

Liberal Democratic Consensus, Morals and Identity Politics as the Inevitable Path of Neutral Moral Subjectivation - Will There be a Way Out?¹

1. Introduction

The rise of identity politics appears to have unveiled the most substantial problem of modern liberal democracies: the loss of communal moral horizon.

Aiming to preserve their neutral nature, liberal democracies made unmatched efforts to promote the pursuit of supreme individual autonomy. Following the steps of the history of western political thought from the 17th century onward, they endorsed the subjectivation of the world, and ultimately led to the entrance into what some authors categorize as “The Secular Age”.

Simultaneously, man’s natural tendency to incessantly search for moral substance in the objective world was set apart and left adrift. In due course, as morals became a matter restricted to one’s private sphere, man gradually alienated himself in the search for his “authentic being”, to the point where his material existence could no longer be aligned with his spiritual being.

In the present essay, one will aspire to discuss the several answers of the political spectrum to fill the moral void of contemporary societies, and whether or not modern liberal democracies will be able to respond assertively to the inevitable moral debate they always refrained from reigniting.

Through a thorough analysis of the political thought of several authors - from Aristotle’s *Politics* to Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, and from Charles Taylor’s *The Ethics of Authenticity* to Patrick Deneen’s *Why Liberalism Failed* and Francis Fukuyama’s *Liberalism and Its Discontents* -, one will attempt to demonstrate how man’s detraction from the moral world and liberal democracies’ constant endeavour to escape from the moral and religious debate on the existence of a hierarchy of moral goods ultimately led

¹ Essay written by Manuel Gaspar, a bachelor’s in law and current master’s student of the Institute for Political Studies of the Catholic University of Portugal.

to the creation of two vast moral consensual poles which are now forcing democracies to take a moral stance on several issues, against its own nature.

While some point out the need to re-insert a “sense of moderation” in human nature, others perceive liberalism’s vices as irredeemable. But will there be a way out?

2. Freedom and Man as a Religious Animal: Modernity as the Rise of Plato’s Young Democratic Man

In book VIII of Plato’s *Republic*, after commencing a dialogue regarding democracy, Socrates and Glaucon discuss the character of the young democratic man. Following the deflation of his soul by “false and boastful words and beliefs”², he becomes a lover of equality moved by “insolence, anarchy, extravagance, and shamelessness”³ who refuses to accept that “some pleasures belong to fine and good desires and others to evil ones and that he must pursue and value the former and restrain and enslave the latter”⁴. Although for him “There’s neither order nor necessity in (...) life, (...) he [still] calls it pleasant, free, and blessedly happy, and he follows it for as long as he lives.”⁵; living, however, according to the excesses of freedom, he ultimately becomes a victim of “extreme slavery”⁶.

But why would the young democratic man be seduced by such deceitful principles? According to Plato, there is one main cause: just as Ulysses’ three travelling companions had to be forcefully taken out of the Island of the lotus-eaters due to having eaten lotus, in Homer’s *Odyssey*, the democratic man was dominated by his desires (the “drones”), and ultimately forgot his divine origin, that is, “knowledge, fine ways of living, and words of truth (which are the best watchmen and guardians of the thoughts of those men whom the gods love) (...)”⁷.

Following the noticeable predominance of liberty as “will (...) moved not only by the universal good apprehended by the reason, but also by good apprehended by sense”⁸ - presuming good as ordained toward something higher or transcendent - or “as the learned capacity of human beings to conquer the slavish pursuit of base and hedonistic

² Plato, *Republic*, VIII.560c, in John M. Cooper, *Plato - Complete Works*, Hackett Publishing Company, Cambridge/Indianapolis, 1997, p. 1171.

³ Plato, *Republic*, VIII.560e, in Cooper, *Plato*, p. 1171.

⁴ *Idem*, VIII.561c, in *Idem*, p. 1172.

⁵ *Ibidem*, VIII.561d, in *Ibidem*, p. 1172.

