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From Pulpit Logic to Passionate Appeal: The Shift from Reason to Passion in Selected post-1688 Whig-Aligned Clerical Texts

[Od retoryki rozumu do retoryki emocji: transformacja strategii retorycznych w wybranych prowigowskich pismach dyskursu religijnego w porewolucyjnej Anglii]

Streszczenie: Artykuł poświęcony jest analizie wybranych tekstów dyskursu religijnego autorów związanych z kręgami wigowskimi w porewolucyjnej Anglii, z naciskiem na zastosowane w nich strategie retoryczne – w szczególności retorykę emocji. Analizie poddane zostały wybrane kazania Johna Tillotsona, pisma Gilberta Burneta oraz dzieła Johna Dennisa, w których zastosowanie tego narzędzia odzwierciedlało wysiłki zmierzające do zaangażowania większego audytorium przy jednoczesnym dystansowaniu się od ideologii Kościoła Wysokiego (High Church) i torysów. John Tillotson, dążąc do przedstawienia religii Kościoła Niskiego (Low Church) jako „rozsądnej", podkreślał konieczność podporządkowania emocji rozumowi, jednocześnie jednak dostrzegając ich znaczenie. Gilbert Burnet natomiast, świadomy kierowania przekazu do coraz szerszego odbiorcy o często niewygórowanych możliwościach i potrzebach intelektualnych, doradzał dostosowanie kazań, zalecając bardziej świadome wykorzystanie retoryki emocji jako uzasadnionego narzędzia perswazji. John Dennis, ukazując emocje jako element destrukcyjny w swojej krytyce „kapłańskich sztuczek" (priestcraft) Kościoła Wysokiego, jednocześnie wykorzystał język emocji, aby wzmocnić swą polemikę, realizując niejako w praktyce rady Burneta odnośnie do perswazyjnej siły emocji. Przykłady te sugerują wyraźną zmianę w kulturze religijnej i politycznej tego okresu, ukierunkowaną na zintensyfikowanie retoryki emocji w celu dotarcia do szerszego grona odbiorców. Śledząc tę ewolucję, niniejsze rozważania służą ukazaniu emocji jako istotnego elementu strategii komunikacyjnych pisarzy związanych z wigami na przełomie XVII i XVIII w.

Summary: This article examines a selection of clerical texts associated with Whig-aligned churchmen in post-Revolution England, focusing on how their rhetorical strategies – particularly their treatment of the passions-reflect an effort to engage

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broader audiences while distancing themselves from High Church and Tory ideologies. The analysis is based on three case studies: John Tillotson's sermons, Gilbert Burnet's writings, and John Dennis's works. Tillotson, seeking to present Low Church religion as 'reasonable,' though emphasised the need to subordinate passions to reason, at the same time acknowledging their significance. Burnet, by contrast, emphasized the need to adapt sermons to the unlearned, recommending a more deliberate and expansive use of passions as a legitimate tool of persuasion. John Dennis, while portraying passions as destructive in his attack on High Church' 'priestcraft,' simultaneously embraced impassioned and affective language to strengthen his polemic, aligning with Burnet's recognition of the persuasive power of passions. These examples suggest a marked shift in the period's religious and political culture – from reasoned moral instruction toward more emotionally charged appeals aimed at increasingly diverse audiences. By tracing this evolution, the study highlights how rhetoric of passions became an essential element in the communication strategies of Whig-affiliated writers at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Słowa kluczowe: retoryka emocji, latitudinarianie, wigowie, Kościół Wysoki.

Keywords: rhetoric of passions, Latitudinarians, Whig, High Church.

