

In Search of Better Terms: The Critique of Rhetorical Eloquence in the Transatlantic  
Hispanic Enlightenment

By

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## CHAPTER ONE: Overview and Arguments

The aim of this study is to explore the influence French rationalism wrought on the literature of the Hispanic Enlightenment. The priorities in the interplay between embellishment and clarity shifted during the eighteenth century in Spain, Portugal, and Ecuador in efforts to regulate diction, figures of thought, tropes, and the *locus* for historiographic argumentation. Using a framework in New Formalist Criticism, I argue that the content and form of works by Benito Jerónimo Feijóo y Montenegro (1676–1764), Luís António Verney (1713–1792), and Francisco Javier Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo (1747–1795) reveals a literary context that downgraded poetically eloquent devices in favor of those that appealed to moderation and intelligibility.

In analyzing the rhetoric tropes, I argue that the use of these devices by Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo, reveals the influence of Dominique Bouhours (1628-1702) and Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711). Such embellishments also embody philosophical trends that writers associated with the Port-Royal Abbey popularized in their disputes with Jesuits over probabilism and the theory of rhetoric. In addition, I draw attention to the tropes that Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo used in their criticism of poetic rhetoric as too irrational. These metaphors, allegories, and irony play on the same themes found in French rationalist thinkers.

### **Probabilism in The Iberian Peninsula and its Relationship to Spanish Baroque Historiography**

The critique of rhetoric during the Hispanic eighteenth century corresponds with debates between Scholastics and proponents of modern science over the interpretation of

what “nature” meant. For many Enlightenment radicals, this meant physical nature, and physics and mathematics allowed them to read it. For their opponents, it was part of human nature to find in the imagination a canvas for conceptualizing and expressing meaning.

We can trace probabilism in Jesuit spheres of influence to Early Modern interpretations of Aristotle’s thoughts on the methodologies for treating different kinds of knowledge. In books Epsilon and Delta of *Metaphysics*, Aristotle elaborates on what questions cannot be included in a rigorous and universal notion of a science. There can be no theoretical knowledge of what is coincidental, a concept he also coins as “particulars” (1016b11-14, 1016b27). Aristotle often focuses on human history in this context, identifying it as random (1025a25), being nothing like the natural necessity inherent in a triangle for the sum of its angles to equal 180 (1025a30-35). In *Posterior Analytics*, he defines human events as accidental, and, as such, a certainty of them is impossible (75a31-37). One cannot apply a mathematical approach to something of such a such a different genre (75b4-6).

The question also arises in *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle teaches that thinking about the past does not come with a set of rules (1104a). One can only demand the degree of accuracy that a given subject permits, claims in history are “probabilities,” and therefore one cannot demand more certainty than postulating the truth roughly (1094b21). Unlike in rational sciences, the tools consist of judgment and practical wisdom (1143b). This does not negate what Aristotle writes in his *Poetics* on the differences between fact and fiction, where he states that history and poetry are both “true.” One aims to be factual about particulars, although its claims are impossible to demonstrate, and the other, equally

elusive to proofs, is true in the sense that it speaks to universals about the human condition (1451b).

During the Middle Ages, *probabilis*, *verisimilis*, *credibilis*, and *opinabilis* were terms associated with the capricious relationship between language and certainty when evaluating statements of fact. The most important of these for the interest of this chapter is *probabilis*. Eloquence relied on what Philip Nickel terms a “moral salience” of the material presented by a historian or orator and a “demonstrative dependence” between the speaker and the audience (255). Critical interpretations of Medieval Christian and Jewish texts were based on the belief that Scripture was adjusted to the capacity of human comprehension. It is what Amos Funkenstein calls “the hermeneutical principle of accommodation” from which the learned and unlearned alike could grasp the less palatable religious precepts” (213). In other words, history helped reconcile the political, moral, and intellectual conditions of humanity with Providence.

The debate surrounding Scholastic probable opinions was heavily concentrated in the Iberian Peninsula and reached its peak in the seventeenth century. The Dominicans Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1646), Domingo de Soto (1494–1560), and Melchor Cano (1509–1560) were important figures in this period.

Melchor Cano is one of the central figures who shaped the development of probabilistic reasoning. What he does with Aristotle’s writings on the theory of uncertainty will impact the rationalist critique of historiographical language of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1653, he published *De locis theologicis* (1563), a systematic analysis on argumentation. The major transformation Cano puts forward in the text is his casting of human history as a *locus*, a rhetorical place, for theological argumentation. In

addition to Holy Scripture, council decrees, canon law, natural reason, the authority of religious fathers, and others, profane history suddenly becomes a viable source for establishing religious truth. In effect, Cano permits humans to believe the testimony of other humans in questions of the faith. In Book Eleven, Chapter Two, for example, Cano persuades his readers of how dependent preachers are on history to when they invent material, a notion.

As Catholic theorists showed greater interest in the field of profane historiography as means to establish theological truth, the line begins to blur the line between what was part of the sacred world and what was not. Argumentatively, Cano provided apologists of the Faith much broader tools to dispute with heretics and Jews, to whom otherwise appeals to Sacred authority and scripture could be as too cyclical to have a profound rhetorical effect. But this then opens the door to the question of what historical sources are worthy of trust, the difficulty probabilism was meant to resolve. The criteria for incorporating persuasive material in one's text shifted from what was certain to what was probable. Alternatively, if someone were proven wrong as the result of relying on the human authority of someone else for a theological argument, then he could hardly be accused of lying.

Euhemerism, or *evermerismo*, refers to the Greek philosopher Euhemerus of Messene from the third and fourth century BCE who theorized a rational interpretation of the origin of mythological tales. The tradition later informed the culture of Renaissance Neoplatonism. A historian could seek to trace the genealogy of information through a variety of stories over time. Pagan fables, for example, were accepted as adorned vessels of Sacred teaching, a secret philosophy.



Juan Pérez de Moya (ca. 1512-1596), a student of La Universidad de Salamanca, published highly influential works on the interpretation of myths and on mathematics during Spain's sixteenth century. Two decades following his *Aritmética práctica y speculativa* (1562), Pérez de Moya presented a treatise on the moral truths contained in mythology and history, *Philosophia secreta donde debajo de estas historias fabulosas se contiene mucha doctrina provechosa a todos estudios, con el origen de los ídolos o dioses de la gentilidad. Es materia muy necesaria para entender poetas y historiadores* (1585). The author positions his work as pertinent to poets and historians alike.

Historiography was regulated less by the caveats with which Aristotle judged testimony and more by the values for which he praised poetry. For example, Pérez de Moya insists that an eloquence of truth resides in fables. Historians possessed a poetic reasoning, notwithstanding the discrepancies between what occurred and language one uses to impart it. In the start of his work, Pérez de Moya introduces his theory of fables as stories invented by the wise, a source of honest recreation, communicated with “alguna semejanza de la verdad” (“with some likeness of truth”; Book One, Chapter One, folio I).<sup>1</sup> A term like “historia fabulosa” (“fabled history”) lacked the derogative connotation it would later acquire in Feijóo's writing. In his Prologue, Pérez de Moya describes the role of the historian as that of a protector of truth. Like an allegory, the important elements in a story are somewhat subjacent to the contradictions in statements over long stretches of time. He added that his work contained excellent virtues of universal nature which were exempt from the “slander and contradictions” that entertained the rather insensitive faultfinders.<sup>2</sup>

Pérez de Moya outlines five modes of understanding historical accounts. They consist of literal (pertaining to a true portrayal of events), literary (allegorical), Sacred,

tropological (the representation of good deeds), and natural interpretations of the story. A natural interpretation emphasizes non-changing aspects of the physical world, such as the order of planets, heat, the wind, plants, etc. Scholastic historians prioritized the truth of wisdom over the truth of natural philosophy. Problematizing the inconsistencies in mythological narratives was a symptom of placing more interest in facts over truth. An inaccurate description of some occurrence, for example, would not necessarily change the essence. This does not mean that the details of a story were insignificant. Pérez de Moya, in fact, interprets a great number of minute details found in pagan fables.<sup>3</sup> He was concerned with the symbolic interpretation of a story's minute details, but not the historical validity of the events.<sup>4</sup>

The theory of probabilism underwent a transition from its role as interpretative historical license to one of individual moral clemency. In 1577, Bartolomé de Medina, a Dominican professor at Salamanca, published a commentary on St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa* that brought about a major shift in the use and regulation of opinions. Medina posits that one is free to assent to any statement given that it is probable, notwithstanding that another view might be even more probable. By the late seventeenth century, the *doctrina probabilitas* ushered in considerable theological and historiographical debates. Francisco Suárez (1548-1617), for example, taught that a moral precept is void if its language is anything short of appearing perfectly unequivocal. Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz (1606-1682) argued for the application of probabilism in all human affairs, pointing to its practice by Adam and Eve as their prelapsarian criterion in deciding to partake of the Forbidden Fruit.

The distinction between likelihood and lies in sixteenth-century theories of historiography is also obvious works by Friar Ambrosio de Morales (1513-1591), the Royal Chronicler of the Church of Santiago. Like others who advocated probabilistic reasoning in Spain, Ambrosio de Morales studied theology and history at the University of Salamanca. At the age of 75 (ca. 1588), he published a defense on how to know with any certainty the validity of a specific statements about the past, such as if a prominent historical figure did in fact take the religious vows as was recorded for centuries.<sup>5</sup> The title the work is *Información de derecho por averiguación de historia en el punto sí se hizo el voto, y dio el privilegio a la Santa Iglesia de Santiago el Rey Don Ramiro el I, o el II*. The central argument is that the certitude of past human activity can demand no more evidence than what is morally probable:

[L]a ciencia moral no es de universales, sino de individuos, que no pueden ser comprendidos ni enseñados con demostración. Pues no hay ninguna ciencia, que tan de veras sea de individuos, como la historia, que toda consiste en contar hechos particulares, y así requiere ni razones eficaces [ni] total certidumbre. (442)

Moral science is not of universals, but of particulars, which cannot be understood or taught with demonstrations. For there is no science that is so much about particulars as history, which entirely consists of relating specific facts, and thus requires neither effective reasonings nor full certainty.

