PASCAL, BERNANOS, AND SOME ASPECTS
OF THE PROBLEM OF THE HUMAN EGO

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis involves a comparative study of aspects of the problem of the human ego as seen by two Christian writers, Pascal, in the seventeenth century, and Bernanos in the twentieth. The study revolves mainly around the novels of Bernanos and the *Pensées* of Pascal.

In Part one the problem and its harmful effects are presented and examined, first in terms of the individual himself, and then, in a social context. Chapter three deals with the question of self-delusion, a related concept.

Part two presents a possible "solution" in a strictly Christian frame of reference. This includes an examination of the correct attitude to the self, of the actual means of submission, of the nature of this surrender, and finally, of its ultimate value in terms of salvation.
FOREWORD

On completing this work I would like to express my thanks to those who helped to make it possible, first of all, to the members of my family for their continual co-operation and support.

Secondly, to Dr. Baird of the University of Canterbury for his extreme willingness in clarifying any difficulties concerning Pascal.

Finally I would like, most of all, to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. A.R. Clark, also of the University of Canterbury, whose stimulating criticism, advice, help and encouragement, throughout all stages of the preparation, were more than invaluable.
Text Abbreviations

In the course of this study the following abbreviations have been employed:

OE, I: *Oeuvres Romanesques suivies de Dialogues des Carmélites.*
This reference will cover all the novels by Bernanos.

B: Brunschwig's classification and numbering of Pascal's *Pensées* as reproduced in the Hachette edition.

JCC: *Journal d'un curé de campagne* (from chapter 2 onwards)

When certain polemical works by Bernanos are cited by the various critics, the following standard abbreviations will appear:

Anglais: *Lettre aux Anglais*
Crépuscule: *Le Crépuscule des Vieux*
Croix: *Le Chemin de la Croix-des-Ames*
Liberté: *La Liberté pour quoi faire?*
INTRODUCTION

It is undoubtedly true to say that the conflict between man's desire for things of this earth—things which bring immediate satisfaction and can be touched, or at least appreciated through the senses;—and between an innate, more profound longing for intangible and more lasting spiritual values, is one of the central tenets of the Christian faith. Because of this it is perhaps not surprising that Pascal, a 17th century scientist, thinker and writer, and Bernanos, a 20th century novelist and polemicist, both of whom claim allegiance to the Catholic Church, should give considerable emphasis to this problem in many of their literary creations.

Without sounding historically banal and oversimplifying certain issues, one could also attribute the obsession with this problem, and more particularly with the aspect of militant egoism, to the times in which each man lived.

Pascal (1623-1662) lived in a time in which France, and Europe as a whole, were undergoing a succession of civil wars mostly in the name of religion itself. Really, however, these were often a pretext for the achievement of the personal ambitions of men like Richelieu and Mazarin (men of God and Cardinals of the Church itself), and their hosts of satellites, ecclesiastical or otherwise. As well as this, the seventeenth century was a time of persistent optimism as regards human powers and aspirations. This confidence, however, was not to reach its peak until the eighteenth century, which is known as the Age of Reason, more so than its predecessor.
Shortly before the time of Pascal\’s *Pensees*, Descartes\' *Discours de la méthode* had been published, claiming as it did a reliance on the powers of human reason even to the point of belief in God. Experimental science, with its emphasis on visual phenomena and proof by concrete experimentation was also an obsession, almost, as was the power and dignity of the individual human being. This was stimulated by the Italian Renaissance of approximately two hundred years before.

For Christians, however, who insisted on believing in the supernatural rather than in evidence presented by sensory phenomena, and in the essential superiority and mystery of God and the Divine Order, much of this was sacriligious, especially to the disciples of Port Royal or Jansenists, of whom Pascal became an ardent follower. Instead of pride in human achievement, they preached humility in human weakness, and instead of reliance on man\’s intellect, complete trust in God. They did not see hope in things of this earth, but in God and in the hereafter. As one of their most articulate advocates, Pascal shared these views and propounded them in his works. He saw ambition, avarice and selfishness as the enemy of man, and repeatedly warns against placing trust in things of this world.

In contrast, the early to mid-twentieth century, which encompassed the life of Georges Bernanos (1888-1948), was not a period of human optimism but of great pessimism in many ways. It saw two major wars and some minor conflicts. Twentieth century post World War I \"enlightened\" man may well have been miserable, but in his misery he did not turn to God; he no longer believed.
Writers like Sartre, Malraux, Proust, and to some extent Gide, just tried to find release by codifying, "realizing" and crystallizing the sense of misery, which recognised its origins in man himself, but failed to acknowledge the possibility of a solution beyond the powers of humanity. Egoism, or more correctly, egocentricity, here presents just as much of a problem as it did for the seventeenth century optimists - it prevented man from turning to God to find release from his unhappiness. In addition, Bernanos like Pascal, also had to contend with a Church which, in these matters, was largely paralyzed by maintaining its own interests - not, it is true, in as militant a fashion as that of the seventeenth century churchmen. Nevertheless, the Church of the early to mid-twentieth century, anxious to preserve its own influence and power, ignored certain crimes against humanity, or even lent tacit support, as in the Spanish Civil War. Bernanos, like Pascal in his time, seems to see these problems as stemming from man's basic selfishness, and because of this, this theme of man's self-centredness and its accompanying misery, receives considerable emphasis in the literary works of both writers.

These same literary creations by the separate authors, have, in their turn, aroused interest in literary critics; in Bernanos' case, however, the novels have received decidedly more attention than the polemical works. Despite this concentration on these two single authors, there has to this date been no prolonged comparative study of their works or of their ideas. Admittedly, some prominent critics and commentators
on Bernanos do mention in passing certain similarities
with Pascal, and even Hans Urs von Balthasar, the recognized
authority on Bernanos' theological background, refers to the
twentieth century novelist as the great-nephew ('petit-neveu')
of Pascal.(2) Among others, Michel Estève mentions the
similarities in the notions of belief in God(3) and initiates
a brief discussion on divertissement(4). Still others treat
isolated problems, many focussing on the similarities in a
productive fear of death or angoisse(5). As for notable
direct influence, this is never suggested, and it seems
evident that many Bernanosian commentators would go only as
far as admitting that Bernanos had a knowledge of Pascal's
works, and that he would have understood the ideas in a spirit
of sympathy, rather than adopting them in his own works.

Max Milner, who in his critical biography considers
many influences, literary or otherwise, on the thought and
writing of Bernanos, simply states that the latter had read
Pascal during his formative years.(6)

Any comparison in the thought of the two authors would
therefore seem to base itself on similarities in spirit,
atmosphere and ideas, rather than focussing on direct influence
or sources. Even a modern-day critic of Pascal, Jean Steinmann,
would admit a sameness of outlook in the two men; he refers
to Pascal as a sort of seventeenth century Bernanos!(7)

In common with the implied opinions of all these
critics, this study will not be a search for Pascalian sources
in Bernanos' novels, nor will it be an attempt of any sort
to establish possible or definite influence of Pascal on the
thought or works of Bernanos. Rather, it will be an independent
examination, by no means exhaustive, of the ideas of each in certain chosen aspects of human nature and salvation, and an attempt at possible correlation of these same ideas. The central problem will concern their views on the individual human ego, and just how this can help or hinder man's chances for salvation.

In Bernanos' case, the examination will focus to some extent on the themes, but more particularly on the characters in his novels; as such notions as egoism, egocentricity and the absence or renunciation of these same attributes more intimately concern the individual, even though the benefits gained thereby may more particularly aid the group in question rather than the isolated member. Polemical and other works will be used only as a source of more apt quotations on abstract points than are available in the novels.

The examination of Pascal's thought will concentrate mainly on the Pensées, but as in the case of Bernanos' writings, other works will be freely cited if and when the need may arise. The main emphasis, however, will be on the problem of the human ego as depicted and "resolved" in the novels of Georges Bernanos and in the Pensées of Blaise Pascal.

Part 1 will examine the problem as it stands, and Chapter 1 will be devoted to egoism and egocentricity as they concern and affect the individual, both mentally and in various forms of outward behaviour. The second chapter, on the other hand, will consider the social consequences of militant egoism and the forms it may assume in different people.
Chapter 3 will deal with the associated phenomenon of self-deception, and just to what extent it is a basic need of the egoistical human being. This particular discussion will begin with a consideration of the Pascalian concept of divertissement, and will then see with what success this same notion can be applied to certain characters in Bermanos' novels.

Having examined the difficulties presented by the human ego, the next aspect for consideration will concern how and with what success these same difficulties can be "solved". This will be the subject of the second part of the study. Chapter 4 will therefore begin with an examination of Pascal's view on the value and nature of self-hatred and how, if at all, these can be reconciled with Bermanos' apparently diametrically opposed opinion. Through this, some conclusion should be reached as to whether the two authors do, in fact, have similar attitudes towards the human being and his relationship to God; whether or not, for example, he should be confident or hopeful and just how submissive he should be concerning his creator.

Submission, however, will be dealt with much more fully in the fifth chapter. In the same way as Chapter 3 was based on the Pascalian concept of divertissement, Chapter 5 will be based on the Bermanosian spirit of childhood. The various aspects of this will be isolated, as far as possible, in order to see if any of Pascal's ideas have a basic similarity, and whether he gives any credit at all to the value of "spiritual youthfulness". In connection with this also, Bermanos' views
on poverty, economic and spiritual, will be compared, as far as possible, with those of Pascal. This chapter will deal in general with the various means of combating self-centredness in whatever form it may take.

The last chapter will examine the nature and also the value of the final submission. Prominent among these considerations will be the part the individual is able to play in causing the submission described in the fifth chapter, and, if he does manage to achieve a certain spirit of humility, just how much this will be able to contribute to the reception of the all-important saving grace. In other words, Pascal's Jansenism will be considered alongside the opinions of Bernanos. Finally, the discussion will progress to a consideration of the values of a successful submission of the harmful attributes of the human ego; and it shall be seen what benefit this may have for the individual himself and for his fellow-Christians.

The difference in literary genre is, admittedly, quite a considerable one, and apart from the level of ideas, it would perhaps be difficult to make a successful comparison. Ideas, however, in the main, are going to be the subject for consideration; but at certain points where the author's intention (as far as this can be gauged), has to be taken into account, the question of genre cannot be ignored. This will be the case especially in the second part, and will mostly concern Chapter 5.
Differences in genre, however, need not matter when human nature itself is the subject for examination, and a single character of Bermanos' could easily show evidence of a more general trait described in the "maxim" or "portrait" tradition of the seventeenth century, just as traits in such people could be detected in individual characters in a twentieth century novel.

The fundamental truths of Christianity also do not change, nor does its teachings on creator and created. The individual's interpretations of these truths, however, can and do change, as do attitudes to God, to man himself, and to the concept of eternal salvation and the means of attaining it. With this in mind, one could perhaps successfully begin a comparison of certain aspects of attitudes to God and his relationship with man, held by Blaise Pascal and Georges Bernanos.
Notes


4. Ibid., p. 138 and p. 144.


Note on the Meaning of the Term "Ego"

In this study the term "ego" will be considered as a separate, subjective entity, very similar in basic characteristics to those described in the two following definitions.

Ego: (I) The "I" or self of any person; a person as thinking, feeling, and willing, and distinguishing itself from the selves of others and from the objects of its thoughts.


Ego: That which is symbolized by the pronoun "I"; the conscious thinking subject, as opposed to the non-ego or object.


The problem of the human ego is therefore the problem presented by the conscious, separate entity (in relation to God for the purposes of this particular study).
PART I

ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM IN RELATION TO GOD
Chapter 1. THE PROBLEM OF A SEPARATE ENTITY.

"Homo existens te Deum facit" (B. 754, p. 684)

"You, a man, make yourself God." This quotation included by Pascal in one of his Pensées, expresses, quite succinctly, a major tendency inherent in human nature - a tendency in man to usurp for himself the role that rightfully should be occupied by God.

Man certainly wants the fulfillment only God can give, but, claims Pascal, he wants also to exist as a separate entity;

"L'oeil de l'homme voyait alors la majesté de Dieu. Il n'était pas alors dans les ténèbres qui l'aveuglent, ni dans la mortalité et dans les misères qui l'affligent. Mais il n'a pu soutenir tant de gloire sans tomber dans la présomption. Il a voulu se rendre centre de lui-même, et indépendant de mon secours. Il s'est soustrait de ma domination; et, s'égalant à moi par le désir de trouver sa félicité en lui-même, je l'ai abandonné à lui;" (B. 430, pp. 522-523)

Man's desire to be his own centre is seen therefore as a manifestation of Original Sin. Bernanos agrees to this, and puts these words into the mouth of a woman impersonating a priest, in Un crime:

"... nous n'aimons pas le Bon Dieu aussi naturellement que nous nous aimons nous-mêmes, le péché original le veut ainsi." (G. I. 760).

The motivation of this tendency, a self-seeking pride, is still an operative force in human nature.

Many of his characters are victims of this same arrogance, victims to a greater or lesser degree. These range from Simone Alfieri, an almost totally egotistical character to l'abbé Donissan, in whom this initial pride or desire for independence from God is transformed into a totally selfless yet self-punishing asceticism.

Simone Alfieri is motivated by her proud egoism throughout much of Un mauvais rêve, and, in accordance with Pascal's reasoning it is her vanity(1) which helps her to sustain these roles - that, and her imagination:
"Les habiles par imagination se plaisent
tout autrement à eux-mêmes que les prudents
ne se peuvent raisonnablement plair." (B.82,p. 363)

This same imagination can successfully deceive her for a consider-
able time and please her in the process.

Like many Bernanosian characters she is trying to escape
an unhappy and humiliating childhood. (2) She does this by
creating for herself a new existence in which she is made to feel
important, and manages her own destiny. She had not found happiness
in her marriage, and had probably killed her husband, Count Alfieri.
As secretary to Gansé she is an efficient worker, and, for a time,
finds the refuge she seeks. His literary creations, however,
begin to stifle her, to threaten the power of her own personality
or ego, which, without any contact with God remains essentially
vacuous. To affirm this existence, she first of all takes a
lover, Olivier de Mainville, a fellow employee, younger than herself,
the other secretary to her employer Gansé.

This love is not at all selfless. It is partly an
attempt at domination, at self-realization through another person,
which, in another context, can be seen as the Pascalian notion of
a person who means everything to him or herself thinking that he
or she can also mean everything to other people. (3) Simone, however,
also wishes to dominate Olivier. (4)

This affair is naturally a failure. Neither gains
satisfaction nor the desired escape. Olivier suddenly disappears,
and Simone now attempts to re-convince herself that she exists, and,
chooses to do this by means of a crime. She tells Gansé that she
personally will act out the conclusion to his novel Evangeline, a
novel which will probably require a murder. She therefore sets out
to murder the rich Voltairian aunt of her former lover.

Earlier, when speaking to Gansé, Simone had recognized that
any spiritual resources had in both their cases almost vanished.
In her own words they were "Au bout du rouleau." (5) They do not however accept their destinies nor surrender their pride, a gesture which would help them towards some form of salvation; instead, they continue with their lives of egoism and deceit.

Simone asks him:

""Où la menez-vous cette pauvre Evangeline?"

"Au crime, a-t-il répondu sans sourciller. "A un beau crime, un crime digne de vous et de moi."

(CE, I, 933).

His writing is a source of perpetual support for both of them and a means of maintaining their feeling of self-importance.

Simone's pride would not allow her to accept her original hated personality: she tried to fabricate another in which she felt more important and more powerful. She was sometimes forced to help her failing imagination, which could no longer sustain her, and she turned to drugs. This false self, however, could not in essence bring her any lasting comfort, and when its effectiveness had finally ceased she assumed another personality, that of murderess, thinking that through this role she would finally gain her desired fulfilment.

Steeny, the child in Monsieur Guiné, is beginning to undergo a development similar to that of Simone. He, too, is trying to establish his own world, of which he is indisputably the centre. Like Simone he too is becoming a victim of this egoistical notion which leads the individual away from selflessness and from God. Pascal terms the same notion, amour-propre, and, like Bernanos, he sees it as damaging to the soul. 

"Qui ne hait en soi son amour-propre, et cet instinct qui le porte à se faire Dieu, est bien aveuglé. Qui ne voit que rien n'est si opposé à la justice et à la vérité? Car il est faux que nous méritons cela, et il est injuste et impossible d'y arriver, puisque tous demandant la même chose. C'est donc une manifeste injustice où nous sommes nés, dont nous ne pouvons nous défaire, et dont il faut nous défaire."

(£.492, p.555-6).
Steeny, however, does not hate his self-love, in fact it now almost totally rules his life. He is beginning to cultivate his feelings of self-importance on an ever-increasing scale. He does this sometimes by physical violence or domination of people, such as Miss, the governess, or Jambe-de-Laine, and sometimes by a form of intellectual deviousness. When speaking to his friend Guillaume, for example, he analyses the type of hero that has existed in history, and through this, seeks to justify his own position and the way he now intends to prey on life:

"La vie pour nous, ça ne doit pas être un but, c'est une proie. Et pas une seule, des milliers et des milliers de proies, autant que d'heures."

(Œ, I, 1386)

He would, however, like the crippled Guillaume, (who seems to represent Steeny's vanishing and rather maimed childhood), to follow him from a very great distance. This indicates that the would-be hero himself feels insecure and senses the danger.

Guillaume not only senses this danger; he fully realizes all its implications. He warns his friend:

"Oh! Steeny, mon petit Steeny, je vous ai vu l'autre nuit, en rêve, cloué par le milieu de la pritri ne sur un rocher aride, une espèce du muraille flamboyante, vu mur de sel et, avant que j'aie pu seulement prononcer un mot, vous m'avez crié: 'Non, non, reste là, ne bouge pas, laisse-moi', absolument comme si vous étiez déjà damné."

(Œ, I, 1380).

Here the imagery is undoubtedly religious, and words like "rocher" and "aride" suggest the nature and effects of this sterile egoism and taste for domination which Steeny has now developed.

Sterility and nothingness are also the hallmarks of Steeny's new-found master, M. Ouine. He has preyed on life, trying not only to dominate it, but to examine its forces and discover its essence. His motives in this are selfish rather than charitable and most of his examinations, especially that of himself, have had a destructive and even an annihilating effect. Through being his own centre, he
has now in fact become his own prey. Through tirelessly probing his own personality, he has greatly harmed himself, and it is precisely because of this that he is now suffering greatly. He says to Steeny:

"Mais chacun de nous peut aller jusqu'au bout de soi-même."

speaking as though:

"la parole qu'il venait de prononcer l'aurait lui-même cloué sur place."

(C6, I, 1371)

In one way he is trying to warn the child, but is himself wanting to seek comfort from what remains of Steeny's own innocence. He therefore does not directly warn him but seeks a form of selfish consolation in the child, hoping to gain release from his own painful predicament. In Guine, self-love and self-interest remain predominant till the end.

