



SELF-LOVE AND THE REVERSAL OF THE WESTERN CENTRAL EMOTIONAL RULE

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Abstract

This article discusses the transformation of the main emotional rule in the West: love. The interpretations made by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation of Saint Augustine's work placed the rule of love at the center of the treatises on the government of passions in the 17th century. The period of religious wars and the unification of nation-states led to the displacement of Augustine's rule into politics, with self-love operating as a pessimistic lens for the behaviors of subjects and adversaries. In the first half of the century, the Christian condemnation of self-love and the Neo-Stoic government of passions merged with the emerging Reason of State. In the second half, there was a reversal of the emotional rule. The Jansenist conception of how divine providence disposed of self-love to put one's satisfaction in the service of others served as a model for Political Economy and the nascent liberalism. Thus, enlightened self-love was affirmed as a political norm, mediated by the emotional dispositive of commerce.

Keywords: Emotional rule of love. Self-love. Emotional power. Government. Passions.



INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Love is the central emotional rule of the West. Its normative configurations formed the axis from which other emotions were classified, occupying a hierarchically superior position to all others. Shifts in its morally legitimate objects defined models of subjectivity, relationships, and social order, being a decisive metamorphosis in the rise of modernity. The reconfigurations of love were also theoretical, associating with different general concepts that sought to explain what emotional life is and define the ways to govern it.

The variations of the emotional rule of love circulated from the religious government of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation to the construction of the modern state and the subsequent foundation of various political visions. Some historical examples of its mutations between the 17th and 19th centuries were the theological debate about “pure love” in the *Querelle de la Grâce*, the government of “self-love” in Neo-Stoicism and the emerging Reason of State, the reassessment of “enlightened self-love” in Jansenism and Liberalism, the revival of “benevolent love” (the basis of later “romantic love”) as the fundamental moral sentiment of what would become Conservatism, and finally, “sexual love” in eugenic policies.

Then, love became the privileged object of a form of emotional power constitutive of the history of the West. Emotional power is a kind of biopower, that is, a subjugation of life by power, but differentiated by aiming at the body in a particular aspect. Michel Foucault (1997) points to two dimensions of the body that would be targeted by biopower: the individual organism endowed with capacities, which must become useful and docile through the action of disciplinary dispositives; and the collective body of the population, where the overall aspects of a mass of living beings are targeted, in order to regulate the global phenomena specific to life. Emotional power constitutes a third dimension of biopower, irreducible to the other two, as it acts on the individual and/or collective body aiming at its perceptive dimension, its sensations, and “emotions”. It is the living body as a sensitive body that is the focus. The subject's lived experiences and expressions are the target to be managed. Emotional power also acts to build subjected subjectivities, structuring and restricting the field of possible experiences and actions, producing the will of the subject. Although this dispositive has its uniqueness as biopower, it sometimes intersects and composes itself with disciplinary powers, bioregulatory powers, and forms of governmentality to seek to establish a social order (Andrade, 2014, 2015, 2020).

Emotional power is not homogeneous; it has a long and varied history that is associated with different general conceptions of “emotional” life. Examples of these historical designations, with distinct theoretical and strategic uses, are terms like passions,

moral sentiments, and emotions (Dixon, 2003; Desjardins and Dumouchel, 2012; Andrade, 2014, 2016, 2020). If we adopt “emotion” as the general term that encompasses the different specific historical designations, as sociology does currently, we can say that the arts of government, in explaining what “emotion” is, what its causative sources are, how it relates to other faculties of the mind and the body, and how it is expressed and determines behaviors, established “emotional” power dispositives inseparable from an anthropological ideal and social order. Therefore, each general conception of “emotional” life was linked to a style of intervention, with specific objects, techniques, purposes, and emotional and expressive rules that affect specific “emotions” when evaluating and establishing what, when, and how one should feel and/or express emotionally (Hochschild, 2003, p. 82-83; Andrade, 2014).

This article aims to demonstrate that modern economic rationality emerged not from a euphemistic term (Hirschman, 2013) but directly from the reversal of the Western Christian world's primary emotional rule. It was the Jansenists who proposed the idea that self-love could replace love for God and neighbor as the basis for life in society, provided it was mediated by “*doux commerce*”, which ended up identifying this self-love with economic interest. The second thesis the article critically engages with is the Foucauldian idea (Foucault, 2004a) that the emerging Political Economy was a kind of naturalism, breaking away from religious thought and constituting a secularized version of pastoral power. This work aims to show that, in fact, the theological discussion proposed by Jansenism served as a divine model for the political government. The idea is that political government should imitate the wisdom of Divine Providence, which had created a society where self-love would be employed in the service of satisfying others, promoting harmony and the common good despite the sinful motivations of individuals.

To reconstruct this history, this work article analyzes a series of 17th-century French treatises on governing passions, drawing support from extensive secondary literature. Since these treatises shared the statement that passions significantly influenced the will, being the true motives of human action, they became central to forms of conduct government. Consequently, numerous conduct books targeting princes and other authorities of the time emerged, prescribing how they should govern both their own passions and those of others (James, 1996). By referring to these prescriptive texts that sought to rationalize governmental practice, this article intends to reconstruct the framework that shaped emotional experience, that is, the correlation between “fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity” (Foucault, 1984, p. 10). When resorting to broader theoretical and doctrinal

elements, it is not to create a history of ideas, but merely to better grasp the facts of thought that inform these prescriptive texts and, consequently, their impact on individuals' behavior (Weber, 2004).

The article begins by reconstructing the doctrinal elements of Saint Augustine that shaped the disputes between the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Consequently, Augustine's rule of love gains centrality in the 17th century amidst religious wars and the unification of nation-states. The primacy of love allows it to be confused with human will itself, serving as the reference from which other passions are deduced and judged. The article then analyzes the political implications of the rule of love, constituting an important dimension of the shift towards modernity. In the early 17th century, the Christian condemnation of self-love and the neo-Stoic government of passions intertwine with the emerging Reason of State, enabling self-government for princes and figures of authority, as well as manipulation of the people and political adversaries. Self-love ultimately becomes a grid for a pessimistic analysis to decipher political behaviors and secrets. In the latter half of the 17th century, Jansenism proposes a new conception of divine providence that utilizes self-love to create a harmonious and prosperous social order despite the sinful intentions of human subjects. This religious conception operates as a political model for rulers, who start using commerce as a device to harness the self-love of some in service of others' needs, producing on the earthly realm the same beneficial effects as divine grace. Hence, at least in politics, self-love mediated by the market operates as a new normative principle, with emerging Political Economy both deriving from and replacing religious guidelines in governing subjects. In the concluding remarks, the article discusses how the reversal of Augustine's rule of love paves the way for modern political and economic rationality, contrasting this thesis with those of Hirschman and Foucault.

