Pascal’s, *Les pensées*, addresses a most important concern, that is, the ontological nature of the question about the existence of God. The conception of the universe underwent a radical change in Pascal’s writings. He rejected the rationalist point of view, that this is, an unchangeable, ordered, and intelligible world. His scientific experiments with vacuum proved to be traumatic moments in his life because the notion of vacuum represented not only a physical reality but the sentiment of being cut off from the source of meaning. “The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frighten me”, he wrote.

Man is lost between two infinities, the infinitely large and the infinitely small. By approaching one extremity, the other eludes him, Man’s intelligence can not grasp the structure of the world, much less its significance. Man is estranged from his own world, his knowledge constitutes but a few fragments, the totality and the finality are forever hidden from him.

For a brief period in his life, Pascal made an attempt to lead a worldly life. It was during this time, that he was free from physical pain and illness, which had plagued him from his earliest childhood. Nevertheless, Pascal soon discovered that a brilliant life in society is not true existence, in as much, as it diverts man, from himself and from his true purpose. Incapable of facing the only certitude, that of death, man finds ways to turn away from his misery in trifling pursuits.

If man is incapable of grasping God (totality, meaning), by means of his intellect then he must overcome this negativity by expressing faith. In other words, he must hope against hope and opt for God’s existence. To the “libertins”, sceptics
and freethinkers of his day, Pascal offered the wager: Either God exists or he does not exist. His intentions were to overcome their indifference and persuade them to choose the proposition that God exists. One is not entirely free in the wager, in a sense, because one’s very existence, the sense and direction of his life and future happiness depend on whatever choice will be made. God has not manifested himself in an evident manner, he remains “Deus absconditus”, there is enough obscurity to mislead those who do not want to believe. The gap between the intellect and the acceptance of faith must be bridged by the will. The will to faith is a paradoxical and an enigmatic move in as much as it is devoid of certitude and is intrinsically subjective.

The position of sceptics is hardly swayed by the wager because either the finitudes of this world are sufficient values for them or again, they do not consider Pascal’s problematic issue as relevant and valid. The official militant standpoint (represented by Bossuet) also radically refuses to partake in the wager. Weary of the growing indifference to religious values, and even outright atheism, this group adopted a strong partisan and dogmatic view. There is also a reformist position, defended mostly by the Jesuits, which maintains some essential parts of the Christian creed but compromises heavily some other tenets with the demands of modern realities. The Cartesian or modern rationalist approach counters the tragic Pascalian existential argument with a rhetorical argument of demonstration and makes meaning rest on the demonstration itself. Pascal confronts the propositions advanced by the above mentioned groups which oppose his own revendications. But, at the same time, he is also a part of their discourses. Pascal does not offer a replacement or a positive answer, but rather creates a vacuum and makes a vertiginous proposition by presenting the wager. A polyphonic reading of Pascal’s *Thoughts*, shows that he refuses a final resolution to the problem preferring to keep the issue open (the question of meaning) and by keeping it open, he had to have recourse to discontinuity. It is not the