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THE AUGUSTINIAN CONCEPT OF AMOUR-PROPRE,
1597-1694

by

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ABSTRACT

The term amour-propre entered the French language in the late sixteenth century. The pessimistic concept it embodied was derived from amor sui, a term of the theology of St. Augustine. Being synonymous with concupiscence, it denoted the condition to which man was reduced by original sin and was thus opposed to the love of God. Since it was stronger than reason, it came to characterize man's psychology.

One of the first full discussions in French literature of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre occurs in the writings of Bérulle, the founder of the main tradition of French Augustinianism in the seventeenth century. François de Sales, Bérulle's contemporary, modified the concept somewhat; he stressed the power of the rational faculty to control amour-propre, thus enabling man to make the initial aspiration to the love of God without divine assistance.

The Augustinian concept of amour-propre, however, retains its strict meaning in the works of those who followed in the general Augustinian tradition of the seventeenth century, such as Saint-Cyran, Arnauld, Senault, Pascal, Nicole, Esprit and Bossuet. Even though the Maximes of La Rochefoucauld are

not of a theological nature, the Augustinian concept of amour-propre plays a significant rôle in this author's moral conception of man.

Towards the end of the century, when Augustinianism was beginning to fall into disfavour, the term amour-propre gradually came to lose its original Augustinian sense. It was, however, beginning to take on a new double meaning, one pejorative and one legitimate: self-esteem was permissible, but only within certain moral limits. In these two meanings of the term are to be found the origins of the modern concept.

FOREWORD

The Augustinian concept of amour-propre played an important rôle in the general movement of ideas in the seventeenth century. This importance has not always been recognized to its full and just extent, however, since the true meaning of the term has not always been hitherto fully understood. In this present study I therefore propose to discuss the original meaning of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre and trace its development through the seventeenth century by analyzing those parts of some representative works in which it occurs or which reflect it.

Only two critical works dwell at some length on the seventeenth-century concept of amour-propre: A. Krailsheimer's Studies in Self-Interest from Descartes to La Bruyère¹ and A. Levi's "Amour-propre: The Rise of an Ethical Concept."² Levi's study is quite informative, noting the true sense of the concept, and will be referred to frequently during the course of this study. It has, however, two flaws as far as the initial meaning

¹Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

²In The Month (May, 1959), pp. 283-294. The author incorporates substantially the same material in French Moralists: The Theory of Passions, 1585-1649 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 225-233.

of the concept is concerned:³ the almost total omission of the rôle of Bérulle and the undue emphasis placed on Jansenius' Augustinus.⁴ Krailsheimer gives some fine analyses of the works of the more important writers of the seventeenth century, and reference will be made to these analyses. His main purpose, however, is to describe the way in which these works reflect the gradual breakdown of the medieval view of man and man's attempt to make himself his own axis. Amour-propre, which is never defined in its Augustinian sense, enters his discussions only insofar as it demonstrates these views.

Since the Augustinian concept of amour-propre constitutes the focal point of this study, I shall be treating typical theologians and moralists whose works deal with the concept. I should also state here that no attempt will be made to give an exhaustive examination of the entire theologies or moral views of the authors to be studied in the following pages; works will be studied only insofar as they imply or are concerned with the Augustinian concept of amour-propre.

Another point to be taken into account is that about midway through the seventeenth century, at a date impossible

³For this initial meaning, see below, pp. 12-13.

⁴"Amour-propre," p. 288; French Moralists, p. 226. See below, pp. 78-79 for a critique of Levi's position.

to specify, the Augustinian concept of amour-propre lost its pristine theological sense in some circles and became considered simply as an ethical concept with the more restrictive meaning of "egoism." And so, the expression amour-propre embraced at this time two concepts: the original Augustinian concept and the purely ethical concept of egoism.⁵ I am, however, focusing my attention on works in which the concept of amour-propre retains its theological meaning and which are, on the whole, representative.⁶

And so, bearing in mind these limitations, I intend to discuss the original meaning of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre as well as its progress through the century with reference to selected works of Bérulle, François de Sales, Saint-Cyran, Arnauld, Senault, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Nicole, Esprit and Bossuet. As far as Pascal and La Rochefoucauld are concerned, the knowledge gained from this approach should lead to the establishment of a new point of view as to the meaning and rôle of this theological concept in their respective works. The presence of La Rochefoucauld among so many religious writers

⁵See below, Epilogue, pp. 185-192, for a brief examination of this gradual change of context and meaning of the term amour-propre in the second half of the century.

⁶It is probable that an exhaustive study of all seventeenth-century texts of a theological nature would reveal more examples of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre. Within the framework of this present study, as I have said above, it has been considered reasonable to limit the scope of this research to certain important representative texts.

may seem somewhat out of place. But, as Levi suggests and as I shall be showing at greater length, the author of the Maximes basically uses the term amour-propre in its theological rather than in its more restrictive ethical sense.⁷

Finally, the dates which delimit the formal period of study, 1597 and 1694, are those of the first and last works, chronologically speaking, that are examined here with reference to the Augustinian concept of amour-propre, the first work being Bérulle's Bref Discours de l'abnégation intérieure and the last work Bossuet's Traité de la concupiscence. These two dates would seem to mark, in a very general way, the life-span of the strict Augustinian concept of amour-propre.

⁷For example, Levi writes: "La Rochefoucauld himself is clearly conscious of the theological overtones attached to the word amour-propre." French Moralists, p. 230.

INTRODUCTION

TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF THE AUGUSTINIAN CONCEPT OF AMOUR-PROPRE

Both Dauzat and Brunot affirm that the term amour-propre first entered the French language in the seventeenth century.¹ Although, as we shall see, the concept it embodied was largely theological during this first century of existence, the term amour-propre has changed in meaning and lost the earlier theological context.²

As a result of this semantic change, most modern dictionaries do not prove to be very useful as far as the definition of the Augustinian concept is concerned. They simply confine themselves to giving the modern sense of the term. The Larousse du XXe siècle, for instance, defines it as being the "bonne opinion que nous avons de nous-même et que nous tenons à donner aux autres," and goes on to say that it often assumes "un sens défavorable pour une opinion visiblement trop avantageuse qu'on a de soi-même."³ The

¹A. Dauzat, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française (Paris: Larousse, 1938), p. 32; F. Brunot, Histoire de la langue française: Des origines à 1900 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1905-1924), IV (1913), 602. As we shall see, the term actually entered the language in the late sixteenth century.

²See below, pp. 190-192.

³Ed. P. Augé (Paris: Larousse, 1928-1933), I (1928), 199.

Robert dictionary gives a similar definition, adding that amour-propre also has another meaning which is now "vieilli," namely the "tendance à ne considérer que soi."⁴ To illustrate this sense of the term it refers the reader to Pascal and La Rochefoucauld. It does not answer the more important question as to the sense in which amour-propre was used before Pascal and La Rochefoucauld in the seventeenth century. It simply deduces a definition from the context in which the term appears in certain parts of their works (the Robert dictionary refers to fragments 11 and 100 of the Brunschvicg classification and to maxim 563), and so, owing to this limited context, is led to envisage the term as an ethical rather than as a theological concept. It does not consider the term in the total context of their works. Neither of these dictionaries is then very useful for the purposes of this study.

Such is also the case with the recently published dictionaries specializing in seventeenth-century vocabulary. They too usually give a superficial examination of the term, restricting themselves to quotations from Pascal, La Rochefoucauld and Bossuet, or offering a minimal definition, such as: "Recherche exclusive de son propre intérêt personnel."⁵

⁴Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française, ed. P. Robert (Paris: Société du Nouveau Littré, 1960-64), I (1960), 140.

⁵J. Dubois & L. Lagane, Dictionnaire de la langue française classique (Paris: Belin, 1960), p. 24.

G. Cayrou notes that "amour-propre tient lieu alors du mot 'égoïsme' qui n'existe pas encore et ne sera admis par l'Académie qu'en 1762."⁶ Egoism, however, according to the Robert dictionary, means the "attachement excessif à soi-même qui fait que l'on subordonne l'intérêt d'autrui à son propre intérêt,"⁷ and proves too limited in scope to be very useful. The Augustinian concept of amour-propre in the seventeenth century has wider connotations. Moreover, the substitution of a relatively modern expression, such as egoism, for an older expression, such as amour-propre, can lead to misinterpretations, and this in fact would seem to have been the case with amour-propre. By considering it simply as egoism, critics have stressed it as an ethical concept and almost totally neglected its original theological implications. The examinations of these theological implications will, of course, constitute the primary focus of this study.

Oddly enough, the dictionaries published in the seventeenth century itself offer little enlightenment on the problem. The dictionary of the Académie Française simply lists the term under the general heading: "Propre. . . . Qui appartient à quelqu'un à l'exclusion de tout autre" and

⁶Le Français classique: Lexique de la langue au dix-septième siècle (Paris: Didier, 1948), p. 32.

⁷Dictionnaire alphabétique, II (1960), 1485.

illustrates its usage in the phrase: "C'est un homme rempli d'amour-propre."⁸ A. Furetière's dictionary is somewhat more informative, giving a substantial listing under amour-propre and illustrating the use of the word by means of quotations, unfortunately without precise references, from La Rochefoucauld, Jacques Abbadie and St. Luke. The quotation from the latter writer reads: "L'amour propre trahit les intérêts à force d'être intéressé."⁹ And this quotation, by reason of the absence of any theological considerations, would seem to relate to the idea of self-interest alone.

In the present day, only a religious dictionary gives a definition of the term amour-propre within a theological context. An interesting article on amour-propre appears in the Dictionnaire de spiritualité and the definition it gives of the concept is well worth quoting at length. Amour-propre is

. . . un amour désordonné qui nous porte à notre bien propre, personnel, sans aucune subordination à Dieu et à la droite raison Le désordre en effet n'est pas dans ce fait que l'homme aime son propre bien, puisque c'est sa nature d'aimer tout bien, y compris le sien, mais en ce qu'il préfère son bien en tant que sien à un bien supérieur ou plus général: celui de Dieu ou de ses frères. . . .

⁸Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française (Paris: Coignard, 1694), p. 335.

⁹Dictionnaire universel, contenant généralement tous les mots françois tant vieux que modernes et les termes de toutes les sciences et des arts (The Hague & Rotterdam: Leers, 1690), p. 69. I have consulted the French text of the Bible Segond and have not been able to locate this quotation in St. Luke. It is therefore not possible to be more precise on the meaning of amour-propre in this quotation. For the selection from Abbadie, see below, Epilogue, pp. 191-192.

Mais il faut reconnaître que si le propre bien de la nature raisonnable est d'aimer tout bien, celui de la nature inférieure est de ne chercher que son propre bien, immédiat et sensible, la satisfaction de ses tendances, de ses appétits même les moins raisonnables, les plus déréglés, et cette faiblesse naturelle est encore aggravée par les suites du péché originel et des péchés personnels. C'est cet amour désordonné du moi inférieur et de son bien propre qui mérite le nom d'amour-propre au sens fort, puisqu'il s'oppose au bien universel, et à l'amour qui porte à vouloir ce bien: la charité de Dieu et du prochain.¹⁰

This definition is perhaps the most informative and nearest in meaning to the Augustinian concept of amour-propre. It clearly establishes the concept within its theological setting, noting the classical distinction between the rational nature and the lower, that is, the sensual nature, which characterize the patristic conception of the soul. It explains that the sensual appetite¹¹ reigns as the dominant force in man since the rational appetite was weakened by original sin. It observes that amour-propre is the moving power in the sensual appetite and that it is therefore "désordonné" since the rational appetite can no longer control it.

This definition reflects to a certain extent the Salesian view of man.¹² Hence it states that man's sinfulness

¹⁰R. Daeschler, "Amour-propre," Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique: Doctrine et histoire, ed. M. Viller, S.J. et al. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1937-), I (1937), 533.

¹¹Appetite may be defined as the fundamental inclination or direction of a nature.

¹²See below, p.50.

results not from his love of himself, which is permissible, but from his love of himself to the exclusion of all else, including God. He thus distinguishes between two types of self-love in man, one of which is quite proper and the other being reprehensible. For Daeschler, as for François de Sales, it is only this latter love - - the "amour désordonné" - - which is known as amour-propre. As Daeschler implies, this idea of two kinds of self-love has become the orthodox Catholic view of self-love.

The Salesian view, however, is not as absolute nor as pessimistic as the Augustinian concept of amour-propre in the seventeenth century. This latter concept, as we shall see, considers both types of self-love mentioned above equally reprehensible and embraces both of them in the concept of amour-propre.

In his entry under amour-propre, Furetière notes that it is derived from amor sui.¹³ Dom Michel Jungo also gives this etymological derivation, indicating that it refers to St. Augustine's theory of the two loves: amor sui and amor Dei.¹⁴

¹³Page 69.

¹⁴Le Vocabulaire de Pascal, étudié dans les fragments pour une apologie (Paris: Editions d'Artrey, 1950), p. 49. Levi also notes this origin of amour-propre, but no systematic study of amor sui is made. French Moralists, p. 225.

It is true that the Bishop of Hippo found the origins of the concept in the New Testament,¹⁵ but he was one of the first writers to emphasize amor sui to any great extent and it was to him that Bérulle, as we shall see, went for authority. An examination of the place and meaning of amor sui in St. Augustine's works therefore becomes essential.

In St. Augustine's time arose the heresies of pelagianism and semi-pelagianism which exalted man's liberty, his natural goodness and his ability to help achieve his own salvation through good works, thus reducing to a large extent the redeeming rôle of Christ. Reacting strongly against these doctrines in the defence of Church orthodoxy, St. Augustine stressed those aspects of Pauline theology which emphasized the fundamental corruption of human nature and the consequent need for grace. As J. Calvet writes:

Saint Augustin, . . . insiste sur les aspects les plus abrupts et les plus rigides de la doctrine paulinienne: la transmission effective du péché d'Adam dans tous ses descendants, la corruption

¹⁵The origins of the concept of amor sui are found mainly in the writings of St. Paul, especially in the Epistle to the Romans 1: 24-25. Here St. Paul writes: "C'est pourquoi Dieu les [les hommes] a livrés à l'impureté, selon les convoitises de leurs coeurs; en sorte qu'ils déshonorent eux-mêmes leurs propres corps; eux qui ont changé la vérité de Dieu en mensonge, et qui ont adoré et servi la créature au lieu du Créateur" See also II Timothy 3: 2-5; I John 2:14-16; James 4:4. French translations will be used for primary sources not originally published in French for the sake of consistency in terminology.

profonde de la nature humaine, son impuissance radicale pour le bien, la toute-puissance de la grâce, l'infirmité de la liberté humaine tantôt entraînée en haut par la grâce, tantôt entraînée en bas par la concupiscence, qui est une sorte de péché permanent, un mauvais feu, toujours brûlant sous la cendre.¹⁶

The entire corruption of human nature and the permanence of concupiscence thus constitute major themes of the theology of St. Augustine; they also form, as we shall note, the basis of the concept of amor sui.

As a result of Adam's Fall, man and his posterity are in a state of original sin, of concupiscence.¹⁷ Concupiscence is the state in which the sensual appetite dominates the rational appetite. Before the taint of original sin, the rational appetite kept dominant in man the love of God, so that man was part of the universal adoration of God. With the Fall, however, the rational appetite was weakened and the sensual appetite became the stronger force:

L'âme, qui aime son propre pouvoir, glisse de l'universel, qui est commun à tous, au particulier, qui lui est propre. La faute en est à l'orgueil, cette force de séparation, . . . Si l'âme avait suivi Dieu comme guide, elle aurait pu, unie à

¹⁶La Littérature religieuse de François de Sales à Fénelon (Paris: Del Duca, 1956), p. 115.

¹⁷St Augustin, Enchiridion, ed. J. Rivière in Oeuvres de Saint Augustin (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1947-), IX (1947), 151.

l'universalité des créatures, être gouvernée de façon excellente par loi divine; mais le désir de posséder quelque chose de plus que l'universel et la prétention de se gouverner par sa propre loi la précipitèrent dans le souci du particulier, . . . Aussi quand il [l'homme] prétend être comme Dieu, c'est-à-dire n'avoir personne au-dessus de lui, sa punition est de tomber . . . dans ce qui fait le bonheur des bêtes.¹⁸

Concupiscence thus results from and is characterized by man's pride and his attempt to make himself his own God,¹⁹ and so man falls from the universal adoration of God to the personal adoration of himself. His sensual appetite dominates and leads him to seek gratification of his own desires alone, which places him on the same level as animals. This is the fundamental state of fallen humanity. Divine grace may help him resist his sensual appetite, but "à cause du corps de chair, qui n'est pas encore spirituel . . . à cause de la concupiscence [concupiscentia] de la chair," even the most saintly of men can never triumph over it completely.²⁰ It is erased by death, after which man, with God's mercy, may become one of the blessed in the Heavenly City.

¹⁸St Augustin, La Trinité, ed. P. Agaësse, S.J. & J. Moingt, S.J. in Oeuvres, XVI (1955), 237-243.

¹⁹This idea of man's aspiration to be God's equal finds its first mention in Christian literature, of course, in the Eritis sicut dii of Genesis 3:5.

²⁰St Augustin, Les Révisions, ed. G. Bardy, trans. G. Combès in Oeuvres, XII (1950), 413.

This leads to an examination of the Cité de Dieu, in which St. Augustine expresses his doctrine of the two cities and the love which is to be found in each. He first describes the two cities: "Il existe deux cités différentes et contraires, car les uns vivent selon la chair, les autres selon l'esprit; ou encore, les uns vivent selon l'homme, les autres selon Dieu."²¹ He subsequently goes on to describe the dominant motive force which has created them, enunciating the doctrine of the two loves:

Deux amours ont donc fait deux cités: l'amour de soi [amor sui] jusqu'au mépris de Dieu, la cité terrestre; l'amour de Dieu [amor Dei] jusqu'au mépris de soi, la cité céleste. L'une se glorifie en elle-même, l'autre dans le Seigneur. L'une demande sa gloire aux hommes; pour l'autre, Dieu témoin de sa conscience est sa plus grande gloire. L'une dans sa gloire dresse la tête; l'autre dit à son Dieu: Tu es ma gloire et tu élèves ma tête. L'une dans ses chefs ou dans les nations qu'elle subjugué, est dominée par la passion de dominer: dans l'autre, on se rend mutuellement service par charité; . . .²²

The relevance of this passage to the general theological thought of St. Augustine cannot be too highly stressed. As G. Bardy writes: "L'ouvrage entier de Saint Augustin se trouve en quelque sorte résumé dans cette formule lapidaire."²³ Amor sui thus

²¹St Augustin, La Cité de Dieu, ed. G. Bardy, trans. G. Combès in Oeuvres, XXXV (1959), 363.

²²Ibid., p. 465.

²³La Cité de Dieu, XXXIII, 75.

characterizes the earthly city; it is the state of those who have disavowed God, of those who live "selon l'homme." It is the state of those who have passed from the universal, the commune, to the particular, the proprium, who are totally characterized by self-glorification and pride, having made themselves the object of their adoration. These characteristics of amor sui are clearly identical with those of concupiscentia, and so it is possible to establish a general synonymy between the two terms.²⁴ Like concupiscence, amor sui is therefore the state to which man was reduced by his Fall. It is the motive force that typifies his nature and only divine grace can help him resist it, thus assisting him to walk in the way of charity. Finally, as is the case with concupiscence, amor sui ceases only with death.

It is evident that the concept of amor sui embodies a pessimistic view of man. This pessimism, no doubt, is due to the fact that St. Augustine, in attacking those who placed too much confidence in man, was attempting to restore in man the Christian virtue of humility. For, as E. Gilson writes on this question of Christian humility:

²⁴Two dependable critics make this same point: J. Orcibal, Jean Duvergier de Hauranne, abbé de Saint-Cyran, et son temps (1581-1638) (Paris: Vrin, 1947), p. 78; N. Abercrombie, Saint Augustine and French Classical Thought (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 112. Orcibal's point is made in his discussions on Bérulle (see below, p. 35) and Abercrombie's is made in discussing Pascal (see below, pp. 102-103)

Résumée sous une forme abstraite, on peut dire que l'expérience d'Augustin revient à la découverte de l'humilité. L'erreur de l'intelligence est liée à la corruption du cœur par l'orgueil, l'homme ne trouve la vérité béatifiante qu'en pliant son intelligence à la foi et sa volonté à la grâce, par l'humilité.²⁵

St. Augustine therefore indicates that this confidence is misplaced by emphasizing the corruption of human nature, thereby showing that there is no good cause for placing confidence in such a creature as man.

It is this concept of amor sui that was to become the Augustinian concept of amour-propre in the late sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century.²⁶ It is more absolute and more pessimistic than the Salesian concept in that it views both types of self-love that François de Sales distinguishes in Fallen Man as reprehensible.

To sum up, the Augustinian concept of amour-propre is, as we shall see with reference to the various studies of the Augustinian theologians that follow, first and foremost

²⁵Introduction à l'étude de Saint Augustin (Paris: Vrin, 1949), p. 299.

²⁶It is true that St. Augustine's translator renders amor sui by amour de soi and not by amour-propre. But "aucune distinction entre ces deux termes n'existait au XVIIe siècle, qui confondait dans une commune réprobation l'amour de soi et l'amour-propre." Dictionnaire de la langue française, ed. E. Littré (Paris: Hachette, 1878), I, 134. While this is not wholly correct, as François de Sales differentiates between the two terms, even so the writers of the Augustinian tradition generally use them synonymously.

the condition of Fallen Man, being brought about by original sin and being present in all mankind. It is, secondly, a psychological phenomenon, since it becomes the fundamental principle of human conduct. It is man's pride; it leads him to dominate others in order to satisfy his own desires. It motivates him to place himself at the centre of his pre-occupations, to endeavour to make himself and believe himself self-sufficient and all-powerful like God. Fundamentally, it impels man to make himself his own God. Amour-propre is therefore considered to be totally reprehensible by the Augustinians in that it induces man to seek after his personal good alone, the proprium, and not the universal good, the commune. Only divine grace can help man resist the impulses of his amour-propre, but he can never completely triumph over it. The life of a God-fearing man is thus a continual struggle against amour-propre, a struggle that ends only with death.

CHAPTER I

BERULLE AND THE AUGUSTINIAN TRADITION

The Augustinian movement in France that was to play an important rôle in the seventeenth century had begun to gain impetus towards the close of the sixteenth century and it was to find one of its first significant exponents in Pierre de Bérulle. But before proceeding to a study of Bérulle's work and the place of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre in his theology, it would be useful to describe briefly the renaissance of Augustinianism in the Catholic Europe of the sixteenth century.

Augustinian theology with its emphasis on the corrupt condition of man and the necessity for grace dominated medieval religious thought.¹ In the thirteenth century, however, the views of St. Augustine gave way somewhat to a slightly more optimistic theological view of man in the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas: "Très pénétré d'augustinisme, mais moins pessimiste que saint Augustin, et plus soucieux que lui d'équilibre et de conciliation, saint Thomas, après

¹L. Cagnet, Le Jansénisme (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961), pp. 7-8.

avoir affirmé la transmission du péché dans l'homme, insiste à la fois sur la corruption et la valeur persistante de l'homme raisonnable."² The Renaissance and its concomitant humanism gave greater impetus to this more optimistic theology, and stressing the idea of "l'homme raisonnable," witnessed the gradual formation of humanisme dévot.³

The Renaissance, owing to the new critical spirit and the advent of the printing press, also led to a wider dissemination of the writings of the Church Fathers and reasserted their authority, especially that of St. Augustine. As J. Dagens comments: "Les conséquences de cette renaissance patristique ont été incalculables. Une des plus importantes est la renaissance de l'augustinisme, à Louvain d'abord, puis dans toute l'Europe chrétienne."⁴ Two strains of theological thought, embracing two more or less opposing views of man, thus came into prominence in the sixteenth century.

The Council of Trent, which met intermittently between 1545 and 1563, sought to reaffirm the authority of the Catholic Church. It was "la réponse de l'Eglise à la provocation

²Calvet, p. 115.

³See below, p. 44 et seq.

⁴Bérulle et les origines de la restauration catholique, 1575-1611 (Paris: Desclée, 1952), p. 35.

du schisme, et l'acte par lequel, reprenant conscience d'elle-même, l'Eglise s'est renouvelée par le dedans."⁵ While it answered the Protestant claims, it did little to reconcile the conflicting tendencies of Augustinianism and devout humanism.⁶ It did, however, reinforce the authority of the Church Fathers,⁷ thereby permitting both currents of thought, which came to characterize the Counter-Reformation, to prosper: the Augustinians could claim that they were, in essence, following St. Augustine; the partisans of devout humanism could claim the authority of St. Thomas, although they were adapting his theology more to the needs of the time.⁸

In France, it was not until the civil and religious wars had been brought to an end and Henri IV had brought peace to the country that the Catholic Church was enabled to join the general European movement of the Counter-Reformation. The original inspiration of the movement in France was Augustinian.⁹

⁵H. Jedin, Crise et dénouement du Concile de Trente, trans. E. Florival (Paris: Desclée, 1965), p. 176.

⁶Dagens, p. 95.

⁷Ibid., p. 35.

⁸Cognet, p. 10.

⁹A. Adam, Sur le problème religieux dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle, Zarahoff Lecture for 1959 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 7.

The Sorbonne at the beginning of the seventeenth century, under the leadership of men such as Du Val and Gamaches, was favourable to Augustinian ideas,¹⁰ and Mme Acarie's salon, established around 1602, provided the centre from which the ideas of these people were disseminated.¹¹ Pierre de Bérulle, who studied under Du Val and who frequented Mme Acarie's salon for six or seven years, gradually became recognized as the most significant theologian of the Augustinian movement in France.¹²

Bérulle was an ardent student of patristic writings in general, but his great master was St. Augustine.¹³ Those central aspects of St. Augustine's doctrine concerning Fallen Man's condition and his consequent need for grace constitute fundamental elements of Bérulle's theology and, most important of all for our purpose, the Augustinian concept of amor sui also plays a rôle of considerable importance in his thought. As G. Bady writes: "La dénonciation de l'amour-propre, de ses ruses et de ses pièges [est] une des pensées maîtresses de Bérulle"14

¹⁰Dagens, p. 36.

¹¹Ibid., p. 110.

¹²Levi, French Moralists, p. 136.

¹³Dagens, pp. 33, 250; R. Bellemare, Le Sens de la créature dans la doctrine de Bérulle (Desclée de Brouwer, 1959), p. 102.

¹⁴L'Homme et son 'institution' de Montaigne à Bérulle, 1580-1625 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1964), p. 489.

There now follows an analysis of the concept of amor sui, which has become amour-propre in the French language, and its place in the Bref Discours de l'abnegation interieure and, subsequently, in the Oeuvres de piété.¹⁵

The Bref Discours, which was Bérulle's first publication, is not a wholly original work. It is rather a free adaptation of an Italian work of devotion entitled Breve Compendio intorno alla perfezione cristiana, written by Dona Isabella Bellinzaga and her spiritual director, the R.P. Gagliardi, and published in 1593 or possibly in 1585.¹⁶ Bérulle was studying under Beaucousin at the time and it is likely that the Bref Discours

¹⁵Pierre de Bérulle, Oeuvres complètes, reproduction of the Edition Princeps of 1644 by F. Bourgoing (Monsoult: Maison d'Institution de l'Oratoire, 1960). All the works by Bérulle that are quoted in this chapter are taken from this two volume edition. Parenthetical documentation will be used for subsequent quotations from the Oeuvres complètes.

¹⁶Dagens, p. 138. See also J. Dagens, "Notes bérulliennes: La Source du Bref Discours de l'abnegation interieure," Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, XXVII (1931), 318-349. In the article, Dagens notes that the Italian work was translated and published in 1596 by a "gentilhomme gascon," and that there is now no trace of this first French edition. It was adapted in French by Bérulle in 1597 and was again published in French in 1598 (in the "Epître dédicatoire" of which mention is made of the edition of 1596.) In 1599, it was again published in French along with Bérulle's Bref Discours in one volume. By comparing the French edition of 1599 with Bérulle's Bref Discours, Dagens discovers many textual similarities between the two works, which, he suggests, is most likely due to the fact that both are based on the 1596 edition. It seems, then, that Bérulle did not work from the Italian original, but from a French translation of it.

is the result of a collaboration between the two.¹⁷ Bérulle's lack of originality in the composition of the work is not, however, very important as far as our purpose is concerned; what is important is the fact that the concept of amour-propre plays a central rôle in the treatise: "L'amour-propre ou amour de soi, opposant l'homme à Dieu, est, pour l'auteur du Bref Discours, la forme fondamentale que revêt la corruption de notre nature."¹⁸ And this evaluation by Bady is certainly borne out, as we shall see, on examining this early Bérullian text.

The Bref Discours is, essentially, an ascetic work, advising the reader how he may prepare himself to receive God. As Bérulle states in the "Avertissement" to the work: "Ce Livret ne s'adresse qu'à ceux qui ont fait notable progrès en la haine de soy-mesme, & qui n'ont autre but que leur advancement en l'amour de Dieu, aux despens de toute autre chose." (II, 644) Man's great barrier to the love of God is his amour-propre and the only way in which he can combat it is through the practice of abnegation, which will eventually lead him to the state of "disponibilité à l'égard de Dieu."¹⁹ Bérulle is thus

¹⁷Dagens, "Notes bérulliennes," p. 338.

¹⁸Bady, p. 258.

¹⁹M. Dupuy, Bérulle: Une Spiritualité de l'adoration (Tournai: Desclée, 1964), p. 40.

describing the nature of Fallen Man in this treatise and prescribing a remedy for his ills.

The "Avant-Propos" of the Bref Discours begins with the patristic division of soul into two parts, each one of which is capable of loving God, but only with the assistance of grace:

Comme nous avons deux natures, l'une corporelle & sensible, l'autre spirituelle & raisonnable, toutes deux capables d'aimer Dieu par grace, & enclines à s'aimer elles mesmes par nature, ou plutost par une certaine inclination corrompue; aussi il y a deux sortes d'amour de Dieu, & d'amour de soy-mesme en nous
(II, 645)

Both "natures" are, because of their corruption, inclined to love themselves and are unable, again because of their corruption, to pass into the higher order of the love of God. Already, then, we have the Augustinian doctrine of the two loves: amor sui, which is man's fallen state, and amor Dei, to which man rises through grace. The idea of amor sui, however, is here conveyed by "amour de soy-mesme." Continuing his analysis of man, Bérulle writes:

Or, la perfection que l'on peut acquerir en cette vie mortelle, & vrayement militante, ne consiste qu'à perfectionner l'une & l'autre partie [de l'âme] en l'amour de Dieu, & à en dechasser l'amour propre qui y est profondement enraciné. (II, 645)

Amor sui has thus become amour-propre, which is used here to designate the two types of "amour de soy-mesme" that Bérulle has earlier related to the two parts of the soul, the "nature

corporelle et sensible" and the "nature spirituelle et raisonnable." It is evident that amour-propre, being deeply rooted in both natures and resulting from original sin, is essentially the condition of man without God. Bérulle goes on to say that amour-propre reigns in man perpetually "sans mesme qu'il y ayt aucun estat de perfection en cette vie mortelle, tant élevé soit-il, qui s'en puisse dire exempt, n'y ayant que la seule gloire des bienheureux qui le puisse bannir du tout" (II, 645) Even with God's assistance, man cannot completely overcome his amour-propre in this life; it ceases only with death.

Even if there is no way in which man can rid himself of his amour-propre entirely, he can resist its impulses and reduce their violence by cooperating with God's will and grace. (II, 646) Man has not the natural strength to overcome it alone. The "Avant-Propos" then concludes with the discussion of three general ways in which man may with some measure of success combat his amour-propre. He should, first of all, place himself under the guidance of a spiritual director because "cét amour propre est d'autant plus en nous que moins nous le decouvrons; & que nous sommes d'autant plus malades que moins nostre mal est connu" (II, 646) Secondly, he should combat it to the best of his ability since it is the fundamental enemy of his salvation. Thirdly, he should renounce all affections that he

may conceive for all things as the source of these affections may be his amour-propre and not his amour de Dieu. (II, 647)

Whereas, in the "Avant-Propos," Bérulle is emphasizing that amour-propre is the condition of man's nature, he describes in the main part of the treatise how amour-propre asserts itself in man's psychology. He instructs the reader how he may, with God's grace, combat his amour-propre by practising various degrees of abnegation. There are two foundations to abnegation: a low esteem of all created things, including oneself, and a high esteem for God, both of which will eventually unite since esteem for God, according to Bérulle, necessarily leads to a low esteem of all created things. (II, 648) Bérulle subsequently describes various ascending degrees of abnegation for man as he moves towards God.

Firstly, he advises indifference to "choses exterieures & corporelles," such as social honours, riches and health. (II, 651) Interests of this nature are not at all helpful to spiritual life in God, but are desired only by man's amour-propre, which always seeks to place him and his well-being at the centre of his preoccupations.