THE AUGUSTINIAN DOCTRINE OF GRACE AT THE CENTER OF THE DISPUTES BETWEEN THE REFORMATION AND COUNTER-REFORMATION

The central dogmatic issue that opposed the religious movements of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation became known as the “Quarrel of Grace”. Stemming from different interpretations of the works of Saint Augustine, the disagreement revolved around the interplay of divine grace and/or human free will in salvation. Reformers emphasized that the only path to salvation was divine grace, asserting that after original sin, human nature

was entirely corrupted by concupiscence and would inevitably lead the faithful to sin and damnation. The Counter-Reformation reacted to this thesis, accusing it of heresy. However, since the opposite position, which advocated only the path of free will, had also been condemned under the name Pelagianism, the Council of Trent had to assert an intermediate position where both divine grace and human freedom would contribute to salvation. Due to internal disputes within the Counter-Reformation camp, a unanimous position on how this combination would precisely work was not possible. This opened a long chapter in theological history and Catholic pastoral care concerning the issue. Dominicans, Jesuits, and Jansenists clashed throughout the 17th century, emphasizing theoretically one side or the other of the equation, exchanging accusations of heresy, and defining different sacraments and pastoral approaches in dealing with the faithful (Quilliet, 2007).

The dispute about grace was, from the beginning, linked to Saint Augustine's emotional rule of love. He was the Church Father who generalized Adam's sin as the original sin of all humanity, which transformed human nature and transmitted through it the need to sin and, consequently, the inevitability of both temporal and eternal death (Saint Augustine, 2000, p. 547). In this condition, humanity starts to live according to the flesh, which doesn't just mean living according to bodily pleasures but, in a broader sense, living according to the whole man, including his soul and spirit (Saint Augustine, 2000, p. 548-550). In other words, living according to a flawed kind of self-love, arrogantly placing oneself in the position that should belong to God.

The proud self-love nourishes the vain pursuit of glory, a passion that is truly spiritual or rational, rather than physical. In this passion, a person can even suppress the bodily impulses felt in their lower soul, leading to the appearance of virtue. Yet, this similarity is only superficial, as it does not constitute true love for God. This proud love can also lead to a disorder that disrupts the control of the spirit over the lower soul, leaving the individual susceptible to the concupiscence of the flesh, that is, passions linked to the body. The body itself is not inherently evil. "It is not corrupted flesh that made the soul sinful," says Saint Augustine, "but it is the sinful soul that corrupted the flesh" (2000, p. 551). The same applies to passions. Since they are connected to the movements of the will, their evaluation is inseparable from the quality of human will, or, particularly, the type of love that guides the will in its pursuit of happiness (Saint Augustine, 2000, p. 552, 555-556).

Saint Augustine promotes, as explained by Carole Talon-Hugon (2002, p. 56), a "central idea around which the constellation of considerations about passions is organized and through which they alone gain all their meaning. This central idea is that of the absolute

primacy of love". Love is not a passion but the very will whose movements constitute passions and enable them to be evaluated as good or bad. In other words, the emotional rule of love is the one from which other passions are deduced and judged. As Saint Augustine asserts (2000, p. 558):

It is because the right will is a good love, and the perverse will is an evil love. Love aspiring to have what it loves is desire; if it possesses and enjoys it, it is joy; love fleeing from what is hostile to it is fear; if it experiences it and suffers from it, it is sadness. Consequently, these impressions are bad if love is bad, and good if love is good.

Therefore, it is not appropriate to ask whether experiencing passion is good or bad, but rather the reason why they are experienced (Saint Augustine, 2000, p. 345). If human will has been alienated by original sin, love for oneself or for creatures can only lead to an unhappy existence. It finds itself in an "impossible situation," a contradictory one, desiring to possess things that cannot be possessed without the fear of losing them. The passions of fear and desire, although contrary movements of the soul, are mutually implicated when the object of love is finite and unstable, such as the body, earthly life, concupiscent freedom, family, city, money, and material goods (Saint Augustine, 2002). According to Saint Augustine, "man was created in rectitude to live not according to himself, but according to the one who created him, that is, to do God's will and not his own; and not to live according to the way of life for which he was created, that is the lie. He wants to be happy not living the way he could be" (2000, p. 552). "Reason teaches that all things should be perfectly ordered, and therefore, the spirit should be submitted to God, the only Lord who could guarantee it true love without fear and in whom the final glorification resides".

Nevertheless, as Emmanuel Bermon (2003, p. 187) summarizes concerning Augustinian doctrine, "natural man is incapable of becoming just, since to the extent that he attains virtue, or more precisely quasi-virtue, he can only do so by giving a basis to his pride, [...] only grace can free man from all the concupiscences that keep him in slavery". It is the Passion of Christ, and even the passions of Christ, that allow the distinction between good and bad passions. This is because Christ experienced his passions as God who became man, suffering as a man the passions in soul and flesh, but creating as God the very conditions to which he voluntarily submitted without them arousing in him the slightest disorder or sin. By submitting needlessly to necessity, by voluntarily enduring the passions, the passivity of passions is transformed into an act. Thus, Christ saves the passions, and he grants men the ability to experience them correctly. Through grace, the passions of men, which are naturally experienced as concupiscences, are now experienced in an orderly manner and become good.

