



UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE PERNAMBUCO
CENTRO DE FILOSOFIA E CIÊNCIAS HUMANAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOSOFIA
PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM FILOSOFIA

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THE *HOMO Oeconomicus*' SYMPATHY: a reading of Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiments in light of Michel Foucault's concept of liberal governmentality

Recife

2019

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Dissertação apresentada ao programa de Pós-Graduação em Filosofia do Departamento de Humanas (CFCH) da Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE) como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de mestre em Filosofia.

Área de Concentração: Ética e filosofia política.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Filipe Augusto Barreto Campello

Recife

2019

Catálogo na fonte
Bibliotecária Valdicéa Alves Silva, CRB4-1260

L732h Lima, Luis Eduardo Melo de Andrade.
 THE *HOMO OECOMICUS*' SYMPATHY: a reading of Adam Smith's
theory of moral sentiments in light of Michel Foucault's concept of liberal
governmentality / Luis Eduardo Melo de Andrade Lima. – 2019.
 92 f.; 30 cm.

 Orientador: Prof. Dr. Filipe Augusto Barreto Campello.
 Dissertação (mestrado) - Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, CFCH.
Programa de Pós-graduação em Filosofia, Recife, 2019.
 Inclui referências.
 Texto Inglês.

 1. Filosofia. 2. Foucault, Michel, 1926-1984. 3. Liberalismo. 4. Smith, Adam.
5. Homem econômico. I. Campello, Filipe Augusto Barreto (Orientador). II. Título

100 CDD (22. ed.)

UFPE (BCFCH2019-218)

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Aprovado em: 30/08/2019.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the writing of this dissertation I have received a great deal of support and assistance.

I would first like to thank my supervisor Dr. Filipe Campello, for the orientations, discussions, interest in the research and, above all, for the reception in the UFPE's Department of Philosophy.

Part of this research was conducted at the University of Alberta in Edmonton as part of the Emerging Leaders in the Americas Program. I am extremely thankful to Dr. Amy Schmitter for the warm welcome at Edmonton, for the fruitful discussions, for the orientations, for the advice, and for the opportunity to develop part of my dissertation at the University of Alberta. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all the faculty of the Philosophy Department of the U of A for the kind welcome and for all the engaging discussions.

I would like to thank Dr. Bastian Ronge for the collaboration, the discussions, and for accepting the invitation to participate in the thesis defense committee.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Érico Andrade for accepting the invitation to participate in the thesis qualification and defense, and for all the engaging commentary.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my family for the unconditional support and love.

I am also extremely thankful to Marilia and Mariana for all the help and support throughout this dissertation. I wish also to extend my gratitude to my friends Felipe and Erinaldo for every conversation and discussion.

Most economists, we must grant them that, admit that an autonomous rational Homo oeconomicus is a fiction. Yet his ghost keeps coming back to haunt the economic imagination. It is symptomatic that the standard version of mainstream (or neoclassical) economics supports itself upon a character who does not exist: entrance to the world of economists begins with trust in a model, not with questioning about social practices.(RIST, 2011, p. 37)

Homo œconomicus is the one island of rationality possible within an economic process whose uncontrollable nature does not challenge, but instead founds the rationality of the atomistic behavior of [the] homo œconomicus. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 282)

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. [...] The greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it.(SMITH, 1984, p. 9)

ABSTRACT

The present dissertation focuses on a series of lectures Michel Foucault gave between the years of 1978 and 1979 at the *Collège de France*. In these lectures, Foucault traced the emergence of liberalism – or liberal governmentality – back to the mid-eighteenth century, more specifically to the thought of the physiocrats and the political economy of Adam Smith. One of the main features of Liberal Governmentality is that it based its actions on the rationality of its direct correlate: the *homo oeconomicus*. According to Foucault, the *homo oeconomicus* is a rational subject moved by his irreducible preferences, i.e., his self-interest. Two aspects of Foucault's foray into liberal theory appear problematic: (1) According to Foucault, the subject of interest arose from the British empiricist tradition, nevertheless, his analysis of the *homo oeconomicus* is admittedly superficial; (2) Foucault's reading of Adam Smith in the context of the 1978-79 lectures is somewhat limited: the French philosopher considered only Smith's economic writings, disregarding the Scot's moral treatise (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*). As a result, Foucault implicitly reenacts the age-old Adam Smith Problem which posits the incoherence between the Scot's moral treatise and his economic writings. In that sense, I propose to analyze Smith's moral treatise (specifically Part I and Part IV) in light of Foucault's liberal governmentality framework. First it is important to note that Foucault was hasty in treating Smith's political economy as independent from his other writings. Smith's economical thought was part of the broader science of the legislator, as such intrinsically connected to his moral writings. My contention is that by focusing on the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* it is possible to show (a) an intersubjective side to the *homo oeconomicus* by considering Smith's writings on sympathy and the impartial spectator; (b) the role deception plays in the mechanics of the *homo oeconomicus* and, by extension, in liberal governmentality. In addition, the mechanics of deception reveals an aesthetic dimension of Liberal Governmentality not yet explored. As a result of this approach the present research aims to contribute to the ongoing debate around Foucault's concept of Liberal Governmentality. In addition, it intends to add to the contemporary discussions about the rather elusive figure of the *homo oeconomicus*.

Keywords: Michel Foucault. Liberal governmentality. Adam Smith. *Homo oeconomicus*.

RESUMO

A presente dissertação tem como foco uma série de palestras que Michel Foucault deu entre os anos de 1978 e 1979 no *Collège de France*. Nestas palestras, Foucault remonta o surgimento do liberalismo - ou da Governamentalidade Liberal - à meados do século XVIII, mais especificamente ao pensamento dos fisiocratas e à economia política de Adam Smith. Uma das principais características da Governamentalidade Liberal é a de basear suas ações na racionalidade de seu correlato direto: o *homo oeconomicus*. Segundo Foucault, o *homo oeconomicus* é um sujeito racional movido por suas preferências irreduzíveis, ou seja, seu interesse próprio. Dois aspectos da incursão de Foucault na teoria liberal parecem problemáticos: (1) Segundo Foucault, o sujeito de interesse surgiu na tradição empirista britânica, no entanto, a análise de Foucault desse *homo oeconomicus* é admitidamente superficial; (2) A leitura de Adam Smith feita por Foucault no âmbito dos cursos de 1978 e 1979 é um tanto limitada: o filósofo francês considerou apenas os escritos econômicos de Smith, desconsiderando o tratado moral do escocês (Teoria dos Sentimentos Morais). Como resultado, Foucault implicitamente reencena o antigo *Adam Smith Problem*, que postula a incoerência entre o tratado moral do escocês e seus escritos econômicos. Nesse sentido, proponho-me a analisar o tratado moral de Smith (especificamente a Parte I e a Parte IV) à luz do conceito de Governamentalidade Liberal de Foucault. Primeiro, é importante notar que Foucault foi apressado em tratar a economia política de Smith como independente de seus outros escritos. O pensamento econômico de Smith era parte da chamada ciência do legislador, como tal intrinsecamente ligado aos seus escritos morais. Minha tese é que ao focar na Teoria dos Sentimentos Morais é possível mostrar (1) um lado intersubjetivo do *homo oeconomicus*, considerando os escritos de Smith sobre a simpatia e o espectador imparcial; (2) o papel que o engano desempenha na mecânica do *homo oeconomicus* e, por extensão, na Governamentalidade Liberal. Além disso, a mecânica do engano revela uma dimensão estética da Governamentalidade Liberal ainda não explorada. Como resultado dessa abordagem, a presente pesquisa pretende contribuir para o debate em andamento sobre o conceito de Governamentalidade Liberal de Foucault. Além disso, pretende acrescentar às discussões contemporâneas sobre a figura um tanto quanto elusiva do *homo oeconomicus*.

Palavras-chave: Michel Foucault. Governamentalidade liberal. Adam Smith. *Homo oeconomicus*.

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1 INTRODUCTION

During the years of 1978 and 1979, Michel Foucault gave a series of lectures in the *Collège de France* entitled “Security, Territory, Population” and “The Birth of Biopolitics”¹. These lectures mark the emergence of the notion of government in Foucault’s thought – a concept that would be present in his work until his death in 1984. Moreover, government marks a change in perspective in Foucault’s analysis. Up until that point (1976), his genealogical work was marked by what he called Nietzsche’s Hypothesis: power was conceived as relational and analyzed through the grid of war and domination (FOUCAULT, 2003, p. 16). After the problem of population appeared in the end of the first volume of the *History of Sexuality* – a problematic connected to the notion of biopolitics - a change of viewpoint was needed.

Foucault’s 78-79 lectures trace the development of the concepts Government and Governmentality. These concepts produced a considerable change in Foucault’s conceptual landscape. The way government appears in Foucault’s analytics of power constituted a theoretical gain that allowed him to overcome the limits his microphysics of power had presented. An analytics of government, as some commentators have called it (DEAN, 2010; LEMKE, 2012), is concerned with the ways in which men’s conduct are guided or directed. The direction of conduct is accomplished by the structuring of the field of possibilities of the subject.

The notion of Governmentality emerged from the abovementioned study of government. Governmentality is a concept that considers the forms of directing conduct and its immanent rationality. Furthermore, it allows an analysis of the two meanings inscribed into the use of the word government: the government of others and the government of oneself. Governmentality, in that sense, becomes an analytical grid for relations of power (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 186) that allows one to see the point of contact between technologies of power and technologies of the self.

These courses, however, were not published in their entirety until 2004. Before that, parts and isolated lectures were published in volumes containing some of Foucault’s collected essays and interviews. Of these volumes, the publication in 1991 of the seminal *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*” was an important moment in Foucauldian studies. The

¹ I am using the English translations of Foucault’s courses and books. The material quoted, unless otherwise stated, is extracted from these translations.

book contained two of the 78-79 lectures and an interview with Foucault. In addition, the volume edited by Colin Gordon, Graham Burchell, and Peter Miller, contained several researches conducted by people that were close to Foucault in the 1970s. These researches were carried out using Foucault's conceptual toolkits; prominently Government and Governmentality. The book caused an increase in interest in Foucault's work, especially in Great Britain². More importantly, it marked the start of what came to be known as the field of "Governmentality Studies"³.

It is important to point out that more than just a presentation of his research, Foucault used the Courses in the *Collège de France* to engage political and social problems of his present⁴. Foucault's work was always guided by a preoccupation with the historical conditions that make the present possible. Philosophy for the French thinker was a way of diagnosing the present⁵. The 78-79 lectures represent Foucault's foray into a pressing issue at the time: the problem of the State-apparatus and how to approach it theoretically. More importantly, Foucault

² This is striking especially considering that Foucault's work had a difficult reception in British soil. In that sense, Colin Gordon - an independent researcher who first translated parts of the Governmentality lectures to English - posits that "The British reception of Foucault's work has been difficult and uncertain. Difficult because no other contemporary case demonstrates so strikingly the obstacles that can intrude themselves between a French thinker and a British public. Uncertain because largely translated, widely read, often discussed (but mainly within the younger theoretical Left), Foucault's work has been received in silence by the great majority of his academic peers and contemporaries, whether philosophers, historians or sociologists. (Gordon in BARRY; OSBORNE; ROSE, 1997, p. 253)

³ The Governmentality Studies are comprised of diversified researches that use Government and Governmentality as conceptual tools to identify and study the multifarious ways government is exercised in society. In that sense, it does not try to grasp totalities (such as the State or other institutions). The ambitions Governmentality studies as a field of research are more modest. It aims at analyzing a discursive and practical aspect: "a discursive aspect - the fact that government presupposes the existence of various means for rendering the real think- able, calculable and improvable; but also, a practical aspect - the point being that governmental plans, programmes and ambitions always find themselves dependent upon particular technologies if they are to have any prospect of shaping the real, becoming actual." (WALTERS, 2007, p.314). As Nikolas Rose, a central scholar in the Governmentality Studies, proposes: "The mentalities and machinations of government that we explore are not merely traces, signs, causes or effects of 'real' transformations in social relations. The terrain they constitute has a density and a significance of its own. Government is the historically constituted matrix within which are articulated all those dreams, schemes, strategies and maneuvers of authorities that seek to shape the beliefs and conduct of others in desired directions by acting upon their will, their circumstances or their environment. It is in relation to this grid of government that specifically political forms of rule in the modern West define, delimit and relate themselves."

⁴ As François Ewald posits "The course is a particular form, not reducible to the exposition of a work in development. Each year tells a story that the auditors will follow assiduously. Each course concentrates a singular alchemy: the will to share a given research but also a dramatization, the production of a story that will unfold over three months, week after week, keeping the auditors in suspense." (EWALD in Patton in FALZON; O'LEARY; SAWICKI, 2013, p. 273)

⁵ Foucault, in that sense, follows a Nietzschean project: "It is possible that my work has something to do with philosophy, above all in so far as, at least since Nietzsche, the task of philosophy has been to make diagnoses, and its aim is no longer to proclaim a truth which would be valid for all and for all time. I seek to diagnose, to carry out a diagnosis of the present: to say what we are today and what it means, today, to say what we do say. This work of excavation beneath our feet has characterized contemporary thought since Nietzsche, and in this sense I can declare myself a philosopher" (FOUCAULT, 1999, p. 91)

examined Liberalism and Neoliberalism not as political or economic theories but as arts or rationalities of government⁶.

In “Security, Territory, and Population”, Foucault trailed the path of Reason of State’s theoretical development in the seventeenth century, then moved to the emergence of the Liberal Rationality of Government in the mid-eighteenth century. Afterwards, in the “Birth of Biopolitics”, he approached the crisis of liberal thought that culminate in the neoliberalism of the Austrian and the Chicago schools of the 1950-1970.

My focus in the present work lies in Foucault’s analysis of political economy and the development of a Liberal Art of Government in mid-eighteenth century. According to Foucault, political economy in the mid-eighteenth century posited a certain frugality of government constituted by an internal limit to governmental action. Such limitation is possible inasmuch as political economy introduced a concept of population traversed by a naturalness and a common matrix of action: self-interest. Within this framework, the population is construed as the site of a mechanism of spontaneous convergence of interests. The *homo oeconomicus* figured as the subject that makes this spontaneous convergence of interests possible. Such subject became a support for an art of government which based itself on the rationality of its subjects.

In his analysis of the liberal governmentality, Foucault perceived that civil society appeared as the *vis-à-vis* of the State – that which the State must manage. Moreover, Foucault posited that even though the mechanism of interest finds a place in it, civil society is constituted by a different mechanics than that of interest. Civil society is formed by a synthesis of individual satisfactions that presents itself through a series of disinterested interests (instinct, passions, sympathy) which differ from the economic egoism of the mechanism of interests

In the present research, I analyze critically Foucault’s conceptualization of the *homo oeconomicus*, a subject of interest that figures as “an island of rationality” (FOUCAULT, 2008a, 283) driven only by its economic interest. The *homo oeconomicus* must be thought in its complex relation to passions and other social bonds. In 1977, Albert Hirschman’s classic work “The Passions and the Interests – Political arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph” had already showed the complex relations of passions and economy. The German economist

⁶ As Colin Gordon posits: “A rationality of government will thus mean a way or system of thinking about the nature of the practice of government (who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed), capable of making some form of that activity thinkable and practicable both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it was practiced.” (Gordon in BURCHELL; GORDON; MILLER, 1991, p. 3). In the first chapter I explain the concepts of government and arts of government in more detail.

postulates the importance of the passions and their government to economic thought. Furthermore, recent work has complexified the figure of the *homo oeconomicus*: Christian Laval (2009) traces a history of this subject with a focus on how interest became a normative foundation for human action. In addition, Miguel de Beistegui (2018) recently inserted the *homo oeconomicus* in a broader genealogy of desire and the liberal subject.

Foucault traced the emergence of both the subject of interest and civil society to the conceptual developments of eighteenth century British Empiricism (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 271). Foucault acknowledges, however, that his analysis of the emergence of the subject of interest is superficial⁷. In the present work, I take issue with Foucault's approach to "British Empiricism", more specifically, his reading of a thinker that is predominantly thought as a political economist: Adam Smith. In his lectures on classical liberalism, especially the last two lectures of "The Birth of Biopolitics", Foucault reproduced a limited interpretation of Smith, one that construes the Scottish philosopher as a thinker of egoistic and unbridled self-interest⁸. In fact, his separation of a mechanism of interest, populated by subjects of interest, and a synthesis of individual satisfactions, which would be the basis of civil society, closely resembles the infamous Adam Smith Problem.

The Adam Smith Problem was first formulated in the nineteenth century by the German Historical School of Economics (MONTES, 2003; TRIBE, 2008). The problem refers to an apparent divide in the Scots' work. According the German economists, Smith's work on moral philosophy, the Theory of Moral Sentiments (TMS), presented a subject governed by the virtues of prudence and benevolence. His more famous work of political economy, the Wealth of Nations (WN), on the other hand, was supposed to be populated by a subject whose only drive is self-interest.

⁷ "How can we consider this problem of *homo oeconomicus* and its appearance? To simplify things, and somewhat arbitrarily, I will start, as from a given, with English empiricism and the theory of the subject which is in fact put to work in English empiricist philosophy, with the view that—once again, I am making a somewhat arbitrary division" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 271)

⁸ Recent work has brought attention to the problems in Foucault's interpretation of Adam Smith in these lectures. Samantha Ashenden takes issue with what she calls Foucault's "hasty pigeonholing of him [Adam Smith] as an economist" (ASHENDEN, 2015, p. 46). She further argues that Foucault's argument seems anachronistic since in the later eighteenth century economics could not be so neatly separated as a specific field or science. from other areas of knowledge. In chapter 3 I tackle the anachronistic problem of Foucault's reading of Smith in these lectures. Bastian Ronge, in a work that interprets Adam Smith's complete works in light of Foucault's concept of Liberal Governmentality, also notes the limits of Foucault's readings of Smith (RONGE, 2015a, p. 232)

Recent work on Smith, however, has opposed such problem and has shown the integrity and coherence of Smith's works⁹. Against the idea that the WN represented a shift into a more materialist philosophy - an effect of Smith stay in France in 1764 and the influence of French materialist philosophers and economists (physiocrats) - I agree with the editors of the Glasgow Edition of the Theory of Moral Sentiments in respect to the consistency of Smith's works. Raphael and Macfie have convincingly exposed the issues with such interpretation, showing that prior to Smith stay in France, the Scot had already developed a part of his thought on political economy¹⁰. Furthermore, I follow Ronge's analysis - which is also consistent with Raphael and Macfie's position - that the TMS and the WN are parts of a singular project. In that sense, they cannot be viewed as separate works, with a different set of subjects.

Foucault's analysis of the *homo oeconomicus* focused solely on Smith's Wealth of Nations. With that in mind, I propose to analyze Adam Smith's moral philosophy in light of Foucault's framework of a liberal governmentality. My contention is that by focusing on Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments one can better understand the mechanics of the *homo oeconomicus*. Moreover, Smith wrote the TMS considering Hume's conception of a "science of man". As such it was an attempt to show the processes, inherent to human nature, that make people behave as they do. Drawing from this, I examine Smith's moral philosophy, with attention to his notion of self-love, the mechanism of sympathy, and the impartial spectator. My contention is that those are part of the mechanics of the *homo oeconomicus*.

Sympathy and the impartial spectator are very important notions in Smith's moral work¹¹. Sympathy for Smith is not a passion or an affect comparable to pity or compassion: it is a correlation of passions, a "fellow-feeling" (SMITH, 1984, p. 10). This correlation produces the "sentiment of approbation or disapprobation" by which one judges the propriety or impropriety of ones and another's actions. The impartial spectator is the process through which

⁹ See Macfie (MACFIE, 2003), and Haakonssen (2006). In the third chapter, I will give a brief historical introduction to the problem.

¹⁰ "We also have a manuscript that W. R. Scott called 'An early draft of part of The Wealth of Nations' and published in his "Adam Smith as Student and Professor". It must have been written before April 1763. These documents show that Smith had gone a considerable way in his economic thinking by the time he left Scotland for France in 1764, and that this early material provided a sound foundation for developments which were certainly stimulated by the visit to France but which occupied his mind throughout the period 1764-76." (RAPHAEL and MACFIE in SMITH, 1984, p. 23). The text of this early draft has now been published in the Glasgow Edition of Smith's Lectures in Jurisprudence.

¹¹ According to the editors of the Glasgow Editions of the Theory of Moral Sentiments, these two features are the "truly original features" of Smith's moral philosophy. (Macfie and Raphael in SMITH, 1984, p. 7).

one turns the mechanism of sympathy towards oneself. It is the procedure in which we look upon “our own conduct” in order to reach the appropriate response to the another’s actions.

My aim is to show that these features are not the make-up of a separate subject, a *homo socialis* or a *homo moralis*, but of the *homo oeconomicus*. In fact, I content that Foucault’s description of a subject of interest encompasses all these features, thus opening an intersubjective side to the *homo oeconomicus*. Moreover, by analyzing Smith’s moral work I uncover an aesthetic dimension to the *homo oeconomicus* that has not yet been explored.

The present thesis uses the conceptual apparatus proposed by Foucault and his analysis of Liberalism as an art of government. It engages critically with Foucault’s work by expanding Foucault’s analysis of the economic man in the eighteenth century. The first chapter is composed of a descriptive reconstruction of Foucault’s notion of Government and Governmentality. Commentators have talked of a replacement: power would have been slowly replaced by government¹². Our contention is that government and governmentality represent a change in perspective; an adaptation of the object of analysis. After the initial concepts are presented, I reconstruct the way Foucault approaches the State through what he calls arts of government. The discussion of arts of government serves as an introduction to the main theme of the thesis: the notion of Liberal governmentality and the *homo oeconomicus*.

In the second chapter, I reconstruct Foucault’s analysis of a Liberal Art of Government. Moreover, using recent literature I build upon Foucault’s notion of a *homo oeconomicus* and show its connection with Liberal Governmentality. I also show how political economy lodges itself in this art of government by positing Sovereign and of the *homo oeconomicus*’ epistemic limitation. At the end of 2.2 and 2.3, however, I point to the problems in Foucault’s narrow readings of Adam Smith, and I draw attention to the advantages of examining the Scot’s Moral work.

In the third and final chapter, I start by showing that Foucault is too hasty to position Adam Smith’s political economy as a separate science. Moreover, I demonstrate how Foucault’s treatment of Smith resembles the Adam Smith Problem. Following Ronge (2015a), I propose to see Smith’s work was part of a project that encompasses both the Theory of Moral Sentiment and The Wealth of Nations. More importantly, by analyzing the TMS, I demonstrate

¹² “Hence the question of government - a term that Foucault gradually substituted for what he began to see as the more ambiguous word, 'power'.” (PASQUINO, 1993, p. 79).

how Foucault's subject of interest is composed both by a tendency of self-love and by a mechanism of sympathy. Drawing from the conclusions of the previous points, I propose to show that there is an aesthetic dimension to both the *homo oeconomicus* and, consequently, to Liberal Governmentality.

The general aim of the present work is to verify the role of moral science in classical liberalism, specifically in the eighteenth century. It is an attempt, above all, to understand the way a certain discourse about the passions and their government is intrinsically linked with what Michel Foucault studied as a Liberal art of government, or Liberal Governmentality. In that sense, my aim is to contribute both to the current studies in governmentality and to the contemporary analysis of the *homo oeconomicus*.