⁶ *Ibidem*, VIII.563b-e - 564a, in *Ibidem*, pp. 1173-1174.

⁷ *Ibidem*, VIII.560b, in *Ibidem*, p. 1171.

⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, Loyola Editions, IaIIae, Q. 10, a. 2, p. 167.

desires (...), condition of self-governance of both city and soul”⁹ during the Middle Ages, western political thought has evolved toward a moral system which, leading “not only to the privatization of the religious need, but also to a peculiarly bloodless vision of community (...), delivers at best only a part of moral thinking”.¹⁰

Indeed, though the classical definition of freedom remained present in the sixteenth century through Thomas More’s *Utopia*¹¹ (1516), Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *De Libera Arbitrio* (1524), and St. Robert Bellarmine’s *On Temporal and Spiritual Authority*¹², the sixteenth century was mainly shaped by Martin Luther’s notion of free-will and liberty as “empty concepts”¹³, merely achievable through the “word of God”. Since “external things” such as works and laws “could easily be done by some ungodly person and since such efforts result only in producing hypocrites”¹⁴, every person should seek their salvation in the word of God and, primarily, through faith - in essence, via one’s “inner person”, who “becomes guilty and a condemned slave of sin only by ungodliness and unbelief of the heart and not by any external sin or work”¹⁵. Hence, if one has faith in his heart, neither laws or works would be necessary to assure his “righteousness and salvation” - which meant faith would ultimately constitute the sole path to freedom.¹⁶

Finding Erasmus’ “habituation in virtue” approach through the imitation of Christ’s figure as an obnoxious expression of pride¹⁷, the German thinker asserted it was better to live passively as “honest sinners” rather than as virtuous men who aimed to publicly free themselves from sin.¹⁸ As in every action resides the expression of one’s true sinful nature, being restrained by external elements such as “reading scripture; imitating Christ’s charity

⁹ Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*, Yale University Press, 2018, p. 37.

¹⁰ Roger Scruton, *The Face of God: The Gifford Lectures*, Bloomsbury, 2012, p. 157.

¹¹ “(...) that in so far as public necessities allow for it, as much time as possible should be reclaimed from the servitude of the body and redirected, for all citizens, to the freedom and cultivation of the mind. For here, they think, is where the happiness of life is to be found.”. See Thomas More, *Utopia & Selected Epigrams*, CTMS Publishers at the University of Dallas, 2020, II.v.15, p. 57.

¹² “(...) freedom consists in being able to choose good and reject evil”, provided one “at least begins to be freed through the prevenient grace of God”. See Robert Bellarmine, *On Temporal and Spiritual Authority*, Liberty Fund, 2012, p. 40.

¹³ “(...) when it is granted and established, that “Free-will”, having once lost its liberty, is compulsively bound to the service of sin, and cannot will anything good: I, from these words, can understand nothing else than that “Free-will” is a mere empty term, whose reality is lost. And a lost liberty, according to my grammar, is no liberty at all. And to give the name of liberty to that which has no liberty, is to give it an empty term.”. See Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will [De Servo Arbitrio (1525)]*, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1957, section 50.

¹⁴ Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian (1520)*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2016, para. 25, p. 11.

¹⁵ Luther, *The Freedom*, para. 32, p. 13.

¹⁶ *Idem*, para. 40, p. 15.

¹⁷ Jennifer A. Herdt, “Virtue’s Semblance: Erasmus and Luther on Pagan Virtue and the Christian Life.”, in *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2005, pp. 137–62, p. 154, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23561604>. Accessed 18 June 2023.

¹⁸ Herdt, “Virtue’s Semblance...”, in *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, p. 148.

and humility; heartfelt prayer; battling the vices of jealousy, anger, and gluttony; seeking concord with neighbor”¹⁹ would prove to be meaningless, as it would inevitably “lead to hypocrisy and false piety as much as going on pilgrimages, venerating saints' relics, rote prayer, and buying indulgences”. Thus, one’s only hope would be to wait for God’s work to be done in his “inner being” by having faith.

