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Raphael .C Eruka,
PhD

Department of Philosophy
Madonna University, Nigeria

The 'Wager Theory' in Contemporary Thought: Reflections on Safeguards and Sentinels in Skepticism and Theodicy

Raphael.C Eruka, PhD

Department of Philosophy
Madonna University, Nigeria

Abstract

The Wager Theory was developed by Blaise Pascal in 17th century French society, in response to the dire religious challenges of the time. The existential significance of the Wager Theory stands out if we consider that whatever is of value in it is meant to be part of lived experience in relation to Pascal's immediate audience. The religious problematic to which the Wager relates concerns matters of belief and unbelief or as it were belief and the state of indecision in this regard. In this light, the Wager needed to be contextualized not only within the twin themes of skepticism and theodicy but also in relation to theism, atheism and agnosticism as intricate and relevant religious conceptual schemes therein. A presupposition of the Wager is the affirmation question of God's existence; which appreciation ought not to be solely a speculative issue but rather an intuitive involvement that expresses its reality in lived experience of its presence in Christian love or charity. The paper attempted a critique of the Wager Theory especially within the perspective of the atheistic position. Does philosophy possess the tools to adequately handle, in the final account, all the presuppositions of the Wager? Reasons and insights could be proffered even as the question needs no hasty answer. Again, the Wager Theory was further examined with regard to its place and significance in the contemporary society. The position of the paper is that the Theory has existential value and needs to be contextualized in the face of the challenges of the contemporary society.

Key Words: Wager, skepticism, theodicy, theism, atheism.

Introduction

Philosophical ideas have been filtered to us through many channels. Even among professional philosophers, down through history, these ideas have been disseminated to us through variations of methodologies and genres. Some of philosophical idea-channelization has been determined by epochs and time. The precursors to philosophic development in the West; Homer and Hesiod, for

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instance, chose the poetic genre: it is common knowledge that the 'Iliad and Odyssey' contained the famous Homeric poems (Early Greek Philosophy: 3 – 4). The emergence of pure philosophic thought did not undo this stylistic form, although this could not be said of the content of such new visions of reality which to a large extent underwent tremendous transformations in comparison to the preceding intellectual culture. Parmenides would pass as a case for reference here, for in spite of the fact that he wrote in hexametric verses; his metaphysical ideas were thorough and unprecedented in Greek antiquity. Many of the Pre-Socratics presented their works in verses which up to the present, is not completely considered anachronistic. It should be borne in mind that Heraclitus particularly made his thought-content available in epigramic genre whereby he intended to invite the audience to his thought terrain and challenge their intellect to deep reflection. This earned him the epithet 'the obscure thinker' (Composta, 2008, p. 35); except that he believed perhaps his thought would be clear to anybody who would take up the task to travel the same lane with him. Another turn in genre is to be found in the dialectics of Socrates which came down to us through the penmanship of Plato. The dialectics was actually referred to as 'The Dialogues', a conversation genre that took the form of 'Question and Answer' sessions with the interlocutors: the method entails teaching by questioning, not by 'telling' (Kreeft, 2002, p. 14). The end is inter-subjective involvement in the Socratic research program, whereby Socrates facilitates the giving of birth, as it is said, to philosophic ideas; quite analogous to the midwife who assists the pregnant woman to safely deliver her baby. While the prose genre has comparatively gained dominance over others due to its convenience for straight communication and dissemination of ideas as conceived, still a number of other channels exist mainly from the point of view of the philosopher's taste and intent. Such channelization media include: plays and drama; songs; fine artistic works such as drawing and painting which were quite prevalent in ancient Egyptian aesthetics and thought (Obenga, 2004, p. 37). Today, however, these genres can be combined as demanded by theme development with the pendulum swung disproportionately towards the critical sense, analysis, synthesis, expose and the prosaic systematic presentation of the contents of deep reflection. In this paper, our goal is to attempt an expose of the 'Wager Theory' which was developed by the religious philosopher, mathematician and scientist, Blaise Pascal. The genre through which this theory was channeled to the philosophic world was that of 'Letter Writing' and aphorisms (Provincial Letters and the *Pensees*). This suggests a few more things: there were the addressees to whom his thought was primarily directed. Again, Pascal was not fundamentally concerned with the development of a philosophical theory. If in the course of time, his candid advice to his mentees turned into a theory of sorts, then, it could be so regarded as a philosophical 'accident'.