Secondly, Bérulle counsels abnegation with respect to "consolations interieures." These are divided into two categories which appeal to the two different parts of the soul. "Consolations

sensibles," being a source of pleasure, are to be rejected as amour-propre, "par une glouttonnie spirituelle & abus déplorable des choses saintes, les convertit en ses propres delices & plaisirs." (II, 654) "Consolations spirituelles" are also a source of danger insofar as they lead to a "certaine satisfaction & occulte complaisance de soy en icelles," brought about not by amour de Dieu, but by amour-propre. (II, 655) In this instance, amour-propre produces in man a feeling of self-satisfaction which is, for Bérulle, in no way warranted because man's condition is so corrupt.

The third degree of abnegation resides in the "re-formation des bons desirs," such as the desire for eternal life, for total abnegation and for suffering. (II, 662) The peril here lies in the possibility that amour-propre may make these desires excessive and again motivate a feeling of self-satisfaction in man. Bérulle therefore suggests that all these desires be left in the hands of God, for "la perfection de l'ame et de la vertu consiste à estre tout à fait dependante non de l'esprit humain, mais du vouloir de Dieu, . . ." (II, 661) True virtue thus proceeds only from the close cooperation between man and God; this latter quotation is also significant in that it expresses what will become one of the major themes of Bérullian theology, namely the theme of "dépendance." For Bérulle, when man stands

alone, depending solely on "l'esprit humain" as if he were God, he is unable to proceed to virtue because his weakened nature and amour-propre lead him to seek his own personal desires and not the common good. The implied criticism of the popular stoic view that man can achieve virtue through the sole exercise of his powers of reason and will is thus evident.

Stressing this imperfect nature of man, Bérulle cautions that the soul should always keep itself aware of

. . . la grandeur de son infirmité, & la subtilité de son amour propre, qui sçait bien mesme se glisser parmy des choses si bonnes & conformes au vouloir de Dieu, & le grand besoin qu'elle a de s'humilier & avilir en tout, puis qu'il faut pour son bien, que Dieu mesme l'aveugle, & luy cache ses richesses & perfections, de crainte qu'elle ne les dissipe, & qu'elle ne s'en orgueillisse. (II, 667)

If man does not continually bear in mind the corruption of his condition and continually resist the sinful impulses of his amour-propre by a feeling of humility, amour-propre will lead him to take pride in his progress towards abnegation, and pride is equally as reprehensible as self-satisfaction. This idea of the similarity between the effects of amour-propre and amour de Dieu will be later developed, among others, by Pierre Nicole in his essay "De la charité et de l'amour-propre."²⁰

Having explained these various degrees of abnegation

²⁰See below, p. 163 et seq.

through which the soul gradually progresses as it prepares to receive the amour de Dieu, Bérulle writes: "Il sembleroit que l'amour propre, avec toutes ses forces & subtilitez ne pourroit passer outre . . . & que la presumption seroit du tout bannie de la creature, . . ." (II, 667) But such is not the case; amour-propre, dislodged from the previously mentioned aspects of social and spiritual life, retreats "mesme en l'acte pur & essentiel de la vertu, . . ." (II, 667) The very act of interior adoration of God may become perverted by amour-propre in such a way that man, while ostensibly performing an act of adoration of God, is really admiring himself for his ability to perform the act and adoring the pleasure he receives from it. This view that amour-propre pervades all man's actions provides, as we shall see, the central basis of La Rochefoucauld's description of man.²¹

Stressing the fact that amour-propre is, in effect, concupiscence and that man can only resist this concupiscence when assisted by God's grace, Bérulle states that the essential mission of Christ on earth was to aid man combat his amour-propre: "Dieu . . . est descendu du Ciel expres pour le [l'amour-propre] combattre." (II, 667) Man's only remedy for his amour-propre thus resides in grace, which assists him to

²¹See below, p. 129 et seq.

renounce all the satisfactions that his amour-propre may give him in his thoughts and actions. He must try to achieve a state of passivity in which the soul keeps itself in "une dependance immediate de Dieu seul en tout & non de soy, comme estant chose de neant" (II, 672) Yet even at this high point of abnegation, when man has rejected all satisfaction in his thoughts and deeds, there is still "une distance infinie entre Dieu & l'ame." (II, 676) Man's natural propensity to amour-propre, though now controlled to a certain extent, is still present and so the spiritual combat between amour-propre and amour de Dieu lasts until death.

When considered simply as a theological work, the Bref Discours is not generally highly esteemed. Bérulle himself refers to it in the "Advertissement" as "une simple pratique d'Abnegation, sans persuasion." (II, 645) It is an "exposé froid,"²² and "oeuvre de raisonnement, plutôt que le résultat d'une expérience vécue."²³ But for the purposes of this study, it is an extremely important work; it deals almost entirely with the Augustinian concept of amour-propre and was one of the first works in French to do so.²⁴

²²Dagens, Bérulle et les origines, p. 148.

²³Dupuy, p. 38.

²⁴Dagens, Berulle et les origines, p. 144.

From the preceding analysis of the treatise, it is evident that the concept of amour-propre is substantially synonymous with the concept of amor sui. There is, in the Bref Discours, a fundamental opposition between amour-propre and amour de Dieu just as there is, in the Cité de Dieu, a similar opposition between amor sui and amor Dei. Like amor sui, amour-propre sums up the condition of Fallen Man and divine grace is the only remedy for it; like amor sui, amour-propre also becomes a psychological force, motivating man to make himself his supreme occupation as if he were God. It seems, however, that amour-propre had a more immediate textual source than the Cité de Dieu. As Dagens writes: "Il est possible, il est vraisemblable qu'il faille chercher chez les spirituels italiens une des sources de cette grande méditation pessimiste sur les ruses et la puissance de l'amour-propre que nos moralistes chrétiens et profanes varieront à l'infini pendant tout notre siècle classique."²⁵ Bérulle's treatise is, as we have seen, an adaptation of a devotional work by two such "spirituels italiens" and it seems possible that the Augustinian concept of amour-propre and the term itself came into the French language by way of them. The Bref Discours had a reasonable popularity in the seventeenth century, being published at least

²⁵Ibid., p. 146.

fourteen times between 1597 and 1700.²⁶

The Bref Discours was written early in Bérulle's spiritual development. The Oeuvres de piété, which were "le plus souvent, des esquisses de conférences spirituelles, prononcées au Carmel depuis 1604 et à l'Oratoire depuis 1611,"²⁷ reveal the doctrine of the more mature theologian. Amour-propre,

²⁶Ibid., p. 136. Bérulle was not, of course, the only early seventeenth-century theologian to stress the rôle of amour-propre in Fallen Man. Laurent de Paris also defines the term in its Augustinian sense in his "Ample Traité et discours notable de l'impur et pervers amour propre, ou de soy-mesme, ennemy mortel de l'amour pur & sincere de l'Epouse de Iesus," in Le Palais de l'amour divin entre Iesus et l'ame chrestienne auquel toute personne tant seculiere que religieuse peut voir les regles de parfaitement aimer Dieu & son prochain en cette vie (Paris: Denys de la Noüe, 1614), pp. 805-886. Laurent de Paris defines amour-propre as follows:

Voila donc vôtre ennemi découvert, l'ennemi du pur amour suprême, l'ennemi du pur amour aussi que vous luy voulez porter tout le cours de vôtre vie, l'Amour de soy, l'amour propre ou naturel, mais corrompu, recourbé, & réfléchi à soi désordonnément, amour déréglié, débandé, opposé au bien commun, bandé contre le bien commun, bandé contre le bien de Dieu, répugnant au bien de la vertu, contre lequel si sévèrement avec tant d'acrimonie . . . Saint Augustin combat en ses livres de la Cité de Dieu; . . . Il s'appelle Amour propre, parce qu'il se termine en la propre personne de celui qui s'aime naturellement, mais vitieusement, & est bandé contre le commun Amour ou charité (pp. 809-810)

Laurent de Paris also echoes Bérulle in stressing the necessity of the practice of abnegation to combat amour-propre as well as the necessity of making oneself dependent on God:

Exercez vous donc en un total rebut & rejet ou dénudation & desappropriement volontaire de toutes choses qui ne sont point Dieu, ou qui ne conduisent point à Dieu qui se possèdent par & avec affection desordonné, ôtez en vôtre coeur, renoncez à toute volonté d'icelles, n'en craignez la sustration faite par les supérieurs, ou par nôtre Seigneur, ains réjouissez vous en, & ce par une vraie haine ou abnégation & contemnement de vous-mêmes Dépendez totalement de la providence & disposition de Dieu (pp. 883-884)

²⁷Dagens, Bérulle et les origines, p. 320.

the term, does not appear as frequently in them as it did in the Bref Discours, but the central ideas of this Augustinian concept are still very much present.

In the first creation of man, God imprints in him two fundamental inclinations:

Dans le mesme instant de la Creation, il y a deux mouvements differens: l'un produisant la creature hors de Dieu mesme, l'autre la referant & l'attirant à Dieu mesme, & comme en l'un nous sortons de Dieu, en l'autre nous retournons & rentrons en Dieu, . . .
(no. 112, II, 967)

These two "mouvements" are thus towards man himself and towards God; in other words they are the inclinations of St. Augustine's amor sui and amor Dei. In the pristine state of nature, they were in harmony with each other: man could adore himself along with the rest of creation and he was also part of the universal adoration of God.

With the Fall of man, this harmony was destroyed: "Le peché mesme . . . nous a ravé la puissance d'aimer Dieu; . . ."
(no. 143, II, 1043) The "mouvement" itself towards God is not destroyed, but man no longer has the power to join himself to it: "Nostre Esprit, interessé par le peché originel, & rempli d'amour propre, n'a aucune puissance de soy en cét Estat, . . ."
(no. 179, II, 1067-1068) The inclination towards self, man's amour-propre, predominates and is in fact supreme:

Voilà l'estat miserable de la nature intelligente depuis sa perte, car elle est incapable d'amour, & eternellement incapable en sa damnation & en sa vie sur la Terre: elle est sans usage de l'amour legitime, de l'amour digne d'elle-mesme, de l'amour immortel digne de sa condition immortelle, de l'amour divin digne de son origine divine, . . . (no. 136, II, 1006)

By virtue of the Fall, man has rendered himself incapable of attaining the legitimate amour de Dieu, the one love worthy of man's immortal condition and of his divine origin. Man is therefore characterized by his illegitimate love of himself. Amour-propre thus becomes the condition of man without God.

Bérulle writes: "Il y a deux Mondes au Monde, l'un sensible exposé à nos yeux, l'autre spirituel, mais plus grand, plus réel & plus important que l'autre: . . ." (no. 176, II, 1063) God is the creator of both worlds and the principle behind both worlds. In his state of felicity when his inclinations to self and to God were whole, man could see both worlds. But since his original sin has reduced him to his amour-propre, his perception stops short at the "monde sensible" and he is therefore unable to recognize the spiritual world and God: "Ce monde que nous voyons, a pour son principe, un Dieu que nous ne voyons pas: comme le corps que nous avons, a pour son soutien un Esprit qui nous est invisible." (no. 164, II, 1045) For man, then, dominated by his amour-propre, God becomes a Deus absconditus, -- a theme which Pascal was to treat of in his Pensées.²⁸

²⁸See below, p. 104.

Now that he has broken the link between himself and God, man cannot achieve virtue. His amour-propre diametrically opposes him to the true source of virtue, the amour de Dieu, and leads him constantly into sinfulness:

Le peché dans lequel nous naissons, nous incline au peché dans lequel nous vivons & nous mourons: & dans les ressorts de notre nature, nous n'avons aucune voye & puissance de nous préserver, ny de la mort ny du peché; . . . (no. 170, II, 1054)

Man without God is powerless to rise above his condition of amour-propre, the central spring of his nature, and so lives and dies in sin.

Being perpetually possessed by this inclination to self, man's condition is thus one of wretchedness and misery. He is continually haunted by the fear of death:

Le monde est l'eschafaut de nostre supplice, nous sommes non seulement obligez à la mort, mais condamméz à la mort. Nous vivons en la Terre, comme entre nostre sentence & nostre execution: nos pensées, nos conseils, nos paroles, sont dans l'impuissance, dans l'inutilité, dans la déformité de la mort. (no. 139, II, 1009)

Characterized by "les inclinations de la nature, & les inventions de l'amour propre" (no. 166, II, 1050), man is unwilling to consider these unpleasant consequences of his condition. He turns to sleep, but "le repos mesme donné à la nature par le sommeil ne luy suffit pas; . . ." (no. 125, II, 989) And so, in his waking hours, he tries to distract his mind from existential

reflexions by keeping himself in a constant motion: "La nature [de l'homme] est tousiours en action perpetuelle, & ne cesse iamais de croistre, & de changer l'aliment en sa substance: . . ." (Ibid.)²⁹

It is his amour-propre that leads man to attempt to rival God by asserting his independence and self-sufficiency. Speaking of the stoics, who were notable exponents of this view, Bérulle writes:

En cét égarement de la nature, quelques-uns ont pensé prendre un chemin different & s'élever plus haut, en tenant des maximes impossibles à la nature. Le monde les estime, & ils me font pitié, un Seneque, un Epictete: car ce peu de lueur qui reste en la nature, ils l'ont converty en tenebres. Ils établissent l'estime & l'amour propre de la nature, & non pas l'amour de Dieu: Ils s'arrêtent en eux-mesmes, & il s'en faut éloigner: . . . (no. 136, II, 1006)

For Bérulle, man cannot find true contentment in himself; the tendencies of Renaissance humanism towards the exaltation of man are therefore misdirected and find their origin in nothing more than the forceful assertion of man's natural inclination to himself, his amour-propre. There is in these views of Bérulle a criticism of the neostoic thought that was widespread

²⁹There is in these quoted lines, as Dagens points out, (Bérulle et les origines, p. 286) a viewpoint that evokes the idea of divertissement such as it will appear in Pascal's Pensées.

in some circles at this point in the seventeenth century.³⁰

And, as Dagens writes, "il semble bien que Bérulle soit à l'origine de l'antistoïcisme chrétien du XVIIe siècle."³¹

In a Bérullian perspective, man is, by his very essence, dependent on God and any attempt to dissent from this dependency simply attests the perverseness of human nature that was brought about by the original sin. When, therefore, man's amour-propre leads him to make himself his own God, he can do nothing but seek his own personal good, the proprium, which is totally opposed to the amour de Dieu, which seeks the commune. It is in this sense above all for Bérulle and the Augustinians that amour-propre is a pessimistic concept.

All in all, because of the corruption of his condition, the perversity of his actions and his invincible amour-propre, man without God is

. . . un neant qui tend au neant, qui cherche le neant, qui s'occupe du neant, qui se contente du neant, qui se remplit du neant; & qui enfin se ruine & se détruit soy-mesme pour un neant. (no. 110, II, 961)

³⁰This humanism that Bérulle criticizes is, for example, reflected in the views of Du Vair. He writes: "L'homme se considère soi-même, s'esmerveille de son excellence, se prise plus que toutes les autres creatures, et met toute son estude à se parer et honorer, et faire paroistre ce qui est d'excellent en lui." Quoted in J. Maurens, La Tragédie sans tragique: Le Néostoïcisme dans l'oeuvre de P. Corneille (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966), p. 131.

³¹Bérulle et les origines, p. 339.

Man without God is nothing since he was formed from nothing and will return to nothingness since he is content with himself, and such a disposition can only result in his eventual damnation.³²

"A l'homme que décrit Bérulle, perdu dans les ténèbres et voué à la mort, il ne reste d'autre ressource que de tendre les bras vers le Rédempteur."³³ And it is at this point that the Mystery of the Incarnation and the dogma of Redemption become of prime importance in Bérulle's description of man, for Christ restores in man the love of God through the action of grace: "Le Fils de Dieu se donne à l'homme pour l'homme, pour faire vivre Dieu en l'homme, & l'homme en Dieu." (no. 14, II, 765) With the gift of grace, Christ

. . . nous veut tirer hors la satisfaction de nos sens, & nous devons estre dans la satisfaction de Dieu; hors de nostre volonté, dans celle de Dieu; hors de nostre propre amour, dans celui de Dieu; hors de nos desseins, dans ceux de Dieu. (no. 168, II, 1052)

As is the case in the Bref Discours, grace alone can help man

³²This idea of the intrinsic nothingness of man is also well expressed in the Discours de l'estat et des grandeurs de Iesus. Here Bérulle writes: "Car entre le neant & l'estre de la nature, il n'y a rien d'interposé: Et entre l'homme & le neant, il n'y a qu'une paroy entre deux, & encores n'est-elle que de fange. L'homme est formé du limon de la Terre, & la Terre est tirée du neant: Il n'y a donc que ce peu de limon qui sert comme de mur metoyen entre le neant & l'homme: . . . (I, 221)

³³Adam, Sur le problème religieux, p. 8.

overcome his amour-propre, or "propre amour" as Bérulle says here, and establish him in the amour de Dieu. It is through the action of grace that man achieves a new life, which, for Bérulle, is the true life and the only one in which man may fulfil the promise of his divine origin:

O Vie, vraye vie & seule Vie, vie du Ciel & non de la Terre!
 Vie propre au Ciel, estrangere à la Terre, & toutefois établie
 en la Terre! Vie propre à Dieu, mais offerte à l'homme, s'il
 veut se passer de soy-mesme à Dieu, c'est a dire, du Neant à
 l'estre & de la mort à la vie; en un mot, s'il veut estre
 Dieu. (no. 163, II, 1043)

Grace, then, does not destroy man's free-will; he may accept it if he desires, or refuse it if his amour-propre, his concupiscence, so commands. For, as J. Orcibal notes in an important phrase, "l'amour-propre ou concupiscence s'oppose constamment à la grâce. C'est là un effet de la chute dont, en fervent disciple de saint Augustin, Bérulle marque en termes saisissants la profondeur."³⁴

As is the case in the Bref Discours, the action of grace never totally destroys man's amour-propre. Grace simply helps him resist the sinful impulses of amour-propre by giving him the spiritual strength to practise abnegation, or "aneantissement" as Bérulle now prefers to call it, and so maintain himself in his "mouvement"

³⁴Jean Duvergier de Hauranne, abbé de Saint-Cyran, et son temps, p. 78.

towards God. (no. 149, II, 1026-1028)³⁵ For, as Bérulle has stated in his Bref Discours, this practice of abnegation is the sole means by which man in grace may counteract his natural, and therefore sinful, desire to pay homage to himself and his own qualities to the exclusion of all else. God alone, by his very nature, is the sole independent Being. Man, on the other hand, created by the Divinity with an inclination that returns him to his Creator, is thus by his very nature dependent on Him. This point is clearly made in the Discours de l'estat et des grandeurs de Iesus, where we read:

Tant il est propre & essentiel à l'Estre divin & incréé d'estre independant: & Tant il est propre & essentiel à tout estre créé, d'estre indigeant, adherant & dependant de son Dieu, de son Principe, de son origine; . . . (I, 252)

Man must therefore strive to make himself totally dependent on God, for in this way he loses his individuality -- individuality being in its strongest form the assertion of self over others and thus an impulse of amour-propre -- and joins himself to the universal movement of the adoration of God.

³⁵Bérulle stresses this idea in a letter to the "Religieuses Carmélites" when he writes: "Et il faut vaincre la loy des sens & de l'amour propre, pour se rendre obeïssantes & sujettes à la loy de l'esprit & de l'amour de Dieu. En ces deux loix consiste tout l'usage & l'exercice de la vie humaine sur la Terre, & mesme apres cette vie: . . ." (II, 1143)

Even while ostensibly walking in the path that God has elected for him, man should take care to bear in mind that the path is not intrinsically virtuous, but virtuous since it leads to God. In other words, man should be careful that his Christian way of life is always closely related to God and does not become an end in itself; if it does, the result is a feeling of self-satisfaction which alienates man from God:

Quand les voyes sont plus cogneuës & sensibles, encores est-il mieux à mon advis, de se lier à Dieu par icelles, que de se lier à icelles pour eviter l'engagement secret & subtil, que l'amour propre sçait bien faire entre l'ame & les graces & voyes de Dieu sur elle, pour divertir subtilement l'ame, & la desunir de Dieu par les voyes de Dieu mesme. (no. 149, II, 1027)

With the assistance of grace and careful thought, the practice of abnegation becomes man's loftiest way of praising God and of maintaining himself in the amour de Dieu:

L'Abnegation est fondée en la Grandeur de Dieu, & en l'estat de la creature tirée du neant, & tendante au neant par sa condition propre & par le peché; & en une autre sorte de neant de soy-mesme par la grace. (no. 132, II, 999)

This latter quotation also has the virtue of explaining the double sense of the term "neant" in Bérullian thought. Man is first and foremost a "neant" insofar as his condition of amour-propre will result in his destruction. He must therefore aspire to Christ in Whom he will become again a "neant" by making God and not himself his constant preoccupation.

Bérulle sums up these ideas of dependence on God and abnegation by means of an interesting metaphor:

Il faut considerer que nostre vie est un rayon & participation de la Divinité, qui doit estre tousiours adherant à son Soleil: mais un rayon qui va tous les iours se diminuant & s'affoiblissant quant à la vie humaine; & se confortant & perfectionnant, si nous voulons, quant à la Vie Divine. (no. 176, II, 1063)

Just as the ray can only exist and continue to exist by virtue of the presence of the sun, even so man can only live and continue to live when he acknowledges the existence of God and when he makes his way of life conform to the amour de Dieu.

There are, then, three orders in Bérulle's thought: "L'ordre de la nature, de la grace, de la gloire." (no. 190, II, 1100) The order "de la nature" is man's natural condition of original sin in which the inclination towards self, man's amour-propre, dominates; the order "de la grace" is the state of man when visited by grace and in which the spiritual combat between amour-propre and amour de Dieu takes place; the order "de la gloire" is, finally, the condition of the blessed in the Heavenly City.

And so, Bérulle's definition of man, which Charles Du Bos finds so praiseworthy,³⁶ is one that takes into account

³⁶ Approximations, 6e série (Paris: Corrêa, 1934), p. 199.

both man's corrupt condition and his potential, when in grace,
to raise himself up to God:

Il est miracle d'une part, & de l'autre un neant; Il est celeste d'une part, & terrestre de l'autre: Il est spirituel d'une part, & corporel de l'autre. C'est un Ange, c'est un animal, c'est un neant, c'est un miracle, c'est un centre, c'est un monde, c'est un Dieu, c'est un neant environné de Dieu, indigeant de Dieu, capable de Dieu, & remply de Dieu s'il veut. (no. 114, II, 969)

And so, while painting the picture of the misery of the human condition, Bérulle goes to great lengths to show that man nevertheless has within him, if he is willing to accept God, the opportunity to realize himself fully.

In the Oeuvres de piété, the concept of amour-propre is still as fundamental to Bérulle's thought as it was in his less original Bref Discours. The whole basis of his doctrine concerning man seems to be centred on the Augustinian doctrine of the two loves. Christ's redeeming rôle is to mediate between the two and, through grace, to allow man to achieve a new being. As Bellemare writes: "L'être de la nature n'est, de lui-même, rien dans l'ordre de la grâce. Si l'homme passe de l'un à l'autre, c'est à condition qu'un principe divin agisse en lui . . . capable d'infuser un nouvel être."³⁷ With such assistance, man may resist his amour-propre and join himself to the general and universal movement towards God:

³⁷Page 67.

Ce doit estre un de nos soins, de ioindre nostre mouvement propre & particulier, au mouvement naturel & universel que Dieu imprime dans la nature: de tendre à Dieu, & conduire l'usage de nostre estre selon le vouloir de celuy qui nous a donné l'estre; . . .
(no. 123, II, 986)

As in the Bref Discours, amour-propre is considered both as the condition and as the psychological force that characterize man without God.

This more mature doctrine of the Oeuvres de piété was disseminated through the Oratoire, which Bérulle established in 1611 with the aim of reforming the priesthood. His active teaching was, perhaps, more influential than his published works,³⁸ and one of those who came to study under Bérulle was Saint-Cyran,³⁹ who was to continue the Augustinian tradition after Bérulle's death. And so, as far as the Augustinian concept of amour-propre is concerned, Bérulle is the direct or indirect foundation on which the subsequent writers to be discussed here will base their ideas.

Conclusion

"Dans ce siècle qui exaltait tous les pouvoirs humains, toutes les grandeurs, toute la gloire humaine, il

³⁸P. Cochois, Bérulle et l'Ecole française (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963), pp. 145-146.

³⁹Levi, French Moralists, p. 139.

[Bérulle] a voulu replacer Dieu et la religion au centre de la vie."⁴⁰ Bérulle thus runs counter to the humanistic faith in man which was prevalent in the first half of the seventeenth century. In opposing this current of thought, he drew largely on the doctrine of St. Augustine, who had himself had cause to combat similar theories which exalted man's natural powers. It is in this sense that Bérulle may be considered the founder of the main tradition of seventeenth-century Augustinianism.⁴¹

As we have seen in the preceding analyses of the Bref Discours and in the Oeuvres de piété, amour-propre, otherwise concupiscence, is the condition of man insofar as it is a principal characteristic of original sin; it is also a psychological phenomenon insofar as it becomes the sole principle of human conduct, asserting itself through man's pride, his desire for self-sufficiency and through his making himself his supreme occupation as though he were God. For Bérulle, as for St. Augustine, this condition of amour-propre is utterly reprehensible because it leads man to seek after his own personal good alone and is totally opposed to the inclination of amour de Dieu, which leads to the seeking of the universal

⁴⁰Dagens, Bérulle et les origines, p. 68.

⁴¹Levi, French Moralists, p. 137.

good. Bérulle, whose moral perspective is theocentric, therefore stresses that this central principle of human nature is intrinsically sinful and will lead man to his eventual destruction.

Man is given the potential to resist his amour-propre when visited by grace; but his life thereafter must be characterized by the practice of abnegation and spiritual humility in order to counteract the impulses of his amour-propre. As Bady writes: "Cet amour-propre si tenace, si subtil, si envahissant, que Bérulle dénonçait dès son premier écrit, l'abnégation seule peut en triompher."⁴² Even so, the spiritual combat between amour-propre and amour de Dieu can never be brought to a completely successful conclusion in this life; the struggle ends only with death, when man, with God's mercy, is reunited with Him.

The influence of Bérulle was substantial and his ideas, to a large extent, were to be continued by Saint-Cyran and his followers through to Bossuet. But before considering the Augustinian concept of amour-propre in this continuation of the Augustinian tradition, we should first pause to analyze its place in the works of Saint François de Sales, who was writing in the general movement of devout humanism and whose theology brings some modification to the concept.

⁴²Page 499.

CHAPTER II

FRANCOIS DE SALES AND DEVOUT HUMANISM

Renaissance humanism with its tendency towards the glorification of human nature had had a great influence on some theological circles in the sixteenth century, among the more significant of which was the Society of Jesus,¹ founded in 1540. The teachings of the Society, along with other optimistic currents of Catholic thought,² led to the gradual formation of Christian humanism at the dawn of the seventeenth century. The implications of this particular trend of Christianity are well described by H. Brémond:

Comme théologie, l'humanisme chrétien accepte purement et simplement celle de l'Eglise, . . . Sans négliger aucune des vérités essentielles du christianisme, il met de préférence en lumière celles qui paraissent les plus consolantes, les plus épanouissantes, en un mot, les plus humaines, . . . Ainsi il ne croit pas que le dogme central, c'est le péché originel, mais la Rédemption.³

The Christian humanists, then, made the dogma of Redemption the

¹Cognet, p. 10.

²For example, Christian stoicism, as typified in the position of Du Vair, illustrates these same tendencies.

³Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1935-1936), I, 11.

central point of their theology and, by virtue of their optimistic view of man, were led to attach little importance to the idea of original sin. They referred to it as a "blessure," as Mousnier writes below, which did not destroy the magnificence or natural harmony of man, that is, the harmony between the sensual and rational natures. Altogether, for the Christian humanist,

l'homme est un reflet de la divine ressemblance, donc la nature humaine est la merveille de la création. La blessure du vieil Adam n'a pas pu gangrener tout notre être. Nos passions, effets de notre nature, créées par la sagesse de Dieu, sont bonnes Notre propre raison, reflet de la raison divine, nous donnera les principes de notre conduite.⁴

Such views as these are evidently quite different from those of a Bérulle, particularly insofar as they stress the supremacy of reason in man's make-up.

This optimistic idea of man inherent in Christian humanism is also very much present in devout humanism. The difference between the two humanistic currents of theology is not great, as Brémond points out: "L'humanisme chrétien est plus spéculatif que pratique, . . . il s'adresse à l'élite plutôt qu'à la foule. . . . L'humanisme dévot applique aux besoins de la vie intérieure, met à la portée de tous et les

⁴R. Mousnier, Les XVIIe & XVIIIe siècles (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961), pp. 198-199.

principes et l'esprit de l'humanisme chrétien."⁵ It is the spirit of devout humanism that prevails in the works of François de Sales and he is generally considered to be one of its most outstanding exponents.⁶

In the early years of his spiritual development St François was very much under the influence of Augustinian ideas. After his religious experience at Notre-Dame-des-Grès, however, he abandoned the more pessimistic of the views of the Bishop of Hippo and passed over to the Jesuit theories of man and grace.⁷ As Calvet writes:

Dieu veut sauver tous les hommes et c'est en prévision de leur activité méritoire, sous l'impulsion de la grâce impartie à tous, qu'il les prédestine au salut. C'est à cette doctrine, qui met notre avenir spirituel entre nos mains, que François de Sales s'attache pour toujours; . . .⁸

In spite of his rejection of Augustinianism, St François still refers to the Augustinian concept of amour-propre in his works. It is not, however, given a place of primary importance. As we have seen, the concept itself is dependent on the doctrine of original sin. When original sin is made a

⁵Brémond, I, 17.

⁶Ibid., 104.

⁷Calvet, pp. 23-24.

⁸Ibid., p. 24.

central point of theology, then amour-propre with all its implications becomes central and this has been noted in Bérulle's works. If the doctrine of original sin has only a secondary importance, as it does with the Christian humanists, then the concept of amour-propre tends to have only a secondary importance. As we shall see, this is true of the place of the concept in the works of François de Sales that are studied here. Even so, when he discusses amour-propre, he does so with great insight; in fact, as one critic writes: "Pour la finesse des analyses [de l'amour-propre], il faudrait sans doute donner le prix à François de Sales."⁹ There now follows an analysis of the concept and its place in the Introduction à la vie dévote and the Traité de l'amour de Dieu.

The Introduction à la vie dévote, published in 1609, is addressed to ordinary people living and playing a rôle in society and its aim is to instil "la religion vraie, la dévotion, dans la vie quotidienne du monde, de la ville et même de la cour."¹⁰ It does not therefore go deeply into major theological problems, but simply offers practical advice to those who desire to become devout Christians. François de Sales had read the Breve Compendio in its French translation, probably the one of

⁹Daeschler, "Amour-propre," p. 534.

¹⁰Calvet, p. 47.

1598.¹¹ Although he admired it, he had reservations about it, possibly owing to its emphasis on amour-propre and original sin. For, according to St François, "le péché originel n'a pas vicié radicalement notre nature. Notre activité naturelle n'est pas corrompue dans sa source."¹² He would not therefore share the view that amour-propre, or concupiscence, is present in all man's natural actions. The concept, nevertheless, is given a rôle of some importance in certain parts of the treatise. The Introduction is addressed to Philothée, meaning "amatrice ou amoureuse de Dieu,"¹³ and she symbolizes all those who want to lead devout lives. The treatise will advise her how to aspire to true devotion and counsels various spiritual exercises to this end.

Treating of the necessity of "l'esprit juste et raysonnable," St François writes:

¹¹Dagens, "Notes bérulliennes," p. 347. This Italian work has been mentioned earlier, see above p. 18.

¹²F. Vincent, Saint François de Sales, directeur d'âmes: L'Education de la volonté (Paris: Beauchesne, 1932), p. 90.

¹³François de Sales, Introduction à la vie dévote, pref. by Dom B. Mackey, in Oeuvres de Saint François de Sales: Evêque et prince de Genève et docteur de l'Eglise (Annecy: Niêrat, 1892-1932), III (1893), 8. Parenthetical documentation will be given for all subsequent references to this work in this edition.