Ambrosio de Morales reiterates that history is not a branch of speculative universals. The rationale underlying mathematics and geometry aim for a perfection only applicable to a non-physical domain.<sup>6</sup> As a consequence, the Royal Chronicler deduces that studies

concerned with concrete particulars (i.e., medicine, moral theory) should not be regulated like those of a speculative science.

Ambrosio de Morales believed that individuals too often confused the history with logic. Formal reasoning yielded the wrong tools for presenting the action of past human events.:

[E]s muy bien se entienda, que las que se han de tratar, no serán demostraciones de aquellas que llaman los dialecticos *propter quid y potissimas*; asi que sean del todo eficaces para concluir con entera evidencia. Porque la materia no las tiene, ni es capaz de tenerlas; teniendo muy limitada su certidumbre. Sino que harán las razones de buena y entera probabilidad moral, siendo esto lo más que puede dar la materia. (441-42)

It is very well understood that the demonstrations that will be discussed will not be like those that the dialecticians call *propter quid y potissimas*, and, as such, they will be fully effective for concluding with sufficient evidence because the material does not have it, nor is it capable of having it, being very limited its veracity. But the reasons will be given in good and proper moral probability, given that this is all that the material can offer.

A lack of certitude when thinking about the past was not evidence of poor historiography. It came from demanding mathematical clarity where it was not applicable.

Ambrosio de Morales encourages his audience to avoid obscuring the distinction between different kinds of certainty. Referring to moral probability, he adds that it is as valid and binding as one could possibly achieve in life: “con tales razones es justo y forzoso, y se convenzan todos, pues no las puede haber en lo que se trata de mas fuerza” (“with such

proofs it is just and forceful, and all are convinced, because in what is treated there cannot be more force"; 441). One's freedom to state claims based almost entirely on personal conviction opened the door to an endless range of interpretative liberties. It relates to the mediation of language between the world and knowing. Without obstructing a sense of "truth," allegories were free to occupy the figurative space between historical fact and the words to communicate them.

Ambrosio de Morales's *Información de derecho por averiguación de historia* was published one decade prior to the Jesuit manual for education, *Ratio Studiorum* (1559). *Ratio Studiorum* single-handedly shaped how young European and American minds learned to compel belief using rhetorical proficiency. The techniques are based on the assumption that rhetorical figures and tropes command conviction through intuition instead of reason.<sup>7</sup> The text recommends orators study Cipriano Suarez's *De arte rhetorica* (1568) for the Spaniard's knowledge of harnessing emotions with embellished language.

Friar Jerónimo de San José (1587-1654) holds an important role in the development of probabilistic theories on the rhetorical use of profane historiography. Like Melchor Cano, Jerónimo de San José borrows ideas from Aristotle on the inescapably inexact nature of studying the past and refashions them to fit the needs of Early Modern theologians and orators. The biographer, historian, and author of the handbook for students of history, *Genio de la historia* (1651), defines history in a probabilistic fashion, exonerating possible errors in the process of blending Sacred stories with Pagan:

Es pues Historia (en la mas dilatada y universal acepción suya) cualquier narración de algún suceso, o cosa. De suerte que ora sea la narración hablada, escrita, o significada; ora sea verdadera, o falsa; ora larga, o breve; ora suelta, o asida a

número y metro, ora en llano, o en alto y figurado estilo; ora perpetua y seguida, o precisa por los siglos, anales o días, o en otra cualquier manera, como sea finalmente narración, será en este sentido y acepción Historia (p. 31)

History is (in the most broad and universal sense) any narration of some event, or thing. In matters not that the narration be spoken, written or symbolical, or be true, false, extensive or brief, in free form or structured to meter and number, in vulgar or high style, perpetually ongoing over or the same over centuries, years, days, or any other way. Given that it is always narration, in this sense, then, it is also history.

The author writes that the utility of profane history for preachers and theologians is not contingent on factual precision. Instead, there is an inclusivity toward interpretation given that the truth in this context is a moral issue, not mathematical. As such, a fair-use policy for religious edification was considered valid.

In Part 1 of *Genio de la historia*, Jerónimo de San José elaborates on the benefit (“provecho”) of history using very Aristotelian language. For example, after presenting it as unavoidably imprecise, and how orators stand to benefit as a result, he dedicates Chapter Seven to a portrayal of individual historical moments as particulars, just as Aristotle had described, and immune to rational scrutiny (65). In the third and final part of the handbook, Jerónimo de San José closes with a discussion on the defense theologians are permitted if they are caught in error (266). He revisits the theme of the human capacity for error in questions of moral certainty and insists that a factual imperfection does not equate to an intent to deceive.

One of the most notable aspects of Jerónimo de San José’s text is his portrayal of the way in which histories engage with readers. Because its truths evaded conclusive

definitiveness, history should be esteemed far above what natural philosophers can produce. There were some forms of knowledge made known only through a darker form of light: “su luz con ser oscura, es más firme y cierta que toda la claridad de las ciencias naturales” (“being that it’s light is dark, it is more solid and certain than all of the clarity of the natural sciences”; 15). The paradox of casting of a dark light as a figure for allegorical meaning is a vivid representation of how conscientious Baroque artists were of the mediation of language. Given that frictionless communication was impossible, rhetoric yielded boundless opportunities for artful expression. The virtues in history were more important than the clarity of reason in natural philosophy. The knowledge (“la luz”) portrayed in fables in the sense that mathematics, physics, geometry, and logic aimed to emulate what a field of study would be subsisting in a transparent, a-rhetorical vacuum.

Given that the human arts could not rely on incontrovertible evidence, historians and painters used figures. Jerónimo de San José insisted that hieroglyphics, symbols, and painting are equally valid mediums for a historian to record meaning (31). It resulted in a different understanding of certainty and falsehood:

Parecerá dificultoso que haya una narración verdadera, y que sea de cosas falsas: porque la verdad o la falsedad de la narración se toma de las cosas narradas. Pero bien considerada la naturaleza de la verdad y de la falsedad, halláramos que se puede juntar en algún modo y sentido la verdad de la narración con la falsedad de las cosas que se narran. La verdad moral consiste en un ajustamiento y conformidad de las palabras con la mente, o concepto e inteligencia de las cosas, como la natural en el ajustamiento de las palabras y mente con las cosas mismas en la realidad de su ser. Pudiendo pues la mente estar mal informada, y hacer concepto errado y falso de

algún suceso; la narración que lo declarase de la manera que se concibe, no sería por esta parte falsa, sino verdadera: y así lo sería también la Historia sustancialmente; pues lo formal y sustancial della, que es la narración, sería en el modo dicho verdadera. Y en este sentido debemos tener por verdaderos a todos los Historiadores que escriben lo que entendían era verdad, aunque no lo fuese. (33)

It would be difficult for there to be a true narration, and for it to be of false things.

The truth or falsehood of the narration comes from what is being narrated. In considering well the nature of truth and falsehood, we will find that, in one way or another form of truth, the truth of the narration and the falsehood of the things narrated can come together. Moral truth consists of the correction and conformity of the mind with the words, concepts, and understanding of the ideas, as in when what is naturally true is met through the marriage of the words in the mind to the things as they are in reality. Being susceptible to error, as the mind is, as in making an erroneous and false concept out of some event, the narration that states the error, perceiving it to be accurate, would not be taken as false, but as truth. And history also will be treated this way, for what is formal and substantive in it, the narration, would be true in this methodology. And in this sense, we ought to hold as truthfull all the historians who write what they understand is true, even though it may not be.

An orator's telling of events was to be judged on the conformity his intention has with his words. The relationship between the content and historical events is not a factor for calling a narration true. The divorce of certainty and fact seen in Jerónimo de San José and others in will later face corrective measures by rationalist radicals.



Gabriel Álvarez de Toledo (1662-1714) occupies a liminal space between Spanish Scholasticism and the Enlightenment. Like Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) and Robert Boyle (1627-1691) before him, the Royal librarian, poet, and cofounder of the Real Academia Española interpreted the world through a rationally mechanicalistic lens. As such, Álvarez de Toledo demonstrates ways in which allegory and history continued to cohabit the same space, although increasingly to a lesser degree. His *Historia de la iglesia del mundo que contiene los sucesos desde su creación hasta el diluvio* (1713) brought an atomist/mechanical context into the Scholastic imagination. Álvarez de Toledo depicts the creation myth with language that conforms to Descartes's theory in *Principles of Philosophy* (1644) of interstellar vortices, which offered a mechanism for the movement of the celestial bodies different than that of Aristotle.<sup>8</sup> However, the work maintains many features that rationalist thinkers would turn against. It privileges moral digressions and probabilistic reasoning over a more direct "esteril narración de los sucesos" ("sterile narration of events"; Prologue) and the author insists that the wisest in ancient Greece were the poets with truths "disfrazadas en figuras poeticas" ("disguised in poetic figures"; Book 2, Chap. XV).

Three decades later, opponents of the New Science in universities resisted the influence of figures like Descartes, Descartes' rival Gassendi, and Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677). Luís de Flandes, a defender of the Scholastics, dedicated *El antiguo académico, contra el moderno escéptico* (1742) to one of Feijóo's most adamant critics, Salvador José Mañer (1676-1751) as Enlightenment radicals continued to condemn the flexibility of Scholastic reasoning. R. G. Saisselin expands on this period as one characterized by a confusion of the sacred and profane. He traces the origins of the misunderstanding in the

eighteenth century to the Italian Renaissance (17). Jointly with the Spanish and Portuguese, the Italians were frequently blamed for aspects of seventeenth and- eighteenth-century culture entwined with features of Neoplatonic and Baroque poetics. As we will read in Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo, the measure of eloquence was the regulation and transparency of language, not the possibility of verisimilitude.

### **The Emergence of Cartesian Rationalism and its Relationship to the Critique of Eloquent Historiography**

In the previous section, I outlined in the previous section how allegories and probabilistic reasoning were legitimate historiographical modes of expressing truths prior to the emergence of rationalism. René Descartes's charge against how Jesuit Scholasticism viewed history would effectively alter the conception of eloquence. Knowledge became analogous to sound judgment to the same degree that figurative expressions were contrary to good sense. In the context of the eighteenth century, the worldview would shape Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo's theories on the portrayal of information through language.