Church and politics in post-Republic England: From Puritan into Whig

The fall of the Republic in 1658 largely brought to an end the Puritan influence on English political life. This was followed by the Restoration and the return of the Stuart dynasty, developments that were inextricably linked with the re-establishment the grounding position of the Anglican Church. The English parliament's decision to put Charles I on trial for treason, which lead to his eventual execution, while a mere decade later reversing the process by restoring the monarchy in the form of Charles II, only served to question evermore vigorously the very notion of the Divine Rights of Kings. As a consequence, this doctrine, along with the principle of passive obedience, emerged as one of the most vigorously debated topics in the writings of contemporary churchmen. The treatises of Thomas Hobbes and Robert Filmer reflect significant shifts in the interpretation of royal authority as either a panacea against the evil nature of men or faith in blind obedience even to a tyrant. However, within the struggle between the King and parliament, the Anglican Church, with its ongoing reference to divine rights, formed a serious obstacle in diminishing the role of the monarch. Thus, in the newly post-Restoration political scene the opposition began to consolidate its forces both in the fields of politics and religion and, as a consequence, the 1670s witnessed the emergence of Whigs supported by more liberal, tolerant religious circles called the Latitudinarians. Their further activity in court, parliament and more explicitly its visibility to the public through the publishing market reveals both

their links with the Puritan regime of the Commonwealth as well as the changing nature of these links. The reactions of churchmen to the 1662 Act of Uniformity clarified the division on Conformist and Non-conformist and, on the grounds of the subsequent religious debate, a shift from Puritan to Whig. Mark Goldie characterising the process and tracing the roots of anticlericalism remarked that:

> Puritans believed that the English Church was 'but halfly reformed' and that elements of popery remained insidiously intermixed. Their first answer to Laudian prelacy was Presbyterian power [...] But the Covenant [...] who damned the all rival sects, did not endear themselves [...] The religious polemics of 1640s also generated the voguish phrases by which the wits would bruise the clerics in Restoration coffee-houses [...] A substantial segment of Protestancy came to believe that priestly usurpation took not one but three forms: prelatical and presbyterial as well as popish. As Protestant shed the rule of the saints, this triad came to haunt their search for a civic religion, and in this awakening the Puritan became the Whig (1993, p. 215–216).

This article examines selected clerical texts associated with Whig-aligned churchmen in post-revolution England, with the aim of exploring how their rhetorical strategies – particularly the approach to passions – suggest a shared orientation toward engaging broader audiences and distancing themselves from High Church and Tory ideologies. Selection of John Tillotson's sermons, Gilbert Burnet's, and John Dennis' works treated as case studies rather than as examples of the whole range of early eighteenth-century religious writing, serve to illustrate an observable evolution in preaching strategies and a transition from the restrained moral instruction characteristic of earlier Latitudinarian preaching to a more emotionally charged and affective mode of appeal. Read comparatively, they indicate how changing political, theological, and social situation shaped the tone and style adopted by preachers seeking to address audiences no longer confined to the educated elite. Thus, the study aims to trace tendencies and emerging patterns that speak to a changing conception of religious persuasion and its role in political culture.

Rhetoric of passions: addressing the audience, an image of the rival and that of a self-portrait

A traditionally sceptical approach toward passions and an emphasis on the dominance of reason as the faculty of control over the wilder, passionate sides of human nature found its full confirmation in seventeenth century philosophical thought reinforced by the developing sciences.

The seventeenth-century philosophical inheritance regarded passions as "an overbearing and inescapable element of human nature, liable to disrupt any civilised order [...] unless they were tamed" (James S., 1997, p. 1). As a result, and in the context of an advancing optimistic rationalism, the Puritan revolution with its insistence on "a polity governed by a godly ministry schooled in Genevan discipline" (Goldie M., p. 213) was seen as an enthusiastic irrationalism. This purely negative perception of the passions was a dominant trend in philosophical thinking in the first half of the eighteenth-century, where passions were perceived as public, easily transmittable and as a source of anxiety that needed to be controlled. Therefore, the rhetoric developed within the political conflict in early eighteenth- century England aimed at producing a self-portrait which reflected social responsibility and rationality while simultaneously depicting rivals to be both irresponsible and irrational. According to Brian Cowan this "critical appeal to reason was used and invoked by contemporaries as legitimisation strategy for their arguments" (2016, p. 62). Yet this rhetorical strategy, especially in the context of a steadily expanding print culture and increasing levels of literacy, also required means by which to appeal beyond the educated elite. Consequently, emotionally charged language – far from being an incidental feature – became a deliberate instrument in addressing and persuading the broader, less educated segments of society. Such impassioned expression formed a crucial element of the rhetoric of passions: a discursive mode which sought to engage the affections and which enabled political and religious actors to influence public opinion by appealing to emotions.

