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The Concept of Love in 17th and 18th Century Philosophy

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Introduction

Most papers collected in this volume owe their origins, at least partly, to the two "ContactFora" organized within the framework of the research project *Actuality of the Enlightenment: the Moral Science of Emotions* by the members of the research group supported generously by Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van Belgie voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten. The research project was centred on the problem of the interplay between descriptive and normative elements and aspects of Enlightenment emotion theories, a problem that had never been examined in its full range.

The philosophico-scientific inquiry into emotions (passions or affects, as they were called) in early modern and Enlightenment philosophy pushed the study of man in a new direction: what was formerly a descriptive discipline came to be called (philosophical) anthropology. However, philosophers' interest in emotions also influenced the way they looked at specific fields such as moral philosophy, religion, and politics. The research project aimed to undertake the reconstruction of these developments. This is not just a task for the historian of philosophy; it also raises problems for the contemporary systematic philosopher who critically examines the role emotions play in laying the groundwork for morality, religion, and political authority.

What is new in our research is the historical inquiry of a twofold process. On the one hand, we investigated the way the new scientific-naturalistic philosophy of passions and emotions penetrated into the different complementary systems of evaluation – morality, religion, and politics – jeopardizing, at the same time, their very evaluative character. On the other hand, we also examined the ways these systems of evaluation made a determinative impact on the scientific project itself. No scientific philosopher could get rid of his pre-theoretical convictions even (or, precisely) when confronting the scientific understanding of passions and emotions with the systems of evaluation. Descartes, for example, wanted to investigate the nature of emotions *en physicien*, as a natural scientist. Nevertheless, he based his system of passions on the concept of a created nature directed to the realization of *the good* construed almost in the medieval manner of having interchangeable transcendental concepts like being, beauty, and truth. In Descartes' case, as well as in cases of his fellow seventeenth century philosophers, this points to a *desideratum* of the research: one has to follow the traces of concealed evaluative positions in the new scientific systems of the emotional man.

The research project (which, for all intents and purposes, has not really 'ended' after its six-month period) will be of immediate interest to all those who focus their research on the origins of modern philosophical anthropology. And, since historical research is not to be separated from the systematic issues, the results of the project are also of considerable importance for those who investigate the rela-

tions between emotions and modern anthropology, political, ethical, and aesthetical theories.

Workshops ("ContactFora") around specific topics with specialists in the field were part and parcel of the research project itself. We organized two such workshops for analyzing love, the most appropriate emotion to open up and deepen the discussion. Love was regarded as one of the most important emotions by the seventeenth and eighteenth century authors. Descartes placed love among the primary passions, and later thinkers certainly followed him as far as the distinctive role of love was concerned. Spinoza, for example, considered love to be the first affect after the primary ones. Malebranche took love and aversion to be the primary passions that succeeded admiration. When Leibniz defined justice as the charity of the wise he also had a certain kind of love in mind.

These few examples clearly show how love provides us with a paradigm case for the investigation of the changes in the treatment of emotions effectuated by the intrusion of the descriptive-mechanical methods in a field previously characterized by predominantly normative approaches.

What are the most intriguing aspects brought to light in the analyses of love, specifically in view of the fact that in the period under investigation philosophy was given a new character? The original *élan*, present, e.g., in Hobbes' philosophy, of the renewal of thinking in the form of a mechanical philosophy neutral to religious-theological and political issues soon ceased. As a result, mainstream philosophy began searching for a compromise between the "old" and the "new" philosophy, which was more than just a superficial juxtaposition of an old metaphysics and a new physics. This *philosophia novantiqua* attributed to systematic philosophical thinking an important role in answering the great religious and/or theological-political questions of the age. In Spinoza's *Ethics*, the cognitive aspect dominated the treatment of love, whereas his *Theological-Political Treatise* considered *amor erga proximum* as part and parcel of the divine verb ("reason" in Spinoza's vocabulary) imprinted in everybody's heart. In Leibniz, "the charity of the wise" was a combination of juristically rationalized Christianity and Platonic philosophy aimed at the emendation of the life-standards of humankind. Malebranche tried to find the middle course between a sort of egoistic *amour-propre* and a pure love without any consideration of the lover's own interest.

One of the general morals to be drawn from these findings is that, regardless of all the differences between these thinkers with respect to the accents put on different aspects of their respective theories of emotions, the late seventeenth century philosophical study of man cannot, in reality, be separated from the study of emotions regarded usually as reason's main antagonists. We can even find early-modern evidences in favour of various views endorsed by today's theoreticians of emotion, for example, that emotions have a salient role in decision-making. Contemporary theories maintain that emotions cut the potentially infinite series of arguments and counter-arguments in the process of decision-making on the basis of an underlying value not necessarily accessible to reason. According to

the seventeenth century theories, it is precisely through the emotions, and especially love, that the explicitly or implicitly made assumptions concerning basic values enter the field of both our everyday concerns and the principally value-free scientific-philosophical investigation. Love is what directs the steps of the Spinozean philosopher to real wisdom; love of a God who creates and maintains order and harmony in the world is the cornerstone of the philosophy of Malebranche and Leibniz.

Given love's paramount importance on a general level, a number of questions dominate the theory of love in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. To name but a few:

- Is love an emotion in which the will plays a role?
- Can we love only human beings or can we also love beings above and below human?
- Can we speak of a hierarchy within the concept of love?
- Can love play a role in providing an historical or systematic explanation of how political or other human societies and/or communities have come about and continue functioning?
- Which roles do the two extremities – *amour propre* and *amour pur* – play in late seventeenth century concepts of love?

These questions are treated in the papers of the present volume, and are also briefly discussed here by way of introduction.

Let us begin with Descartes. In the last decade, it has become more and more evident that Descartes was not the rigid rationalist that earlier interpretations have made him out to be. This is partly due to the fact that his *Passions of the Soul* is considered to be the *chef-d'œuvre* of the early modern theory of emotion, and also because his concept of love became indisputably the main starting point of subsequent treatments of love. For these reasons, we will dwell on his concept of love more than that of other authors. What are the main elements of Descartes' concept of love?