A curiosity motivated by the desire for knowledge for its own sake has been the cause of Guine's downfall. This curiosity has effectively paralysed him ("cloué sur place"). He has tried to achieve self-understanding through a process of detailed self-analysis. He has done this without any charity whatsoever — the only condition in which Bernalos allows any introspection or psycho-analysis.

Pascal, too, condemns excessive curiosity, and, in his theory of the three orders, sees it as a potentially negative value governing things of the mind just as concupiscence governs those of the flesh:

"Dieu doit régner sur tout, et tout se rapporter à lui. Dans les choses de la chair, règne proprement la concupiscence; dans les spirituelles la curiosité proprement, dans la sagesse, l'orgueil proprement." (B460, p. 544).

He also warns his reader against philosophers who advise introspection as a means of escape from a seemingly incomprehensible world. This he claims is not the answer. (6)
M. Ouine, however, has done just this; he has searched within himself for a time, found nothing and at first been very proud of his hard-won discovery. He gloried in it, as Pascal's statement on similar issues would suggest:

"Contradiction. - Orgueil, contrepesant toutes les misères. Ou il cache ses misères; ou, s'il les découvre, il se glorifie de les connaître." (B. d. O. S. P. 510)

Now, however, this selfish curiosity has revealed the emptiness of his own inner being — even the evil discovered through his own introspective probing now bores him. (7) He has come to a full realization of the nothingness within himself and can now only lament his error. He himself is nothing — therefore something must exist:

"S'il n'y avait rien, jeerais quelque chose, bonne au mauvaise. C'est moi qui ne suis rien." (Œ, I, 1557)

Ouine has thus fragmented himself by concentrating on his particular traits of character — those which distinguish him from other human beings, rather than seeing himself as part of an integral whole.

L'abbé Cénabre, like Ouine, is interested in introspective thinking and he, too, has great personal curiosity. Unlike Ouine, however, his intellectual enquiries are combined with a desire for positive and tangible personal advancement.

During his "night of crisis," when he is forced to call on l'abbé Chevance, he is unable to surrender his own finite personality, or, to surrender what amounts to this. The pull of himself is simply too strong. He is too attached to this same personality, that of a celebrated author and hagiographer, which he himself has created and sustained. His analytical mind is also too active. At one stage when experiencing a feeling of freedom equivalent to that of the damned, he cannot at first recognize the significance of these feelings. Still, however, he subjects them to an intellectual enquiry:

"La cause de ce brutal dessaisissement fut simple presque comique. Mais elle s'enfla aussitôt. 'Je vois libre!' s'était-il écrit un moment plus tôt, et il répétait depuis ce mot à mi-voix, sans le comprendre... 'Libre de quoi?' demanda soudain une voix ironique, presque insaisissable encore
su fond de la conscience. Puis, en un moment, elle grossit désmesurément, couvrit tout le reste, 'Libre de quoi? Libre de quoi?' " (Œ, I, 369)

Later, in order to gain insight into his own situation, he pesters a beggar and mercilessly analyses him.

Cénabre definitely has been a victim of this tendency towards an all-embracing egocentricity, of this same tendency stemming from Original Sin. Even when he realizes that this self he has formed is essentially false and egoistical, he continues to embrace and to cultivate it. This is his, his alone, and he vows always to maintain it. His pride demands this of him.

"Ayant souvent médité sur le sort malheureux des renégats, même illustres, qui finissent dans une monotone et humiliante dispute, impuissants à se dégager tout à fait, et qui ont l'air, en l'injuriant, de trainer avec eux leur dieu outragé ainsi qu'un compagnon de chaîne, il s'était fait la solennelle promesse de rester jusqu'à la fin, jusqu'à la mort, impénétrable."

(Œ, I, 460)

The force of his own ego and its accompanying pride constitute a barrier which prevents him from achieving any spiritual insight or advancement whatsoever.

The first Mouchette is the victim of similar tendencies, and, is perhaps more of an innocent victim than Cénabre. Not only her own egoism and pride but also those of other people combine to cause her harm. She does have this "curiosité du plaisir et du risque, la confiance intrépide" (Œ, I, 68), certain aspects of which are to be admired. Fearless confidence and willingness to accept risks are laudable but not the desire for pleasure. This is inherently selfish and is somewhat akin to Pascaulan cupidity, cupidity which takes pleasure in worldly things. Charity, on the other hand, does the opposite. (9)

Separated from such influences, the baser aspects of Mouchette's ego, her moi haissable (10) can gain predominance and they do. In Pascaulan terms she is now a "separated member" who feels the inadequacy of these instincts for self-sufficiency, and, at the same time, ruthlessly
pursues them.

"Le membre séparé, ne voyant plus le corps auquel il appartient, n'a plus qu'un être périssant et mourant. Cependant il croit être un tout, et ne se voyant point de corps dont il dépende, il croit ne dépendre que de soi et veut de faire centre et corps lui-même. Mais n'ayant point en soi de principe de vie, il ne fait que s'égarer, et s'étonne dans l'incertitude de son être, sentant bien qu'il n'est pas corps, et cependant ne voyant point qu'il soit membre d'un corps. (B.403,r.552-3)

She fabricates a role for herself and plays it as much as possible. Cadignan and Gallet, her two lovers, cannot help her in this. Their egoism in fact causes just as much harm as did that of her father. Bitterly disappointed she seeks revenge and tries to reaffirm her existence, first by killing Cadignan and later by abandoning Gallet. This is in accordance with her cherished role:

"... une fille dangereuse et secrète, au destin singulier, une héroïne parmi les couards et les sots..." (Œ, I, 209)

Donissan destroys her illusions - she has not affirmed her existence. She is one sinner among many, a mere toy in the hands of Satan into whose power her egoism has led her:

"Vous n'êtes point devant Dieu coupable de ce meurtre. Pas plus qu'en ce moment-ci votre volonté n'était libre. Vous êtes comme un jouet, vous êtes comme la petite balle d'un enfant, entre les mains de Satan." (Œ, I, 200)

Some of her instincts could have led her to God, had this same self-seeking egoism not constituted an impenetrable barrier. Although she may feel free, she is greatly mistaken; Donissan challenges her with this:

"Te crois-tu libre? Tu ne l'aurais été qu'en Dieu." (Œ, I, 203)

Until she has found God and her ultimate fulfilment she must search in impenetrable darkness, like the lost men described by Pascal:
"Il ... cherche partout avec inquiétude et sans succès dans des ténèbres impénétrables."

(B. 427, p. 521)

In this she conforms to the Pascalian notion of 

misère de l'homme sans Dieu, and Bernanos himself admits that he may subconsciously have been thinking of the doctrine of Original Sin when he composed the novel or began to compose it. The association, however, was merely subconscious and sprang from the surrounding circumstances:

"J'ai vu la mystérieuse petite fille entre son papa brasseur et sa maman. J'ai imaginé peu à peu son histoire[...]. Je lui sentais un cœur intrépide[...].

Comprenons-nous bien. Le dogme catholique du péché original et de la Rédemption surgissait ici, non pas d'un texte, mais des faits, des circonstances et des conjectures..." (11)

Bernanos then goes on to say how Donissan was called forth as the saviour of Mouchette, but until the priest actually carries her to the altar of the Church, she was prepared, when left to herself, to seek her good even in her own destruction:

"Et depuis qu'il (l'homme) a perdu le vrai bien, tout également peut lui paraître tel, jusqu'à sa destruction propre, quoique si contraire à Dieu, à la raison et à la nature tout ensemble"

(B. 425, p. 519-20)

Bernanos would attribute this tendency in Mouchette to the power of Satan who now has complete control over her. He directly forces her to this end. She is troubled, but feels a certain power at being in control of her destiny:

"Chose étrange: son regard seul restait trouble et hésitant. Toute sa vie sensible était à l'extrémité de ses doigts, dans la paume de ses mains agiles."

(Œ, 1. 214).
As Pascal predicted, she has in fact reached the point of her own destruction, which was not unexpected in a person who had no knowledge of where her true happiness really lay.

Pascal himself then gives some idea as to the true nature of this same fulfilment. It will be possessed in common by all men and will transcend the bounds of individuality. Anything connected with egoism just cannot aspire to this. Left to himself man is forced to search within himself. It is in this way that he comes to usurp the role of God.

This usurping of the role of God, mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, may seem clearly applicable to characters already discussed but could seem only marginally applicable to later ones. Simone Alfeiri, for example, consciously and deliberately made herself her own centre of interest and activity, as did M. Cuine. Pride forces them to this and pride forces Steeny to adopt a similar position. The first Mouchette differs slightly as her egoism is not consciously an end in itself; it is a barrier which prevents her from reaching God.

Concentration or reliance on the self is also the problem, the tragic flaw of the secular hero, Dr. Delbende, and also the problem of l'abbé Donissan, a Bernanosian "saint."

Dr. Delbende, in *Journal d'un curé de campagne*, is an extremely sympathetic figure, admired by the curé de Torey, and obviously by Bernanos himself. He has a profound, charitable concern for his fellowmen and rejects Catholicism only because the Church, after two thousand years, has failed to give the poor their rightful place. In this his ideas are almost identical to those of the curé de Torey. Unlike the latter, however, he cannot accept the Church's mediocrity. "La médiocrité... c'est l'affaire de Dieu," says Torey, but Delbende cannot accept this. In this case he cannot surrender, and place his trust in God. In many ways
he is full of charity but in this one instance he lacks it. Human reason, (condemned as an ultimate means of reaching God by both Pascal and Bernanos(15)), is what prevents his final surrender. Like the first Mouchette he cannot find elsewhere the fulfillment only God can give, and his life ends in apparent suicide. Reason, one of the powers of human ego, prevented him from reaching God.

This power for thought also provides a problem for l'abbé Donissan. In his case it takes the form of self-reliance, a rather subtle kind of self-centredness. This is seen not only in more negative, less saintly figures, such as Cézabre and Ouine, but provides a significant problem for Donissan, one of the 'saints'! So deep is its entrenchment in human nature that he falls victim to it with the highest possible motives. It is a more elevated aspect of what Pascal describes as a tendency for self-centredness. This, he sees as the foundation of all disorder, and every human being is born with it.(16)

Bernanos, in a lengthy polemical passage attributes this same tendency to the power of Satan, or to evil in the world.(17) As is the case with Mouchette, it is this turning inwards which denotes the presence of Satan.

During his self-flagellation, and before he goes to revive the dead boy, Donissan is the victim of this same tendency. He will not let this God-given joy peacefully invade him, as does Chantal de Clergerie. It deprives him of self-awareness, and for him, this is bad. He feels obliged to fight:
"Où Dieu vous appelle, il faut monter," avait dit l'autre. Il était appelé.
"Monter ou se perdre!" Il était perdu.
La certitude de son impuissance à égaler un tel destin bloquait jusqu'à la prière sur ses lèvres."

(CE, I, 142)

He feels that the onus is on him to climb, rather than on God to help him.

When this feeling of satisfaction and contentment invades his soul he therefore fights it tirelessly:

"Cette joie sans raison ne peut être qu'une illusion. Une espérance si secrète, au plus intime, au plus profond, née tout à coup - qui n'a pas d'objet - indéfinie, ressemble trop à la présomption de l'orgueil ... Non! Le mouvement de la grâce n'a pas cet attrait sensuel. Il faut déraciner cette joie." (CE, I, 143)

It would deprive him of all self-awareness he may have and he simply will not accept this. Here his position is similar to that of Cénabre. As this spiritual odyssey progresses Donissan experiences this continual oscillation between peace and torment. His greatest agony occurs on the threshold of despair when he is prepared to renounce his own salvation for that of his parishioners, (18) rather than redeem them through acting as God's agent. He feels that he has only himself to offer and to sacrifice and this, although a completely selfless wish, is also a grave error.

He does not consciously depict the Pascalian position on the nature of man in relation to God - a desire for independence in the face of a definite need, ("... dépendance, désir d'indépendance, besoin" (B,126,p.387)) but he is the innocent victim of this same truth. Before the episode of the partial cure of the dead boy he experiences a similar temptation to that of the first members of the human race - a desire to know and to understand the mysteries of existence and to have power over these same forces:
'...l'autre concupiscence s'éveille, ce défi
de la connaissance qui perdit la mère des hommes,
droite et pensive, au seuil du Bien et du Mal.
Connaître pour détruire, et renouveler dans la
destruction sa connaissance et son désir — le
soleil de Satan! — désir du néant recherché pour
lui-même, abominable effusion du coeur!'
(C, I, 237)

Here, the very imagery is associated with man's desire to acquire
the ultimate in knowledge and to become the equal of God himself.

Donissan does not consciously wish to do this, and, on two
occasions he admits to Moun-Segrais that he is in some measure
aware of his problem. He knows that he would surrender his own
soul if it would benefit his parishioners. He is nevertheless a
victim of the human condition as depicted by both Pascal and Bernanos.

Pascal sees in this condition man's tendency and desire to
be his own centre. Bernanos sees it as a result of the presence
of evil in the world — an evil continually assailing man and which,
on closer examination, can be seen as a tendency to rely on one's own
powers. This leads to a perpetual separation between man and God.

Donissan, when he resists Satan (in the form of a grotesque
horse-dealer) is able to do so only when he abandons himself totally
to God without relying on any power stemming from his own particular
personality:

"Non! cette force ne vient pas de moi, et tu le sais.
Cependant je t'observe depuis un moment avec quelque
profit. Ton heure est venue."
(C, I, 178-9)

The curé d'Ambricourt has a similar tendency to rely on his
own inadequate powers, or, to believe that he should do so. One
assumes from the pages torn from his diary that he too suffered the
temptation to submit to despair. Throughout most of the novel he
believes that he is totally inadequate for his mission and that he has
failed in his task. The reader is led to conclude, however, that he
would finally have found this peace by recognizing that grace, implying as
it does a complete reliance on and submission to God, is capable of accomplishing all his needs.

Thus a form of egocentricity is evident even among the "saints" of Bernanos' novels. The first man wanted to be free from God, to make himself his own centre, and, in all his descendants, this same process is re-enacted. Among the mediocre souls it takes the form of a fabricated personality more attractive to the character in question. Both Pascal and Bernanos condemn this. That same personality which flatters the pride of the individual could finally lead to his own destruction, as is the case of Mouchette and Philippe of Un mauvais rêve.

In the case of the saints the tendency is still evident even when the motives and intention are basically selfless. The effect is nevertheless the same as in totally egolistical people. It serves to lead them away from God and find for themselves their own form of salvation.

In one way it just emphasizes Pascal's views on the position of man and on the "value" of self-reliance:

"C'est en vain, ô hommes, que vous cherchez dans vous-mêmes le remède à vos misères. Toutes vos lumières ne peuvent arriver qu'à connaître que ce n'est point dans vous-mêmes que vous trouverez ni la vérité ni le bien." (B. 430, p. 523)

views which in a large part are echoed by Bernanos in his novels:

"Nulle vie ne trouve en elle-même l'instrument de sa propre libération. Non pas la délivrance mais un maître." (OE, I, 1419).
Notes

1. See B.150, p.401.

2. This theme is given extensive treatment by Yves Bridel in L'esprit d'enfance dans l'oeuvre romanesque de Georges Bernanos, (Paris, 1966).


4. For consideration of the aspect of domination see Chapter 12.

5. OE, I, 918.


7. " 'La dernière disgrâce de l'homme', fit-il, 'est que le mal lui-même l'ennuie.' " (OE, I, 11469).

8. "... mais la cupidité use de Dieu et jouit du monde; et la charité, au contraire." (B.571, p.588.)

9. For further consideration of this aspect see Chapter 6.

10. This term is used by Pascal (B.455, p.541). The contraction (moi haïssable) is mine.


12. See B.425, p.520.


15. For further consideration of this aspect see Chapter 5.


18. Ibid., 154-5. See Chapter 4, p.72 for quotation.

19. Ibid., 224.

20. Ibid., 1184-5.
Most men, however, do not learn the lesson which excessive concentration on one's own resources can and does provide. Egoism continues, and, in most cases is accompanied by a feeling of basic insecurity. Not content with being all-important in their own minds, many people seek to establish some form of reputation in the eyes of others, whose lives they often try to influence in various ways. Pascal recognizes this egoistical tendency and cautions against it:

"Chacun est un tout à soi-même, car, lui mort, le tout est mort pour soi. Et de là vient que chacun croit être tout à tous. Il ne faut pas juger de la nature selon nous, mais selon elle."

(P.457, p.542-3)

It is also not difficult to find characters with such ambitions in Bernanos' novels. These characters seek the much-desired importance in three basic ways; they try either to obtain the esteem of others, or, they attempt to dominate them. They also seek fulfilment through rather base passions, a fulfilment which in essence requires the co-operation and support of one, and sometimes more than one person.

Pride again forms the basis of this type of egoism which sometimes places considerable emphasis on wealth, power, reputation and other worldly goals. According to Pascal, however, it is concupiscence rather than pride itself which binds men to the things of this earth:

"Vos maladies principales sont l'orgueil, qui vous soustrait de Dieu, la concupiscence qui vous attache à la terre;"

(P.430, p.524)
Pride, however, does play a significant role especially in man's efforts to maintain his social status. It motivates him to search for esteem and to tyrannize other people. Through these activities no progress at all can be made towards spiritual salvation.

Bernanos sees each member of the "communion des pécheurs"(1) as he terms it, behaving with tragic sameness, in an attempt to create an identity for himself through one or other type of sin. Ironically enough, the sinner does not create an identity for himself, instead he remains part of what amounts to an ugly, monstrous mass. The first Mouchette has an insight into this only after her ego-sustaining pride has left her:

"La foule, un instant plus tôt si grottillante, où elle avait reconnu tous les sions, se rétrécissait à mesure. Des visages se superposaient entre eux, ne faisaient plus qu'un visage, qui était celui même d'un vice. Des gestes confus se fixaient dans une attitude unique, qui était la geste du crime. Plus encore: parfois le mal ne laissait de sa proie qu'un amas informe, en pleine dissolution, gonflé de son venin, digéré. Les avares faisaient une masse d'or vivant, les luxurieux un tas d'entrailles. Partout le péché crevait son enveloppe, laissait voir le mystère de sa génération: des dizaines d'hommes et de femmes liés dans les fibres du même cancer, et les affreux liens se rétractant, ravaient aux bras coupés d'un poupe, jusqu'au noyau du monstre même, la faute initiale, ignorée de tous, dans un cœur d'enfant."