The growing reliance on the rhetoric of passions in clerical and political discourse coincided with a broader re-evaluation of the role of passions in moral and civic life, a shift significantly shaped by the writings of Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, founder of the Whigs, who played a major role in spreading a far more positive view of passions: "Since it is therefore by Affection merely that a Creature is esteem'd good or ill, natural or unnatural; our business will be, to examine which are the good and natural, and which the ill and unnatural Affections" (1999, p. 170). Shaftesbury's thoughts were a logical continuation of Descartes' dualistic view of human nature and its impact on the traditional understanding of the passions by treating them as one of the major human faculties rather than as part of the will (Dixon T., 2003, p. 76–79; James S.,1997, p. 85–108). Thus, with this new approach he offered a philosophical foundation for viewing the passions not as inherently dangerous or disruptive, but as integral to virtue, sociability, and public engagement.

Along with the Puritan-into-Whig transformation, the rhetoric of reason and of passions began their successful career. Explaining the trans-

formation and identification of the religious origins of Whigs, Goldie precedes his argument by quoting a Whig MP, Thomas Papillon, who at the end of the 17th century described the difference between the newly emerged political groups. The juxtaposition was based on the image of Whigs as "sober and religious persons" who did not care about ceremonial trappings and were "willing that there might be a reformation to take away offence" while in contrast Tories focused only on ritual formalism and not moral reformation: "who rail against the endeavour to discountenance all those that are otherwise minded" (Goldie M., p. 213). This comparison, though from the Whig perspective, foreshadowed a characteristic rhetoric of passions and reason developed in the future paper war between Whigs and Tories and their supporters[2]. The study of the techniques used, enables us to observe a complex and multi-layered employment of the passion-reason bias (Kozak K., 2017; 2020), with the twin pillars this rhetoric was founded on: an image of the rival and that of a self-portrait. This strategy in clerical text was aptly summarised by Mary Morrisey who referring to the struggle between the Conformists and Nonconformists indicated that the writings of the former reintroduced the rhetoric of passions and reason with the intention "to convince the readers that Nonconformist preaching is an error-laden and destructive force in the English Church" and that "Nonconformist preachers are fraudulent sophists, persuading their hearers by their emotional language and extravagant expressions" (2002, p. 703). It is this rhetorical dichotomy that will be further advanced and developed, also in political writings, during the early eighteenth century.

John Tillotson: "plain and edifying way of Preaching"[3]

The broad perception of the rhetoric of passions and reason exceeding the basic distinction into an appeal to both elements is exemplified in the writings of archbishop John Tillotson (1630–1694), an influential seventeenth century preacher who established the line of argument for Whig-aligned religious writers. Tillotson's strong appeal to reason exceeded its immediate association with a rhetorical tool. This method in itself constituted a means to convince the audience of the importance of reason over the passions in order to present the Low Church as a religion that is reasonable:

[2] The contemporary scene represented a rich variety of political and religious groupings (Tories, Whigs, Jacobites, High Churchmen, Dissenters, Latitudinarians). A two-party system that emerged, though not yet fully visible on an ideological level, which either absorbed other political-religious groups or made them seem radical. However, for the purposes of clarity, a more simplified binary opposition of Whig and Tory will be presented in this present study.

[3] A phrase used by Gilbert Burnet in his funeral sermon for John Tillotson to describe Tillotson's preaching (p.12).

> To say we have no reason for our religion, is to say it is unreasonable. Indeed, it is reason enough for any article of our faith, that God hath revealed it; because this is one of the strongest and most cogent reasons for the belief of any thing. But when we say God hath revealed any thing, we must be ready to prove it, or else we say nothing. If we turn off reason here, we level the best religion in the world with the wildest and most absurd enthusiasms (*The Excellency Of Abraham's Faith And Obedience*, p. 45).