Like Descartes, John Locke (1632-1704) was critical of the figurative nature of human language. Paul de Man studies Locke's objections to the logic of tropes in "The Epistemology of Metaphor" (1978). What Locke would have loved more than anything, de Man writes, is to forget about language (15). There are two primary ways that discourse can deceive: the persuasive misleading of a speaker/author and the tropes in speech that state one thing and mean another. Although someone might look to limit the influence of charlatans on their thought, de Man takes the metaphors Locke uses in disdaining figurative expression as a point of departure to insist that it is impossible to free oneself

entirely tropes, which are always in motion: “They are more like quicksilver than flowers or butterflies,” he continues, “which one can hope to pin down and insert in neat taxonomy” (13). De Man concludes that what remains for theorists of language to do, “[to] control figuration by keeping it, so to speak, in its place,” is to be conscious of its influence (13). Although Locke and Descartes were contemporaries whose attacks on figurative expression somewhat overlap at times, the French rationalists after Descartes would have a greater influence on the negative portrayal of rhetoric that Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo would embrace in the eighteenth century.

What Descartes saw as unregulated mental processes in historiography led to his writing of *Regulae ad directionem (Rules for the Direction of the Mind)* between ca. 1628 and 1630.<sup>9</sup> The text consists of twenty-one instructions which effectively established an early framework for *Discours de la Méthode Pour bien conduire sa raison, et chercher la vérité dans les sciences*, or *Discourse on Method* (1637). Rule 1 of the *Regulae* denies that each discipline relies on a unique science of its own. Rule 2 contains an early version of Descartes’s precept according to which possibility, like probability, warranted someone’s unequivocal rejection. Similar claims had an impact role in Feijóo’s formula for separating truth from historical myths, such as the need to discredit claims even slightly open to doubt.

In *Discourse on Method*, Descartes describes the dissatisfaction he felt at Le College de Jesuits de Le Fleche with the methodology of writing history. For him, the field of study only relied too heavily on rhetoric, not truth. It was too unscientific, and therefore functioned by means of *persuasio*, the *antíthesis* of systematic conviction.<sup>10</sup> Descartes

fundamentally disrupted the notion that interpretation could be the foundation for defending a belief.

Descartes sought to suspend all his beliefs “so that they might later be replaced, either by others that were better, or by the same, when [he] made them conform to the uniformity of a rational scheme” (10). Given that the backbone of figurative meaning relied on resemblances, the non-visualizable became the new proper center. Descartes’s reverence for mathematical reasoning was due to the certainty of its demonstrations and the evidence of its reasoning without appealing to similarities. Scholastic philosophy, in contrast, lent itself to endless disputation. Descartes assumed for the sake of analytic consistency that everything that was given to dispute was, by default, judged untrustworthy. Ancient pagans blended history and mythology into works that were “superb and magnificent, [but] built on sand and mud alone” (7). As Robert McRae states in his discussion of the development of new philosophical concerns in Early Modern Europe, “Cartesian wisdom disassociates itself from the accumulation of knowledge [because] it views history as valueless and ignores it” (41).

Prior to French rationalism, a term like “natural gift of the mind,” applied to a theory of rhetoric, celebrated one’s fecund imaginative prowess in oratory or writing. Regulated reason then became man’s universal and natural gift. Descartes disregarded poetry and eloquence precisely as “gifts of the mind, not fruits of study” (6). It is in this context that Descartes formed a distinction between instinctive, figurative eloquence and clear, structured moderation.<sup>11</sup> In other words, well-arranged thought was the language of persuasion.

The seventeenth-century debate in France on imagination and truth was linked to important theological debates between Jansenists associated with the Port-Royal Abbey and Jesuits. Port-Royalists were devout Catholics who sought to establish a clear boundary between falsehood and truth in natural philosophy and theology. The first cause of dispute centered on the impact of probabilism on oratory and historiography. The second point of contention addressed a priest's faculty to revert to moral laxity when overseeing confessions. But interpretations conformed to those whom moral instruction was meant to regulate (Letter V, 29). Given that the possibility and resemblance of truth was a sufficient justification for embracing an interpretation, it became increasingly common for the penitent to adhere to a narrative of their past actions that had the potential to absolve them from guilt. In response to this problem, Antonie Arnauld's (1612-1694) *Théologie morale des Jésuites* (1643) was shortly followed by Antonio de Escobar y Mendoza's *Liber theologiae moralis* (1646). Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), known for laying the foundation for the modern theory of probabilities based on mathematics, later issued critiques of the Jesuit moral theory in *Lettres Provinciales* starting in 1656.

In Letter 5 of *Lettres*, Pascal wrote that he "must have certainty" (32). He specifically aimed attacks at Tomás Sánchez (1550-1610), Gabriel Vásquez (1549-1604), and Francisco Suárez (1548-1617), fundamental figures in the Spanish Scholastic tradition of probabilism, especially in moral theology and law. A true Christian would treat "error with derision" (Letter V, 82). To the same degree that "Christian truths are worthy of love and respect," he wrote of the Jesuits, "the contrary errors must deserve hatred and contempt" (Letter XI, 81).

The Port Royalists portrayed eloquence as the imagination's vehicle for epistemological vandalization. In one example, Pascal terms probabilistic rhetoric as:

[T]he peculiar dialect of the Jesuitical School [...] What monstrous species of language is this, which, in announcing that certain authors hold a detestable opinion, is at the same time giving a decision in favor of that opinion – which solemnly teaches whatever it simply tells! (Letter XIII, 106)

In a short work titled “De l'esprit géométrique” (1658), Pascal scaled the ascertainment of infallible truths in natural philosophy to rhetoric. Banishing equivocation was sufficient against “captious sophists” (431). Language itself was obstacular: “geometry itself teaches perfectly by example without every putting it into words” (430).

In a collection of writings published posthumously as *Pensées* (1670), Pascal included sections on language and thought regulation to conform them to nature. We find that the imagination was “that deceitful part in man, that mistress of error and falsity, the more deceptive that she is not always so; for she would be an infallible rule of truth, if she were an infallible rule of falsehood” (paragraph 82, 186).

The influence of Descartes's method for assessing certainty in philosophy reached new heights with the publication of *Logique, ou l'Art de penser* (1662), or *Port-Royal Logic*, by Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole. The historian of science Dennis L. Sepper has identified entire passages of Descartes's *Rules* in its French translation inserted directly in Nicole and Arnauld's *Port-Royal Logic* (661). The Port-Royalists' work proved to be a major influence of Cartesian thought on the transatlantic Hispanic understanding of historiographical legitimacy. The authors moved to replace rhetoric with logic where clarity of diction was concerned in discussions that did not involve questions of Faith.

Arnauld and Nicole received criticism for applying Cartesian rationalism to disparate areas of knowledge, treating rhetoric, ethics, physics, metaphysics, and geometry equally. In their defense, they asserted that they “were suddenly transported to the highest sciences” by the stature of reason (14). Their intention was never to separate logic from other fields any more than they had already become, but, instead, “by means of example, to join it in such a manner to solid knowledges...to the end that [they] might learn to judge of these sciences by logic, and to retain logic by means of these sciences” (15). Logic, as a formal investigation alone, made for a subtle effect on the mind, which is why it was necessary that they were fixed to things “more interesting and more tenuous” (16). In Part I, therefore, the authors of the *Port Royal Logic* considered logical fallacies, the clarity of words, and the error of equivocation.

Arnauld and Nicole portrayed alchemists as a metaphor for Jesuits based on the idea that both engaged heavily with the capricious relationship between the language and the world. Like the poetic orators, the optimistic transformers of matter were far more successful in producing empty words than creating intrinsic changes to nature. By changing the names “of almost everything whereof they speak, without any advantage,” Jesuits found recourse in altering their rhetoric, and this placidity constituted a sense of power over things, nonetheless (85). This idea would be repeated decades later in Feijóo’s work when he also identified Neoplatonism as a figure for alchemy.

Part III, “On Reasoning,” further offered a study on logic related to language. Blaise Pascal was upheld as one “who knew as much of true rhetoric as anyone ever did” (268). Figurative speech was deemed obsolete, even for nearly everything worthy of attention in Sacred oratory:

For, since figures express the emotions of our soul, those which are introduced into subjects, where the mind is not moved, are emotions contrary to nature, and a species of convulsions. This is why there are few things so disagreeable, as to hear certain preachers who declaim indifferently on everything, and who are as much excited in philosophic arguments as in truths the most awakening, and the most necessary to salvation” (90)

The disregard for figures that moved the rational mind led to a species of language.

Arnauld and Nicole concluded the *Port-Royal Logic* by reminding their readers that maintaining a gaze toward the speculative truths of logic could yield favorable outcomes in practical life.<sup>12</sup> Particulars, the subject of the senses, were causes of error. Plato’s view on the nature of truth as speculative was positioned as supporting roles in this belief. St. Augustine’s statement, *Non est iudicium veritatis in sensibus*, brought a sense of authority against Early Modern Epicureans like Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) and Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), according to whom the senses were a source of knowledge.

Arnauld and Nicole presented a “method of composition” for conveying exactness from one person to another. It mirrored geometric reasoning. “We will consider the method which the geometers follow,” they wrote, “that being always considered best adapted for proving truth, and for fully convincing the mind of it” (310). The French authors’ appetite for an objective gaze culminated in a minor grievance with two of the most famous mathematicians of the ancient world: Euclid of Alexandria and Archimedes.