Using faith as the main conduit of his thought, Luther admittedly created a philosophical theory which would ultimately lead not only to the promotion of self-defeat and “obsessive self-scrutiny, rather than peaceful trust”²⁰ - which for the author ought to be perceived as man’s humiliation by God -, but also to men’s alienation between each other and in relation to the material world.

Thriving on hopelessness, man no longer saw himself as a creature inserted in an ordained natural world inclined towards good, but rather as a sinful atom who, by aiming to moderate his character through virtue, was only allowing himself to be limited by an exogenous element: nature as a metaphysical, if not godly, creation.

Though the legacy of the classical understanding of liberty remained present in the political realm, its fading would eventually arrive, via the human uprising against nature. Following Francis Bacon’s revolt against the “methods, authority and opinions” of ancient authors and depiction of Aristotle as “«the highest impostor», comparable with the Antichrist”²¹⁻²², new concepts of liberty arose which, as Patrick Deneen argues, may be condensed as “the condition in which one can act freely within the sphere unconstrained by positive law”²³. However, either through Hobbes’ or Locke’s assertion of freedom - “the absence of opposition; (...) [meaning] external impediments of motion”²⁴ for the former, and “the idea of a power in any agent to do or forbear any particular action, according to the determination or thought of the mind, whereby either of them is preferred to the other”²⁵ for the latter - the idea of liberty was not only considerably deflated throughout time, but it also became the higher good towards which

¹⁹ *Idem.*

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 154.

²¹ Silvia Manzo, “Francis Bacon: Freedom, authority and science”, in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 14 (2), 245-273, 2006, pp. 248-249.

²² Manzo, “Francis Bacon...”, in *British*, pp. 246-249; and Francis Bacon, “A Confession of Faith”, in James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis and Douglas Denon Heath, *The Works of Francis Bacon*, XIV, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and company, 1900, p. 49.

²³ Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*, pp. 37-38.

²⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Wordsworth Editions, 2014, II.xxi, p. 163.

²⁵ John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Wordsworth Editions, 2014, II.xxvi.8, p. 228.

every commonwealth ought to be ordained²⁶, reaching one of its pinnacles through Hegel's dichotomy of objective and subjective freedom²⁷.

As freedom gradually went from a secondary good ordained toward a greater good - happiness as a product of a combination of virtues - to 'that towards which something is ordained' - the end, or the greater good itself -, the democratic man's religious propension did not vanish. On the contrary, it was used so as to convince men they could elevate themselves as the greater good.

In the wake of Friedrich Nietzsche's "«the old god is dead»"²⁸ declaration, freedom as "a *disciplina voluntatis* (...) [which makes life] appear illuminated by the highest worth, so that henceforth it becomes a good for which one fights and under certain circumstances even gives one's life"²⁹ was transmuted into a will of power which ultimately benefits the already amoral ferocious "bird of prey"³⁰. Freed from the chains of the "only great calamity, the only great interior perversion (...), the only and immortal shameful stigma of humanity"³¹ - Christianity -, men could now create their own values - and the most powerful would eventually win. In the XXth century, lust for power and men's religious propensity would finally become one, in the form of solitude and ideology³², and originate what would later be known as totalitarianism.

However vile the works of freedom as will of power were, the newly-escaped-from-tyranny democratic man did not hesitate in maintaining freedom as the higher good. While some aimed to expose the proximities between Christianity and Stalin's language³³, others pursued Nietzsche's desire through «biopower»³⁴ or reinstated Hegel's subjective and objective freedom concepts by renaming them as positive and negative liberty³⁵.

²⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, II.xvii, p. 131; and John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, Wordsworth Editions, 2014, IX.123-124, p. 782.

²⁷ George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, Batoche Books, Kitchener, 2001, IV.iii.3, p. 477.

²⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, V.343, p. 199.

²⁹ *Idem*, V.353, pp. 210-211.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, V.352, p. 210.

³¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *O Anticristo*, Publicações Europa-América, 1977, p. 138.

³² Hannah Arendt, *As Origens do Totalitarismo*, 7.^a Edição, D. Quixote, 2017, pp. 609-634; *Eichmann em Jerusalém - Uma Reportagem sobre a Banalidade do Mal*, ITACA, 2021; and Raymond Aron, *Démocratie et Totalitarisme*, Gallimard, 1987.

³³ Bertrand Russel, "Religião e Moral", in *Porque Não Sou Cristão*, 2.^a Edição, Brasília Editora, Porto, 1970, pp. 257-258.

³⁴ Developing Michel Foucault's «biopower» concept, Francis Fukuyama, *Liberalismo e Seus Descontentes*, D. Quixote, 2022, pp. 110-112.

³⁵ Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty", in Henry Hardy (ed.), *Liberty*, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 166-217.

Whilst modern freedom was re-proclaimed as the highest good, its intrinsic emptiness became ever more evident. “Inspired by the Romantic critique of the modern disciplined, instrumental agent”³⁶, man understood, due to the demands of his religious nature, that liberty should be substantially determined. Refusing, however, to accept that liberty’s content could only be defined through its ordination toward a higher, self-sustainable good - that is, to a certain conception of the good, or object -, individuals turned into themselves so as to fill their religious need. Indeed, instead of aiming to perfect themselves through the moderation of their conducts via the cultivation of virtue (which would ultimately lead to the concept of “ordained liberty”), men made every effort to justify the immoderate nature of the modern concept of liberty.

Firstly, they would attempt to separate their “sense of justice” - somehow obtained through a hypothetical original impartiality - from the good³⁷, prioritizing “processual efforts” over “substantial efforts”. But it seemed that the fact that “we are free and independent selves, unbound by antecedent moral ties, capable of choosing our ends for ourselves”³⁸ was not enough to fulfill the existing gap, since, as every conception of the good would be levelled by the State’s neutral moral stance, man would still feel considerable void, indifference and, mainly, need for recognition. Accordingly, the ends we choose in conformity with our desires could not be left adrift in the world, as arbitrary as they were - they demanded recognition as a condition to every “value judgement and to the value of (...) [one’s] own existence”³⁹. The merit of one’s freedom - or even one’s “moral ideals”⁴⁰ - was not only independent from a conception of the good; it was morally valuable in itself as the expression of one’s subjective existence, relinquishing any exigence for sacrifice or responsibilities toward others, as well as any limitations imposed to us by nature.

Hence, occasionally in “the search for health”, individuals could now instrumentalize their religious nature in order to idolatrize themselves: separating “spirituality” from “religion”, they created an abstract, individualist spirituality “totally focused on the

³⁶ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 2007, p. 510.

³⁷ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 1999.

³⁸ Michael Sandel, “Political Liberalism - Review By Michael Sandel”, in *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 107, No. 7 (May 1994), pp. 1765-1794, available at <https://doi.org/10.2307/1341828>.

³⁹ Luís Lóia, *Charles Taylor - O Reconhecimento como Mediação e Subsunção de Conflitos Políticos*, UCP Editora, May 2020, p. 86.

⁴⁰ Sandel, “Political Liberalism...”, in *Harvard*, p. 1789.

immanent, and/or being a variety of invitations to self-absorption, without any concern for anything beyond the agent, whether the surrounding society, or the transcendent”⁴¹.

Modern freedom finally guided us towards the contemporary political landscape: the impossibility of democratic consensus prompted by what might be named as the clash of the idolatrized individuals, whose subjective morality is protected by the State’s pretentious neutral moral stance.

3. The Impossibility of Democratic Consensus: State Neutrality and Modern Freedom as the Eternal Good

From liberal authors such as Francis Fukuyama⁴² or Bassam Tibi⁴³ to post-liberal thinkers such as Yoram Hazony and Glenn Hellmers, the common trait observable in every identity politics movement seems to be forgotten: man’s religious nature.