This paper does not set as its target the overview and review of Pascal's philosophic thought as such but the exposition of the Wager Theory and its further consideration with reference particularly to its prospects for the intended audience, critical analysis of the theory-statement and the evaluation of this ingenious idea for contemporary times. Before wading into the Wager, it would make sense that the path to it be cleared. This could normally be done by way of contextualization; the Wager has to be properly situated to make for its comprehensive grasp. The background to the Wager is that of pervading philosophic quagmire discernible in skepticism. Skepticism is always a reaction to claims to knowledge; in this case directed to established epistemological values of religion especially as concerns theodicy: the philosophy of God.

Therefore, to clearly comprehend the Wager, the twin themes of skepticism and theodicy have to be investigated for their relevance to the overall development of this project.

The French philosopher – Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) – came from a family of child-prodigies. His sister was a child-prodigy in literature while Blaise Pascal, the brother was polyvalently endowed in mathematics, science and philosophy. In the area of mathematics, he was credited with laying the foundations of the infinitesimal calculus and the integral calculus (Stumpf, 2003, p. 203). He succeeded, quite early in life, with breakthroughs in significant scientific endeavors:

‘At age 12, he was able to produce a proof that the sum of the internal angles of a triangle is two right angles, and at 18, he built a mechanical calculator for his father. Pascal was also a talented scientist and is credited with inventing, among other things, the syringe’ (Law, 2013, p. 118).

In Philosophy, he is a reckonable religious thinker best known for ‘The Wager Theory’. For a contemporary appreciation of this theory, we first proceed with its contextualization within a prevailing atmosphere of skepticism and theodicy; the former pointing to epistemological uncertainty while the latter refers to a rational inquiry into issues of theism, atheism and agnosticism as real human concerns existentially.

Skepticism

Skepticism appeared in post-Golden Age of Greek philosophy. It is an anti-climax in the rich gains of Greek philosophy. In spite of the monumental breakthrough in the development of ideas in the history of thought associated with the Golden Age of Greek philosophy, skepticism in its general understanding, charted a diametrically opposed view to the concept of knowledge. They, the skeptics, doubted the possibility of knowledge. For the skeptic movement, in the universal sense of it, the idea of knowledge is untenable as nothing can be known. The first group of skeptics in western thought was the Sophists. Gorgias, a Sophist, wrote a book in which he claimed that nothing exists, that even if anything were to exist, it would be impossible to know it (Omogbe, 2009, p. 9). Protagoras is famous for his statement that ‘Man is the measure of all things’; of things that are black that they are black and of things that are white that they are white. The implication is that there is no truth out there; rather truth happens as man wills or consents. General skepticism owes its foundation to Pyrrho (360–240 B. C.). Through Arcesilous, it found its way into Plato’s Academy (the Middle Academy) (Omogbe, 2009, 10). Pyrrho and his followers felt that all attempts to explain the nature of the universe were futile since man cannot know the nature of things (Frost, 1989, p. 17). It should be borne in mind that skepticism continued to thrive in the Academy right up to the 4th century A.D. when St Augustine, in his ‘Contra Academicos’, had to refute some of the unsustainable claims of the skeptics (Omogbe, 2009, p. 10). Skepticism of a non-universal nature has remained part of philosophical development as well. In modern and contemporary times, we have witnessed the skepticism of John Locke, David Hume, Immanuel Kant and even Edmund Husserl (Omogbe, 2009, pp. 13 -14). Descartes’ skepticism though universal, was at best a hyperbole; and, methodologically a temporal suspension of knowledge in order to begin from a sure foundation. Skepticism holds irrespective of the fact that this may or may not be fundamental or radical denial of the possibility of knowledge – such denial can thus be in part and not necessarily a generalization. It has to be noted that when skepticism is in relation to theodicy, it acquires a theistic and non-theistic or atheistic and agnostic determination. Religious skepticism is a special type of skepticism in which the doubt is directed to certain claims in the