Descartes' general definition of love is given in Article 79 of the *Passions of the Soul*:

> Love is an emotion of the soul caused by a movement of the spirits, which impels the soul to join itself willingly to objects that appear to be agreeable to it (CSMK I, 356.).

We do not need to dwell now on the famous problem of how the bodily "spirits" can cause emotions in the thinking soul. Instead, I want to stress first the will's quite unique role in this account of love. As stated in Article 80:

> [I]n using the word 'willingly' I am not speaking of desire, which is a completely separate passion relating to the future. I mean rather the assent by which we consider ourselves henceforth as joined with what we love in such a manner that we imagine a whole, of which we take ourselves to be only one part, and the thing loved to be the other (Ibid.).

"Will" is meant here in the technical sense of 'assenting to' (or, 'withdrawing from') what has been presented to us by the intellect or the imagination. However, the result of the assent of love is not a proposition in which an idea or a bit of knowledge articulates itself, as in Descartes' basic analysis of the will in the Fourth Meditation. What we are given here is rather a kind of motivation for action: the assent produces a new state of affairs, namely, our being involved in a whole of which we willingly acknowledge ourselves to be only one part. This means that the ego acknowledges and assents to its essential limitations with respect to the other that presents a claim upon it and invites it to act somehow in relation to the other's challenge. But the way the ego reacts depends a great deal on which part of the whole gets acknowledged to be the "greater" or the "lesser" part. Descartes, the natural philosopher, cannot help applying in the theory of love the same consideration applied when determining the main laws of movement: it matters a lot which of any two colliding bodies outweighs or is stronger than the other. The stronger or the bigger body will determine the joint movement of the new unit. Likewise, the interests of the stronger part of the whole will determine the actions that will be permitted or tolerated by the weaker part. Descartes assigns special names for the three main possible combinations of this love-relation:

> We may, I think [...] distinguish kinds of love according to the esteem which we have for the object we love, as compared with ourselves. For when we have less esteem for it than for ourselves, we have only a simple affection for it; when we esteem it equally with ourselves, that is called 'friendship'; and when we have more esteem for it, our passion may be called 'devotion' (Art. 83; CSMK I, 357.).

The love construed along these lines is not a static end of one's strivings: there is a considerable action-readiness resulting from the love-relation. When transposed in the world of real human beings who love each other, what is a simple physical (i.e., descriptive) law on the level of pure bodily movements becomes a normative law that lets moral values enter the scene, allegedly issuing from pure physical considerations about the relation of magnitudes. In all of the above kinds of love-relation,

> we consider ourselves as joined and united to the thing loved, and so we are always ready to abandon the lesser part of the whole that we compose with it so as to preserve the other part (Ibid.).

This statement is only a disguised version of the following general law: for all wholes made up of a lover and a beloved object, the greater or stronger part can legitimately achieve its own interest through the lesser part (i.e., the interest of the greater part is to be valued more than the interest of the lesser part). In this way, moral evaluation enters the scene of the putatively pure physical theory. The first step, i.e., the first kind of love, seems innocent in this regard:

> In the case of simple affection this results in our always preferring ourselves to the object of our love (Ibid.).

The case of devotion, however, is more suspicious:

> In the case of devotion... we prefer the thing loved so strongly that we are not afraid to die in order to preserve it (Ibid.).

There are thinkers who would identify the sphere in which some are entitled to command people to die for a cause and people are willing to obey to this command with the sphere of "the political." The same thinkers would certainly also endorse at least one aspect of the so-called secularization theorem: the main political concepts of our modern age are but secularized theological concepts of the Middle Ages. They would also maintain that the seventeenth century is the period where these two sets of concepts existed simultaneously and began to be transposed into or intermingled with each other. These people would appreciate Descartes embedding the third kind of love in a theological-political context. For him, the most appropriate object of love *qua* devotion is God *or our prince*, and the main effect of such a love is that the lesser part of the whole, i.e., man, as either a creature or a subject, feels obliged to sacrifice himself to the whole, i.e., the greater part – God or the sovereign.

> As for devotion, its principal object is undoubtedly the supreme Deity, for whom we cannot fail to have devotion when we know him as we ought. But we may also have devotion for our sovereign, our country, our town, and even for a particular person when we have much more esteem for him than for ourselves... We have often seen examples of such devotion in those who have exposed themselves to certain death in defense of their sovereign or their city, or sometimes even for particular persons to whom they were devoted (Ibid.).

This Article does not connect the theological to the political in a haphazard way. There are passages both in the *Discourse on Method* and in the letters to Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia on Machiavelli that attest to Descartes' willingness to submit himself to the sovereign on the basis of his God-given power – political-military as well as moral. Without going into the details of Descartes' political commitment, we can simply draw the obvious consequence based on what the *Passions* says about the kinds of love. For Descartes, love does have a role in politics, specifically in the explanation of how cohesion can be achieved in a political community. Although he had a preference for monarchic government, he probably did not have any difficulty, in principal, in theoretically accepting other forms of government, for example, in the case of a town. When, in Article 194, he characterizes gratitude as a passion which is "always a virtue and one of the principal bonds of human society" (reference) we can certainly infer from this that gratitude must have a place in the Cartesian good man and good "citi-

zen": we must feel gratitude towards the beloved God or sovereign to whom we must devote ourselves. But we can perhaps also argue in favor of the presence of the idea of another kind of society in Descartes, rather than just a political community: namely, a society constituted by the kind of gratitude the generous human being feels towards the other (human being). But this is an idea that leads to the concept of the society of "free men" in Spinoza, the philosopher whose analyses of love cannot be left out in this introductory survey.

At the surprising end of Book 5 of *The Ethics* remarkable passages crop up on the intellectual love of God. We are first confronted with the Cartesian issue of the fear of death. As we have seen, for Descartes, the best medicine against this fear is devotion, i.e., love of God or the sovereign, which provides the groundwork for an (underdeveloped) political theology. In contrast, although Spinoza's therapy against the fear of death is based upon a kind of love of God, it is not politically motivated but belongs to a metaphysic of knowledge.