2 GOVERNMENTALITY: FROM POWER TO GOVERNMENT

Although Foucault himself states that the problem of power could already be found, if somewhat elusively, in his early works (*Madness and Civilization*, *The Order of Things*, *The Birth of the Clinic*), he also admits that the “question of power was not yet properly isolated” (FOUCAULT; GORDON, 1980, p. 103). Foucault lacked, at that point, an approach that allowed him to connect an analysis of the emergence of knowledge-*savoirs* - through his investigations of discursive events - and the modes in which these knowledge-*savoirs* were related to the exercise of power.

In the early 70s, Foucault’s approach was modified not only in terms of the question¹³ that was being asked but also the practice inherent to his methodological stance. Thus, the practice of an epistemological history of discursive regimes was replaced by an “historical analysis of the political conditions of possibility of discourse” (MACHADO, 1982, p. 182, my translation)¹⁴. In his archeological approach, Foucault was interested in describing conceptually “the formation of knowledges-*savoirs*, scientific or otherwise, to establish their conditions of existence, and not of validity” (MACHADO, 1982, p.185, my translation)¹⁵. Archaeology is preoccupied with the epistemic grounds in which knowledge-*savoir* are formed. Genealogy, on the other hand, is interested in analyzing the “apparatus of power as a productive instance of discursive practices” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 13). Apparatuses of power, such as the State or the prison, are the effects of discursive practices as much as the ground in which knowledges-*savoirs* emerge. In that sense, Foucault’s reconceptualization of power is what marks the change from an archeology of knowledge to a genealogy of power.

¹³ To speak of a change in approach is not to try to stablish a periodization in Foucault’s work. As Rabinow and Dreyfuss put it, this is a “futile game of classification” (HUBERT L. DREYFUS, 1983, p. 104). Furthermore, the separation of an archeological period from a genealogical one is not so well defined. Rabinow and Dreyfuss assert that after the events on May 1968 Foucault’s interest changed. Still, “there is no pre- and post-archeology or genealogy in Foucault. However, the weighting of conception of these approaches has changed during the development of his work” (HUBERT L. DREYFUS, 1983, p. 104). For more on the relationship between the events of the 60s and 70s and Foucault theory of power see Elden (2017).

¹⁴ Translated from: A genealogia é uma análise histórica das condições políticas de possibilidade dos discursos. (MACHADO, 1982, p. 188)

¹⁵ Translated from: a arqueologia tem por objetivo descrever conceitualmente a formação dos saberes, sejam eles científicos ou não, para estabelecer suas condições de existência, e não de validade, considerando a verdade como uma produção histórica cuja análise remete a suas regras de aparecimento, organização e transformação no nível do saber. (MACHADO, 1982, p.185)

In genealogy, knowledges-*savoirs* are not only the surface effect of deeper epistemic modifications. A passage from *Discipline and Punish* is exemplary of the genealogical approach and how a knowledge/power complex appears in Foucault's thought:

This book is intended as a correlative history of the modern soul and of a new power to judge; a genealogy of the present scientific-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications and rules, from which it extends its effects and by which it masks its exorbitant singularity. (FOUCAULT, 1973, 23)

In this summary, Foucault explicitly states how genealogy accounts for the formation of a knowledge-*savoir* (the scientific-legal complex) in relation to the exercise of a power (punishment). At the same time, he is preoccupied with signaling how the exercise of set power can only take place inasmuch as it derives its basis from a specific knowledge-*savoir* (the scientific-legal complex). Power (disciplinary power) appears intertwined with knowledge (e.g. theories of the nature of punishment as well as the nature of the criminal). The power-knowledge relation is what marks Foucault's genealogical analysis. It is a depart from his concerns with the “compatibility and incompatibility between knowledges (*savoir*) through the configuration of their positivity”¹⁶ (MACHADO, 1982, p. 187, my translation). What is at stake now is how knowledge is produced in relation to - and inasmuch as it is situated in – apparatuses of power, i.e., how they are constituted by relations of power.

Furthermore, Foucault aimed to show that individuals do not preexist those complexes of power-knowledge but are actually constituted by them. Genealogy entails a move in which one does not start from a constituent subject, from the subject of knowledge which “is either transcendental to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history” (FOUCAULT; GORDON, 1980, p. 117). The individual thus is not something which runs outside of power, something powers merely works on. Individuals are effects of power/knowledge complexes, and their bodies are “the inscribed surface of events” (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1984, p. 83)

This form of history - an effective history as Foucault calls it (RABINOW, 1984, p. 89) – requires a dislocation from a traditional notion of power. Foucault had to show how power was not a negative force, but a name given to a set of relations.

¹⁶ Translated from: “As compatibilidades e incompatibilidades entre saberes a partir da configuração de suas positividades” (MACHADO, 1982, p.187)

According to Foucault a common representation of power permeates several discourses. The mechanics of this representation has certain characteristics. Power is always that which negates, that which says no. It sets boundaries, it demarks limits, and it represses what might overstep them. Power works as negative force that nullifies and suppresses by way of prohibition. Thus, power as prohibition functions “as a pure limit set on freedom” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 86). Furthermore, power seemed to be something that someone holds or renounces. The juridical theories in which power is delegated to the Sovereign, posited power as something like a capacity or a property. It can be held, possessed, and by acts of will (or violence) can be exchanged or surrendered¹⁷.

All of these scenarios appear to convey the same mechanics of power. Foucault calls this “the uniformity of the apparatus” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 84):

From state to family, from prince to father, from tribunal to the small change of everyday punishments, from the agencies of social domination to the structure that constitute the subject himself, one finds a general form of power, varying in scale alone. This form is the law of transgression and punishment, with its interplay of licit and illicit. (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 84–85).

On the other end of set power, one can always find the subject that obeys: a subject - already subjected - that is constricted, constrained, and awaiting to be set free. The effects of this mechanics of power, of this submission, are in a way paradoxical:

The paradox of its effectiveness: it is incapable of doing anything, except to render what it dominates incapable of doing anything either, except for what this power allows it to do. (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 85).

Such mechanics seems to have a distinctive juridico-discursive feature. Its form appears to reside “in the function of the legislator” when he conveys through discourse the rule of law (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 83). This appears in such a way that power always seems to be articulated by and through an armature of law. According to Foucault, the emphasis on law is a reminiscence of the monarchical structures¹⁸. The juridical edifice built around the person of

¹⁷ For a more precise view on the notions of power and Foucault’s specific contribution see Hindess (1996).

¹⁸ Foucault risks an explanation, albeit not an exhaustive one, as to why this uniform mechanics of power seems to always appear with a juridical framework. According to Foucault this conception of power is intrinsically linked to how monarchy “rose up on the basis of a multiplicity of prior powers and to some extent in opposition to them” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 86). The process through which monarchy rose up required very specific actions: it needed the construction of a hierarchical structure that would delimit clear boundaries. To build such an edifice it needed something that would keep the multiplicity of powers in check and at the same time act as transcendental justification for its structure and prerogative.

the monarch, which at the same time served as the armature that organized the state apparatus, functioned as

a principle of right that transcended all heterogeneous claims, manifesting the triple distinction of forming a unitary regime, of identifying its will with the law, and of acting through mechanisms of interdiction and sanction. (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 87).

This mechanics of power takes the form of law to such an extent that even its contestation must occur through law. In this sense, royal power had to demonstrate how it conformed to a certain divine right or how it was “limited, that it had to submit to certain rules, and that if that power were to retain legitimacy it had to be exercised within certain limits” (FOUCAULT, 2003, p. 26).

According to Foucault, “we still have not cut off the head of the king” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 89). In that sense, power is still that which emanates from the sovereign and descends the hierarchical structure in the form of restriction, prohibition, repression, upon those subjected to it. Power is still that which says no. Hence, Foucault’s move is to dislocate this perspective. Power is usually posited as emanating from a center, be it the monarch or the State apparatus, and descending upon its subjects in a repressive manner. Against that, Foucault proposes an analytics of power in which

power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another. (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 92)

In Foucault’s analytics “power is no longer deduced from terminal forms, it is now situated as an effect of a correlation of germinal forces” (CANDIOTTO, 2010, p. 34)¹⁹. In that sense, the terminal forms of institutions or the State are an effect of the sedimentation of set strategic relations²⁰ as much as individuals. Foucault does not so much cut off the head of the king as shows it to be a product of the “practical dispositions of power, the characteristics

¹⁹ Translated from: “o poder deixa de ser deduzido de *formas* terminais, para ser situado como efeito da correlação entre *forças* germinais”. (CANDIOTTO, 2010, p. 34)

²⁰ Power is a multiplicity of forces. Those complexes of forces must, therefore, understood “in the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 93). Or as Lemke puts it: “the state is to be conceived as a condensed form of power” (LEMKE, 2012, p. 11)

networks, currents, relays, points of support, and differences of potential” (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 15).

If power does not proceed from a center it is because it “comes from below” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 93). It is not the product of a general binary matrix (rulers and ruled). Relations of power do not form a superstructure, exterior to other relations. When Foucault says power, he is being nominalistic: power “is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 93). Conceptualized as such, power in Foucault stands for a strategical correlation of forces immanent to all types of relation in society – be they “economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 94). In that sense, power is everywhere not so much because it possesses an omnipresent and omniscient status, but because “it comes from everywhere” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 93).

As power takes the form of an assemblage of asymmetrical confrontational relations - all the unhinged play of forces which constitute social order - resistance is inherent to those relations. Resistance is immanent to power, not because a relation of power is always met by the eventuality of resistance, but because a multiplicity of correlation of forces also means a “multiplicity of points of resistance” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 95). In this scheme, domination is not something which is met by an exterior opposition: resistance is immanent to power relations. Dominations, therefore, are the “hegemonic effects that are sustained by all these confrontations” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 94).

The notion that power is in fact a name given to a set of relations means also that power can only be grasped in its exercise. Power is not owned, it functions. Although it is not a product of a single decision or will, power is intelligible. Power relations are instilled with a rationality inasmuch as they are exercised with certain aims and objectives. Foucault’s genealogy, thus, will not look for the “caste which governs, nor the groups which control the state apparatus” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 95). It is not a problem of finding the center from which the rationality of power stems from power is intentional even though it is non-subjective: its rationality is characterized “by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed (the local cynicism of power)” (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 95).

Thus, for Foucault the question is how these power relations function in these capillary and local instances. The microphysics of power enables Foucault to distinguish the different

forms in which power is exercised and, consequently, the aims and objectives, i.e., the calculus that runs through the technologies involved in these strategical relations. Foucault aims to understand the different modes of functioning of power (sovereign, disciplinary, or biopower), crystallized in distinct economies of power.

2.1 GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENTALITY

In the first half of the 70s, Foucault is preoccupied with the advent of domination. Foucault's work in the lectures *The Punitive Society* (1972-73), *Psychiatric Power* (1973-74), and *The Abnormals* (1974-75) traced the development of institutions such as the hospital, the asylum, the prison. From these analyzes, Foucault distilled a form of power that traverses all these institutions: Disciplinary power, a mode of power which acts on the individual body, its "movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body.(FOUCAULT, 1995, p. 137).

Later, in 1976, Foucault perceived a different strategy, a technique that aims at the population. Differing from Sovereign power - which according to Foucault exercises his "right to life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing" (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 136) – Biopower takes a hold of life in another manner. Biopolitics inverts the Sovereign power's logic and takes a hold of life as something that must be managed, organized, and optimized. While sovereign power works by taking a life or letting live, biopolitics is the power to "make live" and "let die" (FOUCAULT, 1976, p. 241).

Foucault's focus on domination left him open to the criticism of determinism. Although Foucault states that resistance is immanent to power relations, "it was not evident how the normalized subject, constituted by power, is capable of engaging in resistance" (LAWLOR in LAWLOR; NALE, 2014, p. 433). Moreover, as discipline appeared to be ubiquitous in society it seemed "impossible to assess processes of subjectivation beyond the formation of disciplined bodies" (LEMKE, 2012, p. 12). This meant that aside from processes of self-discipline, Foucault's subject seemed to be an "inert matter upon which power is exercised" (PATTON;MOSS, 1998, p. 66)²¹.

From 1978 onwards, Foucault changed his conceptual landscape and developed the concepts of government and governmentality. I do not propose here to answer why this

²¹ For such a critique see Peter Dews (1987)

conceptual change took place²². As Deleuze notes, Foucault was a “seismic thinker” (Deleuze in LAWLOR; NALE, 2014, p. 126) which means that instead of looking for an evolution of concepts one should understand Foucault as “proceeding by jolts, rather than developments, by abrupt reformulations rather than by continuations” (NIGRO, 2005, p. 16)²³. Government and Governmentality were part of one of these jolts. They are concepts that opened avenues for Foucault’s thought which his previous genealogies could not reach.

Foucault’s movement, albeit introducing new concepts, was a matter of making some distinctions in regard to his conceptualization of power. In a sense the problem was distinguishing:

Between power relations understood as strategic games of liberties - in which some try to control the conduct of others, who in turn try to avoid allowing their conduct to be controlled or try to control the conduct of others - and the states of domination that people ordinarily call “power”. (FOUCAULT, 1997, p. 299).

Strategic games of liberties meant power was exercised as actions that modify other’s actions. In that way power is not to be thought in terms of a juridical structure, but as a “an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future” (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 340). To describe the exercise of power in such a broad perspective means that power is a “ubiquitous feature of human interaction” (LEMKE, 2012, p. 19).

Power relations understood as actions that modify other’s actions stand in opposition to an idea of power as some sort of “violence which must be its primitive form” (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 340). Power relations must be distinguished from relations of violence. Relations of violence relinquish the field of possible actions of others: “it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities” (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 340). On the other side of such relations there can only be a complete passivity. A relation of violence in that manner is a matter of a “physical relationship of constrain” (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 341).

Strategic games of liberties, contrarily, require the subjects to be free. For Foucault freedom is a practice which means that the exercise of power in such strategic scheme can only

²² For more on this see Patton (2014)

²³ Translated from “Foucault est un penseur sismique, qui procède par à-coups, plutôt que par développements, par reformulations brusques plutôt que par continuations” (NIGRO, 2005, p. 16)

occur insofar as the subjects can be active. Thus, power requires “individuals or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized. (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 342). This is not to say, however, that violence and consent are not part of power’s mode of action. In fact, as Foucault himself states, the exercise of power can hardly do without these as instruments or results (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 341). Neither violence nor consent in themselves, however, can account for the specificity of power. Refining his previous conceptualization, Foucault proposes that power is

A total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions. (FOUCAULT, 1982, p. 789)

The differentiation of violence and power aims at affirming the necessity of an active subject in relations of power. Power can only be exercised insofar as the subject has room for maneuvering - however small this space may be at times. Power cannot be seen as something which excludes freedom. Nor can power be exercised upon “a malleable *tabula rasa*” (DEWS, 1987, p. 126). Power and freedom interplay in more complex ways. Power as the action upon the action of others and freedom as a practice means that the relation that takes place is an agonistic one: “a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitation and struggle, less of a face-to-face confrontation which paralyzes both sides than a permanent provocation.” (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 342).

Resistance, therefore, remains immanent to power inasmuch the “recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom” (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 342) are inherent to these power relations. This in turn means that “insofar as power always accidentally produces resistance, even the most disciplined subject can be engaged in it” (LAWLOR; NALE, 2014). Thus, strategic games of liberties are constituted inasmuch as:

Every power relationship implies, at least *in potentia*, a strategy of struggle, in which the two forces are not superimposed, do not lose their specific nature, or do not finally become confused. Each constitutes for the other a kind of permanent limit, a point of possible reversal. (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 342)

The aim of the agonistic interplay is always the fixing of power relationships through certain mechanisms in more or less rigid ways. If these relations are stabilized in such a manner as to be “perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of

freedom” (FOUCAULT, 1997, p. 292) one can face a state of domination. Domination, thus, is not the globalized structure of repression localized solely in certain apparatuses (institutions or the state). Domination is a specific situation in which “the power relations instead of being mobile, allowing the various participants to adopt strategies modifying them, remain blocked, frozen” (FOUCAULT, 1997, p. 285)²⁴. In states of domination, however, there is the possibility of resistance. Practices of freedom are possible in such states, albeit in a very limited capacity.

Technologies of government are in the middle of these games of liberties and states of domination (FOUCAULT, 1997, p. 299). Techniques of government, or governmentalities, form assemblages of powers, juxtaposing different techniques of power. Liberal governmentality, for example, juxtaposes sovereign, disciplinary and biopower according to its rationality²⁵.

Government, according to Foucault, has to be understood in its broadest meaning: “to govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others” (FOUCAULT, 1982, p. 341)²⁶. Moreover, it is not about seeing government as linked to a specific structure or institution (the government), but it refers to the specific manner in which the conduct of individuals is directed (FOUCAULT, 1982, p. 789). Foucault plays with the double meaning of the word conduct: it means here both the way one leads others according to specific mechanisms of coercion and, also, how one acts in relation to a specific field of possible actions.

²⁴ Foucault clarified with this conceptualization a position he posited in the first half of 1970 by accounting for domination as a specific result of the stabilization and fixation of power relations through certain mechanisms: institutions and political power can be a means of continuously reinserting war with its effects of domination within “Humanity does not gradually progresses from combat to combat until it finally arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination. (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1984, p. 85). In 1976, Foucault famously inverts Clausewitz claim: “War is the continuation of politics by other means” to “politics is the continuation of war by other means” (FOUCAULT, 2003, p. 48).

²⁵ In the next section we show how the study of arts of government and governmentality are used by Foucault to theoretically approach the State. In chapter two we dive into liberal governmentality and its correlate, the *homo oeconomicus*.

²⁶ Foucault specifically states that the word government should be given the very broad meaning it had in the sixteenth century (FOUCAULT, 1982, p. 790). In the fifth lecture of Security, Territory and Population he talks about the meanings this word had in the sixteenth century: “Before it acquires its specifically political meaning in the sixteenth century, we can see that “to govern,” covers a very wide semantic domain in which it refers to movement in space, material subsistence, diet, the care given to an individual and the health one can assure him, and also to the exercise of command, of a constant, zealous, active, and always benevolent prescriptive activity. It refers to the control one may exercise over oneself and others, over someone’s body, soul, and behavior. And finally it refers to an intercourse, to a circular process or process of exchange between one individual and another.” (FOUCAULT, 2009, p. 122)

Foucault's movement towards government was not so much a correction of a deficient scheme, but a "recasting of the earlier themes within a more finally tuned field of reflection" (DEAN, 2003, p. 153). Power in both accounts still remains a "relational potency capable of inducing, arousing, and producing objects and truths"²⁷ (CANDIOTTO, 2010, p. 34)

Government allowed Foucault to analyze power relations through the perspective of political rationalities or arts of government. That means posing the question of "who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed" (GORDON, 1991, p. 3). It also means an approach which does not deal with the effective practice of government - the way in which governors really govern - instead, it addresses these arts of government at a level of reflection on governmental practice. Arts of government are the many ways in which "governing was conceptualized both within and outside government" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 2). What Foucault searched for in the series of lectures given between 78-79 were the "reasoned way of governing best and, at the same time, [the] reflection on the best possible way of governing" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 2).

Government also opened the possibility of analyzing the ways in which subjects act on their own conduct. Up until the first half of the 1970s Foucault had studied the ways the subjects were produced by certain operations of knowledges and by technologies of power. The notion of government - allied with a movement that took him to Greek and Roman Antiquity - allowed Foucault to analyze the ways subjects formed themselves by deploying a series of practices. These practices revealed a whole domain which the complex of power/knowledge blocked: the forms in which a relation to oneself constituted part of the experience of subject formation. Thus, these technologies of the self can be defined as

The procedures, which no doubt exist in every civilization, offered or prescribed to individuals in order to determine their identity, maintain it, or transform it in terms of a certain number of ends, through relations of self-mastery or self-knowledge" (FOUCAULT, 1997, p. 87)

The analysis of technologies of the self changed the approach of his history of sexuality - a movement that is explicit in the theoretical shift that occurred in the "Uses of Pleasure" and "The Care of the Self". On the other hand, it exposed a completely different side of mechanisms of power: technologies of the self reveal the level in which "technologies of domination of

²⁷ Translated from: "o poder como potência relacional capaz de induzir, suscitar e produzir objetos e verdades." (CANDIOTTO, 2010, p. 34).

individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself” (FOUCAULT, 2016, p. 25). Moreover, those technologies can be seen as sites of resistance to forms of power which act by individualizing the subjects into certain categories and fixing in them specific identities.

The idea of government intertwines an approach that can account for technologies of power and technologies of the self. This meant a change in the grid of analysis for power relations which is now guided by the notion of Governmentality. Governmentality functions as a grid of analysis for the government of others, the government of oneself, and their interactions (FOUCAULT, 1988, p. 20). Moreover, the difference between the microphysical approach and Governmentality is a matter of point of view:

This grid of governmentality, which we may assume is valid for the analysis of ways of conducting the conduct of mad people, patients, delinquents, and children, may equally be valid when we are dealing with phenomena of a completely different scale, such as an economic policy, for example, or the management of a whole social body, and so on. What I wanted to do—and this was what was at stake in the analysis—was to see the extent to which we could accept that the analysis of micro-powers, or of procedures of governmentality, is not confined by definition to a precise domain determined by a sector of the scale, but should be considered simply as a point of view, a method of decipherment which may be valid for the whole scale, whatever its size. In other words, the analysis of micro-powers is not a question of scale, and it is not a question of a sector, it is a question of a point of view. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 186)

According to Foucault, the theme that runs through his whole research is the many ways “human beings are made subjects” (FOUCAULT, 1982, p. 777). Governmentality is the unique point of view in which one can address both the question of the state and that of the subject. In other words, the move to governmental rationalities allows Foucault to analyze “the long-term process of co-evolution of modern statehood and modern subjectivity” (LEMKE, 2012, p. 12–13). Thus, arts (or rationalities) of government allowed Foucault to account for how the state became, in the end of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, an object of reflection. Rationalities of government also permitted Foucault to analyze the subjects connected to them.

It is within this framework that Foucault approaches the problem of the state and at the same time analyses liberalism as an art of government. In the lectures Foucault gives in 1978 and 1979 Foucault attempts to grasp the state from the “outside”: arts of government are conceptual tools Foucault used to accomplish this task.

2.2 THE LECTURES OF 78-79: THE GENEALOGY OF THE STATE, REASON OF STATE, AND LIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY

Foucault's focus on localized practices seemed to fail to account for how the heterogeneous and capillary power relations "are articulated and integrated into more general mechanisms which sustain specific forms of rule" (LEMKE, 2012, p. 12). This problem was more acute when it came to the state apparatus (HINDESS, 1996; DEAN, 2003; LEMKE, 2012). During the 60s and 70s the debate over state theory was produced predominantly through the use of Marxist principles and conceptual tools (DEAN, 2003, p. 142). Foucault's microphysics served in many ways as a critique of Marxists conceptions of power and, consequently, as a response to the way French Marxists approached the problem of the state apparatus²⁸. Microphysics' apparent inability to effectively shed light on the strategic role the state, however, made it vulnerable to criticism.

The lectures of 78-79 have a unique place in Foucault's body of work. They signal a transition to a different genealogy which deploys a new conceptual landscape. Although these lectures introduced the concept of government, they do not deal with the question of governing oneself yet. In both *Security, Territory, and Population* and *The Birth of Biopolitics* the problem is a genealogy of the state through the analysis of arts of government. They also traced the emergence of a subject connected to this art of government: the *homo oeconomicus*.