philosophy of religion. Humans operate based on different cultures of the intellect: these variations in backgrounds interpolate when it is a case for the need for common agreement on specificities of religious matters. Conflicts in positions and views tend to define the true state of affairs in this domain. Arguments tend to do little to disperse perceived clouds between the lines that make for the differences. A simple statement such as, 'God exists', may pass without further ado for some people of an intellectual cultural bent. For others, such a statement may be provocative of expressions of doubt and unbelief. This thus is a clear case of religious skepticism.

Theism holds sway in certain cultures. In such a cultural atmosphere, it would be quite odd the interpolations of religious discourses with atheism since perhaps such a concept would not be comprehended. A clear example would be Africa, described by one of her own scholars, John Mbiti, as notoriously religious (Ochieng'-Odhiambo, 1994, pp. 47 – 48). This implies the pervading and perhaps permeating influence of religion in the consciousness of the people and the inextricability of the concept in practical details of the people's lives even to a degree that could allow negative value attribution to such an existential reality. If this is true, then at least theism has to be taken for granted as defining the cultural milieu from the religious view point, that is, as far as Africa is concerned. It also implies that the problematic of atheism would not arise in such a cultural ambience or at best said to be totally absent. However, from the philosophical perspective, there is in this more of questions for reflection. The inquiry of whether a religious culture could be skeptic with regard to the concept of God's existence would form part of the analysis of contemporary appreciation of this theory. Doubt and unbelief may not pertain more to the intellect than to the culture of the heart.

Theodicy

Theodicy refers to the philosophy of God. It is the philosophical justification of claims about God. The concept of God has played fundamental role in philosophy right from time. Among the ancient philosophers who discussed notions of God include Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics (Frost, 1989, p. 104). Early Christian Philosophy was an attempt to rationally explore the capacity for this justification in the move to reconcile Philosophy with religion. It found domains for faith and philosophy in the demonstration that one is not necessarily opposed to the other. The middle ages witnessed a heightened critical study in which faith and reason shared respectable appreciation in their mutual contribution to the positive values of religion. An aspect of theodicy that really mattered to intellectual culture is the question of God's existence. In matters of faith, this is a given. The believer is so fundamentally because he or she believes that God is. This cannot be otherwise since this claim is factored into what it means to believe. However, in philosophy, the issue is not taken gratuitously; thus the need for proof. The intellectual especially, who could be distracted in this, and as such, prone to entertaining the possibility of a denial, would definitely benefit from such proofs. Pascal is radical about Christ, the Redeemer of man. His concern fundamentally is not theism as such unless the concept entails as well belief in Christ. It bothered him that one may believe in God externally when such does not presuppose personal involvement with Christ. Belief for him means the loving apprehension of God which involves supernatural faith informed by love or charity (Copleston, 2003, p. 165). It is clear that Pascal does not refer to the God who is distant but the one who is close and radically involved in human existence.

The atheist does not believe in the existence of God as the one who redeems. Atheism is religious skepticism. This can be of the radical type in which the atheist's negation of the concept of God is fundamental. The belief here is that 'There is no God'. This means that God never existed in the past and does not exist now. Philosophers in this group would include Ludwig Feuerbach, Sigmund Freud and Jean Paul Sartre. Sartre, for instance went on to adduce proofs to his position (Omogbe, 2007, pp. 117 – 118). The other group of atheists can allow that God may have once existed but not anymore. Examples include Friedrich Nietzsche, Altizer Thomas and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Omogbe, 2007, p. 129).