> Because human Bodies are capable of a great many things, there is no doubt but that they can be of such a nature that they are related to Minds which have a great knowledge of themselves and of God, and of which the greatest, or chief, part is eternal. So they hardly fear death (E 5P39 S; Curley, 614).

Even if we can find passages in Descartes connecting love of God to the knowledge of certain truths, the political-theological layer is undeniably much more accentuated in his writings than in those of Spinoza. At the same time, we have also a passage in Spinoza where he connects political-theology to the love of God. In the Preface to *Theologico-political Treatise* he speaks of the "precious name of religion" that can be misused in despotic regimes to make "men... fight as bravely for slavery as for safety, and count it not shame but highest honor to risk their blood and their lives for the vainglory of a tyrant" (Elwes, 5.).

It seems that for Spinoza, the counterpart of a politically exploited superstitious religion in favor of a tyrant would not be the political use of the true religion in favor of a God-given prince. The politico-theological use of love could not be a viable option – which certainly does not mean that patriotic love itself could not have an *uncontaminated* political *and* religious role according to Spinoza. This view is supported by Susan James in the present volume. James demonstrates that Spinoza was one of those political thinkers of early modernity who opted for love instead of fear when dealing with the question of whether love or fear is more apt to render the coherence between members of a particular state as stable as possible. Unlike other patriarchal thinkers, Spinoza did not construe political societies as coherent unities bound up by the same kind of natural love emotion that bind members of natural families together. But, like Jean Bodin and other (almost) contemporary thinkers, he did reckon with the benevolent effects of a sort of artificial love aroused by the realization of similarities and resemblances "in some significant respects" such as shared "occupation or civic duty," coming from the same village, being "united by a particular vocation," or being "students

and teachers, or adherents of a single religion" (page 50). These are quotations from James' description of Bodin's views since, as she puts it, "Spinoza does not say a great deal about devotional practices [i.e., about the appropriate means to arouse and maintain the artificial love between adherents of a particular group of people], and mainly focuses on their role in arousing patriotism and love of the moral law" (page 52).

Notwithstanding this lack of interest in elaborating on the practical means, we can refer to an interesting chain of propositions in *The Ethics*, Book 3 where Spinoza connects the ideas of similitude, love, and a social class or nation. (Wolfgang Bartuschat also refers to these propositions in his paper in the present volume, although from a different perspective.)

> If we imagine a thing like us, toward which we have had no affect, to be affected with some affect, we are thereby affected with a like affect (Prop. 27, Curley, 508).

In other words, pure similarity – certainly "in some significant respect" – suffices to let the "mechanism," or, what today biologists would call "emotional contagion," function. And although Spinoza does not say this explicitly, we are entitled to think that, according to him (just like Bodin), with the realization of some significant similarity comes the likelihood of feeling the kind of artificial love needed for the establishment of "class-consciousness." According to Proposition 21, this love can multiply the force of the "emotional contagion":

> He who imagines what he loves to be affected with Joy or Sadness will also be affected with Joy or Sadness; and each of those affects will be greater or lesser in the lover as they are greater or lesser in the thing loved (Curley, 506).

Proposition 22 says essentially the same thing from a different angle:

> If we imagine someone to affect with Joy a thing we love, we shall be affected with Love toward him (Ibid.).

The first corollary to this proposition shows us clearly how love arises out of that "imitation of affects" Spinoza is describing here:

> If we imagine that someone toward whom we have had no affect affects a thing like us with Joy, we shall be affected with Love toward him (Ibid.).

Not only does love multiply the efficacy of emotional contagion but one of love's essential aspects is its striving to be multiplied, as Proposition 33 reminds us:

> When we love a thing like ourselves, we strive, as far as we can, to bring it about that it loves us in return (Curley, 513).

Note that Spinoza is perfectly aware of the awkward fact that hatred in a particular group of people against another group of people can considerably enhance cohesion among the members of both groups: Love – an affect of joy – is able to unite people internally, whereas hate – an affect of sadness – is able to create group-cohesion in an external way. What Spinoza says in Proposition 46 can be interpreted along these lines:

> If someone has been affected with Joy or Sadness by someone of a class, or nation, different from his own, and this Joy or Sadness is accompanied by the idea of that person as its cause, under the universal name of the class or nation, he will love or hate, not only that person, but everyone of the same class or nation (Curley, 520).

But, going back to the concept of love in *The Ethics*, the main definition is the following:

> VI. Love is a Joy, accompanied by the idea of an external cause. Explication: This definition explains the essence of Love clearly enough. But the definition of those authors who define Love as a will of the lover to join himself to the thing loved expresses a property of Love, not its essence. And because these Authors did not see clearly enough the essence of Love, they could not have any clear concept of this property. Hence everyone has judged their definition quite obscure (E 3AD6, Curley, 533).

There are a number of open questions concerning this definition, and also the way Spinoza makes use of it. Wolfgang Bartuschat addresses and settles these questions through a thorough analysis of the systematic links between the ontological groundwork of the doctrine of affects in the three "cardinal affects" – desire, joy, sadness – and the emerging of the intellectual love of God itself.

But, however troublesome the interpretation of the peculiar facets of Spinoza's concept of love might be, one thing is clear enough: the thinker whom Spinoza criticizes for his obscure concept of will's role in love is Descartes. Spinoza thinks that the laws that regulate the arousal of the affects presented in Book 3 of *The Ethics* have the status of the geometrical laws he promises to imitate when treating the affects. From this point of view will can, at best, be seen as a concept of folk-psychology, which is not given any explanatory role in a really – not only nominally – *more geometrico* philosophical treatise.