These lectures presented a response to the critique Foucault received for not developing a theory of the state (LEMKE, 2012, p. 25). Foucault was well aware of this line of criticism and, in fact, acknowledged that he had avoided producing a theory of the state as one "can and must forgo an indigestible meal" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 76–77). According to Foucault, he avoided a "theory of the State" to escape the trap of grasping the state as an already given object. A genealogy cannot start from such universal objects, nor can it analyze the nature and functions of preconceived objects. Genealogy starts from how certain phenomena become problems, how they come to be perceived as objects for the practice of thought. In other words,

²⁸ As Colin Gordon notes: "One objection frequently raised by the Marxist Left was that this new attentiveness to the specifics of power relations and the detailed texture of the particular techniques and practices failed to address or shed light on the global issues of politics, namely the relation between society and the state. Another was that Foucault's representation of society as a network of omnipresent relations of subjugating power seemed to preclude the possibility of meaningful individual freedom. A third complaint was that Foucault's markedly bleak account of the effects of humanitarian penal reformism corresponded to an overall political philosophy of nihilism and despair. (BURCHELL; GORDON; MILLER, 1991, p. 4).

Instead of deducing concrete phenomena from universals, or instead of starting with universals as an obligatory grid of intelligibility for certain concrete practices, I would like to start with these concrete practices and, as it were, pass these universals through a grid of these practices. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 3)

In fact, Foucault had done this in previous years in his analysis of the medical, psychiatric, and penal institutions. In his former researches, Foucault never started from the institutions themselves, with the already given individuals that populate it (the sick, the mad, the prisoner). His aim was to go outside the institutions in order to perceive, traversing and constituting them, a set of technologies of power:

What is important therefore is not institutional regularities, but much more the practical dispositions of power, characteristics networks, currents, relays, points of support, and differences in potential that characterize a form of power, which are, I think, constitutive of, precisely, both the individual and the group. (FOUCAULT, 2006, p. 15)

Foucault's approach was able to perceive a similar technology of power, namely discipline, cutting across a variety of fields and institutions such as hospitals, the army, schools, prison. Displacing this institution-centric view allowed one to analyze set institutions as effects of movement of a multiplicity of technologies of power. The genealogical framework of a microphysics of power thus permitted Foucault to circumvent the institution as a point of departure for his analysis. Thence, the question was if this microphysics could allow the same procedure to be made when it came down to the state. In other words:

Can we cross over to the outside of the state as we could, without great difficulty, with regard to these different institutions? Is there an encompassing point of view with regard to the state as there was with regard to local and definite institutions? (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 119)

Governmentality marked the "adaptation of the gaze" (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 120) necessary to approach the State. Even if one considers phenomena of different sizes, the problem for Foucault is not one of scale – it is not a matter of base and superstructures²⁹ - but of perspective. In that sense, just as technologies of power were the instruments through which

²⁹ If one affirms different levels on the scale one runs the risk of positing the state as a totalizing structure which always appears as the source or point of fixing of the various institutions: "We may well single out the disciplinary mechanisms of sites such as the prison, workshops, and the army, where there were attempts to put these mechanisms to work. But, in the last instance, is not the state ultimately responsible for their general and local application? It may be that the extra-institutional, non-functional, and non-objective generality of the analysis I have been talking about confronts us with the totalizing institution of the state." (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 119)

local institutions could be put into perspective, arts of government served as the instrument Foucault to assume an outside perspective of the State.

This move allowed Foucault to analyze the state neither as the ultimate source of power nor as a Nietzschean cold monster, but as a “tricky combination in the same political structures of individualization techniques and of totalization procedures” (FOUCAULT, 1982, p. 782). As with prisons, it was not a matter of studying the prisons themselves, their physical reality³⁰. What Foucault wanted to grasp was “the appearance of the state on the horizon of a reflected practice at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century” (FOUCAULT, 2009, p. 276).

Thus, Foucault does not produce so much a history of the state but a history of governmentality. By assuming this approach Foucault is distancing himself from an account of the formation of the State in all its different processes - be they administrative, economic, political or social. What interests Foucault is “a midway between the state as a type of political organization and its mechanisms” (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 313).

Government in this sense, however, has a more precise meaning. Governing is not the same as reigning or ruling, nor is it similar to the relation of the sovereign or the suzerain of a land. Government is not exercised over a territory but over people. This form of government which does not focus on land or territory is based on a specific form of power that, according to Foucault, stems from Christian pastoral practices. Pastoral power as a government of souls entails “an individualizing form of power that is intimately linked to the production of truth” (LEMKE, 2012, p. 13)

More importantly this technology of power is taken up - albeit in a secularized form - in the formation of the modern state under the guise of a specific political rationality. If pastoral power referred to a distinct form of government that would produce effects on the state, the rationality that permeated the secularized form of this exercise can be found in two doctrines that emerged roughly between the sixteenth and seventeenth century: Reason of State and the theory of police. Between these two doctrines emerged a government of human beings which

³⁰ “The rational schema of the prison, the hospital or the asylum are not general principles which can be rediscovered only through the historian’s retrospective interpretation. They are explicit *programmes*; we are dealing with sets of calculated, reasoned prescriptions in terms of which institutions are meant to be reorganized, spaces arranged, behaviors regulated. If they have an ideality, it is that of a programming left in abeyance, not that of a general or hidden meaning” (Foucault in BURCHELL; GORDON; MILLER, 1991, p. 80)

relies on “the production of rational knowledge about the individual and the population as a whole” (LEMKE, 2012, p. 14).

According to Foucault, Reason of State, as it emerges in the seventeenth century, can be understood as the “pursuit and definition of a specific form of government with respect to the exercise of sovereignty” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 234). The heavenly oriented objectives that existed before are slowly accompanied, and in some cases substituted, in the end of the sixteenth century, by a concern with the *res publica*. The problem of the public domain signals “the emergence of the specificity of the level and form of government” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 236). The notion of a Commonwealth³¹ in Hobbes is exemplary of this move. Moreover, in the semantics of government:

The notions of production, wealth, labor, money, population and interest will become familiar to the practitioners of the state to the point of gradually removing the ethico-religious categories of the old political speech. (LAVAL, 2009, p. 63)³²

Religion, however, is not expelled or completely divorced from the structures of the state. Reason of State marks a dislocation, or dislocations, which produced an art of government that does not rely primarily on divine laws or heavenly foundations. A *ratio diaboli* - as it was called by Pope Pius V³³ - because it did not reference any sort of natural order or divine law. It referred and basis itself on the observation of the nature of the State. Reason of state is directed by very precise and immanent objectives:

In *Raison d'État*, and by *Raison d'État*, what is involved is essentially identifying what is necessary and sufficient for the state to exist and maintain itself in its integrity if, in the event of it being damaged, it is necessary to re-establish this integrity. (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 258)

In Reason of State, The State was an abstract entity intertwined with the prince. The prince, in that sense, is the State, and the “governmental rationality is the rationality of the sovereign himself, of whomever it is who can say “me, the state.” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 312).

³¹ As Senellart notes: “Whereas in Machiavelli taking power and maintaining it requires the same means, in such a way that its exercise in fact corresponds to a permanent conquest, in Hobbes, preserving the State (which is not reduced to the *stato* of the prince, but is identified with the Commonwealth) is part of the obligations arising from the sovereign rights in relation to its subjects” (SENELLART, 1995, p. 36)

³² Translated from: “Les notions de production, de richesse, de travail, de monnaie, de population et d'intérêt vont devenir familières aux praticiens de l'État au point de destituer progressivement les catégories éthico-religieuses du discours politique ancien.” (LAVAL, 2009, p. 63)

³³ “There was scandal anyway, to the point that Pope Pius V said that the *ratio status* is not at all *raison d'État*; *ratio status* is *ratio diaboli*, the devil's reason.” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 241)

To maintain the state, of course, is not only a matter of conserving it, but of increasing its strength. The strengthening of the state took the form of an augmentation of the prince's wealth (which at that point is the same as the State's wealth). In that sense, mercantilism signaled the intersection between the sovereign apparatus and an art of government. Mercantilism marked the development of commerce, the rise of a market economy between the states, and the growth of monetary circulation.

The liberal art of government starts to form in the mid-eighteenth century as critique of the Reason of State³⁴. Governmental management in the emerging liberal art of government took "the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument" (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 108)³⁵. The political economy developed in the mid-eighteenth century, especially Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, displaced the Sovereign's centrality in the economic processes. By asserting that no one could effectively know the totality of the economic processes – in direct response to the physiocrats – Smith devised a system of natural liberty in which the economic agents had to pursue their own interest.

Furthermore, the liberal art of government imposes a set of limits to governmental reason which are not only that of public law, but de facto limits that are brought forth by economic knowledge. In order to maintain a structure of Sovereignty and account both for the subject of public law – *the homo juridicus* -and the one that emerges of political economy – *the homo oeconomicus*- a new domain will have to serve as reference for the state. Civil society,

³⁴ The emergence of a Liberal Governmentality does not mean that Reason of State ceases to exist. The changes Foucault talks about did not take place as a substitution.. The processes that change the arts or rationality of government are composed by a "multifaceted rather than a unitary trajectory" (DEAN, 2010). Thus, in these lectures, Foucault was not trying to dictate a linear movement in which sovereignty was substituted by discipline that in turn was replaced by a liberal art of government. Foucault is not describing a single movement of rationalization, secularization, or governmentalization. The movement towards a liberal governmentality is composed, in a broad sense, of a triangulation of sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management. (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 107).

³⁵This process is much more complex, and Foucault is not reducing it to the development of the concept of population or the appearance of economy as a science: "How was the art of government released from this blocked situation? The process of its release, like the blockage itself, should be situated within a number of general processes: the demographic expansion of the eighteenth century, which was linked to the abundance of money, which was itself linked in turn to the expansion of agricultural production through circular processes with which historians are familiar and so will not be discussed here." (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 103). Foucault's focus on these aspects relates to his aim of understanding the emergence of a liberal art of government by analyzing certain operations of knowledge and their relationship with technologies of power.

thus, appears in the eighteenth century as both a separate and autonomous domain and the object of management by the State.

In the 78-79 courses, Foucault is not yet interested in the forms of self-constitution which appeared in his later writings. He is not directly interested in a genealogy of political economy either. As with the prison or sexuality, the issue was how political economy understood as a “specific form of knowing (*savoir*) is connected with a specific modality or regime of power (*pouvoir*), and oriented toward a particular type of subject.” (BEISTEGUI, 2018, p. 33). In the liberal governmentality the *homo oeconomicus* appeared as both an objective of governmental practice and its correlate (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 278).

Liberal governmentality posited the incompatibility between “the optimal functioning of the economic process and the maximization of governmental regulation” (BURCHELL; GORDON; MILLER, 1991, p. 138). It pegged, consequently, the rationality of its actions in the naturally self-regulating processes of the objects of government: the rationality of the *homo oeconomicus*.

According to Foucault this subject of interest – the *homo oeconomicus* – emerged in the eighteenth century as a “intangible element to the exercise of power” and, consequently, as the “subject or object of *laissez-faire*” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 270). It is a subject that by nature pursues its own interest and whose interest converges with that of others in a process of spontaneous multiplication. In the next chapter, I use Foucault’s 78-79 courses in connection with recent literature on the *homo oeconomicus* and the concept of interest to paint a picture of how this subject is connected to liberal governmentality.

3 LIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY AND THE HOMO OECONOMICUS

Foucault started his analysis of arts of government with the seventeenth century theory of Reason of State. Reason of State marked, broadly speaking, an important dislocation: from a sovereign preoccupied with glory, honor, and (divine) law to a rationality of government which aimed at increasing the power of the state. This movement does not mean, however, that sovereignty was expelled from the framework, but that Reason of State produced a “bond and connection between sovereignty and government” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 246). This bond³⁶ is better understood through the category of Interest of State.

In the seventeenth century, the neo-stoic notion of civil prudence encompassed ‘the training of princes, their advisers, the new standing army and emergent bureaucracy’ (DEAN, 2010; OESTREICH, 1982)³⁷. As it pressed the need for discipline and obedience it englobed and aligned the government of the state, the government of the household, and the government of the self (DEAN, 2010)³⁸. On the other hand, Civil prudence was linked to “the virtue of a knowledge and method of the state, the virtue of a primitive statistics” (ENGELMANN, 2003, p. 141). As Foucault notes, in Reason of State the knowledge the prince had to know, that which made him wise, was precisely the knowledge of things that comprised the state:

That is to say, someone who governs must know the elements that enable the state to be preserved in its strength, or in the necessary development of its strength, so that it is not dominated by others or loses its existence by losing its strength or relative strength. That is to say, the sovereign’s necessary knowledge (*savoir*) will be a knowledge (*connaissance*) of things rather than knowledge of the law, and this knowledge of the things that comprise the very reality of the state is precisely what at the time was called “statistics.” [...] it

³⁶ The figure that best exemplifies this bond is Louis XIV: “Louis XIV in this history is precisely that he succeeded in showing, at the level of his practice as well as at the level of the manifest and visible rituals of his monarchy [...] the bond and connection between sovereignty and government, and at the same time their specificity and the difference of their level and their form. Louis XIV really is in fact *Raison d’État*, and when he says “The State is me,” it is precisely this stitching together of sovereignty and government that is being put forward.” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 246).

³⁷ As Oestereich points out: “It stressed obedience and discipline as necessary conditions for well-ordered government and created the climate for the institutional reforms in town and country which were necessitated by the social, political and economic changes of the period. It taught the individual to control his own life by mastering his emotions and to subordinate himself politically without resistance.” (OESTEREICH, 1982, p. 165)

³⁸ Foucault exemplifies this using Rousseau: The essential issue of government will be the introduction of economy into political practice. And if this is true in the sixteenth century, it is still the case in the eighteenth. In his article on “Political Economy,” it is quite clear that Rousseau still poses the problem in the same terms, saying roughly: The word “economy” originally designates “the wise government of the house for the common good of the whole family.” The problem, Rousseau says, is how to introduce this wise government of the family, *mutatis mutandis*, and with the discontinuities that we will note, within the general management of the state. (FOUCAULT, 2009, p. 95)

is no longer the corpus of laws or skill in applying them when necessary, but a set of technical knowledges that describes the reality of the state itself. (FOUCAULT, 2009, p. 274).

Reason of State, informed by the notion of civil prudence, introduced a level of calculation into sovereignty. The development of a science of the state, statistics, in the smaller German states, and of Political Arithmetics in Britain is followed by the creation of official bureaus of statistics³⁹ between the seventeenth and eighteenth century. In addition, Political arithmetics and statistics informed the mercantilist rationality directly by asserting the State's condition, its wealth and power. Furthermore, they allowed for an individualizing knowledge of the population - their regularities, capacities, wealth - inasmuch as they were elements of the State.

One of the most important features of Reason of State is the linking of the prince's wealth and will with a notion of an Interest of the State⁴⁰. The notion of interest is rehabilitated⁴¹ in the sixteenth and seventeenth century and now conflates both the prince's ambition, its wealth, and the abstract unity of the State. As Engelmann notes, the treatise of the Duke of Rohan, *De l'intérêt des princes et États de la chrétienté*, provides perhaps the best example of this:

With Rohan we can see that a non-juridical discourse was governing princes with a distinct and existential political rationality: a reason of state that did not care about origins or obligation, only about present and future interest. Interest of state regulated princely behavior, but not in the language of law. (ENGELMANN, 2003, p. 140).

³⁹ "Every state, happy or unhappy, was statistical in its own way. The Italian cities, inventors of the modern conception of the state, made elaborate statistical inquiries and reports well before anyone else in Europe. Sweden organized its pastors to accumulate the world's best data on births and deaths. France, nation of physiocrats and probabilists, created a bureaucracy during the Napoleonic era which at the top was dedicated to innovative statistical investigations, but which in the provinces more often perpetuated pre-revolutionary structures and classifications. The English inaugurated 'political arithmetic' in 1662 when John Graunt drew demographic inferences from the century old weekly Bills of Mortality for the City of London. England was the homeland of insurance for shipping and trade. It originated many other sorts of provisions guarding against contingencies of life or illness, yet its numerical data were a free enterprise hodge-podge of genius and bumbledom." (HACKING, 2002)

⁴⁰ According to Engelmann: Reason of State: "prospected the future on the basis of knowledge of the present. It demanded continuous stock taking and the production of aggregate figures. And its counsel bound the newly legitimated absolutism of the prince to the interest of state." (ENGELMANN, 2003, p. 127)

⁴¹ The notion of interest is not new and has a long history prior to its political and economic uses in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The present research does not, however, aim to reconstruct its precedent uses nor the movement of its rehabilitation between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. For more on this see Laval (2009). On the debate of interest and usury which runs through the problems of interested behavior in the middle ages see Le Goff (1990).

Moreover, as interest became attached to calculation and rational behavior it served to regulate the prince's passions. The passion of glory directly linked to the heroic ideal of the middle ages was restrained by the principle of interested behavior. Other destructive passions and their excesses were also thought to be tamed by interest. In that sense, interest became normative notion, one that regulated behavior by demonstrating two major characteristics:

self-centeredness, that is, predominant attention of the actor to the consequences of any contemplated action for himself; and rational calculation, that is, a systematic attempt at evaluating prospective costs, benefits, satisfactions, and the like. (Hirschman, essential, p. 197).

As State and the Prince became one, the interest of the state became its matrix of action in the mercantilist competition with other States. Mercantilism, however, was not simply a commercial competition between states. It was also a calculus which was directly linked to the government and management of the economy (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 32). The wealth of the state is directly linked to the population - an aggregate of individuals seen as productive force.

The assemblage of power used to aggregate the individual's productive force was called Police. Police not in the sense that it is used today: an essentially repressive apparatus whose main objective is to suppress crime and guarantee the safety of the population. Police was linked to a form of intervention which aimed at guaranteeing both the increase of the state's forces and its internal order⁴².

Police thus is not the same as justice, although it deploys law's instruments through the unrestrained use of regulations, ordinances, interdictions, prohibitions, instructions (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 340). Police was a precise and calculated intervention upon individuals. Police techniques deployed a juridico-disciplinary apparatus which worked by postulating a certain model, an optimal instance, and "trying to get people, movements, and actions to conform to this model" (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 57). As Oestreich notes:

Greater social complexity brought a greater deployment of authority. People had to be 'coached', as it were, for the tasks created by the more populous society and the claims which it made on its citizens. [...] At the same time a start was made on educating people to a discipline of work and frugality and

⁴² In Germany the word can be dated back to the fifteenth century (KNEMEYER, 1980), but in the seventeenth and eighteenth century it became a specific science or *Polizeiwissenschaft*⁴² (DEAN, 2010; FOUCAULT, 2007; KNEMEYER, 1980). In France and Italy, although lacking this formal conceptualization, it was practiced and institutionalized. In general, however, these practices could be found throughout Europe (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 318).

on changing the spiritual, moral and psychological make-up of political, military and economic man. (OESTREICH, 1982)

Police regulation was ubiquitous - a trait that Oestreich calls a “regulation-mania” and Foucault sees as a “world of indefinite regulation” (FOUCAULT, 2007; OESTREICH, 1982). Such intervention did not differentiate properly between public and private life, was essentially urban, and its reach extended to “manners, morals and the minutiae of everyday life” (DEAN, 2010). As Foucault points out this pervasive form of regulation⁴³ can be seen in the wide range of topics which De Lamere’s *Traité de la Police* covers:

De Lamare says that the police must see to eleven things within the state: (1) religion; (2) morals; (3) health; (4) supplies; (5) roads, highways, town buildings; (6) public safety; (7) the liberal arts (roughly speaking, arts and science); (8) trade; (9) factories; (10) manservants and labourers; (11) the poor. (FOUCAULT; RABINOW, 1982, p. 320)

Within this framework the police’s ultimate goal was both the happiness of the population and the splendor of the state. Police, thusly, is primarily concerned with the discipline of the individuals conduct so it can trace a continuity between the government of the state and the self-government of individuals:

It [Police] will have to provide itself with whatever is necessary and sufficient for effectively integrating men’s activity into the state, into its forces, and into the development of these forces, and it will have to ensure that the state, in turn, can stimulate, determine, and orientate this activity in such a way that it is in fact useful to the state. In a word, what is involved is the creation of a state utility on the basis of and through men’s activity; the creation of a public utility on the basis of men’s occupation and activity, on the basis of what they do. (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 323)

The power assemblage of police guaranteed the State Utility and the Public Interest: a notion which linked population productive force and private enrichment with the interest of the state. Medieval notions such as *utilitas communis* and the reactivated Roman notion of “*salus populi, suprema lex*” designated:

⁴³ Oestreich highlights a few regulations from the city of Strasbourg in 1678: “Heading the list of matters it covered were moral questions such as Sunday observance, divine service, sorcery, blasphemy, cursing and perjury. Then followed sections on the upbringing of children, the keeping of domestics, expenditure on weddings and christenings, and the dealings between innkeepers and guests. Next came comprehensive sumptuary regulations, and sections relating to begging and almsgiving, the status of Jews, the prevention of usury and monopolies, and conditions for the carrying trade by middle-men. In the economic sphere there were sections on faked goods and bankruptcy. More general rules related to gaming, breaches of the peace, libel and slander. Finally came the rules limiting funeral celebrations. (OESTREICH, 1982, p. 158)

a sphere separated from the interests of the king and his subjects, and also indicates the preeminence of the collective order over particular interest, especially in case of military necessity. (LAVAL, 2009, p. 52)

As the State became a separate unity, following its own rationality and objectives in an immanent plain of competition with other states, the expression Public Interest started “gradually replacing the ‘common good’ of scholastic philosophy and the ‘salus populi’ favoured by Roman law” (GUNN, 1969, p. IX). Moreover, public interest does not represent the submission of individual interests to a collective good imbued with transcendental imperatives. Public Interest, within Reason of State, was construed as the aggregate of the individual interests of the population. Thus, the discourse of Interest of the State and of State Utility represents a move to a “more horizontal, immanent, essentially managerial model of power based on the satisfaction and composition of interests” (LAVAL, 2009, p. 55). That entails an identification between the wealth of the state and that of the individual:

Wealth adds up, the enrichment of individuals and that of the state are in solidarity. Giovanni Botero at the end of the sixteenth century contributed to spreading this idea, which became familiar, that the interest of the state and the interest of the subjects converge since the first aims at the abundance of wealth both of men and the kingdom, while that the latter, seeking individual prosperity, sees it all the more assured as the State is powerful. (LAVAL, 2009, p. 56)

The composition of individual interests presupposes that interested behavior is not seen only as an attribute of the Prince. Interest became an operative notion not only to States but came to denote an element of reflection and calculation in the way individual aspirations were pursued. Moreover, interest seemed to counteract a human nature still thought as imbued with “concupiscence, greed, and vanity” (LAVAL, 2009, p. 57). As such:

The idea of interest as it had been developed by the political literature since Machiavelli—the idea, that is, of a disciplined understanding of what it takes to advance one's power, influence, and wealth—came into common use early in the seventeenth century and was soon utilized by the great moralists and other writers of the period in their meticulous dissection of individual human nature. (HIRSCHMAN, 1977, p. 38)

The debate of interest and self-interested behavior surfaced in the seventeenth century against a discussion of the passions and how to properly tame them. In his seminal work, “The Passions and the Interests”, Hirschman shows how interested behavior played a very important part in what he called the principle of countervailing passions. Hirschman perceived that in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, a principle seemed to reign over the many philosophies

concerned with the passions and affects. The principle that only a passion of the same intensity could counteract another passion seemed a corollary that could be identified in philosophers as different as Spinoza and Hume. Within this countervailing principle framework, interest came to be seen as a tamer of passions:

Such a formulation emerged in fact and took the form of opposing the interests of men to their passions and of contrasting the favorable effects that follow when men are guided by their interests to the calamitous state of affairs that prevails when men give free rein to their passions. (HIRSCHMAN, 1977, p. 32)

Interest, however, should not be understood as a completely cold, dispassionate, behavior. As Hume famously proclaimed “reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions” (HUME, 1896, p. 415). The same Hume talks about a “the passion of self-interest”⁴⁴. Thus, interest could not be construed as a solely rational calculative behavior. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, interest became connected, and even identified, with a variety of passions such as avidity, avarice, love of gain, and more importantly, self-love⁴⁵. In fact, Hirschman posited that interest appeared as a middle ground between the dangers of passions and the insufficiency of reason. In that way, it surfaced “as the passion of self-love upgraded and contained by reason, and as reason given direction and force by that passion” (HIRSCHMAN, 1977, p. 43). Self-interest and self-love are notions that carry numerous meanings in the eighteenth century, many times appearing as synonyms (FORCE, 2003, p. 1)⁴⁶.