Christian philosophers were challenged by atheism and agnosticism. Agnosticism does not necessarily deny the existence of God although it does not affirm it. It is simply the indecision about whether God exists or not. The atheist and agnostic would definitely benefit from the endeavor to offer proofs for God's existence. The Christian philosophers took it upon themselves to proffer convincing proofs of God's existence. Prominent among these is St Anselm who started with affirmation of belief and the need for philosophy to further expound on this: *Credo ut intelligam* (I believe in order to understand). In his two works, the 'Monologion' and the 'Prosologion', St Anselm developed the ontological argument for God's existence: God is that being greater than which none can be conceived; and this makes God's existence necessary (Mondin, 2005, pp. 248 – 249). Another famous Christian effort in this regard is the 'Quinqueviae' of St Thomas Aquinas; the Five Ways in which he proved God's existence: from motion, causation, contingency and necessity, degrees of perfection and teleology (Copleston, 2003, pp. 240 – 344). Others who endeavored to offer proofs for God's existence include Rene Descartes and Gottfried Leibnitz. Although it could be argued that proofs of God's existence would not be necessary for the theist; yet, for the atheist and agnostic, such proofs are a fundamental concern and necessity which may or may not succeed in its goals. The record of positive impacts and gains for Christianity in this endeavor would not obliterate the fact that there are records of the unmoved who would as well adduce reasons for dispositions to atheism.

Blaise Pascal, in his approach to the theistic and non-theistic, atheistic and agnostic problematic, opted for a different method. Proofs of God's existence are basically intellectual measures at convincing the skeptic; thus, the beneficiaries are the cultured and elitist. He seems to conclude that belief is no more a case for the assent of the intellect than that of the heart. He believed that the heart has its reasons which the reason does not understand.

'Thus for Pascal, the guide to the truth is the heart. He does not give precise definition of "the heart" but from the various ways in which he uses the term it becomes clear that by the heart Pascal means the power of intuition. Things are true or false according to the context or perspective from which we see them', (Stumpf, 2003, pp. 203 – 204).

Pascal seems opposed to the intellectuality of the proofs; preferring instead an anti-intellectualist intuitive alternative. Pascal's depreciation of reason is with regard to abstract, analytic and deductive operation of the mind as seen in geometry and not in the general sense. His outline of a Christian apology is obviously a work of the mind (Copleston, 2003, p. 163). His ingenious measure is geared more towards the heart than the intellect but at most a case of conventional wisdom; thus capable of general appeal. Pascal's method directly bears on human existence. His approach is truly existential and in this, it can be said that he is a forerunner of the Christian existentialist thinkers.

The purpose of life is the meaning therein; and the human existential value is defined more by the foundation of its future anchor than by any such absence. Life in so far as it is limited cannot afford to gloss over the risks and consequences therein in the futuristic turn of human existence as regards matters of belief and unbelief as necessary correlates of the final questions. This is what the Wager Theory tends to impress on human conscious existence: to weigh values with the view to make a wise choice; to check possibilities of value positive-propositions as influences to informed decisions in faith matters; to carefully consider that in the absence of full futuristic knowledge of the final questions and their resolutions, one 'ought to look before one takes a leap'.

Exposition of the Wager Theory

Pascal's apparent alternative to the rational proofs of God's existence is to wager on God. The Wager is an attempt to offer 'a pragmatic reason for believing in God' (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy). This he proposes in his letter of instruction to his mentees. Obviously, it implies a background of pervasive atheistic or agnostic culture. Pascal would desire that the agnostic bets on God. For the sake of man's future and final winding, God is worth wagering on. The driving force is the consequences of such wagering. What if at the end of the tunnel, it is found out that God exists? What again, if at the end, it is discovered that God does not exist? Because of the consequences in the above hypothesizations, no rational being can afford to be indifferent to these questions. The bothersome position however, is that the skeptic is indifferent to these concerns; seeming not to mind either way. It is this indifference of the skeptic that Pascal seeks to overcome by the Wager Theory. According to him:

'The indifference of the skeptic is to be overcome by means of the wager: if God does not exist, the skeptic loses nothing by believing in him; but if he does exist, the skeptic gains eternal life by believing in him', (Safra, 2003, p. 458).'

The wager is a bargain on life after earthly existence. If man is accustomed to bargaining in the course of life's transactions, this can be a feature in the determination of the final questions. We stop to weigh the next step, with regard to gains and losses, perhaps in economic or political transactions. If this path is appropriate in the lesser human existential ends, it should be more so in the greater questions of meaning in the absolute earthly existential winding up. In the spirit of safeguard and bargains, Pascal has this to say:

Let us weigh the gain and loss in wagering that God is. Let us establish these two chances. If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager then without hesitation that He is (Adler, p.215).