Even Euclid was too irrational for the the authors of *Port-Royal Logic*. It was not for his conclusions but his digressions when he went about proving them. The Port Royalists viewed several of his discoveries as “full of far-fetched demonstrations” when it was



“sufficiently clear that the way he proved them was not natural” (334). The inferences of the ancient geometrician were certifiable by clear and distinct necessity. Nicole and Arnauld believed Euclid marginalized this principle because he proved ideas inherent in perpendicular lines by placing triangles on top of each other when the central concept could have been manifested clearly and distinctly without appealing to models foreign to the specific subject matter. In the eyes of Port Royalists, even a philosopher like Euclid, who succeeded in discerning some universal understanding, was portrayed as having fallen victim to the same kind of conceptual errors that they also saw in Seneca’s writings and that Feijóo would later find in Baroque orators.

Because all disciplines ought to center on one rational foundation, the Port Royalists Arnauld and Nicole did not define truth in a context unique to historiography any differently than what would have been fitting for a purely speculative field. They did not legitimize what allegories conveyed because they constituted a distinct conception of certitude. There was an absence of treatment of “figurative truths” coupled with a repeated assurance that that truth categorically began where “no evidence is needed because it has, of itself, all the evidence which demonstration could have given it” (324). They did not allow for a thought to be true morally and imprecise factually. Their First Principle of Knowledge stated that “it is impossible for the same thing to be, and not be” (326). It was nothing short of Aristotle’s principle of non-contradiction, cited most frequently in his *Metaphysics IV*, which served as the foundation for logic, math, and geometry.

It was not only possible but fundamentally necessary to eradicate the demonstrative faction of discourse from narrations of human history. If it was fair to scrutinize historical accounts without considering the speaker’s language as mediation, then it followed that the

task of non-fiction storytelling looked to the same structure on which the speculative sciences relied. The gaze of logic did more than determine truth; it effectively generated a different value mode on only the subject matters that it knew to observe. As a result, particular empirical facts were hardly evidence that a purported fact of nature was based on a foundation of infallible certainty. Any idea that did not fully lend itself to a comprehensive reflection of its parts was simply deemed a menace to truth.

Despite being a Jesuit whose letters against the theology of the Jesuits circulated widely, Dominique Bouhours (1628-1702) proved to be a prominent influence on the works of Feijóo, Verney, and especially Espejo. One can draw a direct line from Ariste and Eugene's conversations on *le bel esprit* and *je ne sais quoi* in *Les Entretiens de'Ariste et d'Eugene* (1671) to Feijóo's essays "El no sé qué" (1734) and "Razón del gusto" (1734). And Bouhours's *La Manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'sprit* (1687) was more closely aligned to what Feijóo would later write in "Despotismo, o dominio tiránico de la imaginación" (1753). The content and form of Bouhours's works are evident in Espejo's *Nuevo Luciano de Quito* and *Ciencia blancardina*, both of which two and three characters discuss poetics and speak highly of the Frenchman.

*Les Entretiens* presents views that would later differ from those of Boileau. Where they agreed, however, is in the view that excellence in poetics can be found in passions, nature, and art. An important distinction was Bouhours's belief that emotions have a greater role than reason in recognizing peak eloquence, as the name *je ne sais quoi* would suggest. It involves an instinct of the heart, even a relationship between two of them, and is easier to feel than to know (91). *Le bel esprit*, the second major term that Bouhours popularized, presented good taste as a mark of social distinction and education (125). This

concept would be somewhat applicable to Feijóo in terms of who his target readership was in Spain. For Verney and Espejo, even those well-versed in the education systems lacked rational eloquence.

Using a trope that Verney would repeat after, Bouhours used the metaphor of a gem found in the woods and later cut to perfection. The imagery illustrated where nature ends and proper craft begins. The story speaks further to the idea of class distinction – Even though it could be universal and innate in all humans, eloquence was not a natural situation, but the result of a process of linguistic and social betterment. The rationalist underpinning of Bouhours's thought emerges in examples where the character Ariste insists that to possess *le bel esprit* is to discern things as they are, not the superficial chimerical imaginings (107). Enigmas, guesswork, and mysteries had no place as adornment (117). In another trope that Verney would repeat later, the character Eugene joins painting and rhetoric when he states that there are good artists with poor brushes and poor colors (124-25).

Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711) further shaped Neoclassical poetics in 1674 when he produced his didactic treatise, *L'Art poétique* (*The Art of Poetry*) simultaneously with his translation of Longinus's *On the Sublime*. In Section II of *On the Sublime*, the author writes that the underlying principle of the sublime was nature, notwithstanding the fact that the force of eloquence demanded a proper regulation by a person (5). Boileau's role in the critique of rhetoric in eighteenth-century Spain, Portugal, and Latin America came from applying the poetics of writing and speaking to what the Port Royalists wrote earlier on the rational regulation of thought.

*The Art of Poetry* sheds light on the debates involving the balance between naturalness and structure in rhetoric. In the same way that Descartes delighted in conceiving a geometric shape from all directions within his mind, Boileau insisted that a writer observe the subject of his work as one perfect and beautiful whole (93). While throughout the four books Boileau associated eloquence with what he called noble figures of the mind, in Book I he expressed that “[w]hat we can perceive, we can express with words” and thus introduced his theory of poetics to his reader using Cartesian references about clearness and distinctness as the foundation for eloquence (91). Boileau was highly critical of Italians for disassociating art from truth and celebrating the former. On the level of tropes and rhetorical figures, he identified flights of wit and conceited language as evidence of the dissonance between language and reason. The Spanish who unheeded the irrationality of portraying a lifetime over the course of a few short acts simply disregarded nature.

Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757), a strong proponent of the Cartesian method in natural philosophy, would later be esteemed in high regard in works by Feijóo and Espejo. Especially for Feijóo, *De L’Origine de Fables* (1684) and *L’Histoire de Oracles* (1687) provided a roadmap for several essays on the same theme in *Teatro crítico* and in *Cartas eruditas*. Espejo found in Fontenelle an example of simple yet adorned rational eloquence.

Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750) was the founder of modern Italian historiography and played an important role in the debates that shaped in intellectual context in which the generation in which Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo lived. The *Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto intorno le scienze e le arti* (Venice, 1708-1715) was a call to harmonize

the modern worldview of universal knowledge to what constituted truth in human virtuosity. In Chapter Twelve, the admonition implied that the art of rhetoric held no place in knowledge-centered institutions given that as an instrument of persuasion it “violently” led the public to falsehood because metaphors, among other things, were an affront on certainty (56). The absence of figurative language that Muratori imagined would have led to a language of pure terminology, which he viewed as the eloquence closest to nature and furthest from man’s infatuation with equivocation (57).

One of the themes Muratori would later be known for most appeared in Chapter Thirteen and after. He argued that a historian should focus his ideas on the way in which they relied on the interaction between bona fide documents and reason, or what Sempere y Guarinos terms “documentos seguros y racioncinio” (“trustworthy documents and reasoning”) in the 1782 Spanish translation of Muratori’s *Riflessioni* (150). The combination of accepted textual evidence and the instrumentation of a rational systematization of the mind of the historian clearly defined the debates in eighteenth-century Europe on the means and ends of probabilism. History written in the fashion that Muratori prescribed was worthy of more praise, in his view, than what should be given to any genre of literature. “No es otra cosa (“it is nothing more”), he writes, “que la narración de los sucesos” (“than the narration of events”), pure facts without rhetoric, like the moral digressions of the historians of centuries prior (Chap. 13, 154-55).

Muratori argued that rhetoric should be only permitted to shape truth in so far as one could scale down a structure without surrendering its internal proportions in the process. The return to exactness, sincerity, meant an author could exactly draw the context of a nation as if it were a map (Chap 13, 156). A map allows for very little interpretation of

meaning from the reader, in the sense that what a cartographer sees as factual is simply scaled down and rendered on paper. The art of topography was to nature what historiography was to language. Muratori's metaphor of a map communicates the way in which figurative devices served as tools to advocate a form of speech critical of figurative interpretation, a far shift from Hispanic and Italian traditions.

Muratori suggested that the absence of style alone achieved the three aims of Classical rhetoric: *docere*, *delectare* and *movere*. Vulgar language that reflected only clear and simple ideas, paved the way to these goals, not metaphors.<sup>13</sup> And in Chapter Eighteen Muratori formed classified reason as a broad disciplinary genus within which astronomy, geography, calendar science, Sacred oratory, and poetry operated correspondingly. He criticized those who fill their speeches with alegorical interpretations of scripture on the basis that such means can persuade one of nothing (168). Instead, true teaching, moving, and persuading rested on the communication of solid, literal, and obvious proofs (168). My interest in the passaged cited above lies in the way in which the highly influential Italian theorist portrayed truth as having the qualities of literality, solidness, and obviousness in addition to the fact that such knowledge could be taught without persuasive devices. Thirty years following the publication of the final volume of *Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto*, Muratori released *Delle forze della fantasia* (1745). The first Spanish translation was in 1777, but many of the themes were paralleled in Feijóo's earliest volumes of his *Teatro crítico universal* before 1730 and Ignacio de Luzán's *Poetica* (1737). *Delle forze della fantasia*, in comparison with *Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto*, traded an emphasis on what true eloquence was for a look into the mental processes that opposed it. As the title suggests, rhetoric was detrimental to the human imagination, and vice versa. Using

terminology that resembled the worldview of the Port Royalists in France, Muratori wished that if a person were bound to error, then it was highly preferable that at least he did so in his reasoning and not in his ideations, which suggested that figments of the imagination were more serious than mere slips of the one's thought process.<sup>14</sup>

*Fuerza*, as stated in the work's title, spoke to the need to amend, arrange, and rectify thoughts and language to the point prior to which rational ideas were consumed by imaginative faculties (314). It was for this same reason that Muratori praised Cartesians for finding fault in Aristotle for not differentiating the sensory-based features of an object with its defining and unalterable characteristics that the mind alone can study (318). Colors, as an example of secondary circumstances, was no other than a term Muratori and others used a synonym for the layer of metaphoric language that orators and historians painted over the unmovable truths they believed they were teaching.<sup>15</sup> In Chapter Nineteen, Muratori argued that rational philosophy was the core of moral philosophy. What Muratori called "las reglas del bien discurrir" ("the rules for reasoning well") were much more applicable to life than just to scientific reasoning: modern radicals shed light on the supreme method for examining truth, in whatever subject in which certainty was concerned (321-23). He links conducting oneself in harmony with nature to the grasping of speculative facts (328). This emphasis on discourse as an unmediated and morally anchored representation of objects as they existed in nature, or the external world, will reappear repeatedly in the chapters that follow.

Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) is another Italian of interest to the discussion on the philosophy of history, and specifically on the poetics of historiography. Although he opposed Descartes and the strict rationalist tradition which followed, Vico sought to

accommodate figurative and analytical methodologies by highlighting the ahistorical advantages each offered in educating youth, as well as the role each played over millennia in the in the development of human culture.

In 1709, Vico published *De nostril temporis studiorum ratione* (*On the Study Methods of our Time*), making the argument that a balance should be struck between how the Ancients and Moderns approached knowledge. Vico shared with Descartes a belief in the unity of the sciences, although for Vico each one existed as interacting limbs, not as outgrowths of rationalism. Simply because natural laws uncovered through the geometric method certainly advanced physics, which then drove mechanics forward (11), and that those of chemistry greatly improved medicine (10), it does not follow for Vico that the sense of wisdom and eloquence of what knowledge meant for Ancients should be discarded so easily.

Painting, poetry, and oratory are natural inclinations, Vico argues. A teacher ought to invest in and cultivate these imaginative faculties in youth long before promoting a mastery of philosophical criticism (14). One of the main reasons Vico provides for this is because so much in human life is, in fact, ambiguous (33). One must accept verisimilitude, probabilities, rather than truth (13). In historiography, for example, it would be impossible to inquire into the free will of a person who acted in the world long ago. The certainty Vico wanted students to be familiar with was moral certainty. For this end, he advocates for the art of inventing arguments, the art of topics, for forming persuasive rhetoric on an issue (14). Pupils would lack the capacity to discover truth if they cannot discern the probabilities surrounding any topic that is not purely speculative (15). This idea opposes Descartes, the Port Royalists, and the rationalist Hispanic authors I study later, who insist



that familiarity with a question breeds the topics of invention to speak eloquently about it (13). Overall, the geometrical method is a hindrance on poetic expression unless added to the knowledge humans already possessed (24).

Vico's work on the philosophy of history, *Scienza nuova* (*The New Science*, 1725), seeks to answer in what generic patterns all societies charted. The three primary divisions Vico identifies are the poetic, the heroic, and a final social order organized through reason (336). Each grouping successively fixes less room for the imagination, metaphors, and more for a regulated structure over the mind collectively. Whereas in the first era a culture invents metaphysical stories out of the context of their own creativity, the second stage enforces a system of laws that organize society based on models of heroic feats of divine origin. Lastly, philosophical reasoning parts ways with allegorical meaning as thing of the past.

In the following section, I briefly outline New Formalist Criticism and articulate its benefits as a theory for my reading of theories on the regulation of language in Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo.

### **New Formalism, Rhetorical Analysis, and Cultural Context**

Although it differs from New Criticism in significant ways, New Formalist Criticism, or New Formalism, owes its origin to the earlier school of thought. In this section I will include a brief review of the elements of New Formalism to make the case for why the theoretical approach is suitable for a study centered on analyzing the scientific and cultural contexts that shaped debates on eloquence in Spain, Portugal, and in Ecuador.

The New Criticism was a formalist movement that emerged around the middle of the twentieth century. One of its primary traits is the consideration of any given text as a self-contained entity. Neither the author's intention nor the reader's experience with the work is of interest. Consequently, the internal structure of a text is elevated, allowing for a more direct observation of the relationship between the parts and the whole. For the same reason, figures like T. S. Elliot, and then later John Crow Ransom, Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren, primarily wrote and analyzed poetry. And it is common that the interpretation of poems regards irony, paradox, and ambiguity as moments of tension which lead to further modes of signification.<sup>16</sup> With what came to be called close reading, the New Critics excluded considerations for the social, political, ideological, or biographical environments of the author.

New Formalism modified various tenants of New Criticism. One significant change is emerged from reassessing what factors may be relevant in interpreting a text.<sup>117</sup> New Formalism takes the close reading popularized decades prior by New Critics but invites the social, cultural, and historical elements of the period from which a work develops. The result is a new level of freedom for understanding literature. As Mark Rasmussen notes, it also means that the "wholeness" of a text will be harder to pinpoint (7). It is a move away from what Northrop Frye refers to when he writes that literary studies, as akin to any discipline, requires "the assumption of total coherence" (16).

The interest New Critics had in the ironic and paradoxical aspects of a text continue evolve into something no longer adverse in New Formalism. Following the wave of cultural changes in the 1960s, dissonances and contradictions acquired a certain interpretative intrigue. Disharmony or rupture no longer was viewed necessarily as impediments.

Similarly, the notion that a text naturally aspires a final state of unification is largely absent in New Formalism. The same idea applies to the question whether an internal structure is innate to a text. There is a greater awareness that a reader's critical framework, the observational gaze, is a component that helps assemble the form that will be analyzed.

Since the mid-twentieth century until the present, the changes to the nature of academic research in general have provided New Formalism tools that were unavailable before. Tensions can indicate evidence of marginalization, hierarchy, claims of legitimization, or different references to power struggles. New Formalism also lends itself to new fields like ecocriticism. Instead of focusing mimetically on the representation of nature in literature, researchers in turn attention to grammar and style to assert their readings. The methodology of close reading is still very much the same, despite thematic differences.

A discussion on how New Formalism differs from New Criticism should not overlook the developments by the more recent theory regarding authorial intention. The aim of a writer is neither as extraneous as it was under New Criticism nor a prerequisite for analysis.<sup>18</sup> What was understood as the literariness of poem as an object for rhetorical analysis in the middle of the twentieth century extends to all forms of cultural expression in New Formalism; anything that uses rhetoric becomes a narrative for close reading.

Around the 2000s, New Formalists looked toward other disciplines, often focusing on how scientists use language. An important topic focus like Ken Baake in *Metaphor and knowledge: The Challenges of Writing Science* (2003) and Theodore L. Brown in *Making Truth: Metaphor in Science* (2003) is how research in fields that deal with abstract knowledge use rhetoric to constitute and communicate information.<sup>19</sup>

The overview above on the way in which New Criticism provided a theoretical foundation for New Formalist Criticism highlights elements that make the latter pertinent to the aims of my present project. The features include the social, cultural, and historical contexts, authorial intention, irony, grammar and syntax, the contrast between balance and paradox, and the language of scientific discourse, and.

My interest in how rationalist thought shapes the literary theories of Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo forces a consideration for the historical context from before and during the Hispanic Enlightenment. The question on rhetorical responses by radical thinkers toward the tradition of allegorical exegesis inherently encapsulates interests positioned far beyond the specific works written by Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo's hands. Authorial intention can be linked to cultural context. The authors' objectives were not sequestered units of meaning, art for the sake of art. An important facet of the European Enlightenment is an optimism in its tools to advance societal conditions. Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo saw in Spain, Portugal, and Quito, respectively, the literal beneficiaries of their literary labors. While New Criticism's attention to symmetry is important for reading the rhetoric of rationalism, New Formalism's observations for imbalance adds crucial commentary on the contradictions that arise in the conceptualizations of a purely regulated, clear, and direct mode of speech. Like studies by New Formalists on the discourse of the formal sciences, this research finds points of contact in the rationalist culture underpinning the rhetoric of geometry and logic.

## **Chapter Overviews**

Chapter Two of this study presents the French rationalist critiques of probabilism, human testimony, and the imagination in Spain in essays from *Teatro crítico universal*

(1726-39) and *Cartas eruditas y curiosas* (1742-60) by Benito Jerónimo Feijóo (1676-1764). Bouhours, Boileau, and those closely affiliated with the Port-Royal Abbey are the primary voices heard in the Galician's calls for a more regulated choice of topics for historiographical argumentation, word selection, and diction.

As a member of the Benedictine order, Feijóo was careful to avoid the theological conflict that previously plagued Blaise Pascal, Antoine Arnauld, and Pierre Nicole. To this end, he went to great lengths to separate sacred and profane discourse, and then focus his attention heavily on the latter. Human authority, or testimony, had no place in historiography or in natural philosophy, as it was the origin of fables. For Feijóo, probabilism was a solution that perpetuated the very lawlessness it was meant to mitigate. Feijóo confronts this culture by advocating for the rationalization of rhetoric, and therefore thought.

Chapter Three looks to Portugal with the treatise *O verdadeiro método de estudar no Portugal moderno* (1746) by Luís António Verney (1713-92), whose mother was Portuguese and father, French. The terms “modern” and “method” in the title point to the quarrels Verney has with the Jesuit education system dominant in Portugal. In ways sometimes similar to Feijóo, Verney teaches his compatriots to improve their reasoning by regulating their rhetoric. Following the precepts of French thinkers like Pascal, Port Royalists, Bouhours, and Boileau, the Portuguese critic often relies on specific figures of diction to embellish his language without jeopardizing the clarity of thought. Many of these devices play on different modes of structured symmetry and repetition to retain the reader's attention. They showcase forms of incorporating influential patterns of regulation, logic, mathematics, and geometry in rhetoric, the rationalization of speech.

Verney was no stranger to inventive rhetorical devices in his writing. I identify three primary categories in which his metaphors and allegories can be grouped. The first two allude to the fields of natural science and to objects in nature itself. The content centers on themes of exactness, numbers, and the geometry underlying painting as figures for the art of rhetoric. The same applies to precious stones in the wilderness, and to the solar system and their movements. The final compilation is made of metaliterary critiques of figurative eloquence. There was no restraint of inventiveness at the expense of the illogicality of other writers and orators when they speak of one thing by talking about another.

Chapter Four looks to Quito with Francisco Javier Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo (Espejo) (1747-95), a prominent physician of mulatto and Indian parentage. The conversations between the characters Mera and Murillo in the satirical *El nuevo Luciano de Quito* (1779) and *Ciencia blancardina* (1781) draw on Dominique Bouhours's *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugene* (1673), as many of the topics carried over from *Cartas provinciales* (1657) by Blaise Pascal and *Moral práctica de los Jesuitas* (1690) by Antoine Arnauld.