Moreover, according to Hirschman, between the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, interest suffered a semantic drift which saw its meaning “being narrowed, by some processes,

⁴⁴ “For whether the passion of self-interest be esteemed vicious or virtuous, 'tis all a case; since itself alone restrains it: So that if it be virtuous, men become social by their virtue; if vicious, their vice has the same effect” (HUME, 1896, p. 492)

⁴⁵ As Hirschman notes: “the opposition between interests and passions could also mean or convey a different thought, much more startling in view of traditional values: namely, that *one set of passions, hitherto known variously as greed, avarice, or love of lucre, could be usefully employed to oppose and bridle such other passions as ambition, lust for power, or sexual lust.*” (HIRSCHMAN, 1977, p. 41, emphasis added)

⁴⁶ The recent work of Christian Maurer is important as it distinguishes five ways in which the concept was used in the eighteenth century: egoism, self-esteem, excessive pride, and self-respect (MAURER, 2009, p. 29–42). Maurer is careful, however, in delimiting that these five conceptions are not exhaustive. In the next section, I will introduce Foucault’s conceptualization and show how it is in consonance with Hirschman’s. It is more important for the present research to accentuate how both self-love and self-interest substantiate a self-centered behavior. In fact, later we will show how Foucault’s conceptualization of interest actually encompasses Adam Smith’s notion of self-love and of sympathy.

to the pursuit of material, economic advantage” (HIRSCHMAN, 1977, p. 38). Hirschman, however, is not clear on why this drift takes place⁴⁷.

Considering the central place commerce acquired with Reason of State it is no wonder interest came to have its meaning narrowed to economic endeavours. In fact, Police’s disciplinarization of society towards productive activity concurred to both spread the normativity of interested behavior and to give it an economic connotation. As Laval posits

Mercantilist thought, far from being only a theory of absolute power and a discourse of war, developed very early an argument favorable to the freedom of trade and private interest, regarded as factors of power. In mercantilist theses, the strength of the state, a political body struggling with other political bodies that surround it, depends on the attention the government will be able to provide to the main agents of production and exchange. Contrary to a too simple view, mercantilists are far from being archaic defenders of the old ideology of the organic hierarchy. It was they who, well before Mandeville or Adam Smith, emphasized the importance of self-interest in the production of the general good of the nation. (LAVAL, 2009, p. 63).

One could analyse the emergence of the language of interest as part of the “privatisation” of the individual directly connected to, and as an effect of, the emerging capitalist economy, and/or as an expression of the nascent ‘bourgeois’ society (BURCHELL; GORDON; MILLER, 1991, p. 122). Moreover, one could see in the confluence of mercantilism, police, Reason of State, the rehabilitation of commercial activity and the semantics of interest, the factors within which a *homo oeconomicus* could emerge. As Gunn proposes

Whatever was once believed on this question, it now appears certain that the model of economic man predated Adam Smith by well over a century. Those who were anxious to make accurate predictions about economic behavior could assume no other pattern that offered comparable results. (GUNN, 1968, p. 557)

Foucault, however, analyzed the different forms of subjectivity alongside the changing in the arts of government. Thus, within a Foucauldian framework what becomes central is

⁴⁷ “How, in fact, can this drift be explained? Perhaps it was due to the old association of interest and money- lending; this meaning of interest antedates the one that is discussed here by several centuries. Possibly, too, the special affinity of rational calculation implicit in the concept of interest with the nature of economic activities accounts for these activities eventually monopolizing the contents of the concept. Returning to seventeenth- century France, one may also conjecture that, with power so concentrated and seemingly so stable at the time, economic interests constituted the only portion of an ordinary person’s total aspirations in which important ups and downs could be visualized.” (HIRSCHMAN, 1977, p. 39)

the connections between ways in which individuals are politically objectified and political techniques for integrating concrete aspects of their lives and activities into the pursuit of the state's activities" (BURCHELL; GORDON; MILLER, 1991, p. 122–123).

Even though interest began to be a coordinating principle for understanding the actions of both the state and individuals, within the axis that connect Reason of State, Mercantilism, and police the individuals remain "no more than legal subjects and subjects of police, if you like, subjects who have to apply regulations" (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 345). Moreover, according to Foucault, at this point governmental reason is still identified with the "rationality of the sovereign who, in turn, identifies himself or herself with the state" (BURCHELL; GORDON; MILLER, 1991, p. 139).

In Liberal governmentality, however, the *homo oeconomicus*, appeared as both a correlate of the governmental rationality and its limit. The rationality of government became clinched with the rationality of its subjects. This change is also aligned with the modifications in the terrain of political economy: the positing of nature's self-regulating principles and of an epistemic limitation both of the sovereign and of the economic agents.

3.1 THE LIBERAL ART OF GOVERNMENT AND THE *HOMO OECONOMICUS*

Foucault proposes that by the mid-eighteenth century a liberal art of government started to form. Liberal governmentality is based on a change in conception of population and, most importantly on the rationality of the subjects of interest:

It is now a matter not of modeling government on the rationality of the individual sovereign who can say "me, the state," [but] on the rationality of those who are governed as economic subjects and, more generally, as subjects of interest in the most general sense of the term. It is a matter of modeling government [on] the rationality of individuals insofar as they employ a certain number of means, and employ them as they wish, in order to satisfy these interests in the general sense of the term: the rationality of the governed must serve as the regulating principle for the rationality of government. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 312)

Government is possible inasmuch as it pegs the exercise of political power to "the freedom and interested rationality of the governed themselves" (BURCHELL; GORDON;

MILLER, 1991, p. 139). It is also based on a certain naturalism⁴⁸. This can be best visualized by understanding the change in conception of population.

Within the tension that permeated Reason of State and Sovereignty, population appeared as the “blazon of the sovereign’s power” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 68). As an effect of the logics of Reason of State and through the mercantilist calculus, population also became very foundation of a “dynamic of the strength of the state and sovereign” (FOUCAULT, 2009, p. 68). Therefore, mercantilism construed population as a productive force, a source of wealth in the state’s continuous commercial competition with other states.

According to Foucault, this changed with the thought of the physiocrats and with eighteenth century political thought. By mid-eighteenth century, Nature appeared as a level of reality which meant that to act in the domain of politics or economy was still to act in the domain of nature. In this context, Population⁴⁹ was construed as a “set of processes to be managed at the level and on the basis of what is natural in these processes” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 70). Population was no longer an indefinitely malleable set of subjects but was thought to move according to variables which did not present themselves so readily to the sovereign’s direct intervention. Population began to be viewed as an intricate phenomenon⁵⁰ which encompassed,

⁴⁸ As Foucault notes “So, what we see appearing in the middle of the eighteenth century really is a naturalism much more than a liberalism. Nevertheless, I think we can employ the word liberalism inasmuch as freedom really is at the heart of this practice or of the problems it confronts.” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 62)

⁴⁹ Population or the public: “With the emergence of mankind as a species, within a field of the definition of all living species, we can say that man appears in the first form of his integration within biology. From one direction, then, population is the human species, and from another it is what will be called the public. Here again, the word is not new, but its usage is.³⁵ The public, which is a crucial notion in the eighteenth century, is the population seen under the aspect of its opinions, ways of doing things, forms of behavior, customs, fears, prejudices, and requirements; it is what one gets a hold on through education, campaigns, and convictions. The population is therefore everything that extends from biological rootedness through the species up to the surface that gives one a hold provided by the public. From the species to the public; we have here a whole field of new realities in the sense that they are the pertinent elements for mechanisms of power, the pertinent space within which and regarding which one must act.” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 75)

⁵⁰ The problem proposed by police in the seventeenth century – the “care” of the Sovereign’s subjects-, alongside the discovery of a naturality, or regularity of processes, within population are part of the processes of the change of Sovereign power. Sovereign power was constituted – it functioned – basically as the, “the right to take live or let live” (FOUCAULT, 2003, p. 241). In 76, Foucault remarks that this changed, roughly around the nineteenth century: And I think that one of the greatest transformations political right underwent in the nineteenth century was precisely that, I wouldn’t say exactly that sovereignty’s old right – to take life or let live – was replaced, but it came to be complemented by a new right which does not erase the old right but which does penetrate it, permeate it. This is the right, or rather precisely, the opposite right. It is the right to “make” live or “let” live.” (FOUCAULT, 1976). This change Foucault alludes to is precisely the emergence of life as an object of power. He would later call this biopolitics: “The development in the second half of the eighteenth century of what was called Medizinische Polizei, public hygiene, and social medicine, should be re-inserted in the general framework of a “biopolitics”; the latter aims to treat the “population” as a set of coexisting living beings with particular biological and pathological features, and which as such falls under specific forms of knowledge and technique. This “biopolitics” must itself be understood on the basis of a theme developed since the seventeenth century: the management of state forces.” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 367)

and varied with, things such as “climate, material surroundings, commerce, customs and laws, moral and religious values, means of subsistence, and so on” (DE BEISTEGUI, 2018, p. 33)

Among these very complex set of phenomena, it is possible to discern, according to Foucault, an invariant. Population’s mainspring of action is desire (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 72). Population as a set of natural processes meant that it could regulate itself, its numbers, through a play of its desires. At this point, desire is “closely associated, if not identified, with the concepts and norms of interest and utility” (DE BEISTEGUI, 2018, p. 34). In mercantilism and Reason of State, police had to ensure the composition of the individuals’ private interests aiming to produce public or state utility. The naturalness of population, however, guarantees that the:

both spontaneous and regulated play of desire will in fact allow the production of an interest, of something favorable for the population. The production of the collective interest through the play of desire is what distinguishes both the naturalness of population and the possible artificiality of the means one adopts to manage it. (FOUCAULT, 2009, p. 73)

Thus, in Population what takes place is a mechanism of interest - a spontaneous and natural composition of interest. Population is thus inhabited by subjects of interest. The notions of desire, interest, self-love, became gradually detached from its religious implications. Self-Interest was a

a tendency that was given some legitimacy within the context of the reason of state and sovereign power, while recognized as a constitutive feature of a fallen human nature, and thus in need of being fought and contained (through the love of God and charity), was legitimized and integrated into a discourse of truth, and as a basic instrument of government. Initially perceived as cynical and disturbing, the idea of self-interest, and of its inevitable pursuit, was eventually accepted as an indisputable truth regarding human nature. From a flaw that needed to be controlled and dominated, it became a basic and indispensable instrument of government. (DE BEISTEGUI, 2018, p. 54)

According to Foucault, a subject of interest, or a *homo oeconomicus*, appeared in the eighteenth century “as the vis-à-vis, and the basic element of the new governmental reason” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 271). For Foucault, the mechanics of the *homo oeconomicus* is derived from British empiricism. British empiricism, with its sensationalist approach, posited a human nature permeated by passions from which certain propensities derive. Moreover, a mark of eighteenth-century empiricism was the intertwining of physical sensations (sensualism) and moral sentiments. What differentiates and marks the novelty of the theoretical proposition of British empiricism for Foucault, however, is that:

What English empiricism introduces—let’s say, roughly, with Locke—and doubtless for the first time in Western philosophy, is a subject who is not so much defined by his freedom, or by the opposition of soul and body, or by the presence of a source or core of concupiscence marked to a greater or lesser degree by the Fall or sin, but who appears in the form of a subject of individual choices which are both irreducible and non-transferable. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 271–272)

Desire, as Locke proposed is “the uneasiness of the mind for want of some absent good” (LOCKE, 1824, p. 217). Desire for Locke is a lack, a disagreeable idea of pain, one that we actively seek to avoid. According to Locke, the motive for human action stems from the search of enjoyment and the avoidance of its absence:

The uneasiness a man finds in himself upon the absence of any thing, whose present enjoyment carries the idea of delight with it, is that we call desire: which is greater or less, as that uneasiness is more or less vehement. Where, by the by, it may perhaps be of some use to remark, that the chief, if not only spur to human industry and action, is uneasiness.” (LOCKE, 1824, p. 217)

It is no wonder that desire is defined by Locke in the section “Of Modes of Pleasure and Pain” in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Desire as the engine of human action is connected to a will that moves through an interplay of preferences: an individual choice between pleasure and pain. Thus, the subject in British empiricism has no concupiscent core or fallen nature: its will is based solely on a pleasure/pain matrix. In that sense, be it the “itch after honor, power, or riches” (LOCKE, 1824, p. 248) or moral principles, they are enframed by the pleasure and pain matrix:

That we call good, which is apt to cause or increase pleasure, or diminish pain in us; or else to procure - preserve us the possession of any other good, or absence of any evil. And on the contrary, we name that evil, which is apt to produce or increase any pain, or diminish any pleasure in us; or else to procure us any evil, or deprive us of any good. (LOCKE, 1824, p. 216)

David Hume, half a century later, arrived at a similar instance with regards to pleasure and pain: “there is implanted in the human mind a perception of pain and pleasure, as the chief spring and moving principle of all its actions” (HUME, 1896, p. 118). Along the same lines, Adam Smith, in his moral treatise, sees pleasure and pain as felt instantaneously, and links the drive for sympathy to the level of pleasure and pain that the passions can excite (SMITH, 1984, p. 14). For Foucault, the atomistic individual choice that stems from this irreducible principle of pleasure and pain is precisely what interest means (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 272).

Thus, Foucault proposed a conceptualization of interest close to that of Hirschman. It is also marked by self-centeredness. Self-interest became a general and natural law of human action that any government had to follow. It would be inefficient to govern men by and through anything other than their interest:

By the mid-eighteenth century, and taking the advances in mechanics introduced by Galileo and Newton as a model, self-interest was seen as a natural law governing human action, which any good (or reasonable) government would seek to take into account. “Just as the physical world is ruled by the laws of motion,” Helvétius writes, “no less is the moral universe ruled by the laws of interest.” [...]. It would be unwise, if not altogether foolish (or simply ineffective) to govern to govern them any differently than according to their own interest and relative selfishness, especially regarding private property and the acquisition of riches (DE BEISTEGUI, 2018, p. 48–49)

According to Foucault, the relation of the Sovereign and its subjects irrevocably changed with the normative force that self-interest acquired. Instead of saying no to the desire of its subjects, the Sovereign had now to affirm it. The issue of government was not how to limit or prohibit interest, but how to secure its correct functioning. It is the formation of a politics of self-love:

The problem is how they [Sovereigns] can say yes; it is how to say yes to this desire. The problem is not therefore the limit of concupiscence or the limit of self-esteem in the sense of love of oneself, but concerns rather everything that stimulates and encourages this self-esteem, this desire, so that it can produce its necessary beneficial effects. (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 73)

The State is gradually reconfigured by the rationality of government and was construed as a regulator of interests (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 346) inasmuch as it aims at securing a precarious, albeit natural, spontaneous confluence of interests⁵¹. According to Foucault, this is the moment that civil society signaled a field that would be the “vis-à-vis of the state.” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 349). Civil society, society or just the social⁵² emerged as a new object

⁵¹ That is to say, liberalism, the liberal art of government, is forced to determine the precise extent to which and up to what point individual interest, that is to say, individual interests insofar as they are different and possibly opposed to each other, constitute a danger for the interest of all. The problem of security is the protection of the collective interest against individual interests. Conversely, individual interests have to be protected against everything that could be seen as an encroachment of the collective interest. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 65)

⁵² “And I think that civil society—which is very quickly called society, and which at the end of the eighteenth century is called the nation—makes a self-limitation possible for governmental practice and an art of government, for reflection on this art of government and so for a governmental technology; it makes possible a self-limitation which infringes neither economic laws nor the principles of right, and which infringes neither the requirement of governmental generality nor the need for an omnipresence of government.” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 296).

and domain. For Foucault, civil society as it appears in the eighteenth century, is a correlate of a liberal art of government⁵³. It was a proper field of action for the management of interests. The object of government is

not a primitive nature, as it were, any more than it is a set of subjects indefinitely subject to a sovereign will and submissive to its requirements. The state has responsibility for a society, a civil society, and the state must see to the management of this civil society. This is of course a fundamental mutation with regard to a form of *raison d'État*, of police rationality that continued to deal only with a collection of subjects. (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 350)

Civil society appeared as a zone where the population of *homo oeconomicus* put forward by political economy and the collection of *homos juridicus* of public law could cohabit. It appeared as an “opaque domain outside the political order, with its own history, its own forces and struggles, its own groups and hierarchies, and its own voice.” (DEAN; VILLADSEN, 2016, p. 124).

According to Foucault, the economists and the sentimentalism of the Scottish Enlightenment civil society is thought within a historical-natural plane. There was no state of nature from which, after the event of a collective consent, civil government was established. Civil society is a natural state that springs from men's social nature. There is no prehistory of the social bond. The histories of the development of human society in stages, which were very common among the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, serve to show how “the social is part of the natural and the natural is always conveyed by the social” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 300). To that extent:

If we are asked therefore, Where the state of nature is to be found? we may answer, It is here; and it matters not whether we are understood to speak in the island of Great Britain, at the Cape of Good Hope, or the Straits of Magellan. [...] In the condition of the savage, as well as in that of the citizen, are many proofs of human invention; and in either is not any permanent station, but a mere stage through which this travelling being is destined to pass. If the palace be unnatural, the cottage is so no less; and the highest refinements of political and moral apprehension, are not more artificial in their kind, than the first operations of sentiment and reason. (FERGUSON, 1996, p. 14)

⁵³ Foucault compares civil society to madness and sexuality inasmuch as they are “transactional realities”. Transactional reality refers to certain concepts or phenomena which have not always existed - at least not in the same way or with the same function - but are nevertheless real as a consequence of a specific intertwining of operations of knowledge and relations of power. Thus, civil society “is an element of transactional reality in the history of governmental technologies, a transactional reality which seems to me to be absolutely correlative to the form of governmental technology we call liberalism, that is to say, a technology of government whose objective is its own self-limitation insofar as it is pegged to the specificity of economic processes.” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 297)

It is in this context that Foucault sees civil society as a site of “a spontaneous synthesis of individuals” which ultimately refers to “a summation of individual satisfactions within the social bond itself” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 300). This mechanism seems analogous to that of the interest. In fact, as Foucault himself states:

We are dealing with a mechanism of immediate multiplication that has in fact the same form as the immediate multiplication of profit in the purely economic mechanism of interests. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 301)

For Foucault, however, there is a difference: although similar, the bonds in civil society are not constituted by economic interests. According to Foucault the bonds which constitute civil society are

instinct, sentiment, and sympathy, it is the impulses of benevolence individuals feel for each other, but is also the loathing of others, repugnance for the misfortune of individuals, but possibly the pleasure taken in the misfortune of others with whom one will break. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 301)

Foucault sees a distinction between the economic (thus selfish) bonds and what he calls “an interplay of disinterested interests” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 301). In relation to these disinterested interests the selfish principle of economic interest stands in a very unique position. It is that which makes individuals converge through the multiplying effect of the mechanism of interest, but also appears as something which threatens to disassociate them. In sum:

The economic bond is a principle of dissociation with regard to the active bonds of compassion, benevolence, love for one’s fellows, and sense of community, inasmuch as it constantly tends to undo what the spontaneous bond of civil society has joined together by picking out the egoist interest of individuals, emphasizing it, and making it more incisive. In other words, the economic bond arises within civil society, is only possible through [civil society], and in a way strengthens it, but in another way it undoes it. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 302)

On the one hand, the *Homo œconomicus* is “the abstract, ideal, purely economic point that inhabits the dense, full, and complex reality of civil society” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 296). On the other, Civil society is formed by a series of emotional bonds utterly distinct from the *homo œconomicus*’s economic interest. In this sense, the *homo œconomicus*’s self-interest, its vain and rapacious nature, found a place in civil society, but also risked disintegrating society’s set of constituent “disinterested interests”. Within the opposition Foucault alludes to, the *homo œconomicus* seems to be in constant tension with another subject: a *homo socialis* (ANDRADE, 2016, p. 260).

The separation Foucault inadvertently established appears also in the recent work of Miguel de Beistegui (2018). Beistegui aims to discern the regimes of desire that compose liberal subjectivity. He distinguishes three different regimes of desire: economic (*homo oeconomicus*), sexual (*homo sexualis*), and the desire of recognition (*homo symbolicus*). These regimes intersect in many ways, to the extent that the separation between the *homo oeconomicus* and the *homo symbolicus* appears problematic:

The latter [self-love and self-interest] distinction is particularly difficult to establish, as some, like Hume, have tended to identify self-love and self-interest. (DE BEISTEGUI, 2018, p. 254, note 37)

Although Beistegui goes to great lengths to distinguish these regimes, it would be hard in the eighteenth century to completely distinguish self-love and self interest. The opposition can be viewed, however, as one of sympathy and self-love. Foucault mentions sympathy twice in his 78-79 lectures. In the abovementioned passage, sympathy is a bond that forms civil society. In another passage Foucault posits that sympathy may have a relation to the mechanism of interest:

This is the idea of a subject of interest, by which I mean a subject as the source of interest, the starting point of an interest, or the site of a mechanism of interests. *For sure, there is a series of discussions on the mechanism of interest itself and what may activate it: is it self-preservation, is it the body or the soul, or is it sympathy?* But this is not what is important. What is important is the appearance of interest for the first time as a form of both immediately and absolutely subjective will. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 273, emphasis added).

Foucault blatantly acknowledges his disinterest on the subject. Nevertheless, sympathy is a very important notion in the eighteenth century, especially in the British empiricism of Foucault's subject of interest. Sympathy as a concept has a broad history. It can be found in fields as varied as medicine, rhetoric, music, and theater⁵⁴. The sympathy⁵⁵ Foucault alludes to, however, is related to a political connotation: sympathy as the capacity to enter another person's feelings, to share them, and possibly be "contaminated" by them. Sympathy posits the possibility of a harmony "among otherwise isolated individuals and a way for them to fit into a larger whole, be it society or the universe" (SCHLIESSER, 2015, p. 4). In that sense, Foucault

⁵⁴ For more on the various aspects of the concept see Schliesser.(2015).

⁵⁵ Recently words such as empathy and recognition replaced the word sympathy. I use sympathy in order to maintain the connection with its eighteenth-century root. In one way or another, they are related with the German "*Einführung*" which means "to enter into somebody else's feelings" (SCHLIESSER, 2015, p. 3) .

may have disregarded an important aspect of the mechanism of interest. Moreover, it is my contention that both sympathy and self-love are part of the mechanics of the *homo oeconomicus*.