In another perspective of the Wager Theory, everything bothers on reward that would have eternal value. Concepts such as rewards and punishment are part of human experience normally. There is no need to suppose that in matters of afterlife, this may not apply. The rewards and punishment are predicated on the presupposition that there is a God who would be responsible for administering such remunerations. Stephen Law, in his explication of the Wager in the above direction, has this to say:

'If I choose to believe and there is a God, then the rewards are enormous – I will know eternal happiness. However, what if there is no God? Then certainly,

I won't receive that heavenly reward. But still, my loss is not so very great, little more than the time I have to spend in worship. If, on the other hand, I chose not to believe in God, and God exists, my loss is beyond imagining for I face eternal damnation. Nothing could be worse. And if I chose not to believe in God, and there is no God, then I win, but I don't win very much. Not more, in fact, than the time that I would have otherwise spent in worship', (Law, 2013, pp. 114 – 115).

Acting on equal presumptions for the validity of the positions of the skeptics and non-skeptics alike, Pascal would conclude that the wager would be the wise option. While the persistence in indifference would not add any value or gains or at best very little of these, the wager would add meaning to human existence. Comparing the result to that of the winner in a conventional betting game, one comes out a big or small winner or loser respectively. Consider this:

'Now supposing that we have no more grounds to suppose God does exist than to suppose that he doesn't, surely the rational wager to lay is to believe in God. If I believe, then I win big or lose small. If I fail to believe, then I win small or lose big. Pascal concludes that belief is therefore the more sensible wager', (Law, 2013, p. 115).

In furtherance of the exposition of the Wager Theory, an analogy has been supposed as follows: 'You are diagnosed with a disease that will soon kill you unless you receive treatment. There is only one treatment, and it has a 50 per cent success rate. When the treatment doesn't work, its side effects are rather unpleasant. What should you do? Clearly, the rational choice, assuming you want to live, is to undergo the treatment, despite the fact that you have no more ground to suppose that it will work than you suppose that it won't. Undergo the treatment and you will either win big or lose little. Fail to undergo the treatment, and you will either lose big or win small (not having to suffer the unpleasant effects)', (Law, 2013, p. 115).

Dupre believes that in the wager question, no matter how it is viewed, there is always: So much to gain, so little to lose: therefore, one would pass for a mug not to bet on God existing (Dupre, p. 174). A rational being would rather not choose to sacrifice a position where he or she would be quantumly rewarded to that in which he or she would get nothing in return, be rewarded poorly or be subjected to punitive measures. In all the Wager is fundamentally an existential safeguard; drawing from the didacticism of lived conditions, it prescribes the necessity for sentinel in matters to the afterlife problematic, if it is so regarded, of man's possibility of continued existence.

Critical Evaluation

There is need to clear the question of the relation between the Wager theory and the preceding assiduous attempts at providing proofs for the existence of God. The Wager is not a proof of God's existence. It is rather an invitation to be on guard and to take precautionary measures lest perhaps God does really exist. The proofs offered by medieval scholarship would rather work on the presupposition that God does exist. It is this given truth that needs to be demonstrated in the varied attempts at proving God's existence. The two methodologies of coming to belief or eradicating doubt about God's existence presuppose a common stand, namely the signification to the possibility of God's existence. If this is the case, then the approaches need not be separated; need not be opposed to each other or be measured as to which is more effective to deliver. The Wager is a non-alternative to the proofs but a complement to them. Since both serve common religious