(CF, 1, 206)

Perhaps Pascal would not use the same imagery, but emphasize the sameness inherent in all human error. In his section on amour-propre (2) however, and in others, he does agree that man engages in a perpetual quest to achieve greatness for himself as an individual, and this will bring him neither success nor happiness. He also agrees that this desire for importance in man involves a fundamental deception, of himself first of all, and, secondly, of those around him.
One example of this occurs in Bernanos' novels when the poacher, Arsène, impresses the later Mouchette (3) with stories of his own heroism; he even tells her that he has committed a murder. It is suggested that he does this merely to prove to the child, (4) but more importantly to prove to himself, that he actually does exist. By creating an heroic impression of himself in her mind and in his own, he has in this way managed to overcome his feelings of insignificance and inadequacy. In this he is similar to several characters described in this and in the previous chapter - characters who neglect the existing self in which their pride is not fulfilled, and concentrate on another which flatters the sense of personal importance. Pascal also recognizes this tendency:

"Nous ne nous contentons pas de la vie que nous avons en nous et en notre propre être; nous voulons vivre dans l'idée des autres d'une vie imaginaire, et nous nous efforçons pour cela de paraître. Nous travaillons incessamment à embellir et conserver notre être imaginaire, et négligeons le véritable. Et si nous avons ou la tranquillité, ou la générosité, ou la fidélité, nous nous empressons de le faire savoir, afin d'attacher ces vertus-là à notre autre être, et les détacherions plutôt de nous pour les donner à l'autre; et nous serions de bon cœur poitrins pour en acquérir la réputation d'être vaillants. Grande marque du néant de notre propre être, de n'être pas satisfait de l'un sans l'autre, et d'échanger souvent l'un pour l'autre!"  

(1424, p.400)

However, unlike some of the characters discussed in the previous chapter, (Simone Alfieri is one example), those treated in this context feel more need to force others to accept their pseudo-personalities, than to establish them in their own consciousness.
Simone is a strong and a determined woman; it is herself she has to deceive and for herself she must make the deception effective. She despises Ganse and finds only brief consolation in her affair with Olivier. She cannot gain consolation from him in the same way that Arsène gains consolation from the later Mouchette. Olivier's belief in her as a person would not be capable of sustaining her feelings of self-importance; she needs more than this, and, it is true that, in general, most Bernanosian characters seeking or finding consolation in another person are weaker than those who wish primarily to satisfy themselves.

This is true of Malority, the father of the first Mouchette. Domination of his wife and daughter gives him a feeling of power and importance which in some measure compensates for his essential emptiness:

"Pour beaucoup de niais vaniteux que la vie dégoit, la famille reste une institution nécessaire, puisqu'elle met à leur disposition, et comme à portée de la main, un petit nombre d'êtres faibles, qu'on plus lâche peut effrayer. Car l'impuissance aime refléter son néant dans la souffrance d'autrui". (c. I, 70)

Steeny, however, is developing both tendencies. He tries to dominate people within his sphere of influence, such as Miss and Jambe-de-Laine, and through an embryonic form of intellectual reasoning tries to convince himself of this same importance.

Mae de Clergerie, on the other hand, relies solely on the domination of others in order to sustain her special position. In this she can be seen to reflect the Pascalian idea of the ego of the individual being potentially harmful in that it wishes to
subjugate others:

"Et un mot, le moi a deux qualités: il est injuste en soi, en ce qu'il se fait centre du tout; il est inconmode aux autres, en ce qu'il les veut asservir: car chaque moi est l'ennemi et voudrait être le tyran de tous les autres."

(B. 455, p. 542)

The temporal power of Chantal's grandmother and her domination over others are represented by her household keys. These represent what now remain of forces which once sustained an independent and proud personality. Here the "universal usurpation" of which Pascal speaks in another Pensée, can be extended to include aspects other than those in a purely material frame of reference. This concentration on herself and on her own material influence has been a sin against charity, and is therefore harmful to her and to her fellow-men. She is, of course, insane, and through this fact Bernanos is able to emphasize the extreme madness inherent in excessive egoism, and also the fact that an overriding concern for the self alone, in one form or another, can and does lead to insanity, as in the case of Mme de Clergerie, of the first Mouchette and of Cénabre.

Only through renouncing her domination of others and thereby weakening her sense of her own importance, can Chantal's grandmother expect to make any progress towards an essentially beneficial submission. This maintenance of her own importance, and of her own ego were founded on the power she exerted and usurped over other human beings.

M. Devandomme also relies on the favourable opinions of other people in order to maintain feelings of his own importance.
The admiration of others is what he needs and would like to have. For the sake of the family honour, the negative aspects of which Pascal and Bernarios both unequivocally condemn, he urges his son-in-law, Eugène, (suspected of the murder of the little cowherd), to go and kill himself. His selfishness is, in a large part connected with the honour of the family - it certainly is a corporate honour, but it is also his own egoism which prompts him to suggest or to initiate the suicide of his daughter and her husband. It is largely for his own sake that he wishes the family honour to be upheld and he dreams of a dignified death - a death fit for a nobleman:

"Quoi qu'il arrive, ces gens-là ne se vanteront pas de lui avoir fait baisser les yeux et ils l'interrogèrent un jour bon matin, malgré, chapeau bas. Même il laissera d'argent ce qu'il faut pour une belle pierre, un beau grand morceau de granit venue d'Ardennes, avec son nom écrit dessus, en lettres capitales, son nom à particule après tout, un nom de seigneur." (08,1,434)

His egoism causes a considerable amount of misery to others, just as that of Arsène, and that of Cadignan and Gallet, is in some way harmful to both Mouchettes.

Like the honnête-homme described by Pascal, those men cannot satisfy their own desires without harming other people in the process:

"- Ils (les honnêtes gens)n'ont pas trouvé d'autre moyen de satisfaire la concupiscence sans faire tort aux autres."

(B.542,p.541)

Devandomme's antiquated code of honour harks back to the time of Pascal and considerably before this. It is a code, the selfish side of which Pascal definitely did condemn:

"Il n'y a que la religion chrétienne qui rende l'homme aimable et heureux tout ensemble. Dans l'honnêteté, on ne peut être aimable et heureux ensemble."

(B.542,p.569-70)
Like Bernanos he would seem to advocate a selfless code of honour based on Christian values, but would condemn, it seems evident, a system founded indirectly on the laws of reason and personal gain such as that followed by the rather of the first Mouchette.

This condemnation of a worldly code of honour based on pride is expressed notably in the Seventh Provincial Letter, and Pascal castigates, in addition, the priests (Jesuits in this case), who form a compromise with this worldly code and even subscribe to it to some extent:

"Vous savez, me dit-il, que la passion dominante des personnes de cette condition est ce point d'honneur qui les engage à toute heure à des violences qui parissent bien contraires à la piété Chrétienne, de sorte qu'il faudrait les exclure presque tous de nos confessionnaux, si nos Pères n'eussent un peu relâché de la sévérité de la religion pour s'accommoder à la faiblesse des hommes. Mais, comme ils voulaient demeurer attachés à l'Évangile par leur devoir envers Dieu, et aux gens du monde par leur charité pour le prochain, ils ont eu besoin de toute leur lumière pour trouver des expédiens qui tempéraient les choses avec tant de justesse qu'on peut maintenant et réparer son honneur par les moyens dont on se sert ordinairement dans le monde, sans blesser néanmoins sa conscience, afin de conserver tout ensemble deux choses aussi opposées en apparence que la piété et l'honneur." (6)

He abhors the way these priests circumvent the problem by "directing the intention", and meanwhile let the heinous deeds continue. He summarizes their position in these words:

"- Les Jésuits ont voulu joindre Dieu au monde, et n'ont gagné que le mépris de Dieu et du monde." (7)

This seems also to express Bernanos' opinion about some priests in his novels - priests who, like the seventeenth century Jesuits, compromise their sacerdotal duties in order to accommodate their beliefs with the changing conditions of the world.

As in other characters, this quest for importance among the priests often takes the form of a simple desire for esteem - simple to describe but by no means simple in its psychological or social motivations. This same admiration in the eyes of the world is detrimental to man, claims Pascal, and the true disciples of Port Royal do not fall prey to it:
Nevertheless many of the mediocre priests in Bernanos' novels do have this fault, just like the Jesuits described by Pascal. L'abbé Sabiroux, the curé de Luzarnes is one of these. His desire for advancement is condemned, as is his dishonest attitude towards Bonissian's problems and condition. He urges the latter to attempt to perform the miracle of resuscitating the dead child and then denies the responsibility, writing as an independent observer. The doyen de Blangermont in JCC, a priest who places excessive emphasis on the external wealth of the Church, is also greatly criticized. Just as the Jesuits described by Pascal would compromise the ideals of the Church in an egoistical attempt to survive and to be esteemed, this priest is prepared to placate and to accept the values of the middle classes.

Mgr. Espelette is another of these whose selfishness forces him to compromise the values and the spirit of the Church he serves. He believes that this same Church must adapt itself to the ideas and conditions of the modern world, and, like the seventeenth century Jesuits, his motives are often personal:

"Nul n'est moins digne d'amour que celui-là qui vit seulement pour être aimé. De telles âmes, si habiles à se transformer au goût de chacun, ne sont que des miroirs où le faible apprend vite à haïr sa faiblesse, et le fort à douter de sa force, également méprisés par tous."

(Œ, I, 388)

Like these same Jesuits, however, these people he is trying to impress despise him:

"Une telle bassesse fait le risée dans gens au pouvoir, dont l'infortuné brigue l'amitié bien qu'ils ne lui dispensent, à son insu, qu'un cordial mépris, car les partis triomphants haïssent ordinairement leurs flateurs."

(Œ, I, 389)
To a lesser extent, L'abbé Cénabre also falls prey to this same tendency. His fabricated self, discussed in the previous chapter, demands a reputation and esteem in the eyes of others. He needs a public to read his books and to applaud his efforts. Although most of his revolt and his desire for advancement are aimed at satisfaction of the self, he nevertheless does need the favourable opinions of others to sustain him in his future endeavours. In describing these literary works, for example, Bernanos speaks of the priest's "gentillesse" and of his "goût de plaire", both of which demand a certain degree of recognition.

In describing Ghese literary works, for example, Bernanos speaks of the priest's "gentillesse" and of his "goût de plaire", both of which demand a certain degree of recognition.

In this M. de Clergerie resembles Cénabre, but he is in many ways a much weaker character. He too wants the esteem of others, but for him the Other is more the person he wishes to please than is the case with the faithless priest. With the latter it is undoubtedly the self, most of all, which must be satisfied.

M. de Clergerie, however, will do almost anything to be accepted by others and to win their approval. He was once a brilliant student who received considerable praise for a thesis, and, since then, he has continuously sought the admiration of others. In order to find favour with the Parisian aristocracy, he is willing to employ any unsuitable servant they may happen to recommend, and it was through his future bride, Mme de Montanel, that he acquired the Satanic Fiodor. He intends to marry this lady primarily because she has connections with various people who may be able to advance his candidacy for the Academy. To prepare his house for this same bride, he is willing to persuade his only daughter, Chantal, to enter a convent. His only objective is to achieve social and academic success.

The defrocked priest, Louis Dufréty, also belongs in this category to some extent. He, however, is much stronger, more resourceful and forthright in his affairs than is M. de Clergerie.
On his own admission, he left the priesthood in order to promote his intellectual advancement; he twice speaks of his "évolution intellectuelle," and at another time boasts how he is earning his own living. Admittedly, this tendency does involve a pseudo-personality which aims first at self-satisfaction and self-justification, but it does seek recognition and praise from others. He tries, for instance, to impress the curé d'Ambricourt and his own mistress, and sets great store by their possible admiration.

In order to earn this all-important living, Dufréty has become a salesman for a firm of drug distributors. Drugs, for the most part are anathema to Bernanos. When misused they intensify the misery of many of his characters. Simone Alfieri, Dr. Lipotte, Dr. Laville, and La Pérouse, the psychiatrist, provide only a few examples. Bernanos, in evoking the harm and misery drugs can cause, and connecting Dufréty with their distribution, seems in a sense to cite him as the indirect cause of misery to many people. All is the result of his egoism.

Fame and the regard of others are very necessary to most human beings and essential to their pride. They are, in fact, so important, that many people are prepared to die in order to achieve them:

"- La douceur de la gloire est si grande, qu'à quelque objet qu'on l'attache, même à la mort, on l'aime."

(B.158,p.403)

Chantal, the daughter of the comte d'Ambricourt could furnish a modified example of this desire. Admittedly, it is not glory she is seeking, merely recognition. She wishes to punish her father for his affair with the governess, Mlle Louise, which in her eyes constitutes a bitter betrayal of any trust she may previously have accorded him. In order to force him to repent and to realize the wrong he has done her, she is prepared, if necessary, to commit suicide.
Chantal does not want the same sort of glory sought by the person described by Pascal, but glory in a more elementary form does imply recognition and notice, and that is what she seeks. Her ego demands this, her pride has been wounded and she now wants revenge. Until the curé is able to weaken this self-centred desire for revenge, and to force the influence of her outraged pride to diminish, she remains a prisoner of her own personality, and therefore of the egoistical hatred she bears her father, the count.

Chantal's mother, the countess, is also a victim of egoistical hatred, hatred which in her case is directed towards her husband and her daughter. In order to be impervious to what she considers is their scorn and disregard, she uses an obsessive love for her dead son as her defence. She forms an attachment to anything that remains of him, namely his lock of hair, and, when the curé forces her to see that this obsessive devotion to the dead child is preventing her from exercising charity, and therefore from having any possible contact with God, she symbolically destroys this lock of hair. At first this is a punitive gesture based on self-hatred, but she afterwards becomes reconciled with God, to whom she now turns.

This desire for esteem and for the goodwill of others is not the only way in which human egoism manifests itself. It is present equally in rather base passions likewise detrimental to the well-being of the soul. They drive men to seek satisfaction through others, and this satisfaction, which is often sexual, brings about a separation between man and God:

"Alors Jésus-Christ vient dire aux hommes qu'ils n'ont point d'autres ennemis qu'eux-mêmes, que ce sont leurs passions qui les séparent de Dieu."

(B.783, p.693)
Bernanos also decries passion and sees it as a potentially destructive force in human nature - destructive because it tends to remove forces from the human spirit and give nothing in return:

"La passion prend tout ce qu'on fait cade et ne rend rien."

he says in his short work, Dominique, (10) and in his novels he includes many examples of these destructive effects.

The first Mouchette is seeking love, pleasure and escape through her lovers, first through Cadigan, and then through Gallet. Her relationships with these men do not, however, bring her the fulfilment she desires. On the contrary, she does not obtain self-satisfaction and self-gratification in any lasting form whatsoever. Her passions, and their attendant qualities of egoism and reliance on other human beings, prevent her from obtaining any true fulfilment and freedom.

In the same way, Simone Alfieri could not find consolation through Olivier, and he in his turn could not find comfort of a lasting sort in his affair with her. He was afraid of death and felt alone:

"Dieu qu'il a peur de mourir! Qu'il est seul!"

(Œ, I, 901)

Each relied on the other to provide the necessary means of escape and to furnish a reason for existence. Neither obtains these through the subsequent affair.

The same occurs with Mlle Louise, the governess in JCC, and with Francine in La Joie. Her love and trust in Fiodor bring her nothing but unhappiness. She had hoped for pleasure but confesses to Mme Fernande that she is being tortured. (Œ, I, 618)

Unlike the later Mouchette, love for all these people is an egoistical notion.
Pascal warns his readers never to seek consolation in other human beings, as, compared with God they are merely transitory creatures:

"S'il y a un Dieu, il ne faut aimer que lui, et non les créatures passagères. [...]
Donc tout ce qui nous incite à nous attacher aux créatures est mauvais, puisque cela nous empêche, ou de servir Dieu, si nous le connaissons, ou de le chercher, si nous l'ignorons."

(B.479,p.551)

Bernanos' ideas are similar, and many of his characters also find reliance on other human beings disastrous. This comes about because a human being cannot in essence provide lasting fulfilment. Any form of impurity, sexual or otherwise, destroys in man any possible desire for union with God:

"L'impureté ne détruit pas cette connaissance, elle en anéantit le besoin." (Œ, I, 1129)

The first Mouchelette, for example, has some semblance of a longing for a union with God, (although she may not recognize it as such), before she embarks on her life of lies and deceit. As she progresses in this unfortunate existence, however, her initial pure notions are increasingly displaced by a spirit of egoistical revolt which finally leads her to destruction. The initial pure need is gradually obscured and transformed into a malignant force.

Thus whether the person in question, (in Bernanos' novels or in Pascal's Penseés), is looking for esteem, for a position of some predominance, or for love from another person, the nature of the goal is always basically similar. From the esteem of others M. de.Clergerie seeks motivation for his life and work; through her symbols of temporal power (her bunch of keys), his mother seeks to retain her position as mistress of the household, and the first Mouchelette seeks self-realization and escape through her lovers. The aims of all are fundamentally egoistical, and all
are trying to obtain self-satisfaction through the agency of another person or of other people. (11)

"L'enfer, c'est les Autres", says Sartre. Albeit on radically different grounds, Pascal and Bernanos would seem to agree. They would seem to further imply that this hell is caused by others precisely because one finite being cannot successfully be the ultimate goal of any other, and, because all egoistical or uncharitable attitudes towards another person will eventually cause disaster.
Notes

1. The curé d'Ambricourt explains this to Chantal: "Il y a une communion des saints, il y a aussi une communion des pécheurs". (CW, I, 1139)


3. This title is given to distinguish her from Germaine Valory in Sous le Soleil de Satan. From now on the latter will be termed "the first Mouchette" except in one or two extremely obvious contexts.

4. This opinion is given by Béguin in Bernanos par lui-même, (Paris, 1954), p.80.

5. See B.295, p.463.


8. This abbreviation commonly used in reference to the novel, Journal d'un curé de campagne, will be employed from now on.

9. See CW, I, 1248 (both times).


CHAPTER 3. "DIVERTISSEMENT" AND TOTAL DIVERSION.

This study so far, has in a large part, been devoted to people who seek to establish feelings of self-importance. Egoism of characters like Goncourt and M. de Clergerie demands a favourable reputation in their own minds and also in the minds of other people. Coupled with this desire for personal and social renown, is a need, sometimes for partial, and often for total self-deception. This is necessary in order to acquire these same feelings. Some evidence of this has, in fact, emerged from the first two chapters, and, in Berranos' novels, it is a problem confronting the "sinner" rather than the "saint".

Donissan's difficulties, for example, stem from his fundamental honesty about himself — an honesty which convinces him of his insignificance, whereas the problems of many egoistical characters, such as Simone Alfieri or Louis Dufresny, have their origins in a basic dishonesty, one which is aggravated by the practice of perpetual self-deception.