Though recognizing that “liberal societies (...) cannot function if they are incapable of agreeing on basic facts and reverting their slide towards epistemic relativism”⁴⁴ and affirming that “human autonomy is not unlimited (...) [and] is not an absolute human good which automatically dissolves every other conception of the good life”⁴⁵, liberal reformist’s proposals would not produce any significant changes to man as a religious creature. For the values in relation to which they claim liberal societies cannot be neutral - *Leitkultur*⁴⁶ and “public spirit, tolerance, mental openness, and active participation in public affairs”⁴⁷ - are deprived of any effective moral substance, in virtue of the refusal to acknowledge and apply a hierarchy of moral goods in which liberty as individual satisfaction of our desires does not stand at the very top.

Even if one were, for instance, to attempt to complement modern freedom with the ancient “sense of moderation” (“nothing in excess”) at the top of the moral hierarchy, as Fukuyama suggests⁴⁸, the former would eventually let loose of the latter, and individuals would return to the moral and spiritual hole in which they reside nowadays. For the

⁴¹ Taylor, *idem*, p. 508.

⁴² Fukuyama, *Liberalismo*, pp. 164-173.

⁴³ Francis Fukuyama, “Against Identity Politics: The New Tribalism and the Crisis of Democracy”, in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 5 (SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018), pp. 90-94, 96-102, 104-114, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44823914>.

⁴⁴ Fukuyama, *Liberalismo*, p. 168.

⁴⁵ *Idem*, p. 170.

⁴⁶ “(...) a belief in equality and democratic values firmly grounded in the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment.”. See Fukuyama, “Against Identity Politics...”, in *Foreign Affairs*, p. 107.

⁴⁷ *Idem*, p. 171.

⁴⁸ Fukuyama, *Liberalismo*, p. 172.

ancient “sense of moderation”, classically associated with excellence⁴⁹, was conceived as the mean through which excellence, as a relative and instrumental end⁵⁰, was ordained towards the ultimate end - happiness - and not to temper freedom. In essence, Plato’s democratic man cannot sustain his character through an “aristocratic” notion of liberty.

The only conceivable modern theory consistent with Fukuyama’s requirements is probably one put forward by Francisco Suárez, who foresaw that the members of the political community “look after their own particular convenience, which most of the times is contrary to the common good, and [that] seldom there are lots of things necessary to the common good, which are not necessary for each of its particular members”⁵¹. The catholic thinker argued however that the end of politics consisted in “peace and justice [between men, and that they live] with sufficiency of the goods which serve the conservation and comfort of the corporal life, and with the rectitude of customs necessary to such peace and external happiness of the republic and to the convenient conservation of human nature”⁵² - thus proclaiming the ordaining of modern liberty through the recognition of the existence of a divine order⁵³ (that is, recognizing what we have been naming as “man’s religious nature”).

Certain post-liberal thinkers tend, on the other hand, to overly focus on social links in no way related to any conception of the good, such as nationality. Adhering to the modern notion of liberty, they too claim that “homeland people” are not free enough - that is, do not have the possibility of assuring the absolute satisfaction of their desires - due to the works of a bureaucratic system controlled by democracies’ biggest political parties, whose main *ratio* consists in defending their particular interests. By diluting a given conception of good in nationality, they too disregard “that man is by his constitution a

⁴⁹ Aristóteles, *Ética a Nicómaco*, 4.ª Edição (Reimpressão), Quetzal, 2020, II.viii.1108b11-1109a19, pp. 61-62.

⁵⁰ *Idem*, I.v.1095b20-1096a11, p. 26.

⁵¹ Diogo Freitas do Amaral, *História das Ideias Políticas*, I, Almedina, 2006, pp. 302-303.

⁵² Ángel Poncela González, “Origen y fin del poder en Suárez. Elementos antropológicos de la teoría de la «comunidad política perfecta»” (319-334), in Mário Santiago de Carvalho, Manuel Lázaro Pulido and Simone Guidi, *Francisco Suárez: Metaphysics, Politics and Ethics*, Coimbra University Press, 2020, p. 325.