I identify specific conflicts with rhetoric in *El nuevo Luciano* and *Ciencia blancardina*. The author uses figures of omission frequently in his work as if to forgo expendable mediums. In addition, the figure *reticencia* appears often in the text as explicit nods to the breakdown of language, an unwillingness to put ideas to form if doing so would fail to do them justice. In many other occasions, various forms of repetition exhaust talking points as a lesser offence than reverting to tropes for rhetorical force.

The tropes that Espejo employs in *El nuevo Luciano* center on irony and metaphors. The former is used primarily for satirizing orators associated with probabilistic reasoning and florid language at the pulpit. The metaphors Espejo penned referenced monstrosities

and mental slavery. Whereas Verney admiringly linked the art of painting to geometrical reasoning, Espejo, like Feijóo, looked to music's powerful effect on the mind as an ill-fated figure.

## CHAPTER TWO: Benito Jerónimo Feijóo and the Critique of Figurative Eloquence in Spain

Studies abound on Benito Jerónimo Feijóo (1676-1764) that address the author's writings as emblematic of eighteenth-century attempts to modernize Spanish thought. Feijóo's work encompasses eight volumes of *Teatro crítico universal* (1726-1739), *Ilustración apologética al primero y Segundo tomo de Teatro crítico* (1729), five volumes of *Cartas eruditas y curiosas* published between (1742-1760), and minor works. The vehemence with which he sought to remedy what he viewed as impediments to Spain's nation's proficiency arts and sciences leads to questions on what role rationalist culture had on the problems he perceived in culture and on the solutions he proposed to remedy them.

Scholars on the eighteenth-century Iberian Peninsula tend to focus more on the English empiricism in Feijóo's thought than on the French rationalism in his rhetoric.<sup>20</sup> Feijóo's acclaim for Sir Isaac Newton is a less subtle example of Feijóo's appreciation for the philosophy that emerged from England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In as early as 1727, one year after publishing the first volume of *Teatro crítico*, Feijóo writes correspondence in which he states "yo hablo como newtoniano" ("I speak as a Newtonian") as a way of endorsing the Englishman's theories on the movement of massive objects in nature.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, Sir Francis Bacon's scientific method based on empirical experimentalism certainly guided Feijóo's initiative to instruct the Spanish public to consider what they learned through the written and spoken language in conformity with the same reality they observed for themselves.



Today the role rationalist ideals of Port-Royalists and other French thinkers had on Feijóo's worldview is less understood. The rather optimistic view of the philosophy, as in reason's ability alone to describe the relationship between the world and humanity's understanding of it, might appear to problematize the Spaniard's unmistakable clear endorsement of the empirical methodology that the British celebrated. But Feijóo believed that the realm of speculative truths was essential for critiquing errors in the absence of direct observation. But it would be an oversight to ignore the contribution Descartes had in the imagination of a Spanish author who refused to endorse any one profane belief system dogmatically, was highly eclectic in his reading, whose formative years took place at the same time Spain experienced a significant wave of French culture, and was someone who read French but not English.

The specific reading that I propose is that the Feijóo's portrayal of the rhetoric that best describes truth can be understood as a self-negating act of language itself. To provide a poetics consisting of a clear and distinct methodology for communicating truth, Feijóo follows seventeenth-century French rationalist thought when he extrapolates deeply human modes of meaning from the language of non-Sacred oratory and writing. He does this through an understanding of what was "natural" in terms that privilege logic and mathematics over the imagination, rhetoric, and interpretation. Cartesian reasoning gave Feijóo the tools with which he could confront the writings of Baroque Scholastics who blended profane history, Sacred history, and fables through a highly exegetic readings of texts.

### **The Divorce of Human Authority from non-Sacred Discourse**

In following seventeenth-century theories presented in the previous section, Feijóo portrays the relationship between Sacred and profane truths as one of separate but equal. In an often quoted essay from the first volume of *Teatro crítico universal*, “Voz del pueblo” (1726), he insists that both categories of certainty are infallible, universal, but of varieties that need not ever meet:

Quien considerare que para la verdad no hay más que una senda, y para el error infinitas, no extrañará que caminando los hombres con tan escasa luz, se descaminen los más. Para la verdad no hay más que una senda, y para el error infinitas. (par. 5)

Whoever considers that there is only one path for truth, and for error an infinite, would not be surprised that men go astray more for walking in such scarce light.

There is no more than one path for truth, and error an infinite.

In the passage above, I should note, Feijóo discusses historical truths, not those of the faith. Feijoo takes the structure of the Christian precept on the one true path for the faithful and applies its language to facts about nature and human history. In both groups, the standards of proof that certainty demands leaves little room for one’s will to interpret. And Feijóo emphasizes that here is where the similarities between profane and sacred truths end. The method for gaining a religious persuasion must be far different from that of arriving at a sense of certainty toward narrations of events not relating to the faith. This allowed for a better accommodation of both. From this standpoint, for example, Feijóo critiques a history or fable from a religious context without jeopardizing a reverence toward what is sacred. In “Guerras filosóficas” (1728), he advances arguments against Scholastics who argued that rationalist ideas prompted atheist tendencies. (par. 25). Specifically, he defends Pierre

Gassendi from those who felt that the Italian's deterministic, rational worldview was too Epicurean for the Church (par. 21, 25).

Feijóo's early attempts to balance a worldview in which rationalism and Sacred truths coexisted for modern Spaniards involves magnifying human authority as a fortuitous privilege that the Faith alone enjoyed:

Nadie hasta ahora fijó, ni pudo fijar columnas con la inscripción *Non plus ultra* a las Ciencias naturales. Este es el privilegio municipal de la doctrina revelada. En el Reino intelectual sólo a lo infalible está vinculado lo inmutable. ("Guerras filosóficas," par. 22).

Nobody to date has nor could have fixed the inscription *Non plus ultra* on the pillars of the natural sciences. This is the municipal privilege of revealed doctrine. In the intellectual realm only what which is infallible is linked to what is immutable.

A rationalist critique occupied a significant role for Feijóo, given the lack of authority human testimony has over the truth of past events in the physical world. To assert that revealed doctrine and science were not inherently antithetical in this view, Feijóo moves to defend Descartes's influence by presenting the Frenchman as someone more in line with Catholicism than the Jesuits most critical of him. He tells his reader that that Cartesians discovered that reason, not the imagination, can dictate truth where faith cannot ("Guerras filosóficas," par. 29). In other words, Feijóo argues that reason can be a proxy for the faith up to the point at which human authority was required.

On a macro-level of figurative language, allegorical history for Feijóo is the continuance of metaphors which endure in one shape or another over millennia. His "Divorcio de la fábula y la historia" (1733) was interpreted by some during his lifetime as a

denial on his part that any pagan mythological histories had its origin in true feats recorded in the scriptures. Nine years later, in “Origen de la fábula en la Historia” (1742), he insists that evidently some formed that way, although at a scale outstandingly less imposing than those from profane history. By consistently presenting natural events as the primary source of Pagan mythology, Feijóo sought to shake the legitimization that people who granted fables the unshakable truths of Catholicism.

The Galician’s ideas on the correlation between truth and language also are laid out in “Escepticismo filosófico” (1729). As Robbins accurately notes, the reasons for which Feijóo endorses doubt as a pivotal epistemological device trace Descartes’s writings on the same questions in *Discourse on Method* (248). The points in common touch on which doubts are impossible. Like Descartes, Feijóo cites the existence of oneself, of God, and of mathematical certainty on this topic (par. 8-10). The relationship these ideas have with language for the Spaniard involves a judgment for clear and distinct thought and speech. The imagination, “la errada representación de la imaginativa” (“the erroneous representation of the imagination”), negotiates between words and the world. What the senses were to speculative knowledge for Descartes is what that the imagination was to rhetoric for Feijóo.

### **The Mathematic Measure of Human Testimony**

The rationalization of rhetoric is particularly evident in Feijóo’s thought in his essay “Regla matemática de la fe humana” (1733), where he outlines the way one should scrutinize statements of opinion with a “mathematical.” Feijóo calls it his *balanza intelectual*, a robust criterion for scrutinizing the language of demonstrative rhetoric. He

aims to render rationality where there is nuance (par. 12). The words “regla” and “matemática” in the title only begin to touch the surface on how little Feijóo welcomes artistic proofs and adornments in his conception of how to communicate historical truth. He describes strict rules, an intellectual balance or scale, and cognitive proofs weighted “todos en grado determinado” (“each to a specific degree”), all of which being what plain-spoken truth demands (par. 7). The following passage conveys what Feijóo characterizes as the grand blueprint for prudence in this matter:

Puestas en la balanza intelectual, por una parte la inverisimilitud del suceso, y por otra la autoridad del que le refiere, se ha de ver cuál pesa más; si pesare más aquélla que ésta, se ha de negar el asenso; si ésta más que aquélla, concederse; y si quedaren las dos en equilibrio, dejar también en equilibrio el juicio, no asintiendo ni disintiendo. (par. 6)

Placed in the intellectual balance, on one end the implausibility of an event, and, on the other, the authority of whom references it, it then must be seen which one weighs more. If the former were to weigh more than the latter, assent must be denied. If the latter more than the former, then it must be conceded. And if both remain indifferent, then leave judgment indifferent too, neither assenting nor dissenting.

The influence of rationalist thought is evident throughout Feijóo’s passage. In a separate thought experiment, Descartes rejected what he could not ascertain with upmost certainty. Descartes did this, he writes, by “follow[ing] no other order than what geometers used” (*Meditations* 10). Later, Nicole and Arnauld similarly judged that one should simply assert

ambivalence to issues that are nonconclusive after weighing the evidence rationally (230). Feijóo followed this line of reasoning in eighteenth-century Spain.