In most cases, especially those of the characters discussed in the first chapter, this deception involves the complete re-direction of the human personality, and often its complete recreation, to satisfy the egoistical quest for the person's own importance. Pascal attributes this need to self-love, and therefore to pride:-

"La nature de l'amour-propre et de ce moi humain est de n'aimer que soi et de ne considérer que soi. Mais que fera-t-il? Il ne saurait empêcher que cet objet qu'il aime ne soit plein de défauts et de misères: il veut être grand, et il se voit petit; il veut être heureux, et il se voit misérable; il veut être parfait, et il se voit plein d'imperfections; il veut être l'objet de l'amour et de l'estime des hommes, et il voit que ses défauts ne méritent que leur aversion et leur mépris. Cet embarras où il se trouve produit en lui la plus injuste et la plus criminelle passion qu'il soit possible de s'imaginer;
car il conçoit une haine mortelle contre cette vérité qui le reprend, et qui le convainc de ses défauts. Il désirerait de l'endurcir, et, ne pouvant la détruire en elle-même, il la détruit, autant qu'il peut, dans sa connaissance et dans celle des autres; c'est-à-dire qu'il met tout son soin à couvrir ses défauts et aux autres et à soi-même, et qu'il ne peut souffrir qu'on les lui fasse voir, ni qu'on les voie. " (B, 100, p. 375-6)

It is interesting to note that he does not give the term divertissement to the above tendency; many more factors are involved than this term implies. Divertissement consists mostly in a camouflage of man's basic unhappiness, and of a refusal to think about these difficulties.

What has been described under the heading of amour-propre, involves a total redirection of the human personality, and, as far as possible, its total recreation in the minds of other people. From this point onwards this same total re-direction will be termed "total diversion", in order to distinguish it from divertissement. Nevertheless the characteristics of the two states do, at times, coincide, and the aim, self-delusion, has a basic similarity. The difference, however, lies in the fact that "total diversion" is essentially an active, self-assertive state, whereas divertissement, although egoistically motivated, requires less activity and less effort on the part of the individual. The aim in "total diversion" is to disguise the original self by "refashioning" it as far as possible:

"Nous ne sommes que mensonge, duplicité, contrariété, et nous cachons et nous déguisons à nous-mêmes."

(B, 377, p. 501)

the aim in divertissement is to camouflage the wretchedness and unpleasant truths of existence, simply by not thinking about them, or by directing the attention elsewhere:
"Divertissement. — Les hommes n'ayant pu guérir la mort, la misère, l'ignorance, ils se sont avisés, pour se rendre heureux, de n'y point penser."

(B.168, p.406)

This is an altogether milder form of self-delusion from that practised by Simone Alfieri, for example, by Cénabre, or by Louis Duméty, characters whose profound egoism has already been discussed.

It has been shown how Simone tries to obtain her feelings of importance and power. She has first found some means of compensation for her previous miseries and humiliations in her position as secretary to Ganse, and her affair with Olivier was by no means selfless. In this also, she was seeking a form of diversion, but this was mixed with a desire for domination — an aspect of self-centred egoism, forceful and positive in its own context, as well as being a form of escapism. She could not, however, escape through her affair, and she did not wish to escape in the same way as do Pascal's hunting, gambling aristocrats. In common with them, she has this basic feeling of self-dissatisfaction, and she does not like the sense of her own wretchedness which increasingly assails her. Ganse realizes that she would like a total release from her hated existence, but warns her that this complete deliverance she so earnestly desires, simply cannot be achieved. All she can expect, he tells her, is a certain oubli, or euphoric forgetfulness of the difficulties in question:

"Et personne, d'ailleurs, ne réussit à se délivrer de soi-même. Des blagues. On peut espérer l'oubli. Et encore! Car l'oubli, voyez-vous, ça ne se trouve que dans le sommeil ou la débauche."

(G.1, 922)

Simone is forced to turn to this state of forgetfulness and comes to rely increasingly on drugs. For her, however, as opposed to other weaker characters, drugs can also provide a strange source of strength,
She does not want to forget herself completely. She does want escape from an existence which is fundamentally unhappy one, but in her new existence, which she herself is trying to fashion, she wishes to retain the sense of her own separate identity.

It was precisely because she was beginning to forget herself, to doubt her own existence, that she took Olivier de Mainville as her lover:

"Avant de te connaître, je ne me sentais plus vivre. Ne plus se sentir vivre, c'est la seule chose qui m'accable! Et c'est sans remède, car je ne suis pas de celles qui tuent! ... Hé bien! sache-le: je n'ai jamais aimé personne d'amour. Ni mon cœur ni mes sens, nulle force au monde ne m'arrachera à moi-même."

(GE, I, 96.)

Ganse's literary creations, at first a new and interesting field, finally begin to suffocate her, that is, they begin to stifle and to threaten her existence as an individual:

"Vous m'avez remplie de vos créatures, j'étouffe. Oui, j'étouffe réellement. Que je tarde encore à redevenir moi-même, et je ne pourrai jamais plus."

(GE, I, 921)

It is to obtain vengeance against them, and against Ganse, that she decides that she, personally, will act out the conclusion to the novel, Evangeline, rather than let the novel and its characters suffocate her. She does want this fundamental escape, (which in more objective terms amounts to man's much-desired release from wretchedness after the Fall), but into her new existence she wishes to take her own finite personality. Unlike Pascal's aristocrats aiming to forget the problems of life through their various activities, Simone Alfieri grapples with hers and tries to conquer them.
L'abbé Cénabre, too, although trying to escape the initial misery and humiliation of his childhood, has not merely camouflaged his disappointment, as do others such as the villagers of Ambricourt, or the male members of the family of the late Mouchette (her father and brothers, for example, rely on perpetual drunkenness). Cénabre's escapism, like that of Simone, requires more personal effort than that of Mouchette's family. Like those of Simone, also, his notions of effective release are far more actively egoistical. He totally re-directs his personality, and by hard study and considerable sacrifice, "develops" himself into a famous writer and hagiographer. Admittedly, this is an attempt at an escape from an initial sense of misery, but it is an attempt at a more profound sort of escape than divertissement would ever be able to provide.

Louis Dufrety also "refashions" himself into another personality, or, at least he tries to do this. At the time of his meeting with the curé d'Ambricourt, towards the end of the novel, he is attempting to achieve several goals. He wishes to be a successful businessman, a celebrated intellectual, and he glories in the fact that he now earns his own living, and that this same living to some extent involves the manipulation and the management of other human beings. (2)

Earlier in the novel, the curé d'Ambricourt had mentioned that his fellow seminarian was very nervous and also very sensitive (qualities that he himself possesses in his social relationships rather than in his spiritual life). This could suggest that Dufrety may perhaps have perceived the rigours and hardships of the sacerdotal mission, and then quite simply surrendered; alternatively, it could imply that this same nervousness and this
sensitivity, could, if self-orientated, provide the basis for a life of egoistical escapism, rather militant in nature and even cruel.

The child, Steeny, who often courts comparison with Simone, Cénabre, and Dufrêty, is also the victim of an elementary form of these same tendencies. He, too, is escaping from his mediocre, and to some extent, uninspiring childhood, and is forging a new existence for himself, a world in which Steeny is powerful and dominant. Already he is engaging in a form of escapism sanctioned by his own intelligence.

In addition to Steeny, three of the mediocre priests, l'abbé Sabiroux, the doyen de Blangermont, and Mgr. Espelette, also furnish examples of "total diversion" rather than of divertissement. Somewhat in the manner of Louis Dufrêty, they escape the full measure of their caserdenial duties. Unlike him, they do not leave the priesthood, nor do they even neglect all their obligations. In addition, their powers of resolution and their egoism are not as forceful as those of Cénabre or of Simone Alfieri, but their conduct nevertheless furnishes examples of this same instinct.

Forces of positive egoism demand, direct and govern any form of escapism. Mgr. Espelette, for example, wishes to be considered a modern man, in order not to be rejected by his colleagues in the literary field, and l'abbé Sabiroux - "le futur chanoine" - desires promotion in the hierarchy of the Church he serves, and at least recognition from, if not the regard of the celebrated author and man of the world, Saint-Marin.

The doyen de Blangermont also desires a form of personal acceptance from people other than his immediate colleagues in
the priesthood. His emphasis on, and his interest in
money matters are due at least partly, to a desire to gain
the approval of the propertied middle-classes.\(^7\) He does
have a talent for financial management, and, through enriching
the Church he serves, he can gain a certain amount of respect
in his own mind and in the eyes of the middle-classes, with
he so much admires.

Malorthy, the father of the first Mouchette, is a
member of this class, and he too has some ability in economic
affairs. Money and social position are his gods, and,
compared with his aristocratic neighbour, the marquis de
Cadignan, with whom he shares the attributes of pride and
egoism, he is more active in his attempted escape from any
feelings of wretchedness and insignificance he might otherwise
have. In Malorthy's case, wretchedness would mean economic
poverty, powerlessness over other human beings, and social
unimportance. He has worked tirelessly to try and avoid
these misfortunes, unlike Cadignan, who just listlessly tries to
ignore his difficulties.

Cadignan is bankrupt, Malorthy is successful. Both
are selfish and both live on the surface of their personalities,\(^8\)
a surface which is egoistical. The only difference between the
two men concerns personal effort and ambition. Malorthy's is
greater.

Dr. Gallet too, is striving for personal advancement and
he also is heavily satirized. He is said to have come from the
"paradis perdu" of bourgeois comfort and complacency and now to
be struggling on "earth", (a small village) as an advocate and
zealous missionary of liberal ideas. His activism and his
altruism, however, are almost non-existent, but both his mission
and his avoidance of it are egoistical:
"Des hauteurs où son destin l'a placé, il contemple encore avec mélancolie le paradis perdu de la vie bourgeoise, sa petite ville obscure, et le salon familial de reps vert où son enfant s'est enflé. Il croit honteusement mettre en péril l'ordre social et la propriété, il se déplore et, se taisant ou s'abstenant toujours, il espère ainsi prolonger leur chère agonie."

_{Œ, I, 60}_

As has previously been shown, the selfishness of these three men combines to harm the first Mouchette. It is their mediocre existence she wishes to flee, not that she wants the comforting effects of divertissement desired and practised by her lover, Cadignan; Mouchette wants more than this state could ever give her. In her search for authentic values she wishes to retain her own particular personality and the sense of her own existence; and in this, her predicament is somewhat similar to that of Simone Alfieri. Like Simone also, she is attempting to create a new and powerful self. In one way she does lie to herself, but lying for her is not a deliberately adopted way of life, as is the case with Ganse's secretary. Mouchette is the victim of the lies of others, and also of her own self-centredness. The latter factor will prevent any beneficial submission—a submission which could lead to the attainment of this all-important state of contentment towards which she is unconsciously fleeing.

The writer, Ganse, seems best to express the nature of the flight desired by some of the more forceful characters in Bernanos' novels. To provide himself with a new exterior, "faire (9) peau neuve" is what he claims that he would like to do. This phrase contains all the elements of this entire tendency evident in these people. They wish to change merely the external image, "peau", while the essential faulty self retains its identity and basic characteristics. This is in accordance with man's basic tendency towards falsehood and disguise described by Pascal.
Again it is a more active notion than divertissement.

Ganse himself did, at one stage in his life, want to achieve escape from the fundamental miseries of human existence, and, he did want to provide his life with some basis, some authentic values and meaning. Like several nineteenth and twentieth century French novelists, he thought that he could achieve this through a literary career. As he tells Simone, however, literature has not been able to provide this "total diversion" — it has merely allowed him to probe his existing personality and to realize its utter emptiness:

"Et quand vous parlez de vous délivrer par des livres, vous me faites rire, ma petite, la littérature n'a jamais délivré personne. Et personne, d'ailleurs, ne réussit à se délivrer de soi-même."

(G8, I, 921-2)

It is in this same paragraph that he tells her about the quality of his state of forgetfulness. This state of forgetfulness is more akin to Pascalian divertissement than is the deliverance sought by Simone; this, of course, involves a total reshaping of the personality.

The fundamental cause and the motivation for this re-fashioning of the personality is, naturally enough, the pride of the person in question — this same pride which is described by Pascal as a counterweight to all miseries. It will not allow man to remain for too long in a state of rest, because he then feels a sense of wretchedness and the nullity of his whole existence:

"Ennui, — Rien n'est si insupportable à l'homme que d'être dans un plein repos, sans passions, sans affaire, sans divertissement, sans application. Il sent alors son mort, son abandon, son insuffisance, sa dépendance, son impuissance, son vide. Incontinent il sortira du fond de son âme l'ennui, la noirceur, la tristesse, le chagrin, le dépit, le désespoir."

(B, 131, p.388)
Pride can then be cited as a major operative factor in both "total diversion", and, to some extent in divertissement also. Sloth, however, claimed by Pascal to be the second major source of human error, likewise plays a considerable part in forcing man to seek diversions, of a more minor sort perhaps:

"...les deux sources de nos péchés sont l'orgueil et la paresse."

(Bk 4, p. 556)

A fundamental laziness or spiritual lethargy can be detected in some of Bernanos' characters. Most mediocre priests, for example, actively seek their own advancement but some of those described in JCC, more particularly those listening to the lecture on the Reformation, are just passively ignoring their duties. They seek escape by extending their own intellects, or, by pretending to do this.

In the same way, l'abbé Chapdelaine,\(^\text{(11)}\) when confronted by Donissan, does not try to make personal capital out of the saintly priest (as does Saboroux), he simply does not try to understand him. These priests, especially those at the lecture on the Reformation,\(^\text{(12)}\) do seem to provide examples of what amounts to Pascalian divertissement. They do not, however, furnish the best example to be found in Bernanos' novels; this is provided by the marquis de Cadignan.

The reactions of the latter to the world around him are to a large extent negative or, at least passive. He, and others like him, such as the comte d'Ambricourt, who simply do not think about their difficulties, much less try and solve them, gain almost no sympathy from the author himself. He despises their "littleness" and does not treat their problems in any great depth. People like Cénabre and Simone Alfieri, on the other hand, are the focus of considerable interest, and, in some ways, they are accorded great sympathy. Revolt, for Bernanos, however base the motivation,
can eventually become a positive force. Donissan explains what amounts to this to the first Mouchette:

"Mais, quand l'esprit de révolte était en vous, j'ai vu le nom de Dieu écrit dans votre cœur."

(OE, I, 197)

Her persistent effort, and, to some extent, her own suffering, bring about an eventual redemption through the agency of Donissan himself.

In the same way, there is also considerable authorial sympathy for such people as Cénabre, Simone Alfieri, perhaps for the comtesse d'Ambricourt, and definitely for her daughter, Chantal. All these characters do make an effort to achieve some form of fulfilment, and, although their egotism is to be condemned, their capacity for positive action is more than praiseworthy. It is because of this that the reader is led to assume that they would ultimately have been saved. Other characters are merely pitied and dismissed, whereas some, like Cadignan are openly ridiculed.

Like Pascal's examples of miserable, suffering humanity, the marquis is described, somewhat ironically perhaps, as a dispossessed king. This "roi sans royaume", rather like the unhappy, pleasure-seeking aristocrats of Pascal's own time, seeks his consolation in hunting and in various love-affairs. Appropriately enough, he wishes to restore the sport of falconry to its former glory - an ideal sport for a man like Cadignan, falconry would not require too much personal effort, agreeing admirably with his laziness and his all-pervading nonchalance:

"il nourrissait encore l'ambition de restaurer en France le sport oublié de la chasse au vol."

(OE, I, 60)
He continues to have those dreams and, meanwhile, loses his fortune, has to sell his château, and gradually declines in status and personal wealth.

Hunting is also the favourite sport of another decaying aristocrat, the comte d'Ambricourt, and apart from his laziness and nonchalance, he is similar to Cadignan in many other ways. Both men, in fact, seem to fit the description of unhappy people given by Pascal - people who come to terms with reality only by diverting themselves:

"De là vient que le jeu et la conversation des femmes, la guerre, les grands emplois sont si recherchés. Ce n'est pas qu'il y ait en effet du bonheur, ni qu'on s'imagine que la vraie béatitude soit d'avoir l'argent qu'on peut gagner au jeu, ou dans la lievre qu'on court: on n'en voudrait pas s'il était offert. Ce n'est pas cet usage mol et paisible, et qui nous laisse penser à notre malheureuse condition, qu'on recherche, ni les dangers de la guerre, ni la peine des emplois, mais c'est le traces qui nous détourent d'y penser et nous divertit."

(B, 139, p. 391)

Bernanos' characters seek escapism not only in agreeable activities, but also through drugs. The effect is similar to that of divertissement, but again, it is not quite this. Most of the particular people in question are already victims of "total diversion" and are fashioning for themselves personalities based on this egoistical desire for self-importance. Their present way of life, therefore, is already an attempt at escape, and is a form of self-delusion.

Even the most actively egoistical in some cases resort to drugs. Simone Alfieri again provides the most obvious example. Her "false self" has no lasting qualities, and it is against the annihilating effects that she has to anaesthetize herself.
In taking drugs she is therefore "two selves" removed from her original personality, and she later comes to realize the truth of Ganse's statement - that she could not be completely delivered from a distasteful existence, she had to rely on a means of making herself forget.

On the journey she makes in order to kill Olivier's aunt, her own powerlessness and the futility of her existence begin to overwhelm her. Twice she takes drugs, once in the café, and again in a shed beside the road. On both occasions she does, in some measure, obtain the necessary strength and evasion she seeks, but even the comfort of this is beginning to be less effective. The futility of life begins to assail her, and partly destroys her first attempt, but the later administration is more successful:

"Ils tremblèrent encore longtemps, (ses doigts) jusqu'à ce que les millions de cellules avides fussent de nouveau imprégnées, imbibées du défectable poison. À ce moment, elle n'eut pas besoin de fermer les yeux, elle crut sentir comme d'habitude son regard se retourner lentement vers cet univers intérieur chaque fois exploré, conquis; et chaque fois toujours aussi mystérieux, toujours nouveau. Il semblait alors que le monde réel se parvint à sa conscience qu'au travers d'une fente étroite, semblable à celles qui laissent passer une seule raie de lumière par une personne close. L'image de gros nuages livides roulant dans le ciel, et la plainte de plus en plus aiguë du vent continuaient d'accompagner son rêve."

(Œ, I,1005-4)

Simone now has to escape even her fabricated self, and she is not the only Bernanosian character who is forced to do this. L'abbé Cénabre is forced to take similar action. After his "night of crisis", when he realizes that he has lost his faith, he runs away on a journey to Germany, hoping thereby to forget, if not to dispose of his problems.
He does not share with Simone the habit of taking drugs, but many other characters in these novels are forced to do this, in order to conceal a wretched existence. It seems to be especially prevalent among members of the medical profession. Dr. Lipotte, for example, fears death, somewhat like the man described by Pascal, and, in order to force himself not to think about this, he resorts to drugs, which, for a time at least, can maintain for him his feelings of importance and confidence.