utilitarian ends, they ought to be seen in terms of modal complementarities than alternatives. Thus seen, their tendency to wider reach would be an additive value to the scholarly endeavors expended in this regard. The proofs are not necessarily elitist since they are capable of comprehension by the average person when explained. The Wager is as well open to clear grasp should one pay the necessary attention to its significations. One can critique the Wager from the point of view that the erstwhile skeptic who decides to cash on it does not necessarily do so out of personal conviction but out of fear of the unknown or that it comes from the type of smartness that is 'borne of an economic sense of bargaining'; a cushioning against the possibility of loss especially in the face of the colossal nature of such loss. Therefore, the Wager can exist along with non-deep sense commitment to belief but rather as safeguard against loss. Here, one focuses on envisaged gain rather than establishing proper relationship with the supernatural 'Other' who may not be as interested in transaction as in the transformation of lived existence. Pascal would respond that the starting on the path matters as those who begin with such ulterior motives may eventually attain the conviction that is proper to true belief and again the transformation in commitment that may gradually become the case, (Law, 2007, p. 116).

The third critique would have to do with final responses to matters of belief and unbelief. Are theists by the very fact heirs to eternal bliss while atheists and agnostics are not? The above notwithstanding, perhaps it would make more sense for the finality of the skeptic to be left open to further inquiry since claims to knowledge in such issues may not always be tenable philosophically. The certainty of epistemological insight into the final questions is not always a given. However, philosophy shows interest in providing insight into what it considers rational and therefore of appeal to the human intellect. Let us suppose that with regard to the atheist, there is a pre-acceptation of the non-existence concept in relation to God or that at a point in time, that concept was extinguished. The implication is a radical realization that possibilities that are open to the concept are dismissed by non-acceptors of such concept. If anything, this exposition suggests that faith or belief is a factor in any relation that would be expected to work. It is more so in relation to the supernatural. The Wager, however, remains a timely reminder of possibilities. While the weight of colossal gain tilts heavily on the scale of acceptance of belief; the skeptic does not lay claim to any such big wins in the favor of the position it lays claim to.

Contemporary Evaluative Discourse

Does the Wager Theory have a place of relevance in contemporary human existential and religious discourse? Does the existence of God still pose a problem in the dimensions of religion today? Do people still need proofs that God does exist? Are there people who are rather more convinced of the non-existence of God than of his existence? Are these parallel positions not existential religious realities of contemporary times? The truth seems to be that the theistic and skeptic problematic remains a perennial reality. Although these may not have equal measure of pronouncement among all peoples; yet, there appears to be deference to and guarding of respective positions where these are stated. There are as well breakthroughs in domains with crossovers, though not historically in equal measures, for instance, from atheism to theism or skepticism to belief. Of its nature, Christianity exists to make gains, with the disposition to invite all to the joy it claims awaits her adherents at the end of the tunnel.

The proofs for God's existence and the Wager are common Christian heritage in the campaign against religious skepticism. These would be of utility value in so far as there is unbelief. Pronounced skepticism in matters of God's existence is atheism. It is no less a reality of the 17th century than of today. The elitist and non-elitist alike, among the atheistic and agnostic club, may have been challenged adequately by the value-deposits against the referred position. Yet, this is not solely the issue. The real issue for contemporary times would have to do with the atheism of the heart and not necessarily the intellectual non-assent to God's existence as such unless in situations where the concept involves both. The atheism of the heart could be referred to as neo-skepticism in religious affairs. It is the new face of atheism or agnosticism that can, in some cases, comfortably co-exist with the declaration of belief in God's existence. Substantial atheism or agnosticism can be the worst form of religious skepticism. In a world that has acquired some sort of notoriety for religious exhibitionism; non-theistic anti-human values continue to be permitted alongside pretensions to religious fervor. Amidst religious sentimentalism, for instance, terrorism has invaded nations. It is the negative phenomenon of contemporary times. Radical agnosticism or atheism of the heart breeds non-humanizing ideologies. As a result of the emergence of these ideologies, values have been eroded and life has suffered devaluation. Insecurity reigns and tends towards systematic domiciliation and institutionalization. The proper atmosphere for scientific inquiry is threatened. The Aristotelian recommendation of the existence of basic material infrastructure for the fructification of rational science remains unmet in a disturbing number of places where, especially migration to better organized societies from the reality of unsafe conditions of human existence predominates. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and camps are common sight even in paces associated with phenomenal religious fervor. The gains of civilizations have been lost to non-purposive ventilation of discontent. There is insecurity in all its dimensions and absurdities and this remains the bane of the contemporary era; no thanks to the radical atheism and agnosticism of the human heart.