This is not, therefore, a stoic defense of apathy, except in relation to concupiscence, but rather a proof, even in the weakness of human condition, of the passions derived from the love of God. A divine love that grace awakens as a *delectatio victrix*, that is, as a supreme delight, superior to any human pleasure, by which fallen man is irresistibly drawn to God by his desire to be happy. While man remains the subject of will, he is not its ultimate cause: “It is true that we want every time we want. But it is God who makes us want what is good” (Saint Augustine, 2002, p. 912). Or yet: “For that we wish, He operates without us. But when we want, and when we want enough to act, He cooperates with us. However, without Him, whether He operates for us to desire, or He cooperates when we want, for the good works of piety, we could achieve nothing” (Saint Augustine, 2002, p. 914). For, in this will defined in affective terms as love, “God acts from within, He takes the hearts, He moves the hearts, He awakens them by voluntary desires that He himself had produced in them” (Saint Augustine, 1962, p. 373). In the absence of grace, “man [remains] abandoned to himself because he has abandoned God, taking pleasure in himself, and, by not obeying God, he can no longer obey himself. And hence, his evident misery: man no longer lives as he wants” (Saint Augustine, 2000, p. 590).

According to the vision of Saint Augustine, the government of souls first involves the definition of an emotional rule and a mode of subjectivation that seeks to compensate for the “weakness” of human will and direct it towards self-renunciation and love for God. In an attempt to place God as the primary cause of a will in which humans remain subjects, Christian pastoral care establishes itself as the very first cause of voluntary desires, thus producing an emotional power of Christian origin. This pastoral view, which takes human will as its object, acts through persuasion on the affective and moral life, was already present even before Saint Augustine, at least since the influential Pastoral Rule of Pope Gregory the Great (Senellart, 1995, p. 27-29). However, with Saint Augustine, given the conception of the internal division of fallen man and his inability to govern himself, the use of coercion is legitimized, as it is necessary for men to undergo a power in order to be capable of willing the good. This passage discusses an external discipline aimed at ensuring the internalization of emotional regulation rules. It is inseparable from a therapy for the soul and body, intending to undo the lust that turns the individual into their own enemy and the enemy of others. Saint Augustine advocates for an essentially active process of educational severity that gives political power, as a repression organ, an apostolic role, turning the king into a minister of priesthood. As explained by Michel Senellart (1995, p. 83): “It is this conception of government as an instrument of discipline for salvation, subordinating violence to preaching,

which prevailed in the following centuries, against the aspiration of the early Christians for an autonomous life”.

THE PRIMACY OF LOVE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF PASSIONS IN THE 17TH CENTURY

The Christian government of wills is what underlies the quarrel about grace in the 17th century, reaffirming the Augustinian primacy of love as the central norm that organizes various treaties on passions (Terestchenko, 2009; Talon-Hugon, 2002, p. 58). Grace and the affections it produces provide the perspective for analyzing passions. The affections not only oppose, but normatively overlap with human passions and differ from them in their origin (the higher spiritual part of the soul and not sensory appetites), their object (love for God and not for the creature), and their value and hierarchy. These affections stemming from love for God appear as an inner force that determines the will, as the principle of its movements, as the ultimate reason without reason, ultimately leading to religious mysticism. They also overlap or merge with rational affections that govern passions. Then, this love does not necessarily have to be connected to religious ecstasy; it can simply remain as a will or steadfast faith disconnected from any sensory satisfaction (Saint-Cyran, 1992, p. 73; Levi, 1964, p. 204) or even as a despair of loving God regardless of being eternally condemned by Him (Fénelon, 1998; Terestchenko, 2009). This is how affections promote a reversal of the conception of passions: if passions were considered since antiquity as something suffered passively, affections are active, thus transferring the mystique of Christ's passion, in which passivity is actively desired, into a form of divine love as an internal motive of human will and conduct. This reversal extends to the valuation of emotional life, which, at least partially and according to the rules of the “true will”, can be evaluated as positive (Auerbach, 1998; Talon-Hugon, 1999, p. 179).

The rule of love constitutes the normative axis of all “emotional” life and subjugates other passions as specific developments of a general rule. It not only defines what to feel by distinguishing two types of love but also the legitimate object of affection and intensity, by moderating or proactively seeking to eliminate human passions and by inspiring divine love. Augustine's emotional rule unfolds into two inseparable fronts of debate. On one hand, the theme of pure love, of selfless love for God, born from divine grace, self-annihilation, and the dissolution of the self in God. The fundamental question about the possibility of the existence of a human love that is not selfish, that sacrifices even the interest in one's own

salvation. This discussion spans authors such as François de Sales, Pierre-Camus, Fénelon, Bossuet, and Malebranche. On the other hand, there is the question of unbridled self-love that needs to be moderated or eliminated, of vanity that disguises itself as virtue and guides the selfish actions of fallen man. This discussion is not so much based on an expressive rule but on an emotional rule that defines what one should feel internally, despite an outward manifestation that can be identical in the form of charity and humility, since the appearance of virtue can be sought with the aim of worldly glory. Saint-Cyran (1992, p. 74), for example, asserted that “the true rule of love that we direct towards ourselves is the love we direct towards God [...] For God loves not our works more than our persons, and He takes more pleasure in looking at our souls than our actions [...] just as we are in our hearts, and in the regulation of our inner life, that is, in our secret movements, our hidden intentions, and our imperceptible passions”. The emphasis on this pessimistic perspective was placed primarily, but not exclusively, by the Jansenists and can be found in authors such as Saint-Cyran, Jean-François Senault, Blaise Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Pierre Nicole, Jacques Esprit, and others. Considering that these two lines of discussion are complementary, they are often integrated in the treatises on passions of the 17th century, regardless of a greater emphasis on one side or the other.