It is in the light of Tad Schmaltz's paper on Malebranche and Daniel Schmal's paper on the *amour-pur* debate at the end of the seventeenth century that the question posed by Chantal Jaquet gains considerable significance. This question concerns the Spinozean concept of self-love, *amor sui*, which appears in *The Ethics* only rarely, interestingly enough. Furthermore, the concept of self-love seems to dissolve in another concept, that of self-esteem, *acquiescentia in se ipso*. Jaquet argues that self-love is a positive affect since it expresses our joy arising from the contemplation of our power of acting. And, since Spinoza did not consider the

power of acting as something essential to human beings before writing *The Ethics*, it is no wonder that the concept of self-love is missing in his earlier works. A "passage from the anthropology of weakness to the anthropology of the power" takes place between the early works and *The Ethics*, and this implies a positive assessment of self-love (Bartuschat calls our attention to another concept of the early *Short Treatise* that is missing in *The Ethics*: union). This self cannot, however be simply given: the process of the constitution of the self goes *via* the ideas of those objects affecting our bodies. This entails that self-love cannot be the primary expression of our striving for the enhancement of the power of acting of the *self*. However, once the self is constituted, this self is both the lover and the beloved object of self-love; consequently, it is in the *acquiescentia in se ipso* that self-love attains its purest form.

We turn to Leibniz on the issue of the ties between love and political theology touched upon above. In the seventeenth century, questions of political theology addressed the appropriate relation between a particular human being and his princely sovereign, who was associated with the divine sovereign. One of the conceptual means employed to answer these questions was love. Leibniz's approach to love originates from the treatment of some complex issues in political theology and is clearly bifurcated: on one hand, a considerable role is attributed to love in metaphysics; on the other hand, his natural law theory is also connected to the concept of love.

In general, Leibniz refuses to treat love within a quasi-mechanical theory like that of Descartes. His view on love is not independent of his stance against the atomists' view of the world, which implies that he is not willing to identify the corporeal world analyzable in mechanico-philosophical terms with our own, proper world. The souls that render even bodies living can in no way be analyzed in those mechanical terms: their proper being cannot be understood without constant reference to God. If they succeed in establishing an adequate relation to God, their own life is thereby already adequately ordered without further efforts: "...God alone operates on me, and God alone can do good or evil to me" (DM §32).

Leibniz's God is therefore the only source of a creature's well-being or misery. The mechanistic approach that implies the postulate of a value-free Nature is therefore excluded from his metaphysics of morals – and of love in particular – from the very beginning. And since the only appropriate starting-point for the metaphysical consideration of what happens to us can only be the goodness of God, the only appropriate relation of souls to him is love that manifests itself in human beings as the will and readiness to satisfy and be satisfied in the divine volition. This true love of God results from appropriate philosophical investigations:

> But the more someone loves God, the more she can give reasons for her love. And to find pleasure in someone's perfection means already to love him. Therefore the supreme function of our mind is the cognition or – which is in that object the same

– the love of the most perfect being, which necessarily entails the highest and most durable pleasure, that is felicity (reference).

We can also raise the question about what role love has, for Leibniz, in establishing political communities. Given that his concept of love is highly intellectualistic we would not expect this love to enter the field of real politics. In my view, a society of human beings loving each other in the Leibnizean way would resemble neither a religious community nor the reality of a body politic. Rather, we should search for parallels to such societies in the projected philosophical community we find in both Descartes and Spinoza. For Leibniz, this is the systematic place of the *cité de Dieu*: the almost utopian concept of a future state of humankind projected in the final sentence of the *New Essays*.

The scope of the theories of love at the turn of the eighteenth century was not exhaustively determined by the deliberations of pros and cons of the mechanical approach to the world. St. Augustine's influence was felt throughout the seventeenth century in the writings of religious authors like St. Francis of Sales and those pertaining to the Jansenist movement. This alternative approach to love becomes important for us through the work of the oratorian father, Nicolas Malebranche. As Tad Schmaltz convincingly argues in his paper, Malebranche's treatment of love was characterized by the bifurcation of natural love on the one hand and free love on the other. This had harmful consequences to Malebranche's occasionalist doctrine he had to struggle with throughout his life.

In any case, it is clear that Malebranche follows Descartes' at least partial anchoring of the concept of love in the will. He defines the will in terms of love saying that the will is the "capacity the soul has of loving different goods." The capacity for love is defined as "the impression or natural motion that carries us toward the undetermined good in general" (see 99). Given this general characterization of love based on will and vice versa, he goes on to differentiate natural love and free love. Roughly speaking, and according to the *Research on Truth*, we have an "irresistible natural love of the good in general and a resistible free love of particular goods" (page 104). The natural love of the good in general is irresistible simply because the meaning of this love is nothing but our elementary striving to happiness. But, "Malebranche's considered position is" that not only this general movement of the will has been impressed in us by God. There is some sort of guidance even for our free will attracted to particular goods that makes it impossible for that free will to be indifferent. This means that we are not independent from God's control over us even when we "freely execute all that He wills" (see 104). Obviously, there is a problem here: although this view fits the occasionalist position well, it seems to involve God's participation even in our actions when we freely choose the bad, when we are captured by a "disordered love of our self." Or, if we emphasize the independence of our choice, then we are attributing a proper causal efficiency to ourselves, if not when consenting to divine guidance at least when we are resisting it, which clearly runs against the occasionalist position that recognizes only God as a real cause in the universe.

Tad Schmaltz's paper examines thoroughly the different attempts to solve this double problem in the Malebranchean *œuvre*. His conclusion seems to relieve that part of the difficulty that concerns our contribution to the decision: "Malebranche's most considered position seems to be that the acts themselves are *rien de physic* since far from involving the turning of our natural or free love, they consist merely in the cessation or continuation of the search for the good" (page 111). Notwithstanding this solution, the other part of the dilemma seems to have become even more pressing: How to account for God's role in our becoming disordered if our own contribution shrinks to nothing?

Though we may not be able to fully answer this question, we can at least clarify the problem further if we take into account what Dániel Schmal writes regarding "the problem of conscience and order in the *amour-pur* debate." Our question concerns nothing less than Malebranche's theodicy and the concept of order that plays an eminent role in it. Schmal maintains that at least "all physical disorder in the world can be explained by the fact that God, who is the only agent in nature, mostly acts in accordance with general rules" (page 118). A dangerous consequence of the application of general rules is that it is difficult to avoid the unintended side effects or collateral damages brought about by these rules, which affect severely the view finite human beings have of the order. To be sure, Malebranche's 'Order', which the general rules must obey, is not the order accessible to humans living in the everyday world. This Order is "the immutable order of the divine perfections," "a matter of the inner perfection in the divine nature with no reference to any external being" (page 118). Regardless of how many collateral damages might be let in by the generality of the operational rules, those who really love God in an unselfish manner must not complain even if they are afflicted by those effects in their own persons.