Nous ne sommes hommes que par la rayson, et c'est pourtant chose rare de treuver des hommes vrayement raysonnables, d'autant que l'amour propre nous detraque ordinairement de la rayson, nous conduisant insensiblement a mille sortes de petites, mais dangereuses injustices et iniquités (p. 257)

These small but dangerous sins that result from amour-propre are "des grans defautz de rayson et de charité; . . ." (p. 259)

When François de Sales goes on to describe some of these sins, it becomes evident that, in this instance, he sees amour-propre asserting itself on the social level of man's relationship with man rather than on the spiritual level of man's relationship with God.¹⁴ Owing to these impulses of amour-propre,

. . . nous avons un coeur doux, gracieux et courtois en nostre endroit, et un coeur dur, severe, rigoureux envers le prochain. Nous avons deux poids: l'un pour peser nos commodités avec le plus d'avantage que nous pouvons, l'autre pour peser celles du prochain avec le plus de desavantage qu'il se peut; . . . (p. 258)

Amour-propre thus leads man to esteem himself more highly than his fellow men; man views himself indulgently and his fellows critically. François de Sales seems to have been one of the first writers to discuss these aspects of human relationships

¹⁴The social effects of amour-propre were not described by Bérulle. He was more interested in describing its spiritual effects, which lead man to deny God and make a God of himself. These social effects, however, are necessary consequences of man making himself his supreme occupation. Just as amour-propre leads him to assert his own interests over those of God, it will also lead him to act in a similar manner in his relationship with other men.

within the context of the concept of amour-propre.¹⁵

Philothée, however, has the natural ability to overcome the criminal social effects of amour-propre through the process of self-examination:

Resouvenés-vous donq, ma Philothée, d'examiner souvent vostre coeur s'il est tel envers le prochain comme vous voudries que le sien fust envers vous si vous esties en sa place, car voyla le point de la vraye rayson. (p. 259)

The "point de lay vraye rayson" has been treated earlier by St François in the chapter entitled: "Des conversations et de la solitude." Here he writes:

Il faut aymer le prochain comme soy mesme: pour monstrier qu'on l'ayme, il ne faut pas fuir d'estre avec luy, et pour tesmoigner qu'on s'ayme soy mesme, on doit demeurer en soy mesme quand on y est. (p. 222)

François de Sales thus finds one aspect of self-love legitimate;

¹⁵It would not be out of place here to note that Montaigne had discussed these social effects of amour-propre in his Essais. The term amour-propre had not entered the French language at the time when Montaigne was writing, but he refers to these same aspects of social behaviour within the context of the term gloire, which may be taken here as synonymous with pride. He writes in his essay entitled: "De la praesumption": "Il y a deux parties en cette gloire: sçavoir est, de s'estimer trop et de s'estimer trop et de n'estimer pas assez autrui." Oeuvres completes, ed. A. Thibaudet & M. Rat, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), p. 617. As is evident, this idea relates closely to the one that St François develops above; it is, however, doubtful whether one may talk of a positive influence of Montaigne on the latter.

it is that love of oneself which is balanced by a love of one's neighbours. He refers to this legitimate love as amour de soi-même. The other type of self-love, amour-propre, is always reprehensible.¹⁶

St François returns to this differentiation between amour de soi-même and amour-propre when he questions Philothée:

Tenez-vous bon ordre en l'amour de vous mesme? car il n'y a que l'amour desordonné de nous mesmes qui nous ruine. Or, l'amour ordonné veut que nous ayons plus l'ame que le cors, que nous ayons plus de soin d'acquérir les vertus que toute autre chose, que nous tenions plus de conte de l'honneur celeste que de l'honneur bas et caduque. (p. 348)

This "amour desordonné" is evidently amour-propre, which is always illegitimate since it leads to sinfulness and man's eventual ruin. The "amour ordonné" would therefore seem to be the legitimate amour de soi-même, which denotes, for François de Sales, that love which is proper and necessary since it is controlled by reason and balanced by a love of one's neighbour.

¹⁶This distinction that St François makes between amour-propre and amour de soi-même is stressed by J.-P. Camus, L'Esprit de Saint François de Sales (Paris, 1770), pp. 308-310; J.-E. d'Angers, who paraphrases Camus' chapter on this Salesian distinction, writes: "L'amour-propre est toujours mauvais, car il n'y a point de péché sans arrêt volontaire en la créature ou en soi, contre la volonté du Créateur; par contre l'amour de nous-même est bon, car nous sommes obligés de nous aimer en Dieu et selon Dieu." "Problèmes et difficultés de l'humanisme chrétien (1600-1642)," Dix-septième siècle, nos. 62-63 (1964), p. 23. Daeschler appears to have this passage of the Introduction in mind when he defines amour-propre; see above, p. 4.

And so, although he uses amour-propre in its Augustinian meaning, St François nevertheless points out one aspect of self-love which is altogether meritorious.¹⁷

François de Sales refers to spiritual amour-propre in the chapter entitled: "De l'humilité plus intérieure." He discusses false humility, which induces man not to pray, or not to take part in the Eucharist, ostensibly because of a feeling of unworthiness. He comments:

¹⁷This concept of a legitimate amour de soi brings to mind the Cartesian concept of self-esteem, also denoted by the term amour de soi. For example, in article 204 of his Traité des passions of 1649, Descartes defines la gloire; it is "une espèce de joie fondée sur l'amour qu'on a pour soi-même, et qui vient de l'opinion ou de l'espérance qu'on a d'être loué par quelques autres." R. Descartes, Oeuvres et lettres, ed. A. Bridoux, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1953), p. 791. In article 205, Descartes goes on to define la honte; he writes: "La honte . . . est une espèce de tristesse fondée aussi sur l'amour de soi-même, et qui vient de l'opinion ou de la crainte qu'on a d'être blâmé; . . ." (Ibid.) In the subsequent article, Descartes sums up on la gloire and la honte, declaring: "Or la gloire et la honte ont même usage en ce qu'elles nous incitent à la vertu, l'une par l'espérance, l'autre par la crainte; . . ." (Ibid., p. 792)

Cartesian amour de soi, like Salesian amour de soi, is thus intrinsically virtuous and leads to virtue. It is, in fact, possible to suggest that Cartesian amour de soi depends directly on the Salesian concept and, more generally, that the Cartesian view of man finds one of its more immediate antecedents in the thought of François de Sales. As is plainly evident, nothing could be further removed from the pessimistic Augustinian concept of amour de soi, considered the synonym of amour-propre within the strictly Augustinian school of thought, than these particular views of Descartes and François de Sales.

Tout cela n'est qu'artifice et une sorte d'humilité non seulement fause, mais maligne, par laquelle on veut tacitement et subtilement blâmer les choses de Dieu, ou au fin moins, couvrir d'un prétexte d'humilité l'amour propre de son opinion, de son humeur et de sa paresse. (p. 148)

Amour-propre appears to be used here in the sense of pride or vanity, which may lead man to place his own views, the promptings of his feelings and his pleasure in his slothfulness over the demands of God. It is therefore opposed to the love of God and leads man away from it.

We have noted that Philothée can control social amour-propre by reason and self-examination. Similarly, she has the ability to control spiritual amour-propre through the exercise of will. As St François writes:

Consideres la noblesse et excellence de vostre ame, qui a un entendement lequel connoist non seulement tout ce monde visible, mais connoist encor qu'il y a des Anges et un Paradis; connoist qu'il y a un Dieu tres souverain, . . . et de plus connoist ce qui est propre pour bien vivre Vostre ame a de plus une volonté toute noble, laquelle peut aymer Dieu et ne le peut haïr en soy mesme. (pp. 353-354)

There is no idea of the Deus absconditus in this humanistic theology. For François de Sales, Fallen Man is aware of his inclination to himself and of his inclination to God even in a state of original sin. The will, moreover, has the natural ability to love God. These views are evidently quite different

from those of Bérulle and they will also be noted in the Traité de l'amour de Dieu.

In the Introduction à la vie dévote, François de Sales was writing for the ordinary layman. The Traité de l'amour de Dieu, being addressed to the "âmes d'élite,"¹⁸ is of a different nature; it is much more a work of pure theology and deals almost wholly with man's relationship with God. It is addressed throughout to Theotime, who symbolizes "l'esprit humain." (IV, 13) Amour-propre with its Augustinian implications enters his discussions, but it does not play a major rôle in the work. What dominates is the Salesian optimistic view of man. As Vincent writes: "Nulle part . . . nous ne trouvons trace chez lui de conception déprimante . . . qui fait du péché originel comme une 'dénaturation' de l'homme, une décheance en vertu de laquelle notre substance serait empoisonnée d'une sorte de virus corrupteur."¹⁹

St François writes of the condition of Fallen Man as follows:

¹⁸François de Sales, Traité de l'amour de Dieu, pref. Dom B. Mackey, in Oeuvres, IV (1894), v. The Traité is found in volumes IV and V of this edition and parenthetical documentation will be used for all subsequent quotations from this edition. The original edition of the work was published in 1616.

¹⁹Pages 81-82.

Bien que l'estat de nostre nature humaine ne soit pas maintenant dollé de la santé et droitture originelle que le premier homme avoit en sa creation, . . . si est ce toutefois que la sainte inclination d'aymer Dieu sur toutes choses nous est demeuree, comme aussi la lumiere naturelle par laquelle nous connoissons que sa souveraine bonté est aymable sur toutes choses; . . . (IV, 78)

From the outset, then, it is made clear that Fallen Man's awareness of God remains. Not only is he aware of God, but he is also capable of loving God: "Nostre coeur humain produit bien naturellement certains commencemens d'amour envers Dieu; . . ."
(IV, 82) Only grace, however, permits man to love God above all else (Ibid.); its function is to confirm and strengthen this initial movement that man makes to God without divine assistance.

For Bérulle, man's will is dominated by his amour-propre, or concupiscence. But, for François de Sales, the will may reign supreme in man, dominating the sensual appetite and the passions:

En somme, cet appetit sensuel est a la verité un sujet rebelle, seditieux, remuant; . . . mays pourtant la volonté est si forte au dessus de luy, que, si elle veut, elle peut le ravalier, rompre ses desseins et les repousser, . . . (IV, 29)

As Vincent comments, St François "est optimiste et déjà cornélien de tendances."²⁰ Man's will is therefore also capable of

²⁰Page 96.

controlling to some extent his reprehensible amour-propre:

"On ne peut empescher la concupiscence de concevoir, mais ouy bien d'enfanter et de parfaire le peché." (IV, 29)

François de Sales makes this same point again, when he refers explicitly to the two loves:

Pour faire vivre et regner l'amour de Dieu en nous, nous amortissons l'amour propre, et, si nous ne pouvons l'aneantir du tout, au moins nous l'affoiblissons, en sorte que, s'il vit en nous, il n'y regne plus; . . . (IV, 34)

The Augustinian opposition between the two loves is evident here, but François de Sales softens it by emphasizing the power of the will to embrace either as it chooses.²¹ Hence when St François paraphrases the famous passage in the Cité de Dieu in which St. Augustine expounds the doctrine of the two loves (IV, 225), he understands that man's selection of the love of God or self-love is the result of a conscious choice. For St. Augustine, as we have seen, man can do nothing without grace and must necessarily fall into amor sui. With François de Sales, man is endowed with the potential to make the first step to God without the assistance of divine grace; man therefore becomes to some extent a master of his own destiny. St François, naturally, exhorts man to make the right choice:

²¹See also Levi, French Moralists, pp. 225-226.

Sacrifions ce franc arbitre, et le faysons mourir a soy affin qu'il vive a Dieu. Qui le voudra garder pour l'amour propre en ce monde, le perdra pour l'amour eternel en l'autre; et qui le perdra pour l'amour de Dieu en ce monde, il le conservera pour le mesme amour en l'autre. (V, 341)

If man asserts his independence by living in accordance with the dictates of his concupiscence, he will bring about his own eventual destruction. If, on the other hand, he makes himself dependent on God by living in accordance with the precepts of amour de Dieu, then he will merit ultimate salvation.²²

Once the will has chosen to follow the love of God, divine grace allows man to advance more surely in it. For grace never fails man: "Ainsy le sacré Concile de Trente inculque divinement a tous les enfans de l'Eglise sainte, que la grace divine ne manque jamais a ceux qui font ce qu'ils peuvent, invoquans le secours celeste; . . ." (IV, 228-229) If man falls into amour-propre, then this is because he wants to do so. Man therefore fails grace, especially when he does not wilfully concentrate on maintaining himself in the love of God:

L'amour propre treuvant nostre foy hors d'attention et sommeillante, il nous presente des biens vains mais apparens, seduit nos sens,

²²As Vincent notes: "Si le Dieu de saint François de Sales a pour l'homme toutes les générosités dans le superflu comme dans le nécessaire, l'homme, de son côté, apporte à l'oeuvre du salut une part d'activité qui fait de lui un collaborateur utile de la Divinité." (p. 75)

nostre imagination et les facultés de nos ames, et presse tellement nos francs arbitres qu'il les conduit a l'entiere revolte contre le saint amour de Dieu; . . . (IV, 224)

Although the will controls amour-propre, the latter tries to induce the will to opt for it, by suborning the passions and the imagination, and thus forsake the love of God. And so the Salesian view of man rejoins that of Bérulle insofar as it visualizes human life as being a continual conflict between amour-propre and amour de Dieu. As St François writes:

L'amour divin et l'amour propre sont dedans nostre coeur comme Jacob et Esaü dans le ventre de Rebecca: ilz ont une antipathie et repugnance fort grande l'un a l'autre, et s'entrechoquent dedans le coeur continuellement; . . . et comme il fut dit qu'entre les deux enfans de cette dame le plus grand serviroit le moindre, aussi a-il esté ordonné que des deux amours de nostre coeur, le sensuel servira le spirituel, c'est a dire que l'amour propre servira l'amour de Dieu. (V, 310)

The heart is the seat of both loves and even though man may choose the amour de Dieu, he does not thereby totally vanquish his amour-propre. Mortal life is a combat between the two loves, a combat that ceases only "lhors que la haut au Ciel l'amour bienheureux possedera toute nostre ame en paix." (V, 311)²³

And so, although François de Sales' total picture of man differs

²³See also St François' letter to Mme de Chantal, written in 1604: "L'amour propre ne neurt que quand nous mourrons, il a mille moyens de se retrancher dans nostre ame, on ne l'en sçaurait desloger" Oeuvres, XII (1902), 383.

appreciably from the one that Bérulle was elaborating during this same period, both writers agree on the primacy of the love of God in their respective theologies. As St François writes:

L'homme est la perfection de l'univers, l'esprit est la perfection de l'homme, l'amour celle de l'esprit, et la charité celle de l'amour: c'est pourquoy l'amour de Dieu est la fin, la perfection et l'excellence de l'univers. (V, 165)

Conclusion

In spite of the fact that François de Sales was writing in a different theological tradition, amour-propre remains in its basic Augustinian sense in the works examined in the preceding pages. It is still considered a condition insofar as it is natural to Fallen Man. It is always considered to be reprehensible, since it leads man away from God and induces him to sin by causing him to place himself above all others. It is present throughout mortal life, ceasing only with death. What is most important here is that François de Sales describes the concept of amour-propre very fully, analyzing the concept not only with respect to man's relationship to God, but also with respect to man's relationship with his fellow men.

The concept is, however, set in a new overall context by St François and, as a result, it tends to become less pessimistic and less absolute. It is less pessimistic insofar

as St François insists that original sin has not entirely corrupted human nature and that man's will still has the potential to control and master the promptings of his concupiscence. Man can therefore make the initial choice between amour-propre and amour de Dieu without divine assistance. For the Augustinians, man's will is weak and does not have the natural ability to rise above amour-propre without the help of divine grace. The concept is less absolute in that François de Sales distinguishes between two types of self-love in Fallen Man, amour-propre and amour de soi-même, the latter being meritorious and proper. The Augustinians make no such distinction. François de Sales thus permits man

. . . de réaliser ce qui constitue son humanité profonde, c'est-à-dire, cette inclination naturelle qu'il a d'aimer Dieu par dessus toutes choses, et qu'en aimant Dieu jusqu'à ce renoncement suprême, il réalise pleinement l'amour qu'il se doit à lui-même et, de la sorte, il se réalise lui-même parfaitement.²⁴

St François' fundamentally optimistic theology found a ready response in the society of his time, as is attested to a large extent by the immense popularity of the Introduction à la vie dévote and the Traité de l'amour de Dieu.²⁵ This popularity

²⁴D'Angers, p. 24.

²⁵The Introduction à la vie dévote was published forty times within the ten years following its first publication. Oeuvres, III, xxvii. The Traité de l'amour de Dieu was published eighteen times between 1616 and 1630. J. Merlant, De Montaigne à Vauvenargues: Essais sur la vie intérieure et sur la culture du moi (Paris: Société Française d'Imprimerie et de Librairie, 1914), p. 124.

is also important to note as far as the concept of amour-propre is concerned, since it helped lead to a wider dissemination of the concept itself in social circles as the century progressed.²⁶ It is now to the successors of Bérulle and to the examination of certain of their works that this study proceeds.

²⁶The examination of intellectual and religious thought in these social circles evidently goes beyond the scope of this study. I only wish to point out that whereas the influence of the works of Bérulle and his successors was to assure the permanence of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre throughout the century, the popularity of the Salesian treatment of the concept was eventually to become partially responsible for the modern sense of the term. See below, Epilogue, p. 191.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTINUATION OF THE AUGUSTINIAN TRADITION, 1630-1643

Devout humanism found popularity with many circles in society and was, at this stage in the century, much more widespread than the Augustinian current of theological thought.¹ The latter tradition, however, was still a vital force. It was continued after the death of Bérulle by Saint-Cyran, Antoine Arnauld and the other theologians who became associated with Port-Royal. The monastery had been reformed by Mère Angélique in the early years of the seventeenth century and, in 1618, it had been visited and admired by François de Sales.² When the

¹For example, P. Bénichou, in his Morales du Grand Siècle (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), links this optimistic current of Christian thought with the tradition of aristocratic idealism that was prevalent in the first half of the century. (p. 83) He later goes on to say that "un vaste courant de pensée morale accompagne et porte le jansénisme proprement dit, se renforçant, dans la seconde moitié du siècle, au moment même où s'accuse, avec le triomphe de l'absolutisme louis-quatorzien, la désuétude du vieil idéal héroïque de l'aristocratie." (p. 97) The optimistic conception of man on which both devout humanism and aristocratic idealism were founded, was eventually to be eclipsed by the more pessimistic views of Augustinian theology. But, at this time, devout humanism was supreme. See also Calvet's opinion: "A partir de 1660, le XVIIe siècle religieux appartient à Port-Royal et à Bossuet; jusqu'en 1660, il appartient à François de Sales." (p. 91)

²Calvet, p. 32.

community moved to Paris and re-established itself in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, it continued to draw converts to its cause. In 1635, Saint-Cyran became its spiritual director.³

Bérulle's thought also lived on in the Oratoire and was very much present in the theology of his successors: "Condren, Olier, Eudes, Vincent de Paul, Bourgoing vivent de sa pensée, qu'ils répandent, qu'ils vulgarisent, en mettant chacun l'accent sur l'élément qui répond le mieux à leur tempérament, mais sans y rien ajouter d'essentiel."⁴ To a certain extent, such was also the case of J.-F. Senault, a priest of the Oratoire.

Likewise, the Augustinian concept of amour-propre lived on in the Augustinian tradition. It still had basically the same sense that it had with Bérulle, but it was becoming more forcefully described and its effects on the human personality were becoming more sharply defined, and this will be shown with reference to texts of Saint-Cyran, Antoine Arnauld and J.-F. Senault.

The name of Saint-Cyran is usually associated with two outstanding theologians of the seventeenth-century Augustinian

³J. Orcibal, Jean Duvergier de Hauranne, abbé de Saint-Cyran, et son temps. p. 424.

⁴Calvet, p. 81.

movement, namely Bérulle and Jansenius. Although tradition has placed Saint-Cyran in the Jansenist current of thought, implying that Jansenius was his mentor, most authorities of the present day do not give the tradition much credence. Saint-Cyran studied and corresponded greatly with the author of the Augustinus, but their interests were substantially divergent. If both were spiritual descendants of St. Augustine,

. . . ils ne le lisent de la même façon. Intellectuel, Jansénius y cherche la solution scientifique du problème précis dont il tenait l'énoncé de l'actualité académique. Duvergier a, au contraire, des préoccupations pratiques: . . . le retour à la spiritualité augustinienne était à ses yeux le moyen de faire reflourir au XVIIe siècle l'Eglise primitive, . . .⁵

Jansenius was more concerned with the theoretical solution of the problem of Augustinian grace. Saint-Cyran, on the other hand, was more interested in the practical application of Augustinian spirituality to everyday life.

Bérulle was, in fact, his more significant master. In 1621 and in 1622, both theologians met very frequently in Paris and had discussions on spiritual problems, as a result of which Saint-Cyran became "définitivement et profondément imprégné de

⁵J. Orcibal, Saint-Cyran et le jansénisme (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1961), p. 46.

bérullisme."⁶ Since Bérulle's influence was decisive on the formation of Saint-Cyran's spirituality, we should expect that the Augustinian concept of amour-propre occupies an important place in Saint-Cyran's view of man; this is, in fact, the case.⁷

Like Bérulle, Saint-Cyran insists on the corruption of human nature by original sin, which has reduced man to his love of himself. His former love of God can only be restored through the action of grace,⁸ which enables him to walk in the way of charity, charity being the spirit of the love of God that grace produces in man (Ecrits de piété, p. 246):

Il est impossible qu' . . . ils [les hommes] puissent marcher un pas dans la voie de Dieu, où l'on marche vers Dieu et vers le ciel par les mouvements et les affections du coeur, si Dieu ne leur donne cette grâce actuelle, . . . (Ecrits de piété, p. 234)

⁶Cognet, p. 22. See also Orcibal, Saint-Cyran et le jansénisme, pp. 11-12; Dagens, Bérulle et les origines, p. 249; M. de Certeau, "De Saint-Cyran au jansénisme," Christus, cahiers spirituels, X (1963), 408. Each of these writers stresses that Bérulle's influence was preponderant on Saint-Cyran's formation.

⁷Saint-Cyran did not publish much material in his lifetime. I am using the texts that Orcibal has collected and published in La Spiritualité de Saint-Cyran avec ses écrits de piété inédits (Paris: Vrin, 1962) as well as the letters that Annie Barnes has published in Lettres inédites de Jean Duvergier de Hauranne, abbé de Saint-Cyran (Paris: Vrin, 1962). These two volumes will be referred to henceforth as Ecrits de piété and Lettres inédites respectively and documentation for quotations from them will be given parenthetically.

⁸Orcibal notes that grace, according to Saint-Cyran, cannot be efficacious in man without his consent: "Saint-Cyran insiste . . . sur le 'consentement' exigé par le concile de Trente." (Ecrits de piété, p. 87)

The inclination of amour de Dieu can therefore only be restored to the heart of man by the direct intervention of God. And so grace is defined as "un mouvement d'amour vers Dieu, et une sainte affection de charité que Dieu forme dans nos coeurs par lesquels il nous retire du péché, . . ." (Ibid.)⁹ Without grace,

⁹This leads to the problem of what Saint-Cyran understands by the term "le coeur." As Levi writes, Saint-Cyran's use of the word relates closely to Duval's idea of the apex mentis. (French Moralists, p. 322) Levi goes on: "Since Duval appears to have been Bérulle's master in both philosophy and theology, it is possible that this identification of the high point of the soul with the heart was known to Bérulle. At any rate the oeuvres de piété contain a comment on the 'Cor mundum crea in me Deus' which may perhaps implicitly identify the apex of the soul with a new heart: 'Créez, olly créés; car ce n'est pas seulement une renovation, le Prophete l'appelle, creation: Il ne dit pas changez mon coeur, mais créez en moy un coeur.' (no. 116, p. 972) It seems at least not unlikely that we have here the seed of Saint-Cyran's 'coeur nouveau': . . . Saint-Cyran's usage makes it clear that the heart is the seat of grace and also the ultimate residence of guilt or merit." (Ibid., pp. 322-323)

The heart, then, is the high point of the soul, otherwise, that part of the rational appetite imparting knowledge of spiritual truths which passed from man's understanding when he fell from paradise, thus leaving him dominated by the sensual appetite. Through the operation of grace this apex of the soul is again made whole, "nouveau" or created anew and man therefore becomes aware of spiritual truths, by virtue of which the rational appetite is strengthened in such a way as to control the sensual appetite. Saint-Cyran makes this idea of the change that grace effects in the heart quite clear in a letter to Antoine Singlin. He writes: "Car quand Dieu veut sauver une âme & la convertir, il commence par le dedans, & par le changement du coeur." (Lettres inédites, p. 21) The infusion of grace thus effects a change in the heart, liberating it from the domination of concupiscence and instilling into it the spirit of amour de Dieu. As Levi mentions, this particular usage of the word "le coeur" is evident in Pascal. (French Moralists, p. 322)

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man must perforce follow the dictates of his self-love. On different occasions, Saint-Cyran refers to this self-love as "amour-propre," "concupiscence" and "cupidité," and places them in direct opposition to the love of God. All three terms have a similar sense, as the four following quotations will show.

In the first, talking of "la charité," Saint-Cyran writes:

Elle produit autant de bonnes passions en l'âme que l'amour-propre en produit de mauvaises, elle est la vraie vie comme l'amour-propre la vraie mort, l'une fait vivre pour Dieu et non pour soi, faisant autant mourir l'amour de soi-même que l'amour des autres créatures, au lieu que l'autre fait le contraire. (Ecrits de piété, p. 256)

Here amour de soi-même is viewed within the pejorative context of amour-propre;¹⁰ it is seen as the source of bad passions; it is totally opposed to the love of God, "la charité," and only grace can help man resist its impulses. It leads to "la vraie mort," since it motivates man to depend on himself and deny God and this will eventually result in the damnation of the soul. Insofar as it produces bad passions, it seems to be understood

¹⁰The Salesian distinction between amour-propre and amour de soi-même (see above, p. 49) thus does not exist for Saint-Cyran. He, like Bérulle before him and like Arnauld after him, considers both types of self-love in Fallen Man sinful.

both as a condition and as a psychological force.¹¹

In a fragment entitled: "Concupiscence et charité,"

Saint-Cyran relates:

L'une tient le coeur penché vers les créatures, et l'autre le tient élevé vers le Créateur. Ce penchement vient du poids naturel de l'homme et de cette corruption répandue comme un mauvais levain dans toutes les puissances de son âme qui les fait tendre naturellement aux choses de la terre. L'élévement vient de la grâce qui élève le coeur, malgré la corruption et le poids contraire, vers le ciel et vers Dieu. (Ecrits de piété, p. 249)

Concupiscence here is patently used in the same sense as amour-propre in the previous quotation and it is much reminiscent of Bérulle's theory of man's natural inclination to himself and to created things. It results from the corruption of human nature by original sin. Grace, imparted to "le coeur," allows man to combat his concupiscence and rise to the love of God.

That amour-propre and concupiscence are, in point of

¹¹Saint-Cyran also considers "l'amour des créatures" an integral part of the concept of amour-propre. It is true that Christ enjoined all men to love each other, but for the Augustinians, man without grace can only "love" his fellow men in a self-centred manner, so as to bring pleasure to himself and not to the loved one. (See below, p. 175 where Bossuet deals with this point.) As J. Laporte writes of this distinction: "C'est cette distinction de l'uti et du frui qui est souvent invoquée par saint Augustin et les autres Pères, pour expliquer comment nous pouvons et devons en un sens aimer les créatures, tout en étant obligés, en un autre sens, de n'aimer que Dieu seul." La Doctrine de Port-Royal: La Morale (d'après Arnauld) (Paris: Vrin, 1951), I, 110. Fallen Man, however, can only "enjoy" others egotistically; he cannot "use" them charitably. Hence his love of them is totally reprehensible.

fact, synonymous for Saint-Cyran is made clear in a letter to Marie-Angélique d'Aquaviva d'Atri. Here Saint-Cyran writes:

Car plus un Chrétien entre dans la charité, plus il entre dans la dépendance: Et plus il entre dans les passions du monde et dans l'amour des créatures, plus il entre dans l'indépendance, parce qu'il augmente davantage sa concupiscence, qui est diamétralement contraire à la charité. Ce qui doit être ainsi, parce qu'on [entre davantage dans le péché d'Adam, qui n'est que concupiscence,] c'est-à-dire l'amour de soi-même et des créatures: Et au contraire plus on entre dans la dépendance de Dieu et de ses ministres, qui tiennent sa place, plus on croît dans la vertu de Jésus-Christ, . . . (Lettres inédites, p. 369)

This passage echoes the Bérullian themes of man's rightful dependence on God and his natural proclivity to independence motivated by his concupiscence. Furthermore, like Bérulle, Saint-Cyran notes that concupiscence is "diametrically" opposed to charity and that the violence of the former of these two phenomena can only be lessened when man is assisted by grace. What is most important here for our purpose, however, is that Saint-Cyran characterizes concupiscence by the phrase "l'amour de soi-même et des créatures," whereas in the Ecrits de piété (p. 256), as we have seen, he characterizes amour-propre by these same two general inclinations. This would seem to place the synonymy between amour-propre and concupiscence beyond question.

Finally, in a fragment entitled: "Bonnes Oeuvres," Saint-Cyran states:

Si les bonnes oeuvres ne sont les fruits de l'amour de Dieu qui est dans le coeur, elles sont les fruits de l'amour du monde qui possède le coeur. C'est-à-dire si elles ne sont les fruits de la charité, elles sont les fruits de la cupidité, si elles ne naissent de la bonne, elles naissent de la mauvaise concupiscence. (Ecrits de piété, p. 247)

Fallen Man's heart is naturally filled with cupidity, the "mauvaise concupiscence," and cannot overcome it without divine assistance. Grace alone has the power to change "le coeur de l'homme en y effaçant le péché." (Ibid., p. 248) Cupidity here is used in direct opposition to the love of God, which makes it synonymous with amour-propre. For, as Orcibal notes, cupidity is another of the names of amour-propre.¹² For Saint-Cyran, then, amour-propre, still used in its Augustinian sense, completely possesses the heart of Fallen Man and therefore determines his outlook and his actions.

Bérulle noted that one of the ways in which man could, with God's help, resist his amour-propre was in the practice of abnegation. Saint-Cyran repeats this advice when he writes in the "Remarques sur Saint Matthieu":

L'abnégation de soi-même et porter sa croix sont deux choses nécessaires pour suivre Jésus-Christ. . . . Or l'abnégation croît selon que la charité croît, laquelle seule est capable de retrancher l'amour-propre avec ses branches qui sont les mauvaises inclinations. (Ecrits de piété, p. 176)

The ideas stated here, in effect, sum up the whole tenor of the

¹²La Spiritualité de Saint-Cyran, p. 37.

Bref Discours. Bérulle also noted in the latter work that amour-propre may pervert the very act of adoration of God by motivating a feeling of self-satisfaction; Saint-Cyran returns to the same theme when he writes:

Au lieu que l'homme doit aimer Dieu pour l'amour de lui, [il] l'aime pour l'amour de soi, et ainsi il rapporte . . . le Créateur à la créature et Dieu offensé au pécheur qui l'a offensé.
(Ecrits de piété, p. 371)

Prendre garde à ne tomber pas dans l'amour de soi-même par l'exercice extérieur des bonnes oeuvres. Car qu'y a-t-il de plus déplorable que d'avoir fait un dessein généreux de quitter toutes les choses de la terre pour chercher Dieu, et n'avoir enfin trouvé que soi-même. (Ibid., p. 499)

Amour-propre, or amour de soi-même, thus induces man to place himself and not God at the centre of his preoccupations. So that man may counteract this natural impulse of his amour-propre, Saint-Cyran emphasizes the necessity of placing oneself under the care of a spiritual director, because, by doing this, man makes himself dependent on both God and man. (Ibid., p. 397)

As we have seen, the Augustinians consider that grace is the sole means by which the force of man's amour-propre, or concupiscence, may be weakened. In the following passage, Saint-Cyran explains how this comes about:

Cette grâce actuelle par laquelle Dieu remue le coeur des justes, qui en effet n'est rien qu'un mouvement d'amour de Dieu, est toujours joint à une délectation et à un plaisir secret qui emporte la volonté en lui faisant vaincre tous les plaisirs de la concupiscence qui s'oppose à notre vertu, et qui fait que l'homme embrasse si fortement cet attrait amoureux de Dieu, qu'il se fait comme un mélange de la volonté de Dieu avec la sienne, . . . (Ecrits de piété, p. 237)

Concupiscence is again set in complete opposition to amour de Dieu and Saint-Cyran writes of the conflict between the two forces in man when visited by grace. More significantly, he comments that the eventual victory of grace is due to the fact that the spirit of the love of God imparts to man a higher pleasure or delectation than that imparted by concupiscence. This higher pleasure thus strengthens man's will and enables him to resist successfully his natural bent to sinfulness, inspired by his amour-propre.