In his radical loathing of passions and insistence on understanding, Tillotson preached strictly in line with the Whigs' desire to, on one hand, transform the defeated Puritan doctrine into a Protestant civic religion that was to be based purely on Reason, and to demonstrate the benefits of true religion against High Church and Catholic insincerity, on the other. For achieving this, he analyses definition, effects and rhetorical exploitation of passions. Dal Santo (47–48) analysing the treatment of passions in his sermons highlights their image of a destructive force, "a tyrant at home, and always ready to at hand to domineer" ("Objections against the true religion answered", p. 285) and an element hindering the rational part of human constitution:

> The operations of the passions are often associated with blindness and physical impairment. Bodily reactions are immediately visible: Man becomes "very hot and impatient" and feels he is in "a very unnatural and uneasy state" (Vol. 3, 91–2, Sermon 38). Man's "degeneracy and weakness" (Vol. 2, 277–8, Sermon 28) become an incurable disease when the "inferior faculties, our sensitive appetite and passions are broke loose and have got head of our reason" (Vol. 2, 274, Sermon 28). Once conquered by its lusts, the mind of Man is "almost as hard to be rectified as it is to recover a body bowed down with age to it's first streightness" (Vol. 1, 243, Sermon 10). Tillotson claims that "fleshly lusts […] pollute and defile, […] quench and extinguish" (vol. 5, 1069, Sermon 69) Man's divine part and he compares the "clouds and mists" which impede sight to "the lusts and corruptions of men [are] to the understanding", as they "hinder it to a clear perception of heavenly things" (Vol. 6, 1391, Sermon 87).

Tillotson's approach to the status of passions reflects their traditional treatment as subordinated to reason. In particular, he focuses on zeal, which he describes as "one of the most ungovernable passions of human nature", explaining that it "requires great knowledge and judgment to manage it, and keep it within bounds. It is like fire, a good servant, but a bad master; if it once get head, it consumes and devours all before it" ("The Danger Of Zeal Without Knowledge", p. 513). It is

zeal that was exposed in his sermons serving as the foundation for his critique of the High Church position. Contrasted with the essence of true religion – whose spirit is "still and calm, charitable and peaceable" ("Of Sincerity Towards God and Man", p. 14) – High Church practice is cast as a distortion, marked by ostentation and theatrical displays that undermine religious sincerity. In this context, Tillotson implies that the actual aim of false religion (as opposite to the true one) lies in agitating the passions without their control, for "a misguided zeal; [...] is an *ignis fatuus*, a false fire, which often leads men into bogs and precipices" ("The Danger Of Zeal Without Knowledge", p. 513). The real danger, as Tillotson sees it, is that such fervour particularly appeals to weakly educated or unlearned "it appears in the night, in dark and ignorant and weak minds, and offers itself a guide to those who have lost their way" ("The Danger Of Zeal Without Knowledge", p. 513). In consequence, he concludes, "A blind and misguided zeal in religion is enough to spoil the best nature and disposition in the world" ("The Best Men Liable To The Worst Treatment From Mistaken Zealots", p. 528).

Tillotson's strong emphasis on understanding was supported by scientific development and the authority of the Royal Society with Thomas Sprat's invectives on 'swellings of style'. Being a strong advocate of a plain style of preaching, Tillotson perfected John Wilkins' tripartite sermon, a model that combined appeals both to reason and the passions. Paradoxically, though often distrustful of the passions, Tillotson remained aware of how easily they reached "dark and ignorant and weak minds". Thus, alongside his characteristic plainness, calmness, and sobriety of tone, he made strategic use of what he described as the two "most powerful arguments, that GOD ever used, to persuade Men to any thing [...] the promise of eternal happiness, and the terror of everlasting torments" ("Of Self-Denial and Suffering for Christ's Sake" pp. 1022–23). In doing so, he deliberately appealed to fear and self-love – two of the most potent passions – in order to engage his listeners both intellectually and emotionally[4].

Gilbert Burnet: approaching "weak unthinking multitude"

In his funeral sermon for Tillotson, bishop Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715), a prominent cleric and preacher closely associated with the Whig Party and a trusted friend of William III, praised Tillotson's style of preaching, which aimed at "the reforming of Mens Natures, and governing

[4] A detailed analysis of Tillotson's rhetoric, centred on these two passions, is provided by Regina Maria Dal Santo (2017).