Another drug-taking doctor is Laville in JCC. In one way he is perhaps an admirable character, with traces of a similar, but by no means as deep a love for humanity as that possessed by Dr. Delbende. The younger doctor, nevertheless, is also possessed by a profound Ouine-like curiosity and desire for knowledge, but his is in the field of medical science, rather than human psychology. As is the case with Ouine, however, Laville's sterile curiosity reveals the emptiness of any form of world in which God is either ignored, has his rightful place usurped, or has his existence denied. Like Delbende, Laville cannot surrender and place his trust in God; his reason will not permit this. Unlike Delbende, however, he does not unflinchingly bear his disappointment, he takes drugs to conceal this. He speaks to the curé d'Ambricourt of the forgetfulness he can thereby obtain, but this form of escapism is not entirely selfish, as it helps him in some way to continue to treat his patients, even though he expects to die of cancer in less than six months.

These men, with their capacity for personal effort are very different from Michelle, the mother of Steeny. She refuses to think about her difficulties and manages very successfully to
disguise them. Her selfishness is comparable even to that of Simone Alfieri, but her powers of resolution definitely are not. She does not even take drugs to camouflage her difficulties, and her only activity consists in her achievement of total inactivity and an accompanying imperviousness. Complete resignation and a spirit of gentleness constitute her divertissement. Considerable vigilance is required, however, to maintain this state of perpetual quiescence:

"Pour tant de pauvres diables, la douceur n'est qu'absence, absence de malice ou de malignité, qualité négative, abstraction pure. Au lieu que la sienne a fait ses preuves, prudente en ses desseins, hardie à prendre, vigilante à garder. Comment ne pas l'imaginer sous les espèces d'un animal familier? Entre elle et la vie, le rongeur industrieux multiplie ses digues, fouille, creuse, déblaie, surveille jour et nuit le niveau de l'eau perfide. Douceur, douceur, douceur." (Œ, I, 1351-2)

One could, in a spirit of irony perhaps, compare Michelle with the men described by Pascal — men seeking a state of rest, but meanwhile finding consolation in the rest-seeking activity:

"Ils ont un instinct secret qui les porte à chercher le divertissement et l'occupation au dehors, qui vient du ressentiment de leurs misères continues; et ils ont un autre instinct secret, qui reste de la grandeur de notre première nature, qui leur fait connaître que le bonheur n'est en effet que dans le repos, et non pas dans le tumulte; et de ces deux instincts contraires, il se forme en eux un projet confus, qui se cache à leur vue dans le fond de leur âme, qui les porte à tendre au repos par l'agitation, et à se figurer toujours que la satisfaction qu'ils n'ont point leur arrivera, si, en surmontant quelques difficultés qu'ils envisagent, ils peuvent s'ouvrir par là la porte au repos."

(Œ, 139, p.393-4)

In Michelle's case, however, it is perhaps true to say that the all-important peace is consciously more desirable than the activity needed to obtain it. Unlike the men described in
Pascal's Pensées, she knows the rest she seeks, and admittedly it is not to be equated with the celestial calm or heavenly fulfilment of which Pascal is speaking. Michelle actually finds it tiresome to have to actively sustain her state of repose. Unknown to her, however, it is the activity directed towards the attainment of a state of quiescence, which keeps her alive, and also prevents her from dealing with her son, Steeny, and helping him with his problems. She is simply too busy maintaining her own state of mental serenity to worry about her son.

For Michelle, then, these walls (or dykes in this case), which she is building, are able to provide her with this feeling of blissful unawareness until she finally falls into the abyss (mentioned by Pascal), or, until she allows her son to do so:

"Nous couronç sans souci dans le précipice, après que nous avons mis quelque chose devant nous pour nous empêcher de le voir."

(B, 183, p. 412)

For many people, however, this "wall" they build begins to crumble; their self-deception just ceases to be effective. This is true for Simone Alfieri and also for Ganse, but more notably for the maire de Fenouille, and for the celebrated writer, Saint-Marin.

Arsène, the maire de Fenouille, lived mainly for pleasure during his early, and much of his middle life. A brewer, (like Malorthoy), he placed considerable emphasis on money and social position, but now, as a man over sixty, his previous amusements and pastimes have ceased to interest him. He no longer cares for women, or for anything connected with his past life. He himself feels that the life he has led has somehow been unreal. He tries to explain this to his wife:
"Mais j'étais fait pour être autre chose que je suis, comprends-tu - je ne sais quoi... tiens! une truite dans l'eau du moulin, quelque chose de frais, de pur... Et même l'eau... pour moi, ben, il n'y a pas d'eau pure."

(Œ, I, 143?)

His obsession with clean water and with washing are also noteworthy in this particular context. He is, in fact, trying to purify himself and to wash away the guilt accumulated during a life of falsehood. His anguish increases, and, at the funeral of the little cowherd, he attempts a public confession in the cemetery. Later, however, he refuses to confess his sins to the priest, as he now wishes only to humiliate himself.

As he himself knows, or comes to realize, his mistake was to lose himself in too much pleasure as a young man, and now this fabricated self, formed for the sake of his own pride and enjoyment, is proving its utter emptiness and torturing him in the process:

"Écoute, Malvina" (he says to his wife) "on ne sait pas ce que c'est, la rigolade. Tu jouis d'abord de la rigolade, bon! Et puis un jour, c'est la rigolade qui jouit de toi. De chat, te voilà devenu souris, tu te rends compte?"

(Œ, I, 1439)

He was, in some measure, the victim of divertissement in the true Pascalian sense, as he did spend much of his life seeking consolation outside himself;

"...n'est-ce pas être heureux, que de pouvoir être réjoui par le divertissement? - Non; car il vient d'ailleurs et de dehors; et ainsi il est dépendant, et partant, sujet à être troublé par mille accidents, qui font les afflictions inévitables."

(P, 170, p.407)
Any diversion from the outside is certainly not to be trusted according to the above statement, and Bernanos, it seems, would agree; but for him, what is also to be feared and distrusted is the total re-fashioning of the personality from within, which is what many characters, including Arsène, have tried to achieve. In all his novels he is showing that attempts at this can prove extremely damaging to the person in question, just as Pascal, in some of his Pensées, emphasizes the human weakness inherent in the tendency. (15)

For the latter, however, the very fact that a person turns to various forms of divertissement is a certain indication of fundamental unhappiness:

"Si notre condition était véritablement heureuse, il ne nous faudrait pas divertir d'y penser pour nous rendre heureux."

(B,165,p.405)

Bernanos, on the other hand, does not so much stress the fact that divertissement, or "total diversion" is a proof of unhappiness, although this is undoubtedly very important for him, (as shall be shown in the next chapter). Instead, the emphasis in his novels seems to be more on the ineffectiveness and the futility of the actual means of attempted escape. Many characters, such as Arsène, come to a realization of this futility, as does Saint-Marin, the famous author in Sous le Soleil de Satan.

The latter has always been afraid of death, and this fear assails him more frequently as he grows older. His whole life has been marked by lies and fabrication. In his literary efforts, this master of irony has played the problem of human existence as though it were a toy. For this he is severely castigated and satirized. As far as his charity will allow, Bernanos detests men who form "du problème de l'être un divertissement d'honnêtes gens." (16)
Saint-Marin knows that it is not from his own world (a self-orientated and largely self-made one), that he would seek his final solace, and not in his own world would he place his final hope. He would fling himself on his knees in the parish Church of his childhood:

"Si j'avais à me mettre à genoux, j'irais encore tout droit à ma vieille paroisse de Saint-Sulpice, on ne me verrait pas faire des grimaces aux pieds de Pallas-Athéné, comme un professeur ivre!"

He continues:

"Qui jouit craint la mort. Autant s'essayer à la regarder en face que se distraire aux bouquins des philosophes, ainsi qu'un patient chez le dentiste feuillette les journaux illustrés. [.....] Au fond, nous sommes dupes, l'abbé, repics et capots!"

(Œ, I, 291-2)

He realizes the utter emptiness of his life, and for the first time perhaps, he confesses it. In his admission that a life of pleasure is symptomatic of a fear of death, his sentiments express a remarkable similarity to those expressed by Pascal. (17) Saint-Marin, however, does not surrender himself; his egoism will not allow him to do this. He continues to "brazen it out with God" ("faire le brave contre Dieu"), as Pascal would say. (18)

In the same section from which this quotation comes, there are many other statements which could aptly describe the spirit of Saint-Marin in all his confidence and sophistication:

"Or, quel avantage y a-t-il pour nous à oyer dire à un homme qu'il a donc secoué le joug, qu'il ne croit pas qu'il y ait un Dieu qui veille sur ses actions, qu'il se considère comme seul maître de sa conduite, et qu'il ne pense en rendre compte qu'à soi-même? Pensez-vous qu'il nous ait porté par là à avoir désormais bien de la confiance en lui et en attendre des consolations, des conseils et des secours dans tous les besoins de la vie? Frémiennent-ils nous avoir bien réjoui, de nous dire qu'ils tiennent que notre âme n'est qu'un peu de vent et de fumée, et encore de nous le dire d'un ton de voix rieur et content? Est-ce donc une chose à dire gaîment? et n'est-ce pas une chose à dire tristement, au contraire, comme la chose du monde la plus triste?" (8, 134, p. 421:2)
He too had this confidence, this triumphant feeling of self-acquired independence, and he also thought that in all his actions he was responsible to no-one but himself. He does not have this same bias towards pure science but he did claim to be a "rationalist",\(^{(19)}\) or is described as such. Above all else, however, he proclaimed his truths in a spirit of proud flippancy, and in a tone of detached personal satisfaction, which is what Bernanos detested most of all.

Man should not challenge God, claim both authors, nor should one try to do without his help by developing a self-sufficient personality. Neither this "total diversion" (practised by Bernanos' characters), nor the divertissement described by Pascal, can provide the ultimate deliverance that man seeks. Anything based on notions and desires which are fundamentally egoistical will prove totally ineffective.

In order to reach God, where man's true happiness lies, individual interests must not be advanced, nor must the human intellect be deluded in any way, especially where its own powers are concerned. Man must face the truth about himself and perform his allotted part. This "hated self" must not be camouflaged in any way -- it must be transcended; and exactly how these two authors think that this should be, and can be done, will be the subject of the second part of this study.
Notes

2. OE, I, 1247. "... manier les hommes" are the actual words used.
3. Ibid., 1057.
4. See chapter 1, p. 16
5. See chapter 2, p.35
8. This tendency and its implications are described more fully in JCC. "Je crois, je suis sûr que beaucoup d'hommes n'engagent jamais leur être, leur sincérité profonde. Ils vivent à la surface d'eux-mêmes, et le sol humain est si riche que cette mince couche superficielle donne l'illusion d'une véritable destinée." (OE, I, 1115). For further mention of this aspect see chapter 6, p.97
10. See B.405, p.510. Quoted chapter 1, p.18
11. See OE, I, 156.
12. Ibid., 1054.
13. Her first self would have been her original personality, the one which she was trying to escape through "total diversion". The second would have been the one provided by the latter tendency. In taking drugs, she in some ways enters a third personality.
14. "Je lui demande ce que vous demandez probablement à la prière, l'oubli." (OE, I, 1236). The curé, of course, denies this, saying that from prayer he obtains strength ("force") rather than forgetfulness.
16. OE, I, 255. This statement refers in fact to l'abbé Sabiroux but could, it seems, be applicable to Saint-Marin also. Guy Gaucher, op.cit., p.7, uses it in reference to all men of letters.
17. It is hard to find a Pensée which expresses these sentiments verbatim but B.168, p.406 (quoted p.45) expresses a similar intention as that implied by Saint-Marin's statement and any other Pensée dealing with divertissement, such as B.131, B.135, B.139, B.140 and B.165, would also seem to lend ample support to the opinion.
18. B.194, p.422.

19. This is not the precise term Saint-Marin himself uses. He calls himself "le dernier des Grecs" (Œ, I, 281). Colin Nettelbeck, however, in his work, Les Personnages de Berneois romancier (Paris, 1970), p.214, interprets the statement in this way, "Il se dit rationaliste - 'le dernier des Grecs'."
PART II

GOD IN RELATION TO ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM
CHAPTER 4: THE THEME OF SELF-HATRED

Just how these harmful attributes of the human ego should be and can be transcended, is given considerable emphasis by both writers. At times in his Pensées, Pascal openly advocates a policy of self-hatred, and, in this, his views may at first glance seem diametrically opposed to those of Bernanos. The latter, as shall be shown, condemns this notion as harmful and destructive.

For this reason, the reader who finds in Pascal's works that the nature of man is wholly animal, or, that he advocates love of God and hatred of self alone, is apt to be misled concerning the totality of his argument. These statements may appear extreme and uncompromising, when considered in isolation, but one could attribute their stringent pessimism to the vagaries of the current mood, or concede that such severity would have to be applied at a certain stage in the argument. One more detailed examination, however, Pascal's position on human nature is closer to that of Bernanos than the above statements would seem to indicate.

Rather than the actual self, it is self-love or amour-propre which must be hated:

"Qui ne hait en soi son amour-propre, et cet instinct qui le porte à se faire Dieu, est bien aveuglé." (B.492, p.555)

In other words, man must hate his egoism and his egocentricity. Bernanos also singles out self-love as a potentially dangerous attribute of the human personality, and, in describing one of the religious experiences of Chantal de Clergerie, he pointedly states that she did not allow this amour-propre to invade her:
Like Pascal, Bernanos sees this self-love as potentially injurious to the human being.

Unlike Chantal, however, many of Bernanos' other characters are not devoid of self-love and self-assertion. Men like Cadignan, Gallet and Malorthy wish to please only themselves, and the self-assertive pride of the first Mouchette as preventing her from gaining release from her misery. Donissan does not tell her to hate herself, as Pascal sometimes advises his readers, but he does tell her that this role she has adopted, and this false personality that she has fabricated in her systematic revolt, are what are preventing her from reaching the fulfillment she would instinctively like to achieve. He tells her she will find freedom only in God and denies her her individuality:

"Pas plus qu'en ce moment-ci votre volonté n'était libre. Vous êtes comme un jouet, vous êtes comme la petite balle d'un enfant, entre les mains de Satan."  

In making Donissan deny Mouchette the total responsibility for her crime, Bernanos reveals a different opinion on the nature of the fabricated self from that held by Pascal. For the latter, this false personality is still acknowledged as a part of the human being himself, even though an evil part. In Bernanos' view, however, the directive forces of the human personality have been usurped, and it is Satan who has taken control. Just as the first Mouchette is told that she is merely a plaything of Satan, Chantal in JCC is asked by the curé d'Ambricourt, to pray in the following way:
"Mon Dieu, je ne me sens capable en ce moment que de vous offenser, mais ce n'est pas moi qui vous offense, c'est ce démon que j'ai dans le coeur." (W, I, 1133)

It is not the self which must be hated, but an inimical force which has become predominant and been able to take control. In terms of concrete reality, this force of evil assumes the form of what it is directing, that is, the form of a harmful, self-assertive ego, and, in most cases, the "casting-out of the demon" is closely integrated with the shedding of this same ego.

Simone Alfieri's only hope for deliverance lies in the surrender of her life of hypocrisy and deceit; the same is true of Saint Marin and Cénabre. As the countess prays, in JCC, she simultaneously casts Satan out of herself, as she destroys her obsessive egoistical hatred. In her, as in others, Satan has taken possession through her false personality and, if anything, it is Satan that she must hate, not herself, as she comes to love others.

Chantal de Clergerie performs a similar function to that of the two priests, Donissan and d'Ambricourt, as she forces her grandmother to surrender her bunch of household keys. These keys, representing the power for domination and the sense of importance of the old lady, are preventing her from gaining any peace or cure:

"Ce sont vos clefs qui vous empêchent de dormir. Chacune d'elles est un petit démon, et chacun de ces petits démons est, à lui seul, plus lourd qu'une montagne. Avec un poids pareil, ma pauvre maman, quand les anges s'y mettraient tous à la fois, ils n'arriveraient pas à vous trainer jusqu'en paradis." (W, I, 661)

Again it is an inimical force which is seen to have taken possession of Mme de Clergerie, as is the case with other characters. She herself must nevertheless strive to drive out these demons, and
here Bernanos, like Pascal, is emphasizing the role of the person himself in achieving salvation. Admittedly it is a limited role, which in most people requires co-operation rather than initiative, but the part played by the person himself is nevertheless significant.

All these roles are, in a sense, the shedding of a moi haïssable, or, what amounts to this. The effects of the ego of Chantal's grandmother can be just as damaging as those of the Pascalian moi described in the following quotation:

"En un mot, le moi a deux qualités: il est injuste en soi, en ce qu'il se fait centre du tout; il est inconmode aux autres, en ce qu'il les veut asservir: car chaque moi est l'ennemi et voudrait être le tyran de tous les autres." (B.457, p.542)

The essential difference lies in the fact that, according to Bernanos, the moi has not of itself caused all the trouble, it has been possessed by a hostile force.

Nevertheless, whatever the motivation of this false self, both authors seem to agree that it must be surrendered if the individual in question is to reach God. Bernanos, however, never advocates self-hatred as such in order to achieve this. Self-hatred, according to him, is the tragic cause of much human misery. This hatred, which is deep-rooted, springs from man's basic disappointment and despair even, at his Fall - a Fall which he can never pardon:

"Il y a dans l'homme une haine secrète, incompréhensible, non seulement de ses semblables, mais de lui-même. On peut bien donner à ce sentiment mystérieux l'origine ou l'explication qu'on voudra, mais il faut lui en donner une. Pour nous, chrétiens, nous croyons que cette haine reflète une autre haine, mille fois plus profonde et plus lucide - celle de l'Esprit indicible qui fut le plus rayonnant des astres de l'abîme, et qui ne nous pardonnera jamais sa chute immense." (5)
As a result, many characters, such as Simone Alfieri, punish themselves almost to the point of destruction.

Self-hatred is connected with divertissement and with "total diversion," through the life of deceit, but it is, in a sense, even deeper:

"Pour Bernanos, la haine de soi est la preuve la plus évidente du désespoir."

(Œ[I,1759, note to p 97)

It provides mankind with an excuse for perpetual self-punishment (somewhat akin to self-flagellation on Donissan's part), and revolt and "total diversion" are only symptoms of this same tendency.

In the case of Simone Alfieri, this is made quite clear:

"La seule haine qu'elle est vraiment connue, éprouvée, consommée jusqu'à la lie, c'était la haine de soi.[... ] Sa révolte prétendue contre la société - qui avait trompé le vrai Ganse après tant d'autres - n'était encore qu'une des formes de cette haine."

(Œ[I,1020)

Her lover, Olivier, had already explained this to her, and had in part given her a reason for this self-hatred. His explanation is in Christian terms:

"Vous méprisiez votre corps parce qu'il est l'instrument du péché."

(Œ[I,969)

It is not until later that she herself comes to a full realisation of this.