All this belongs to the Augustine tradition, including the role the will is given to play. Malebranche binds the will by the bonds of divine justice; therefore it is not an indifferent agent: "the essential rule of the will of God is the immutable order of justice."

From this it follows that those aspects of love for which the motion of the will is impressed in us by God – natural love and the ordered love of our self – must comply with the basic, double rule of God's acting, i.e., fecundity and simplicity, which necessitates the application of general rules. When Fénelon defends the idea of a pure and disinterested love against all efforts to prove that it cannot be realized, one of his main points is that we must not give up the absolute indifference of the divine will. According to Fénelon's view developed in his *Réfutation du système du père Malebranche*, the divine will's indifference is not cancelled by any pre-given order. God's original choice was not carried out on the basis of an "objective" insight into one of the possible worlds being the best from among an infinity of other possible worlds. There is no best choice predetermining God's decision. On the contrary: "He cannot do anything that is not good, and, consequently, everything possible – if it is really so – ...is good and conforms to Order" (page 121). Contrary to Malebranche's Order, the Order of Fénelon to be loved

disinterestedly "is consequent upon and is not presupposed by God's decisions" (page 121). In fact, when Leibniz informed Pierre Coste of his own view on love (although he did not publish books contributing to the *amour-pur* debate), he developed the ideas of the Preface to the *Codex Juris Gentium Diplomaticus* further in order to assess to the question of whether a perfectly disinterested love is possible. His answer can be taken as favoring Malebranche's view.

> I explained there the problem of how one can love God above all things with a non mercenary love, and at the same time how one can relate everything to his own well-being following his propitious nature. The solution is that loving is nothing else than being attracted to find our pleasure in the happiness or perfection of the other, and this definition shows us that separating the love of others from our own well-being is just to create a chimera.

The British developments in the third quarter of the seventeenth century attracted Catherine Wilson's attention as expressed in her papers, "The theory and regulation of love in 17th century philosophy" and "Love of God and Love of Creatures: The Masham-Astell Exchange."

In the first half of the seventeenth century Augustinianism meant more than just what we have seen in the *amour-pur* debate. The main tenor of religious writers is echoed in the title of Jean Senault's *Man become guilty*; or *The corruption of nature by sinne, according to St Augustines sense*. Love of creatures is "an imperious passion." Those affected by love become slaves of the objects of their loves. On the other hand, we have poets of the same century like Dryden or Shakespeare in whose plays women – the main objects of that "imperious passions" – "appear kind, noble, intelligent, brave and resourceful."

Wilson's main thesis is that there were two developments in the philosophy of the period to be praised or blamed for the emergence of some more favorable views on love that characterize early eighteenth century French and English letters. One was the rediscovery of Platonism; the other was the Cartesian naturalization of ethics. One of the first books written in the "Platonizing spirit" was Robert Waring's, *Amoris Effigies, sive, Quid sit amor?* (1650) or, in the English translation by John Norris, *The Picture of Love Unveiled*. This work "legitimizes the pursuit of love," so much so that in an ironic way it elevates love to an even higher status than that of the gods: the Epicureans could do without gods but not without love. The translator of this work, John Norris, was an important philosopher in his own right. His own major work, the title of which has been borrowed by Wilson, is an apology of love. Love is what "makes men images of God": it is "as much the Glory of man to be an Amorous, as to be a Rational Being."

I would like to pay some attention to two more points in Wilson's paper, which will remind us of what was elaborated on in earlier parts of this introduction. The first point has to do with the analogy of love Norris employs to make the coherence of societies explicable. He says, "Tis Love that begets and Keeps up the great Circulation and Mutual Dependence of Society..." Concerning Society itself, he

endorses the view that because Society is a harmonious system like a "Musical Instrument" it provides us with the norm of the Public Interest. It is difficult to find underlying this a more elementary norm, "a presocial notion of moral purity," which Henry More tries to defend in his letters to Norris as the ideal of "Moral Perfection of human nature antecedent to all Society."

The second point to be mentioned is Cartesianism's role in mitigating the rigid theological views of the early seventeenth century. Wilson notes that Antoine Le Grand, who introduced Cartesian Ethics into English philosophy, "composed a treatise in defense of pleasure," "and the same mixture of Cartesianism and Epicureanism is present in Walter Charletons's *Epicurus' morals*" (1670). In her second paper she highlights also the merits of Descartes' own appeasing approach to the dichotomy 'love of God–love of the creatures' from a contemporary perspective. There is no simple way to decide which of the alternatives is to be preferred: the ascetic ideal of Mary Astell or Damaris Masham's view recommending the delightful involvement in various forms of relations with creatures, finite beings. Wilson interprets Descartes' famous letter to Chanut on the natural way of loving God as a middle course: God can be loved in a natural way but primarily for the providential manner he ordered the created universe.

The concept of love is a bit disguised in Aaron Garrett's paper on Hutcheson's moral theory. In the same way benevolence is, in Leibniz, a clue to the ethics of love, so it is for Hutcheson, who builds his moral sense theory on the concept of benevolence involving the affection for rational beings instead of a "love of God tempered with reverence" as in Carmichael. It is within the concept of love *qua* benevolence that the principal differences make themselves seen between such influential ethical options as the Hobbes-Mandeville theory of a morality based on self-interest, the natural right theories of Carmichael's type based on a superior's will, and Hutcheson's own Shaftesburyan theory of a morality based on the concept of the moral sense informed by benevolence, love for rational beings. "Not only is benevolence paradigmatic for the moral sense theory, but it is the ultimate basis for all moral approval in the moral sense theory" (page 168). This type of theory entails at least a moderate acceptance of a disinterested love, although in a perfectly different, much more secularized context than the one we saw in the *amour-pur* debate. When we perceive pleasure in the contemplation of our or someone else's morally praiseworthy actions, no expectation of personal advantage comes into play. Our love towards the actor of a morally good action is disinterested.