The political legacy of the different emphases, however, is not the same. Although books on pure love as well as self-love have been dedicated to princes, sons of princes, and authorities of the time, each evaluated in its own way the emerging rationality of governmental state. Authors like Jean François de Sales and Fénelon condemned, in the name of pure love, a Reason of State defined as a moral exception that rulers would have in the face of human and divine rules in order to pursue the good of the State. The devout humanism of François de Sales (1986) preached a retreat from the world that passively rejected politics, with a peaceful pastoral approach submissive to the power of the sovereign. He proposed an inner reform that began with the radical conversion of the heart, in order to establish the love of God as the source of the will. Yet, “to receive the grace of God in our hearts, it is necessary to have emptied it of our own glory”, and it is imperative to give consent, freely sacrificing one's own free will that would allow for a contrary choice. The privileged technique for self-renunciation would be prayer, a way to expose “our will to the warmth of heavenly love” and to “quench the thirst of our heart for its passions” (Sales, 1986, p. 937-941). For Sales, only one affection can oppose another affection, and the purified affection that dissipates passions is love. As Carole Talon-Hugon (1999, p. 67) observes, “love is then at the beginning of passions as it is at the beginning of their treatment,

as it is still in the composition of their remedies”. Thus, in contrast to a human wisdom of a political nature, François de Sales urged living “not humanly, but superhumanly; not in us, but outside of us and above us” (Talon-Hugon, 1999, p. 68). Such self-renunciation and passivity before God and politics constituted an affinity between the religious posture and the absolutist State that was then consolidating, something that did not go unnoticed in his time (Ashcraft, 1995, p. 18-19).

THE NEO-STOIC GOVERNMENT OF SELF-LOVE IN THE EMERGING REASON OF STATE

Still, religious tendencies that emphasized criticism of self-love admitted, albeit with reservations, moral exceptions, inasmuch as they saw it as an inevitable resource employed by rulers in guiding people driven by their fallen nature. These tendencies, especially neo-Stoicism, became intertwined with the very formation of the Reason of State in the late 16th and 17th centuries.

Justus Lipsius was the central figure of neo-Stoicism, and his books enjoyed enormous success during that period. Lipsius reinterpreted Stoic doctrine and practices in a Christian manner, positioning himself in a theological neutral ground between reformers and various currents of the Counter-Reformation. As a result, he was “acknowledged by both sides of the divided Western Christendom as the great moral philosopher and the founder of a historical-political science that could rise above factional conflicts and, for a period, dominated political education” (cf. Oestreich, 1982, p. 64; Lipsius, 1994, 2010; Senellart, 1995, p. 239). His book “Politiques” (1994) was translated into several languages and had 96 editions. It was read by princes and counselors, adopted as a reference book in the teaching of history and politics at universities and courts. Thus, neo-Stoicism played a central role in the formation of the Reason of State throughout Christian Western societies.

The neo-Stoic rationality was inseparable from the control of passions and had the affections of grace as its horizon. Neo-Stoics advocated for more than the eradication of passions, seeking moderation or manipulation through a therapy that involved both the soul and the body. In the case of the body, the techniques were rooted in a Christian interpretation of Galenic medicine, based on the pursuit of balance among the four elements/humors. Passions were believed to result from the predominance of one or more of these bodily humors, which, if kept within certain limits, constituted temperaments. Nonetheless, if excessively imbalanced, they could lead to pathologies. The Christian reinterpretation saw the decline of humoral harmony as a result of original sin, making man a slave to his own

body (Klibansly, Panofsky, and Saxl, 1989, pp. 139-141, 178-179). Medical therapy for passions then involved an attempt to rebalance humors through diet and exercise, the use of other passions as compensatory antidotes, or the conversion of temperamental disposition through submission to the love of God (Charron, 1986, pp. 35-37; Klibansly, Panofsky, and Saxl, 1989, p. 178).

Regarding the soul, a distinctly Stoic theme, the emphasis is shifted to the treatment of passions as disturbances caused by false opinions that, if repeated frequently and without care, can take root as permanent judgments, turning into pathologies. If passions reside in involuntary representations to which humans give consent and eventually submit themselves, their treatment involves self-knowledge through which the individual frees oneself from hasty judgments and regains true reason. Through this process, Reason or the soul, “this principal and divine part”, regains its sovereign position, “instead of serving its servants” (Lipsius, 2010, p.95).

In the face of the passions triggered by public ills, which Lipsius concerns himself with in the troubled period of civil and religious wars, the proposed solution is constancy. Constancy is defined as “a firm and unchanging mental strength, which does not exalt itself nor humble itself with external or fortuitous circumstances” (Lipsius, 2010, p. 100). This strength is not linked to pride or vain glory, both false opinions, but to humility and patience, that is, to “voluntary suffering without complaint of all that happens or presents itself to man” (Lipsius, 2010, p. 100). As a result, man is urged not to be discouraged or overwhelmed by external and fortuitous things, nor to resist the inevitable, seeking the virtue of balance and stability, concentrating the soul within itself and controlling oneself to extinguish vice. It implies, therefore, accepting public (and private) ills as sent by God and necessary, considering them useful and bearable. The autonomy of wisdom, linked to patience, is inseparable from voluntary obedience, whether to God (“freedom consists in obeying God,” Lipsius, 2010, p. 127) or to the sovereign, including even tyrants, as tyrannies are determined not only by divine providence (Lipsius, 2010, p. 126) but also by corrupt human nature, with its tendency to exercise authority insolently (Lipsius, 2010, p. 223). Even when tyranny imposes a religion, Lipsius advocates external obedience and withdrawal into silence, asserting that resisting spiritual oppressions is to misunderstand oneself and the celestial nature of the soul. The sovereign can only affect the body, not the soul, for “no external force could ever make you want what you do not want and feel what you do not feel” (Lipsius, 2010, p. 224).

Lipsius denies that the soul of the wise can be controlled, advising the prince himself to impose only a submission in “appearance and external signs” and otherwise be guided by gentle persuasion (Lipsius, 1994, p. 26). On the other hand, Lipsius believes that the disorderly passions of the people can indeed be governed. This is how the Christian government of will is transferred to the realm of politics. In Book IV of his *Politiques* (1994, p. 27), dedicated to the analysis of the virtue of prudence in the particular case of the prince, it is presented as “a skill of governing external things calmly and securely”. Lipsius divides this government into two: that of the people's nature and that of the kingdom's nature. Regarding the people, prudence constitutes a form of understanding their moods and an art of commanding their passions, shaping public opinion through it.

The government of the prince must complement the patience and obedience of the wise. The self-discipline of the prince, a specific case of constancy, leads him to submit externally only to his own reason, while that of the subjects leads them to submit to the prince. Since people are not generally wise, the prince's wisdom needs to be exceptional in order to deal with restlessness, disunity, and turbulence, aiming to maintain order and civil peace. In its pessimistic characterization of the people, passions serve as a link between the fickle man (opposite of the wise Neo-Stoic), sinner (opposite of the chosen Augustinian), and unruly (opposite of the idealized citizen of the Platonic republic).