The first step in Feijóo's methodology involves mentally isolating the claim from the he who gives it. Witnesses, Feijóo writes, "aunque muchos, se fundan en el dicho de uno solo, solo se ha de atender a la autoridad de aquel de donde dimanó la noticia" ("even when they are many, base their beliefs in the statement of one alone. Someone only ought to heed the authority of whom the account originated"; "Regla matemática" par. 22). Given that an historian's authority rested only on *opinio*, Feijóo essentially departs from historical and literary tradition:

[A]unque con tanta evidencia dictada por la luz natural, se halla frecuentemente abandonada por los mismos que debieran tenerla más presente: Esto es, los Profesores de letras, cuando se trata de la comprobación de algún hecho histórico que está en opiniones." (par. 22)

Despite so much evidence dictated by natural light, frequently is it abandoned by the very ones the most who ought to hold it close. That is, the professors of Letters, in proving some historical fact in question as an opinion.

This is an affront on historical and poetic truth. It mirrors Descartes's language when the Frenchman critiques the methodology of his professors of letters while he was educated under the Jesuits. Feijóo downplays the rhetorical function of probabilistic reasoning by treating history and speculative rationalism on equal footing.

Feijóo's critique is aimed at human authority, the foundation of what made Scholastic probabilistic reasoning persuasive. He reiterates what he states in "Reflexiones sobre la Historia" (1730) on the need to perceive each statement comprehensively in the

mind. The devices of eloquent appeal by the speaker become secondary to, and independent of, the facts. To a certain degree, his attempts to restore human testimony to how it was portrayed in the oldest discussion known on the topic in Western literature. In his treatise on rhetoric, Aristotle labels a witness's statement as something arhetorical. The concluding presentation from a prosecutor or defendant, in contrast, is an object of rhetoric, for Aristotle, because the speaker takes the statement presented by a witness and makes something else from of it. But Feijóo goes one step beyond Aristotle. He appears troubled by the rhetorical dress in all human language, seeking to extricate all of it excluding the untainted idea of what is communicated.<sup>22</sup> Feijóo's rules for the critique of historical narratives did not teach one how to consider artistic proofs. Inartistic utterances were the golden standard for truth. This inevitably led to a dichotomy between fact and language, content and form, certainty, and history. For the Galician, and the Cartesian rationalists who influenced his thought, formal mathematical reasoning and *elocutio* only coinhabited a world of misconceptions.

Additional comments by Descartes in which he addresses the judging of human testimony in history further contextualizes Feijóo's critique of language in "Regla matemática de la fe humana." The Frenchman rejected the idea that the sum of testimonies could serve to bolster a truth claim about the past (*Regulae*, Rule 3). He argues that it is of no use to total the witnesses in favor of a historical claims. Memorizing, even to a perfection, what learned men unanimously agreed upon would not suffice to render the kind of knowledge he sought because "we shall not," Descartes wrote, "turn out to be mathematicians," he states somewhat figuratively, because "we should not have acquired the knowledge of a science, but of history" (*Regulae* 225).

For Feijóo, the human authority on which someone is expected to rely is an external condition of a belief and therefore was simply expendable. His idea of clarity of thought, speech, and writing comes at a cost of banning what makes language, *language*.<sup>23</sup> Truth is then portrayed as a despot who perceived an array of interpretations as a threat to its legitimization. In relation to *Port Royal Logic*, the range of beliefs that one could justifiably affirm based on possessing only tentative information practically diminished to zero. The burden of proof Feijóo describes rests on one's speculative and isolated analysis of an idea alone.

Feijóo elaborates on the lack of confidence in figures of authority much more extensively than on the side of his scale that deals with judging how verisimilar an event is. Over 30 paragraphs, he presents reasons for rejecting the authoritative persuasiveness in a statement by one person or by society. Alternatively, he discusses isolating and observing a statement rationally over only one paragraph. My reading of this imbalance suggests the difficulty Feijóo faces when attempting to render a clear-cut order of operations *a la geometrique* from something too nuanced for mathematic reasoning. It points to how deeply skeptical his theories were of the de-centeredness of interpretation and language. Speech that is figurative or simply uncorroborated becomes a transgression against nature and truth.

Failure to inspect a belief first rationally, clearly and distinctly, purely as a mental concept, opens the door for appeals to probabilism for Feijóo, a slippery slope for epistemological certainty. No scenario in his thought experiment accepts a statement that appears unsound despite coming from a reliable voice of authority. Human authority practically becomes irrelevant. It was insufficient that a historian believed in good faith



that what he wrote was true: This would be a return to probabilism. Instead, Feijóo insists that what remains is weigh, or validate any idea (“graduarla”), and only then examine how far its virtues extend (“Regla matemática,” par. 11). In theory, half of his measure for assent is given to evaluating someone’s authority. But this amounts to very little significance, a supporting role at best, because reason alone is the sole determining factor.

Feijóo’s language on disregarding much of what figures of authority interpreted about the past resembles Descartes’ writings in *Regulae*. The Frenchman argues that entirely submitting oneself to what men of letters say about historical events carries the risk of becoming “infected with their errors” (225). Such a contagion involves artistic proofs, or “the subtlest of arguments to compel us to go along with them” (225). For Feijóo in Spain, spectacles of the imagination, a rhetorical cabinet of wonder, was no longer a substitute for knowing the facts.

Allegories and metaphors for Feijóo are to clear language what fables are to accurate historical events. Aristotle understood that all members of society communicated via metaphors (*Art of Rhetoric* 1404b32). Cicero writes that it was “[t]he commonest occurrence in the language of townsman and rustic alike” (*Orator*, 24.81). For Feijóo in 1745, the measure of an eloquence more in harmony with the precision of mathematical reasoning strikes a difficult balance between structured thought and intuitive bearing of *el buen gusto*. In “La elocuencia es naturaleza, y no Arte” (1745), he stresses that “la naturalidad [es] una perfección, una gracia, sin la cual todo es imperfecto, y desgraciado, por ser la afectación un defecto, que todo lo hace despreciable, y fastidioso” (“naturalness is a perfection, a grace without which everything is imperfect and disrepute, for affectation is defect that makes everything detestable and obnoxious”; par. 3). It is clear how few

interpretations of “truth” Feijóo entertains. Whereas there is an infinite number of deformities, perfection is singularly natural:

A todo lo demás inficiona, y corrompe la afectación. Es preciso, que cada uno se contente en todas sus acciones con aquel aire, y modo, que influye su orgánica, y natural disposición. Si con ese desagrada, mucho más desagradará, si sobre este aplaza otro postizo. Lo más que se puede pretender es, corregir los defectos, que provienen, no de la naturaleza, sino, o de la educación, tomando uno por otro. (par. 5)

Affectation infects and corrupts everything else. It is necessary that, in all his actions, each person be content with that air and manner that influences his organic and natural disposition. If this is distasteful, then so much more will it distaste with an added layer of falsity. The most that one can aim for is to correct defects that arise, not from nature, but either from education or from confusing the one with the other.

Feijoo suggests that allowing an inch of figurative expression has the potential of forfeiting of a mile of truth. Regulation over the speech one chooses involves bringing the mind’s eye back to the same center on which speculative knowledge stood. The emphasis on *agrado* in rhetoric is replaced by *el corregir*. Muses amuse far more than they guided. Likewise, so well-structured thinking is entitled to please if only incidentally. Only the language that constantly begged questions of falsifiability was relevant.

Feijóo’s imposition of a mathematical ruler is a radical shift in the Spanish rhetorical tradition. Less than two centuries prior, the Dominican Fray Luis de Granada was the most influential theorist on oratory of the sixteenth century. A Judeo-Christian context shaped

Luis de Granada's rhetorical theory about moving spectators to adhere to the faith. *Rhetorica Ecclesiastica* (*Los seis libros de la retórica eclesiástica, o de la manera de predicar*, 1576) teaches that the shortest path between truth and their spectator's imagination was paved with tropes and figures. Speech that "artificially" captivate an audience surrender epistemological exactness for an *elocutio*, or style, in which allegories interact in the symbolism of the content overall. In Luis de Granada's text, we understand discourse as a mediator for truth without outcries that meaning cannot change and remain intact. In a purely poetic context, Luis de Granada's approach to rhetoric was no different than his English contemporary, Sir Philip Sidney, according to whom, regardless of if one spoke of geometry or painting, there was no art of mankind that did not have nature as its principal object (330).

### **The Dangers in The Resemblance of Truth**

The resemblance of truth had a doubtful advantage for Feijóo. If an idea was less than undeniable, then inadvertent falsehood was never far away. Andrew E. Benjamin discusses what Descartes found problematic in fables, or allegorical history, in terms of the instability and fallibility of meaning. The imagination moves from one idea to another along a succession of resemblances, a cause for error in reasoning but poetically expedient. For Descartes, and later for Feijóo, verisimilitude is necessary but hardly sufficient for distinct clarity. On his point, Benjamin writes:

If it were not the case the clear and distinct perception overcame resemblance, knowledge of the world would be impossible, since the co-extensivity between sign and the thing that characterizes Cartesian representation would itself be impossible.

Knowledge therefore is premised on the possibility of overcoming not simply the threat of the imagination, but more importantly the interrelationship between resemblance and metonymy, in other words the basis of fiction itself. (17)

Feijóo envisions an impossible form of rhetoric comparable to what Benjamin finds Descartes's ideal form mental representation to be.