Wim Lemmens' paper displays the interesting gap between the seventeenth century high-rationality of the ethics of love in the form of Spinoza's overwhelmingly cognitivistic account of emotions (affects) and the moderate sceptical account of the passions in Hume's *Treatise*. Spinoza's concept of an intellectual love of God "transcends, in a way, the finiteness of the self" in moving towards the classical idea of a *bios philosophicos*. It is "in participating in the Divine thinking" that the highest activity of the mind is achieved, which appears as the *Amor Dei intellectualis*, i.e., an active emotion. In contrast with this theory

of the ideally achievable perfectly active state of mind of the philosopher, Hume turns back his attention to the life of the common man to be analyzed "experimentally" via the thorough observation of many of the situations "everyman" gets in: the *more geometrico* philosophical ideals are contrasted with the presuppositions of the then emerging new science of philosophical anthropology. It is not so much the systematic place of love in the theory of passions strictly speaking that attracts the attention; it is rather the concept of sympathy that stands for love now, something prefigured in the contagious character of the emotions in Spinoza. "Hume stresses the 'contagious' character of the emotions and passions, and considers the mechanism of sympathy to be one of the chief regulating principles of human nature" (page 200). However, whereas Spinoza will not ignore the ambiguous character of the imitation of affects (it can be both a hindrance and a promoter of the aspirations of the sage), "Hume welcomes the fact that minds are 'like mirrors for each other', sympathetically responding to one another's emotions," which is for him "directly constitutive for the identity of the self." In line with this development, reason loses its capacity to transcend human finitude via participation in divine thinking and providing human beings with the ideal possibility of acquiring the status of the sage.

With Martin Moors' paper we arrive at the final part of our investigations, namely, the Kantian perspective on the problem of love. We have two papers and two different points of view regarding Kant's arguments. Moors considers Kant a thinker for whom the bulk of his philosophical explorations on love is to be found in his autonomy-seized ethics of pure practical reason. As a major theme in his metaphysical *Doctrine of Virtue*, Kant's idea of practical love is loaded with the imperative weight of being a duty, primarily to others and to myself, and subsequently *seen as* a divine command. As a consequence of this duty-bound definition of practical love, Kant, in his anthropology, is vehemently reluctant to make any room whatsoever for a possible positive energetic momentum of emotions and passions in the practice of love. There is even an interesting link, a noteworthy harmony between Catherine Wilson's last paragraph and Martin Moors' final view on Kant elaborated in his paper on the biblical command of love quoted by Kant. Wilson's Kant is "a notable reaction" where matters of love are concerned, "a swing of the pendulum back to other-worldliness and the devaluation of women and amorous passion" (page 161). Moors confesses, after a careful study of the merits and demerits of the Kantian approach, that his philosophy of (the duty of) love fails to seduce.

Heiner F. Klemme's paper is a plea for a Kantian standpoint in the debate between contemporary internalists and externalists. He argues that besides the Descartes-Spinoza-Leibniz line another sort of ethical rationalism of the seventeenth-eighteenth century is of great importance to the understanding of later developments: those British thinkers – Cudworth, Clarke, Balguy – who sided with Spinoza rather than Hume concerning the main moral motivational force are to be taken into account if we are to understand today's philosophical debates on internalism and externalism. Klemme maintains that modern Kantians are

motivational internalists and normative externalists: the persuasion that "we have no reason at all to believe that one person has more value than another person" is, in fact, the modern descendant of what was called in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries love, generosity, charity, sympathy, and benevolence that issued in the Kantian categorical prohibition of taking the other person as only a means. This is a formally evaluative statement that does not imply any materially evaluative stance, i.e., the Kantian will not decide which life is more worth living than another: "We do not have insight into anything that would make our lives or our persons more important than the life or existence of another person," Klemme argues, formulating the basic formal presupposition of being a member of the above-listed conceptual family of love. "Persons have value," he continues, "but they do not have this value because of their subjective ends. Rather, they have value because they are human beings who must lead their own lives." They must be attributed and granted the ability to choose their ways of life independently of the particular subjective ends they strive to attain.

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Abbreviations

CSMK: The Philosophical Writings of Descartes. Translated by J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Curley: The Collected Works of Spinoza Translated by E. M. Curley. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

DM: Leibniz: Discourse on Metaphysics

Elwes: Spinoza: A Theologio-political Treatise. A Political Treatise. Translated by R. H. M. Elwes, New York: Dover Publications, 1951.

LO: Malebranche: The Search after Truth. Translated by T. M. Lennon and P. J. Olscamp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

OCM: Œuvres completes de Malebranche, 20 volumes. Edited by A. Robinet. Paris: J. Vrin, 1958–84.

Riley: Leibniz: Political Writings. Translated by P. Riley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 (1972).

Wiener: Leibniz: Selections. Philip Wiener. Scribner, 1982.

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Cartesian Subjectivity and Love[1]

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The title given to this paper might appear, at first, problematic. Everyone knows the extent to which Descartes' century was concerned with reflections upon love. Descartes was twenty years old and about to finish his studies when Francis de Sales published his *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616). He was thirty-two and working on the layout of the *Regulae* when Balthazar Baro, former secretary of Honoré d'Urfé, published the *Conclusion and the Last Part* of *Astrée* (1628), the novel which remained the seventeenth century's most popular. At the age of forty-one, Descartes published the *Discourse on the Method* at the very moment when Corneille made the *extravagant lover* of his comedy *La Place Royale* (1637) say:

> Il ne faut point servir d'objet qui nous possède;
> Il ne faut point nourrir d'amour qui ne nous cède;
> Je le hais s'il me force: et quand j'aime, je veux
> Que de ma volonté dépendent tous mes voeux.[2]

Certainly, Descartes himself devoted a considerable number of pages to this passion, love. Yet the claim that the author of the *Meditations* was also a theorist of love seems paradoxical and requires clarification.