Influential Neo-Stoic author, the Frenchman Pierre Charron (1986), presents a similar pessimistic diagnosis of the people in his influential treatise on passions. He deduces the moods of the people from the predominance of Augustine's self-love, deriving from this corrupted love a list of eleven passions found in the writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Among them, Charron places ambition (love of greatness and honor) as the strongest and most powerful passion that overrides all others (1986, p. 158-159, 161, 164), avarice (love of wealth and goods) as the most diseased and foolish (1986, p. 161, 169-171), and carnal love as the most natural and universal (1986, p. 161, 173-175). According to Charron, passions arising from the senses lead to false judgments of good and evil, which, mixed with imagination, form false opinions that oppose the sovereignty of right reason (1986, p. 155-157). The rarity of wisdom and a well-balanced humoral nature leads people to be described as “fickle, inconstant, mutinous, talkative, fond of vanity and novelty, proud and unbearable in prosperity, cowardly and dejected in adversity” (Charron, 1986, p. 551). In this sense, he broadly agrees with Lipsius, who attributes the same negative qualities to people, accusing them of not knowing how to restrain themselves and of misusing their freedom. Always excessive, people cowardly submit when they fear, and in the opposite case, they become

turbulent and bold. As a consequence, for Lipsius (1994, p. 27-31), “there is nothing as easy as making a people turn to whichever side one desires”, being susceptible to the influence of seditious men.

Therefore, the prudence of the Prince needs to be of a special kind, relying on strength to maintain peace and seeking a double virtue focused on governing the passions of the subjects. Lipsius draws inspiration here from the advice of Machiavelli (1996, p. 91-128). The first virtue is benevolence, through which the love of the subjects is obtained through affable treatment, generosity, abundance of provisions, and indulgence in the amusements of the people. The second virtue is authority, aiming to instill in subjects and foreigners a venerable opinion regarding the king. This is achieved through three means: by a form of command that is strict, consistent, and compelling; by power acquired through wealth, arms, counsel, alliances, and fortune; and finally, through the good conduct of the ruler, with graceful gestures and a serious and stern appearance. The contrary vices that should be avoided, described as “the evil and harmful affection one harbors against the king and his state” (Lipsius, 1994, p. 57), come in two types. First, there is hatred, a vice contrary to benevolence, which is a bitter and violent passion originating from the fear of subjects, arousing their desire for revenge. To dispel this, one must avoid cruelty, greed, and harshness, and apply punishments, taxes, and criticism prudently. The second vice to be avoided is contempt, contrary to authority, which manifests as a base and degrading opinion held by subjects and foreigners regarding the King and the State (Lipsius, 1994, p. 60). Contempt threatens consensus and unity, dissolves fear, and allows not only for the lack of desire but also for the deposition of the sovereign. This vice is linked to three things: an excessively gentle and cowardly form of government, lacking reason, which seeks to be loved through humility and kindness and capriciously yields to popular whims; second, by a consistently negative fortune that makes the people laugh at the prince; and third, by indecent and vicious customs that render the prince contemptible, foolish, and fragile in health.

Lipsius turns prudence into a kind of treatise on the government of passions that goes beyond the traditional genre of the “mirror of princes”. It is not about setting the prince's virtue as an example for the people, but rather proposing virtue as an ability to manipulate emotions and opinions in order to achieve discipline and security in an absolutist state that had just emerged from religious wars. Not coincidentally, Lipsius (1994) acknowledges what he calls a “mixed prudence”, meaning the use, by right reason, of frauds and deceptions, as long as they are done in the name of the public good, considering the nature of his contemporaries. However, Lipsius' solution to limit this Reason of State,

understood as an exception to norms, is based on a gradation of transgression that seeks a balance between utility and honesty. In English:

There is a small fraud (linked to suspicion and deceit), moderate fraud (which deviates further from virtue and approaches the edge of vice, involving compromise/corruption and deception/dissimulation), and great fraud (not only separating from virtue but also from laws due to a highly pronounced, robust, and perfect malice, including perfidy and injustice). Lipsius advises the first, supports the second, and condemns the third. According to Lipsius, the prince can sometimes take indirect paths for the public good when direct ones are unattainable.

Going beyond Lipsius concerning mixed prudence, Pierre Charron offered a more effective solution to justify moral exception in the name of public utility (Charron, 1986, p. 555). His treatise “De la sagesse” (1986) was the most influential among the theorists of the French Reason of State during the constitution of the absolutist state, exerting its influence throughout the first half of the 17th century. Therefore, Charron attributed virtues suitable for governing to the wise prince, allowing for moral exceptions to deal with a people driven by self-love.

Mr. Charron, unlike Lipsius, does not consider the limit of this moral exception in terms of a gradation of frauds, but in terms of effectiveness, without, however, abandoning his respect for the duty of justice, even if apparently the conditions for fulfilling duties modify their own form and content (Lazzeri, 1992, p. 123). The artificial laws of politics must establish a compromise between universal justice and public utility, and one can resort to means contrary to justice only to the extent that it questions the “natural and indispensable obligation” of the prince: “*Salus populi suprema lex esto*” (Charron, 1986, p. 555). Hence, friendship towards others becomes a natural duty, but in a defensive manner, aiming at their preservation and protection from traps, rather than enhancing the power of the State. In this context, one may employ questionable means, albeit discreetly and within the limits dictated by the situation (Charron, 1986, p. 555). However, when facing declared or presumed enemies, the best defense could be a preventive attack, lest a reaction comes too late. The shift from a defensive to an offensive strategy, be it against external foes or the subjects within the realm, where both civil and natural laws of justice are suspended, solely depends on the ruler's judgment. This judgment is based on their prudence, enabling them to understand the general disposition of their subjects and interpret concrete signs (Charron, 1986, p. 559-560). This interpretive ambiguity allows the Reason of State not to be seen as openly conflicting with ethical and legal norms. Acts of aggression become legitimate based

on the ruler's judgment, applying the case to the rule, considering the bearer's position, and utilizing available information. Consequently, an endless debate arises regarding their legitimacy due to the criteria's inherent vagueness. As Christian Lazzeri states (1992, p. 127-128), "Charron thus establishes a skillful and effective compromise between the nature of ethical and legal norms and the concrete conditions of their application, satisfying the interests of the State".