Foucault's separation of economic interest and other bonds appears artificial. Eighteenth century political economy could not be thought as an independent science⁵⁶, with its own laws and set of rules. In that sense, concepts and methods from physics and natural philosophy were intermingled with political economy:

concepts and methods from natural history and the physical sciences shaped and governed the analysis of wealth offered by eighteenth-century thinkers such as Hume, Quesnay, and Smith. (SCHABAS, 2005, p. 5)

It is impressive how Foucault seems to disregard that at that point the boundaries between disciplines were not so clearly divisible. Moreover, Foucault's dismissal of moral philosophy is concerning. As Hume posited in his *Treatise on Human Nature*, every science has a relation, one way or another, to human nature⁵⁷. The science of man was, according to the Scot, the only foundation for a complete system of the sciences in general⁵⁸

In that sense, Foucault's treatment of Adam Smith in the 78-79 courses is at best limited. Foucault takes Adam Ferguson's *History of civil society* as a "fundamental, almost statutory text regarding the characterization of civil society" (FOUCAULT, 2008a, p. 298). According to the French philosopher, Ferguson's civil society figures as "the political correlate of what Adam Smith studied in purely economic terms" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 298). Even if *The Wealth of Nations* is, as Foucault stated, an "unavoidable text" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 278), it is problematic to completely ignore Adam Smith's moral treatise: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. This is even more precarious when one considers that Smith's moral work was his

⁵⁶ To propose that something in the eighteenth century was a science does not mean that it was separate from other areas of knowledge: "In the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, 'science' expressed an esprit systématique that encompassed all intellectual inquiry. Hence those who wrote on society or history or human nature were conscious of operating on the same plane as those working in medicine, chemistry, mathematics and so on." (BERRY, 2011, p. 2)

⁵⁷ 'Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. (HUME, 1896, p. XIX)

⁵⁸ In pretending therefore to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a complete system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security. (HUME, 1896, p. XX)

attempted at a science of man or of human nature. It was a work that, broadly speaking, posited the motives for human action⁵⁹.

Foucault's real interest at this point was in how political economy pegged itself to a rationality of government. By isolating Smith's political economy in that fashion, however, Foucault seems to replicate a problem that is forever inscribed in the Smithian literature: The Adam Smith Problem. The century old problem refers to an ambiguity in Smith's published oeuvre. The Theory of Moral Sentiments is supposed to be permeated by a subject motivated by sympathy and beneficence. It ultimately posited an ethical dimension apart from the economic field. The Wealth of Nations, on the other hand, is supposedly populated by the cold self-interested individual, ruled by the self-regulating norms of economy.

In the next chapter, I delve into the problem of Foucault's readings of Adam Smith. As with the physiocrats, Smith does not deliver economy as an independent reality. In his writings, the Scotsman clearly posits political economy within the broader "science of the legislator" (SMITH, 1979a, p. 428). The recent treatment of the Adam Smith Problem has shown that the one must consider the Theory of Moral Sentiments and The Wealth of Nations as integrated parts of an overall project⁶⁰. In that sense, it is necessary to first disperse the separation Foucault installed and posit the importance of Theory of Moral Sentiments to the study of Liberal Governmentality.

Furthermore, at the heart of the correlate of Liberal Governmentality, the *homo oeconomicus*, there seems to be a more complex subject than simply the one who must obey his own interest. The mechanism of interest appears to be permeated by the impulse of passions. We intent to paint a more complex picture of this *Homo oeconomicus* by analyzing the moral philosophy of Adam Smith. Our contention is that in the theory of moral sentiments, one can find a *homo oeconomicus* which fits Foucault's conceptualization. Furthermore, it complexifies Foucault's analysis by showing a *homo oeconomicus* moved by self-love and by a mechanism of sympathy. Both converge to produce the subject as a "source point of an interest" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 273).

⁵⁹ As Ronge posited: "the first thing to note is that Foucault is not a very good connoisseur of Adam Smith. Already his apostrophy of the Wealth of Nations as the "unaboidable text" of Smith reveals that he was not very well acquainted with the work of the Scottish philosopher. Otherwise, he would have been aware that Smith's main work is the Theory of Moral Sentiments; at least in the eyes of Smith and his contemporaries." (RONGE, 2015a, p. 232)

⁶⁰ In the next chapter, I will present a brief history of the Adam Smith Problem.

3.2 LIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY AND THE OPACITY OF THE ECONOMY

The governmentality framework proposes an analysis of liberalism not as a political or economic theory, much less as an ideology, but as a reflexive principle or practice of government. As such, it aims at maximizing its effect with the lowest possible political and economic cost. Liberal governmentality privileges an effective government over questions of morality or justice. Consequently, its premise is that one always risks governing too much (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 319).

The liberal art of government appeared as a critique to the previous governmentality of Reason of State. It sets limitation to the boundless government which mercantilism and police deployed. Political Economy emerged as a form of knowledge that posited an internal critique to governmental reason. It constituted *de facto* limits to government inasmuch as it attempted “to define the sphere of competence of government in terms of utility⁶¹ on the basis of an internal elaboration of governmental practices” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 41). Eighteenth-century utilitarianism turned the question of governing too much into:

Is it useful? For what is it useful? Within what limits is it useful? When does it stop being useful? When does it become harmful? This is not the revolutionary question: What are my original rights and how can I assert them against any sovereign? But it is the radical question, the question of English radicalism; the problem of English radicalism is the problem of utility. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 40)

Political economy, as it begins to be conceptualized in the mid-eighteenth century, appeared as “a principle of self-limitation for governmental reason” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 20). It did not, however, functioned in the terms of public law⁶². Political economy did not posit a

⁶¹ By the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, political economy’s internal critique and limitation of government is connected to utilitarian thought (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 16). For Foucault, utilitarianism is not simply a system of thought, philosophy or ideology; it is a technology of government (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 41).

⁶² Public law provides liberal governmentality with a limitation which does not pose an internal question of the usefulness of its acts. It sets a number of natural rights which predate, at times, even the formation of the sovereign and the state. Thus, law constitutes the Sovereign through a transaction of rights. At the same time, it demarks a set of rights which the Sovereign’s power must guarantee and that, conversely, can be asserted against him. Although Foucault demarks the distinctions of these two forms of limiting the State’s power, it does not mean that they are distinctive features of specific authors. Most thinkers at this point were versed and wrote both on economics and public law. As economy had not yet become a specific reality, commerce and law appeared as a preoccupation of most of the thinkers from the seventeenth to early nineteenth century. The fact is that the limitations proposed by political economy had to be translated to the juridical field. The question became: “if there is political economy, what is its corresponding public law?” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 38). The freedom of the market had to be secured by laws which prevented intervention. Conversely, it also needed to be protected by a set of regulations that would inhibit the ill functioning of the processes (anti-monopoly laws being a clear example of this).

set of natural rights which existed prior to governmental action. Instead it disclosed a natural order that ran through and formed the set of processes and the relations between men in society.

Nature, henceforth, appears as something that “runs under, through and in the exercise of governmentality” (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 16). According to Foucault, political economy takes up the task of unveiling the intrinsic connection between governmental action and this natural order. More importantly, the affirmation of these natural processes or of an *Oeconomy of Nature* ended up dislodging the role of the Sovereign in governmental action. This effect on the sovereign, and also on the *homo oeconomicus*, can be best analyzed through a particular distinction between the thought of the physiocrats and of Adam Smith.

According to Foucault, the first political economy in that sense was that of the physiocrats (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 14). In consonance with this, Schabas posits that François Quesnay was “the one who most instantiates the links between nature and economic phenomena, both physical nature and human physiology” (SCHABAS, 2005, p. 45). As a physician, Quesnay drew much upon physiology and often equated the body politic to the human body (SCHABAS, 2005, p. 46). Thus, he showed how the circulation of people, goods, and consequently currency had to be properly secured and freed by comparing it to the circulation of blood in the human body⁶³. Not only that but as Quesnay collapsed social order with economic order, knowledge of the economic processes “appeared to be of primary necessity if the sickness of society was to be cured” (MEEK, 2003, p. 18).

The physiocrats thought to be working on the reality of things, at the physics of the processes. As such wealth was seen as part of nature to the extent that it was “a physical substance that only nature could produce and reproduce” (SCHABAS, 2005, p. 48). Armed with such presuppositions the physiocrats could infer that the natural laws which guided the economic processes, and consequently social order as a whole could be made visible:

The Physiocrats assumed that the system of market exchange which it was their main purpose to analyze was subject to certain objective economic laws, which operated independently of the will of man and which were discoverable

⁶³ In his study of the origins of the *Tableau Economique*, Foley shows how the circulation of currency is analogous to the circulation of blood in Quesnay’s thought: “Thus a major similarity between the circulation of the Tableau and the circulation of Quesnay’s medical scheme published a quarter century before lies in the fact that they both begin with an initial division of the circulating medium into two separate and equal flows. The blood goes equally to the upper and lower parts of the body, just as currency goes in equal amounts to the productive and sterile classes. Moreover, just as the blood flow then subdivides and sub-subdivides as it passes into the smaller arteries, so the currency flows, after their initial division, redivide in the same repeating pattern as each recipient of funds splits his income evenly between purchases made in his own and the opposite class of the Tableau.” (FOLEY, 1973, p. 134)

by the light of reason. These laws governed the shape and movement of the economic order, and therefore (on the Physiocrats' basically materialist hypothesis) the shape and movement of the social order as a whole. (MEEK, 2003, p. 19).

The good government for the physiocrats could only be an economic government. A sovereign that ruled according to the reality of the processes inasmuch as he knows the natural laws of the economy. The figure of Quesnay's Economic Table exemplifies this. The economic table was the place where all the processes of circulation were effectively represented. In that sense the Table offered the Sovereign "a principle of analysis and a sort of principle of transparency in relation to the whole of the economic process." (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 285). The sovereign for the physiocrats remained that unity which aggregates the polity⁶⁴ inasmuch as he had total knowledge of the processes which brought about social order.

The knowledge of these processes, of these natural laws, led the physiocrats' economic despot to secure the freedom of the economic agents. Economic knowledge was not a secret of the state as statistics was in the form of an *arcana imperii*⁶⁵. As economy appeared imbued with transparency it would have to be "spread as widely and uniformly as possible among all subjects" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 285). Thus, in physiocracy not only the sovereign but also the agents can know all the laws which permeate the reality of the economic processes.

The principle of *laissez-faire* for the physiocrats is thus the direct consequence of a total knowledge of the economic processes. As the Sovereign looms over with a totalizing gaze he allows the subjects to be free. The sovereign is forced by reason and evidence to concede the freedom of the economic agents and their interests.

Even though the physiocrats displaced the Sovereign as the "the constitutive framework of a discourse on wealth and trade" (DEAN, 2010, p. 134), they still posited a legal despot whose function was to know the laws of nature: the Despot's totalizing gaze guaranteed the *laissez-faire* politics. Adam Smith, according to Foucault, effected another dislocation which would place economy in a more independent relation to the Sovereign.

⁶⁴ This becomes clear when the relation of the sovereign to the territory is analyzed in physiocracy. For the physiocrats the Sovereign was the owner of the territory: "Economic agents must be left free, but, first, we must take account of the fact that the entire territory of a country is basically the sovereign's property, or at any rate that the sovereign is co-owner of all the land of the country and so is therefore co-producer. This enabled them to justify taxation. So, in the physiocrat's conception, the sovereign, as co-owner of a country's lands and co-producer of its products, will correspond perfectly, as it were, in principle and right as well as in fact, to all the production and all the economic activity of a country." (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 284)

⁶⁵ On *arcana imperii* see Senellart (2006, p. 263)

Converging with the physiocrats, Smith also posits the idea of an orderly nature, what he calls an *oeconomy* of nature. Moreover, Smith also uses the term nature to refer to “that which normally takes place, or would take place, in the absence of some distinctively human factor” (CAMPBELL, 2010, p. 56). The specific movement that Adam Smith produced, however, has to do with the possibility of the knowledge of economic processes. If the physiocrats postulated the economic order as a field of total transparency, Smith affirmed the “benign opacity of economic processes” (GORDON, 1991, p. 15).

Foucault saw this movement in the affirmation of the invisible hand. Although usually caught in the debate of the possible theistic influence of Smith’s thought⁶⁶, Foucault focus on the principle of invisibility inherent to the invisible hand postulate. The invisibility refers precisely to the totality of the economic processes. Smith postulates a field where the events cannot be exhaustively covered or effectively totalized. As Vivienne Brown posits, the invisible hand is both “sightless and out of sight” (BROWN, 1994, p. 21). This entails that both the Sovereign and the homo oeconomicus in Smith’s thought suffer from an epistemic limitation. Smith postulated that no one could know all the economic processes. Neither could these processes be represented in something like an economic table. The economic man only acts to the extent and with the knowledge of his own interests:

His situation is therefore doubly involuntary, indefinite, and non-totalizable, but all these involuntary, indefinite, uncontrollable, and non-totalizable features of his situation do not disqualify his interest or the calculation he may make to maximize it. On the contrary, all these indefinite features of his situation found, as it were, the specifically individual calculation that he makes; they give it consistency, effect, insert it in reality, and connect it in the best possible way to the rest of the world. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 278)

Thus, this apparent paradoxical position in which the impossibility of a total knowledge actually supports the rationality of the *homo oeconomicus*’ self-interested choices opposes the direct pursuit of collective good. In fact, as Smith states, the economic agent “neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it” (SMITH, 1979, p. 456). According to Smith, that the economic agent does not know or aims at the public benefit is crucial inasmuch as by doing that they are actually more effective at promoting it⁶⁷. The principle of invisibility is not only an impossibility in terms of the capacity

⁶⁶ See Jacob Viner (1972)

⁶⁷ “By pursuing his own interest, he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the publick good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need be employed in dissuading them from it.” (SMITH, 1979, p. 456)

of human intelligence. The opacity of economy is a necessary correlative of the mechanism of interest.

The benign opacity of economy also extends to the Sovereign. Smith's Political Economy opposes both the Prince's disciplining and composing individual interests and the physiocrat's Despot whose totalizing gaze secures freedom. As the sovereign cannot grasp the totality of the economic reality, he must not block the pursuit of individual interest:

Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man, or order of men. *The sovereign is completely discharged from a duty, in the attempting to perform which he must always be exposed to innumerable delusions, and for the proper performance of which no human wisdom or knowledge could ever be sufficient; the duty of superintending the industry of private people, and of directing it towards the employments most suitable to the interest of the society.* (SMITH, 1979b, p. 687, emphasis added)

According to Foucault, Smith's political economy constituted a critique to Reason of State inasmuch as it posited the Sovereign's and the *homo oeconomicus*' epistemic limitation. By doing this, Smith constituted political economy not as the science of government - as police was - but as something which lodges itself within governmental reason:

Economics is a science lateral to the art of governing. One must govern with economics, one must govern alongside economists, one must govern by listening to the economists, but economics must not be and there is no question that it can be the governmental rationality itself. (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 286)

There is another side, however, to this epistemic limitation. The *homo oeconomicus*' partial blindness appears intermingled with an element of deception. In an above-mentioned passage, Foucault alludes to this element of deception within the mechanics of the *homo oeconomicus*:

In his desire the individual may well be deceived regarding his personal interest, but there is something that does not deceive, which is that the spontaneous, or at any rate both spontaneous and regulated play of desire will in fact allow the production of an interest, of something favorable for the population. (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 73)

Foucault is thus aware that deception plays a role in the mechanism of interest. Furthermore, even though this deception may take place in the very heart of a subject's desire, it, apparently, does not interfere "in the spontaneous production of the collective interest by

desire” (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 73). Foucault, however, does not explore the possibilities that this deception may have for Liberal Governmentality.

This may be due to the fact that the concept of deception lost its appeal in economic theory. Recently, Catherine Gerschlager shows how the concept of deception was gradually removed from economic analysis. In general equilibrium theory there was no place for deception:

thanks to the general concepts included within the economic framework, it is not in *homo oeconomicus's* interest to deceive either him- or herself or others, as this would ultimately damage the mutually advantageous exchange. (GERSCHLAGER, 2015, p. 34)

In fact, the growing idealization of the models, along with their increased mathematization, made deception completely disappear from economics. Deception also lost its appeal because the distinction between means and ends for some strands of utilitarianism are not considered important. As Diatkine posits: “If I use my car to go to Lyon, or if I drive to Lyon because I like showing my car off – the outcome is exactly the same” (DIATKINE, 2010, p. 390).

This is not true if one considers the thought of Adam Smith, specifically his analysis of utility in Part IV of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Smith posited deception at the center of the *homo oeconomicus*. In fact, according to the Scot, the illusion which rests in the *Homo oeconomicus's* desire is a necessary fact of the oeconomy of nature. In the next chapter, I examine the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in order to show how this deception is as important to the *homo oeconomicus* as its epistemic limitations. Moreover, I uncover an aesthetic dimension at the center of this deception. For Smith, the beauty of order can explain the *homo oeconomicus's* self-deceiving nature. Consequently, there is an aesthetic dimension of Liberal Governmentality that has not yet been explored.

4 THE *HOMO OECOMICUS* IN ADAM SMITH'S THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS

Foucault's distinction between a selfish, or economic, passion and a set of "disinterested interests" seems to resemble, and to some extent call upon, the separation between moral and economic dimensions. He seems to perceive an incongruity between the mechanism of interest and the synthesis of individuals that takes place in civil society. These two mechanics indicate two distinct subjects: an ethical or social and an economical.

Political oeconomy under the mercantilist technology constituted in the seventeenth and up to the mid eighteenth century an analysis of wealth which worked by "quantifying wealth, measuring its circulation, determining the role of currency" (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 76). This knowledge, which appeared mixed in statistics and political arithmetic⁶⁸, comprised what the Sovereign needed to govern. Moreover, like the patriarchal figure of the father in the household, the Sovereign or, as it appears in treatises at that time, the Statesman was:

essential in the structure of this discourse, since in his administration of an aggregated 'polity' he is the sole expression of a unity which is otherwise dispersed among individual units or the categories which articulate these units. The 'individual' unit of administration is in this conception the family, ruled by a patriarchal figure in a fashion analogous to that of the state. (TRIBE, 1981, p. 138)

The separation of an economic and an ethical dimension can be traced in Foucault's thought to his insight that

The word "economy" designated a form of government in the sixteenth century; in the eighteenth century, through a series of complex processes that are absolutely crucial for our history, it will designate a level of reality and a field of intervention for government. (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 95)

In that sense, the isolation of a field of economy, and its passage from an analysis of wealth to "both a science and a technique of intervention in this field of reality" (FOUCAULT, 2007, p. 108) could support such a separation. Mitchell Dean, however, objects to that

⁶⁸ As Poovey notes even though both forms of knowledge are methodologically linked to natural philosophy, political arithmetic was a descendent of the science of police, whereas later political economy derived its epistemological concerns from eighteenth century moral philosophy: "Practitioners of police, whose foremost concern was efficient rule, were interested in collecting numerical information to facilitate centralized administration, while moral philosophers deployed a combination of historical analysis and introspection to determine the nature of man, for whom government was necessary, but a secondary concern" (POOVEY, 2005, p. 62). Thus, political oeconomy is still strictly linked to police governmentality.

periodization. In fact, he states that economy as a science cannot be found in Smith's classical *Wealth of Nations*:

Contra Foucault and Gordon, we might note that there is substantial textual evidence for the view that the *Wealth of Nations* does not mark the emergence of an economic science, particularly in its final three books. (DEAN, 2010, p. 135)

Smith himself states in the *Wealth of Nations*:

Political oeconomy, considered as a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator, proposes two distinct objects; first, to provide a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people, or more properly to enable them to provide such a revenue or subsistence for themselves; and secondly, to supply the state or commonwealth with a revenue sufficient for the publick services. (SMITH, 1979b, p. 428)

Political Oeconomy, as Smith still calls it, is not an isolated science but a branch of the science of the legislator. It is still connected to the notion of a Statesman as in the analysis of wealth in mercantilism. For Smith, and others such as Hume, the science of the legislator entailed the finding of general principles with which the statesman should guide his policies and laws⁶⁹. Moreover, between 1752 and 1764, Smith was professor of Moral philosophy at Glasgow University. His lectures touched upon natural theology, ethics, jurisprudence, and political oeconomy. As Duglass Stewart states, this last one encompassed:

political regulations which are founded, not upon the principle of justice, but that of expediency, and which are calculated to increase the riches, the power, and the prosperity of a State. Under this view, he considered the political institutions relating to commerce, to finances, to ecclesiastical and military establishments. (STEWART IN SMITH, 1982, p. 276)

Dean further supports this claim by affirming the inseparability of the economic and moral domains in the 18th century:

The advocacy of the invisible hand should be understood within the unity of moral, political and economic concerns. If we use the criterion of the presence of a theoretical demonstration of the economy as an autonomous domain, Smith and the physiocrats, like Mercantilists, therefore, cannot be regarded as

⁶⁹ In both the TMS and WN Smith expresses similar views on what this science of the legislator is: "Some general, and even systematical, idea of the perfection of policy and law, may no doubt be necessary for directing the views of the statesman." (SMITH, 1984, p. 234) In the WN, when talking about commercial disputes between European Nations, and the retaliations which took the form of a high duties or commercial restrictions and prohibitions Smith states: To judge whether such retaliations are likely to produce such an effect, does not, perhaps, belong so much to the science of a legislator, whose deliberations ought to be governed by general principles which are always the same, as to the skill of that insidious and crafty animal, vulgarly called a statesman or politician whose councils are directed by the momentary fluctuations of affairs." (SMITH, 1979a, p. 467)

economists regardless of whatever break they introduce within the doctrines and practices of police. (DEAN, 2010, p. 136)

Dean identifies the beginning of this separation in the contributions of Ricardo and Malthus (DEAN, 2010, p. 136). Ute Tellmann further stresses this point. According to her work, *Life and Money – A Genealogy of the Liberal Economy and Displacement of Politics*, the turn of the nineteenth century

Was marked by a novel demarcation between economy and politics in liberalism: economic necessity was invented for liberalism. *Liberal economy turned into a domain of unyielding laws that override issues of justice or political demands for equality*. These conceptual shifts emerged in an environment of heated political contestation: democratic radicalism, revolutionary upheaval, and the turn to empire characterized this situation. (TELLMANN, 2018, p. 3, emphasis added)

Thus, Foucault could not, if circumscribed within eighteenth century British empiricism, talk about a clear-cut separation between moral and economic domains and, therefore, between a *Homo Oeconomicus* and a *Homo Socialis*. What is important at this point, however, is to posit that Foucault's separation appears to resemble a problem that appeared in the nineteenth century within Smith scholarship. The Adam Smith Problem⁷⁰ was essentially an issue regarding the internal coherence of Smith's work. It concerned a discontinuity between the Theory of moral sentiments and the Wealth of nations:

The so-called "Adam Smith problem" turned on how we might reconcile the Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759) and its emphasis on sympathy with the Wealth of Nations (1776) and its emphasis on self-interest. Are the books consistent or continuous? And if not, which in Smith's mind was prior? Was Smith primarily an ethical or an economic thinker? Were human beings driven primarily by sympathy or self-interest, virtue or vice? *Homo socius or homo oeconomicus*? (FORMAN-BARZILAI, 2010, p. 30)

⁷⁰ Our objective here is not to solve, or give a new light to the Problem. Nevertheless one can see how Foucault's insight of the economy becoming a specific domain and reality could help understand the Adam Smith Problem as it appeared in the nineteenth century. Foucault, understood as the historian of problematizations, could be elicited to help approach the Adam Smith Problem. Such approach would not propose to solve the issue, at least not in the conventional sense of the term. It would be a problem of how the ASP was made possible. A hint can be found in the famous text by August Oncken "The Consistency of Adam Smith": "As the new "ethical " school had entangled itself in a determined opposition to classical political economy, and especially to Adam Smith, its leader, it was most disconcerting to them to be told that he himself was a great ethical teacher" (ONCKEN, 1897, p. 445). This points not only to discursive conflicts but problems in terms of relations of power. It is important to remember that a problematization in Foucault "doesn't mean representation of a preexisting object, nor the creation by discourse of an object that doesn't exist. It is the totality of discursive or non-discursive practices that introduces something into the play of true and false and constitutes it as an object for thought (whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc.)" (FOUCAULT in KRITZMAN, 1990, p. 257). Thus, a genealogy is still to be made of the infamous Adam Smith Problem.