See, also, Manuel Lopéz Casquete de Prado, “La ley natural en Francisco de Suárez: exaltación de la libertad”, in *Pensamiento. Revista De Investigación E Información Filosófica*, 74 (279 Extra), 147-161. <https://doi.org/10.14422/pen.v74.i279.y2018.007>; Costantino Esposito, “Francisco Suárez: la natura, la grazia e la causa della libertà”, in *Anuario Filosófico* 47 (1), 2006, 119-148;

⁵³ Gonçalo Moita, “Apologia da doutrina social e política de Francisco Suárez”, in *GEPOLIS: revista de filosofia e cidadania*, Lisboa, ISSN 0873-7193. 5 (1998) 25-42, paragraph 7, p. 32.

religious animal”⁵⁴ and, mainly, “that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and comfort.”⁵⁵.

By reducing human liberty to mere individual desire and degrading conscience from “the subject’s capacity for the divine, sign of the real dignity and greatness of the human being” to the status of “a justification mechanism”⁵⁶, liberal democracies led people to have “more in common with others who share a political outlook even if they are from a different area of the country (or even foreigners), a different ethnic or racial background, and - remarkably, given the history of religious warfare - a different religion.”⁵⁷.

If democratic consensus, due to the very nature of liberal democracies, was already impossible to achieve, one must start to realize that the “overlapping consensus” conceived by John Rawls turns out to be insufficient to fulfil our true nature: to be Truth seekers and contemplators.⁵⁸ As Alan Bloom stated, similarly to every other political regime, democracy too “needs citizens who are in accord with its fundamental principle”⁵⁹. However, overreliance on modern liberty has resulted in the isolation of the democratic man, who was compelled to search for new moral goods within the political realm.

The main question is thus not if democratic consensus is or ever was possible. It is rather whether or not democracies are prepared to respond for man’s search for new moral goods in the communal or political world, and likewise whether men will opt for a new political experience, “grounded in the actual practice and mutual education of shared self-rule”⁶⁰ - as well as in the belief that “we cannot enjoy liberty without sacrifice and renounce”⁶¹ -, or will continue to choose modern liberty, only to end up destroying virtuous liberty, as Plato foresaw.

From the opposition of the most exasperated democratic man - for whom “The true believer is the real danger”⁶² - to the tentation of pursuing “the religious absolutization of the state”⁶³ - mainly from those who see modern liberty as the eternal good -, this lengthy

⁵⁴ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790)*, in Frances Canvas, *Select Works of Edmund Burke*, II, Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1999, p. 186.

⁵⁵ *Idem*, p. 185.

⁵⁶ Bento XVI, *Verdade, Valores, Poder*, Editorial Franciscana, 2006, p. 34.

⁵⁷ Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*, p. 44.

⁵⁸ José Bacelar and José Oliveira, “O Homem como ser para a Verdade: segundo S. Tomás de Aquino”, in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, T. 21, Fasc. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1965), pp. 150-168.

⁵⁹ Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind - How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*, Simon & Schuster Inc., p. 26.

⁶⁰ Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*, p. 197.

⁶¹ Bento XVI, *Verdade*, p. 18.

⁶² Bloom, *The Closing*, p. 26.

⁶³ Bento XVI, *Verdade*, p. 75.

process of reforming democracy and arbitrary liberty will face several obstacles. Nonetheless, the pursuit of truth will make us realize the virtuosity of freedom; for one cannot survive without the other.