Génabre also hates himself, and his refusal to surrender to God can therefore be interpreted as a desire for self-inflicted punishment. Like Simone, he too has hated himself from the time that he was a small child.(6) Even the First Mouchette comes to realize that she too harbours a basic self-hatred, and speaks of this to her lover, Gallet.(7)
Self-hatred causes also the misery of Fiodor, the Satanic chauffeur. Chantal de Clergerie is unable to help him while he is still possessed by a deep loathing of his own soul. At this stage Fiodor cannot surrender; he hates himself too much.

The maire de Fenouilles is in a similar situation; it is his self-hatred which makes his refuse to confess to the priest. The latter confronts him with this:

"Hélas! Serez-vous toujours ainsi l'ennemi de vous-même? Il n'est pas permis de se haïr."  

(Œ, I, 1517)

As in the case of Simone, this hatred has caused him to embark on a life of pleasure and on a life of lies. The escapism that this type of existence provided has now left him, but the self-hatred remains, and is now even more powerful and destructive.

Self-hatred then provides the motivation for the life of deceit in many of Bernanos' characters. Pride may be acknowledged as the cause of man's Fall but the resulting self-hatred sets in motion the punishment which follows. Pride aids and abets this and helps to sustain any fabricated self.

Pascal's views are not synonymous with those of Bernanos, but in the section on amour-propre his ideas in some respects at least, do appear to have a certain similarity. In common with the twentieth century novelist, for example, he agrees that it is hatred and disgust of the existing self which motivates man to find escape through a life of falsehood, but, what man wishes to achieve through this dissimulation is not self-punishment. According to Pascal, man does this simply to obtain the goodwill and admiration of others.
Just as Bernanos in his novels never says that the self, meaning that the social, outer, fabricated self is hateful, as does Pascal, the latter never actually cites a deep-rooted, Bernanosian-like self-hatred as an important cause of much human misery. In his section on *amour-propre*, it is the truth about himself, not the actual self, that Pascal claims man now begins to hate:

"... il (l'homme) veut être l'objet de l'amour et de l'estime des hommes, et il voit que ses défauts ne méritent que leur aversion et leur mépris. Cet embarras où il se trouve produit en lui la plus injuste et la plus criminelle passion qu'il soit possible de s'imager; car il conçoit une haine mortelle contre cette vérité qui le reprend, et qui le convainc de ses défauts.

(8.100, p.376)

He goes on to say that it is the flight from this hated self and the attempt to abandon it which cause the life of deceit. The flight and subsequent misery are not themselves a perverted form of punishment, as is Bernanos' opinion.

Both, however, would agree that this type of hatred or this self-doubt, whatever its motivation, is somehow immoral, as it implies a certain lack of confidence in God, who would be prepared to accept the human being, however miserable and wretched he may be. Pascal challenges man's right to impose limits on God's power and mercy:

"Car je voudrais savoir d'où cet animal, qui se reconnaît si faible, a le droit de mesurer la miséricorde de Dieu, et d'y mettre les bornes que sa fantaisie lui suggère. Il sait si peu ce que c'est que Dieu, qu'il ne sait pas ce qu'il est lui-même; et, tout trouble de la vue de son propre état, il ose dire que Dieu ne le peut pas rendre capable de sa communication."

(8.439, p.525)
Donissan is of course guilty of this anticipation of God's judgement. In this imbalanced attitude which forces him to rely too much on himself, he comes to doubt God's willingness to help him. He is even prepared to reject God's advances because of his own imagined unworthiness:

"Je ne veux pas de la gloire! Je ne veux pas de la joie! Je ne veux même plus de l'espoirance! Qu'ai-je à donner? Que me reste-t-il? Cette espoérance seule. Retire-la-moi. Prends-la! Si je le pouvais, sans te haïr, je t'abandonnerais mon salut, je me damnerais pour ces âmes que tu m'as confiées par dérision, moi, misérable!"

(Œ, I, 154-5)

He shares this fault with the curé d'Ambricourt, but the latter comes to realize its implications. When he speaks of self-doubt being a subtle form of pride, his position is somewhat similar to that adopted by Pascal:

"Le doute de soi n'est pas l'humilité, je crois même qu'il est parfois la forme la plus exaltée, presque délirante de l'orgueil, une sorte de férocité jalouse qui fait se retourner un malheureux contre lui-même, pour se dévorer. Le secret de l'enfer doit être là."

(Œ, I, 1222)

Again, as is the case with self-hatred, Bernanos stresses the harm self-doubt can cause the individual, whereas Pascal concentrates more on the pride of which this same self-doubt gives ample evidence. In this sentence, for instance, man is perhaps blamed for presumption rather than pitie on account of the harm this same presumption could cause:

"Car je voudrais savoir d'où cet animal, qui se reconnaît si faible, a le droit de mesurer la miséricorde de Dieu, et d'y mettre les bornes que sa fantaisie lui suggère."

(B.1430, p.525)
Bernanos takes considerable measures to prove just how harmful this deep-seated self-hatred can be. To counteract this tendency, he advocates a certain amount of the correct type of pride. "Soyez fière!" says the curé d'Ambricourt, to the governess Mlle Louise, who, in her humiliation and disappointment could easily fall prey to self-hatred and despair. Fièrè is the word he uses, and it is to be distinguished from the more destructive kind of pride. For this, orgueil is the term employed by both authors.

Even the later Mouchette does not die hating herself, although she is tempted to do so, and, for a time, is almost overcome by shame and disgust:

"Elle n'arrive plus à pleurer, elle a trop honte d'elle, de son mal, elle se hait trop."

(Œ, I, 1305)

It is not really herself she hates, it is this fundamental deception which has robbed her of her innocence:

"Ce n'est pas de sa faute qu'elle a honte, non! Elle hait sa déception fondamentale, la hideuse erreur de son âge, la sombre épreuve de son jeunesse, sa vraie jeunesse."

(Œ, I, 1305)

In other words, she comes to hate something connected with her, something which is, in essence, vile. (This, however, is not to be confused with the Pascalian notion of man's hatred of the vileness within him. These are not synonymous.) Although this is not Mouchette's final temptation to self-hatred, she finally does overcome all these desires. Through her suicide she comes to expect ultimate fulfilment in a better life, rather than annihilation in her shame.
Her death comes to be a gesture of hope and confidence, rather than one of shame and despair:

"Et aujourd'hui voilà qu'elle songeait à sa propre mort, le cœur serré non par l'angoisse, mais par l'émotion d'une découverte prodigieuse, l'imminente révélation d'un secret, ce même secret que lui avait refusé l'amour. Et, certes, l'idée qu'elle se faisait de cet événement mystérieux restait puerile, mais l'image qui la laissait la veille insensible, l'envirait maintenant d'une tendresse poignante. Ainsi un visage familier nous apparaît dans la lumière du désir, et nous savons tout à coup que depuis longtemps il nous était plus cher que la vie."

(Œ, L. 1339)

Man should have this hope and confidence, claims Bernanos, precisely because in God's plan for salvation he, too, has a part to play. The priest in Monsieur Quiné says this to his parishioners, who are no longer in a fit state to play this role. (15)

This is due, in a large measure, to the self-hatred and its attendant egoism which rules the lives of many of the parishioners.

Pascal, too, would give man a part to play in his own salvation, and repeatedly states, in his Pensées, that he must face the truth about himself, and recognize that good and bad co-exist in his nature. He does, however, use the term hatred of the self, but stresses that it is the vileness in man which must be hated. He seems to be dealing with an equivocal paradox.

"Que l'homme maintenant s'estime son prix. Qu'il s'aime, car il y a en lui une nature capable de bien; mais qu'il n'aime pas pour cela les bassesses qui y sont. Qu'il se méprise, parce que cette capacité est vide; mais qu'il ne méprise pas pour cela cette capacité naturelle. Qu'il se haïsse, qu'il s'aime: il a en lui la capacité de connaître la vérité et d'être heureux; mais il n'a point de vérité, ou constante, ou satisfaisante."

(B.423, p.516)
Man's vileness must not be stressed, and he must also be conscious of the fact that he is part of a greater whole. Pascal terms this greater whole a body. He speaks of a certain annihilation of the part within the body, and of its willingness to suffer for the sake of this same body.

If the separate member realized its dependence it would unhesitatingly submit:

"... avec quelle soumission se laisserait-il gouverner à la volonté qui régit le corps, jusqu'à consentir à être retranché s'il le faut! ou il perdrait sa qualité de membre; car il faut que tout membre veuille bien périr pour le corps, qui est le seul pour qui tout est."

(B, 476, P, 550)

Even though this Pensée does begin with the words, "Il faut n'aimer que Dieu et ne haïr que soi," it is not altogether irreconcilable with a statement Bernanos has placed in the diary of the curé d'Amboisieourt, a statement which begins with a condemnation of self-hatred (in Bernanosian terms):

"Il est plus facile que l'on croit de se haïr. La grâce est de s'oublier. Mais si tout orgueil était mort en nous, la grâce des grâces serait de s'aimer humblement soi-même, comme n'importe lequel des membres souffrants à Jésus-Christ."

(G, I, 1258)

As in statements made by Pascal, a complete lack of egoïsm is implied; the shedding of selfish tendencies is one of the major preoccupations of the two writers. Pascal, in his more direct approach advocates a policy of self-hatred, but hatred only of the vile tendencies in man. Like Bernanos, he wants man to recognize that God is, in a sense, present in each and every human being, and that this God, (inside as well as outside man) must be loved:
"Le bonheur[...] est en Dieu, et hors et dans nous."

(Bo, 465, p. 546) (17)

In making this statement, Pascal seems to agree with Bernanos who gives these words to the Prioress in Dialogues des Carmélites. This nun cautions against self-hatred, saying that it is very difficult to despise the self without also despising God:

"Il est très difficile de se mépriser sans offenser Dieu en nous."

(Or, I, 1601)

As in many of Pascal's Pensées, a deep and all-embracing hatred of the self is not advocated, but both writers, in their different ways do condemn any other types of self-centredness.

On the positive side, both would seem to favour a certain sense of submission, and also a certain pride - pride stemming from the fact that God himself is, in a special way, present within man.
Notes

1. See B.94, p.373.
2. See B.476, p.549.
3. Cf.,Chapter 1, p.20
4. Cf.,Chapter 2, p.32
7. "Je sais que tu me haïs ... Moins que moi!" OE, I, 97.
8. "Oui, monsieur, je n'ai ni experience ni esprit, mais je sais que vous haïssez votre âme et que vous la tueriez, si vous pouviez." (OE, I, 548).
10. Ibid, quoted chapter 3, p.43 and following page.
11. The emphasis is mine.
13. For detailed discussion of this aspect see Yves Bridel, op.cit., chapter 6, pp.185-197.
14. See same chapter, p.65, 74.
15. See OS, I, 1486.
16. Cf.,B.418, p.515; B.435, p.534 (paragraph 1); B.494, p.556.
A certain submission and a certain kind of pride are also the hallmarks of the spirit of childhood.

This spirit (L'esprit d'enfance), is a major theme in all the novels of Bernanos, and it is through the possession of its various qualities that man is able to reach God. Pascal, as will be shown, does in fact advocate most of the qualities in question, but he does not accord the "spirit" as such the same sort nor degree of emphasis, nor does he recognize it in the same way as Bernanos. Unknowingly however, or not with these precise aims in mind, he does endorse many of its characteristics, including the all-important dependence on God, and also complete unselfishness, another major quality.

The apparent fragmentation of the various aspects of the spirit of childhood and its comparative lack of emphasis in Pascal's Pensées are due, in some measure, to the difference in literary genres of the two authors: Bernanos claims that he is writing to justify himself in the eyes of the child he once was. Even if he cannot recapture the actual language of that childhood, he intends to try and regain at least some semblance of its accent. In his novels this involves illustrating the situation with a fuller and more detailed picture, than is the case in a less discursive work such as the Pensées. In these, Pascal's principal aim is persuasion; he intends to try and convince the honnête homme of the truths of the Christian religion. He seems partly to despise this class and many of its members and yet had more than a partial sympathy with them, and a realization of their problems.
Because he is trying to convince them, and because of this partial sympathy, he tends to speak as much as possible in terms which they understand. Initially, at least, he cannot treat these sophisticated people as children, even though he may favour the child-like state as an ultimate and sublime goal, worthy of achievement, and in fact necessary, if one wishes to gain eternal happiness:

"La Sagesse nous envoie à l'enfance: nisi efficiamini sicut parvuli." (B 271, p. 456) (4)

While both men are communicating a personal vision, Bernanos is able to give more colour and depth to his, while at the same time presenting a much wider spectrum. Pascal's work (which incidentally is unfinished) is plainer in presentation and more direct, but one would hesitate to say that it would be any more effective simply because of its comparative directness. Bernanos, no less than Pascal, also aims to persuade the reader.

Both wish, first of all, to convince the reader to acquire a degree of submission, leading to a total abandonment to the will of God. This is an important aspect of the Bernanosian spirit of childhood, and it is also given considerable emphasis by Pascal. Both writers favour an initial intellectual submission, which naturally enough, includes a submission of the faculty of reason, especially where belief in God is concerned.

They agree that ultimate reality will not be reached by any form of intellectual understanding: "La grande affaire de ma vie n'a pas été de voir, mais de croire." (6)
This can be attained only through that intangible feeling of certainty, termed faith in most religious contexts:

"C'est le coeur qui sent Dieu, et non la raison. Voilà ce que c'est que la foi, Dieu sensible au coeur, non à la raison."

(B, 278, p. 458)

Reason can help man to reach the threshold of faith, says Pascal, but once this has been achieved, it can only demonstrate its inadequacy in any matters beyond this. It must prove, in fact, that man transcends his own nature and innate capabilities:

"La dernière démarche de la raison est de reconnaître qu'il y a une infinité de choses qui la surpassent;"

(B, 267, p. 455-6)

He claims that man's greatness consists in his ability to think, but this faculty must be used to recognize his own misery, (a misery whose only hope of alleviation rests in God).

Bernanos also states that reason cannot penetrate the fundamental truths of human nature or of God's creation, but, like Pascal, he would accord it a place - once faith has been achieved, whereas Pascal emphasizes its powers in preparing for the actual reception of this same faith.

In accordance with these opinions, none of the Bernanosian "saints" are particularly clever or intellectually motivated. Donissan and the curé d'Ambricourt were among the least intelligent at their respective seminaries, and Donissan was ordained only through a special favour of the bishop in question. (Dufrety, one of the cleverest, leaves the priesthood). Unlike the latter, the two "saint-priests" try not to reason, and manage finally to submit to God. In this they are quite different from "heroes", such as Dr. Delbende, and, perhaps, Laville. In both cases it is the faculty of
human reason which in part prevents them from making any beneficial submission.

As well as the use of reason, introspection and self-analysis are also quite foreign to such simple people. Here, the two authors may appear to differ, as Pascal does, in some circumstances, advocate a degree of self-knowledge. In a spirit of Renaissance humanism almost, he claims that self-knowledge can help to direct one's life (not, of course one's spiritual life), which is considered very fitting. (11)

Chantal de Clergerie, on the other hand, who is perhaps the most flawless of all Bernanosian "saints", is not concerned to have any knowledge whatsoever about the inner workings of her intellectual or spiritual processes. She is gifted with complete submission to God and would like to retain this:

"Je n'ai plus besoin de voir clair en moi... il est trop tard. Que m'importe ce que je suis, ou ne suis pas?"

(Œ, I, 700) (12)

Chantal has always had this instinctive indifference and this forgetfulness of the self, which Donissan and d'Ambricourt acquire only with great difficulty.

In common with Chantal, however, these two priests are blessed with a complete absence of self-interest. It has become clear that self-interest and its attendant spirit of egoism are hateful to Pascal also, and are considered detrimental to man's chances for salvation. Utter selflessness leading to self-hatred is to be condemned in both Donissan and d'Ambricourt, but egoism, harmful to both the self and to others, and at the same time causing a life of lies and deceit, is also injurious.
Donissan lives selflessly for the sake of his parishioners, as does d'Ambricourt. Both are honest and extremely simple. D'Ambricourt cannot even take care of his household expenses, and, in this, he is like another "saint-priest", l'abbé Chevance. The latter, who before his death was the spiritual director of Chantal de Clergerie, is also very simple and honest.

The simplicity of Bernanosian "children" forms a stark and startling contrast with the complicated lives and the despair of "the adults" ("les vieux"). Malvina, the wife of the maire de Fenouille, comes to realize the implications of this:

"... en mon temps.... les vieux n'avaient pas la moitié du vice de ceux d'aujourd'hui. Pour moi, le mal vient de là. Le monde est en train de pourrir par les vieux."

(CF, I, 1511)

Her views expressed here seem to have something in common with those of Pascal when he interprets the Jewish text about the wise child and the foolish old man:

"Meilleur est l'enfant pauvre et sage que le roi vieux et fol qui ne sait pas prévoir l'avenir. L'enfant est la vertu, et le roi est la malignité de l'homme."

(B, 446, p. 538-9)

On this occasion, Pascal like Bernanos, seems to associate childhood with a spirit of hope and goodness, and old age with the concept of error and vice.

Clearly their ideas are similar, but, for the most part, the limitations of Pascal's literary form do not permit him to use the technique of contrast on as wide a scale as Bernanos.
The latter is often able to employ what amounts to a form of visual antithesis. He can, for example, "undermine" a corrupt and "stagnant" world by placing in its midst one of his "children" whose simplicity and holiness stand in sharp contrast to the spiritual bankruptcy of the older people. This is the case with Chantal de Clergerie, whose presence in her father's household shatters a community of egoistical, rapacious and disappointed human beings; and with the two priests. A similar scene is also enacted when l'abbé Chevance, in his utter dependence on God, confronts the obstinate Cénabre, whose desire for importance and self-sufficiency have caused him to almost lose his soul.

This type of egoism and self-interest seen in Cénabre is also corrupting adolescents like Mouchette and Steeny. In Steeny, it is true, there is more of a conscious effort towards self-advancement than is the case with Mouchette, but the effects of the latter's inherent egoism could be just as disastrous. Unlike Chantal de Clergerie, these children are not content with insignificance, they wish to exert the influence and power which they are coming to possess.

The true "child", on the other hand, does not possess great influence and power in his own right. He certainly does make use of such qualities, but they, in their turn, come from God. The "child" therefore gives what he himself does not possess. Chantal experiences this, as does the curé d'Ambricourt, when he restores to the countess her lost confidence in God:

"Ô merveille, qu'on puisse ainsi faire présent de ce qu'on ne possède pas soi-même, ô doux miracle de nos mains vides! L'espérance qui se mourait dans mon cœur a refleuri dans le sien, l'esprit de prière que j'avais cru perdu sans retour, Dieu le lui a rendu, et qui sait? en mon nom, peut-être..."