Exactly because of this conciliation, Charron's work experiences enormous success: "Charron's work encompasses all the elements of the theories of *raison d'État* that will be developed in France during the first half of the 17th century among statistes linked to the defense and strengthening of the State and who must respond to criticisms directed against the absolutism of 'reason of Hell'" (Lazzeri, 1992, p. 128). As Étienne Thuau (1966, p. 365-366) explains: "The statistes insistently emphasize the stupidity and cruelty of the people, and this view is often presented as the postulate of their authoritarian policy. It is an admitted idea that rulers must be harsh because men are wicked." Both the view of man (treatises on passions) and the criterion of prudence are borrowed from Charron. In the practical actions of the State's rulers, especially Cardinal Richelieu, the texts of Charron and other theorists will form a governmental dispositive aimed at strengthening the power of the State by legitimizing its actions against religious critics (Lazzeri, 1992, p. 128-129; Thuau, 1966, p. 365-366). Despite that, just as it justified violence, Charron's successful discourse spread the political government of passions throughout the 17th century. The straight Stoic reason and the *raison d'État* are produced together in the prudent government of the people's passions.

SELF-LOVE AS A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETING POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

In the middle of the 17th century, the government of passions began to be strongly influenced by the religious pessimism of the Jansenists. Followers of strict Augustinianism, with a strong inclination towards the predestination of grace, they represented the Counter-Reformation movement that was closest to the Calvinists.

The Jansenists rejected the intermediate path offered by Camus' devoted humanism, which distinguished self-love, whose sinful covetousness leads us to focus on ourselves and on creatures, from love of oneself, which, though not as perfect as pure selfless love for God, directs us to Him as the hope of salvation, as the Supreme Good within us and for us (Terestchenko, 2000, p. 69-73). The Jansenists asserted only one corrupted form of self-love in fallen humanity. In partial contrast to the Stoics, the Jansenists did not believe in the free

rational power of humans to control their own passions; the will was determined either by grace or by corrupted self-love. Grace would produce a superior delight that would triumph over concupiscence, yet without extinguishing the inextricable selfishness of humanity. *Delectatio victrix* kept the will free only in the sense that it did not externally contradict what one wanted. Deliberative reason would come only after volitional determination, hardly distinguishable from sensitive appetites, as it would arise from a sensitivity of concupiscence or grace (Levi, 1964, p. 210).

The pessimistic viewpoint of Jansenius allowed for a new political utilization of emotions, all while retaining the methods and political control rooted in neo-Stoic philosophy. For instance, in the treatise “On the Use of Passions”, Jansenist Jean-François Senault (1987) suggested a fusion of scholastic definition, the prominence of Augustinian love (in the Jansenist interpretation), and the neo-Stoic therapeutic approach. This approach merged reason with grace, making charitable love a prerequisite for the effective rational management of emotions. In accordance with Anthony Levi (1964, p. 214), this amalgamation represents “the most enlightening form of ethics in the mid-century”.

The a priori volitional determinism of the Jansenists allowed for the establishment of a framework for interpreting human behavior through the lens of self-love, encompassing even good deeds and apparent virtues. Through this, it enabled predictions of future political stances and influence over behavior by manipulating the selfish interests that guide passions. Then, long before economic interest became a general principle for deciphering behavior, self-love played the role of a general cause of human behavior.

For Senault, morality advocates the use of passions and “instructs politicians and teaches them to govern the states by governing their passions” (1987, p. 27). In the dedication to Cardinal Richelieu, after stating that “it is necessary to regulate affections before leading men” (1987, p. 2), acknowledging that the Cardinal subjected his passions to Love and Reason supported by grace, Senault refers to what he considers to be “the greatest work that a statesman can undertake” (1987, p. 137): reading intentions in the depths of hearts and unveiling secret and concealed thoughts (1987, p. 7 and 138). The just regulation of one's own passions is thus complemented by the prudent use of others' passions (Senault, 1987, p. 7). Being the heart of men an abyss, characterized by its depth, vastness of desires, chronic dissatisfaction, but also by the secrecy and obscurity that surrounds it, there are only fragile clues to guess the feelings and thoughts it hides. To decipher what words conceal, Senault proposes the understanding of passions since “they escape against our will, they betray us by their swiftness and volatility” (1987, p. 138). Being difficult to contain, they rise without our

permission, acting as true tortures, both for the torment they cause and for their strength that compels us to confess the truth. And thus, one who has not learned to govern and prevent them ends up surrendering to enemies and allowing them to cunningly govern them (Senault, 1987, p. 138).

Knowing human passions better than the subjects know themselves, Cardinal Richelieu, according to Senault, would have gained the loyalty of his subjects and adversaries, using passions as “chains to capture and detain them”. Chained by the heart, it would be possible to lead them according to the ruler's desires and needs, imitating in the State the way God governs the world: first, accommodating the inclinations of his creatures and acting with both gentleness and strength; second, making them obey without understanding the mysteries of the ruler (divine in the case of God, of the State in the case of the Cardinal). The divine model of governing wills described by Saint Augustine is once again copied by political government in the absolutist French State. The strategy suggested by Senault would be beneath the Majesty of Religion. It would initially take into account passionate weakness, persuading it through self-interest and using inclinations to soften its fury, in order to then lead people towards virtue and charity (Senault, 1987, p. 32).

In this form of knowledge that seeks to unravel the true emotions that govern the heart, self-love emerges as a causal laxity capable of explaining all human conduct. French moralists of the second half of the century, heavily influenced by Jansenists, attribute various and even contradictory characteristics to self-love: “it is impetuous and obedient, sincere and deceitful, merciful and cruel, timid and audacious” (La Rochefoucauld, 1992, p. 180). Being hidden, abysmal, cunning, invisible to oneself, skillful, refined, frivolous, fickle, multiple or singular, constantly metamorphosing, varying its rhythm, leaning according to temperament, age, fortune, and experience, struggling against itself or unconditionally asserting itself, leading to success or failure and producing various passions, its incredible plasticity accounts for the entirety of the human universe: “Behold the portrait of self-love”, says La Rochefoucauld (1992, p. 181), “of which all life is nothing but a great and long agitation [...] it lives everywhere, it lives on everything as if on nothing” (La Rochefoucauld, 1992, p. 181).