4. Bibliography

- Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind - How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*, Simon & Schuster Inc., 1987.
- Ángel Poncela González, “Origen y fin del poder en Suárez. Elementos antropológicos de la teoría de la «comunidad política perfecta»” (319-334), in Mário Santiago de Carvalho, Manuel Lázaro Pulido and Simone Guidi, *Francisco Suárez: Metaphysics, Politics and Ethics*, Coimbra University Press, 2020.
- Aristóteles, *Ética a Nicómaco*, 4.^a Edição (Reimpressão), Quetzal, 2020.
- Bento XVI, *Verdade, Valores, Poder*, Editorial Franciscana, 2006.
- Bertrand Russel, “Religião e Moral”, in *Porque Não Sou Cristão*, 2.^a Edição, Brasília Editora, Porto, 1970.
- Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 2007.
- Costantino Esposito, “Francisco Suárez: la natura, la grazia e la causa della libertà”, in *Anuario Filosófico* 47 (1), 2006, 119-148.
- Diogo Freitas do Amaral, *História das Ideias Políticas*, I, Almedina, 2006.
- Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790)*, in Frances Canvas, *Select Works of Edmund Burke*, II, Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1999.
- Francis Bacon, “A Confession of Faith”, in James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis and Douglas Denon Heath, *The Works of Francis Bacon*, XIV, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and company, 1900.
- Francis Fukuyama, “Against Identity Politics: The New Tribalism and the Crisis of Democracy”, in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 5 (SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018), pp. 90-94, 96-102, 104-114, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44823914>.
- Francis Fukuyama, *Liberalismo e Seus Descontentes*, D. Quixote, 2022.
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *O Anticristo*, Publicações Europa-América, 1977.
- George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, Batoche Books, Kitchener, 2001.
- Gonçalo Moita, “Apologia da doutrina social e política de Francisco Suárez”, in *GEPOLIS: revista de filosofia e cidadania*, Lisboa, ISSN 0873-7193. 5 (1998) 25-42.
- Hannah Arendt, *As Origens do Totalitarismo*, 7.^a Edição, D. Quixote, 2017.

- Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann em Jerusalém - Uma Reportagem sobre a Banalidade do Mal*, ITACA, 2021.
- Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”, in Henry Hardy (ed.), *Liberty*, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Jennifer A. Herdt, “Virtue’s Semblance: Erasmus and Luther on Pagan Virtue and the Christian Life.”, in *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2005, pp. 137–62, in <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23561604>. Accessed 18 June 2023.
- John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Wordsworth Editions, 2014.
- John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, Wordsworth Editions, 2014.
- John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 1999.
- José Bacelar and José Oliveira, “O Homem como ser para a Verdade: segundo S. Tomás de Aquino”, in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, T. 21, Fasc. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1965), pp. 150-168.
- Luís Lóia, *Charles Taylor - O Reconhecimento como Mediação e Subsunção de Conflitos Políticos*, UCP Editora, May 2020.
- Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian (1520)*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2016.
- Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will [De Servo Arbitrio (1525)]*, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1957
- Manuel López Casquete de Prado, “La ley natural en Francisco de Suárez: exaltación de la libertad”, in *Pensamiento. Revista De Investigación E Información Filosófica*, 74 (279 Extra), 147-161. <https://doi.org/10.14422/pen.v74.i279.y2018.007>.
- Michael Sandel, “Political Liberalism - Review By Michael Sandel”, in *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 107, No. 7 (May 1994), pp. 1765-1794, available at <https://doi.org/10.2307/1341828>.
- Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*, Yale University Press, 2018.
- Plato, *Republic*, in John M. Cooper, *Plato - Complete Works*, Hackett Publishing Company, Cambridge/Indianapolis, 1997.
- Raymond Aron, *Démocratie et Totalitarisme*, Gallimard, 1987.
- Roger Scruton, *The Face of God: The Gifford Lectures*, Bloomsbury, 2012.
- Robert Bellarmine, *On Temporal and Spiritual Authority*, Liberty Fund, 2012.
- Silvia Manzo, “Francis Bacon: Freedom, authority and science”, in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 14 (2), 245-273.
- St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, Loyola Editions.

- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Wordsworth Editions, 2014.
- Thomas More, *Utopia & Selected Epigrams*, CTMS Publishers at the University of Dallas, 2020.