their Actions, the restraining of their Appetites, and Passions" (1694, pp. 30–32). In his writings, however, Burnet recommended a stronger appeal to the passions and placed particular emphasis on the physical aspects of sermon delivery. In his "Discourse of the pastoral Care" Burnet describes his spiritual formation by a bishop who while preaching had "whole assemblies often melt in tears" (1692, p. 123) and advises his fellow preachers to follow this example. The overall rejection of the appeal to reason while preaching does not seem to result from his admiration for the rhetoric of passions but is rather the effect of his cold-hearted calculation about the intellectual capacities of the audience sermonised. Although, as he states, "great Regard is to be had to the nature of Auditory" he rather pessimistically adds that "too close a Thread of reason, too Great an Abstraction of Thought, too sublime and too metaphysical a Strain are suitable to very few Auditories, if to any at All" (1692, p. 169). On revealing the reasons for Corruption in religion, Burnet identifies certain traits in people that lead them "under the Power of Deception" calling them "weak and unthinking multitude" (1746, p. 2). The appraisal and call for *pathos* perfectly reflected the long tradition of philosophical warnings against appealing to the "Vulgar" which due to its ignorance was particularly susceptible to demagogy, especially in regard to *pathos*. On discussing the effectiveness of a sermon Burnet places a heavy emphasis on its physical aspects. In his opinion preachers should take the example of actors who with their moving speeches and gestures have a great power over their audience. Proper use of pronunciation and body language would strengthen the effectiveness of the sermon. The author compares good preaching to a theatrical performance which "melt the Company, that Tears cannot be stop'd" (p. 114). In accordance with the early modern view in regard to the contagiousness of passions, Burnet states that "the preacher must have a Life and Flame in his Thoughts [...], observe narrowly the Motions of his own Mind, and the Affections he feels within him [...] so he may have a lively Heat in himself" (p. 118) to engage the audience. In his in-depth analysis of an accurate performance during the particular parts of a sound sermon, a special focus is laid on the actual application which has to be "free of every Thing that looks like Affectations of Wit and Eloquence. Here the Preacher must be all Heart and Soul" (p. 170). The effectiveness of a sermon is to be observed from the behaviour of listeners: "Eloquence" which make the hearers "look lively, and as it were smile upon one another, may be pretty, but it only tickles the Imagination, and pleases the Ear", while an eloquence that "goes to the Heart, and wounds it [...] makes the Hearer rather look down, and turns his Thoughts inward" (p. 112).

John Dennis: "Empire of Reason and Law" against "Empire of Passions and Will"

Deistic ideas promoting a pure and natural religion which had not been corrupted or manipulated by priests logically resulted from criticism against the clergy. Thus, what developed in the search for a pure religion and in the devising of a civil theology was a fierce anticlericalism, a strain taken up and developed by the early Whigs who demonstrated it as a long and historically justified tradition (Goldie M., 1993, p. 216–230). The heritage of spats and arguments from the period of The Civil Wars offered a rich body of wording against the Restoration clergy, the "black-coats" and "canting tribe" that produced an "air of nauseous priestcraft" (p. 216––219). The term *priestcraft*, the appearance of which can be traced back to the 1640s, began its career after the 1690s and constituted a keyword used against the High Church. The various definitions offered amounted to associating the priestcraft with the art of cunning preaching in order to deceive people's minds. Straightforward attacks on priestcraft containing explicit associations of a given rival or adversary with the overwhelming and destructive force of the passions characterised the work of John Dennis (1657–1734), a critic, dramatist and a writer enthusiastically supporting both the Whigs and the new monarchs enthroned after the so-called Glorious Revolution. Priestcraft in his words was defined as "an Art by which Designing Men, in order to their own Advantage, make that pass for Religion upon the unthinking part of the world" (p. 6) and armed with the purpose of putting a king on the throne, of making him Absolute and able to enjoy great power in the realm; all pursued in Dennis' opinion in the High Church's preaching on passive obedience, non-resistance, and *ius divinum*. In his treatise "Priestcraft distinguished from Christianity" he juxtaposes the establishing "Empire of Passions and Will" and "of Tyranny of the Devil, and of Antichrist his Son" where people are enslaved "by their Passions" to the "Empire of Reason and Law and by consequence, an Empire of Liberty" (p. 5). Both empires are associated with the rule of Christ and Antichrist and denote the reign of the Hanoverian dynasty and the expelled Stuart kings. Drawing on politics thus became the main division line in Dennis' narration, and the parallel made with the betrayal in Eden seems to be a plain message to the enemies of the new monarchs. The passage reminding of Adam and Eve's fate "when by Pride and Hatred, and the rest of their Diabolical Passions, they broke that Divine Union, their Pride and the rest of their tormenting Passions, became at once their Transgression and their Hell" represents a notable example illustrating the deliberate choice of wording. The very term *passions* is employed only in reference to Hell, and it is the Devil who "inflames" (p. 8) and "kindles