Another reason why divine grace is considered man's sole means of redress against his amour-propre is that amour-propre resides in those parts of the soul of which reason has no knowledge. In the "Traité de la pénitence," Saint-Cyran writes: "Les plus grands empêchements d'une vraie conversion sont certains désirs cachés dans l'âme qui sont aussi invisibles et insensibles que l'âme qui les cache" (Ecrits de piété, p. 282) Man has no defence against them since he is not consciously aware of them. His only recourse is to beseech God's grace:

Il faut prier Dieu sans cesse et se ressouvenir tous les jours de la prière . . . qui est la plus propre pour purger tout ce qu'il y a de mauvais et de corrompu dans nos âmes sans que nous le connaissions: "Mon Dieu, lavez-moi des taches occultes et invisibles qui sont en moi," et que personne ne connaît mieux que vous qui voyez devant vous toutes les ruses de l'amour-propre et de la malice de l'ennemi, qui s'enfuit et se cache après avoir semé la zizanie dans la bonne semence. (Ibid., pp. 282-283)

Amour-propre, therefore, as well as determining man's conscious acts, also resides in his unconscious and is quite beyond the reach of reason and will. The idea of man that is enshrined in the Augustinian concept of amour-propre is evidently far removed from the humanistic view of man illustrated in the theology of François de Sales.

Like St François, however, Saint-Cyran advises that communion should be taken frequently if one is in the proper "état":¹³

Le Saint-Sacrement est un excellent remède et fortifiant contre l'affaiblissement de la grâce qui se fait en nous par la concupiscence. Les âmes devraient être en état de communier tous les jours, puisque c'est leur pain quotidien, . . .
(Ecrits de piété, p. 492)

The Eucharist thus provides man with the spiritual sustenance he needs to engage successfully in the combat between amour-propre and amour de Dieu that characterizes earthly existence.

Although Saint-Cyran published relatively little, his influence was considerable and his ideas came to prevail in the outlook of Port-Royal and, more particularly, in that of Antoine Arnauld.

¹³In the Introduction à la vie dévote, St François had exhorted Philothée to take communion as often as possible, provided that she was free from mortal sin and from any affection to venial sin. Oeuvres, III, 116-120.

Saint-Cyran died shortly after his release from the prison of Vincennes in 1643, but his work and ideas were continued by Antoine Arnauld. The latter's book De la fréquente communion, published in 1643, "embodies the principles of Cyranist spirituality."¹⁴ Reacting against the growing worldliness of the Church, Arnauld declared the necessity for a return to the practices of the Primitive Church, the Church "du tems de Saint Basile, du tems de Saint Ambroise, du tems de Saint Augustin."¹⁵

François de Sales, as stated earlier, had advised frequent communion when man was free from sin. This proviso was largely overlooked in some Jesuit circles as the century progressed and Arnauld's purpose in his treatise is to reassert the conditions in which communion may be taken. He considers that participation in the Eucharist is a privilege of which man must first make himself worthy:

C'est par la pureté de la vie, par l'innocence des actions, par l'exercice des bonnes oeuvres, par le dégagement de la corruption du monde, par l'union avec Dieu et enfin par un état ferme et

¹⁴N. Abercrombie, The Origins of Jansenism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. xi.

¹⁵A. Arnauld, De la fréquente communion (Lyon: Claude Plaignard, 1739), p. 88. Parenthetical documentation will be used for all quotations from this edition.

persistant dans la vertu chrétienne, que l'on doit juger un homme digne de recevoir l'Eucharistie. (p. 738)

Arnauld draws heavily on the authority of the Church Fathers to show that his views are incontestably orthodox. St. Augustine, however, stands out above all and receives this eulogy from Arnauld: "Ce Père, en qui la nature et la grace semblent avoir conspiré, pour en faire la plus grande lumière qui ait jamais éclairé l'Eglise depuis les Apôtres" (p. 221)

One of the major obstacles to frequent communion is amour-propre, since it utterly precludes the possibility of any union with God. As Arnauld states: "Rien ne s'accorde mieux ensemble que la privation de la grace et la plénitude de l'amour-propre; l'inapplication aux choses de Dieu, et l'attachement à celles du monde." (p. 753) He discusses the Augustinian doctrine of the two loves and insists that those who are filled with amour-propre should not be allowed to participate in the Eucharist:

Et véritablement y a-t-il une plus mauvaise disposition pour participer souvent à ce mystère ineffable de l'amour Divin, que d'y apporter un coeur rempli de l'amour du monde et de soi-même, de cette charité terrestre, directement opposée à la charité celeste, et qui n'est pas moins la reine et l'origine des vices que l'autre est la reine et l'origine des vertus. (pp. 753-754)

Like Saint-Cyran, Arnauld uses amour-propre and amour de soi-même synonymously and here he establishes a direct opposition

between self-love, the "charité terrestre," and the love of God, the "charité celeste," stressing that amour-propre necessarily leads man to sinfulness. This latter point seems to be the only aspect of the concept that concerns him in the treatise, for he is intent on describing the state of mind necessary for taking part in the Eucharist, not the whole condition of Fallen Man and all its consequences. Hence, when he goes on to say that the concept of amour-propre finds its origin in the respective theologies of St. Paul and St. Augustine, he again only refers to this one aspect:

S. Paul et après lui S. Augustin nous ont appris qu'il falloit considerer ces deux amours comme deux sources generales de tous les biens et de tous les maux de notre ame: L'amour de Dieu de tout bien, l'amour de soi-même de tout mal. (p. 754)

Amour-propre is an inevitable source of evil and Arnauld insists that the Christian must rid himself of it as far as is humanly possible. He draws at length from the fourth chapter of the Epistle of St. James to advise how this may be done. The sincere Christian should attempt to fill himself with the spirit of penitence and humility, and acknowledge the wretchedness of his condition before approaching the altar. He will then be assisted by God's grace and his heart opened to the amour de Dieu. (pp. 763-764)

Although Arnauld makes no attempt to analyze the ways in

which amour-propre asserts itself in man's psychology, it is nevertheless evident from the insistence given to the point that sin unavoidably results from amour-propre that Arnauld understands the latter term within the pejorative context of concupiscence and that he is therefore following in the tradition of Bérulle and Saint-Cyran.

The book itself was both successful and influential. As H. Busson writes, it was a "livre très important . . . ; l'un des premiers parmi ceux qui ont orienté la conscience française à l'époque classique."¹⁶ This popularization of Augustinian views permitted a wide dissemination of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre, a process that was also greatly aided by J.-F. Senault's De l'usage des passions.

Senault was a priest of the Oratoire and he pursued his studies there from 1618 to 1623,¹⁷ when Bérulle was still actively teaching. Among the authors he studied were St. Augustine and Seneca.¹⁸ The study of the latter author in the Oratoire may

¹⁶La Religion des classiques, 1660-1685 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), p. 13.

¹⁷V. Miloyevitch, La Théorie des passions du P. Senault et la morale chrétienne en France au XVIIe siècle (Paris: Rodstein, 1935), p. 127.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 128-129.

seem somewhat odd, but Bérulle apparently considered that a knowledge of the pagan writers was essential in order to combat them well.¹⁹ Senault's De l'usage des passions, published in 1641, reveals this duality of his education; for while he quotes extensively from Seneca, he also insists on the necessity of grace in order to achieve true virtue. The book belongs to "cette littérature qui en combattant la littérature païenne et en apportant le renouveau du sentiment chrétien, détruisait en même temps l'influence de l'antiquité."²⁰ It is, in a sense, a confrontation of the stoic ideal with the theology of St. Augustine.

Senault does not, then, belong to the Port-Royal movement, but he is nevertheless part of the general tradition of seventeenth-century French Augustinianism. The general tone of the treatise is well established in the "Preface," in which Senault writes of man as follows:

Sa perte venoit de sa volonté, et son salut ne pouvoit venir que de la Grace. Toutes les actions qu'il faisoit sans cette assistance estoient criminelles et, si nous croyons Saint Augustin, toutes ses bonnes oeuvres estoient des pechez; . . . n'agissant pas par la Grace, il falloit qu'il agist par la concupiscence, et estant possédé par l'amour propre, il ne se pouvoit proposer d'autre fin que soy mesme: il cherchoit ou la gloire ou le plaisir et, dans toutes ses actions, il ne s'eslevoit point plus haut que ses interests.²¹

¹⁹Ibid., p. 133.

²⁰Miloyevitch, p. 135.

²¹J.-F. Senault, De l'usage des passions (Paris, 1665), p. iv (unnumbered). Parenthetical documentation will be used for quotations from this edition.

This passage not only affirms the authority of St. Augustine, but it also restates the various attributes of amour-propre that have been noted in the course of this study. It is made synonymous with concupiscence and is the condition of man without God. It also determines man's actions by asserting itself through his psychology, motivating him to seek only his own desires, pleasures and interests. It is opposed to grace, which alone can help man overcome amour-propre's promptings to sinfulness.²²

²²Levi writes that Senault "seems to have been among the earliest vernacular writers to use the term [amour-propre] in specific sense it acquired about 1640." French Moralists, p. 225. This specific sense is, for Levi, the one established in the Augustinus of Jansenius: "For Jansenius, . . . Augustine's 'amor sui' is 'cupiditas.'" (Ibid., 226) Levi then goes on to say that the Augustinus was the context in which the term amour-propre received a pejorative sense; he adds that Senault uses the word "squarely in the theological perspectives established by the Augustinus." (Ibid.)

Levi's views contradict those advanced in this study with regard to the origin and initial meaning of the term amour-propre and it is therefore necessary to examine them at length. It has been my view that amour-propre had the sense of concupiscence since it first appeared in the language. But before passing comment on these divergent views, it would be useful to examine briefly the meaning and theology of the concept in the Augustinus. The pertinent section comes in the second part of the treatise, entitled: "De Statu Naturae Lapsae," book II, chapter 25; the edition used is the Louvain edition of 1640, published by Jacobus Zegerus.

Jansenius first establishes a general principle: "Omnibus animalibus natura insitum est, ut seipsa diligant." (p. 419) All men naturally love themselves. While man was in a state of innocence, this self-love was balanced by a love of God. (p. 422) But man was cut off from the love of God by his original sin and thereafter only self-love remained in him: ". . . solus ille amor sui efficacissimus in quem homo lapsus est." (p. 424) Now that man has deprived himself of the love of God, he cannot achieve

At various points in the body of the treatise, Senault discusses the theology of amour-propre and its effects on human nature in greater detail. Most of the aspects he deals with have

virtue. He is continually propelled to do evil. As Jansenius comments: "Nihil mirabile, si ex illo solo amore ad omnia omnino vitia incessanter urgeamur." (p. 424) Then, paraphrasing the passage in which St. Augustine writes of the two loves, he says: "Impossibile est enim ut amator sui non contemnat Deum, et ex contrario ut amator Dei non contemnat se." (p. 424) Only grace can free man from the bondage of self-love. It is given gratuitously and it is also irresistible. As F. Strowski writes: "Il n'y a qu'une grâce, la grâce efficace, souverainement efficace en effet et irrésistible, puisque l'homme ne résiste jamais à ce qui lui plaît le plus, à la délectation dominante." Histoire du sentiment religieux en France au XVIIe siècle: Pascal et son temps. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1907), I, 276.

Jansenius' position is thus as follows: two loves were present in Adam, self-love and the love of God. After his original sin, he was reduced to his self-love, which is always a source of evil, and only grace can restore the love of God in him. According to Levi, this was the context in which amour-propre was given a new sense. But, as we have seen, the place and meaning of the concept was essentially the same in Bérulle's works. It is then evident that Levi places too much importance on the Augustinus and not enough on the works of Bérulle.

To support his contention that amour-propre only became synonymous with concupiscence in the Augustinus, Levi also maintains that it had the sense of "vanity" and "ambition" in pre-Augustinus times. (p. 227) This appears to be so because Levi only notes the psychological effects of amour-propre in this period. As we have seen, it was understood by Bérulle both as concupiscence and as a psychological phenomenon.

There is, however, a fundamental difference between Jansenius and Bérulle with respect to the theology of amour-propre and it concerns the rôle of grace. Bérulle respects man's free-will, which may reject grace; Jansenius seems to deny man this possibility. Apart from this one distinction, it is apparent that the Augustinian concept of amour-propre is basically the same in the works of both theologians. And so, while not according the Augustinus the importance that Levi gives it, it is reasonable to say that the treatise reinforced the idea that amour-propre is Fallen Man's condition and that it leads him necessarily into vice.

been noted in the earlier part of this study and it is useful to consider them again within the context of De l'usage des passions as Senault describes them in forceful terms. The book, in fact, tends to sum up the tendencies of the previous forty years as far as the Augustinian concept of amour-propre is concerned.

For Senault, the dominant passion in man is love and it has two facets: man's natural love of himself and his love of God. (p. 190) In the state of innocence, man's love of himself was legitimate, "car . . . l'homme ne s'aimoit que pour Dieu et la nature estoit si bien temperée avec la Grace que toutes ses inclinations estoient saintes." (p. 205) Owing to his Fall, however,

. . . son amour changea de nature; celuy qui regardoit d'un mesme oeil les avantages des autres et les siens, commença de les separer, et oubliant ce qu'il devoit à Dieu, il fist un Dieu de luy mesme: Il confondit toutes les loix de l'innocence, comme s'il eust esté seul dans le monde, il renonça aux douceurs de la société, il forma une resolution de regler ses affections par ses interests, et de n'aymer plus que ce qui luy estoit utile ou agreable. (p. 205)

Amour-propre is now the dominant force in man and Senault here describes both its spiritual and social effects. On the spiritual level, it has led man to reject God and Christian principles of conduct with the result that man makes himself his own God. On the social level, it has induced man to determine his relationships with others on the basis of their usefulness towards him

and of the pleasure they give him. It is in this sense that amour-propre motivates man to make himself the centre of everything: "Nous voudrions estre le centre du monde, et que toutes les creatures n'eussent point d'autres inclinations que les nostres." (p. 246)

Amour-propre, or concupiscence, thus becomes the source of all man's ills and, in fact, the source of all the evil in the world: "Ce mal [amour-propre] enferme tous les autres et . . . il n'y a point de desordre dans le monde, qui ne reconnoisse celui-ci pour son principe." (p. 207) Man's reason, weakened by his original sin, is powerless to control it: "La Raison ne s'en peut encore deffendre." (pp. 205-206)

The passions in themselves are neither good nor bad; their moral quality is determined by the "puissance superieure" that governs them. (p. 124) In the state of innocence, reason could control them. But, "comme nostre nature est corrompüe, il faut, par necessit , que toutes ses inclinations soient dereg es . . ." (p. 57), and so Senault is obliged to recognize that the passions cannot be controlled by reason.²³ (p. 58) Since amour-

²³One must admit, however, that Senault is not entirely consistent on this point. He writes, later in the book, that while reason cannot control the passions when they are aroused, it can control them when they are calm. (p. 108) This contradiction seems to devolve from the fact that Senault is concerned not to paint too black a picture of man. To forestall any accusation that he is an enemy of "la grandeur de l'homme" (p. 59), he sometimes gives to reason a greater force than that which the Augustinians usually accord it, perhaps owing to an influence of Seneca, or of Franois de Sales. These occasional hesitations of Senault do not, however, affect unduly the traditional Augustinian picture of man that generally prevails in the book.

propre is the moving power in man, it governs these rebellious passions in such a way that they become its allies and help man achieve what he desires: "Si la Grace ne nous assiste, l'amour propre nous trahit et nous epargnons ces rebelles [les passions] parce qu'ils sont nos alliez." (p. 85)

Having stated that amour-propre is the source of all man's ills, Senault later goes on to say that "de cét Amour deregulé naissent trois autres amours qui empoisonnent toutes les ames et bannissent toutes les vertus de la terre." (p. 211) These three loves are "l'amour de la beauté," which leads to incontinence, "l'amour des Richesses," which leads to avarice, and "l'amour de la Gloire," which leads to the affirmation of personal ambition. (p. 211) Altogether, amour-propre is the one all-pervading "Passion", as Senault calls it (p. 213), that characterizes all men without God.

The solution to man's unenviable condition is not to be found in pagan philosophy. The Epicurean philosophy is rejected since it reduces "les hommes à la vie des bestes." (Pref., p. v) The attitude of the Stoics is also rejected for they "remplissent l'ame de vanité, et dans la misere de leur condition, ils imitent l'orgueil des Demons." (Ibid.) The unique and universal remedy for the wretchedness of man and the sinfulness into which he falls is found only in "le secours de la

Grace, et nous n'avons soupiré avec liberté que depuis que
 Iesus-Christ est venu au monde pour bannir l'amour propre
 de nos ames." (p. 206) This was, in fact, the sole mission of
 Christ: "Sa venuë n'a point eu d'autre motif, ny sa doctrine
 d'autre but, que la ruine de ce monstre effroyable." (pp. 206-207)
 Senault continues on this theme, now juxtaposing charity and
amour-propre:

Enfin il ne nous donne la Charité que pour ruiner l'Amour
 propre, et il n'est mort en la Croix, que pour faire mourir
 cét ennemy, qui est la cause de nos querelles et de nos
 divisions. (p. 207)

The mission of Christ, then, was to destroy amour-propre and
 release man from its bondage; this latter point, in itself,
 illustrates the fact that Senault understands amour-propre as
 the synonym of concupiscence, as the root of all evil in human
 nature.

Only when reason is assisted by grace can it control
 the passions and only then may man proceed to virtue. (Pref.,
 p. iii) And, writes Senault, man rises to grace through the
 practice of mortification and humility which are the founda-
 tions of Christ's message to mankind. (p. 207) Senault stresses
 the fact that he is drawing on the authority of St. Augustine
 in giving this rôle to grace, when he writes:

Tous ses livres sont remplis de ces veritez et sa doctrine, qui
 est tirée de l'Evangile, nous oblige à confesser que, pour

combattre les vices et pour conduire les Passions, il faut avoir necessairement la Charité. Qui agit par les mouvemens de cette vertu ne se peut perdre, et qui suit ceux de la Concupiscence ne se peut sauver. . . . La Charité nous unit à Dieu, La Concupiscence nous unit à nous mesmes. (Pref., p. viii)

Finally, he declares that grace does not destroy this movement that unites man with himself, - - his amour-propre or concupiscence - - it only allows him to combat it:

La Grace ne peut esteindre la Concupiscence, elle ne peut ruiner les Passions, et . . . toute l'assistance que l'homme en doit esperer, c'est de les menager avec tant d'adresse qu'elles deffendent le party de la vertu et qu'elles combattent celuy du vice. (p. 69)

And so Senault, like the Augustinian theologians before him, envisages human life as a continuous conflict between amour-propre and amour de Dieu, between grace and concupiscence.

Senault's views on amour-propre, then, are very similar to those of Bérulle and Saint-Cyran. His book was widely read, passing through fourteen editions between 1641 and 1669.²⁴ This popularity may be explained by the fact that the treatise found a ready response in certain of Senault's contemporaries. For, as Miloyevitch notes, though not without exaggeration: "Se haïr soi-même et n'aimer que Dieu; telle est la grande tâche qui préoccupe les contemporains de P. Senault."²⁵ This was especially

²⁴Miloyevitch, p. 11.

²⁵Page 224.

true in some Christian circles, such as that of Mme de Sablé, and the Augustinian concept of amour-propre was thus becoming well known in some segments of society.

Conclusion

With Saint-Cyran, Arnauld and Senault, the Augustinian concept of amour-propre retains basically the same sense that it had with Bérulle. Its effects on human nature are, however, analyzed more deeply. Saint-Cyran, while stressing that it is synonymous with concupiscence and cupidity, also adds the important note that it resides in man's unconscious beyond the reach of the will. Arnauld visualizes it, above all, as leading man necessarily into evil and sinfulness. Senault also gives a very thorough analysis of the concept. He describes its spiritual and social characteristics as well as the way in which it asserts itself in man's psychology. He notes that it has usurped the place of reason and consequently directs the rebellious passions and determines all man's desires and interests.

For the Augustinians, then, there is inherent in the concept of amour-propre an idea of man that differs totally from the optimistic views of a François de Sales. For these spiritual successors of the Bishop of Hippo, man is an irrational creature who cannot freely choose his actions through the exercise of will, but who is led, perforce, by his amour-

propre or concupiscence to relate everything to himself, irrespective of the consequences that this insuperable inclination may have for others. The Augustinians consider this natural motivation of amour-propre utterly sinful, because man is inevitably led by this impulse to give priority to his own desires over those of his fellow men and, especially, those of God. Desiring to stress the impotence of man and the all-powerful nature of God, the Augustinian theologians all strongly express the idea that man has no natural escape from his amour-propre. Deliverance from its sinfulness comes only through abnegation, which fundamentally means the practice of humility, in the exercise of which man will receive God's assistance in the form of grace. Man will then acquire the capacity to aspire to the higher inclination of the amour de Dieu, and so achieve true virtue.

No writer, perhaps, insisted on the necessity of the amour de Dieu more than Pascal. It is not therefore surprising that the theological context of amour-propre is still very much present in his religious writings, and it is now to the examination of certain of these religious works that this study now moves. Moreover, the knowledge gained through the elucidation of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre in the preceding pages should lead to the establishment of a new point of view

as to the meaning and rôle of the concept in these works.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELIGIOUS WORKS OF PASCAL

We have noted that Bérulle places the Augustinian concept of amour-propre at the centre of his conception of man, that is, he understands amour-propre both as the condition and as the psychological force that characterize man and all his natural actions. This tradition of thought came to typify in many respects the views of the later Augustinian writers, such as Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole,¹ through the intermediary of Saint-Cyran. Pascal, as is well known, worked in close harmony with these later Augustinians, especially in the 1650's, and he gives an important rôle to the concept in his religious works. It becomes, in fact, central to the view of man that is developed in the Pensées.² Before examining this work, however, it would first be useful to consider this concept of amour-propre in Pascal's earlier religious writings.

One of the first analyses of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre in Pascal's works occurs in his letter to M. and

¹See below, pp. 151-165.

²As our study will show, Pascal uses the term in its specific Augustinian sense, rather than in its limited ethical sense. Levi also shares this view. (French Moralists, p. 229)

Mme Périer, written shortly after the death of his father in 1651. In this letter, Pascal seeks to console them by discussing the Christian viewpoint of death. He writes that death was not originally natural to man, but is one of the consequences of Adam's sin.³ It is, moreover, the only way by which the traces of original sin, of concupiscence, can be completely purged:

La mort est une peine du péché, imposée à l'homme pour expier son crime, nécessaire à l'homme pour le purger du péché; . . . c'est la seule qui peut délivrer l'âme de la concupiscence des membres; . . . (p. 492)

Even so, men have a natural horror of death and Pascal therefore tries to help the Périers overcome this feeling and understand the Christian viewpoint more clearly.

He discusses the source of this horror, which is also the source of all man's evils. It is, in fact, amour-propre. Pascal, developing this point at length, first explains the origin of amour-propre:

Dieu a créé l'homme avec deux amours, l'un pour Dieu, l'autre pour soi-même; . . . Depuis, le péché étant arrivé, l'homme a perdu le premier de ces amours; et l'amour pour soi-même étant

³B. Pascal, Oeuvres complètes, ed. J. Chevalier, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), p. 492. All subsequent references to works in this edition will be made parenthetically.

resté seul dans cette grande âme capable d'un amour infini, cet amour-propre s'est étendu et débordé dans le vide que l'amour de Dieu a quitté; et ainsi il s'est aimé seul et toutes choses pour soi, c'est-à-dire infiniment. Voilà l'origine de l'amour-propre. Il était naturel à Adam, et juste en son innocence; mais il est devenu et criminel et immodéré, en suite de son péché; . . .
(p. 496)

Pascal here clearly establishes the concept of amour-propre in its Augustinian perspective. He maintains the strict Bérullian and Jansenist opposition between the two loves and visualizes amour-propre as the condition of Fallen Man. Owing to Adam's original sin, it has usurped the place of the amour de Dieu and man is therefore led to evil.

Pascal goes on to mention some of the psychological connotations of the concept of amour-propre, such as the desire to dominate (Ibid.), but he does not dwell at length on them as his main interest is to explain the origin of the horror of death. He writes that Adam loved life and hated the idea of death, since it would mean separation from God; both of these feelings were meritorious as Adam was living in accordance with God's law. After the Fall, this love for life and horror of death remained in man, but they were now reprehensible as man was now living in accordance with the dictates of his amour-propre. (pp. 496-497)
The Christian in grace should not therefore be filled with horror at the thought of death, but should rather find consolation in

the fact that death means reunion with God. (pp. 498-499)

In his opuscule "Sur la conversion du pécheur," written around 1654, Pascal returns to the theme of amour-propre. He does not overtly mention the term, but the ideas that the concept embraces are very much present. We have seen that one of the aspects of amour-propre is an inevitable inclination to "les créatures," to all terrestrial things in which man tries to find happiness.⁴ The basic idea of this short work is the conflict between this latter impulse of amour-propre and amour de Dieu.

When grace initially descends upon the soul, it brings with it a new awareness, and "cette nouvelle lumière lui donne de la crainte et lui apporte un trouble qui traverse le repos qu'elle trouvait dans les choses qui faisaient ses délices." (p. 548) This fear and confusion patently reside in the fact that amour-propre, which instils in man a love of himself and of all created things, is in conflict with amour de Dieu, which imparts to the soul a knowledge of celestial truths. The soul thus realizes that those things which formerly contributed to its happiness are corruptible. Since the soul cannot find happiness, its "souverain bien," in earthly things, it begins to look for happiness elsewhere:

⁴See above Bérulle, p. 22, and especially Saint-Cyran, pp. 67-68.

Elle [l'âme] le cherche donc ailleurs, et connaissant par une lumière toute pure qu'il [le souverain bien] n'est point dans les choses qui sont en elle, ni hors d'elle, ni devant elle (rien donc en elle, rien à ses côtés), elle commence de le chercher au-dessus d'elle. (p. 550)

Under the guidance of grace, the soul realizes that the promptings of its amour-propre cannot satisfy its demands for a durable happiness and so is led to desire the amour de Dieu. The way to this love is revealed to the soul by those directeurs who are well versed in such matters (p. 551) and so the soul eventually attains the love of God. In this state:

Elle reconnaît qu'elle doit adorer Dieu comme créature, lui rendre grâce comme redevable, lui satisfaire comme coupable, le prier comme indigente [, jusqu'à ce qu'elle n'ait plus qu'à le voir, l'aimer, le louer dans l'éternité]. (p. 552)

This theme of separation from amour-propre and adherence to amour de Dieu can also be inferred from the cryptic phrases of the "Mémorial" of 1654. (pp. 553-554) Pascal writes: "Oubli du monde et de tout hormis Dieu," a phrase that sums up the tenor of the text "Sur la conversion du pécheur." Pascal appears to have achieved this separation from self and from the world during this religious experience; hence he reviews his life and regrets his past sins and his forsaking of Christ: "Je m'en suis séparé. Je l'ai fui, renoncé, crucifié." The wish that he goes on to

express: "Que je n'en sois jamais séparé!" would seem to imply a desire never to be separated from the amour de Dieu.

The Augustinian concept of amour-propre, although the term itself is almost never mentioned,⁵ plays a significant part in the Provinciales. Generally speaking, it may be said that Pascal is attempting to defend Arnauld and the Port-Royal theology against the attacks of the Jesuits and the Sorbonne and to satirize Jesuit casuistry in these polemical letters. Although, as H.F. Stewart writes, these "two topics run into one another and in a last analysis are not separable,"⁶ it is particularly in the second of these topics that the Augustinian concept of amour-propre comes into play.

For Pascal and the Augustinian theologians, true Christianity is based on the love of God and therefore necessitates self-abnegation and a low esteem of created things. The Jesuits, however, dispensed with this prime requisite in large measure by accommodating their view of Christian morality to

⁵The term is mentioned in letter XV, in which Pascal writes: "L'amour-propre nous persuade toujours assez que c'est avec injustice qu'on nous attaque; . . ." (p. 836) Evidently, the usage here relates to a moral aspect of the full Augustinian concept, by virtue of which man always deludes himself into believing that he is above criticism. The edition of the Provinciales used here is the one in the Chevalier edition. The number of the "Provinciale" quoted will be given in roman numerals; the page number, in arabic numerals, will follow.

⁶Les Provinciales de Blaise Pascal, ed. H.F. Stewart (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920), p. xiv.

the desires of the men of their time. This particular point is clearly implied in the passage dealing with homicide. Here Pascal describes with indignation what he considers to be the basis of Jesuit morality:

C'est cela que je blâme; parce que c'est faire Dieu moins ennemi des crimes que les hommes. Si vous disiez qu'on peut tuer un médisant selon les hommes, mais non pas selon Dieu, cela serait moins insupportable; mais quand vous prétendez que ce qui est trop criminel pour être souffert par les hommes, soit innocent et juste aux yeux de Dieu qui est la justice même, que faites-vous autre chose, sinon montrer à tout le monde que, par cet horrible renversement si contraire à l'esprit des saints, vous êtes hardis contre Dieu, et timides envers les hommes? (XIII, 815)

There would seem little doubt that the idea of the Earthly City of St. Augustine is evoked here. The Principle of the Earthly City, as we have seen, is amor sui, which motivates man to despise God and live "selon l'homme," that is, in accordance with human desires. As Pascal writes, the Jesuits are "hardis contre Dieu, et timides envers les hommes" and this phrase shows one of the fundamental issues at stake in the Provinciales. By being accommodating to the wishes of man to such an extent that they were prepared to neglect the commandments of God, the Jesuits were in fact erecting a system of casuistry designed to allow man to live "selon l'homme"; in other words, in accordance with the promptings of his amour-propre. Elsewhere in the Provinciales, Pascal writes as follows of the Jesuit morality: "Comme leur

morale est toute païenne, la nature suffit pour l'observer."

(V, 707) The central spring of man's fallen nature is his amour-propre, and so the conclusion presents itself that amour-propre suffices to observe Jesuit morality.

In a significant phrase, Pascal's Jesuit explains why members of his Society brought about changes in the traditional Christian morality:

Les hommes sont aujourd'hui tellement corrompus, que ne pouvant les faire venir à nous, il faut bien que nous allions à eux: autrement ils nous quitteraient; ils feraient pis, ils s'abandonneraient entièrement. Et c'est pour les retenir que nos casuistes ont considéré les vices auxquels on est le plus porté dans toutes les conditions, afin d'établir des maximes si douces, sans toutefois blesser la vérité, qu'on serait de difficile composition si l'on n'en était content. Car le dessein capital que notre Société a pris pour le bien de la religion est de ne rebuter qui que ce soit, pour ne pas désespérer le monde.
(VI, 720)

Unfortunately, truth was often distorted and the Jesuit idea of morality came to be conceived in such a way as to excuse and appeal to man's amour-propre.

Several examples of the Jesuit casuistry in the Provinciales illustrate this point and therefore justify Pascal's criticism. With respect to the question of "grâce actuelle," Pascal's Jesuit maintains that a sinful act may only be imputed

to man if he has the knowledge, imparted through this grace, that the act is sinful. Such an attitude, comments Pascal, exonerates man from "tous les péchés de surprise, et ceux qu'on fait dans un entier oubli de Dieu, . . ." (IV, 693) This theory thus makes an accommodation to man's amour-propre, which necessarily keeps him unmindful and unaware of God. And so the obvious conclusion of this Jesuit idea clearly presents itself: those actions that man is led to commit by his amour-propre, whether consciously or unconsciously, cannot in any way be deemed sinful.

With the doctrine of probable opinions, these same general tendencies are noted. A probable opinion is defined as follows:

Une opinion est appelée probable lorsqu'elle est fondée sur des raisons de quelque considération. D'où il arrive quelquefois qu'un seul docteur fort grave peut rendre une opinion probable.
(V, 710)

Since in Pascal's view, there can be no real standard of morality with Jesuit casuistry,⁷ everything depends on the casuist himself.

⁷The reason for this view is well stated in fragment XVIII of "Sur la casuistique et la probabilité." Here Pascal writes: "Les casuistes soumettent la décision à la raison corrompue et le choix des décisions à la volonté corrompue, . . ." (p. 1061)

Even if the casuist considers a case where he believes there is no probable opinion, he may still grant absolution if he thinks that other casuists may consider the opinion probable. He therefore grants or refuses absolution as he pleases and in such a way as to please the suppliant. As Pascal's Jesuit says, in a phrase that provides a good example of the satirical quality of the Provinciales: "Nous répondons . . . ce qu'il nous plaît, ou plutôt ce qu'il plaît à ceux qui nous interrogent." (V, 711) The final decision would thus be placed within the province of the self-interest of the suppliant. Pascal suggests that these views are very different from those of the early Church Fathers; whereupon the casuist replies:

Les Pères étaient bons pour la morale de leur temps; mais ils sont trop éloignés pour celle du nôtre. Ce ne sont plus eux qui la règlent, ce sont les nouveaux casuistes. (V, 713)

Why do the new casuists regulate Church discipline? As the Jesuit says, it would have been necessary to exclude almost everyone from the confessional had they not "un peu relâché de la sévérité de la religion pour s'accommoder à la faiblesse des hommes." (VII, 727) In order to keep as many people as possible within the Church, they were quite willing to adapt their view of morality and discipline to the demands of each man's amour-propre. By virtue of this "conduite obligeante et accommodante" (V, 705),

man could live "selon l'homme" and still be considered a good Christian.