Self-love and its passions, as a key to understanding what hides in the heart, gain importance not only from the perspective of Jansenist moral reformism but also from a properly political viewpoint on the secrets in Reason of State. The *arcana imperii* are linked, on one hand, to the mysticism of the king, drawing a parallel between divine government and political government that places the prince in a transcendent position in relation to society, conferring upon his actions a dimension of the sacred. On the other hand, they are

linked to the art of dissimulation among the powerful and to the secret stratagem that the prince employs, exceptions to the law, aiming for the public good (Senellart, 1995, pp. 245-277). The knowledge of passions precisely provides the technique to decipher these secrets and strategies, lending itself to predict the actions of adversaries and manipulate the desires and behaviors of subjects and powerful individuals. Here is a highly operational analysis in the context of the French internal conflict (Fronde), arising from the unification of the national state and the external European conflict, with the intricate alliances in the Thirty Years' War (Goldmann, 1959; Thuau, 1966).

THE REVERSAL OF THE RULE OF LOVE: THE AFFIRMATION OF ENLIGHTENED SELF-LOVE

The French moralists systematically denounced self-love. They dissected souls, pursuing and exposing the motives hidden beneath seemingly virtuous and selfless behavior. For them, there is nothing the human will can desire or the soul can approve that is not already marked by this consideration for oneself. According to La Rochefoucauld (1992, p. 181): “Self-love is the love of oneself and of all things for oneself”. This is the law inscribed in the secret foundations of the will, its unconscious and obscure truth. The knowledge of oneself and the pursuit of moral perfection would be nothing but an illusion forged by a deceiving consciousness that ignores its own selfish and self-interested nature. As Terestchenko (2000, p. 21) asserts, “Man, every man, obeys, consciously or unconsciously, whether for his happiness or his downfall, for his glory or his ruin, the harsh bronze law of self-love”. Corrupting all relationships, even the most intimate ones, because “we cannot love anything except in reference to ourselves”, there can be no selfless human bond. The intention of the French moralists was not to prescribe conduct, a function they delegated to conscience directors, but to describe it in a way that would lead the reader “to break with a favorable representation he forms of himself and his motivations and, indirectly, to reform himself, at least from the perspective of the clarity with which he regards himself” (Lazzeri, 2001, p. 294).

The moralists, however, besides the issue of moral intention, grapple with the question of action and its outcomes. This is a central issue, as the revelation of self-love as a principle of human action points to the danger this motivation poses to the existence and stability of social bonds. “All men naturally hate each other”, asserts Blaise Pascal (1992, p. 384). Conceived as something that cannot be eradicated, although repressible through sanctions, this way of feeling, contrary to religious prescriptions, constituted a significant

political problem. Self-love, undermining charity and promoting indifference towards others, emerges as a potential source of conflict, threatening the preservation of society during a time of great fear of civil wars.

The solution found by Jansenist moralists is the foundation of a new conception of Divine Providence, whose infinite wisdom would confer a paradoxical result to self-love: not being cured except by divine grace, its negative effects can, however, be offset by the action of its own poison, generating positive effects such as peace and improvement in material well-being. Inspired by the ideal of harmonious balance in Galenic medicine, this version of providentialism offers a pacifying solution through the counterbalancing of passions (Hirschman; 2013; Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, 1989, p. 32-33). But the crucial point is that this balance now shifts from the individual to the entire society, an idea that would entail profound political transformations.

The chance of finding equilibrium would arise from clarifying self-love, guiding and channeling it through reason. Still, this isn't about the Neo-Stoic reason that transcends passions; instead, it's a reason completely subjugated to emotions and aligned with their goals, excluding any external perspective (Laval, 2007, p. 191-194; Lazzeri, 2001, p. 298-300). It was this inherent, calculating reason, mediating the fulfillment of passions, that enabled Jansenist providentialism to redefine the course of Western metaphysics.

In Pierre Nicole's essay "On Charity and Self-Love" (1999), when analyzing the different ways in which it is possible to love oneself, the author states that enlightened self-love shifts its objects of satisfaction. Fearing death, one gives up trying to dominate everyone and instead seeks comfort and the pleasure of being loved by others. Therefore, even though "the self-love of other men opposes all our desires" (Nicole, 1999, p. 382), social tension is resolved because, in order to gain the love of others, we externally renounce the pursuit of power and wealth. We engage in a trade that involves satisfying the self-love of others to obtain, as a reward, the satisfaction of our own. The trade of passions thus establishes the idea that a society based on commercial ties would promote peace and prosperity. After all, concealing self-love is the best way to avoid others' aversion and to be loved by them, ensuring safety and improvement in life. With this, as Nicole asserts:

Although there is nothing more opposite to charity that directs everything to God than self-love that directs everything to oneself, there is, however, nothing so similar to the effects of charity as those of self-love. For everything happens in such a similar way that one could hardly distinguish the paths by which charity should lead us from those taken by enlightened self-love, which knows how to recognize its true interests and tends by reason toward the goal it sets for itself (1999, p. 381).

The statement leads Nicole to recommend a reversal of the Augustinian rule of love in the political government of passions, prescribing enlightened self-love as a recipe for social order. Nicole then proposes a new task for political rulers:

To entirely reform the world – that is, to banish all vices and gross disorders, and to make people happy even in this life – it would only be necessary, in the absence of charity, to give everyone an enlightened self-love that can discern their true interests and follow the paths that right reason demonstrates to them. Nevertheless, this society may be internally and in the eyes of God, there will be nothing externally more regulated, civilized, just, peaceful, honest, generous, and more admirable (1999, p. 408).