At the heart of the Adam Smith Problem lies the distinction between two dissonant subjects. The present thesis does not attempt to give a new answer to the quarrel. It has long been thoroughly discussed by scholars that compare exhaustively Smith's writings. In that sense, much of Smith's scholarship today propose, in one way or another, the unity of the Scot's oeuvre. In the following lines we propose to briefly sketch out the history of the issue, some of its currents, and lastly describe how the present research will approach it. Although our objective is not to solve the problem, the argumentation that follows will touch upon it indirectly. In that sense, we assume a constructive relation between TMS and the WN, although our object will restrict itself to Smith's moral work.

4.1 THE ADAM SMITH PROBLEM

Adam Smith has long been considered the father of classical political economy, being viewed as having rested the foundations of his philosophy in the "granite of self-interest" (STIGLER, 1971, 265). If one follows Foucault in thinking that Smith analysed society "in purely economic terms" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 298), one misses the fact that for Smith "the sources of human motivation are heterogeneous and cannot be reduced to a few principles" (MEHTA in HAAKONSEN, 2006, p. 248). In fact, Smith himself criticizes the philosophies which reduced all human behavior to egoistic self-interest as "splenetic" (SMITH, 1984, p. 183). In the following lines we will briefly sketch the historical origin of this problem⁷¹.

Even though proponents of famous economic schools of the 20th century helped to propagate narrow views of Smith's philosophy (e. g. some thinkers of the Austrian and the Chicago Schools), the problem really took shape with the reception of Smith by the German Historical School of Economics in the 19th century. In the same period in England the problem of consistency had not been proposed. In fact, Tribe goes as far as to say that Smith's writings had fallen into the "limbo of famous works that were bought, perhaps read through, but not studied" (TRIBE, 2008, p. 515), at least in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the 19th century saw the emergence in Germany of the now infamous Adam Smith Problem: the claim of an irrevocable anthropological inconsistency within Smith's work. According to the classic text by Auguste Oncken:

It does not seem to be understood in Great Britain that, on the Continent, there is a difference of opinion about one fundamental point in Adam Smith's system-a difference which, at one time, gave rise to some sharp polemics, and which is not yet settled. The question may be thus stated:-Are the two principal

⁷¹ For a more comprehensive analysis and history of the problem see Montes (2004) and Tribe (2008).

works of Adam Smith, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) on the one hand, and the *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) on the other, two entirely independent works, contradicting each other in their fundamental principles, or are we to regard the latter simply as a continuation of the former, though published at a later date, and both as presenting, when taken together, a comprehensive exposition of his moral philosophy? (ONCKEN, 1897, p. 444)

The reception of Smith in Germany was controversial⁷². Some of it had to do with the economic hegemony of Great Britain at the time, which was seen as a threat to the German's ideal of a *Nationalökonomie*. The German Historical School of economics, roughly speaking, was a reaction to the classical political economy that stemmed from Britain. Instead of universal natural laws derived from induction and conjectural history, the Historical School affirmed that the science of economy had to consider historical, ethical, and political issues that were specific to each nation. Naturally, Smith was construed as a one-sided thinker that reduced economy to self-interested behavior. In fact, the arguments against Smith were synthesized in the term *Smithianismus* (MONTES, 2003, p. 67).

Montes and Tribe see in Robert Hilderbrand the figure that rekindled the criticism of Smith⁷³. In 1848 his book "*Die Nationalökonomie der Gegenwart und Zukunft*" posited Smith as trying to "transform political economy into a mere natural history of egoism" (Hilderbrand in MONTES, 2003, p. 70). Other attacks came later by Karl Knies in 1853, and by Lujo Brentano in 1877. Knies, and more overtly Brentano, can be linked to the *Umschwungstheorie* position, or the French Connection approach (GÖÇMEN, 2007, p. 5; NIELI, 1986, p. 612).

This line of criticism posited that Smith's views irrevocably changed after the time he spent in France. In 1764, Smith went to France to serve as tutor to the Duke of Buccleuch. There he met thinkers such as Helvetius, Holbach, D'Alambert, Turgot, Voltaire, and Quesnay. These encounters supposedly drove Smith away from his earlier influences. According to Hildebrand, Knies, Skarżyński, and Brentano, Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* was the product of the influences of his teacher Francis Hutcheson and his friend David Hume (GÖÇMEN, 2007, p.

⁷² A brief history of this reception is sketch out by Tribe (2008).

⁷³ As noted before, British *laissez-faire* doctrines were seen as a threat the shaping of a *Nationalökonomie* in Germany. The intellectual criticism of such doctrines can be found in Johann Gottlieb Fichte "The Closed Commercial State". Moreover, Adam Müller saw Smith as a " 'one-sided' (*einseitig*) representative of English economic interests." (MONTES, 2003, p. 67). Tribe, on the other hand, clarifies that it is in Hildebrand that the Adam Smith Problem has its origins: "The origin of the "Problem" lies in Hildebrand's *Nationalökonomie der Gegenwart und Zukunft*, which opened with a critique of Smith and his "School". Towards the end of this first chapter, having repeated List's allegation of "cosmopolitanism" against Smith, Hildebrand turned to deal with Smith's atomistic conception of civil society, and the "egoism" of his analysis" (TRIBE, 2008, p. 518). The school mentioned is precisely the German Historical School of Economics.

6). Smith would have taken from them the notions of benevolence and sympathy. His stay in France in 1764 would have changed that and veered him towards a materialistic turn. Under the influence of Helvetius and the Physiocrats, Smith appeared to have assumed self-interest as the foundation of human nature, dropping sympathy and benevolence aside. Lujo Brentano wrote in 1878:

Adam Smith had worked on it in the seclusion of the countryside for 10 years. He had begun the work immediately following his return from France. There, during his twelve months stay in Paris with Helvetius ... he conversed with those people whom Helvetius ... had gathered round his table.... And just how great was the influence of this interchange upon Smith can be seen in the revolution (Umschwung) that it exerted upon his basic ideas. As is well known, Smith in 1759 published a Theory of Moral Sentiments according to which only those actions are moral which meet with the approval (sympathy) of the well- informed and impartial spectator. [...] In the Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations, by contrast, he adopts completely the views of Helvetius concerning the nature of man and of selfishness as the only motivating force in human action. The consequences of this dogma of selfishness permeate almost every part of the work. (as cited in NIELI, 1986, p. 613).

The French connection argument, however, became hard to defend once the “Lectures on Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms” were edited by Edward Cannan and published by Oxford University Press in 1895⁷⁴. These lectures were given in 1762-63 and included discussions about the division of labour and natural opulence. Moreover, as Dugald Stewart states, following the reports of Smith’s former student John Millar, the section about expediency contained the substance what would later become the Wealth of Nations (STEWART in SMITH, 1982, p. 275). In fact, a version of the famous sentence of the Wealth of Nations⁷⁵ can already be found in the lectures:

When you apply to a brewer or butcher for beer or for beef you do not explain to him how much you stand in need of these, but how much it would be your interest to allow you to have them for a certain price. You do not address his humanity, but his self-love. Beggars are the only persons who depend on charity for their subsistence; neither do they do so all together. (SMITH, 1978, p. 348)

Thus, it became hard to maintain the biographical argument that the Wealth of Nations was the product of a change of influences that occurred after 1764. There was, however, another

⁷⁴ Now published in the Lectures on Jurisprudence (SMITH, 1978)

⁷⁵ In the Wealth of Nations: “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. Nobody but a beggar chooses to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow-citizens.” (SMITH, 1979a, p. 27)

strand in the second half of the 19th century. They also affirmed the two anthropologies in Smith's work, but, at the same time, saw no problem in that duality. Henry Buckle and Auguste Oncken saw the economic and the ethical realm as separate. As such, each needed separate treatments, in accordance with their rules and principles. Göçmen calls this the “dualist justificatory approach”:

The consequence of both versions of the dualistic justificatory approach to Smith's work seems to have been the neglect of either *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* or *The Wealth of Nations*, so that Smith was interpreted merely as an economist, which is by far the dominant position, or merely as a moral philosopher, rather than as a comprehensive social and political theorist. Those scholars, for example, who consciously or unconsciously took over Buckle's and/or Oncken's dualistic approach, seem to have read Smith's two works in a dualistic or separated way. If we are merely interested in economics, for example, we have to concentrate on *The Wealth of Nations* and lay aside *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and if we are interested in moral issues, we need to take into account only *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and neglect *The Wealth of Nations*. (GÖÇMEN, 2007, p. 12)

This position seems close to the separation Foucault makes in his reading of Smith. To maintain this is, as shown above, somewhat anachronistic. Smith himself saw his work as a unitary attempt. In fact, although he continually revised his two major works⁷⁶, his endeavour was to complete what he saw as a project. In the last paragraph of the original edition of the TMS, Smith states his plans to “give an account of the general principles of law and government”(SMITH, 1984, p. 342). In the preface (“advertisement”) for the sixth edition of the TMS (written shortly before his death in the same year, 1790), Smith weights the partial fulfilment of his plans:

In the last paragraph of the first Edition of the present work, I said, that I should in another discourse endeavour to give an account of the general principles of law and government, and of the different revolutions which they had undergone in the different ages and periods of society; not only in what concerns justice, but in what concerns police, revenue, and arms, and whatever else is the object of law. In the Enquiry [sic] concerning the Nature and Causes

⁷⁶ The *Theory of Moral Sentiments* went through six editions (1759, 1764, 1767, 1774, 1781, and 1790, which appeared a few weeks before his death), and *The Wealth of Nations* went through five (1776, 1778, 1784, 1786, and 1789). These revisions, however, did not entail a complete change in the conceptions as the French Connection theorists proposed. The revisions were a fine-tuning of his argument. As Ronge posits: “It condenses individual lines of argumentation, eliminates linguistic inadequacies, rewrites some passages - not in the spirit of revision, but with the aim of improving linguistic expression and argumentation.” (RONGE, 2015, p. 11, our translation). Translated from: “*Im Gegenteil: Adam Smith verwendet seine letzten Lebensjahre darauf, die TMS noch einmal gründlich zu überarbeiten. Er verdichtet einzelne Argumentationslinien, beseitigt sprachliche Unzulänglichkeiten, schreibt einige Passagen neu – all dies nicht etwa im Geiste der Revision, sondern mit dem Ziel, den sprachlichen Ausdruck und die Argumentationsführung zu verbessern.*”

of the *Wealth of Nations*, I have partly executed this promise; at least so far as concerns police, revenue, and arms. What remains, the theory of jurisprudence, which I have long projected, I have hitherto been hindered from executing, by the same occupations which had till now prevented me from revising the present work. Though my very advanced age leaves me, I acknowledge, very little expectation of ever being able to execute this great work to my own satisfaction; yet, as I have not altogether abandoned the design, and as I wish still to continue under the obligation of doing what I can, I have allowed the paragraph to remain as it was published more than thirty years ago, when I entertained no doubt of being able to execute every thing which it announced. (SMITH, 1984, p. 3)

After the publication of what became known as the Glasgow editions in 1976, which comprised the complete works of Adam Smith, the problem came to be seen as a “pseudo-problem”. In their extensive introductions, the editors of Smith’s complete works defended that the Adam Smith problem was the result of bad interpretation. Macfie and Raphael see it as a pseudo-problem caused by “ignorance and misunderstanding” (RAPHAEL AND MACFIE in SMITH, 1984, p. 20). According to the editors of the TMS, it is misleading to attribute the sole motivation of human nature to sympathy and argue that the WN has a different anthropology, based only on self-interest. The focus on self-interest in the WN is due to its narrower scope (RAPHAEL AND MACFIE in SMITH, 1984, p. 20). The same subject, however, can be found in both books:

The increased attention to prudence in edition 6 is natural from the more mature Adam Smith who had pondered on economics for so long. The prudent man of TMS VI.i. is the frugal man of WN.II.iii. (RAPHAEL AND MACFIE in SMITH, 1984, p. 18)⁷⁷

By proclaiming the problem a hermeneutic error, they also argued that the issue was resolved. Knud Haakonsen also sees the problem as largely finished. In fact, according to him, it would be “futile to take any more rides on that old hobby-horse ‘sympathy v. self-interest’ in Smith” (HAAKONSEN, 1981, p. 197, note 19) ⁷⁸.

⁷⁷ On the subject of the prudent and frugal man, R.H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner wrote in the introduction to the WN: “Equally interesting is the fact that Smith should also have discussed at such length the means whereby the poor man may seek to attain the advantages of fortune, in emphasizing the importance of prudence, a virtue which, being uncommon, commands general admiration and explains that ‘eminent esteem with which all men naturally regard a steady perseverance in the practice of frugality, industry, and application, though directed to no other purpose than the acquisition of fortune’ (IV.i.2.8). It is indeed somewhat remarkable that it is the TMS, and in particular that portion of it (Part VI) which Smith wrote just before his death, that provides the most complete account of the psychology of Smith’s public benefactor: the frugal man.” (CAMPBELL and SKINNER in SMITH, 1979b, p. 18)

⁷⁸ In our brief sketch of its history we could not account for all the works that deal with the Adam Smith’s problem. It is interesting to point to a few different directions that the problem has taken: Some

We agree with the position of a pseudo-problem. The comparative work the editors did helped to dissolve some of the more simplistic interpretations of Adam Smith's work. Our approach will start from the assumption that there is no inconsistency in Smith's oeuvre. In fact, following Ronge⁷⁹, we will assume "TMS and WN are not the contradictory components of an unsolvable problem but the visible components of a comprehensive Adam Smith project" (RONGE, 2015a, p. 14)⁸⁰.

The present research, however, is limited to the analysis of the TMS. This choice comes also from the fact that Foucault's analysis dismisses the TMS altogether. Smith, however, considered the TMS to be his most significant work (SCHABAS, 2005, p. 80). In fact, the TMS can be considered a thoroughly "scientific investigation that contributes to the science of man by laying the foundations and principles of man's moral judgment" (RONGE, 2015a, p. 134)⁸¹.

In the following points we will interpret parts of the TMS in light of Foucault's investigations on Liberal Governmentality and the *homo oeconomicus*. Our contention is that there is no *homo oeconomicus* and a *homo socialis or symbolicus* (as Beistegui envisions⁸²). This can be shown by an approach that does away with the "established demarcations between academic disciplines and return to the wilderness of eighteenth-century philosophy" (RONGE,

commentators have proposed that two voices can be found in Smith: one scientific, descriptive; the other is prescriptive: TMS is written in two voices, one that is distanced from the spectacle of human conduct and that comments on its frailties and foibles with a philosophical resignation; another that exhorts and extols, scolds and rebukes. The two voices obviously belong to Smith the empirical observer and Smith the moral instructor, and the change in rhetorical stance reflects as well Smith's dual role as instructor of and guide to the sons of the gentry entrusted to his charge. The sociology of Smith's rhetoric has never, to my knowledge, been made the subject of a study" (HEILBRONER, 1982, p. 429, note 6). More on this see also Evensky (1987). Another work that stresses the many different voices in Smith's oeuvre is Brown (1994). A different approach to the problem emerged between 1970 and 1980 and proposed that there was no conceptual problem between the TMS and WN. The historical approach, however, stressed that the differences between TMS and WN stem from the problems of "commercial society as a historical social formation and his [Smith's] anticipations about its further development" (GÖÇMEN, 2007, p. 16).

⁷⁹ Bastian Ronge's work is groundbreaking in its use of the liberal governmentality to approach the Adam Smith's problem. Much of the present work has been influenced by his research.

⁸⁰ Translated from: Tatsächlich stellen die TMS und der WN nicht die widersprüchlichen Komponenten eines unlösbaren Problems dar, sondern die sichtbaren Bestandteile eines umfassenden Adam-Smith-Projektes (A-S-P). Smith selbst weist darauf ausdrücklich hin und zwar im Vorwort zur letzten Ausgabe der *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. (RONGE, 2015a, p. 14)

⁸¹ Translated from: Das Gegenteil ist der Fall: Die TMS ist kein ansprechendes und lebendiges Sittengemälde, das den Leser zu einem tugendhaften Leben motivieren soll, sondern eine streng wissenschaftliche Untersuchung, die zur science of man beiträgt, indem sie die Grundlagen und Prinzipien der moralischen Urteilspraxis des Menschen ergründet. (RONGE, 2015a, p. 134)

⁸² Even though Beistegui demarks two different subjects, he is talking about the multiple sides of a liberal subjectivity. See Beistegui (2018).

2015a, p. 25)⁸³. We will show that a homo oeconomicus can be found in the TMS. Moreover, instead of the somewhat narrow view that Foucault portrays, sympathy seems to be a constitutive part of this subject (3.2). This allows us to uncover an aesthetic side to the mechanism of interest through the analysis of Part IV of the TMS (3.3). We content that the spontaneous order the liberal art of government rests upon is not only the effect of an epistemic limitation of the Sovereign and of the economic agents. The love and beauty of order is an active cause, according to Smith, for the harmony of men's self-love.

4.2 SELF-LOVE, SYMPATHY, AND THE SUBJECT OF INTEREST

Much of the debate concerning self-love and sociability in the eighteenth century circled around the problem of vice and virtue. Generally speaking, on the one side, Mandeville eroded the possibility of disinterested acts by posing that all actions stem from self-love, thus, from men's vices. On the other hand, Bishop Joseph Butler thought that self-love could be guided by reason, producing a form of enlightened self-love capable of being morally virtuous. Moreover, Francis Hutcheson also thought that self-love could not produce virtuous action. He conceded, however, that humans beings had a moral sense alongside those of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. This separate sense would be the source of disinterested, and consequently, virtuous actions.

Adam Smith criticizes all of these accounts. He stands in a middle ground, going against Mandeville's splenetic philosophy, Butler strenuous emphasis on reason, and Hutcheson proposition of a separate sense that governs moral action. According to Smith, virtues can be derived from self-love, as it is a part of human nature:

Benevolence may, perhaps, be the sole principle of action in the Deity, and there are several, not improbable, arguments which tend to persuade us that it is so. It is not easy to conceive what other motive an independent and all-perfect Being, who stands in need of nothing external, and whose happiness is complete in himself, can act from. But whatever may be the case with the Deity, so imperfect a creature as man, the support of whose existence requires so many things external to him, must often act from many other motives. *The condition of human nature were peculiarly hard, if those affections, which, by the very nature of our being, ought frequently to influence our conduct, could upon no occasion appear virtuous, or deserve esteem and commendation from any body.* (SMITH, 1984, p. 305).

⁸³ Translated from: Doch für Smith selbst fallen diese und ähnliche Fragen in den Bereich der »moral philosophy«, die im 18. Jahrhundert die gesamte Bandbreite des geisteswissenschaftlichen Nachdenkens abdeckt. (RONGE, 2015a, p. 23).

Smith's goal, following in many ways the footsteps of his friend David Hume and the project of the Scottish Enlightenment, is to produce a science of human nature. Smith seeks primarily to understand why man act the way they do. This objective leads him to propose two principles of action: self-love and sympathy (FORCE, 2003, p. 46). Even though Smith goes to some length to stress that sympathy cannot be deemed selfish (SMITH, 1984, p. 317)⁸⁴, our preoccupation here is not exactly with the classical debate around the scope of the selfish principle. Neither does it position itself within the discussion of interested/disinterested actions as source of virtues. The main objective of the present point is to show how Foucault's conceptualization of a subject of interest encompasses Smith's notion of self-love and sympathy.

As abovementioned, Foucault conceptualizes the subject of interest as one in which the choice or action is centered ultimately in the irreducible pleasure/pain matrix of the subject himself. It is easy to posit Adam Smith within these same lines:

Pleasure and pain are the great objects of desire and aversion: but these are distinguished not by reason, but by immediate sense and feeling. If virtue, therefore, be desirable for its own sake, and if vice be, in the same manner, the object of aversion, it cannot be reason which originally distinguishes those different qualities, but immediate sense and feeling. (SMITH, 1984, p. 320)

Smith is a proponent of the sensualism that Foucault sees at the heart of Liberal governmentality's affirmation of self-love. More proof of this can be found in his assertion about first principles of morality. They are the equivalent of what Foucault called irreducible and untransferable choices, and according to Smith cannot be a product of reasoning:

it is altogether absurd and unintelligible to suppose that the first perceptions of right and wrong can be derived from reason, even in those particular cases upon the experience of which the general rules are formed. These first perceptions, as well as all other experiments upon which any general rules are founded, cannot be the object of reason, but of immediate sense and feeling. It is by finding in a vast variety of instances that one tenor of conduct constantly pleases in a certain manner, and that another as constantly displeases the mind, that we form the general rules of morality. (SMITH, 1984, p. 320).

⁸⁴ Sympathy, however, cannot, in any sense, be regarded as a selfish principle. When I sympathize with your sorrow or your indignation, it may be pretended, indeed, that my emotion is founded in self-love, because it arises from bringing your case home to myself, from putting myself in your situation, and thence conceiving what I should feel in the like circumstances. But though sympathy is very properly said to arise from an imaginary change of situations with the person principally concerned, yet this imaginary change is not supposed to happen to me in my own person and character, but in that of the person with whom I sympathize. (SMITH, 1984, p. 317)

The preeminence of sense and feeling over reason is a trace that can be easily found throughout British empiricism. Foucault's notion follows the idea of a subject that is centered in himself. No action or choice can be derived but from the preferences which stem from the subject's own sensations. The same self-centeredness occurs in Smith notion of self-love:

Every man is, no doubt, by nature, first and principally recommended to his own care; and as he is fitter to take care of himself than of any other person, it is fit and right that it should be so. Every man, therefore, is much more deeply interested in whatever immediately concerns himself, than in what concerns any other man: and to hear, perhaps, of the death of another person, with whom we have no particular connection, will give us less concern, will spoil our stomach, or break our rest much less than a very insignificant disaster which has befallen ourselves. (SMITH, 1984, p. 82–83)

Self-love for Smith is a matter of “orientation – perception and attention” (HEATH in BERRY; PAGANELLI; SMITH, 2013, p. 249) of and to oneself. It cannot be viewed as a separate or egotistic emotion, but as a “general tendency of affection, existing alongside particular passions” (HEATH in BERRY; PAGANELLI; SMITH, 2013, p. 249). In fact, the place where Smith discusses what he calls “selfish passions” is a description of two different passions: joy and grief. Those two passions, according to Smith's description, are “conceived upon account of our own private good or bad fortune” (SMITH, 1984, p. 40).