in Men's Hearts" (p. 19). This approach is immediately noticeable in the description of Heaven where love is repeatedly identified as the factor that unites. Love, though classified in eighteenth century dictionaries as a passion, was never recognised or explicitly acknowledged as such by Dennis. The clear distinction between passions and reason bolstered by close adherence to the employed wording, aimed at guiding the reader as to whom the forces of either good or evil should be allocated.

The dichotomy depicted by Dennis constitutes a starting point to further distinguishing the members of the clergy into "the priest of God and the priest of Baal" (1715[5]). The latter teaching passive obedience, non-resistance, and *ius divinum* with their unwavering support for the Stuart monarchs embodying the tools of the Devil who delegates "his spiritual Tyranny to some Christian Priests […] to divide and weaken and ruine the Church" (p. 20) in his diabolic design of "kindling in Mens Hearts a spiritual Pride, more fierce and more fiery than ever appear'd before: a Pride attended with a more implacable Anger, a more inveterate Malice, and a more irreconcilable Hatred" (p. 19–20). The language Dennis used to demonstrate the hellish character of Anglican clergy aimed at eliciting an emotional response from readers; and we are left with no doubts as to what part of the clergy the accusations are made against since Satan aims "to teach his Will for the Will of the Most High" (p. 20). Explicit reference to the Devil's malicious activity of ruining the Church reveals the parallel between *witchcraft* and *priestcraft*, both inspired by hellish forces. Dennis' definition of priestcraft, as the High Church clergy's art of influencing the audience, embraced both division and the passions, the two main elements leading to the disintegration of society. The business of priestcraft is "to preach Division and Dissention, a Spirit of Party and of Faction, and to incite and inflame those Passions that create or nourish Division; as Anger, Envy, Hatred, Malice, evil Speaking, evil Surmising […] to inflame their Disciples not against Infidels […] but true and sincere Believers […] who are under sacred Power of Conscience" (p. 21–22). Priests mastering priestcraft "exasperate and inflame their Disciples, exhorting them both by Voice and Example, sometimes to rail with unmanner'd Frontless Invectives" (p. 22). As such, High Church preachers are straightforwardly denoted as clergymen manipulated by the Devil in his cunning plan of establishing the empire of passions and will. Pointing to a very physical aspect of sermonising Dennis accused Anglican priests of impassioned behaviour which, reinforced with the deliberate modulation of voice, aimed directly at appealing to its audience's emotions. This way, the Latitudinarian ideas were indirectly linked with reason, sobriety, and calmness.

[5] No pagination given.

Unification of the Whig platform

The attempt to take and in-different attitude noticeable in laymen writings[6], seemed to find little parallel in the religious output of the time. Manuals for clergy or young clergymen consisted of various pieces of advice with the clear intention to teach the would-be preacher how best to convince his audience. Published sermons, for the most part, addressed the higher and more educated orders of society, however, lower priests sermonising in parishes all over the country were often addressing if not entirely illiterate then not very highly educated rustics or poor towns folk. Obviously, given the target audience, the performed church sermon required the priest to employ a different set of rhetorical tools. In something of a similar approach and also quite remarkably, within the emerging public sphere, the early eighteenth century Whig journalists like Joseph Addison and Richard Steele began the wide-scale project of shifting the target audience of their writings and addressing the lower middle. Addison's declaration of abandoning a sophisticated language of poetry: "Of greater Truths I'll now prepare to tell / And so at once, Dear Friend and Muse, Farewell" (1859) and his plan of bringing philosophy to coffee houses present a straight-forward, calculated and deliberate decision to change the form and the content of his writings to reach a new target audience, educated but less scholarly and less intellectually demanding. This apt recognition by both Low Church and Whig writers of a chance to reach parts of society that had been so far disregarded in the publishing world, forms one of many elements that eventually may have led to unification of a Whig platform. Therefore, both lay writing, like essay periodicals, and clerical texts shared rhetorical features in their approach towards changing audience, imagining the rival and creating self-portrait with the ever-growing use of the rhetoric of passions. The cited Dennis' works, for example, use the rhetoric pattern employed by Richard Steele – who stressed the destructive Tory policy of divisions as opposed to the Whigs' constructive efforts of uniting the nation[7], and represents essayistic and preaching style unanimously consolidating political and religious circles on their path to win the newly emerging audience.