This air of paradox results partly from the fact that the theme of love appears significantly only in Descartes' later writings. The noun *love* does not appear in the *Discourse*, in which the verbs *love* and *to be in love with* have only three minor occurrences (e.g., "I... was in love with poetry..."). Neither the noun nor the verb can be found in the Latin text of the *Meditations*. At the end of the *Third Meditation*, Descartes' only concern, described eloquently but perhaps conven-

1 Another version of this paper was published as "La subjectivité cartésienne et l'amour", *Les passions à l'âge classique,* edited by P-F. Moreau, (Paris: PUF, 2006): 77–97. An earlier version of this study has been translated in Portuguese by Adelino Cardoso: "A subjectividade cartesiana e o amor", *Amor e subjectividade. Textos sobre a Paixao*, edited by Adelino Cardoso, (Lisboa: Sociedade Portuguesa de Psicossomatica, 1999): 17–34, and into Hungarian by Gábor Boros: "A szeretet fogalma Descartes-nál", *Ész és Szenvedély* (Reason and Passions), edited by Gábor Boros (Budapest: Áron Kiadó, 2002): 77–93. Special thanks go to the present editor, Gábor Boros, to the translator, Bálint Kékedi, and to Jonathan David Cottrell who revised the English text.

2 Pierre Corneille, *La Place Royale ou l'Amoureux extravagant*, First act, scene IV, l.

tionally – and rather ambiguously – is to pause and "behold, admire, and adore" the dazzling and incomparable beauty of divine perfections, as much as is possible for the mind.[3] Only in the French version (translated by the Duke of Luynes in 1647) are *love* and *hatred* included amongst the properties of the thinking thing enumerated at the beginning of the *Third Meditation* ("I am a thing that thinks: that is, a thing that doubts, affirms, denies, understands a few things, is ignorant of many things, loves, hates, is willing, is unwilling, and also which imagines and has sensory perceptions").[4]

Certainly, this is not just the rectification of an omission, that of the *affectus*, which is not yet included by the *Third* and *Sixth Meditations* among the "modes of thinking" (*cogitandi modi*). This addition is contemporary with the two letters on love to Chanut (of February 1 and June 6 1647), and follows shortly upon the first writing of the *Treatise on Passions*. It is an evident sign of Descartes' progress in reflecting upon the place of the passions within human nature. Nevertheless, it is important to note that until then – and even in his first letters to Elisabeth (up to that of 15 September 1645) – the *ego* (the Cartesian subject) is never depicted as the subject of any kind of love in an essential and constitutive manner. This *ego* is defined firstly as understanding (mind, understanding, reason), and, secondly, as will (if understanding and will are the two main faculties of the human mind or soul); but the *Principles* of 1644, in which the question whether one can conceive a thinking thing without the faculty of will is set (I, 53), makes no mention of love in its classification among the *modes of willing* (*modi volendi*), the operations or dispositions of desire, aversion, assertion, denial, and doubt (I, 32).

Nevertheless, one may speculate about the philosophical import of the later Cartesian texts, which present love as a chief and prime element of affective life. Here, one would think primarily of the *Passions of the Soul* (1649), from which the following three considerations arise.

First, among the six primitive passions that Descartes identifies as so many "genera, while all others are species of them" (Art. 69), love is found in a notable spot: right after wonder, and before hatred, desire, joy and sadness. We therefore must acknowledge that love is not, according to the Cartesian classification, the first in the series of passions (as it is according to the Thomistic classification of the *concupiscible* passions, which come before the *irascible* ones). However, the first passion – wonder – is a very specific one, whose object is merely the knowledge of things (not their convenience or harmfulness with respect to us), and whose physiological place is limited to the brain (instead of being spread to the heart and the rest of the body). Since the passion of wonder is confined to this particular status, love preserves a certain form of primacy in the Cartesian classification. Being the passion we feel towards things that seem agreeable to us (in

3 From the standard *Oeuvres de Descartes*, edited by Adam and Tannery (Paris: Vrin, 1974). (Abbreviated 'AT'.) AT VII, 52, 15–16; IX, 41.

4 AT IX, 27.

general), love is the first of the literally vital passions of the composite human body. Indeed, among the first passions of our life (those felt even in the womb before birth, according to the internal disposition of the body and the more or less satisfying sustainment of cardiac warmth), it is love that is identified and analyzed here in the first place, as a particularly appropriate nourishment for this warmth (Art. 107).

Two other considerations are raised: on the one hand, love which aims at real goods (and this is possible only in the adult constitution of the conscience) is called *extremely good*. That is to say that this kind of love "can never be too great ...because by joining real goods to us it makes us to that extent more perfect" (Art. 139). On the other hand, in his long letter to Chanut of 1 February 1647, devoted entirely to the subject of love, with a particular explanation of the love of God, Descartes admits that "to treat fully of this passion would take a large volume."[5]

So the problem is the following: do these texts, which appear to concede to love a fundamental role in one's affective and, consequently, one's moral life, state (in terms of Cartesian subjectivity) a truth that the earlier texts, with their carefully delineated issues, had not had occasion to emphasize? Or, do they uphold (partially or completely) the initial reservation which makes the relation or the passion of love inessential to this subjectivity? Moreover, is love, as defined in these texts, really a prominent passion that, for better or worse, leads the subject beyond himself, towards the beloved thing or into union with this thing? Or is it just a relation immediately tempered by the self-presence and self-interest of the Cartesian *ego*?