Self-love for Smith is something which can accompany passions. Although the Scot warns that the extremes of self-love must be humbled and counteracted⁸⁵, this does not mean that the self-centeredness of its nature is changed. This is clear when, at one point, Smith struggles with the question of why one may apparently choose to give up this self-centeredness at times:

It is not the soft power of humanity, it is not that feeble spark of benevolence which Nature has lighted up in the human heart, that is thus capable of counteracting the strongest impulses of self-love. [...]. When our passive feelings are almost always so sordid and so selfish, how comes it that our active principles should often be so generous and so noble? When we are always so much more deeply affected by whatever concerns ourselves, than by whatever concerns other men; what is it which prompts the generous, upon all occasions, and the mean upon many, to sacrifice their own interests to the greater interests of others? (SMITH, 1984, p. 137)

⁸⁵ Smith talks about the dangers of self-love specially in Part III. This is also the part he discusses the impartial spectator. Later we will touch upon this subject.

His answer, however, seems to display a level of that same self-centeredness which Foucault's description of interest alludes to:

It is not the love of our neighbor, it is not the love of mankind, which upon many occasions prompts us to the practice of those divine virtues. It is a stronger love, a more powerful affection, which generally takes place upon such occasions; the love of what is honorable and noble, of the grandeur, and dignity, and superiority *of our own characters*. (SMITH, 1984, p. 137, emphasis added)

Self-love, however, is far from being the main theme in the Theory of Moral Sentiments. Sympathy is the central theme of his moral work. In fact, the principle is introduced in the first paragraph of the book:

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. (SMITH, 1984, p. 9)

By conceding people's selfishness and at the same time proposing that it is not the only principle of human nature, Smith opposes the views of thinkers of the selfish hypothesis such as Mandeville and Helvetius. This does not mean, however, that Smith is aligned with his former teacher Hutcheson in proposing sympathy as a separate sense. Sympathy, according to Smith, is not an emotion comparable to compassion or pity. It is a particular correlation or harmony of any passion whatsoever⁸⁶. Smithian sympathy, however, should not be confused with a process of contamination (as it occurs in Hume). Sympathy is not the automatic transference of one's feelings to another. Although Smith concedes that sympathy may seem to occur from the mere sight of a passion⁸⁷, he is adamant that it derives from the view of the situation and not of the passion itself:

Sympathy, therefore, does not arise so much from the view of the passion, as from that of the situation which excites it. We sometimes feel for another, a passion of which he himself seems to be altogether incapable; because, when

⁸⁶ "Pity and compassion are words appropriated to signify our fellow-feeling with the sorrow of others. Sympathy, though its meaning was, perhaps, originally the same, may now, however, without much impropriety, be made use of to denote our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever" (SMITH, 1984, p. 10)

⁸⁷ "Upon some occasions sympathy may seem to arise merely from the view of a certain emotion in another person. The passions, upon some occasions, may seem to be transfused from one man to another, instantaneously and antecedent to any knowledge of what excited them in the person principally concerned. Grief and joy, for example, strongly expressed in the look and gestures of any one, at once affect the spectator with some degree of a like painful or agreeable emotion. A smiling face is, to everybody that sees it, a cheerful object; as a sorrowful countenance, on the other hand, is a melancholy one." (SMITH, 1984, p. 11) However, Smith quickly dismisses this: "If the very appearances of grief and joy inspire us with some degree of the like emotions, it is because they suggest to us the general idea of some good or bad fortune that has befallen the person in whom we observe them: and in these passions this is sufficient to have some little influence upon us." (SMITH, 1984, p. 11).

we put ourselves in his case, that passion arises in our breast from the imagination, though it does not in his from the reality. We blush for the impudence and rudeness of another, though he himself appears to have no sense of the impropriety of his own behavior; because we cannot help feeling with what confusion we ourselves should be covered, had we behaved in so absurd a manner. (SMITH, 1984, p. 12).

Sympathy is the process in which, through imagination, we put ourselves in another's situation and place. It appears in the TMS with two different meanings. It can mean that the success of the spectator in sharing the agent's emotions, which consequently produces the sentiment of approbation. Sympathy does not solely mean, however, the coincidence of the spectator's feelings and that of the person principally interested in the event. Sympathy can mean the mechanism itself, understood as "the capacity to achieve the coincidence through the imaginary change of one's point of view" (CAMPBELL, 2010, p. 96).

In order to understand the sympathetic mechanism it is important to grasp that, for Smith, we can have no immediate experience of what other people feel (SMITH, 1984, p. 9). Even though Smith posits that the imagination can transport us into the situation of other people in such a manner that "we enter as it were into his body" (SMITH, 1984, p. 9), the passion we feel as a consequence of the sympathetic exchange is always weaker in degree (SMITH, 1984, p. 9). The sympathetic mechanism is thus a matter of reaching a balance between the sentiments of the spectator and the person principally concerned (PPC). The equilibrium, although never perfect, can be reached through two operations. The spectator, on the one hand, must place himself in the situation of the PPC, by imagining the feelings the PPC has at that moment, in that situation. In order to bring the PPC's circumstances home to himself, the spectator must use of sensibility to render "as perfect as possible, that imaginary change of situation upon which his sympathy is founded" (SMITH, 1984, p. 21).

On the other hand, the person principally concerned needs to exert self-command⁸⁸ so the sympathetic mechanism achieves success. The PPC needs to tone down his feelings to a

⁸⁸ Smith is not naïve about the capacity for sympathy. Although he claims even the greatest ruffian possess the capacity (SMITH, 1984, p. 9), this does not mean that he can perfectly tune his self-command and sensibility in every case. For Smith, as much as self-love must be humbled, sympathy is a capacity that has to be cultivated. Ronge posits that one can find in the TMS an implicit normative dimension. This dimension would be connected to a series of techniques of the self that intent upon cultivating self-command and sensibility: "Smith seems to suspect that sentimental cultural practices play an important role in raising people's awareness: reading novels, admiring paintings, attending the theater - all of this has the effect of empowering people to empathize with their fellow human beings" (RONGE, 2015a, p. 234). Ronge further proposes that stoic sensitive techniques are connected to a security dispositif of emotional regulation that is indispensable for the liberal art of government:

level that the spectator can enter and go along with. The sympathetic mechanism as such presents itself as a circular process:

The spectator evokes lively fellow-feelings by copying the original feelings of the person principally concerned, while the latter copies these fellow-feelings in order to reduce his original feelings to the affective level which the spectator is going along with. (RONGE, 2015b, p. 47)

The success of this exchange produces the agreeable sentiment of approbation, the cornerstone of moral judgement. It is this process, through which approbation or disapprobation arises, that generates the first principles that will inform the general rules of morality⁸⁹. For Smith, thus, the problem of moral judgment lies in exhibiting any passion in its proper degree. Smith calls this propriety⁹⁰.

The sympathetic mechanism can produce in the spectator an analogous feeling to those of the PPC, but it can also produce other feelings: ex. compassion for another's pain, resentment towards another person's anger. Most importantly for our present argument, however, is that mutual sympathy is a source of pleasure. The inability to sympathize with other, or to be the object of sympathy, on the other hand, produces pain:

whatever may be the cause of sympathy, or however it may be excited, nothing pleases us more than to observe in other men a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own breast; nor are we ever so much shocked as by the appearance of the contrary. Those who are fond of deducing all our sentiments from certain refinements of self-love, think themselves at no loss to account, according to their own principles, both for this pleasure and this pain. [...] But both the pleasure and the pain are always felt so instantaneously, and often upon such frivolous occasions, that it seems evident that neither of them can

The sensitive-Stoic self-techniques can be understood with Foucault as the basic element of a security dispositif, which aims at the regulation of the socio-emotional nature of society. With their help, people practice a certain emotional habitus that makes them feel and express their feelings in a certain way. [...] this emotional regulation is an essential prerequisite for liberalism to demand the withdrawal of the state from society. (RONGE, 2015a, p. 234)

⁸⁹ If Smith's question is why man act the way they do, his overall goal with this is to describe why man produce the moral judgments they do. Thus, the mechanisms of human nature are inherently intertwined with the process of moral judgement, and consequently with the question "wherein does virtue consist of"?

⁹⁰ For Smith, the propriety of any passion lies in a middle ground: "The propriety of every passion excited by objects peculiarly related to ourselves, the pitch which the spectator can go along with, must lie, it is evident, in a certain mediocrity. If the passion is too high, or if it is too low, he cannot enter into it. Grief and resentment for private misfortunes and injuries may easily, for example, be too high, and in the greater part of mankind they are so. They may likewise, though this more rarely happens, be too low. We denominate the excess, weakness and fury: and we call the defect stupidity, insensibility, and want of spirit. We can enter into neither of them, but are astonished and confounded to see them." (SMITH, 1984, p. 27). In Part I, Section II of the TMS, Smith distributes the passion by their characteristics (social, unsocial, selfish, those that are originated in the body, and those that are originated in the imagination), and also posits to what degree these passions are consistent with propriety.

be derived from any such self-interested consideration. (SMITH, 1984, p. 13–14)

The pleasure that mutual sympathy exerts is not confined to agreeable passions. It can arise even if the motive or situation is one of grief⁹¹. Moreover, this pleasure is not only felt by the person principally concerned:

As the person who is principally interested in any event is pleased with our sympathy, and hurt by the want of it, so we, too, seem to be pleased when we are able to sympathize with him, and to be hurt when we are unable to do so. (SMITH, 1984, p. 15)

If we accept Foucault's rendering of the subject of interest, thus, we must consider sympathy as an integral part of this subject, one of his internal mechanisms alongside self-love. Sympathy can be construed as one of the causes which triggers the choice mechanism of the subject of interest. This can be further verified if we look at the self-centered nature of the sympathetic process. The process of sympathy, even though it may seem directed to others, only produces less lively versions of the emotions of the PPC:

the emotions of the spectator will still be very apt to fall short of the violence of what is felt by the sufferer. Mankind, though naturally sympathetic, never conceive, for what has befallen another, that degree of passion which naturally animates the person principally concerned. (SMITH, 1984, p. 21)

The emotions of others are but a shadow that we feel through sympathy. They are “the reflected and sympathetic images of those sensations” (SMITH, 1984, p. 219). The sympathetic mechanism occurs through a process in which the imagination of the spectator takes him to the situation of the PPC⁹². This occurs so the spectator can “bring home to himself every little circumstance of distress which can possibly occur to the sufferer” (SMITH, 1984, p. 21). Sympathy, however disinterested it may be⁹³, doubles back. It cannot scape the self-

⁹¹ “It is to be observed accordingly, that we are still more anxious to communicate to our friends our disagreeable than our agreeable passions, that we derive still more satisfaction from their sympathy with the former than from that with the latter, and that we are still more shocked by the want of it.” (SMITH, 1984, p. 15). In another passage, Smith compares love and resentment: “Love is an agreeable; resentment, a disagreeable passion; and accordingly we are not half so anxious that our friends should adopt our friendships, as that they should enter into our resentments.” (SMITH, 1984, p. 15).

⁹² Smith posits an exception to this rule. It occurs when two people contemplate a work of art, a beautiful landscape, or the beauty of a system (SMITH, 1984, p. 19). We will discuss this in the next section.

⁹³ In the end of the TMS, in a section that Smith introduced in the final revision, he says that the sympathetic mechanism entails not only imagining oneself in the situation of another, but to consider what would I feel if I was really the other person: “person and character, but in that of the person with whom I sympathize. When I condole with you for the loss of your only son, in order to enter into your grief I do not consider what I, a person of such a character and profession, should suffer, if I had a son, and if that son was unfortunately to die:

centeredness of the subjects that underlie it. For imagination can only takes us to the situations, but our sensations, our matrix of pleasure and pain, are only confined to ourselves:

Though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. *They never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations.* Neither can that faculty help us to this any other way, than by representing to us what would be our own, if we were in his case. *It is the impressions of our own senses only, not those of his, which our imaginations copy.* By (SMITH, 1984, p. 9, emphasis added)

Griswold, commenting on the abovementioned passage, also concludes that it points to a self-centeredness of the subject:

Formulations such as these are meant to show that we are not by nature "selfish," in the sense of being incapable of entering into the situations of others or of caring about them. *Yet the process does seem, so to speak, "self-centered."* This introduces a perplexing ambiguity into the whole idea of sympathy. (GRISWOLD, 1999, p. 91, emphasis added) .

Although self-centered, the mechanism of sympathy can serve not only to judge the conduct of others, but to judge our own conduct. Such principle is what Smith calls the "impartial spectator"⁹⁴. The impartial spectator requires a double imaginative process. It entails a division of the self into two persons (SMITH, 1984, p. 113): First, we have to take some distance from ourselves by imagining what a fair and impartial spectator would see upon examining our situation. After entering into the spectator position, we imagine what this impartial judge would see from his particular perspective:

but I consider what I should suffer if I was really you, and I not only change circumstances with you, but I change person and characters. (SMITH, 1984, p. 317). This appears to be an inconsistency within Smith's theorization of sympathy as he had stressed before that we can never feel exactly what others feel. This section, however, works to accent the unselfish nature of sympathy. According to Smith, if sympathy occurs because of something that befalls another person and not something that springs from myself, it cannot be deemed selfish: "My grief, therefore, is entirely upon your account, and not in the least upon my own. It is not, therefore, in the least selfish. How can that be regarded as a selfish passion, which does not arise even from the imagination of any thing that has befallen, or that relates to myself, in my own proper person and character (SMITH, 1984, p. 317). The main goal of Smith here is to defend the multiplicity of principles of human nature, opposing the view of self-love as the sole principle and motive (SMITH, 1984, p. 317). Smith's attempt of protecting sympathy from being enfolded within the selfish hypothesis, however, does not do away with its self-centeredness. In that sense, we agree with Campbell when he writes that: "When Smith calls sympathy an unselfish principle he means that the pleasure of mutual sympathy is spontaneous and does not depend on one person's calculation that he will obtain the assistance of those who share his feelings." (CAMPBELL, 2010, p. 104)

⁹⁴ There is a debate concerning the impartial spectator. The problem lies in whether the impartial spectator functions as an ideal observer that represents view point transcendent to society, or if it is internal to society, the by-product of constant sympathetic interactions with actual observers, solidified in the norms and conventions of society. We agree with the latter in this point. For more on this debate see Raphael (2007, p. 43f), Campbell (2010, p. 127f), and Ronge (in MURPHY; TRANINGER, 2014, p. 361).

When I endeavor to examine my own conduct, when I endeavor to pass sentence upon it, and either to approve or condemn it, it is evident that, in all such cases, I divide myself, as it were, into two persons; and that I, the examiner and judge, represent a different character from that other I, the person whose conduct is examined into and judged of. The first is the spectator, whose sentiments with regard to my own conduct I endeavor to enter into, by placing myself in his situation, and by considering how it would appear to me, when seen from that particular point of view. The second is the agent, the person whom I properly call myself, and of whose conduct, under the character of a spectator, I was endeavoring to form some opinion. (SMITH, 1984, p. 113)

This process, according to Smith, occurs naturally to men in society in such a way that it becomes internalized. The impartial spectator thus figures as the “the inhabitant of the breast, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct” (SMITH, 1984, p. 137). According to Smith, the internalization of specific conducts and judgements produces conscience. This occurs through the continual observation of others (SMITH, 1984, p. 159).

Moreover, observation conveys how reason figures in the sympathetic mechanism. Reason cannot provide the first perceptions of good or bad. That would go against Smith’s sensual view of the first principles of morality. Reason, however, is “undoubtedly the source of the general rules of morality” (SMITH, 1984, p. 320). In that sense, the impartial spectator figures as “reason, principle, conscience”, or the inductive process through which we form the general rules of morality:

Reason may show that this object is the means of obtaining some other which is naturally either pleasing or displeasing, and in this manner may render it either agreeable or disagreeable for the sake of something else. (SMITH, 1984, p. 320)

The eye of others disciplines our conduct through the sympathetic mechanism of the impartial spectator. In that sense, the impartial spectator helps correct the misdirection of self-love. Smith is not naïve about the possible problems that self-love can generate. According to Smith, the violence of our selfish passions, the misdirection of self-love, can interfere with the sympathetic mechanism, thus inducing “the man within the breast to make a report very different from what the real circumstances of the case are capable of authorising” (SMITH, 1984, p. 157). Smith posits, however, that this self-deceit can be counteracted by the sympathetic mechanism itself:

Nature, however, has not left this weakness, which is of so much importance, altogether without a remedy; nor has she abandoned us entirely to the delusions of self-love. Our continual observations upon the conduct of others,

insensibly lead us to form to ourselves certain general rules concerning what is fit and proper either to be done or to be avoided. This still further confirms, and even exasperates our natural sense of their deformity. It satisfies us that we view them in the proper light, when we see other people view them in the same light. We resolve never to be guilty of the like, nor ever, upon any account, to render ourselves in this manner the objects of universal disapprobation. *We thus naturally lay down to ourselves a general rule, that all such actions are to be avoided, as tending to render us odious, contemptible, or punishable, the objects of all those sentiments for which we have the greatest dread and aversion.* Other actions, on the contrary, call forth our approbation, and we hear every body around us express the same favorable opinion concerning them. (SMITH, 1984, p. 159, emphasis added)

This is an important side of the mechanism of sympathy. It can counterpose the perilous side of self-love. Foucault accounted for the danger that the economic or selfish passion poses to civil society. He dismisses, however, how sympathy can counteract this danger. In a passage dedicated to the virtue of justice⁹⁵, Smith describes how to pursuit wealth one must humble his self-love to an agreeable degree:

Though it may be true, therefore, that every individual, in his own breast, naturally prefers himself to all mankind, yet he dares not look mankind in the face, and avow that he acts according to this principle. He feels that in this preference they can never go along with him, and that how natural soever it may be to him, it must always appear excessive and extravagant to them. When he views himself in the light in which he is conscious that others will view him, he sees that to them he is but one of the multitude in no respect better than any other in it. If he would act so as that the impartial spectator may enter into the principles of his conduct, which is what of all things he has the greatest desire to do, he must, upon this, as upon all other occasions, humble the arrogance of his self-love, and bring it down to something which other men can go along with. *They will indulge it so far as to allow him to be more anxious about, and to pursue with more earnest assiduity, his own happiness than that of any other person. Thus far, whenever they place themselves in his situation, they will readily go along with him. In the race for wealth, and honours, and preferments, he may run as hard as he can, and strain every nerve and every muscle, in order to outstrip all his competitors.* (SMITH, 1984, p. 83, emphasis added)

⁹⁵ Smith dismisses the necessity of benevolence, love or other virtues for the maintenance of society. Justice, however, is the only virtue society cannot do without, and the only virtue that can be exhorted by force: Society, however, cannot subsist among those who are at all times ready to hurt and injure one another. The moment that injury begins, the moment that mutual resentment and animosity take place, all the bands of it are broke asunder, and the different members of which it consisted are, as it were, dissipated and scattered abroad by the violence and opposition of their discordant affections. If there is any society among robbers and murderers, they must at least, according to the trite observation, abstain from robbing and murdering one another. Beneficence, therefore, is less essential to the existence of society than justice. Society may subsist, though not in the most comfortable state, without beneficence; but the prevalence of injustice must utterly destroy it. (SMITH, 1984, p. 86)

Smith does not see the need of generous or disinterested virtues for society to hold together. He defends that, albeit “less happy and agreeable”, society can be maintained from a “sense of its utility” (SMITH, 1984, p. 86)⁹⁶. Moreover, Smith insists that even though man may not share love or affection, their relations may be “upheld by a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation” (SMITH, 1984, p. 86). It is not a stretch to posit that this affirmation echoes in the famous passage of the WN:

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. (SMITH, 1979a, p. 27)

As we have shown sympathy is not an affection, a passion or a separate emotion. Thus, even though society can subsist without the ties of benevolence or compassion, the capacity for sympathy is the very fabric that holds it together. When the subject of interest address others’ self-love, he is engaging in the sympathetic mechanism described by Smith. In that sense, “self-love is inextricably linked with sympathy. Exchange motivated by self-love operates within the sympathetic fabric” (GERSCHLAGER, 2015, p. 39).

By dismissing sympathy Foucault missed an important aspect of the of the *homo oeconomicus*, its intersubjective character. In fact, he disregarded the mechanism with the capacity to regulate the danger potentially posed by self-love. As Ronge notes, it is not benevolence, charity, or compassion that “moderate man's selfish aspirations to a socially acceptable level; it is through the sympathetic interaction that the selfish passions are tamed” (RONGE, 2015a, p. 233)⁹⁷

In the following section, we will finalize our argument drawing conclusions from what was argued until now. We will show how sympathy, as men’s most ardent desire, is a cornerstone of the process of bettering one’s condition commonly attributed to self-love alone. Through this analysis we uncover how a certain deception is a motive that pushes the *homo oeconomicus* towards the pursuit of wealth. This deception is, according to Smith, necessary to

⁹⁶ In the final section we will further discuss Smith’s notion of utility.

⁹⁷ Translated from: “Es sind nicht die » aktiven Bindungen des Mitgefühls, des Wohlwollens, der Nächstenliebe, des Gemeinschaftsgefühls « (GGII, 415), die das egoistische Streben des Menschen auf ein sozialverträgliches Niveau mäßigen; es ist die sympathy bzw. die sympathetische Interaktion, durch welche die selfish passions gebändigt werde.” (RONGE, 2015a, p. 233)

the oeconomy of nature and allows us to reveal an aesthetic side to what Foucault called the mechanism of interest.

4.3 THE *HOMO OECOMICUS*' DECEPTION AND THE BEAUTY OF ORDER

The role self-love and utility plays in the mechanics of the *Homo Oeconomicus* has been stressed within Foucault's analysis of liberal governmentality. According to Foucault, utilitarianism is a technology of government. In that sense, the sovereign must learn how to say yes to desire, to the self-love of its subjects. This means that at the core of the Liberal Art of Government there is an "ethics and politics of self-love" (DE BEISTEGUI, 2018, p. 166). The place of sympathy in the mechanics of the *homo oeconomicus* and in the liberal art of government, however, has not received similar attention by the French philosopher⁹⁸.

In the *Wealth of Nations*, self-love seems to be the sole tendency that actuates the drive to bettering one's condition. As such, the economic treatise proposes that the augmentation of fortune or wealth is the path to accomplish this (SMITH, 1984, p. 50). According to Smith, however, to feel that "we are taken no notice of, necessarily damps the most agreeable hope, and disappoints the most ardent desire, of human nature" (SMITH, 1984, p. 50). That occurs because the drive to better our condition, which so famously figures in the WN⁹⁹ as solely related the tendency of self-love, also appears in the TMS:

From whence, then, arises that emulation which runs through all the different ranks of men, and what are the advantages which we propose by that great purpose of human life which we call *bettering our condition*? *To be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency, and approbation, are all the advantages which we can propose to derive from it.* (SMITH, 1984, p. 50, emphasis added).

Thus, sympathy and the desire of being looked at with approbation figures at least as a part of the drive to better one's condition.. In the context of the TMS, Smith posits that wealth in commercial societies are natural objects of approbation and admiration. It is for this reason

⁹⁸ Recent literature has worked and broaden the concept of the *homo oeconomicus*. See Beistegui (2018), Ronge (2015a), and Laval (2009).

⁹⁹ But the principle which prompts to save, is the desire of bettering our condition, a desire which, though generally calm and dispassionate, comes with us from the womb, and never leaves us till we go into the grave. In the whole interval which separates those two moments, there is scarce perhaps a single instant in which any man is so perfectly and completely satisfied with his situation, as to be without any wish of alteration or improvement, of any kind. An augmentation of fortune is the means by which the greater part of men propose and wish to better their condition. (SMITH, 1979b, p. 341)

that in commercial societies “we make parade of our riches, and conceal our poverty” (SMITH, 1984, p. 51). At first, this can appear problematic: according to Albert Hirschman, Smith operates a reduction that collapses all drives into economic advantage:

Adam Smith then takes the final reductionist step of turning two into one: the drive for economic advantage is no longer autonomous but becomes a mere vehicle for the desire for consideration. By the same token, however, the noneconomic drives, powerful as they are, are all made to feed into the economic ones and do nothing but reinforce them, being thus deprived of their erstwhile independent existence. (HIRSCHMAN, 1977, p. 109).