Pascal's overall attitude towards the question of probability is made quite clear in a fragment from "Sur la casuistique et la probabilité":

Que serait-ce que les Jésuites sans la probabilité, et que la probabilité sans les Jésuites? Otez la probabilité, on ne peut plus plaire au monde; mettez la probabilité, on ne peut plus lui déplaire. Autrefois il était difficile d'éviter les péchés, et difficile de les expier; maintenant il est facile de les éviter par mille tours, et facile de les expier. (no. XXXIV, p. 1063)

And this comment again reveals Pascal's belief that Jesuit morality offered too many concessions to man's amour-propre.

The theories of directing intention and of mental reservations also owed their origin to this desire of the Jesuits to mitigate the exigencies of Christian morality. The first of these theories "consiste à se proposer pour fin de ses actions un objet permis." (VII, 729) It thus allows man to kill in the defence of his honour:

Car il n'y a qu'à détourner son intention du désir de vengeance, qui est criminel, pour la porter au désir de défendre son honneur, qui est permis selon nos Pères. Et c'est ainsi qu'ils [les hommes] accomplissent tous leurs devoirs envers Dieu et envers les hommes. (VII, 729)

Since honour is the sentiment of one's personal dignity and worth,

it is patent that it derives from amour-propre, at least for the Augustinians; hence they constantly counsel the necessity of self-abnegation and a low esteem of self in Christian existence. The Jesuits, however, did not share this view and so were enabled to accommodate the social evil of duelling, so rife in the seventeenth century before the absolutism of Louis XIV, to their idea of Christian morality. This same desire to sanction intrinsically sinful practices is evident in the doctrine of mental reservations. This theory maintained that a man could deny having committed an action, although he had in fact committed it, and still not sin:

On peut jurer . . . qu'on n'a pas fait une chose, quoiqu'on l'ait faite effectivement, en entendant en soi-même qu'on ne l'a pas faite un certain jour, ou avant qu'on fût né, . . .
(IX, 760)

Both of these theories therefore allow man to continue to live in conformity with the inclinations of his amour-propre and, at the same time, remain in good standing in the Church.

As far as Pascal is concerned, Jesuit morality simply amounted to a series of external actions and insincere practices, characterized by laxity and a desire to please the people. Such a morality neglected in large measure the principle that the

Christian should love God, and this is made clear in the discussion of attrition and contrition. Pascal considered that contrition, denoting sorrow for sinning against God, was essential to procure absolution for sinfulness. The Jesuits, however, maintained that attrition, denoting fear of damnation, alone sufficed. (X, 774-775) By simply accepting the doctrine of attrition, the Jesuits placed Christian teaching once again on a level with man's amour-propre. Amour-propre could motivate in man a fear of Hell, but not a love of God. As the Jesuit says: "C'est ainsi que nos Pères ont déchargé les hommes de l'obligation pénible d'aimer Dieu actuellement." (X, 776-777)

We have noted in the various studies of the Augustinian theologians that if man is not animated by amour de Dieu, he must needs be motivated by amour-propre. The Jesuit casuistry, examined in the Provinciales, serves to illustrate this point. By dispensing with the love of God and by according men what they desire, the Jesuits were adapting Christian morality and Church discipline to the demands of man's amour-propre. As Pascal writes of the Jesuits in a fragment on casuistry: "Ils laissent agir la concupiscence et retiennent le scrupule, au lieu qu'il faudrait faire au contraire." (no. XIX, p. 1061) He refers to this same idea in substance in the Provinciales themselves, writing:

Vous avez suivi votre méthode ordinaire qui est d'accorder aux hommes ce qu'ils désirent, et donner à Dieu des paroles et des apparences. . . . C'est ainsi que vous vous jouez de la religion pour suivre la passion des hommes . . . (XII, 798)

As we have seen, the one "passion," or basic disposition, that characterizes all men is amour-propre.⁸

Since Pascal's Pensées are only fragments of his proposed apology for the Christian religion, it is not entirely possible to determine the true meaning of the concept of amour-propre or its rightful rôle in Pascal's overall plan on the basis of internal evidence alone. To discover its rightful meaning, the concept of amour-propre has to be considered within the context of the tradition of seventeenth-century Augustinian thought and this, in general, critics have not done. Consequently, it has been misunderstood,⁹ or relegated to the level of

⁸To refer to amour-propre as "la passion" in this sense is not unusual in seventeenth-century Augustinian thought. For example, see also Senault and Esprit, pp. 82 and 167, respectively in this study.

⁹For example, E. Baudin takes amour-propre as being synonymous with egoism. He also takes Pascal to task for not believing that amour-propre can have a meritorious connotation. With respect to this latter idea, he mentions François de Sales' distinction between amour-propre and amour de soi-même and says: "Tout amour-propre n'est pas donc condamnable et méprisable a priori." Etudes historiques et critiques sur la philosophie de Pascal (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1946-1947, II (ii), 211-213, 213. As we have seen, however, the Augustinian concept of amour-propre always has a reprehensible meaning, even with François de Sales. Similarly, Ch. Baudouin also discusses amour-propre, but only

being simply just one of the "puissances trompeuses,"¹⁰ whereas it is in reality the one "puissance trompeuse," namely concupiscence, which is the root of all evil in Fallen Man.¹¹

That Pascal does in fact understand the term amour-propre in its Augustinian sense of concupiscence is made clear by N.

Abercrombie. He writes:

Saint Augustine constructed his moral teaching about the twin conceptions of concupiscentia and caritas, self-love and the love of God. Pascal is faithful to his teaching. He calls self-love (amour-propre) an 'instinct which leads a man to make himself God' - - an Augustinian maxim which he could have found in circulation at Port-Royal. 'Tout tend à soi. Cela est contre tout ordre: il faut tendre au général; et la pente vers soi est le commencement de tout désordre, en guerre, en police, en économie, dans le corps particulier de l'homme.'¹² The opposition

with reference to its social connotations. Hence he relates it to Méré and Mitton. La Recherche de l'absolu: Blaise Pascal ou l'ordre du coeur (Paris: Plon, 1962), pp. 127-128. Both critics, then, tend to envisage the concept of amour-propre in its ethical rather than its Augustinian sense.

¹⁰J. Chevalier, Pascal (Paris: Plon, 1922), pp. 203-204; J. Mesnard, Pascal (Paris: Hatier, 1951), p. 141; J.H. Broome, Pascal (London: Arnold, 1965), p. 148.

¹¹Although Krailsheimer does not write of the concept of amour-propre within its specific Augustinian context of the two loves or in its Augustinian sense of concupiscence, his views on the rôle and importance of the concept in the Pensées are not dissimilar from those presented here. He writes: "When the whole of Pascal's argument has been unfolded, amour-propre is clearly seen in the key rôle, usurping the central place properly assigned to God and Christ, . . ." (p. 142)

¹²As far as the classification of the "pensées" is concerned, the Chevalier number will be given first, followed by the Brunschvicg number. In the case of extensive fragments, the Chevalier page number will also be given. This fragment quoted by Abercrombie is 703/477.

of an inclination or tendency towards self, and a tendency towards the universe, is precisely the Augustinian opposition between the 'weights' which incline us either towards the proprium (the privatum) or towards the commune: and this opposition is immediately derived, both by Saint Augustine and by Pascal, from the circumstances of the fall of man.¹³

Pascal was writing and thinking in the main tradition of seventeenth-century Augustinianism and it is therefore reasonable to posit that the concept of amour-propre has the same meaning and general importance in the Pensées that it has, for instance, in the works of Bérulle, Saint-Cyran, Arnauld and Senault studied earlier and in the works of Nicole, Esprit and Bossuet that will be examined later.¹⁴

Pascal writes as following on man: "Sans Jésus-Christ, il faut que l'homme soit dans le vice et dans la misère; avec Jésus-Christ, l'homme est exempt de vice et de misère. En lui est toute notre vertu et toute notre félicité; hors de lui il n'y a que vice, misère, erreurs, ténèbres, mort, désespoir." (690/546) This fragment, then, briefly describes two general conceptions of man: man with Christ and man without Christ. As far as Pascal's description of man without Christ is concerned, it will be seen that the particular cause of his wretchedness

¹³Saint Augustine and French Classical Thought, p. 112.

¹⁴See below, pp. 151-183.

and vice is his amour-propre. As far as Pascal's description of man with Christ is concerned, we shall see that the cause of his happiness and virtue is found in the amour de Dieu, the love to which man rises after the acceptance of Christ's gift of grace.

Man was, however, in the beginning, linked to God and dependent on God. He was "comme semblable à Dieu, et participant de sa divinité; . . ." (438/434, p. 1208) When man's desire for independence led him to break God's law,¹⁵ he fell from his state of felicity into a state of corruption in which he no longer had knowledge of God or of the amour de Dieu. God had become a Deus absconditus. As Pascal says, it is written in the Holy Scriptures

. . . que Dieu est un Dieu caché; et que, depuis la corruption de la nature, il les [les hommes] a laissés dans un aveuglement dont ils ne peuvent sortir que par Jésus-Christ, hors duquel toute communication avec Dieu est ôtée: . . . (366/242, p. 1184)

Man, now without God, is left to himself; he has passed from the universal to the particular, from the infinite to the finite, from the commune to the proprium. Having lost his awareness of spiritual truths, he attempts to find a place for

¹⁵As Pascal writes in his second "Ecrit sur la grâce": "Adam . . . se révolta contre Dieu, enfreignit ses préceptes, voulut être indépendant de Dieu et égal à lui." (p. 965)

himself in the world of visible things; but his search results in failure: "Car enfin, qu'est-ce que l'homme dans la nature? Un néant à l'égard de l'infini, un tout à l'égard du néant, un milieu entre rien et tout." (84/72, pp. 1106-1107) Even this "milieu" to which Pascal refers is exceptionally vague and unable to provide man with the sure foothold for which he seeks:

Nous voguons sur un milieu vaste, toujours incertains et flottants, poussés d'un bout vers l'autre. Quelque terme où nous pensions nous attacher et nous affermir, il branle et nous quitte; et si nous le suivons, il échappe à nos prises, nous glisse et fuit d'une fuite éternelle. Rien ne s'arrête pour nous. (Ibid., p. 1109)

Everything is changing and in movement and so man can find no fixed place for himself in the physical universe.

He is therefore led to make himself his own foothold in life. Being devoid of any capacity to love God, he falls into the total adoration of himself: "Nous nous trouvons dans l'impuissance d'adorer ce que nous ne connaissons pas et d'aimer autre chose que nous; . . ." (431/489) The state of self-love thus becomes inevitable in all men. Pascal refers to this condition of man as "amour-propre" and "concupiscence," as the following quotation demonstrates:

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'aimer; et qui lui fait en même temps abhorrer les obstacles qui la retiennent et l'empêchent d'aimer 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 la perd, et que lui seul la peut guérir. (721/544)

Here Pascal refers to the direct opposition between amour-propre and amour de Dieu, a constant theme of the Augustinians. Following in their tradition, he understands amour-propre as the consequence of original sin, placing it on the same level as concupiscence. It may appear in the quoted fragment that he differentiates between these two forces when he writes "l'amour-propre et la concupiscence." Pascal does, however, fuse these two phenomena together when he says that they constitute a "fonds d'amour-propre" and this fusion points to the synonymy between the two terms.

Amour-propre, then, is the condition of Fallen Man,¹⁶ and it necessarily leads to his eventual destruction unless God intervenes. It is "la source de tous nos mouvements" (132/41)

¹⁶In "pensée" 483/430, (p. 1224), Pascal writes: "Voilà l'état où les hommes sont aujourd'hui. Il leur reste quelque instinct impuissant du bonheur de leur première nature, et ils sont plongés dans les misères de leur aveuglement et de leur concupiscence, qui est devenue leur seconde nature." Man's first nature was his state before the Fall; his second nature is his concupiscence, which, as we have noted earlier, may be considered synonymous with amour-propre.

and determines man's psychology and predominates in his relationships with other men.

Amour-propre prevails in man's psychology and its primary characteristic is to motivate him to place himself at the centre of his preoccupations: "La nature de l'amour-propre et de ce moi humain est de n'aimer que soi et de ne considérer que soi." (130/100, p. 1123) The moi is thus identical with amour-propre,¹⁷ and so the moi also becomes "hateful" since it is constantly attempting to make itself the centre of everything: "Le moi est hâssable: . . . Si je le hais parce qu'il est injuste, qu'il se fait le centre de tout, je le haïrai toujours." (136/455) As Abercrombie writes, this idea of the moi hâssable finds its source in Saint Augustine's concept of amor sui,¹⁸ and so takes on the same pejorative connotations.¹⁹

¹⁷See also P. Nédoncelle: "Il y a coïncidence du moi et de l'amour-propre." "Le moi d'après les Pensées," Pascal: Textes du Tricentenaire (Paris: Fayard, 1963). p. 37.

¹⁸Saint Augustine and French Classical Thought, p. 110.

¹⁹This perspective provides a major point of contrast between Pascal and Montaigne, both considered insofar as they are painters of the moi. Pascal writes of Montaigne as follows: "Montaigne Le sot projet qu'il a de se peindre!" (76/62) Such a project is indeed "sot" in Pascal's estimation for in describing himself, Montaigne is simply describing the condition of Fallen Man and shows no great desire to seek release from its imperfections through Christ. Pascal, however, by describing the moi within the context of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre will attempt to lead man to Christ.

The condition of man, plagued by the idea of an inevitable death (341/199), is one of wretchedness: "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; . . ." (130/100, p. 1123) In spite of these circumstances, man achieves a form of happiness, thanks to his amour-propre. He sees the truth of the human condition, but his amour-propre induces him to embellish his view of himself by covering up his faults. (Ibid.) It is at this point that the rôle of the imagination becomes of primary importance. Imagination is

. . . cette partie décevante²⁰ dans l'homme, cette maîtresse d'erreur et de fausseté, . . . Cette superbe puissance, ennemie de la raison, qui se plaît à la contrôler et à la dominer, a établi dans l'homme une seconde nature. (104/82, p. 1116)

Being stronger than reason, imagination allies itself with amour-propre and produces and maintains in man a pleasant image of himself. Amour-propre thus enables man to find happiness within himself by causing him to form an "illusion volontaire" about himself (130/100, p. 1123) and by imparting to him a constant aversion for the truth of his condition. As Pascal writes: "Cette aversion pour la vérité . . . est inséparable de l'amour-propre." (Ibid., pp. 1124-1125)

One of the impulses in man's psychology thus motivates

²⁰Chevalier reads "dominante" and Brunshvicg "décevante"; the latter would appear the more reasonable, especially since amour-propre is the dominant force in man. Chevalier also accepts this reading. (p. 1503)

him to believe in an imaginary idea of himself. A second impulse leads him to divertissement. Hence Pascal states: "Notre nature est dans le mouvement." (198/129) Man's nature is amour-propre and it propels him into movement so as to divert him from the contemplation of his fundamental wretchedness and from the consideration of God. As H. Lefebvre writes on the idea of divertissement: "C'est ce qui détourne l'homme de soi, de la vue de soi-même; c'est ce qui le détourne de cette réalité, de ce problème fondamental, la mort, et qui par conséquent le détourne de l'unique nécessaire, Jésus."²¹ Man is therefore led to search for happiness in the physical world of pleasures as well as within himself.²² Such pursuits bring him forgetfulness of the evils of his finite condition:

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 néant, son abandon, son insuffisance, sa dépendance, son impuissance, son vide. (201/131)

Amour-propre is not, however, the only motivation for this action. Man has an instinct which makes him believe that his happiness is

²¹"Divertissement pascalien et aliénation humaine," Pascal, l'homme et l'oeuvre (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1956), p. 198.

²²Nicole, in the essay "De la connoissance de soy-mesme," also detects these two basic inclinations of amour-propre in man that lead him into divertissements and which blind him as to his faults. See below, p. 157.

to be found outside himself, namely in God. Although he has no knowledge of God in his state of corruption, the instinct remains. (390/464) Both amour-propre and this instinct thus combine to propel man into divertissements. It is not the attainment of the specific end of a divertissement that brings man pleasure, but rather the way in which the divertissement pre-occupies the mind before the end is achieved.²³ In such a manner as this, "le divertissement nous amuse et nous fait arriver insensiblement à la mort." (217/171)

One of the most dangerous of divertissements is the theatre, especially when the subject depicted is chaste love:

Car plus il paraît innocent aux âmes innocentes, plus elles sont capables d'en être touchées; sa violence plaît à notre amour-propre, qui forme aussitôt un désir de causer les mêmes effets, que l'on voit si bien représentés; . . . (208/11)

The traditional notion of romantic love does not therefore appear to exist for Pascal. It is amour-propre that forms in man the passion of love out of a desire to experience its effects and to cause its violence to be brought about in others.²⁴

²³As Pascal writes in a marginal note: "Raison pourquoi on aime mieux la chasse que la prise." (205/139, p. 1140)

²⁴This particular fragment (208/11) first appeared in the edition of Mme de Sablé's Maximes of 1678. Chevalier, however, writes of it: "L'attribution [à Pascal] ne paraît pas douteuse." (p. 1504)

This last point leads to a consideration of man in relation to other men and the part that amour-propre plays in this relationship. Generally speaking, the major way in which amour-propre reveals itself in these relationships is in the desire to dominate: "Chaque moi est l'ennemi et voudrait être le tyran de tous les autres." (136/455) Since amour-propre motivates this desire in all men, all men by their very nature hate each other:

Tous les hommes se haïssent naturellement l'un l'autre. On s'est servi comme on a pu de la concupiscence pour la faire servir au bien public; mais ce n'est que feindre, et une fausse image de la charité; car au fond ce n'est que haine. (134/451)

Society, however, could not exist if all men followed this deep-seated desire to dominate others and thus gave expression to their mutual hatred, and so they affect a false exterior in order to conceal their hatred in the interests of self-preservation and social order. Their concupiscence, or amour-propre, thus gives rise to a false image of charity.²⁵ The truth nevertheless remains that their basic motivation is amour-propre, which is always present even though "couvert":

On a fondé et tiré de la concupiscence des règles admirables de police, de morale et de justice; mais, dans le fond, ce vilain fond de l'homme, ce figmentum malum, n'est que couvert: il n'est pas ôté. (135/453)

²⁵Nicole develops this idea at far greater length in the essay "De la charité et de l'amour-propre"; see below, p. 161 et seq.

One generally accepted way in which men concealed their amour-propre in Pascal's time was through the practice of honnêteté.²⁶ Pascal patently has this particular theory of social conduct in mind; hence he goes on to mention Mitton. (136/455)

Since man conceals the natural despotism of his amour-propre in his social relationships, hypocrisy inevitably results: "Personne ne parle de nous en notre présence comme il en parle en notre absence. L'union qui est entre les hommes n'est fondée que sur cette mutuelle tromperie; . . ." (130/100, p. 1125)

Summing up his description of man in his relationship to himself and to other men, Pascal concludes:

L'homme n'est donc que déguisement, que mensonge et hypocrisie, et en soi-même et à l'égard des autres Et toutes ces dispositions, si éloignées de la justice et de la raison, ont une racine naturelle dans son coeur." (Ibid., pp. 1125-1126)

The principle, or root cause of this is man's all-pervading amour-propre, which characterizes the "coeur" of man without

²⁶As M. Magendie notes of the theory of honnêteté at this time: "L'honnête homme est celui qui manifeste dans le monde, avec ce minimum de vertu indispensable aux relations sociales, les qualités de politesse, d'esprit, de conversation, de grâce, . . . La vie privée, la décence des moeurs, la valeur intrinsèque de l'âme, importent peu." La Politesse mondaine et les théories de l'honnêteté en France, au XVIIe siècle, de 1600 à 1660 (Paris: Alcan, 1925), II, 892. The major requisites for honnêteté are, then, excellence and elegance in speech and manners and in the observance of social conventions.

God.²⁷ It induces him to deceive himself as to his true condition and to disguise himself in an embellished self-image. It leads him to conceal his anti-social tendencies in his relationships with other men, which results in hypocrisy.

In this gloomy picture of man that Pascal constructs around amour-propre, there is one redeeming feature: man is capable of thought:

L'homme est visiblement fait pour penser; c'est toute sa dignité et tout son mérite, et tout son devoir est de penser comme il faut. Or l'ordre de la pensée est de commencer par soi, et par son auteur et sa fin. (210/146)

Man should attempt to become aware of both "soi" and "son auteur et sa fin," and out of this basic, initial confrontation proceed to live in a way consistent with God's love. "Dieu est la fin de l'homme, donc l'homme doit et peut tendre vers lui comme vers sa fin, c'est-à-dire l'aimer."²⁸ Pascal's whole intention in the

27As Pascal writes elsewhere: "Le coeur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connaît point; on le sait en mille choses. Je dis que le coeur aime l'être universel naturellement, et soi-même naturellement, selon qu'il s'y adonne; et il se durcit contre l'un ou l'autre à son choix. Vous avez rejeté l'un et conservé l'autre: est-ce par raison que vous vous aimez?" (477/277) The heart of man loves God or himself; but man rejected God out of a desire for independence and no longer has knowledge of Him or of the amour de Dieu. The heart has therefore become characterized by amour-propre; and so man does not love himself "par raison," that is, because he merits self-praise. He loves himself "par amour-propre," because he has fallen into total self-adoration owing to his original sin. This brief analysis of the fragment allows us to understand the cryptic phrase with which it begins. Insofar as the "coeur" is the seat of amour-propre or amour de Dieu, it is intrinsically a more potent faculty than reason itself since, in a final analysis, human conduct is controlled not so much by reason as by one or other of these two loves.

28J. Laporte, I, 105.

Pensées, in fact, is to attempt to show man the way to make this step from himself to God, from amour-propre to amour de Dieu.

Man's greatness thus resides in his ability to think and, more specifically, in his awareness of his miserable condition. (255/397) Correct thought will bring man face to face with his miserable condition, which will then lead him to search for his Creator, his true end in life. Hence the exhortation: "Travaillons donc à bien penser; voilà le principe de la morale." (264/347)

Man must look for God not only because eternal life is at stake (335/194, p. 1173), but because God is the only way by which man can achieve a lasting happiness.²⁹ Even in his state of corruption, man has an "instinct impuissant du bonheur de [sa] première nature" (483/430, p. 1224), and he attempts to recover this happiness by seeking contentment with himself and with the things of the world. But he is never successful. "Ce gouffre ne peut être rempli que par un objet infini et immuable, c'est-à-dire . . . par Dieu même." (370/425) Man should therefore try to aspire to the love of God. And Pascal writes of three ways in which man may reach up to this love: "Il y a trois moyens de croire: la raison, la coutume, l'inspiration." (482/245)

Reason should reveal to man that it is impossible for him to achieve felicity through his amour-propre:

²⁹The search for happiness is constant in all men: "Tous les hommes recherchent d'être heureux: cela est sans exception." (370/425, p. 1184)

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 méritions cela; et il est injuste et impossible d'y arriver, puisque tous demandent 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. (434/492)

All men therefore, motivated by their amour-propre, desire to make themselves their own God, that is, desire to command a position in which they would be self-sufficient and would have dominion over others. As Pascal writes, such a goal is unrealizable on two counts: firstly, man does not deserve such an exalted position by reason of his imperfections ("il est faux que nous méritions cela"); secondly, man's desire to make himself God cannot evidently be fulfilled since all men seek the same goal ("il est . . . impossible d'y arriver"). Even so, comments Pascal, all men nevertheless persist in their impossible desire; it is motivated by the sinfulness ("injustice") into which man was born and from which man cannot escape. Reason is thus powerless to help man seek happiness elsewhere than in the fulfilment of his self-centred desires.

Reason, that is, man's ability to reason,³⁰ is altogether an intrinsically weak faculty: "Tout notre raisonnement se réduit à céder au sentiment. . . . La raison . . . est ployable à tous

³⁰J. Chevalier, pp. 237-238, n. 3.

sens; . . ." (474/274) Man's amour-propre, the principal force of the sensual nature, controls the rational nature and so renders the rational faculty impotent. Pascal nevertheless believes that reason can be of some assistance to bring man to God. He writes, however, that reason, of itself, cannot lead to man's salvation. (482/245)³¹

The second method, belief through custom, is also insufficient to procure man's salvation. It can, however, provide the non-believer with a method by which he may come to believe in God. He should act as though he were a Christian and imitate those who are already Christians:

Suivez la manière par où ils ont commencé: c'est en faisant tout comme s'ils croyaient, en prenant de l'eau bénite, en faisant dire des messes, etc. Naturellement même cela vous fera croire et vous abêtira. (451/233, pp. 1215-1216)

"Abêtir" thus has the sense of to act as an automaton, or, in other words, to live in a state of complete self-abnegation. As we have seen in Bérulle's Bref Discours, this method is one of the most successful for combating amour-propre, which always seeks to make itself independent of God.

The third and only salvific manner in which man may reach up to the love of God is through inspiration. For, through

³¹As Levi writes: "For Pascal, . . . grace adds that merit which makes rational belief salvific." French Moralists, p. 232.

inspiration, that is, the infusion of grace,³² God imparts to the heart of man a love of Himself and so accords man the possibility of resisting his amour-propre. Hence Pascal writes: "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." (481/278)³³ Man is reunited with God and the amour de Dieu through the gift of grace,³⁴ and it is at this point that the rôle of Christ becomes of supreme importance.

Christ's mission on earth was to redeem all men by releasing them from the bondage of their passions, which are manifestations of their amour-propre:

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; qu'il vient pour les détruire et pour leur donner sa grâce, afin de faire d'eux tous une Eglise sainte; . . . (651/783)

It is thus through the action of grace that "le coeur" becomes

³²J. Laporte's definition of grace makes this point clear. He writes: "La grâce, c'est-à-dire l'inspiration de l'amour de Dieu, la charité." (I, 83-84) Belief through reason and custom would seem to prepare the soul for "inspiration."

³³Speaking of the term "le coeur" in Saint-Cyran's works, Levi writes that the latter's usage "makes it clear that the heart is the seat of grace and also the ultimate residence of guilt or merit." French Moralists, p. 323. This would also seem to be the case with Pascal. For, without grace, the heart is characterized by amour-propre; with grace, it is the potential seat of amour de Dieu.

³⁴"Si on vous unit à Dieu, c'est par grâce, non par nature." (483/430, p. 1225)

receptive to the amour de Dieu and that man is enabled to resist his amour-propre. But, as Pascal points out, amour-propre may prevent the acceptance of grace: "A cela s'opposent tous les hommes . . . par l'opposition naturelle de la concupiscence; . . ." (Ibid.) Man is therefore called upon to consent to the action of grace³⁵ and must also thereafter play an active part in the spiritual combat between amour de Dieu and amour-propre.³⁶

Jésus-Christ n'a fait autre chose qu'apprendre aux hommes qu'ils s'aimaient eux-mêmes, qu'ils étaient esclaves, aveugles, malades, malheureux et pécheurs; qu'il fallait qu'il les délivrât, éclairât, béatifiât et guérît; et que cela se ferait en se haïssant soi-même, et en le suivant par la misère et la mort de la croix. (689/545)

The principle for living a devout life and for controlling the natural proclivity towards sinfulness of one's amour-propre thus becomes embodied in the phrase: "Il faut n'aimer que Dieu et ne haïr que soi." (707/476)

³⁵Pascal is here ostensibly echoing Bérulle and Saint-Cyran; see above, pp. 35 and 64 respectively.

³⁶Pascal also deals with the conflict between amour-propre and amour de Dieu in a letter to Mlle de Roannez. Here he writes: "Avant que l'on soit touché, on n'a que le poids de sa concupiscence, qui porte à la terre. Quand Dieu attire en haut, ces deux efforts contraires font cette violence que Dieu seul peut faire surmonter. Mais nous pouvons tout, dit saint Léon, avec celui sans lequel nous ne pouvons rien. Il faut donc se résoudre à souffrir cette guerre toute sa vie: car ici il n'y a point de paix." (24 septembre 1656, p. 507) The spiritual combat between the two loves therefore ends only with death. Pascal therefore, along with the other Augustinian theologians, envisages amour-propre as a constant in the human make-up.

When he is in grace, man rises to a new self-love, a self-love that is no longer reprehensible; man now loves himself insofar as he is a member of the mystical body of Christ:

On s'aime, parce qu'on est membre de Jésus-Christ. On aime Jésus-Christ, parce qu'il est le corps dont on est membre. Tout est un, l'un est en l'autre, comme dans les trois Personnes. (710/483)

Man is no longer attempting to make himself the centre of his preoccupations, the centre around which everything revolves, which was a principal inclination of his amour-propre. On the contrary, by virtue of the knowledge of spiritual truths imparted through grace, he is now content to make himself dependent on God and part of the universal adoration of God; he is now led to view other men with charity. As Nédoncelle writes: "Ce n'est pas seulement la relation du moi humain à un toi divin qui se renouvelle dans le Christ, c'est aussi celle du moi humain au toi humain: . . ."³⁷ The self-love of man with God is, then, in essence, a love of the presence of God within him:

La vraie et unique vertu est donc de se haïr (car on est haïssable par sa concupiscence), et de chercher un être véritablement aimable, pour l'aimer. Mais, comme nous ne pouvons aimer ce qui est hors de nous, il faut aimer un être qui soit en nous, et qui ne soit pas nous, et cela est vrai d'un chacun de tous les hommes. Or il n'y a que l'Être universel qui soit tel. Le royaume de Dieu est en nous: le bien universel est en nous, est nous-même, et n'est pas nous. (712/485)

³⁷Page 43.

With God, man must therefore hate himself because of his ever-present amour-propre and love himself since he has been visited by amour de Dieu. And so, man's instinct that his true happiness lies outside himself, which remained with him after his Fall,³⁸ is fully realized in God and only in God.

At the heart of the Pensées, then, are amour-propre and amour de Dieu. Pascal himself intimates as much when he writes: "Toute la morale [consiste] en la concupiscence et en la grâce."³⁹ (675/523) These are the two poles of the thought around which the Pensées revolve and which are central to Pascal's plan to draw man to God. He first depicts the rôle of amour-propre in Fallen Man and then the rôle of grace, which permits him to rise to the higher order of amour de Dieu, "l'ordre de la charité," thus making him incapable of any end in earthly existence other than the adoration of God:

Le Dieu des chrétiens . . . est un Dieu qui remplit l'âme et le coeur de ceux qu'il possède; c'est un Dieu qui leur fait sentir intérieurement leur misère, et sa miséricorde infinie; qui

³⁸"Notre instinct nous fait sentir qu'il faut chercher notre bonheur hors de nous." (390/464) As we have seen, when man is without God, this instinct along with amour-propre propels man into divertissements.

³⁹Like Saint-Cyran, Pascal also equates cupidity and charity with these two terms respectively: "Il y a deux principes qui partagent les volontés des hommes, la cupidité et la charité. Ce n'est pas que la cupidité ne puisse être avec la foi en Dieu, et que la charité ne soit avec les biens de la terre; mais la cupidité use de Dieu et jouit du monde; et la charité, au contraire." (574/571, p. 1271) As with amour-propre and amour de Dieu, a major difference between them is the uti and frui discussed above, p. 67, n. 11.

s'unit au fond de leur âme; qui la remplit d'humilité, de joie, de confiance, d'amour; qui les rend incapables d'autre fin que de lui-même. (602/556, p. 1281)

Conclusion

The traditional Augustinian meaning of the term amour-propre is maintained throughout Pascal's religious works studied here. As early as 1651, in a letter to the Périers, he gives a strictly Augustinian account of the origin of amour-propre, noting that it characterizes Fallen Man and is totally opposed to the love of God. He returns to these same themes in the text "Sur la conversion du pécheur" and in the "Mémorial."

In the Provinciales, the Augustinian concept of amour-propre again plays a rôle of some importance. It provides the general basis for Pascal's attack on the Jesuits, since they had accommodated Christian morality to man's amour-propre by such means as the theory of mental reservations and the doctrine of probability in the interests of keeping the churches filled. For Pascal, as for the Augustinian theologians, Christian morality and Church discipline are founded on the love of God and he is therefore highly critical of their laxity.

The Augustinian concepts of amour-propre and amour de Dieu are given a central rôle, if not the central rôle, in the Pensées. Amour-propre, largely synonymous with concupiscence, typifies the human condition and man has no natural escape from

it. It motivates two basic inclinations in man's psychology: it leads him to seek forgetfulness of the misery of his condition by inducing him to believe in an imaginary idea of himself and by propelling him into divertissements. It motivates all men to attempt to dominate others and this, for Pascal, explains the point that all men fundamentally hate each other. In the interests of social stability and peaceful intercourse, however, men conceal their mutual hatred and affect a polite exterior, with the result that hypocrisy typifies social existence.

Christ, with the gift of grace, allows man the possibility of aspiring to the love of God and therefore of combating his amour-propre. Once he is established in the order of charity, man accedes to a new form of self-love, a self-love that is, at bottom, a love of the presence of God within him. In this manner, man realizes the happiness for which he constantly seeks as well as his true end in life, the adoration of God.

Pascal thus examines and discusses the Augustinian concept of amour-propre within the context of his religious works. La Rochefoucauld, to whom this study now moves, treats of this same concept in quite a different context.