In this context, we must refer to a particularly important study in the recent Cartesian bibliography entitled "Does the Ego Alter the Other?" which is the sixth chapter of *Cartesian Questions* by Jean-Luc Marion.[6]

Marion enters into the Cartesian theory of love as the last concern of a broader study, whose aim is to show the manner in which the Cartesian ego restricts all possible otherness, apart from that of God. Marion emphasizes, first, the extent to which the depiction of love in the *Treatise on Passions* reestablishes love as a part of the sphere of the ego's own activity, defined as *representation*. To love an object – in other words, "to be joined with what we love in volition" – is (according to Art. 80) to consider or to represent ourselves as forming a whole with it. Marion explains:

5 AT IV, 606, 27–30.

6 Jean-Luc Marion, *Questions cartésiennes*, (Paris: PUF, 1991): 189–219. First published under the title: "L'unique *ego* et l'altération de l'autre," *Archivio di Filosofia*, (1986): 1–3. For the English translation, see: *Cartesian Questions: Method and Metaphysics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999): 118–138. For a more general approach to the problem, see: *Prolégomènes à la charité,* (Paris: La Différence, 1986): 91–120 ("L'intentionnalité de l'amour"), and *Le Phénomène érotique*, (Paris: Grasset, 2003): 16–19 and 25–37.

> Hence, it becomes impossible to distinguish between a concupiscent love and a benevolent love, for given that the essence of love implies the representation of its "object" by an anterior, prior *ego*, it seems illusory or contradictory to demand the disappearance of the self, as is the case, for instance, in the Augustinian position of *uti* to *frui*.[7]

Moreover, insofar as the *ego* starts from itself to represent another self, this other self – an *alter ego* – cannot possibly be grasped or aimed at in its otherness. It always remains an "altered ego and thus objectified."[8]

These remarks suggest that it is the Cartesian form of love which is condemned by Pascal in the name of charity by his famous words: "the self is hateful."[9] To encourage this thought, Marion has only to draw attention to the fact that charity is not an unknown disposition for Descartes: it is the subject matter of a long development in his polemical *Letter to Voet* of 1643.[10] But, with this text in hand, we must conceive a *totally different form* of one's relation to another self, mediated by God and by the love of God: "the *ego* loves God and knows that God loves other men; thus, imitating God, the *ego* loves these other men."[11] This form of love, which passes "indirectly through the unobjectifiable par excellence" (God), implies a sort of renunciation of the representation and thus a transgression of the initial problem. "To represent or to love – one must choose," concludes Marion.[12] And it is possible that Descartes did choose. But in that case he did it rather covertly, for apparently the ambiguity still remains; as Marion puts it, "an essential part of Descartes' moral doctrine has yet to be examined and understood."

7 Ibid., p. 212/134. We must understand that in this opposition between *using* something and *enjoying* it, the self appears only in enjoyment.

8 Ibid, p. 215/136.

9 Fr. 597 Lafuma, cited and commented by Marion on p. 189–193. On this Pascalian theme, see J. Mesnard, "Pascal et le 'moi haïssable", *La Culture du XVII*ème *siècle*, (Paris: PUF, 1992): 405–413; V. Carraud, *Pascal et la philosophie*, (Paris, PUF, 1992): 327–345, and the recently published and important discussion by L. Thirouin, "Le moi haïssable, une formule équivoque", *Croisements d'anthropologies. Pascals* Pensées *im Geflecht der Anthropologien*, hsg. von R. Behrens, A. Gipper, V. Mellinghoff-Bourgerie (Heidelberg: 2005): 217–247.

10 See AT VIII-B, 107–135; particularly 112–113.

11 Ibid, 138.

12 Marion, *Questions cartésiennes:* 219. See also *Le phénomène érotique*, *op. cit.*: "L'*ego cogito* ne s'établit lui-même qu'à l'encontre de l'instance érotique et qu'en la refoulant", p. 17; "l'ego exclut l'amour (et la haine) de ses modalités d'origine (pour le soumettre ensuite, arbitrairement et non sans danger, à la volonté)", p. 19; "l'amant s'oppose donc au cogitant", p. 50.

If we consider this in more detail, Marion's thesis will appear even more entrenched and refined. First, we have to consider the fact that for Descartes all love whose object is not God remains fundamentally "egoist": it is granted by the ego, but with an eye to the ego itself. Indeed, according to Marion, Descartes thinks "love first as a love of oneself, and then as a foundation,"[13] a proof of which can be found in the letter to Chanut, 1 February, 1647: "Anger... borrows its strength from the love of self, which is always its foundation, and not from the hatred which is merely an accompaniment."[14] Consequently, Marion writes: "...any experience of otherness by love should deploy itself without altering the *ego*-ness (*égoïté*) that transcendentally determines it entirely."[15]

Yet, the manner in which the ego views itself here does not seem to be open to any kind of empirical definition. Marion, for instance, does not assert – like A. Matheron in another important study on the matter[16] – that, in Cartesian subjectivity, love always corresponds to the representation of a gain in terms of power. Most likely, the will of love by and for the ego is meant to be understood here in a solely *transcendental* way, as an exercise of the representative faculty and absolute "primacy" of this representation.[17] This representation appears in the form of a pure seizure of possession, a pure intentional appropriation. Since the ego always has a part there, the *res cogitans* is "self-referential by virtue of its very intentionality."[18]

But this is exactly why natural or human love (i.e., love not aiming at or mediated by God) seems to have only a relatively secondary status in the life of the ego or within its functions, and this is the third important feature of this interpretation. It is under the mode of love that the power of representation brings itself to completion (love "completes the emergence" of the *cogitatio*[19]) by representatively constituting union with things that were unfamiliar to it. But here again, it is the *cogitatio* that continues expanding its sphere without encountering any authentic otherness (and Marion at this point cites Merleau-Ponty: "pour une philosophie qui s'installe dans la vision pure, il ne peut y avoir de rencontre d'autrui"[20]). Without encountering any authentic otherness – or perhaps before the *cogitatio* encounters the non-object –, the non-representable who will make it

13 Marion, *Questions cartésiennes:* 133.

14 AT IV, 616, 1–5.

15 Marion, *Questions cartésiennes*: 211/133.

16 "Amour, digestion et puissance selon Descartes", *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Etranger,* (1988–4): 433–445.

17 Marion, *Questions cartésiennes*: 212/134.

18 Ibid, 210/133.

19 Ibid, 211/133.

20 "In a philosophy which settles into the pure vision, there is no encounter of the other." Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible et l'invisible*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1964): 109; quoted by Marion, *Questions cartésiennes* p. 216.