Hirschman is not wrong in positing that the drive for sympathy has an economic connotation in Smith. Hirschman, however, does not seem to notice a distinctive characteristic of Smith’s text: it is composed of two “voices”. Robert Heilbroner posited this in 1982:

TMS is written in two voices, one that is distanced from the spectacle of human conduct and that comments on its frailties and foibles with a philosophical resignation; another that exhorts and extols, scolds and rebukes. The two voices obviously belong to Smith the empirical observer and Smith the moral instructor, and the change in rhetorical stance reflects as well Smith’s dual role as instructor of and guide to the sons of the gentry entrusted to his charge. (HEILBRONER, 1982, p. 429, footnote 6)

In that sense, the voice of the empirical observer¹⁰⁰ acknowledges that riches attract approbation in commercial society. According to Smith, commercial society is a stage in the development of society. Labor in it is divided in such a way that “every man thus lives by exchanging, or becomes in some measure a merchant” (SMITH, 1979b, p. 37). In that sense, the desire to better one’s condition becomes intertwined with the pursuit of wealth, to the point that they become one and the same. In this setting, it is not difficult to see how the wealthy and rich would be easier objects of approbation and even admiration. In fact, as Smith sharply notices:

¹⁰⁰ Following Heilbroner, Jerry Evensky also sees in Smith two voices: one of the moral philosopher and other of Smith the social critic: The voices express the two points of view from which Smith views the world. One of them is that of Smith as moral philosopher. From this point of view Smith sees the world as the Design of the Deity, a perfectly harmonious system reflecting the perfection of its designer. Smith’s second viewpoint is that of historian, contemporary observer, and social critic, and from it he sees that the real world is not the Design of his ideal vision. He recognizes that human frailty leads to distortions in the Deity’s Design” (EVENSKY, 1987, p. 447–448). This coexistence of two voices may not be a characteristic exclusive to Adam Smith’s writings. Mary Poovey notes how eighteenth century moral philosophers were equally concerned with the prescriptive and the descriptive nature of their writings: “the eighteenth-century moral experimentalists who were also university professors- Ferguson, Turnbull, Francis Hutcheson, and Thomas Reid in particular- were concerned with generating knowledge that was equally ethically efficacious (prescriptive) and true to observation (descriptive), *equally* morally improving and as systematic as natural philosophical knowledge aspired to be.” (POOVEY, 1998, p. 176)

The rich man glories in his riches, because he feels that they naturally draw upon him the attention of the world, and that mankind are disposed to go along with him in all those agreeable emotions with which the advantages of his situation so readily inspire him. At the thought of this, his heart seems to swell and dilate itself within him, and he is fonder of his wealth, upon this account, than for all the other advantages it procures him. (SMITH, 1984, p. 51).

In that sense, it is not properly a reduction that makes Smith see the pursuit of wealth as a product for the desire of approbation. Smith's contention is that the desire for sympathy is a very important one, and in commercial societies this desire became inseparable from the pursuit of riches. It is a descriptive fact that he drew from the type society he was analysing. What Hirschman sees as a reduction may be construed as a sharp social observation. In fact, Smith is disenchanted about this characteristic of commercial society, and sees in it a danger to one's moral sentiments¹⁰¹:

This disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and the powerful, and to despise, or, at least, to neglect persons of poor and mean condition, though necessary both to establish and to maintain the distinction of ranks and the order of society, is, at the same time, the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our moral sentiments. (SMITH, 1984, p. 61)

Smith is far from content with this state of things. In fact, he laments – and here the voice of the moral instructor flares up - that the wealthy and rich are often preferred and admired in detriment of the wise and virtuous¹⁰². Smith also saw with preoccupation the fact that the poor and weak are looked at with contempt, and that the vices of the powerful are “much less despised than the poverty and weakness of the innocent” (SMITH, 1984, p. 62). The Scot, nevertheless, sees this disposition as an empirical fact of commercial society. If, as Hirschman posited, the non-economic drives feed into the economic ones in a sort of a loop, it is because in commercial society, the subject of interest, turned into a *homo oeconomicus*, has both its tendency to self-love and its capacity for sympathy directed towards the pursuit of riches.

¹⁰¹ Smith's view of commercial society is not acritical. Smith adopts the scheme of viewing history as divided by stages, the last one at his time being that of commercial society. That does not mean it is the final stage, nor that Smith is a naïve enthusiast of commercial society. In the present research, it is not our objective to analyze Smith's critique of commercial society, but it is important to point out that Smith is cautious about the possible problems that the division of labor can cause. He is nevertheless an enthusiast of how commercial society's productivity can raise the standard of life of even the poorest people. This is due to the specialization that the division of labor produces.

¹⁰² “Two different models, two different pictures, are held out to us, according to which we may fashion our own character and behaviour; the one more gaudy and glittering in its colouring; the other more correct and more exquisitely beautiful in its outline: the one forcing itself upon the notice of every wandering eye; the other, attracting the attention of scarce anybody but the most studious and careful observer. They are the wise and the virtuous chiefly, a select, though, I am afraid, but a small party, who are the real and steady admirers of wisdom and virtue. The great mob of mankind are the admirers and worshippers, and, what may seem more extraordinary, most frequently the disinterested admirers and worshippers, of wealth and greatness”

Furthermore, according to Smith, it is this mechanics, this disposition to sympathize and admire the rich, that produces the order of society itself:

Upon this disposition of mankind, to go along with all the passions of the rich and the powerful, is founded the distinction of ranks, and the order of society. Our obsequiousness to our superiors more frequently arises from our admiration for the advantages of their situation, than from any private expectations of benefit from their good-will. (SMITH, 1984, p. 52)

The multiple sides of bettering one's condition thus points toward a more complex mechanics of the *homo oeconomicus*: a *homo oeconomicus* moved both by the tendency of self-love and the capacity for sympathy. There is yet another (of several) sharp empirical observation that Smith produced in the context of the TMS. In Part IV, Smith discusses the place of utility in this sympathetic process. According to Smith, we sympathize with the rich, to some extent, because we place ourselves in their position, and imagine as if we were possession of those "artful and ingeniously contrived accommodation" (SMITH, 1984, p. 179). Smith goes against Hume's position, however, which collapses convenience and beauty. According to David Hume beauty comes from the usefulness of an object. This means that one sympathizes with the convenience - the pleasure or the pain - of the object's owner:

Our sense of beauty depends very much on this principle; and where any object has a tendency to produce pleasure in its possessor, it is always regarded as beautiful; as every object, that has a tendency to produce pain, is disagreeable and deform'd. Thus the conveniency of a house, the fertility of a field, the strength of a horse, the capacity, security, and swift-sailing of a vessel, form the principal beauty of these several objects. Here the object, which is denominated beautiful, pleases. (HUME, 1896, p. 576)

Smith displaces the primacy of an object's utility or convenience. Although he does not dismiss utility as a motive for sympathy altogether¹⁰³, he draws attention to the "artful and ingeniously contrived" character of the objects, in other words, the appearance of utility:

But that this fitness, this happy contrivance of any production of art, should often be more valued, than the very end for which it was intended; *and that the exact adjustment of the means for attaining any convenience or pleasure, should frequently be more regarded, than that very convenience or pleasure*, in the attainment of which their whole merit would seem to consist, has not, so far as I know, been yet taken notice of by any body. That this however is very frequently the case, may be observed in a thousand instances, both in the

¹⁰³ "When we visit the palaces of the great, we cannot help conceiving the satisfaction we should enjoy if we ourselves were the masters, and were possessed of so much artful and ingeniously contrived accommodation." (SMITH, 1984, p. 179)

most frivolous and in the most important concerns of human life. (SMITH, 1984, p. 180, emphasis added)

According to Smith, what recommends an object to us is first its orderly disposition. The contrivance of a machine, such as a watch, is what recommends it to the owner and not, at least primarily, the knowledge it portrays. We sympathize with objects of frivolous utility because of the contrivance and order they transpire. For Smith this observation serves both to small and petty objects as well as to the more serious pursuits of life. Smith describes vividly how a poor man's son¹⁰⁴ toils and works endlessly in order to obtain wealth and greatness. He aims to acquire that distant felicity which the order and design of the lives of the powerful¹⁰⁵ seem to possess. To obtain this design, however, the poor man's son

serves those whom he hates, and is obsequious to those whom he despises. Through the whole of his life he pursues the idea of a certain artificial and elegant repose which he may never arrive at, for which he sacrifices a real tranquillity that is at all times in his power, and which, if in the extremity of old age he should at last attain to it, he will find to be in no respect preferable

¹⁰⁴ The passage in full: "The poor man's son, whom heaven in its anger has visited with ambition, when he begins to look around him, admires the condition of the rich. He finds the cottage of his father too small for his accommodation, and fancies he should be lodged more at his ease in a palace. He is displeased with being obliged to walk a-foot, or to endure the fatigue of riding on horseback. He sees his superiors carried about in machines, and imagines that in one of these he could travel with less inconveniency. He feels himself naturally indolent, and willing to serve himself with his own hands as little as possible; and judges, that a numerous retinue of servants would save him from a great deal of trouble. He thinks if he had attained all these, he would sit still contentedly, and be quiet, enjoying himself in the thought of the happiness and tranquility of his situation. He is enchanted with the distant idea of this felicity. It appears in his fancy like the life of some superior rank of beings, and, in order to arrive at it, he devotes himself for ever to the pursuit of wealth and greatness. To obtain the conveniencies which these afford, he submits in the first year, nay in the first month of his application, to more fatigue of body and more uneasiness of mind than he could have suffered through the whole of his life from the want of them. He studies to distinguish himself in some laborious profession. With the most unrelenting industry he labours night and day to acquire talents superior to all his competitors. He endeavours next to bring those talents into public view, and with equal assiduity solicits every opportunity of employment. For this purpose he makes his court to all mankind; he serves those whom he hates, and is obsequious to those whom he despises. Through the whole of his life he pursues the idea of a certain artificial and elegant repose which he may never arrive at, for which he sacrifices a real tranquillity that is at all times in his power, and which, if in the extremity of old age he should at last attain to it, he will find to be in no respect preferable to that humble security and contentment which he had abandoned for it. It is then, in the last dregs of life, his body wasted with toil and diseases, his mind galled and ruffled by the memory of a thousand injuries and disappointments which he imagines he has met with from the injustice of his enemies, or from the perfidy and ingratitude of his friends, that he begins at last to find that wealth and greatness are mere trinkets of frivolous utility, no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquillity of mind than the tweezer-cases of the lover of toys; and like them too, more troublesome to the person who carries them about with him than all the advantages they can afford him are commodious. There is no other real difference between them, except that the conveniencies of the one are somewhat more observable than those" (SMITH, 1984, p. 181–182)

¹⁰⁵ "If we examine, however, why the spectator distinguishes with such admiration the condition of the rich and the great, we shall find that it is not so much upon account of the superior ease or pleasure which they are supposed to enjoy, as of the numberless artificial and elegant contrivances for promoting this ease or pleasure. He does not even imagine that they are really happier than other people: but he imagines that they possess more means of happiness. And it is the ingenious and artful adjustment of those means to the end for which they were intended, that is the principal source of his admiration." (SMITH, 1984, p. 182)

to that humble security and contentment which he had abandoned for it.
(SMITH, 1984, p. 182)

Smith's point is that the exertion the man must endure to achieve wealth far exceeds the conveniences that those riches would provide him. In fact, in a rather cynical remark, Smith, the moral instructor, posits that wealth and greatness "are mere trinkets of frivolous utility, no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquillity of mind than the tweezer-cases of the lover of toy" (SMITH, 1984, p. 181). Nevertheless, Smith understood that wealth and all the frivolity that comes with it has a powerful effect on the imagination:

When we consider the condition of the great, in those delusive colours in which the imagination is apt to paint it, it seems to be almost the abstract idea of a perfect and happy state. It is the very state which, in all our waking dreams and idle reveries, we had sketched out to ourselves as the final object of all our desires. (SMITH, 1984, p. 52)

Wealth appears as a well-ordered machine, albeit of arduous maintenance¹⁰⁶. It is precisely sympathy and admiration for this order, however, that moves us to the pursuit of wealth:

If we consider the real satisfaction which all these things are capable of affording, by itself and separated from the beauty of that arrangement which is fitted to promote it, it will always appear in the highest degree contemptible and trifling. But we rarely view it in this abstract and philosophical light. We naturally confound it in our imagination with the order, the regular and harmonious movement of the system, the machine or oeconomy by means of which it is produced. *The pleasures of wealth and greatness, when considered in this complex view, strike the imagination as something grand and beautiful and noble, of which the attainment is well worth all the toil and anxiety which we are so apt to bestow upon it.* (SMITH, 1984, p. 183, emphasis added)

Smith's displacement of utility reveals that deception plays a major role in the mechanics of the *homo oeconomicus*. The admiration and beauty of order leads us to misdirect even our self-love. It compels us to strenuous labour leaving us "more exposed than before, to anxiety, to fear, and to sorrow; to diseases, to danger, and to death" (SMITH, 1984, p. 183).

¹⁰⁶ "Power and riches appear then to be, what they are, enormous and operose machines contrived to produce a few trifling conveniencies to the body, consisting of springs the most nice and delicate, which must be kept in order with the most anxious attention, and which in spite of all our care are ready every moment to burst into pieces, and to crush in their ruins their unfortunate possessor." (SMITH, 1984, p. 183)

Secondary literature has approached this deception in different ways. Charles Griswold sees in this a confusion between happiness and felicity (contempt). He argues that the distinction between felicity and tranquility drawn by Hobbes can also be found in Smith. According to Griswold, happiness for Smith is a somewhat constant state of "peacefulness, being in control, inner harmony, calm, rest" (GRISWOLD, 1999, p. 218), whereas felicity is inherently unstable, "inseparably interwoven with anxiety" (GRISWOLD, 1999, p. 220). The confusion between the two would be an inherent problem of commercial society. Samuel Fleischhacker, on the other hand, claims that it would be a contradiction for Smith to have maintained that the pursuit of wealth is conducive of unhappiness and at the same time encourage that pursuit. In order to resolve this apparent contradiction, the author makes a distinction between the pursuit of necessary items - namely the search for "food, clothing, or lodging for the sake of their health, and taking care of one's health" (FLEISCHACKER, 2004, p. 118)- from the vain, thus deceptive, pursuit of luxury goods.

The effort of a good part of Smith's commentators is spent trying to solve what Ryan Patrick Hanley calls the tragic paradox that this deception portrays: "what promotes society's opulence corrupts the character of the individual" (HANLEY, 2008, p. 138). My focus, however, is on the *homo oeconomicus* and in what this deception can reveal of this subject's mechanics. According to the Scot, this deception is an imposition of nature. Smith, the empirical observer, once again notes a descriptive fact: it is this deception "which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind" (SMITH, 1984, p. 183).

In the previous chapter, we talked about how Foucault interprets the invisible hand to refer to the opacity of the economic processes. Neither the Sovereign, nor the economic agents could know all the processes. This means that because of this epistemic limitation the *homo oeconomicus* could only pursue his own interests. The principle of deception, however, appears to unveil another aspect of the mechanism of interest. The deception of the *homo oeconomicus* comes precisely from the love of system, the sympathy with order and its beauty. As Macfie notes, the deceptive "pleasures find their justification or utility in the beauty of the system" (MACFIE, 2003, p. 61). Smith sees this deception as necessary to the point of positing it as the cause for the improvement of society:

It [deception] is this which first prompted them to cultivate the ground, to build houses, to found cities and commonwealths, and to invent and improve all the sciences and arts, which ennoble and embellish human life; which have entirely changed the whole face of the globe, have turned the rude forests into agreeable and fertile plains, and made the track less and barren

ocean a new fund of subsistence, and the great high road of communication to the different nations of the earth. (SMITH, 1984, p. 183).

If Foucault had delved into the TMS, he would have seen that there is an aesthetic dimension to the *homo oeconomicus*. The picture of the *homo oeconomicus* as a deeply rational subject, moved by a calculus of pleasure and pain needs to be updated. A close analysis of Smith's work reveals that the *homo oeconomicus* has not only an intersubjective side, but also a "longing for beauty" (GRISWOLD, 1999, p. 222)¹⁰⁷. In fact, if on the one hand, his epistemic limitations leads the *homo oeconomicus* to pursuit only what he can know, his self-interest, the beauty of order, and the consequent deception it produces, leads the *homo oeconomicus* to act for the maintenance of such an order:

The same principle, the same love of system, the same regard to the beauty of order, of art and contrivance, frequently serves to recommend those institutions which tend to promote the public welfare. [...] The contemplation of them pleases us, and we are interested in whatever can tend to advance them. They make part of the great system of government, and the wheels of the political machine seem to move with more harmony and ease by means of them. We take pleasure in beholding the perfection of so beautiful and grand a system, and we are uneasy till we remove any obstruction that can in the least disturb or encumber the regularity of its motions. All constitutions of government, however, are valued only in proportion as they tend to promote the happiness of those who live under them. This is their sole use and end. *From a certain spirit of system, however, from a certain love of art and contrivance, we sometimes seem to value the means more than the end, and to be eager to promote the happiness of our fellow-creatures, rather from a view to perfect and improve a certain beautiful and orderly system, than from any immediate sense or feeling of what they either suffer or enjoy.* (SMITH, 1984, p. 189, emphasis added).

The love of order does not make the *homo oeconomicus* more altruistic. He does not seek to improve public institutions because of a love of mankind. He does it for the pleasure which the beauty of the system provokes in him. Imbuing a system, understood as a philosophical system or as a set of institutions, with aesthetic qualities is common in the eighteenth century¹⁰⁸. According to Robert Mitchell, in part IV "system" denotes any "plan or institution that produces (or aims to produce) a certain end, often with the support of the state."

¹⁰⁷ "Human life is naturally restless, driven not only by fear (as Hobbes suggested) but also by longing for beauty." (GRISWOLD, 1999, p. 222)

¹⁰⁸ System in the eighteenth century Britain seemed to be the object of both admiration and "fear". The proper role of system was a theme of both political and literary thought and practice. According to Robert Mitchell, by mid-eighteenth century, system was connected with puritan radicalism, political and social upheaval, and French philosophy and politics (MONTES; SCHLIESSER, 2006, p. 61). Burke for example was a fierce opposer of systems, calling for the "triumph of common sense over the deceptive genre of system" (MONTES; SCHLIESSER, 2006, p. 61). For more on this see Mitchell in (MONTES; SCHLIESSER, 2006, p. 61)

(Mitchell in MONTES; SCHLIESSER, 2006, p. 68). The *homo oeconomicus* may be limited in his knowledge of the economic processes, but the beauty of the appearance of order of the system of civil government leads him to act for the maintenance of set system. In fact, Smith talks about how sympathy functions regarding aesthetic objects:

The beauty of a plain, the greatness of a mountain, the ornaments of a building, the expression of a picture, the composition of a discourse, the conduct of a third person, the proportions of different quantities and numbers, the various appearances which the great machine of the universe is perpetually exhibiting, with the secret wheels and springs which produce them [...] We both look at them from the same point of view, and we have no occasion for sympathy, or for that imaginary change of situations from which it arises, in order to produce, with regard to these, the most perfect harmony of sentiments and affections. (SMITH, 1984, p. 19)

Although Smith dismisses sympathy, he is referring specifically to the capacity for a change of place with another person. Sympathy understood as the harmony of sentiments in this situation is almost automatic. The sympathetic mechanism seems to be even more self-centered at this point, as it does not require any imaginary exchange. This seems to be what happens when men look at the well contrived machine that is society. A spontaneous order seems to derive from this automatic harmony of sentiments. The love of system, the beauty of order, misleads the *homo oeconomicus* to pursuit his own interest in the form of the pursuit of riches. The liberal art of government rests, therefore, both in an epistemic limitation of its subjects as well as in an aesthetic regime based on the beauty of its own order.

5 CONCLUSION

The present research attempted to provide a contribution to the studies in liberal governmentality in the form of a better understanding of its direct “partner”: the *homo oeconomicus*. In the first chapter, I sought to position how the notion of government and of arts of government emerged in Foucault’s work. My objective was to explain Foucault’s concepts and, at the same time, highlight the novelty of his approach to liberalism.

In the second chapter, I reconstructed Foucault’s notion of liberal governmentality in parallel with the rehabilitation of the notion of interest. I started by tracing how the notion of interest became a normative instance to both the conduct of the prince and of individual subjects in Reason of State. I used Foucault’s 78-79 lectures alongside recent literature to show that interest appeared as a calculative, self-centered behavior that was, nevertheless, connected to certain passions. Afterwards, I delved into Foucault’s conception of a subject of interest and its inherent connection to the liberal art of government that started to form in mid-eighteenth century. I also reconstruct a Foucault’s argument that political economy, beginning with Adam Smith, posed an internal critique to governmental rationality by postulating a constitutive epistemic limitation of both the Sovereign and the *homo oeconomicus*.

At the end of point 2.2 and 2.3, I posited certain limitations of Foucault’s text, especially in his approach to Adam Smith. In the context of the 78-79 lectures, Foucault tends to read Smith only as a political economist. In so doing, Foucault seems to reenact the Adam Smith Problem. We hope to have shown that this is problematic not just because the Scot philosopher had other concerns and works, but because his political economy cannot be construed as a separate science. Adam Smith’s political economy is still inserted in the context of the “science of the legislator”. As such, political economy is interwoven in the broader search for general principles that would inform the decisions and views of the statesman (HAAKONSEN, 1981)

Furthermore, I agree with Bastian Ronge’s proposition that Adam Smith’s work must be regarded as a project in which all the parts are interconnected. In that sense, the Theory of Moral Sentiments is as an unavoidable text as much as the Wealth of Nations. From this perspective, the TMS is a necessary text to comprehend the inner workings of the *homo oeconomicus* in the eighteenth century. In fact, it may even be a more appropriate text to

comprehend the mechanics of this subject of interest, for it “provides an understanding of those forms of behavior that are traditionally called moral.” (HAAKONSEN, 2006, p. 4)

Thus, I set out to examine parts of Smith’s moral work. In the third chapter, I showed how both self-love and sympathy are present in the mechanics of the *homo oeconomicus*. Moreover, my intention was to demonstrate how both are encompassed in Foucault description of the subject interest. Furthermore, in the discussion of the impartial spectator, I demonstrated how sympathy could be the aspect of the *homo oeconomicus* that stabilizes the tendency of self-love to put the bonds of civil society in danger. Following this, I directed my attention to part IV of the TMS to examine a distinctive feature of the *homo oeconomicus*. I uncovered an aesthetic side of the economic man by analyzing Smith’s peculiar take on utility and the deception that the beauty of order can produce. If we accept Foucault’s position that the *homo oeconomicus* is the correlate of liberal governmentality, then there is an aesthetic dimension to the liberal art of government that has not yet been explored.

Foucault’s framework of government and governmentality is still fertile. As conceptual tools, they can be used to understand the ways we are governed by multifarious techniques with diverse ends. They can also be helpful to understand through which techniques we govern ourselves. There is much yet to be explored by the point of view governmentality provides. The present thesis was but an attempt to contribute to this already rich framework.

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