24

CHAPTER V

THE MAXIMES OF LA ROCHEFOUCAULD

Critics generally agree that the concept of amour-propre is central to the moral conception of man in the Maximes, but not all have seen into the full Augustinian sense of the term in this work. H. Chamard writes of it as being egoism:¹ W. G. Moore seems to envisage it as self-interest;² for Krailsheimer, it is the "permanent and radical reorientation of man's spiritual eye on to himself."³ All of these ideas hold some truth, as the Augustinian concept of amour-propre certainly embraces each of these aspects. But, as we have seen, the concept also has the wider connotation of being the natural condition of Fallen Man.

Levi, who shares this view of the meaning of amour-propre in the Maximes, writes that La Rochefoucauld's "denunciation of amour-propre carries with it the clear reference to Augustine's opposition of the two loves, as exposed by

¹"Three French Moralists of the Seventeenth Century," The Rice Institute Pamphlets, XVIII (1931), 8.

²French Classical Literature (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 125.

³Page 89.

Jansenius."⁴ While this point of view would seem to place La Rochefoucauld in a strict Jansenist tradition, we have nevertheless noted earlier that the meaning and rôle of the concept of amour-propre in the work of Jansenius do not differ essentially from the theology of the concept in the works of the other Augustinians studied up to this point. And so, as we shall see, the term amour-propre is used by La Rochefoucauld in its Augustinian sense.

There is, however, one problem to this interpretation which should be dealt with before the actual study of the Maximes is begun. It resides in the problem that the ideas of divine grace and of the amour de Dieu are inherent in the Augustinian concept of amour-propre and yet are never explicitly mentioned in the Maximes themselves. This particular situation need not, however, invalidate our approach since, as Levi has said, the idea of grace is present by implication. Furthermore, the Augustinian concepts of amour de Dieu and of amour-propre do, in fact, depict two different views of man that may be isolated. St. Augustine, for example, in the passage where he establishes his doctrine of the two loves, places them in diametrical opposition with no point of contact between the two; on the one hand, there is the

⁴"Amour-propre," p. 290. Although Levi does not develop this view at length in his short study of the Maximes, he makes several important points to which I shall be referring.

love that characterizes the City of God and, on the other, there is the love that characterizes the Earthly City, the City of Fallen Humanity. The two concepts, then, deal with two independent ideas of man, one being theological and the other moral: man with God and man without God respectively.

Moreover, one should not lose sight of the differing aims of an Augustinian theologian, such as Bérulle, and a moralist, such as La Rochefoucauld. Whereas Bérulle stresses the corruption of Fallen Man, he always emphasizes that la gloire awaits those who accept grace and are reborn in Christ. No such explicit preoccupation is present in a moralist, in the French sense of the term.⁵ He is, above all, concerned with the depiction of man as he is; reference to any transcendental force, such as grace, need not necessarily come within the scope of his study.

Dagens notes: "L'étude de l'homme a tendance à se laïciser chez nos moralistes au XVIIe siècle."⁶ This is evidently true of La Rochefoucauld; he will speak mostly of man without reference to any transcendental force. But, at the same time, he uses concepts that have an evident theological origin. As Krailsheimer points out when generalizing on seventeenth-century

⁵As Moore writes: "The French have a great tradition of moralistes, a word which if translated literally into English alters in sense. The true translation would be something like analysts or psychologists, since they describe much more than they prescribe." (p. 124)

⁶Bérulle et les origines, p. 270.

moral writing: "Any serious discussion of the condition humaine had to deal with Christianity, and even those who were most hostile had no other vocabulary to hand for most of the things they wanted to say than that used by Christians."⁷ As we shall see, one of the more important Christian concepts used in the Maximes is the Augustinian concept of amour-propre; in other words, those views that characterize the concept of amour-propre, or concupiscence, in the writings of the Augustinian theologians will also be present in the Maximes.

Upon examining the Maximes, it soon becomes clear that La Rochefoucauld understands the term amour-propre in its Augustinian sense. He possibly came into contact with the term in its theological context through his meetings with Jacques Esprit⁸ and Mme de Sablé, which became quite frequent in the 1650's and early 1660's. Mme de Sablé's salon, for instance, which flourished at this time, often received visits from Pascal, Arnauld, Esprit and La Rochefoucauld and witnessed the discussion of various points of Augustinian theology.⁹ La Rochefoucauld then apparently took the term into his own vocabulary since the ideas it embodied coincided so aptly with his own view of man.

⁷Page 6.

⁸The author of De la fausseté des vertus humaines, an Augustinian work which is discussed below, pp. 165-172.

⁹N. Ivanoff, La Marquise de Sablé et son salon (Paris: Presses Modernes, 1927), pp. 89-90, 96-106.

As H. Grubbs writes:

Pendant qu'il écrivait ses Mémoires, des réflexions suscitées par une étude approfondie des mobiles des chefs des partis de la Fronde ont dû renforcer une opinion qu'il tenait peut-être déjà: que l'amour-propre est le motif unique des actions humaines, et qu'il n'existe pas de vertu désintéressée.¹⁰

This is not to say, of course, that La Rochefoucauld came to believe entirely in the Port-Royal theology, even though the Jansenist penchants of Mme de Sévigné and Mme de Lafayette may have coloured his own Christian beliefs with pessimistic hues. It nevertheless remains true that the Maximes are heavily impregnated with Augustinian ideas, of which the concept of amour-propre stands out as the supreme and most noteworthy example.¹¹

The main difficulty in interpreting the Augustinian concept of amour-propre in the Maximes stems from the fact that La Rochefoucauld has almost totally suppressed or seen fit not to discuss extensively the theological context of the concept and the reasons for this will be discussed later in this study.¹² It is, however, possible to reconstruct this context and, indeed, necessary to do so if certain of the maxims and some of the

¹⁰"La Genèse des Maximes de La Rochefoucauld," Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, XL (1933), 20.

¹¹Adam mentions this importance of Augustinian ideas in the Maximes. Histoire de la littérature française au XVIIe siècle (Paris: Del Duca, 1958-1962) IV, 93-94.

¹²See below, p. 146-149.

basic ideas that La Rochefoucauld discusses are to be fully understood. To a certain extent, La Rochefoucauld tends to invite such an approach by writing in his "Préface" of the 1666 edition of the Maximes:

La principale [chose], et comme le fondement de toutes ces Réflexions, est que celui qui les a faites n'a considéré les hommes que dans cet état déplorable de la nature corrompue par le péché; . . .¹³

And this view would certainly seem to relate to the Augustinian idea that human nature is fundamentally corrupt by virtue of the original sin. Similarly, in a letter addressed to Thomas Esprit, the brother of Jacques and the author of Maximes politiques, he writes of the Maximes:

Il me semble, dis-je, que l'on n'a pu trop exagérer les misères et les contrariétés du coeur humain pour humilier l'orgueil ridicule dont il est rempli, et lui faire voir le besoin qu'il a en toutes choses d'être soutenu et redressé par le christianisme. (p. 630)

This text, although less explicitly Augustinian, nevertheless evokes the common Augustinian theme of man's pride in himself

¹³F. de la Rochefoucauld, Oeuvres complètes, ed. L. Martin-Chauffier & J. Marchand, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 399. The same text is in the "Préface" of the editions of 1671, 1675 and 1678. The 1678 edition of the Maximes will be used here, the maxims numbering from 1 to 504. The "maximes posthumes" (505-562) and the "maximes supprimées" (563-641) will also be used, usually only if they relate to a theme of the 1678 edition. Subsequent references to works in the Oeuvres complètes will be given parenthetically.

that must be humbled and that Christianity is the only means by which he may achieve this spiritual redress. In the Maximes themselves, La Rochefoucauld's Augustinianism is rarely as explicit as it is here. Even so, the thesis of the corrupt condition of human nature predominates in the Maximes and the Augustinian concept of amour-propre becomes of fundamental importance to it. It should be added that the idea of divine grace only finds mention in the "Préface" and is not overtly dealt with in the body of the Maximes.¹⁴ And so it is clear that La Rochefoucauld treats of man without direct reference to God, which is properly the domain of the moralist.

A major point of Augustinian theology is that amour-propre is the condition of Fallen Man,¹⁵ and La Rochefoucauld also envisages it as the condition of man in the Maximes. He writes: "Nous ne pouvons rien aimer que par rapport à nous" (81), emphasizing that since man necessarily relates everything to himself, his self-love is an integral part of his being. This state of self-love is, in fact, amour-propre: "L'amour-propre est l'amour de soi-même et de toutes choses pour soi; . . ."

¹⁴In the "Préface" to the editions of 1666, 1671, 1675 and 1678, La Rochefoucauld writes that he has only considered men in the state of original sin and that therefore the way in which he speaks of "ce nombre infini de défauts qui se rencontrent dans leurs vertus apparentes ne regarde point ceux que Dieu en préserve par une grâce particulière." (pp. 399, 400, 401, 402)

¹⁵See above, pp. 13, 21 and 67.

(563)¹⁶ Amour-propre was not, however, man's original condition:

Une preuve convaincante que l'homme n'a pas été créé comme il est, c'est que, plus il devient raisonnable, et plus il rougit en lui-même de l'extravagance, de la bassesse et de la corruption de ses sentiments et de ses inclinations. (523)

This maxim would seem to be explicable only in terms of the Augustinian theory of man's original state of felicity and his subsequent fall from grace into amour-propre, with its corrupting influence on his feelings and inclinations.¹⁷ He also alludes to the same corruption of human nature and stresses that there is no escape from it when he states:

Les défauts de l'âme sont comme les blessures du corps: quelque soin qu'on prenne de les guérir, la cicatrice paraît toujours, et elles sont à tout moment en danger de se rouvrir. (194)

The soul has certain defects or flaws that cannot be cured or totally corrected. This idea again relates very closely to the

¹⁶H. Grubbs writes of this maxim: "Maxim 563, the long essay on amour-propre . . . was probably suppressed on the ground of crudeness. That is, it too obviously revealed the author's main thesis. Its suppression cannot be explained as an attempt to diminish the universality of this thesis" "The Originality of La Rochefoucauld's Maxims," Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, XXXVI (1929), 57. It would therefore appear justifiable to quote from this maxim, especially as it treats of the concept in lucid terms. As far as the terms amour-propre and amour de soi-même are concerned, they are, as Adam writes, synonymous: "Les Maximes n'ont de sens que s'il existe en l'homme un seul amour naturel, l'amour de soi, l'amour-propre." Histoire de la littérature française au XVIIe siècle, IV, 100-101.

¹⁷For examples of these views in Augustinian theology, see above, pp. 29-30 and 80-81.

Augustinian idea of the imperfect nature of Fallen Man.¹⁸

We have seen that, with the Augustinians, man lost knowledge of God and therefore of the amour de Dieu after his Fall and was characterized thereafter by amour-propre.¹⁹ La Rochefoucauld seems to be echoing this particular point, albeit in an oblique manner, in the following maxim:

S'il y a un amour pur et exempt du mélange de nos autres passions, c'est celui qui est caché au fond du coeur, et que nous ignorons nous-mêmes. (69)

For La Rochefoucauld, it would seem that man in his present state of corruption cannot achieve awareness of this "amour pur," which is buried deep in his heart; he can only, as it will be noted, follow the impulses of his amour-propre.

In the maxims examined thus far, there has been no open mention of Christianity or of Augustinian theology, even though the ideas that La Rochefoucauld discusses have what would appear to be a probable Augustinian origin. One maxim, however, clearly establishes the concept of amour-propre within its theological context:

¹⁸The difference between "les blessures" of which La Rochefoucauld speaks here and the "blessure" that Mousnier mentions while discussing Christian humanism (see above, p. 44) is that for the author of the Maximes these "blessures" appear to be incurable and capable of affecting the whole personality.

¹⁹Bérulle, for example, makes this same point; see above, p. 30.

Dieu a permis, pour punir l'homme du péché originel, qu'il se fît un Dieu de son amour-propre, pour en être tourmenté dans toutes les actions de sa vie. (509)

As Levi comments, this maxim clearly betrays the theological origin of the concept.²⁰ It notes that amour-propre is God's punishment for man and that man is never free from its influence in his lifetime. It is true that La Rochefoucauld never sanctioned the inclusion of this maxim in the editions of the Maximes that he supervised.²¹ The maxim is, however, important in that it reveals beyond doubt the Augustinian context in which he found amour-propre and in which he understood it. Amour-propre therefore characterizes the human condition: "Il est dans tous les états et dans toutes les conditions; . . . Voilà la peinture de l'amour-propre, dont toute la vie n'est qu'une grande et longue agitation; . . ." (563) Since La Rochefoucauld never introduces the idea of divine grace into the Maximes - - it is present only in his "Préface" - - amour-propre becomes the inevitable condition of all men, or, in non-theological terms, "a biological factor in the human make-up."²² It ends only with death.²³ La Rochefoucauld

²⁰French Moralists, p. 231, n. 2.

²¹This maxim appears in an undated letter to Mme de Sablé, in which La Rochefoucauld writes: "Je vous envoie ce que j'ai pris chez vous en partie." (p. 620) This may imply that she and the habitués of her salon collaborated with La Rochefoucauld in the composition of this particular maxim.

²²Moore, p. 128.

²³Maxim 504, p. 470.

thus reproduces quite faithfully the Augustinian idea that amour-propre is the condition of Fallen Man.

Amour-propre also comes to have ascendancy over the rational faculty in man and so characterizes his psychology. La Rochefoucauld considers man to be an essentially weak creature: "La faiblesse est le seul défaut que l'on ne saurait corriger." (130) This weakness stems from the superiority of the passions over reason; they exist and endure independently of reason and will: "La durée de nos passions ne dépend pas plus de nous que la durée de notre vie." (5) Even if reason should come to control a passion, its victory is not due to its own intrinsic strength but rather to the weakness of the passion. (122) Reason may show man the path he ought to follow, but he is unable to do so owing to his rebellious passions: "Nous n'avons pas assez de force pour suivre toute notre raison." (42) In Augustinian terms, La Rochefoucauld is simply stating that amour-propre, the moving force in the sensual nature, prevails over the rational nature.²⁴ This particular point is made quite clear by La Rochefoucauld himself

²⁴It is true that La Rochefoucauld's views on the irremediable weakness of man's reason may be due to an influence of Montaigne or to exponents of libertinage érudit, such as La Mothe Le Vayer. As we have seen, however, the weakness of man's rational faculty is an essential, integral part of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre and it is entirely probable that La Rochefoucauld's knowledge of this particular implication of the concept, along with other influences and personal views, led to the establishment of this point.

when he writes that amour-propre gives rise to all the passions in man: "Les passions ne sont que les divers goûts de l'amour-propre" (531), and so amour-propre prevails over reason. Hence La Rochefoucauld can say: "L'esprit est toujours la dupe du coeur." (102) "L'esprit," or the rational faculty of man, is always the dupe of the heart since the latter is the seat of amour-propre.²⁵

It has been noted that, for Saint-Cyran, amour-propre also resides in those parts of the soul of which reason has no knowledge.²⁶ La Rochefoucauld appears to echo this idea of man's unconscious when he writes:

L'homme croit souvent se conduire lorsqu'il est conduit, et pendant que par son esprit il tend à un but, son coeur l'entraîne insensiblement à un autre. (43)

What La Rochefoucauld is saying here is simply that amour-propre, being stronger than reason, governs man's actions.

As in the case of Pascal's Pensées, one of the major

²⁵La Rochefoucauld never openly states that the heart is the seat of amour-propre. One may nevertheless posit that he understands the term "le coeur", in this instance, in substantially the same manner as the Augustinian theologians, who note that the heart, or the apex mentis, became the seat of amour-propre after man's original sin. There seems little doubt that La Rochefoucauld was not conversant with this technical sense of "le coeur." J. Esprit, with whom La Rochefoucauld had many discussions as he was composing his Maximes, also refers to this point in his De la fausseté des vertus humaines; see below, p. 168. Once again I should state that I am not attempting to make an Augustinian theologian of La Rochefoucauld, but am simply saying that certain of the concepts he uses find their origin in Augustinian thought.

²⁶See above, p. 71.

impulses of amour-propre produces in man a flattering image of himself. It is "le plus grand de tous les flatteurs" (2), making men idolize themselves (563) and become self-indulgent. (196) This aspect of amour-propre is often referred to as vanity²⁷ and forms in man an embellished image of himself, by virtue of which he is able to achieve happiness: "On n'aurait guère de plaisir si on ne se flattait jamais." (123) Like amour-propre, the force that motivates it, vanity is ever present in man's make-up: "Les passions les plus violentes nous laissent quelquefois du relâche, mais la vanité nous agite toujours." (443)

Amour-propre also gives rise in man to the sentiment of pride in himself. La Rochefoucauld believes that all men are endowed with it (35), and the reason for this belief may be easily explained by having recourse to the Augustinian connotations of the concept of amour-propre. Pride was one of the motive forces that led to man's fall from grace and which characterized his nature thereafter. It is totally opposed to humility, in which is to be found the only defence against it:

L'humilité est la véritable preuve des vertus chrétiennes: sans elle, nous conservons tous nos défauts, et ils sont seulement couverts par l'orgueil, qui les cache aux autres, et souvent à nous-mêmes. (358)

²⁷"La flatterie est une fausse monnaie, qui n'a de cours que par notre vanité." (158)

This latter maxim is one of the few in the 1678 edition of the Maximes which make clear reference to Augustinian theology and which imply the source of La Rochefoucauld's idea of man. It is true that humility is a general Christian virtue, but on the seventeenth-century French religious scene, the partisans of Augustinianism especially tended to give this Christian virtue the degree of importance that La Rochefoucauld gives it in the above maxim. Like St. Augustine,²⁸ La Rochefoucauld believes that "l'humilité est l'autel sur lequel Dieu veut qu'on lui offre des sacrifices." (537) Pride, however, being one of the impulses of amour-propre, prevents these "sacrifices" from taking place since they would lead directly to its destruction. No one therefore desires to entertain a low esteem for themselves: "Force gens veulent être dévots, mais personne ne veut être humble." (534)

Amour-propre is also closely linked with "la paresse." La Rochefoucauld seems to understand by this term a feeling of indolence and self-satisfaction.²⁹ It is the feeling that makes man content with his lot and unwilling to seek any happiness outside himself. It induces him to suspend all activities:

Le repos de la paresse est un charme secret de l'âme qui suspend soudainement les plus ardentes poursuites et les plus opiniâtres résolutions; pour donner enfin la véritable idée de cette passion,

²⁸Gilson, as we have seen, writes that humility is the veritable essence of Augustinianism; see above, p. 12.

²⁹See above, p. 52, where St François links the two terms together.

il faut dire que la paresse est comme une béatitude de l'âme, qui la console de toutes ses pertes, et qui lui tient lieu de tous les biens. (630)³⁰

The passion of love, like all the other passions in man, owes its origin to amour-propre; in fact, as La Rochefoucauld writes of this passion:

Il n'y a point de passion où l'amour de soi-même règne si puissamment que dans l'amour, et on est toujours plus disposé à sacrifier le repos de ce qu'on aime qu'à perdre le sien. (262)

Love, too, is thus characterized by man's insuperable constant inclination to relate of everything to himself. It is not caused by the qualities of a person, but simply by a desire to experience the emotion; hence La Rochefoucauld writes: "Il y a des gens qui n'auraient jamais été amoureux, s'ils n'avaient jamais entendu parler de l'amour." (136) Love is a desire to dominate and possess (68), and therefore comes to resemble hatred more than friendship: "Si on juge l'amour par la plupart de ses effets, il ressemble plus à la haine qu'à l'amitié." (72)

In social relationships, amour-propre again prevails in such a way that man desires to tyrannize over his fellows, and would do so if he had the means at his disposal. (563) Fortunately, more often than not, he does not have these means and so is led to

³⁰See also maxim 266: "La paresse . . . usurpe sur tous les desseins et sur toutes les actions de la vie; elle y détruit et y consume insensiblement les passions et les vertus."

conceal this deep-seated desire. As a result, social life becomes typified by hypocrisy, a hypocrisy that is necessary for the very existence of society: "Les hommes ne vivraient pas longtemps en société, s'ils n'étaient les dupes les uns des autres."

(87) Social intercourse therefore becomes based on civility or honnêteté, which instructs man to cover his true desires with a pleasant exterior and also to be tolerant of others. Hence the true honnête homme is "celui qui ne se pique de rien" (203); he must practise tolerance towards others so as to be treated with tolerance himself. As La Rochefoucauld writes in his Réflexions diverses: "Il faudrait faire son plaisir de celui des autres, ménager leur amour-propre, et ne le blesser jamais."³¹ La Rochefoucauld implies that honnêteté is much more than this when he states:

Les faux honnêtes gens sont ceux qui déguisent leurs défauts aux autres et à eux-mêmes; les vrais honnêtes gens sont ceux qui les connaissent parfaitement, et les confessent. (202)

He does, however, seem to destroy the basis of this true honnêteté, writing elsewhere that those who confess their faults only do so out of a desire to be praised (554), out of vanity (609), or with the ulterior motive of redeeming themselves in the eyes of others: "Nous avouons nos défauts pour réparer par notre sincérité le tort qu'ils nous font dans l'esprit des autres." (184) And so the only

³¹"De la société," p. 505.

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consistent theory of the code of honnêteté that emerges from the Maximes is the one based on self-interest, an aspect of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre.

Justice is also founded on man's amour-propre; it is not loved for its own sake, but because it permits man to live in relative harmony with his neighbours and to safeguard his possessions. It also protects him from the more despotic tendencies of the amour-propre of others:

La justice n'est qu'une vive appréhension qu'on ne nous ôte ce qui nous appartient; de là vient cette considération et ce respect pour tous les intérêts du prochain, et cette scrupuleuse application à ne lui faire aucun préjudice. Cette crainte retient l'homme dans les bornes des biens que la naissance ou la fortune lui ont donnés; et sans cette crainte, il ferait des courses continuelles sur les autres. (578)

Man's basic desire to dominate others, emanating from his amour-propre, is thus controlled to a certain extent by external forces, which he respects because of his desire to preserve himself and to conserve his possessions.³²

This desire to dominate nevertheless persists in his mentality. It leads man to adopt one scale of values for himself and another scale for other men.³³ Amour-propre, in other words, induces man to assume a non-critical approach with regard to his

³²Pierre Nicole also sums up this idea within the context of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre; see below, p. 162.

³³François de Sales treats of this same phenomenon; see above, p. 48.

own faults and a hypercritical attitude with respect to those of his fellows. For example:

Nous n'avons pas le courage de dire, en général, que nous n'avons point de défauts, et que nos ennemis n'ont point de bonnes qualités; mais, en détail, nous ne sommes pas trop éloignés de le croire. (397)

It is for these reasons that La Rochefoucauld considers that true friendship cannot exist between men. Man is so filled with amour-propre that he cannot do otherwise than place his own interests before those of other men. Friendship, like society, is therefore based on amour-propre:

Ce que les hommes ont nommé amitié n'est qu'une société, qu'un ménagement réciproque d'intérêts, et qu'un échange de bons offices; ce n'est enfin qu'un commerce où l'amour-propre se propose toujours quelque chose à gagner. (83)

Evidently man can best achieve what he desires if he has the assistance of others, and La Rochefoucauld seems to consider this to be the sole reason for friendship.³⁴ Man is such a degenerate creature that he finds pleasure in the distress of his friends. (583) The pleasure, no doubt, proceeds from the thought that he is thankful for being spared a similar cause for distress; it may also stem from the fact that man really hates his fellows and therefore experiences some delight when they, whether friends

³⁴Jacques Esprit also develops this theme; see below, p. 168.

or not, are suffering misfortune. And so La Rochefoucauld says with some justification: "La férocité naturelle fait moins de cruels que l'amour-propre." (604)³⁵ Likewise, although a man may weep at the death of a friend, his sorrow is self-centred: "Nous pleurons la diminution de notre bien, de notre plaisir, de notre considération." (233) These, however, are not the only reasons:

On pleure pour avoir la réputation d'être tendre; on pleure pour être plaint; on pleure pour être pleuré; enfin on pleure pour éviter la honte de ne pleurer pas. (Ibid.)

Whatever the cause of weeping, whether it be self-interest, a desire to arouse pity for self or to maintain reputation, the central cause is always amour-propre.

Man in relation to himself and in relation to other men is thus always characterized by amour-propre. It motivates him to disguise his true self from himself and from others. He is, all in all, the image of hypocrisy:

Dans toutes les professions, chacun affecte une mine et un extérieur, pour paraître ce qu'il veut qu'on le croie: ainsi on peut dire que le monde n'est composé que de mines. (256)

The themes of "être" and "paraître" in the Maximes therefore find their origin and principal source in amour-propre, which

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induces men to conceal what they really are and to adopt an insincere but gracious attitude towards other men: "Nous sommes si accoutumés à nous déguiser aux autres, qu'enfin nous nous déguisons à nous-mêmes." (119)

This idea of disguise leads to a discussion of the view of virtues and vices in the Maximes. La Rochefoucauld writes: "On peut dire de toutes nos vertus ce qu'un poète italien a dit de l'honnêteté des femmes, que ce n'est souvent autre chose qu'un art de paraître honnête." (605)³⁶ This maxim has the implication that all so-called virtues are only "vertus apparentes" and not true virtues. This point of view results from La Rochefoucauld's moral conception of man, summed up largely by the Augustinian concept of amour-propre. La Rochefoucauld is not concerned with the end result of an action, but solely with the motive which gives rise to it. Since all man's actions find their origin in one or more of the various forms of amour-propre and since La Rochefoucauld understands the term in its basic Augustinian sense, then all man's actions must necessarily and essentially be vices. As Levi writes of the Maximes on this issue, again stressing the Augustinian nature of the concept of amour-propre in this work: "Amour-propre . . . never inspires virtue. The explanation of this fact, which has so often been overlooked, is to be found in

³⁶The "variante" of the above maxim in the Manuscrit Liancourt is quite illuminating. It reads: "Dieu seul fait les gens de bien, et on peut dire de toutes nos vertus ce qu'un poète italien a dit de l'honnêteté des femmes: 'esser onesta non è, se non un'arte di parer onesta'." (no. 45, p. 345) This maxim thus states that true virtue only proceeds from the cooperation of man with God and implies that man, of himself, cannot achieve virtue.

the theological overtones attaching to amour-propre, . . ."³⁷

La Rochefoucauld writes: "nous aurions souvent honte de nos plus belles actions, si le monde voyait tous les motifs qui les produisent." (409) These motives, as we shall see, are invariably aspects of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre.

In the maxim on clemency, we read:

Cette clémence, dont on fait une vertu, se pratique tantôt par vanité, quelquefois par paresse, souvent par crainte, et presque toujours par tous les trois ensemble. (16)

All three motive forces he mentions are aspects of amour-propre, fear for one's safety deriving from the idea of self-preservation. Fidelity, normally considered a virtue, is no more than an "invention de l'amour-propre, . . ." (247) It is, more often than not, a means by which man can gain the confidence of another and become entrusted with matters of great importance; it thus appeals to man's vanity. Humility is often a mere pretence of submission which serves to dominate others. (254) Generosity is the pride of giving, which is valued more highly than what is actually given. (263) Sympathy and assistance are offered to those in adverse circumstances so as to secure their help if a similar misfortune should befall oneself. (264)

One maxim sums up this basic belief of La Rochefoucauld: "Les vertus se perdent dans l'intérêt, comme les fleuves se perdent dans la mer." (171) Since "l'intérêt est l'âme de l'amour-

³⁷ French Moralists, p. 230. As we have seen, all the Augustinian theologians stress that virtue can only proceed from man when he is assisted by grace. Lacking grace, he is inevitably led to vice by his amour-propre.

propre" (510), man's actions can never be truly virtuous, but can only have the appearance of being so. As Adam comments: "Les vices entrent dans la composition de toutes les vertus. C'est à cette conclusion qu'aboutit le livre des Maximes, et La Rochefoucauld se trouve ainsi rejoindre l'une des thèses habituelles de l'augustinisme."³⁸ When the concept of amour-propre begins to lose its theological connotations in some circles, it will be considered as a respectable motivation towards virtue.³⁹ But, with La Rochefoucauld, there is no doubt that the pejorative Augustinian sense remains firmly and closely attached to it.⁴⁰

In spite of this general picture of corruption that is painted in great detail in the Maximes, La Rochefoucauld appears to admit the existence of certain virtues or ideals. Although sincerity is, for the most part, motivated by a desire to display one's faults in the light in which one wishes them to be seen (383), true sincerity nevertheless exists in some people, albeit in very few:

La sincérité est une ouverture de coeur. On la trouve en fort peu de gens, et celle que l'on voit d'ordinaire n'est qu'une fine dissimulation, pour attirer la confiance des autres. (62)

³⁸Histoire de la littérature française au XVIIe siècle, IV, 94.

³⁹See below, Epilogue, p. 191.

⁴⁰Levi, French Moralists, p. 229.

La Rochefoucauld also believes that true love and true friendship, although extremely rare (473), do in fact exist: "L'envie est détruite par la véritable amitié, et la coquetterie par le véritable amour." (376) Even so, when these maxims are placed within the context of the whole collection, the virtues and ideals they describe seem to become remote or even unrealizable.⁴¹

Whatever the case may be, the world evoked generally in the Maximes is not wholly Augustinian. Although La Rochefoucauld's moral conception of man is largely Augustinian in its pessimism and in its terminology, the world in which the man of the Maximes moves is most clearly not the Cité de Dieu. Almost all direct

⁴¹The very presence of these ideals in the Maximes, however, attest the possibility that there may exist quite a different world from the one generally evoked in the book. This other world is, perhaps, a recollection of the era before the Fronde when the voluntarist ethic held sway. It was then thought by some that man, like Corneille's Auguste, could choose the path of virtue or vice through an act of will. La Rochefoucauld apparently retained this neo-stoic idea and accepts the view that authentic virtue exists in some men, but in very few. This hypothesis is also put forward by Krailsheimer. He writes: "It cannot be denied that in some respects the Maximes retain elements reminiscent of Corneille. Unobtrusive though they are, La Rochefoucauld's occasional positive qualifications show that he recognized, even on a human plane, a class of individuals endowed with genuine virtue." (p. 96) It is entirely possible that La Rochefoucauld's aristocratic origins counted for much in this elaboration of a class of beings superior by reason of their virtuousness.

One may also tentatively suggest that these virtues relate to the world of Christianity. In other words, La Rochefoucauld perceives these virtues in some Christians. For, as we have seen, La Rochefoucauld has written: "Dieu seul fait les gens de bien, . . ." (no. 45, p. 345)

references to Christianity were suppressed by La Rochefoucauld⁴² and the idea of divine grace, as we have already noted, finds mention only in the "Préface" of the Maximes. What takes the place of God and Providence is the pagan idea of chance ruling the world: "L'auteur des Maximes . . . ne veut connaître, au-dessus des agitations humaines, que l'aveugle puissance de la Fortune."⁴³

⁴²A good example of the way in which La Rochefoucauld went about the suppression of references to Christianity is found in comparing maxim 65 with an earlier version. In this maxim, he writes: "Il n'y a point d'éloges qu'on ne donne à la prudence; cependant elle ne saurait nous assurer du moindre événement." He thus stresses the weakness of man. In the Edition Hollandaise of the Maximes, this maxim is found in a longer form. Here he writes in part: "On élève la prudence jusques au ciel, et il n'est sorte d'éloges qu'on ne lui donne. . . . Cependant la prudence la plus consommée ne saurait nous assurer du plus petit effet du monde, . . . Dieu seul, qui tient tous les coeurs des hommes entre ses mains, et peut quand il lui plaira en accorder les mouvements, fait aussi réussir les choses qui en dépendent. D'où il faut conclure, que toutes les louanges, dont notre ignorance, et notre vanité flatte notre prudence, sont autant d'injures que nous faisons à sa providence." (no. 14, p. 303) Man's vanity (or amour-propre as La Rochefoucauld says in the 1665 version of this maxim - - see p. 818 - -) thus opposes man to God. Starting from the Christian view that true prudence is found only with God, La Rochefoucauld arrives at the conclusion that human prudence is fallible.

Similarly, he writes in maxim 170 of the 1678 edition: "Il est difficile de juger si un procédé net, sincère et honnête est un effet de probité ou d'habileté." The maxim thus dwells on the idea man's inability to understand fully and evaluate with certainty the motives of the actions of other people. An earlier form of this maxim appears in a letter to Jacques Esprit: "Il n'y a que Dieu qui sache si un procédé net, sincère et honnête, est plutôt un effet de probité que d'habileté." (p. 618) It appears in still another form in the Edition Hollandaise of the Maximes of 1664: "Il n'y a que Dieu, qui sache si un procédé est net, sincère, et honnête." (no. 157, p. 329) This juxtaposition of the three maxims shows how La Rochefoucauld reduces what is essentially a Christian idea to a non-transcendental level.