(Œ, I, 1170)
Despite these extraordinary gifts the Bernanosian "saint" is able to gain no temporal consolation whatsoever. Through his selflessness he becomes the instrument of God and must suffer, paradoxically enough, from a sense of his own powerlessness. The curé d'Ambricourt, for example, is permitted almost no satisfaction. He feels as though he can do almost nothing for his parish:

"Il me semble que ma vie, toutes les forces de ma vie vont se perdre dans le sable."

(OE, I, 1053)

"L'impression m'est venue tout à coup d'un effondrement des rêves, des espérances, des ambitions de ma jeunesse."

(OE, I, 1056)

His misery is sometimes total, and like Pascal's Misère de l'homme sans Dieu, its only hope of alleviation rests in God. (14)

The later Mouchette is also a victim of this all-pervading misery, so much so that Bernanos speaks of her death in terms of fulfilment. (15) She has no consolation in knowledge of God, as has Chantal de Clergerie, and some of the "priest-saints" and, this consolation is also denied to Dufréty's mistress, who, like Mouchette in her love for Arsène, is totally selfless in her devotion to the defrocked priest. Such an attitude in her utter misery together with her concern for others, are what could lead to God.

In this question of human misery, as in many other matters, the different intentions of the two authors must be taken into consideration. Their ideas, that total misery can gain relief only through union with God, are identical, but the basic aim of the two authors in presenting this message is somewhat different.
Pascal's aim is to persuade man to turn to God, because of this very misery, whereas Bernanos is trying to show that no matter how wretched a human being may be, (provided a spirit of trust is also present), there can be this hope and, in fact, this confidence that final fulfilment will be obtained through union with God. Both convey a message of hope, but Bernanos seems more intent on assuring man that God actually will provide the final solace for human misery; than Pascal, who is using this same sense of misery to urge man to turn to God.

Pascal, therefore, does see some positive element in human misery, and speaks of man's wretched state as that of a dispossessed king. The wretchedness is acknowledged as positive in that the ultimate hope of alleviation does rest in God, but he does not extend the positive element in human misery, to the state of economic poverty, as does Bernanos. According to his sister, Mme Périer, Pascal did have a great love for the poor and this devotion increased as he neared his death. His love, however, consisted more in helping them to remedy the cause of their suffering than in seeing them, as did Bernanos, as the very special children of God.

It is in the spiritually, and sometimes in the economically poor, that Bernanos sees the dispossessed kings of the earth:

"...elle (la pauvrete) garde ici-bas la place du Paradis perdu, elle est le vide de vos coeurs, de vos mains." 

(GF, I, 1080)

Poverty is akin to the spirit of childhood and is, in a sense, synonymous with it:
Both states can include the qualities of dependence, simplicity and also a perpetual hope or expectancy. The poor are in the place where God left them after driving the first man and woman out of the Garden of Paradise, and for this reason they are very close to God and to the Divine Source. They are of course closer than those who, hating the misery and degradation which poverty brings, find false escape in a world of self-centredness with all its diversions. Mankind cannot in fact eliminate poverty. Instead it should honour the poor and restore them to their rightful role:

"Il ne s'agit pas d'enrichir le pauvre. il s'agit de l'honorer, ou plutôt de lui...endre l'honneur." (18)

This is to be acknowledged as the representative of the now-absent Christ. It is poverty and the spirit of childhood, however, that the modern world would like to eliminate or to "rectify". (19)

For Bernanos these two states can be synonymous or at least complementary, but Pascal, it seems, would neither as definitely nor as overtly endorse the unity. Spiritual poverty he certainly does favour and he seems convinced that some forms of deprivation can furnish an aid to salvation:

"Si j'avais le coeur aussi pauvre que l'esprit, je serais bien heureux; car je suis merveilleusement persuadé que la pratique de la pauvreté est un grand moyen pour faire son salut". (20)

Economic poverty, however, is on one occasion mentioned alongside wealth. It is seen as one of many states in which Christ can reveal himself; equally, he can be made manifest in the rich of this world. (21)
Bernanos would not disagree with this; in fact, Chantal de Clergerie, his most flawless saint-figure, is materially in very comfortable circumstances. It is her poverty of spirit which is emphasized:

"Je ne me défends pas. Je voudrais que Dieu n'en demandât pas plus. Je ne défile personne, ni la douleur, ni la mort, ni même le plus petit ennui; je craindrais de les réveiller, de les mettre en colère. Si l'épreuve s'avançait vers moi, je reculerais sans doute un peu; d'abord, c'est naturel... Mais je me persuaderais aussitôt que je ne suis pas de force, je m'étendrais par terre, je rentrerais la tête dans les épaules, en fermant les yeux."

(G2, 1, 499)

He would vehemently deny, however, that God could be present in the egoistical avariciousness of certain people, (22) such as Malorothy, but economic poverty without a certain spirit of simplicity, submission, willing acceptance and pride, would not represent the void left by Christ.

As was shown in the previous chapter, pride definitely is a necessary and important element, and both authors do advocate it, provided it is not directed towards the individual himself, and is properly motivated, that is, motivated by the fact that God himself is prepared to communicate with the individual Christian. This same pride leads to, and indeed demands, a certain confidence, a certain willingness to take risks.

The curé d'Ambricourt, for the most part, feels insecure almost to the point of despair. On one occasion, nevertheless, he does experience a feeling of considerable hope and security. This occurs when he meets Olivier de Trévillé-Sommerange, the nephew of the countess and a soldier in the Foreign Legion.
He can, in fact, be seen to complement the curé himself, who could also be considered a soldier - in the spiritual sense. During this meeting the curé experiences this "tangible hope", (espérance charnelle), and with this comes a brief, but definite sense of assurance concerning his life and its purpose. Unconscious for the most part in the Bernanosian "saint", this confidence nevertheless enables him to take the risk of placing his destiny in God's hands. This very risk is sanctioned by God himself.

According to Bernanos, a "saint" and a true "child" are the only people on earth with any resources left to wager. All others are spiritually bankrupt:

"L'homme moderne ne s'engage plus, parce qu'il n'a rien à engager."(23)

M. Guine, at his death, has nothing left. He longs for a secret, for just some vestige of anything:

"J'ai besoin d'un secret,... Un secret, comprenez-moi bien, mon enfant, je veux dire une chose cachée qui vaille la peine d'un aveu - d'un aveu, d'un échange, une chose dont je puisse me décharger sur autrui."

(Or, I, 1555)

Steeny who still does have resources is no longer prepared to risk them. He has begun to calculate in all his dealings with life.

Pascal's pari, it seems, could, in this context be considered as an invitation to take a risk. There is the abandonment of the self, of self-interest and definite element of fearlessness:

"Oui; mais il faut parier; cela n'est pas volontaire, vous êtes embarqué." (B, 233, p, 437)
Rather ironically, perhaps, Pascal makes a pretence of calculating the individual's chances of success. This only demonstrates just how inadequate, inappropriate, and unnecessary such a measure is, in these matters. Unlike Bernanos he does not say that few human beings have any resources left with which to wager; instead he states that anything worldly that is lost in the process amounts to nothing in any case. Error and misery are all that can be lost by renouncing the things of this earth. Worldly resources simply cannot help to earn eternal salvation; for this a completely different scale of values is required.

The pari is in some ways similar to sentiments expressed by the curé d'Ambricourt when writing an account of his meeting with Olivier. Both men in the novel discover a fellowship founded on intangible qualities - qualities of idealism and trust. The curé realizes that his newly-discovered youthfulness contains a willingness to take risks - risks which are nevertheless sanctioned by God:

"J'ai compris que la jeunesse est bénie - qu'elle est un risque à courir - mais ce risque même est bénî."  
(Œ, I, 1211)

This seems to be what Pascal also promises - a sanctioned risk. In this there is corporate hope and trust, but the individual himself must make the commitment.

During the account of his "Nuit de feu", (as a result of which Pascal made his own commitment), he speaks of what the above-mentioned risk implies - a total abandonment of the self, leading to an all-pervasive sensation of joy and of confidence:
"Renonciation totale et douce. Soumission totale à Jésus-Christ... Éternellement en joie... "(24)

Feelings like these seem to have aspects in common with the spiritual ecstasy experienced by Chantal de Clergerie:

"Si loin qu'elle remontât vers le passé, un sens exquis de sa propre faiblesse l'avait merveilleusement réconfortée et consolidée, car il semblait qu'il fût en elle comme le signe inoffensif de la présence de Dieu, Dieu lui-même qui resplendissait dans son cœur."  

(Œ, I, 553)

Pascal's own experience does in fact seem similar to that of a Bernanosian "saint".

Despite any inherent similarities, however, it will perhaps always be difficult to find evidence of a Bernanosian-like spirit of childhood in Pascal's works, without separating the qualities in question and examining each one in isolation. Many similar aspects can then be detected. Both authors denounce reason as a means of achieving faith in God, and both favour a spirit of simplicity and one of complete trust in the Almighty. The part that man does have to play in his own salvation is intimately connected with this same spirit of submission. Pascal quotes from the Gospel:

...Nisi efficiemini sicut parvuli.  

(B, 271, p. 456)

and his words are echoed by the curé de Torcy:

"Si vous n'êtes pas comme l'un de ces petits, vous n'entrez pas dans le royaume de Dieu."  

(Œ, I, 1073)
Speaking directly to his readers, Bernanos seems to give even more emphasis to this quality of comparative insignificance:

"... si j'avais un conseil à donner aux hommes, je leur dirais de se faire petits, tout petits, le plus petit possible, à proportion que les événements leur paraissent démesurés." (25)

For his readers he advocates a spirit of humility leading to a total submission of all egoism and egocentricity. This will enable man, successfully and confidently, to accept any God-given burdens and roles. It is through this very quality of submissive selflessness that the spirit of childhood can become effective.
Notes

1. For further consideration of this aspect, see Introduction, p. 9-10.

2. "Mais justement, on ne parle pas au nom de l'enfance, il faudrait parler son langage. Et c'est ce langage oublié ... que je cherche de livré en livre, imbécile comme si un tel langage pouvait s'écrire, s'était jamais écrit. N'importe! Il m'arrive parfois d'en retrouver quelque accent." Preface to Les Grands Cimetières sous la Lune. (Paris, 1938), p.V.

3. This opinion could be, and is questioned, but some critics, including Léon Brunschvicg, would subscribe to it, with certain reservations, on such subjects as the power of the conversion to achieve an all-embracing faith. Nevertheless, it could be considered, again with certain reservations, as the principle aim of the work. On this issue Brunschvicg states: "Mais le Rédeempteur a apporté parmi les hommes la vérité absolue et le souverain bien; c'est pour en persuader les hommes que Pascal écrit l'Apoloie." Introduction to Pensées (Part 3) in Pensées et Opuscules (Paris, Hachette, 1968 edition), p.292.


5. This, of course, refers to the notion of the Pensées being part of the unfinished Apologie de la Religion Chrétienne. According to Patrick in Pascal and Kierkegaard: A Study in the Strategy of Evangelism (London and Redhill, 1947), p.159, several literary forms were going to be used.


7. For Bernanos, too, reason is limited. Hans Urs von Balthasar explains it in this way: "Mais cette raison est ... et demeure ... la raison rechâtée. c'est-à-dire la raison aux épaules, livrée à Dieu et à tout ce qu'il décide à chaque instant où il le décide." op.cit., p.62.


10. Bernanos (Croix) cited by H. Urs von Balthasar: "Un homme qui raisonne avant de croire, d'admirer ou d'aimer, au lieu de ne raisonner qu'après, comme si la raison créait la foi, l'admiration ou l'amour, alors qu'elle n'est faite que pour les contrôler." op.cit., p.58-9.


12. Curé Donissan "Que m'importe de me connaître!" (OE, I, 181).

15. See chapter 4, pp. 73-4.
17. Mme Périer, *Vie de Blaise Pascal*, (incl. in Hachette edition of *Pensées et Opuscules*, pp.1-40)
18. *Les Grands Cimetières sous la Lune*, p.31
22. "Il y aura toujours des pauvres parmi vous, pour cette raison qu'il y aura toujours des riches, c'est à dire des hommes avides et durs qui recherchent moins la possession que la puissance" OE, I, 1030.
Having examined the method available to man, of transcending the harmful attributes of the human ego, it now remains to examine the purpose and nature of the ultimate submission to God. Above all else this submission must be total; pride and a sense of personal importance have no place whatsoever:

"Le Dieu des Chrétiens est un Dieu qui fait sentir à l'âme qu'il est son unique bien; que tout son repos est en lui, qu'elle n'aura de joie qu'à l'aider; et qui lui fait en même temps abhorrer les obstacles qui la retiennent, et l'empêchent d'aider Dieu de toutes ses forces. L'amour-propre et la concupiscence, qui l'arrêtent, lui sont insupportables. Ce Dieu lui fait sentir qu'elle a ce fonds d'amour-propre qui le perd, et que lui seul la peut guérir."

(Res. 544, p. 570-1)

This is what, in effect, the curé d'Ambricourt says to the countess. He urges a complete surrender and, in fact, demands it:

"... on ne marchande pas avec le bon Dieu, il faut se rendre à lui, sans condition."

(Œ, I, 1161)

He later adds "Donnez votre orgueil avec le reste, donnez tout."

What he had advised the countess is in some respects similar to what Pascal has described to his readers - complete surrender of the self, of all egoism and self-centredness.

There remains, however, one important and irreconcilable difference in the two notions of submission held by the authors in question. Pascal, as a Jansenist, claims that this lessening of concupiscence and of amour-propre is, in the final analysis, essentially the work of God:
"Le Dieu des chrétiens est un Dieu qui fait sentir à l'âme qu'il est son unique bien; ... 
On ne croira jamais d'une foi utile et de foi, si Dieu n'incline le cœur; et on croira dès qu'il l'inclinera."

It is God's grace alone which can bring about a submission of egoism and egocentricity leading to salvation, such as that described in the five previous chapters of this study. As the grace enters the particular person in question, an accompanying decrease in egoism and egocentricity does, in fact, take place, but without the initial stimulus from God, the individual is powerless to bring about his own salvation:

"Il (Dieu) incline leur cœur à croire. On ne croira jamais d'une foi utile et de foi, si Dieu n'incline le cœur; et on croira dès qu'il l'inclinera."

In this respect therefore, the Pensée could be seen as descriptive rather than prescriptive as regards ultimate salvation, with Pascal merely showing how the process functions in those who actually are saved.

It seems, however, that this was not the only intention. He could not offer a certain route to salvation, but he did intend to persuade people, the honnêtes gens in particular, that a way of life based on Christian principles and ruled by Christian precepts, was the only means of achieving any lasting form of happiness whatsoever:

"Il n'y a que la religion chrétienne qui rende l'homme aimable et heureux tout ensemble. Dans l'honnêteté, on ne peut être aimable et heureux ensemble."

It was in this respect, therefore, that any "risk" involved would be "sanctioned". Apart from any consideration of his own happiness, man also owed it to God (and to a lesser extent to
his fellowmen), to live according to the commandments laid down by his creator. The submission of a wayward ego, (as has been shown), could have a social as well as a religious and salutory effect. It would seem, however, that any social considerations would have far less an importance than those of a higher order.

Amour-propre can be equally harmful to those who have received the grace of God as to whose who have not, as, in Pascal's view, once this grace has been received it is not necessarily present forever. As he says to his sister, (1) anyone who has grace should make personal effort to retain it:

"Ainsi la continuation de la justice des fidèles n'est autre chose que la continuation de l'infusion de la grâce, et non pas une seule grâce qui subsiste toujours; et c'est ce qui nous apprend parfaitement la dépendance perpétuelle où nous sommes de la miséricorde de Dieu, puisque, s'il en interrompt tant soit peu le cours, la sécheresse survient nécessairement. Dans cette nécessité, il est aisé de voir qu'il faut continuellement faire de nouveaux efforts pour acquérir cette nouvelle âme de l'esprit, puisqu'on ne peut conserver la grâce ancienne que par l'acquisition d'une nouvelle grâce, et qu'autrement on perdra celle qu'on pensera retenir, comme ceux qui, voulant renfermer la lumière, n'enferment que des ténèbres. Ainsi, nous devons veiller à purifier sans cesse l'intérieur, qui se salit toujours de nouvelles taches en rettenant aussi les anciennes, puisque sans le renouvellement assidu on n'est pas capable de recevoir ce vin nouveau qui ne sera point mis en vieux vaisseaux." (4)

Personal effort then in subduing the harmful attributes of the human ego is to be advocated perhaps, (as Brunschvicg suggests), so that the mental and bodily capacities of the human being can be convinced of and impregnated with the values of the spirit of selflessness:
"A Dieu il est réservé d'incliner le coeur des hommes, et cette connaissance du coeur suffit à faire le chrétien: mais l'œuvre de l'homme, c'est d'éclairer les esprits afin d'écartler les obstacles qui s'opposerait au sentiment. Elle dissipe les objections des athées qui détourneraient leurs âmes de Dieu, et les prépare à recevoir la grâce et à en profiter, si Dieu veut leur envoyer la grâce." (5)

This, however, would not necessarily preclude, ensure, or even advance the entry of grace and of subsequent faith in the person in question. God alone must initiate this.

For Bernanos, on the other hand, grace is potentially accessible to all men:

"Dieu a sauvé chacun de nous, et chacun de nous vaut le sang de Dieu." (6)

It is the submission which is important, and in this same submission, even faults surrendered are accepted by God. The countess, for example, offers her pride together with everything else, and the curé is able to assure her that God will not refuse her request for help and will even reward her. The surrender of a proud ego is associated with, not caused or influenced by, an influx of grace from God. A co-operation of the two wills, human and divine, is what brings this about:

"Car la grâce n'est pas une décision divine s'emparent de l'âme comme d'une proie passive - et non plus le sursaut d'une résolution humaine. Enigmatiquement, elle est spontanéité et secours, ouverture et présence. C'est par notre volonté que se manifeste celle de Dieu, elle est notre, mais en nous la volonté de Dieu." (6)

Picon continues using Bernanos' own words:

"Nous voulons tout, s'il veut, mais nous ne savons pas que nous le voulons, nous ne nous connaissons pas, le péché nous fait vivre à la surface de nous-mêmes, nous ne rentrons en nous que pour mourir, et c'est là qu'il nous attend." (7)
A surrender such as that of the first Mouchette at her death, is typical of this infusion, as are the conversions of various other characters. It is often after this rather spectacular and startling submission that the Bernanosian character is finally saved, or, at least one is led to assume that this is what had taken place. Many examples of this can be cited, including Simone Alfieri, Cénabre, Mme de Clergerie, Chantal in JCC, the first Mouchette, and of course the countess.