[6] Steele and Addison's call for calming the country down through stopping partisan conflicts and their open declaration not to deal with politics, simultaneously however admitting that they will instruct "gentlemen...of strong zeal and weak intelects...what to think" (no. 1 *The Tatler*), eventually would be abandoned through a declaration of the need "throw away our Care in providing the Palate" when the country is in danger (no. 1 *The Englishman*).

[7] Steele's charges against acts of division embraced various aspects such as the primary split between Whig and Tory supporters, separating the nation from the Queen or evoking quarrels between the Church and the people. In contrast, the Whigs were to represent the policy of unification and supra-party impartiality (Kozak K., 2020).

An interesting Whig-aligned lay contribution to the discussion on preaching style can be found in The Spectator where the acknowledged Tory emphasis on Common Sense, understanding, and the appeal to reason were subtly mocked through the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. Though portrayed as a friend and a good man, Sir Roger is constructed in such a way as to provoke gentle ridicule. His sermons are depicted as dull, to the extent that he himself is shown dozing off while delivering them (No. 112, p. 305). The association between tedium and the preacher's attempt to be overly argumentative becomes central to the humour. What is more, Sir Roger reads sermons written by others, and it is precisely his chosen authors – Tillotson, Barrow, Calamy, and Sanderson (No. 106, p. 291), all Latitudinarian figures – that render him a parody. Ironically, the preachers he selects are those ideologically opposed to his own High Church Tory stance. Although the portrayal of Sir Roger may seem benign, the satirical intent is unmistakable and illustrates linking church and lay circles in ridiculing the political rival.

Conclusions

The rhetoric exemplified in the writings of Tillotson, Burnet and Dennis enables one to identify various ways of approaching the passions and show a clear change in preaching methods, moving from the restrained moral teaching typical of earlier Latitudinarian sermons to a style that relied more on emotion and feeling to reach the audience. Tillotson in his efforts to make religion reasonable in line with Whig policy to establish civic religion, revealed a restrained engagement with the passions subordinating them to reason and employing emotional appeal in a limited way. Another aspect of the rhetoric of passions prevails in Gilbert Burnet's advice to provide proper pastoral care for parishioners. He considered it essential to adapt the delivery of sermons to the needs of the audience, placing particular emphasis on the unlearned and recommended a more deliberate and expansive use of passions as a legitimate means of persuasion in religious preaching. John Dennis demonstrated passions as a highly destructive element in his immediate intention to discredit political and religious rivals. Accordingly, in his opinion the High Church preachers, through *priestcraft,* namely their activity of deceiving people, embodied the tools of Satan's atrocious project of establishing "the Empire of Passions and Will". Though projecting Latitudinarian circles as building "Empire of Reason and Law", he embraced impassioned and affective language as a central rhetorical strategy, reflecting Burnet's recommendations.

From this perspective an overall shift characterised the politically inclined lay writings of the period, especially essay periodicals with their

evident simplification of both the topics and language. Elaborate verse productions with greater or lesser metaphorical treatment of the political issues were addressed to more profoundly educated people and often failed in reaching the middle classes, in the times when the political propaganda began to flourish. These were the "greater Truths" to tell according to Addison, when he officially decided to end up with an elaborate style. Correspondingly, the Whig-aligned preachers began to recognize the importance of a proper oral performance in the new post-Puritan reality. Thus, a multitude of instructions and guidance with a great emphasis on pathos appeared in print. What Steele and Addison defined as instructing "gentlemen...of strong zeal and weak intelects... what to think" (*The Tatler,* No. 1) Burnet bluntly called addressing the "weak and unthinking multitude".

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