⁴³Adam, Histoire de la littérature française au XVIIe siècle, IV, 105.

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⁴²A good example of the way in which La Rochefoucauld went about the suppression of references to Christianity is found in comparing maxim 65 with an earlier version. In this maxim, he writes: "Il n'y a point d'éloges qu'on ne donne à la prudence; cependant elle ne saurait nous assurer du moindre événement." He thus stresses the weakness of man. In the Edition Hollandaise of the Maximes, this maxim is found in a longer form. Here he writes in part: "On élève la prudence jusques au ciel, et il n'est sorte d'éloges qu'on ne lui donne. . . . Cependant la prudence la plus consommée ne saurait nous assurer du plus petit effet du monde, . . . Dieu seul, qui tient tous les coeurs des hommes entre ses mains, et peut quand il lui plaira en accorder les mouvements, fait aussi réussir les choses qui en dépendent. D'où il faut conclure, que toutes les louanges, dont notre ignorance, et notre vanité flatte notre prudence, sont autant d'injures que nous faisons à sa providence." (no. 14, p. 303) Man's vanity (or amour-propre as La Rochefoucauld says in the 1665 version of this maxim - - see p. 818 - -) thus opposes man to God. Starting from the Christian view that true prudence is found only with God, La Rochefoucauld arrives at the conclusion that human prudence is fallible.

Similarly, he writes in maxim 170 of the 1678 edition: "Il est difficile de juger si un procédé net, sincère et honnête est un effet de probité ou d'habileté." The maxim thus dwells on the idea man's inability to understand fully and evaluate with certainty the motives of the actions of other people. An earlier form of this maxim appears in a letter to Jacques Esprit: "Il n'y a que Dieu qui sache si un procédé net, sincère et honnête, est plutôt un effet de probité que d'habileté." (p. 618) It appears in still another form in the Edition Hollandaise of the Maximes of 1664: "Il n'y a que Dieu, qui sache si un procédé est net, sincère, et honnête." (no. 157, p. 329) This juxtaposition of the three maxims shows how La Rochefoucauld reduces what is essentially a Christian idea to a non-transcendental level.

⁴³Adam, Histoire de la littérature française au XVIIe siècle, IV, 105.

It is chance, "la fortune," that gives man the opportunity of showing his qualities: "La nature fait le mérite, et la fortune le met en oeuvre." (153) Heroic actions are usually less the result of a grand design that man has created for himself than the result of pure chance. (57) Man is not a creature who forges his own destiny, but a creature who is generally at the mercy of fate:

Toutes nos qualités sont incertaines et douteuses, en bien comme en mal, et elles sont presque toutes à la merci des occasions. (470)

Man's only defence against chance is simply to try to make the best of any situation in which he finds himself. (392) This control that all-powerful chance exercises over man does, however, have a constructive effect on the human personality: "La fortune nous corrige de plusieurs défauts que la raison ne saurait corriger." (154) Man's impotent reason, as we have already noted, cannot correct his faults; only the lessons learned from the situations in which chance places man are capable of correcting his faults by virtue of the fact that they educate man's amour-propre in the art of social intercourse.

Adam's explanation as to why La Rochefoucauld chose to replace the rule of Providence with the reign of chance seems reasonable: "Les Maximes, c'est d'abord la sagesse païenne démasquée, c'est le mensonge des vertus naturelles mis au grand jour, . . ." ⁴⁴

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 94.

For Adam, La Rochefoucauld was more interested in revealing the falsity of pagan wisdom than he was in stressing the redeeming rôle of Christ.⁴⁵ J.-R. Charbonnel's thesis also deserves mention; he clearly differentiates between Pascal and La Rochefoucauld, emphasizing that the latter's sole intention was to describe man as he is:

Si le jansénisme pousse Pascal apologiste à préconiser une incessante lutte contre l'amour-propre, forme générale de cette concupiscence qui vicie notre nature, source d'illusion et de mensonge à l'égard de nous-mêmes et à l'égard d'autrui, expression de cette misère morale que le Rédempteur seul est capable de guérir, La Rochefoucauld, se rappelant son expérience de mondain et de frondeur, se borne à noter, avec une froide impassibilité de clinicien, sans songer à nous convertir à une éthique supérieure, les souples métamorphoses de ce Protée que l'on devine dans la pénombre de notre conscience.⁴⁶

Altogether, then, it is likely that La Rochefoucauld's aim in the composition of the Maximes embraces both Adam's and Charbonnel's theories: he was intent on showing the falsity of pagan wisdom and,

⁴⁵This basic aim would provide the major point of contrast between the Maximes and Esprit's De la fausseté des vertus humaines. Esprit also sees amour-propre as the fundamental condition of man and systematically demonstrates that all so-called human virtues are in effect vices. But, unlike La Rochefoucauld, Esprit always stresses the importance of Christianity, which alone is capable of providing man with the possibility of proceeding to virtue. See below, pp. 171-172.

⁴⁶La Rochefoucauld: Maximes, ed. J.R. Charbonnel (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1934), p. 8. A third possible reason for this suppression of references to Christianity may, perhaps, reside in La Rochefoucauld's desire to appear an auteur mondain. He would therefore be unwilling to mingle urbane comments on social behaviour, such as are found in maxims 73, 100, 107, 140, 156 to name but a few, with the serious matters of faith and religion.

at the same time, consciously concerned with the depiction of man as he is, without direct reference to a higher essence. It nevertheless remains true that, in his moral portrait of man, La Rochefoucauld uses what is essentially a Christian concept: the Augustinian concept of amour-propre.⁴⁷

The man of the Maximes is therefore ruled by two major forces: he lives in a world in which chance holds sway and his actions are generally determined by one or more of the various impulses of his amour-propre.

Conclusion

In the Maximes of La Rochefoucauld, the Augustinian concept of amour-propre retains the same fundamental sense and importance that it has with the Augustinian theologians. It is understood as the condition of man and, since there is never any mention of divine grace, man would seem to have no escape from it.

⁴⁷W.G. Moore also echoes Charbonnel's views, which are those advanced in this study. He writes: "L'amour-propre, qui est devenu comme le mot d'ordre des Maximes, ne se confond pas avec la concupiscence blâmée de Bossuet ou de Nicole. Ou bien, s'il est la même chose, il est envisagé d'un tout autre point de vue. Les moralistes chrétiens décrivent le péché, l'égoïsme, en tant que preuve de la déchéance et de la misère de l'humaine nature. La Rochefoucauld en marque le fonctionnement, le mécanisme, pour ainsi dire, d'un instinct de notre être." "La Rochefoucauld: Une Nouvelle Anthropologie," Revue des sciences humaines, LXXII (1953), 308-309. As we have seen, amour-propre is in fact understood here in its Augustinian sense of concupiscence, but, as Moore writes, it is envisaged in quite a different manner in the Maximes from the way it is normally considered in works of Augustinian theology, the difference being that La Rochefoucauld treats of it purely on a human level.

It prevails in his psychology, inducing him to believe in a false image of himself through self-flattery and self-satisfaction. It also predominates in man's relations with other men, leading him to desire to dominate them and, when that is not possible, to adopt a hypercritical attitude towards them. Justice, love and friendship all become based on self-interest, a major impulse of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre. Purely human virtues do not exist, since all the actions which give rise to them find their origin in one or more of the impulses of amour-propre. This latter point again stresses the fact that La Rochefoucauld attaches to amour-propre its full Augustinian significance: no good or virtue can ever result from amour-propre. This general moral picture of man and this view of virtues and vices are essentially Augustinian in their basic inspiration.

The world of the Maximes, however, is not explicitly a Christian one. La Rochefoucauld suppressed almost all the maxims which openly gave a Christian context to his views or rephrased them so as to eliminate any idea of God and gave emphasis to the idea that chance ruled the world. The reasons as to why he did this are debatable; but it seems probable that La Rochefoucauld wanted the Maximes to serve a double purpose: to refute the claims of the wisdom of Antiquity and to describe man as he is without relating him to God and without any intention to try to convert the reader to a higher Christian ethic. It is this latter aim

that especially differentiates the Maximes from the works of the Augustinian theologians studied up to this point. The world of the Maximes is, then, a combination of Augustinian and pagan ideas: man, described largely in Augustinian terms, moves and lives in a pagan conception of the world.

In the following pages, this study returns to the examination of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre in its theological context in works by Nicole, Esprit and Bossuet, and we shall see that their views on the concept do not differ in essence from those of their Augustinian predecessors.

CHAPTER VI

THE CULMINATION OF THE AUGUSTINIAN TRADITION, 1670-1694

Nicole, Esprit and Bossuet were all writing during this latter part of the seventeenth century and we shall note from the examination of representative works of each author that the Augustinian concept of amour-propre plays a vital rôle in their respective conceptions of man. By this time in the century, as we shall see, the term amour-propre had begun to be understood in a purely ethical sense, but in these spiritual circles, its pristine theological connotations remain firmly attached to it.

The aims of Pierre Nicole in composing his Essais de morale are not very different from those that Pascal had in mind when he undertook his proposed apology for the Christian religion. As Calvet notes: "A l'exemple de Pascal, dont il avait contribué à éditer les Pensées, il voulait, avec le même souci d'apologie, proposer à ses lecteurs une suite de réflexions propres à les guider dans la pratique du bien."¹ And we shall see with respect to four of the essais de morale that Nicole is constantly attempting to turn men to God by painting the picture of the unhappiness of man without God and the bliss of man with God, the

¹page 246.

underlying theme of which is the familiar diptych of amour-propre and amour de Dieu.

Levi comments that the "Traité de la civilité chrétienne" "exposes at length the theory of the two loves in terms of charity and cupidity, and the term 'amour-propre' is used throughout the essays in the strict Augustinian sense."² This point of the synonymy between cupidity and amour-propre is made apparent at the very beginning of this particular essay. Nicole writes:

La charité qui aime Dieu, desire que Dieu soit aimé de toutes les creatures: & la cupidité qui s'aime soy-mesme, desireroit que nous fussions l'objet de l'amour de tous les hommes.³

The primary motivation of cupidity is thus unrestrained self-adoration, and this is also true of amour-propre. The reasons why cupidity motivates the pursuit of the affection of others are to be found not only in man's natural vanity, but also in his wretched condition:

L'amour des autres envers nous n'est pas seulement l'objet de nostre vanité, & la nourriture de nostre amour propre; . . . Nostre ame est si languissante & si foible, qu'elle ne sçauroit se soutenir, si elle n'est comme portée par l'approbation & l'amour des hommes. (p. 128)

Amour-propre therefore leads man into a divertissement in order

²French Moralists, p. 227.

³Essais de morale, 3rd edition (Paris: Guillaume Desprez, 1679), II, 127. Parenthetical documentation will be given for subsequent quotations from this essay.

to turn his mind away from the contemplation of his miseries, inducing him to seek to be flattered in his relations with other men. This basic inclination, common to all men without God, forms the basis of what Nicole calls "la civilité humaine":

C'est le fondement de la civilité humaine, qui n'est qu'un espece de commerce d'amour propre, dans lequel on tâche d'attirer l'amour des autres, en leur témoignant soy-mesme de l'affection. (p. 129)

And so Nicole rejoins Pascal and La Rochefoucauld in his view that human society and its apparent harmony are derived solely from the self-interested impulses of amour-propre. Nicole goes on to note that man cannot truly love his fellows because of his amour-propre and declares that the affection one shows to others is merely a pretence, an appearance; it is not sincere or authentic. Even so, it is always well received, "parce qu'on est toujours disposé à écouter favorablement tout ce qui est à nostre avantage." (p. 130) Man is always the willing dupe of others because of his vanity. On such premises is based human civility.

Nicole's intention in this essay, however, is not simply to paint a sombre picture of Fallen Man in the context of Augustinian theology. He also has the more constructive purpose in mind of showing the advantages of a society whose harmony derives from Christian rather than human precepts, from charity rather than cupidity. Man's first preoccupation should not be himself but God and his making himself thereafter dependent on

God. (p. 135) For when he is with God, man is filled with the spirit of charity, in which a lasting source of civility in human affairs is found:

Il n'y a . . . que la charité qui nous fournisse des raisons generales d'aimer tous les hommes, & de nous soumettre à eux. L'amour propre nous fait aimer ceux qui nous aiment, & qui nous sont utiles: il ne nous assujettit qu'à ceux qui sont plus puissans que nous; & il nous porte au contraire à vouloir dominer sur tous les autres autant qu'il nous est possible. Mais la charité embrasse tous les hommes dans son amour & dans sa soumission. (p. 140)

True civility therefore emanates from Christ rather than from man and, by following the teachings of Christ, man counteracts the natural desire to dominate others and to achieve personal pre-eminence, both of which originate in his amour-propre.

To practise Christian civility is to practise "une humilité exterieure" (p. 151), and this when combined with the spiritual humility that proceeds from grace permits man to realize himself fully both in his relations with God and with other men.

In the essay entitled "Des moyens de conserver la paix avec les hommes," Nicole again deals with the necessity of a God-centred way of life and the doctrine of the two loves is again given a place of some prominence. The general thesis of the essay is that true peace can only proceed from God since divine grace allows man to control his passions and to deal charitably with his neighbours. Amour-propre, on the other hand, fosters internal discord and induces man to dominate his fellows:

Car au lieu que la cupidité, qui est la loy de la chair, des-unissant l'homme d'avec Dieu, elle le des-unit d'avec luy-mesme, par le soulevement des passions, contre la raison; & d'avec tous les autres hommes en l'en rendant ennemy, & le portant à tâcher de s'en rendre le tyran. Le propre de la charité au contraire, qui est cette loy nouvelle que Jesus-Christ est venu apporter au monde, c'est de reparer toutes les des-unions que le peché a produites; de reconcilier l'homme avec Dieu, en l'assujettissant à ses loix; de le reconcilier avec luy même, en assujettissant ses passions à la raison; & enfin de le reconcilier avec tous les hommes, en luy ostant le desir de les dominer.⁴

Nicole sees cupidity as the fundamental consequence of original sin, leading to disunity on the three levels of man in relation to himself, to other men and to God. Christ's charity restores unity in man by making whole the rational appetite thereby permitting it to control the impulses of the sensual appetite. And once the rational appetite is restored to its former integrity, man is able to advance to a loving relationship with God and other men.

It is true that Nicole agrees, as we have seen in the "Traité de la civilité chrétienne," that amour-propre does provide a basis for civility by motivating tolerance in social affairs. The advantages of founding a society on charity and Godly principles are that peace is given a solid foundation and so becomes everlasting:

La charité non seulement embrasse tous les hommes, mais elle les embrasse en tous temps. Ainsi nous devons avoir la paix avec tous les hommes, & en tous temps. (p. 224)

⁴Essais de morale, 6th edition (Paris: Guillaume Desprez, 1693), I, 222-223. Parenthetical documentation will be used for quotations from this volume.

In the essay "De la connoissance de soy-mesme," Nicole writes that all men agree that self-knowledge is necessary, but no one attempts to gain it:

Rien ne leur est plus odieux que cette lumiere qui les découvre à leurs propres yeux & qui les oblige de se voir tels qu'ils sont. Ainsi ils font toutes choses pour se la cacher, & ils établissent leur repos à vivre dans l'ignorance, & dans l'oubly de leur état.⁵

Man cannot tolerate the sight of his spiritual self and so he hides from it by plunging himself into divertissements, into the physical world of pleasures and social intercourse.⁶

Nicole also detects a second impulse in man, which leads him, paradoxically enough, to consider himself in everything:

Car le plus grand plaisir d'un homme orgueilleux est de contempler l'idée qu'il se forme de luy-même. Cette idée est la source de toutes ses vaines satisfactions: Il y rapporte tout, & rien ne luy plaist qu'à proportion qu'il contribuë à la rehausser, à l'agrandir, & à la rendre plus vive. (p. 6)

It is true that Nicole distinguishes this characteristic in men filled with pride, which may appear to restrict its universality. It is, however, quite clear to Nicole that all men since Adam's original sin and who are without God are filled with pride, pride

⁵Essais de morale, 2nd edition (Paris: Guillaume Desprez, 1678), III, 3-4. Parenthetical documentation will be used subsequently.

⁶In a marginal note (p. 4), Nicole comments that this idea is well expressed by Pascal.

being one of the signal motivations of this original sin.

The apparent contradiction between these two impulses in man is soon resolved. Man reconciles them by an artifice:

C'est de couvrir d'un voile tous ses defauts, de les effacer en quelque sorte de l'image qu'il se forme le luy-même, & de n'y laisser que les qualitez qui le peuvent relever à ses propres yeux. S'il ne les a pas effectivement, il se les donne par son imagination; . . . (p. 7)

As in Pascal's Pensées, the major rôle of the imagination is to create in man an idealized self-image. Thus when man considers himself, he only sees "le vain phantôme qu'il s'en est formé."

(p. 7) Both of these impulses have a common source, namely

amour-propre:

Chacun n'a pour but dans toutes les actions dont l'amour propre est le principe, que d'attacher toujours à l'idée qu'il a de luy-même de nouveuz ornemens & de nouveaux titres. (p. 9)

Amour-propre, the principle behind all man's actions, thus leads him away from the contemplation of his true spiritual self. Since the sight of this self is unpleasant, it motivates him to embellish it in his imagination. It also propels him into divertissemens to help him forget his true self and to seek social honours that will enable him to believe in his high opinion of himself:

L'amour propre se sert des objets exterieurs pour contenter ces deux inclinations naturelles à l'homme, de se connoistre & de

ne se connoistre pas, en ne permettant pas d'une part qu'il se voye autrement que par une idée confuse, qui ne luy represente aucun defect, & en y joignant de l'autre tout ce qu'il peut des choses exterieures, qui luy donnent moyen d'y attacher une image phantastique de grandeur: . . . (pp. 14-15)

If man wanted to cure himself of this wilful self-delusion, says Nicole, he would only have to listen to the various ideas that other men have of him. The research of these critical sentiments of others would be an excellent means of humiliating the self-centred tendencies of the moi. Man's corrupt nature, or more precisely his vanity, closes his mind to these disparaging opinions of others and listens only to what is advantageous to him:

Ainsi en éloignant de nostre esprit tous ces objets qui nous pourroient choquer, en ne nous attachant qu'à ceux qui nous plaisent, en nous trompant volontairement, & en fuyant d'estre detrompez, la vanité demeure à demy satisfaite, & se procure ce vain plaisir dans lequel les hommes vains mettent leur fausse felicité. (pp. 19-20)

Nicole then discusses the Socratic precept "connois toy toy-mesme" (p. 36) and discovers that amour-propre always prevents man from achieving true self-knowledge. Reason is too weak a faculty to combat successfully the self-deluding tendencies of amour-propre: "La raison lors qu'elle combat les inclinations de l'amour propre n'est pas d'un grand usage dans la conduite de la vie: . . ." (p. 43) God-given grace alone has the power to change the nature of man and impart to him the ability to achieve true self-knowledge:

Car cette foy nous apprend, que c'est en vain que nous fuyons de nous connoistre, que cette veuë nous est inévitable, puisque Dieu ouvrira les yeux â tous les hommes pour se voir tels qu'ils sont; . . . (p. 44)

God thus pierces the veil of amour-propre and, by destroying wilful self-delusion, enables man to become aware of his condition.

Self-awareness, for Nicole, becomes the foundation for living a virtuous life. Man is conscious of the imperfections of his nature and so is filled with the spirit of humility spiritually and socially:

La connoissance de nous-mesmes ne nous humilie pas simplement à l'égard de Dieu, elle nous empesche aussi de nous élever au dessus du prochain, . . . (p. 47)

Nicole makes it clear that amour-propre and its particular tendency towards self-flattery are an integral part of man's fallen nature - - a condition - - when he discusses the spiritual combat between the two loves:

Cette malheureuse inclination estoit devenue naturelle à l'homme depuis le peché, & il faut ajouter icy que la grace ne la détruit jamais entierement, & que quelque desir qu'elle nous inspire de ne nous pas aveugler nous-mesmes, il reste toujourns, pour le dire ainsi, dans le fond du vieil homme une pente vers cét aveuglement volontaire, . . . (pp. 64-65)

He therefore warns that grace cannot destroy amour-propre entirely and that much depends on man's will to maintain self-knowledge; there is always the possibility of a relapse into sin and self-delusion.

Along with the other Augustinians then, Nicole envisages amour-propre, or amour de soi-même, as the single fount and source of all man's troubles in earthly life:

Voilà l'image de l'état où nous sommes par la nature. L'amour de nous-mêmes . . . est le centre & la source de toutes nos maladies, . . . (pp. 75-76)

God may provide an escape from its domination, but man must consciously play his part to preserve this divine enlightenment. By bearing in mind his own wretchedness and the infinite mercy of God, he lives his life in a salutary spiritual equilibrium:

L'union de ces deux veuës établit l'ame dans le véritable état où elle doit estre durant cette vie, qui est celui d'une crainte salutaire fondée sur la veuë de nos miseres, & d'une humble confiance appuyée sur la misericorde de Dieu. (p. 145)

In the essay entitled "De la charité et de l'amour propre," Nicole discusses the origin of societies as well as the similarity between the external effects of charity and amour-propre. He first establishes the way in which amour-propre asserts itself in man's psychology. It has many inclinations, or qualities:

Ces qualitez sont, que l'homme corrompu non seulement s'aime soy-mesme, mais qu'il s'aime sans borne, & sans mesure; qu'il n'aime que soy; qu'il rapporte tout à soy. Il se desire toutes sortes de biens, d'honneurs, de plaisirs, & il n'en desire qu'à soy-mesme ou par rapport à soy-mesme. Il se fait le centre de tout: il voudrait dominer sur tout, & que toutes les creatures ne fussent qu'à le contenter, à le louer, à l'admirer. Cette disposition tyrannique [est] empreinte dans le fond du coeur de

tous les hommes⁷

And this definition has the virtue of noting that the tendencies of excessive self-adulation, self-interest, egocentrism and the desire to dominate are all part of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre. Since amour-propre is imprinted in the hearts of men, Nicole also understands it as the condition of Fallen Man.⁸ It is the source of evil in man and induces him to relate everything to himself and to dominate others, or at least the desire to do so.

Since this is so, asks Nicole, why did men group together to form societies? Man's amour-propre would ostensibly be hostile to social existence. But this, in fact, is not the case: "L'amour propre . . . aime à s'assujettir tout le monde, mais il aime encore plus la vie & les commoditez, & les aises de la vie" (p. 150) It is thus the spirit of self-preservation and a desire to enjoy life's pleasures that motivate men to join together and impose limits on their domineering tendencies.

Similarly, laws are established in each society in the interests of self-preservation and they are enforced to the end

⁷Essais de morale, 2nd edition (Paris: Guillaume Desprez, 1678), III, 147-148. Parenthetical documentation will be used for subsequent quotations.

⁸This point is made evident when Nicole writes that God alone can help man resist his amour-propre: "Il vit & il regne absolument en nous, à moins que Dieu n'ait détruit son empire en versant un autre amour dans nostre coeur." (p. 147) The other love is, of course, the amour de Dieu.

of repressing "les pensées & les desseins tyranniques de l'amour propre de chaque particulier." (p. 151) Human society, for Nicole, thus resides on one of the impulses of amour-propre, namely the spirit of self-preservation. It is this spirit which keeps men, in general, from infringing the laws and which induces them to practise a mutual tolerance and to put on a pleasant exterior:

L'amour propre nous empeschant par la crainte du châtement de violer les loix, nous éloigne par là de l'exterieur de tous les crimes, & nous rend ainsi semblables au dehors à ceux qui les évitent par charité. (pp. 159-160)

This latter idea of concealing one's true intentions patently relates to the concept of honnêteté prevalent at the time, the theory of peaceful, agreeable social intercourse. And Nicole does in fact make this point: "Cette suppression de l'amour propre est proprement ce qui fait l'honnêteté humaine, . . ." (p. 162)⁹

The external effects of amour-propre may thus become indistinguishable from those of charity and man is never clearly aware of the true motivation of his actions; such is the prerogative of God alone:

Ce discernement ne se pouvant faire que par la penetration d'un fonds qui est dans le coeur, & qui n'est connu avec évidence que de Dieu seul. (p. 202)

⁹Nicole develops this idea and writes: "C'est ce qui a donné lieu à un grand esprit de ce siècle, de dire que la vertu Chrestienne détruit & aneantit l'amour propre, & que l'honnêteté humaine le cache & le supprime." (p. 162) There seems little doubt that the "grand esprit" to whom Nicole refers is Pascal, especially in fragment no. 135/453.

It is clear, then, that Nicole, like Saint-Cyran and Pascal, envisages "le coeur" as the ultimate seat of guilt or virtue, depending on the force, amour-propre or amour de Dieu, that characterizes it.

Nicole finds that there are divine reasons for man to be ignorant of his true motivation. If the just knew for certain that they were moved by the spirit of charity, they might take pride in themselves and thus fall from grace. Hence for the just man,

. . . cette obscurité qui l'empesche de discerner clairement s'il agit par charité ou par amour propre, bien loin de luy nuire, luy est salutaire. Elle ne luy oste pas les vertus, mais elle l'empesche de les perdre, en le tenant toujours dans l'humilité & dans la crainte, & en faisant qu'il se défie de toutes ses oeuvres & qu'il s'appuye uniquement sur la misericorde de Dieu. (pp. 205-206)

And so, in the final analysis, this external resemblance between the effects of charity and amour-propre has an all-important value as regards the eventual salvation of man in grace.

Levi writes: "Nicole is uncertain whether 'amour-propre' is primarily a psychological motive or a physical state of soul from which our acts proceed."¹⁰ But, as we have seen in our discussion of these four essays, amour-propre is equally the condition of Fallen Man and the psychological motivation that

¹⁰French Moralists, pp. 227-228.

gives rise to all his actions and, as such, it is understood in its strict Augustinian sense.

We have noted earlier that Jacques Esprit was a member of Mme de Sablé's salon and had quite a close relationship with La Rochefoucauld. It has become, in fact, common to compare his De la fausseté des vertus humaines with the Maximes because of the similarity between certain of the theses that each author develops. Most important among these is the idea that all human virtues are really vices in disguise. As we have seen with La Rochefoucauld,¹¹ the reason behind this viewpoint is the fact that all human actions are motivated by amour-propre, or concupiscence. Jacques Esprit holds the same opinion and so is led to the same conclusion.

The book De la fausseté des vertus humaines was published in 1678, but was not very widely read.¹² The causes for this lack of popularity are not difficult to understand. The thesis of the book was becoming a common place in Augustinian thought and the style and structure of the treatise do not arouse much literary interest. As Busson writes: "Les dissertations pâteuses, monotones et compassées de Jacques Esprit (il y a 56

¹¹See above, pp. 142-143.

¹²Busson, p. 211. The edition of De la fausseté des vertus humaines used here is the two volume Paris edition of 1678 of Guillaume Desprez. Parenthetical documentation will be used.

chapitres pour 53 vertus!) lassent la patience et sentent le parti pris."¹³

The treatise, despite its evident drawbacks, is nevertheless a significant work for our purpose, for the Augustinian concept of amour-propre, as is also the case with the Maximes, is given a rôle of some importance.

Esprit declares that his book has two basic aims. Firstly, as he writes in the "Epître à Monseigneur le Dauphin," he will analyze all human virtues,

. . . afin d'avoir lieu de faire connoître les vuës secretes de l'amour propre, les chemins détournés qu'il prend pour empêcher qu'on ne découvre ses intentions, & cette variété de personnages qu'il jette pour arriver aux fins où il souhaite de parvenir.
(I, iv)

The second aim, established in the "Preface," will be to show man where he can find true virtue. Men should not attempt to find it within themselves, but that

. . . n'esperant point de tirer d'un fonds aussi gâté & aussi mauvais qu'est celui de nôtre nature, des vertus pures, solides & veritables, ils s'adressent à Dieu pour les obtenir. (I, xv)

True virtue will thus proceed from God alone.¹⁴

Esprit's purpose, then, does not differ in any essential

¹³Page 211.

¹⁴The treatise therefore belongs to the general movement of thought that attacked the idea of pagan virtue. As Ivanoff writes: "La Fausseté des vertus humaines est dirigée contre les philosophes stoïciens qui prétendent . . . que la vertu et le bonheur dépendent de l'acte libre de la volonté humaine." (p. 185)

manner from that of a Bérulle or a Pascal. He will depict the corruption of the human condition and also reveal the means by which man may rise above this corruption and so achieve authentic virtue.

Esprit writes as follows on the condition of man when he fell from grace:

Il s'est mis en la place de Dieu, qui devoit être l'objet unique de son amour, & . . . il est devenu amoureux & adorateur de luy-même; . . . (I, ii)

Man usurped the place of God and fell into total self-adoration. Esprit refers to this state of fallen humanity as amour-propre¹⁵ and notes that this latter motivation has become the source of all man's actions and the origin of his vices:

Depuis que l'amour propre s'est rendu le maître & le tyran de l'homme, il ne souffre en luy aucune vertu ni aucune action vertueuse qui ne luy soit utile, & . . . il les emploie toutes à faire réussir ses différentes prétensions; . . . (I, xi-xii)

Esprit notes that amour-propre has vitiated "le coeur," the high point of the soul, and that therefore man's rational faculty is weak and subservient to this one "passion" that

¹⁵Esprit implies the synonymy between amour-propre and concupiscence when he writes elsewhere that concupiscence is the source of human actions and the origin of man's disorders: "Or c'est la concupiscence qui donne le branle à toutes les puissances de l'ame, & qui se sert d'elles pour faire mouvoir le corps; & comme elle est irreguliere & desordonnée, les mouvemens qu'elle cause ne peuvent être qu'irreguliers & desordonnez." (II, 483)

typifies Fallen Man. He criticizes the "sages" of Antiquity and comments:

En effet, comment peut-on concevoir que des gens eclairez n'ayent pas découvert par leur lumiere & par leurs propres experiences, que la raison avec tout son pouvoir & toute son industrie, ne sçaurait détruire une passion qui s'est enracinée dans le coeur de l'homme, . . . (I, x-xi)

The heart, which was formerly the seat of amour de Dieu, has become the residence of amour-propre with the result that man can no longer reach up to God by natural means.