It is suggested, for example, that Simone Alfieri abandons her life of militant egoism by surrendering to the priest on the road after her crime; Cénabre at the death of Chantal de Clergerie collapses in an insane stupor after reciting the first words of the "Pater Noster", and Mouchette, after her suicide asks Donissan to carry her to the altar of the church. It is only through this surrender and the accompanying influx of grace have they any possible hope of being saved.

The same is true of the countess. At first she wishes symbolically to punish herself and throws the lock of her son's hair into the fire. God does not want this, claims the curé, he just wants a willing surrender of everything. She accords this and the grace she now receives is represented by the feeling of peace and contentment, described later in her letter:

"Tout est bien. Je ne croyais pas la résignation possible. Et ce n'est pas la résignation qui est venue, en effet. Elle n'est pas dans ma nature, et mon pressentiment là-dessus ne me trompait pas. Je ne suis pas résignée, je suis heureuse. Je ne désire rien."

(Œ, I, 1165)
At his own death the curé himself seems to have received a similar feeling of reassurance. His last words are reported to have been "Tout est grâce", and judging from the last entry in his diary, the reader is led to believe that he had achieved a certain peace. The entry of grace in his case also, is associated with an absence of his type of self-assertion, that is, with an absence of too much self-dependence. He now learns to trust God and not to blame himself for what he considers are failures, the latest example being his conversation with Mr. Laville:

"... je regrette ma faiblesse devant le docteur Laville. Je devrais avoir honte de ne sentir pourtant aucun remords [...]. N'importe! c'est fini. L'espèce de méfiance que j'avais de moi, de ma personne, vient de se dissiper, je crois, pour toujours. Cette lutte a pris fin. Je ne la comprends plus. Je suis réconcilié avec moi-même, avec cette pauvre dépouille." (Op., I, 1258)

He then speaks of grace as the ability to forget one's self, and the greatest grace of all as being able to accept one's self as one among many of the suffering members of Christ. (9)

For both authors, man's chance of ultimate acceptance by God rests precisely in becoming a suffering member of Jesus Christ. (Again this submission in Pascal's view can be made only through grace, that is through the God-initiated Jansenist variety.)

Jesus Christ, in his role of the suffering God-man, is seen to have a very special relationship with the rest of humanity. Submission to Christ is therefore given more emphasis than any submission to a more distant all-embracing God figure. God is undoubtedly the end, but Christ represents the means, especially for the time that man is on earth.
Pascal's complete dependence on Christ and his acceptance of him as his mediator, for example:

"Nous ne connaissons Dieu que par Jésus-Christ. Sans ce Médiateur, est ôtée toute communication avec Dieu; par Jésus-Christ, nous connaissons Dieu." 

(B.547, p. 571)

is echoed by the curé d'Ambricourt in the following statement which stands by itself in the diary, almost like a prayer, (or a Penseé perhaps):

"Il n'est de paix que Jésus-Christ." 

(Œ, I, 1096)

Shortly before this, in a passage very much resembling Pascal's words in the account of the "Nuit de feu", the curé again affirms his allegiance to the God-man:

"Je ne suis pas l'ambassadeur du Dieu des philosophes, je suis le serviteur de Jésus-Christ." (10) 

(Œ, I, 1096)

Pascal, too, endorses the role of Christ as the supreme comfort and source of peace for the human race:

"...En lui est toute notre vertu et toute notre félicité. Hors de lui, il n'y a que vice, misère, erreurs, ténèbres, mort, désespoir." 

(B, 546, p. 571)

Nevertheless before sharing in the redemption and happiness of Christ, man must first of all, share in his suffering:

"Il me semble que Jésus-Christ ne laisse toucher que ses plaies après sa résurrection: Noli me tangere. Il ne faut nous unir qu'à ses souffrances." (11) 

(B, 554, p. 578)

The story of any Béarnosian "saint", for example, is also the story of his or her suffering. Donissan, in his way, shares in the agony of Christ, as does the curé d'Ambricourt. Chantal de Clergerie moves from participation in Christ's joy to a union with him in his suffering. She is consciously experiencing
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this union shortly before Cénabre enters the room:

La douleur fulgurante en était à ce degré de transparence et de pureté qui la fait rayonner bien au-delà du monde charnel. Et pourtant l'extraordinaire jeune fille reconnut la compagne fidèle, l'amie humble et sincère de sa vie, sa propre souffrance, dans cette espèce de miroitement prodigieux, insoutenable, qui était la souffrance même de Dieu. Comme elle en reçut n'importe laquelle des épreuves quotidiennes, familières, jamais recherchées, jamais refusées, la confusion d'une parole railleuse, un plat manqué, elle s'offrit naïvement, elle fit une fois de plus ce don ingénieux de soi-même, Aucune des martyrs qu'elle aimait n'embrassa le glaive ou la hache d'un plus gracieux abandon."

(Œ, I, 685)

Chantal, the curé d'Ambricourt and Donissan, carry out, in fact, what Pascal would advocate. They follow Christ through his misery and death on the cross. Bernanos, however, in Sous le Soleil de Satan, adds a further dimension to the mystery.

As in other cases, this stems partly from his belief and, in fact, his insistence on a definite presence of evil in the world, and partly from the fewer self-imposed limitations of his literary genre. This view of humanity is an objective and a cosmic one compared with that given by Pascal, which is generally seen from the standpoint of a person he is trying to persuade, or, from the point of view of the person in receipt of the saving grace. In Bernanos' view, God, for a time, delivers himself to this "presence", and is then recovered through the agony of certain human beings:

"Mais il y a quelque chose entre Dieu et l'homme, et non pas un personnage secondaire... Il y a... il y a cet être obscur, incomparablement subtil et têtu, à qui rien ne saurait être comparé, sinon l'atroce ironie, un cruel rire. A celui-là Dieu s'est livré pour un temps. C'est en nous qu'il est saisi, dévoré. C'est de nous qu'il est arraché."

(Œ, I, 257)
Both authors, therefore, would agree that agony has a purpose as far as the individual human being is concerned—if properly accepted and endured it can furnish an aid to salvation. In his Prière pour demander le bon usage des maladies, Pascal specifically asks for this:

"Ôtez donc de moi, Seigneur, la tristesse que l'amour de moi-même me pourrait donner de mes propres souffrances, et des choses du monde qui ne réussissent pas au gré des inclinations de mon cœur, qui ne regardent pas votre gloire; mais mettez en moi une tristesse conforme à la vôtre. Que mes souffrances servent à apaiser votre colère. Faites-en une occasion de mon salut et de ma conversion. Que je ne souhaite désormais de santé et de vie qu'afin de l'employer et la finir pour vous, avec vous et en vous. Je ne vous demande ni santé, ni maladie, ni vie, ni mort; mais que vous disposes de ma santé et de ma maladie, de ma vie et de ma mort, pour votre gloire, pour mon salut et pour l'utilité de l'Église et de vos Saints, dont j'espère par votre grâce faire une portion. Vous seul savez ce qui m'est expédient: vous êtes le souverain maître, faites ce que vous voulez. Donnez-moi ôtez-moi; mais conforme ma volonté à la vôtre; et que, dans une soumission humble et parfaite et dans une sainte confiance, je me dispose à recevoir les ordres de votre providence éternelle, et que j'adoire également tout ce qui me vient de vous." (15)

The words "pour l'utilité de l'Église et de vos Saints", a single phrase in Pascal's work, constitute one of the most highly developed themes of Bernanos' novels. The "saint" through his humility and suffering is able significantly to advance the redemption of other people.

This does not imply that Pascal disbelieved in doctrines concerning the corporate nature of the church or, in notions such as that of the Mystical Body. He obviously did believe (14) and, judging by the preceding quotation, he seems also to have given some credit to the idea that the suffering of one person could benefit other members of the church.
Perhaps the lack of emphasis comes merely from his more direct approach to the person he is trying to persuade. He would, of course, be acting more in the interests of the soul concerned, if he advised reliance on God rather than on another person, reliable saint-figure or not. (15) Again this is the question of viewpoint, but it is not only a question of this. The Jansenist notion of the person acquiring salvation in solitary austerity and self-denial is rather different from Bernanos' more liberal and perhaps more humane and socially-orientated ideas.

The Church, claims the curé de Foray, can easily bear the weight of the sins of humanity, speaking in the same hopeful tone employed to state that God is able and willing to save each and every human being:

"L'Église a les nerfs solides, le péché ne lui fait pas peur, au contraire. Elle le regarde en face, tranquillement, et même, à l'exemple de Notre Seigneur, elle le prend à son compte, elle l'assume."

(O, I, 1044)

Much of this confronting and assuming of the sins does in fact fall to the "saint", and this "saint" is a member of the "elect" in Bernanos' understanding of the term. This term does not imply a special opportunity for salvation nor a special grace from God to achieve this, instead it implies a chance and indeed a duty, to suffer for other human beings.

These
"saints" nevertheless, are in receipt of a special God-given grace to which other members of the human race cannot necessarily aspire. It is Donissan's agony and selfless suffering which does much to redeem the first Mouchette. Chantal de Clergerie and l'abbé Chevance combine to save Cénabre, and the curé d'Ambricourt helps many people in his parish.

As he aids others, his own personality undergoes several processes and changes, and because of this he is perhaps the most interesting subject for a detailed study.

In the "salvation" of Dr. Delbende, it is the curé's sheer physical agony and torment which brings about the so-called redemption; on the morning after the priest's suffering, Delbende is found dead. In some ways this case is no different from Donissan's salvation of the first Mouchette. Just as he has physically overcome Satan in the guise of a hideous horse-dealer, he now spiritually defeats him and carries the dying girl to the altar. He knows that his agony will have to save her and, like Christ in Gethsemane, he once asks to be spared the torment, "ÉPAINEZ-MOI, MA FILLE". He cries. In this case, however, as in the case of Chantal de Clergerie, it is unselfish agony rather than a suppression of the "saviour's" ego which causes the miracle.

In contrast, in the curé d'Ambricourt's reformation of the countess, what is stressed is the powerlessness of his own particular personality. Because of this, he can in a sense feel God working through him. At the outset of the interview he innocently remarks, "Mais tout amour-propre était comme mort en moi", and it is precisely this quality which enables his intervention to be effective. God can enter through his
fearlessness and lack of concern for himself. He casts aside the countess's threats about reporting him to his superiors and bravely confronts her with the truth. Throughout the whole of the confrontation he realizes that his strength comes from God and intuitively plays his part:

"Elle s'est mise à trembler comme une feuille. Il me semblait que j'étais seul, seul debout, entre Dieu et cette créature torturée, C'était comme de grands coups qui sonnaient dans ma poitrine. Notre-Seigneur a permis néanmoins que je fisse face."

(Œ, I, 1162)

In microcosm here (and to a lesser extent in the interview with Chantal) are shown the perfect alliance—in-submission with God and the perfect result achieved in another human being. Through his own utter absence of inward-looking selfishness, the curé has been able to shatter that of the countess. His selfless charity has permeated her egoism and in this way been effective.

His charity has served her as its very nature implies. At the beginning of the meeting he had said that this was his intention and his words concerning service to others (13) are reminiscent of Pascal's paraphrase of the biblical text which deals with the role of the Christian:

"... les Chrétiens, dont la vocation a été à servir et à être sujets, sont les enfants libres."

(B, 67 , p. 632)

As true Christians themselves, both men envisage a "world" based on charity—charity in a much fuller sense than mere outward kindness to others.
All good deeds amount to nothing if the spirit is lacking - a spirit of complete selflessness, or, as the curé d'Ambricourt suggests, of self-forgetfulness, concern for the entire Mystical Body rather than for one's own needs. (20)

Pascal is especially definite in his commendation of charity; there is no question about this. He claims that it is the principal purpose of scripture. The ordre de charité where all self-centredness of any sort has vanished, is the highest of the three orders.

Nevertheless, however forcefully Pascal's Pensées may be seen to recommend charity, they are never able to give such a picturesque endorsement as Bernanos can give through his novels. Through these, its power in an otherwise sinful world can be clearly emphasized. Its absence, therefore, represents hell:

"...l'enfer, c'est de ne plus aimer!"

(03, I, 1163)

For Bernanos, therefore, hell does not consist in something positive nor even in something negative but self-orientated. It consists in the absence of an outward-looking feeling for other people. This is the opinion of the curé d'Ambricourt; for him, the final road to despair, would consist precisely in an inability to relate to other people, in fact, in an inability to love them. "Si j'allais ne plus aimer..." (21) he wonders in terror. He realizes that complete annihilation would rest in this and in this alone. The "annihilation" of Guine, is due to this same inability and unwillingness to love other people, as is the near-damnation of Cénabre. The peculiarities
of mankind fascinated Quinon, and Génabre spent years studying the lives of the saints without considering their fundamental motivation, which was the force of charity.\(^{(22)}\)

In the same way, Simone Alfieri could not selflessly love another human being, because her all-pervading egoism would not permit this.\(^{(23)}\) The same is true of the first Mouchette. Only her later namesake and the two lovers, Eugène and Hélène, in Monsieur Quinon, are at all selfless in their love, and in this lies their hope of salvation.

In fact, the only hope of salvation for the whole world rests in charity, which is in a sense, the achievement of this same salvation. As Bernanos would say, it prefigures order in a world which is fundamentally one of great disorder:

"... nous savons qu'il n'est qu'un ordre, celui de la charité."

\((\text{OE, I, 1147})\)

It is also the only means of combating the devil ("le père du mensonge"). Apart from endorsing that the order of charity is the highest possible order of all, he reiterates Bernanos' view by saying that an essential lack of charity constitutes a fundamental departure from God:

"On ne s'éloigne qu'en s'éloignant de la charité."

\((\text{B, 668, p.630})\)

This feeling of charity must be towards the self as well as towards other people, and it is only with great difficulty that the two priests, Donissan and d'Ambricourt, are able to achieve this, if in fact Donissan ever does so at all.
Although he may be able to provide comfort for others, he cannot find peace of soul himself:

"Hélas! pour une part, cette leçon serait vaine. La paix qu'il ne connaîtra jamais, ce prêtre est nommé pour la dispenser aux autres."

(Œ, I, 189)

D'Ambricourt, who shares this problem, dies secure in the knowledge that he has in fact overcome it as far as is possible for him. His was the problem of the "saint" -- the problem of the Bernanosian sinner lies, in addition, in an inability to love other people for the sake of the self. This, of course, is what the countess had to achieve, and the curé d'Ambricourt helped her to do this. As with Donissan and the first Mouchette, his lack of egoism and selflessness destroyed her self-seeking pride.

In a Bernanosian novel, this idea of charity can be graphically presented by the interplay of two characters; in Pascal's writings there is another type of antithesis, this time it is totally verbal:

"...il est proprement un roi de charité, [J.
Vous êtes donc proprement un roi de concupiscence" (24)

The basic message remains the same. Concupiscence is a selfish notion and cannot lead to God; in charity, which is fundamentally unselfish, lies man's only hope for salvation and also the ultimate attainment of this same salvation, just as the Bernanosian "saints" (who in their own way could also be seen as charity personified) provide the hope and to some extent the achievement of salvation for the egoistical sinners with whom they come into contact.
Notes

1. See OE, I, 1167.
3. This letter was in fact written in collaboration with his sister, Jacqueline, to the other sister, Ève Périer.
6. Gaëtan Picon in his preface Œuvres Romanesques suivies de Dialogues des Carmélites, p.XXV.
9. Ibid., 1258. Quoted chapter 4, p.75.
10. Pascal's own words on this occasion: "Dieu d'Abraham, Dieu d'Isaac, Dieu de Jacob", non des philosophes et des savants." (Pascal, op.cit., p.142)
11. Cf. Bernanos' words in the final passage of Sous le Soleil de Satan: "Mais la souffrance nous reste, qui est notre part commune avec vous, le signe de notre élection, héritée de nos pères, plus active que le feu chaste, incorruptible ...." (OE, I, 307)
12. See B.545, p.571.
13. Pascal, op.cit., p.64-5.
16. This view is put forth by Yves Bridel, op.cit., p.160. The curé is said to have felt as though he himself had received a shot in the chest.
18. Ibid., 1145.
19. "Noi, je suis le serviteur de tous". (Ibid., 1146)
21. Ibid., 1113.
22. "L'art, ou plutôt la formule heureuse de l'auteur, exploitée à fond, peut se définir ainsi: écrire de la sainteté comme si la charité n'était pas." (Ibid., 329)
23. "... je n'ai jamais aimé personne d'amour." (Ibid., 96n.), cf., chapter 5, p.46.

In the course of this study the following notable points have emerged.

By nature, the individual human being would appear to be very conscious indeed of his own entity and of its inherent separateness. These he would like to preserve at all costs. As Christians, Pascal and Bernanos recognize this tendency as a manifestation of Original Sin, and also as a potential barrier between man and God.

In most cases this militant egoism takes the form of a policy of obsessive self-interest, the effects of which can harm man's fellow creatures as well as damage the chances of a lasting relationship with God. The desire for self-dependence, however, provides another major form of egocentricity. In Bernanos' novels, this presents more of a problem for the stronger, more ambitious characters than for the "mediocre souls". It provides a problem not only for those with exclusively egoistical tendencies, but also for Donissan and d'Ambricourt, two of the "saints", whose motivation in this is basically selfish; so deeply engrained in man is this tendency to concentrate on himself, in one form or another.

Closely allied with this same tendency is a need for perpetual self-delusion (this, however, is not a problem for the "saints"), as man, in essence, does realize his basic inadequacy in many matters, but equally, he does not wish to recall this, nor to be reminded about it. This forces Pascal and Bernanos to do just this; they remind man that his only hope of fulfilment rests with God and that the pursuance of a policy of militant egoism
or egocentricity can lead to disaster in natural and in metaphysical terms.

Both would therefore urge man to make God, rather than the self or any fellow creature, the centre of activities and ambitions. Just as man is jealous of his own separate entity, God, in his turn, is jealous of his own nature, and of his creation, of which man forms a part. In Pascal's opinion, God alone can initiate any beneficial submission, that is, beneficial in terms of eternal salvation. For Bernanos, on the other hand, this would seem to involve a co-operation of the two wills, human and divine.

In both cases, however, the submission follows a similar course; man learns not to hate himself, but to hate his vile tendencies and, in Bernanos' view, to hate the power of evil in the world. Most of all, he learns to submit in selflessness, to place complete trust in God. In this rests the hope of salvation and also salvation itself.

For egocentric humanity, this quite naturally seems something of a paradox. Its members have difficulties in accepting the notion that one's greatest desires and aspirations can be achieved only through the submissive powerlessness of a complete surrender to God. This is why, perhaps, Pascal (and Bernanos in his own way), would express this idea in positive terms such as these:

"Consolez-vous: ce n'est pas de vous que vous devez l'attendre, mais au contraire, en n'attendez rien de vous, que vous devez l'attendre."

(B.517, p.564)
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