The above ideological bent instantiation remains an insight into what medieval scholarship endeavored to pre-empt and prevent in its insistence that God does exist and has a place and role for the continued development and stability of the society. The realities of the moment may be occasions and precursors of belief or the dispelling of skepticism as the threat of death can be a factor in transformative religious experience. At the same time, they can be precursors of religious skepticism in those who choose to remain unconvinced of God's existence amidst unexplainable confused state of affairs. Either way, the contemporary times is challenged by atheism and agnosticism of its worst kind in human history whether as pronounced elitist culture of the intellect or as an ideological pretension to religious fervor.

Jackson (2021) constructed decision matrices in which was demonstrated first, the irrationality of atheism and agnosticism; and second, that even if the chance of God existing is small, as long as it is greater than zero, the expected value of believing is infinite. Pascal believes that factually there has never been a completely thoroughgoing skeptic; maintaining that, 'Nature sustains our feeble reason, and prevents it from raving to that extent (Popkin & Stroll, 1993, p. 171). The response from the religious philosophical viewpoint is that God does exist; and when properly comprehended and made part of human existential concern, this is capable of ushering in sanity to

the nations that have known the ravages of substantial atheism, especially that of the atheism of the heart.

Conclusion

The background and state of affairs that prompted Pascal to philosophize are dire existential realities that are far from issues done with finally in 17th century French society. The least that can be stated about them is that they are real problematic of the contemporary era. Pascal presupposed, quite plausibly that part of the remediation of the state of affairs was firm assent to the concept of God as an existent that ought not to be denied and as capable of influencing the human condition positively. The implication is that it is a step towards the eradication of religious skepticism which is favorably disposed towards atheism and agnosticism. If it is the case that the implication of God's existence can have transformative consequences on human perspectives on the expectations of life and afterlife questions, then current assiduity would be in terms of replication and possibly, amplification of this effort in the society of today and tomorrow. This calls to mind methodologies towards this accomplishment. In this, it can be said that the situation is typical of the ancient or preceding era being poised to teach the present. Whatever means that can be used to disseminate or channelize the philosophic intervention would be permitted to pass: whether through the genre of poetry or prose; ponderous analytic discourse or the conventional genre of songs and music; plays and dramatization of ideas meant for positive ideological value orientations; paintings and fine artistry or as is the case with the philosopher of the hour, mentoring through the medium of letter-writing or micro-journaling through the aphoristic records of the *Pensees*..

The times have changed quite a lot since Pascal: therefore, the contemporary era is in many ways different from the 17th century modern French society. Science has advanced apace and technology has made positive contributions to information gathering and dissemination. In advancing the course of the religious thinkers, if it is settled that such advancement would validate the vision of a society where positive values reign, more options could be explored from the array of products from the world of information technology. Since current aggregation of interest is glued on the new gadgets for communication, it makes sense to leverage on this opportunity to channel matters of theism aright. The eradication of religious skepticism is no mean challenge in an era where the concept seems to have partly gone underground even though this has by no means minimized the substantiality of its disguised presence in conditions of real human existence and programs of action. Mentorship remains a viable option since the early assimilation of values tends to chart the course or direction of latter perspectives on the meaning, expectations and the futuristic questions of human existence.

Does the Wager Theory really make sense? If we consider that we wager on many issues as the existential normal; it would be quite easy to see wagering as part of human existence. We wager on the economy; politics and infrastructure. If wagering partly defines human secular concerns; it analogously would make more sense, everything being equal, to wager on matters of ultimate destiny of the human person where belief as an overwhelming involvement with the supernatural in religious correlation becomes problematic. Therefore, if one question touches on the human programs of action for a better world – which actually is shared together with (Christians), true atheists and agnostics whose programs are in some cases no less commendable – the ultimate question would be what happens to the subject-architect of these programs long after these positive

endeavors have been accomplished and the subject winds up his existential space on the spatiotemporal order. Pascal's Wager seems to have something fundamental as regards this highly significant moment.

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