The weakness of reason prevents man from achieving true self-knowledge and so he becomes a prey to self-delusion and hypocrisy in relation to himself and to others. He is continually "masked":

Or l'amour propre donne à l'homme cette pente à se déguiser & à prendre autant de figures que le Prothée des fables; parce que si l'homme paroissoit tel qu'il est, idolâtre de luy-même, sans souci & sans affection pour tous les autres hommes, & voulant sans cesse s'élever au dessus d'eux, il les revolteroit contre luy, & mettroit obstacle au dessein qu'il a de leur gagner le coeur & d'attirer leur estime pour les faire servir tous à ses intérêts. (II, 465)

In this manner, like Pascal and La Rochefoucauld, Esprit is led to the conclusion that sincere friendship is impossible among Godless men. It is not within the power of man to overcome his natural desire to dominate and his self-interest.¹⁶

¹⁶As Esprit writes: "L'homme . . . n'est pas capable d'amitié, puisque par l'amitié il doit passer & s'arrêter en celuy qu'il aime L'homme n'est amoureux que de luy-même." (I, 137-138)

All these themes are common elements of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre and we have met with them throughout the course of this study. In De la fausseté des vertus humaines, they are mentioned only insofar as they relate to the central thesis of the book, namely that purely human virtues are really vices. The reason behind this attitude is, of course, the Augustinian view that true virtue can only be inspired by amour de Dieu. Any "virtue" which has only a human motivation is therefore intrinsically a vice, since it is inspired by amour-propre.¹⁷ This point is made evident in the "Preface" (I, xi-xii) and the "Epître à Monseigneur le Dauphin." Here Esprit writes: "L'amour propre . . . est l'inventeur de tous les stratagèmes que l'homme met en usage, & la cause de la fausseté de toutes ses vertus; . . ." (I, iv) The actions of man without God can therefore only be virtuous in appearance, never in essence; and so a major theme of the treatise, as in the Maximes, is the difference between être and paraître. Esprit comments:

La vertu humaine veut avoir un grand nombre de témoins & d'approbateurs; & sa vraie inclination n'est pas d'être, mais de paraître. La vraie vertu ne se soucie que d'être; . . .
(II, 525-526)

The point of the falseness of human virtue is well illustrated in the discussion of the "virtue" of pity. Esprit

¹⁷This point is also made by Levi, French Moralists, pp. 228-229.

asks the question as to whether one can truly have pity on one's fellow men, and immediately concludes in the negative: "Nôtre amour propre . . . ne nous fait sentir les maux de nôtre prochain, & ne nous inspire le desir de les soulager que pour l'amour de nous-mêmes, . . ." (I, 369) If man decides to comfort the suffering of others, the cause is to be found in the feeling of self-satisfaction that the action arouses in him. Like La Rochefoucauld, Esprit goes on to say that the cause may also be found in man's self-interest: those who take pity on others only do so in the expectation that others will take pity on them when disaster strikes them:

Ils . . . prennent tous les soins qu'ils peuvent des malheureux, afin qu'on prenne les mêmes soins d'eux s'ils viennent à manquer de bien, s'ils tombent malades, & si leur fortune vient à changer; de sorte qu'ils previennent tous leurs besoins, & se donnent par avance tous les secours qu'ils peuvent s'imaginer; . . . (I, 372-373)

Altogether, then, pity is "une prevoyance habile, & on peut l'appeler fort proprement la providence de l'amour propre." (I, 373)

Generally speaking, the discussion of virtues in the book follows this model. Prudence is "incertaine & aveugle" because of the weakness of reason. (I, 15) The love of truth is no more than an affectation, since man's self-flattery continually blinds him and instils in him an aversion for truth. (I, 86) Generosity is motivated by amour-propre so that man

becomes a source of admiration. (I, 489) As for sincerity,

Esprit writes:

Nous faisons profession de sincérité afin qu'on ait créance en nous, & qu'on ajoûte foy à toutes nos paroles; car rien ne flatte tant nôtre vanité que cette autorité que nos paroles acquierent par l'opinion qu'on a de nôtre sincérité: . . . (I, 117)

Esprit always reaches the conclusion that amour-propre in one or other of its various forms is at the source of human actions and this makes it impossible for them to have any virtuous connotation. Esprit states as much when he sums up:

La vertu humaine est élevée de fierté, constante d'opiniâtreté, genereuse & liberale de vanité, . . . sa bonté est intéressée, sa complaisance flatteuse, sa douceur apparente, & son humilité trompeuse, . . . sa justice est une rigueur, sa force une violence, sa fermeté une roideur, sa prudence une dissimulation & une finesse, sa sagesse une hypocrisie, & sa magnanimité un orgueil. (II, 530)

In order to achieve true virtue, man must first seek God and the amour de Dieu. For with the infusion of grace, the "coeur" is renewed in God and becomes the residence of amour de Dieu, which gives man the potential to live a virtuous life and to love his fellows:

Il n'y a que les vrais Chrêtiens qui souhaitent sincerement les avantages de leur prochain, . . . parce que la charité qui règne dans leur coeur leur ôte les mauvaises inclinations que nous avons héritées d'Adam, & que Dieu crée en eux un coeur nouveau & leur donne des inclinations nouvelles, qui les portent à faire tous les plaisirs qu'ils peuvent aux autres sans retour vers eux-mêmes. (I, 224)

God changes the heart by inspiring it with knowledge of things divine and, as a consequence, the inclinations that emanate from the heart are also changed. When he was under the sway of amour-propre, man was inclined towards evil; but now that he has been inspired by the amour de Dieu, his inclinations are rather towards virtue and Godly conduct. As is the case with Saint-Cyran and Pascal, Esprit patently considers therefore that the heart is the final seat of merit or guilt in man, depending on the force that ultimately characterizes it.

Once man is established with God, his life becomes a constant struggle between the two opposing forces within him, grace and concupiscence, amour-propre and amour de Dieu:

Mais comme l'homme ne devient naturel¹⁸ qu'à proportion que la grace domine en luy, & que son regne n'y détruit jamais entierement celuy de la concupiscence; de là vient que dans les Chrêtiens les plus saints & les plus parfaits, on y voit toujours quelque chose de faux & de discordant, . . . (II, 484-485)

Absolute victory or defeat is never achieved in mortal life; and so Esprit, too, comes to the Augustinian conclusion that amour-propre is a condition that remains with man throughout his mortal existence, whether he is with or without God.

¹⁸Esprit's use of the term "naturel" here would seem to relate to the state of man before his fall from grace. Usually, in Augustinian writings, this word has the meaning of man's nature after his original sin.

Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, in many respects, bestrides the religious scene of the second half of the seventeenth century. He was, like the Port-Royalists, a spiritual heir of St. Augustine. As Abercrombie comments: "Bossuet was almost as learned in the thought and expression of Augustine as in the language of the Scriptures - - not only in his Sermons, but in his philosophical works" ¹⁹ And, as we shall see with reference to works that span his career, Bossuet deals extensively with man's relationship with God in the Augustinian terms of amour-propre and amour de Dieu.

In his first panegyric of St François de Paule, delivered in 1655, Bossuet writes:

Hé! fidèles, qu'est-il nécessaire d'employer ici beaucoup de paroles pour vous faire voir que c'est l'amour-propre qui fait toutes nos actions? N'est-ce pas cet amour flatteur qui nous cache nos défauts à nous-mêmes, et qui ne nous montre les choses que par l'endroit agréable? Il ne nous abandonne pas un moment: . . . quoique notre ame s'étende et se partage en beaucoup d'inclinations différentes, l'amour-propre y paroît partout. Etant la racine de toutes nos passions, il fait couler dans toutes les branches ses vaines, mais douces complaisances: si bien que l'homme s'arrêtant en soi-même, ne peut plus s'élever à son Créateur. ²⁰

He thus envisages amour-propre as the condition of man and as the major force of his psychology, being the source of his passions

¹⁹St. Augustine and French Classical Thought, p. 7.

²⁰Oeuvres complètes, ed. F. Lachat (Paris: Vivès, 1863-1875), XII (1875), 169-170. Parenthetical documentation will be used for all references to this edition.

and motivating man to view himself in an uncritical manner.²¹

By virtue of this all-powerful force, man cannot reach up to God; it motivates him in fact to claim for himself the attributes of the Divinity:

Ainsi nous attribuons à nous-mêmes les droits qui n'appartiennent qu'à Dieu; nous nous faisons notre fin dernière; nous ne songeons qu'à nous plaire en toutes choses, même au préjudice de la loi divine; . . . (XIII, 170)

And so, under the impulsion of amour-propre, man makes himself and not God his final goal in life. Bossuet then sums up this point by referring to the passage in the Cité de Dieu of St. Augustine which dwells on amor sui, thus making clear the theological context in which he understands amour-propre. Making mention of the irreligious nature of the men of his time, he declares that amour-propre is "ce maudit amour qui règne dans les enfans du siècle." (Ibid.)

Man cannot overcome this sinful natural disposition by drawing on his own rational powers. The Holy Spirit imparts to man the desire and ability to rise above his amour-propre by reason of the fact that when enlightened by grace, he experiences a greater spiritual joy than that afforded by amour-propre:

²¹This idea of self-delusion is also well expressed in a sermon of 1663 on "Les Causes de la haine des hommes contre la vérité." Here Bossuet writes: "Accourez ici, amour-propre, avec tous vos noms, toutes vos couleurs, tout votre art et tout votre fard; venez peindre nos actions, venez colorer nos vices; . . . déguisez-nous si délicatement et si finement, que nous ne nous connoissions plus nous-mêmes." (IX, 428)

Et comment irons-nous à Dieu, si mon Saint-Esprit ne nous y élève? Par conséquent il est nécessaire que cet Esprit tout-puissant lève le charme de l'amour-propre, et nous détrompe de ses illusions; et puis que faisant paraître à nos yeux un rayon de cette ravissante beauté qui est seule capable de satisfaire la vaste capacité de nos âmes, il embrase nos cœurs des flammes de sa charité, . . . (XII, 170-171)

In such a manner, man is imbued with the spirit of charity, becomes reunited with God and makes Him his final goal in life. Bossuet therefore exhorts his listeners to follow the example of St François de Paule "combattant l'amour-propre par l'amour de Dieu." (XII, 171)

In the sermon on "La Charité fraternelle," delivered in 1662 in the presence of Louis XIV and his court, Bossuet returns to these views on amour-propre. He says that God's law demands that man love his neighbours as he loves himself and that if man were filled with the love of God, he would have the power to do so. Owing to the strength of his amour-propre, however, man is unable to break away from the fundamental adoration of himself to the exclusion of all else:

En effet cette attache intime que nous avons à nous-mêmes, c'est la ligne de séparation, c'est la paroi mitoyenne entre tous les cœurs; c'est ce qui fait que chacun de nous se renferme tout entier dans ses intérêts et se cantonne en lui-même, . . . Car il est vrai que notre amour-propre nous empêche d'aimer le prochain, comme la loi le prescrit. La loi veut que nous l'aimions comme nous-mêmes, sicut teipsum, parce que selon la nature et selon la grace il est notre prochain et notre semblable, et non pas notre inférieur; mais l'amour-propre bien mieux obéi fait que nous l'aimons pour nous-mêmes, . . . dans un esprit de domination pour le faire servir à nos desseins. (IX, 240)

These views, which deal with man's social relationships, repeat the comments of the Augustinian theologians and moralists that have been noted throughout this study. Man cannot by natural means break the bonds of his servitude to amour-propre. All his relationships with others are therefore necessarily tainted by his self-interest and desire to dominate. Man can only enjoy (frui) his fellows for the pleasure they bring him; he cannot use (uti) them in a disinterested manner.

Only after man is filled with the spirit of charity, which implies the acceptance of grace, can he proceed to this pure form of love in his relations with other men because he is then inspired to place the love of God before his self-love:

Non, jamais l'homme ne sera capable d'aimer son prochain comme soi-même et dans un esprit de société, jusqu'à ce qu'il ait triomphé de son amour-propre en aimant Dieu plus que soi-même.
(IX, 240-241)

The love of others is therefore directly dependent on the love of God. Man may only advance to the former when he is well established in the latter.²² And so Bossuet, like Nicole, comes to

²²As Bossuet writes in a marginal note: "Nulle créature ne mérite qu'on se détache de soi-même pour elle, et l'on ne peut pas faire cet effort pour la créature. Mais Dieu est infiniment au-dessus de nous: après l'effort de l'aimer plus que soi-même, on peut faire celui d'aimer le prochain comme soi-même. On trouve, en réunissant à Dieu tout son amour, une abondance infinie qui ensuite peut se répandre sur tous les hommes sans exception." (IX, 241)

consider that the love of God is the only lasting basis for peace and harmony in human society:

Concluons donc, chrétiens, que la charité envers Dieu est le fondement nécessaire de la société envers les hommes. C'est de cette haute origine que la charité doit s'épancher généreusement sur tous nos semblables par une inclination générale de leur bien faire dans toute l'étendue du pouvoir que Dieu nous en donne. (IX, 243)

The "Sermon pour la profession de Mme de La Vallière" of 1675 provides another close parallel with the Augustinian doctrine of the two loves. In the introduction, Bossuet comments on the idea of the "coeur nouveau" and then goes on to quote the doctrine of the two loves, writing that "ces deux amours opposés feront tout le sujet de ce discours." (XI, 565) This link between the two loves and the "coeur nouveau" is not unexpected; on many occasions we have seen Augustinian theologians write that the heart of man without God is characterized by amour-propre and is made "new" by the infusion of grace, or amour de Dieu. The sermon itself will deal with the three states of man: man with God in Paradise, man's fall from grace and its consequences and, finally, man reunited with God.²³

Bossuet begins the sermon proper by discussing the original

²³The object of the sermon, the profession of Mme de La Vallière, lends itself to this general theme. She was one of the many mistresses of Louis XIV and had four children by him. Then, in 1674, she withdrew from social life and entered a convent; her profession, over which Bossuet presided, took place in 1675 and she remained in the convent until her death in 1710.

condition of man before his original sin; he leads into this subject by saying: "L'homme, que vous voyez si attaché à lui-même par son amour-propre, n'a pas été créé avec ce défaut."

(Ibid.) This is, in fact, one of the few times in the sermon that Bossuet makes mention of the term amour-propre itself; but his subsequent analysis leaves no doubt that he considers amour-propre as the source of all man's troubles.

God created man in His own image and the essence of this original condition was that the soul was totally dependent on God and found its bliss in this union with God. (XI, 566) Man, however, rejected this felicity and sought independence: "Cette ame qui étoit heureuse, parce que Dieu l'avoit faite à son image, a voulu non lui ressembler, mais être absolument comme lui." (Ibid.) The prime motivation for the Fall was thus man's desire to make himself his own God and to ascribe to himself complete self-sufficiency. Only God Himself, however, can exist alone (XI, 567); man does not have the necessary spiritual resources to find an enduring satisfaction in the contemplation of himself. Fallen from grace and left to himself, he simply finds solitude and emptiness and so his amour-propre leads him into divertissements so as to conceal this intrinsic spiritual indigence:

Cette ame, qui s'est tant aimée et tant cherchée, ne se peut plus supporter. Aussitôt qu'elle est seule avec elle-même, sa solitude

lui fait horreur; elle trouve en elle-même un vide infini, que Dieu seul pouvoit remplir: si bien qu'étant séparée de Dieu que son fonds réclame sans cesse, . . . il faut qu'elle cherche des amusemens au dehors, et jamais elle n'aura de repos si elle ne trouve de quoi s'étourdir. (Ibid.)

The soul has this inner void, resulting from the loss of the amour de Dieu, which it attempts to fill by the pursuit of external pleasures. Bossuet, like Bérulle and Pascal, thus sees amour-propre as the basic motivation for divertissemens and also as the force that keeps man in constant movement.

An inevitable consequence of this quest for pleasure is that man loses the use of his rational faculty. The soul is directed by the sensual appetite, in which amour-propre is the prevailing force, and the rational appetite naturally falls into abeyance. Even so, the soul never succeeds in attaining the lasting happiness which it seeks: "Elle n'est pas plus heureuse en jouissant des plaisirs que ses sens lui offre: . . ." (XI, 568) The idea of God, "empreinte profondément au dedans de nous" (XI, 571), is still present but man is ignorant of it, no longer having the ability to see clearly within himself. Bossuet sums up this picture of Fallen Man:

Vous voyez, Messieurs, l'ame raisonnable déchue de sa première dignité, parce qu'elle quitte Dieu et que Dieu la quitte; menée de captivité en captivité, captive d'elle-même, captive de son corps, captive des sens et des plaisirs, captive de toutes les choses qui l'environnent. (Ibid.)

His entire existence is governed by his slavery to various pursuits and the underlying cause of his enslavement is, of course, his amour-propre. This image of the captivity of man is particularly apt insofar as it implies that man is not a free being in his fallen state. He is a prisoner of his sinful tendencies and is unable to overcome them because of his enfeebled reason.

Bossuet then moves on to describe the third state of man: man reunited with God. He declares that the soul must abdicate its own will and independence in favour of those of God; it thus becomes reunited with God:

De cette union avec Dieu, on voit naître bientôt en elle toutes les vertus. Là est la véritable prudence; car on apprend à tendre à sa fin, c'est-à-dire Dieu, par la seule voie qui y mène, c'est-à-dire par l'amour. (XI, 577)

Man realizes that his true end in life is the adoration of God and so aspires to the amour de Dieu, the only love that leads to authentic virtue. The soul is spiritually transported out of its bodily frame and becomes one with God and participates in the total adoration of God.²⁴ It has passed from the proprium to the commune and maintains itself in the universal by the constant practice of humility:

²⁴This idea is better expressed in a letter to Mme Cornuau. Bossuet writes: "L'amour-propre est celui qui désire le propre bien au préjudice du bien commun et universel: mais Dieu n'est pas notre propre bien, mais le bien commun que nous désirons aux autres comme à nous." (XXVII, 577)

L'amour de Dieu fait donc naître toutes les vertus; et pour les faire subsister éternellement, il leur donne pour fondement l'humilité. . . . L'ame possédée de l'amour de Dieu . . . voit un objet au prix duquel elle se compte pour rien, et en est tellement éprise, qu'elle le préfère à soi-même, non-seulement par raison, mais par amour. (Ibid.)

The sermon then concludes the theological analysis of man on a very Bérullian note: "Ainsi l'ame attachée à Dieu sent continuellement sa dépendance, . . ." (XI, 578) It is such expressions as this that has led one critic to name Bossuet "le plus illustre des bérulliens."²⁵ Bossuet leaves his audience with a final thought: the Holy Ghost is among them and they should listen to its voice: "Ecoutez-le donc, chrétiens; laissez-lui remuer au fond de vos coeurs ce secret principe de l'amour de Dieu." (XI, 581) They, too, like Mme de La Vallière, should allow their hearts to be renewed in the amour de Dieu and thus forsake amour-propre.

The Traité de la concupiscence of 1694 reiterates to a large extent the ideas embodied in the Augustinian concept of amour-propre that we have already noted in Bossuet's earlier works. It is nevertheless useful to analyze this treatise briefly since it was one of the last major works, if not the last one, to discuss in some depth the concept of amour-propre in its original theological context.

²⁵A. Molien, "Bérulle," Dictionnaire de spiritualité, I, 1577.

In the chapter entitled "De l'amour-propre, qui est la racine de l'orgueil," Bossuet, like Bérulle almost a century before him, explains the origin of amour-propre. When God created man, man was the epitome of righteousness:

Cette rectitude de l'homme consistoit à aimer Dieu de tout son coeur, de toute son ame, de toutes ses forces, de toute son intelligence, de toute sa pensée: d'un amour pur et parfait et pour l'amour de lui-même, et de s'aimer soi-même en lui et pour lui. (VII, 436-437)

Man was therefore, in the beginning, characterized by the love of God and by a legitimate self-love.

Then ensued the Fall: "Mais l'ame se voyant belle, s'est délectée en elle-même, et s'est endormie dans la contemplation de son excellence; . . . elle a oublié sa dépendance." (VII, 437)

Bossuet here describes how the legitimate self-love changed to amour-propre. Man admired himself for his intrinsic beauty, not for his beauty in God and so broke away from his dependence on God. The original sin was thus committed; man had made himself his own God and had become typified by amour-propre, or concupiscence,²⁶ with its necessary consequences:

Il n'est plus demeuré à l'homme que ce qu'il peut avoir sans Dieu: c'est-à-dire l'erreur, le mensonge, l'illusion, le péché, le désordre de ses passions, sa propre révolte contre la raison, la tromperie de son espérance, les horreurs de son désespoir affreux, des colères, des jalousies, des aigreurs envenimées contre ceux qui le troublent dans le bien particulier qu'il a préféré au bien général, . . . (VII, 438)

²⁶Brunot, IV, 602.

It would be difficult to find a more sombre expression of the condition of Fallen Man in seventeenth-century Augustinian thought. Whatever the case may be, Bossuet stresses here the utter and complete depravation of man; amour-propre has thoroughly vitiated his nature, spiritually, morally and socially.

Amour-propre, as Bossuet writes elsewhere in the treatise, has become "le vice héréditaire de notre nature." (VII, 441) Being totally opposed to the amour de Dieu, it leads man necessarily into sinfulness and makes him hostile to truth. (VII, 439-440) It remains with man throughout his mortal life (VII, 466), and man is empowered to resist its impulses only after Christ has intervened with the gift of grace. (VII, 475)

E. Baumann writes as follows of Bossuet's ethical thought: "La rigueur de sa morale est de tout ramener aux rapports de l'homme avec Dieu. La créature est vaine, si elle cherche en elle-même sa fin et son appui; elle est précieuse, si elle tend de sa libre volonté vers Celui d'où elle vient, en qui elle retourne."²⁷ And as we have in fact seen, at the centre of Bossuet's discussions of man's relationship with God is the Augustinian doctrine of the two loves.

Conclusion

Our analyses of these works of three Augustinian thinkers of the latter part of the seventeenth century reveal that the con-

²⁷Bossuet moraliste (Paris: Grasset, 1932), p. xiii.

cept of amour-propre was still being understood in its strict Augustinian sense by some important Christian thinkers at this time. Amour-propre, concupiscence or cupidity is opposed to amour de Dieu, charity or grace and these are the two major poles around which the moral ideas of these writers continually revolve.

Nicole, who was concerned with the practical application of Augustinian principles to everyday life, stresses the necessity for the acceptance of charity and the rejection of amour-propre so that men may achieve true peace within themselves, with their fellows and with God and thus realize themselves fully. Esprit dwells on the view that amour-propre inevitably renders all actions that stem from a purely human motivation intrinsically vices, - - only the amour de Dieu inspiring authentic virtue. Bossuet preached the doctrine of the two loves to his contemporaries, desirous of inspiring them with distaste for their fallen natures and criminal amour-propre so as to convert them to the higher order of the love of God.

The Augustinian concept of amour-propre had, however, reached its apogee and was in the process of declining. But, as we shall note in the following pages, the term amour-propre itself was undergoing certain semantic changes.

EPILOGUE

THE DECLINE OF THE AUGUSTINIAN CONCEPT OF AMOUR-PROPRE: 1680-1694

Bossuet's Traité de la concupiscence, written in 1694, faithfully repeats the main characteristics of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre that we have noted in the works of Bérulle, Saint-Cyran, Arnauld, Senault, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Esprit and Nicole. He was, however, one of the last great writers of the Augustinian tradition of the French Counter-Reformation. This religious movement of the seventeenth century that had reacted strongly against the humanism of the Renaissance and of Molinist theology reached its peak around 1685¹ and thereafter began to lose ground to the new forces of rationalism. Bossuet's views were no longer in harmony with those of the time. As Busson writes, the period of the 1680's is characterized by "l'ivresse des nouvelles découvertes, le triomphe de l'expérience et de la mécanique, le dédain ironique qu'inspire désormais la théologie, . . ." ² Philosophic free-thought was also gaining impetus at this time, ³ and

¹p. Hazard, La Crise dans la conscience européenne: 1680-1715 (Paris: Fayard, 1961), p. 74.

²Page 115.

³R. Pintard, Le Libertinage érudit dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle (Paris: Boivin, 1943), I, 571.

hand in hand with its popularity inevitably went a consideration of man in purely human terms. Evidently, in these circumstances, the eventual eclipse of the Augustinian movement and its pessimistic view of Fallen Man was only a matter of time. The movement was essentially retrogressive and detrimental to social progress. As Adam writes:

Il est impossible d'apprécier justement l'option métaphysique des Augustiniens si l'on ne la relie à une option politique au sens le plus élevé du mot, à un refus d'adhérer à l'évolution récente de la société, disons plus exactement: à un refus d'accepter la civilisation moderne.⁴

With the decline of Augustinian theology necessarily declined the Augustinian concept of amour-propre; its gloomy idea of man was becoming as unacceptable to thinking men of the time as the theology from which it derived.

Malebranche constructed a theology more in harmony with the new spirit of the time, as is evident in his Traité de la nature et de la grâce of 1680. Whereas God was "Amour Incarné" for Bérulle, He is now "Raison Incarnée" for Malebranche;⁵ the "amour de Dieu" of Bérulle has become the "amour de l'ordre" for Malebranche.⁶ Malebranche uses the term amour-propre in this

⁴Adam, Sur le problème religieux, p. 15.

⁵N. Malebranche, Traité de la nature et de la grâce, ed. G. Dreyfus (Paris: Vrin, 1958), p. 258.

⁶Ibid., p. 264.

treatise, but clearly understands it outside its original Augustinian context. He writes as follows of sinners:

Ne peuvent-ils pas par amour propre, par la crainte de l'Enfer, ou si on le veut, par des graces générales, éviter beaucoup d'occasions de pécher; se priver des plaisirs, du moins de ceux dont ils n'ont point encore goûté, & dont par conséquent ils ne sont point encore esclaves? Ils peuvent ainsi ôter quelques empêchemens à l'efficace de la Grace, & préparer la terre de leur coeur, en-sortte qu'elle devient féconde, lorsque Dieu répandra sa pluye selon les loix générales qu'il s'est prescrit.⁷

Here amour-propre is envisaged as a force capable of preventing man from sinning, or at least capable of ridding man of certain "empêchemens à l'efficace de la Grace." Again Malebranche writes:

Il faut encore avouer que ceux qui observent les conseils de Jesus Christ, par l'estime qu'ils en font & par la crainte qu'ils ont des peines futures, sollicitent, pour ainsi dire par leur obeissance, la charité de J. Christ de penser à eux, quoiqu'ils n'agissent encore que par amour propre.⁸

Since amour-propre is seen here as an inclination capable of leading man to God and deserving of Christ's charity, there would certainly seem to be no idea of it being considered a reprehensible motivation. In both of these quotations, then, it is apparent that Malebranche understands amour-propre in the sense of egoism and does not attach to the term any reprehensible connotations.

⁷Ibid., pp. 201-202.

⁸Ibid., p. 217.

The term amour-propre had, in fact, begun to be used generally in a non-Augustinian context from about the mid-point of the seventeenth century in this narrow sense of egoism or self-interest, which is, as we have seen, one of the moral aspects of the full Augustinian concept. The strict Augustinian concept of amour-propre had become popularized with the obvious result that it lost its former theological sense of concupiscence, especially with non-theological writers, and became considered essentially as an ethical value with the sense of egoism.

Bussy-Rabutin, for example, uses the term in this particular ethical sense. Bussy apparently became attracted to the mistress of one of his friends, but in order to retain his sense of honour he decided not to see her quite so often: "Je résolu de ne plus la voir si souvent, pour n'être pas partagé sans cesse entre l'honneur et l'amour-propre."⁹ There is no idea here of amour-propre being the condition of man; it is simply a motivation, apparently not insuperable, leading man to place his own interests before those of others.

Such is also the sense of the term in La Bruyère. He declares:

Ne nous emportons point contre les hommes en voyant leur dureté,

⁹Histoire amoureuse des Gaules (Paris: Livre Club du Libraire, 1962), p. 140. [Original edition, 1665]

leur ingratitude, leur injustice, leur fierté, l'amour d'eux-mêmes, et l'oubli des autres: ils sont ainsi faits, c'est leur nature, . . .¹⁰

In this particular phrase, La Bruyère uses amour de soi-même in the sense of amour-propre, the two terms being largely synonymous in the seventeenth century. It appears from the context in which he uses the term that he has the idea of self-interest in mind here, which is made parallel to the other faults that La Bruyère discerns in man. There is evidently no idea of "amour d'eux-mêmes" being equivalent to concupiscence or being an all-pervading psychological phenomenon. Amour de soi-même, or amour-propre, is simply considered to be one fault among many in the human make-up.

E. Spanheim, writing in 1690, describes the form of government of Louis XIV as follows:

L'amour-propre, les sentiments de gloire, la défiance, la jalousie, l'esprit de vengeance, d'épargne et de précaution se joignirent ensemble . . . dans cette forme de gouvernement et de ministère qui s'établit.¹¹

The term amour-propre, listed here along with other psychological values, would again seem to have the restrictive sense of egoism.

This latter sense of amour-propre, which we may assume

¹⁰Oeuvres complètes, ed. J. Benda, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), p. 289.

¹¹Relation de la cour de France en 1690, ed. M. Schefer (Paris: Renouard, 1882), p. 164.

to have been quite widespread in the second half of the seventeenth century, is, as the Robert dictionary states,¹² now archaic; it seems to have died out with the Augustinian concept itself. How, then, did the term amour-propre arrive at its modern meaning?

The Augustinians considered that amour-propre could not be controlled by reason and could not lead to virtue. Damien Mitton, the bourgeois theorist of honnêteté does not share this view. He writes of honnêteté as follows:

C'est ce ménagement de bonheur pour nous et pour les autres, que l'on doit appeler l'honnêteté, qui n'est à le bien prendre que l'amour-propre bien réglé.¹³

The abbé d'Ailly, a member of Mme de Sablé's salon, expresses a similar idea in his Pensées of 1678. He writes:

L'amour-propre fait tous les vices et toutes les vertus morales, selon qu'il est bien ou mal entendu. . . . Quoy que par ce principe il soit vray de dire que les hommes n'agissent jamais sans interest, on ne doit pas croire pour cela que tout soit corrompu, qu'il n'y ait ni justice, ni probite dans le monde. Il y a des gens qui se conduisent par des interests honnestes et louables. C'est ce juste dicernement de l'Amour-propre bien réglé¹⁴

¹²See above, p. 2.

¹³Quoted in H. Grubbs, Damien Mitton (1618-1690): Bourgeois Honnête Homme (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1932), p. 55.

¹⁴Quoted in Ivanoff, p. 194.

In some circles, both social and theological, amour-propre was thus acquiring a double meaning. There was, on the one hand, "amour-propre bien réglé," which was legitimate and which led to virtue as a result of the control that reason exercised over it. On the other hand, by implication, there was "amour-propre mal réglé," which was morally bad.

This distinction between two types of self-love brings to mind François de Sales. As we have seen, he differentiates between reprehensible amour-propre and meritorious amour de soi-même. It is possible that the double meaning that amour-propre acquired with Mitton and d'Ailly originates in this Salesian distinction. There is, however, a problem to this explanation, namely that Salesian amour-propre always has a pejorative connotation. The problem may, all the same, be reasonably solved. We have noted that, contrary to the practice of François de Sales, the Augustinian theologians use amour-propre and amour de soi-même synonymously. It seems likely that this difference in usage resulted in a certain amount of confusion between the Salesian and Augustinian concepts of self-love. As a result of this confusion, it appears that the term amour-propre not only came to embody its correct pejorative meaning, but also assimilated the meritorious connotation of Salesian amour de soi-même by virtue of the Augustinian synonymy between the two terms. Furetière's selection from Jacques Abbadie, a Protestant writing in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, illustrates this point well. He writes: "Dieu ne

nous commande point d'étouffer absolument l'amour propre. Au contraire, l'amour de nous-mêmes est renfermé dans le précepte de Jesus-Christ, d'aimer nôtre prochain comme nous-mêmes."¹⁵ Abbadie has made amour-propre synonymous with amour de soi-même, implying that amour-propre is quite legitimate within certain limits, in other words, when it is "bien réglé." And so, the concept of amour-propre eventually became an amalgam of Augustinian and Salesian thought.

As is evident, we have in these two senses of the term amour-propre the early traces of the modern meaning of the word, as defined in the Larousse dictionary.¹⁶

¹⁵Dictionnaire universel, p. 69.

¹⁶See above, p. 1.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Now that we have traced the development of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre from Bérulle to Bossuet, our formal period of study, it is time to consider the findings of our investigations.

The first and most significant point concerns, of course, the initial meaning of the term amour-propre in the French language. As we have seen, the term first appeared in the language in the late sixteenth century and the concept it embodied was derived from amor sui, a term of the theology of St. Augustine. Like amor sui, amour-propre was synonymous with concupiscence and denoted the condition to which man was reduced by original sin. Insofar as it was the consequence of original sin, it was totally opposed to the love of God and led man necessarily into vice. Man had no natural escape from this condition, his reason being too weak to resist the impulses of his amour-propre, and so amour-propre became the sole motive force in man and gave rise to all his actions.

This latter point is clarified by referring to the patristic conception of the soul. The soul was divided into two natures, the rational and the sensual. Amour-propre was con-

sidered the dominant force in the sensual nature and amour de Dieu the moving force in rational nature, residing more specifically in the apex mentis, otherwise called "le coeur" in seventeenth-century Augustinian thought. In the beginning the two natures were in harmony with each other. But when man fell from Paradise, the amour de Dieu passed from his awareness, thus weakening the rational nature and leaving amour-propre as the major force in the soul.

Only with the assistance of divine grace could man combat his amour-propre and thus reach up to the amour de Dieu. For by virtue of the infusion of grace, the rational nature was strengthened and the apex mentis released from the domination of amour-propre. The term amour-propre and its synonym amour de soi-même were understood in this particular sense by major writers in the movement of seventeenth-century French Augustinianism.

And so, this study of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre, examined here for the first time within its authentic setting of the doctrine of the two loves, thus has given an added dimension to the concept of amour-propre itself in seventeenth-century thought from Bérulle to Bossuet, and has more particularly led to the establishment of a new point of view as to the meaning and rôle of the concept in the major works of Pascal and La Rochefoucauld.

Although evidently limited in its field of enquiry, this study of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre has also shown a

strong tradition of thought progressing through the century and stressing a view of man that hardly conforms to the traditional notion of man in this "Age of Reason." We have seen in the works of successive generations of Augustinian theologians a great emphasis placed on the idea that man, when without God, is a creature whose psychology is characterized by vanity, self-interest and self-delusion and whose rational faculty is too weak to assert itself with any great success. And so, man becomes a creature who is dominated by his passions rather than a creature who controls his conduct through the exercise of reason. More importantly, we have noted this view of man in some of the most significant writers of the seventeenth century, such as Bérulle, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld and Bossuet. Would it be simply a coincidence that such a conception of man should also figure in plays by Molière and Racine at a time when these Augustinian views were quite widespread? Such a question cannot evidently be resolved here; it is, however, interesting to note the parallel.

Another point of significance that emerges from our study of the Augustinian concept of amour-propre is the undeniable importance of the writings of Bérulle in the movement of French Augustinianism. Quite often, critical works tend to focus on the mid-century Augustinians to the detriment of Bérulle; works, however, by Cochois, Dagens and Orcibal have largely restored

Bérulle to the place of importance that is deservedly his. And although this present study is of limited proportions, it nevertheless confirms within the specific perspective of its investigations the view that Bérulle is the solid foundation on which subsequent writers in the Augustinian tradition were to build.

Finally, our study has shown the necessity of carrying out an historical examination of those terms used in the seventeenth century and which have since undergone semantic changes, if the writers who initially used them are to be fully understood.

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