Pierre Bayle provides a decisive testimony to the paradoxical consequences for religion itself arising from the providentialism that proposes a human order driven by concupiscence. When questioning whether an atheist society could be virtuous, Bayle answers affirmatively. For him, what matters is not what individuals display in terms of virtue, but rather God's hidden plan regarding them. This plan extends to the use of their private vices, particularly self-love, to fulfill public virtue. Thus, an atheist society can be even stronger and more prosperous than a society composed of followers of Christian precepts, leading to a new political guideline:

If you want a nation to be strong enough to resist its neighbors, let the principles of Christianity be the subjects for preachers: preserve them for theory and apply them under the laws of nature that allow us to reciprocate and urge us to rise above our current state, to become richer and in better condition than our parents. I retained the vivacity of greed and ambition, only shielding them from theft and fraud, fueling them with rewards: promising a pension to those who invent new manufactures or new means of expanding trade. I sent people everywhere in search of gold [...] so that nothing can stop the passion for becoming rich, and you will accumulate in your country the wealth of many others (Bayle, 1966, p. 361).

Yet, to the extent that a concupiscent human order is established, Christianity, with its preaching of love for God and neighbor, becomes dispensable and even harmful. This opens up the possibility of a science that seeks to decipher the laws of nature applied to human society (Dufour, 2013; Laval, 2007; Steiner, 2017). This science replaced Stoic therapy with a physics of passions inspired by Galileo, with passions as the active principle that decisively influenced the will and guided reason. Passions thus became the driving force behind human behavior (Moreau, 2003, p. 5-9; Hirschman, 2013, p. 16-18).

The naturalization of Jansenist providentialism paved the way for a rupture between the political and religious government of passions. Within the span of a century, the new emotional political rule reversed Charron's Neo-Stoic conception, turning enlightened self-

love, which manifests as avarice and ambition, into a norm characteristic of a commercial society.

FROM PASTORAL POWER TO POLITICAL ECONOMY: TRADE AS AN EMOTIONAL DEVICE

In Pierre Nicole, the idea that the trade of passions can lead to positive effects refers to a broad concept of trade in the sense of interaction among people. However, the example provided in the text ends up pointing to a narrow sense of trade, which gained strength progressively. According to Nicole (1999, p. 408)

For instance, when one travels to the countryside, there are people almost everywhere who are ready to serve those passing by and who have houses prepared to receive them. We can make use of these accommodations as we wish. They take orders and obey. They are content to provide the services requested of them and never complain about offering the help that is asked of them. What could be more admirable than these people, if they were motivated by charity? But it is greed that drives their actions [...]. What charity it would be to build an entire house for another, furnish it, and decorate it, to hand it over complete with the keys? Greed would do it gladly. [...] Greed does all of this without any pain.

Commercial mediation emerges as capable of harmonizing self-loves, placing one's satisfaction at the service of others' needs and increasing the material well-being of all. The mercantile world is thus presented as being similar to grace in its effects, producing the same external behaviors and common good, although the internal motivations are opposite. Pierre Nicole inaugurated a conception of commercial relationships as a new normative principle that simultaneously derived from and replaced religious and pastoral guidelines. This theological-political idea was later developed in the emerging Political Economy, forming the basis of reasoning for the predecessor of physiocratic *laissez-faire* and considered the first French economist, Pierre de Boisguilbert (not coincidentally a disciple of Pierre Nicole). This idea also gained new versions in the long lineage of economic liberalism (or radical-utilitarian liberalism, in Foucault's terms, 2004b), transitioning from the theological realm to fable in Bernard Mandeville, then to metaphor (the famous "invisible hand") in Adam Smith, and finally to a logical-deductive hypothesis in the pure economic theory of Léon Walras, when it acquired the mathematical and scientific framework of contemporary economics.

The Jansenist version of providence and how it governs self-love allows for an alternative explanation of the transition mentioned by Foucault (2004a) from pastoral government, based on the divine model, to liberal government, based on nature. It is not precisely a discursive rupture but a displacement. What changed was not the substitution of

religious reference with scientific-natural reference, but the religious discourse itself, which adopted a new conception of how providentialism operates. As political government continued to draw inspiration from the divine model, it embraced a new logic of action based on natural theology, where God's laws were seen as inscribed in the laws of nature, paving the way for a scientific and secularized worldview (Steiner, 2018). This is how natural laws become a limit to the utility of government interventions, as in the case of an emerging idealized view of the market guided by laws inscribed by divinity in human nature. Thus, the construction of passions as moral forces operating within the human sphere, parallels Newtonian physics (Moreau, 2003).

In this context, the market ends up emerging as an emotional device of a religious and political nature that promotes the harmonization of self-loves and collective satisfaction, a pacifying and materially prosperous solution to the civil and religious wars of early modern Europe. It is even possible to venture to say that the idealized market was the founding myth (and, for that reason, always revisited and updated) of Anglo-Saxon modernity, since it provided a natural theological explanation, both religiously neutral and secular from the perspective of Political Economy, which allowed the English to justify the reason for continuing to live together (and shaping the way they live together) despite their internal fractures.

This valorisation of the market as the quintessential emotional device, as well as the idea that humans trade passions, ended up identifying human nature with the profession of a merchant. As noted by Christian Laval (2007), Jacques Esprit summarized a conception present in the French moralists of the time as follows: "Few realize how all men are merchants, all offer something for sale" (Esprit, 1996, p. 309). Since all men are merchants, self-love was progressively identified with its unfolding in mercantile passions, such as avarice and greed, and enlightenment was equated with economic calculation. Then, enlightened self-love was progressively equated and replaced by the conception of economic interest as the general principle from which behaviors and other passions derive. In this sense, contrary to what Hirschman (2013) argues, it was not self-interest as a euphemism for self-love and as a compensatory passion deemed less harmful that allowed the reversal of the West's central emotional rule. Instead, it was the political-religious emergence of the emotional rule of enlightened self-love, mediated by the emotional dispositive of the market, that created the conditions for the emergence of modern economic rationality.

The reversal of the emotional rule of love, with its shift from religion to political and economic rationality, was a decisive event for modernity, forming the basis of the emerging

liberal governmentality. However, this reversal of the emotional rule sparked scandals and reactions that were felt both in religion and in politics, with repeated attempts to reclaim benevolent love as a principle for organizing society (Andrade, 2016). The disputes over the rule of love thus remained at the center of modern politics, but this discussion is already the subject of other chapters in the history of emotional power.

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