Although presented as foundational to a subsequent statement of certainty, the Cartesian notion of clarity and distinctness essentially begins as a tool of deconstruction. The following passage by Feijóo illustrates how he applies this theory to the dismantling of narratives built on possibility of truth alone, the most prominent justification for embracing fables as veracious, if even figuratively:

[L]a posibilidad de una cosa nunca puede ser regla, ni aun coadyuvante, para creer su existencia. Ni aun Dios puede hacer, que todo lo posible exista; aunque no hay posible alguno, a quien no puede hacer existir. Dista muchas leguas lo posible de lo verosímil. Una cosa es inverisimilitud, y otra imposibilidad. Las cosas muy extraordinarias no son repugnantes; pero inverisímiles en el mismo grado que extraordinarias: porque, si se mira bien, inverisímil es, no sólo aquello que nunca sucede, mas también lo que sucede rarísima vez; y a proporción de lo extraordinario de su existencia va creciendo la inverisimilitud [...] Supuesto, pues, que la inverisimilitud no se mide por la imposibilidad, sino por la extrañez; y que la existencia de cualquiera cosa, tanto se reputa más o menos inverisímil, cuanto es más o menos extraordinaria, es vano recurrir a la posibilidad para persuadir la verisimilitud, y dar derecho a cualquier relacionero para que le creamos cosas admirables, a título de que no hay imposibilidad alguna que lo cuenta. ("Regla

matemática,” par. 16, 18)

The possibility of something can never be its rule, or even a contributing factor, to believing its existence. Not even God can make everything that is possible exist, even though there is not one alone that he cannot make possible. What is possible is far from what is probable. Impossibility is one thing and probability is another. Very extraordinary things are not repugnant but are implausible to the same degree they are extraordinary. If one looks closely, implausibility not only is that which never happens, but also that which occurs in very few occasions. And in proportion to the extraordinary nature of its existence, its verisimilitude grows [...] Supposing, then, that impossibility is not measured by something’s impossibility, but by its abnormality, and that based on the alleged existence of something, however probable, however extraordinary, it is vain to resort to the possibility of persuading what is verisimilar and of giving validation to any old tale teller account so that we can believe compelling things from him.

It is a rhetorical strategy on Feijóo’s part to emphasize the fallacy in alleging that an idea can be treated as fact based simply on its prospect of truth. His solution is not a more stringent methodology for understanding nuance, but its literary foil: the Cartesian precept according to which *if* something can be doubted, then it cannot be taken as true.

It is not the case that Feijóo distinguishes various forms of truth. He felt that the literariness of historiography did more harm than good. Instead, formal logic shapes his understanding of what it means for something to be true in categorically new terms. We can find examples of this in “Divorcio de la Historia y la Fábula” in his characterization of probabilism. It was nothing short of “un trastorno de la Historia” (“a retardation of

history”), as he calls it, a violation of nature, for a historian to insist, from the position of mere defensibility, that relevant parallels exist between the mythology of the universal history of the Church. The mythological episode in which Hercules liberates Prometheus from a cave, for example, is taken as a validated rehash of Joseph triumphing over the Amalekites from Chapters Seventeen through Nineteen of the Book of Exodus. Feijóo critiques such claims as fruits of an unbridled imagination over enthusiastic about discovering links between different stories. He presents contemporary and prior generations as if a rigorous track of falsifiability is very much absent from their poetics of historiography. What is concerning for Feijóo about what probabilism does to the physical world (and therefore history) is not only that it gives one the freedom to justify a view that could be seen, as the name suggests, as probable, but that it legitimizes any position that was merely defensible. Especially given the level of liberty in allegorical exegesis of Sacred and profane histories, propositions become, in principle, impossible to counter using the tools provided within the system. Cartesian rationalist thought prioritizes logic in contrast to what Feijóo called “todas las fatigas de estos hombres [que] sirvieron a ostentar su ingenio y erudición, mas no a descubrir la verdad” (“all the exhausted measures of these men that serve to flaunt their wit and erudition, but not to discover truth”; “Divorcio” par. 5).

Feijóo’s understanding of truth redirected the conversation toward a debate about what did or did not count as evidence. When writing about a belief held by a contemporary named señor Hurt, Feijóo criticizes the proofs on which his counterpart relied, according to which the Greek myths were simply reflections of biblical events. His nemesis was what he calls “este sistema” (“this system”), the overly free association of ideas, “[e]ste género de

pruebas” (“this genre of proofs”), the act of “siguiendo semejanza” (“going off similiarites”), and that of searching for “ciertas analogías” (“certain kinds of analogies”; “Divorcio,” par. 14).<sup>24</sup> A statement was not certain because it was real: It was real only because it was certain. This worldview shaped the way in which Feijóo viewed orators: too susceptible to the sensationalism of finding fragments of truth in popular myths while too accomplishing only “unas aplicaciones tan violentas, tan arrastradas” (“such violent and far-fetched applications”; par. 29). It was Descartes, more so than Locke, whose ideas on eliminating uncertainties indirectly led Feijóo to consider rejecting all questionable preliminaries in historiography.

Scholastic interpretations of fables rely on the premise that historical truth persistently expresses itself through art. That the possibility of a remnant of historical fact contained in a fable could elevate the story to a status of appropriate material for theological debates and speeches is testament to the long-established cultural norms Feijóo challenged. If allegorical or simply erroneous discourses of the past preserved even a fraction of veracity, then only what remained of the original and complete truth is worth a rationalist’s attention. Like a red herring fallacy, any addition to the story distracted the eye of the imagination. A Cartesian sense for foundational certainty guided Feijóo’s efforts to extract the one from the other. There was hardly a fable, he insists, that lacks at least a grain of historic truth on which it was established (“Divorcio,” par. 1). Logicians, Feijóo remarks, judge that entities of reasoning can either be built on a real foundation or on none at all, and that fables by definition are part of the latter (par. 3).

For radicals like Feijóo, Scholastic probabilism is evidence of the failure of reason and of language. In essay 33 from volume 1 of *Cartas eruditas* (1742), “Defiende el autor el

uso que hace de algunas voces, o peregrinas, o nuevas en el idioma castellano,” Feijóo defends the infusion of foreign terminologies in the Spanish lexicon of his time from north of the Pyrenees on the basis that insufficient words existed to describe the multiplicity of newly uncovered speculative truths.<sup>25</sup> His ideal rhetoric which bridges human understanding and nature makes obsolete a language grounded on figurative expression that acts as mediation between words and the world. Feijóo, critical of those who considered dictionaries as windows of meaning, writes:

Así, aunque tengo por obras importantísimas los diccionarios, el fin, que tal vez se proponen sus autores de fijar el lenguaje, ni le juzgo útil, ni asequible. No útil porque, es cerrar la puerta a muchas voces, cuyo uso nos puede convenir; ni asequible, porque apenas hay escritor de pluma algo suelta, que se proponga contenerla dentro de los términos del diccionario. (par. 13)

Yet, although I consider dictionaries to be highly important works, with the goal of grounding language that perhaps their authors set out to do, I don't judge them neither useful nor viable; they are not useful, for closing the door to many concepts whose use it may be convenient for us; they are not viable, for there is hardly a writer who can contain even the slightest movements of his pen within the terms in the dictionary.

In “Argumentación y razón en algunas de las cartas eruditas de Feijóo,” Martín Mondragón-Arriaga interprets this essay by Feijóo as a genial recognition on the Galician's part of the constant metamorphosis of language (25). We can also sense in Feijóo's passage above a somber realization in that, in the absence of a rhetorical “center,” one finds the imperative



to find structure, which in this case, is fulfilled by rationalist ideals bypassing the essence of language at large.

### **The Imagination and The Emotions in Language: Violent and Ugly Forces**

As a rhetorical device, thought-provoking admiration is an agent against historical truth for Feijóo but nonetheless is appropriate in some religious contexts. Figures of *amplificatio* introduce depth, but not necessarily the extensive development of an idea. Feijóo views *amplificatio* as a figure that relies entirely on one's disproportionate attention to visual digressions. It jeopardizes the precision with which one intends to communicate. In "Historia natural" (1728), Feijóo writes approvingly that it is nearly impossible to move someone's emotions in oratory when the details, or particulars, are detached from the excluded from the way a story is told (par. 73). The reason why pre-modern historians wrote extraordinary narratives was because nothing generates the misinformed wonder like language, he adds (par. 72). Rhetorical amplification was the most frequently recommended figure in guides on rhetoric since Classical times for moving an audience through using their emotions. For Feijóo, this method represents objects differently than what they are. It distorts the mind's eye by playing on one's senses, as in "alucina la vista" ("it distorts sight"; par. 74).

Feijóo's understanding of a true human eloquence as utterances in tune to nature's reason are inseparable from his insistence that the intellect should privilege universal and abstract constants over someone's unique interpretation. In "Mapa intelectual," essay 33 of *Ilustración apologética* (1729), Feijóo offers a rebuttal to critics of his first volume of *Teatro crítico universal*. A thin line separates human rhetoric from the language of reason, he tells

them: “la mayor elocuencia es la que a un entendimiento claro y perspicaz y sólido dicta la misma naturaleza” (“the highest eloquence is what nature herself dictates to the understanding as clear, preceptive, and solid”; par. 20). A more perfect union between nature and human understanding would lead to the truest form of eloquence. Mathematics and geometry are to nature what rhetoric could never be to historiography. Feijóo, like Verney and Espejo in the following chapters, demands an impossibility, a paradox, when he conceptualizes a language purged of human expression, subjectivity, and figurality.

Feijóo portrays the spectator of oratory deeply moved by language as if he or she were the object of the speaker’s will. Far from being rational, the viewer’s mind appears outside one’s control. The human body then resembles a machine in which human experiences are the result of moving parts with the orator the reins. This constitutes violence in two interpretations of the term for Feijóo. He sees it is violent physiologically because the brain’s mechanics literally shifts in various directions in response to the ideas entering it through the eyes and ears. The orator’s power is also violent in that consent cannot be given fully if the audience member is unaware of the control an effective speaker can wield over their imagination. Below is a passage in which Feijóo introduces his notion of the imaginative faculty (*la imaginativa*):

Esta, que llamamos *Imaginativa*, es una potencia potentísima en nosotros. Siendo tanta la fuerza, que experimentamos en nuestras pasiones, por lo común vienen a ser éstas como unas inválidas, sino las anima el influjo de la Imaginativa. Ella las mueve, o las aquieta, las enciende, o las apaga. El amor, el odio, la ira, la concupiscencia tantas veces rebeldes a la razón, sin repugnancia obedecen el imperio de la Imaginativa. Ella provoca la violencia de los efectos, y por medio de

ellos todas las partes de esta animada máquina reciben el impulso que los mueve.

Ella, según las varias representaciones que da a los objetos, hace que los ojos viertan lágrimas; que el pecho exhale gemidos; que el cuerpo se resuelva en sudores; que la cólera frenesíes; las venas, o arterias rompimientos; los nervios mortíferas convulsiones. (“Despotismo,” par. 5)

This what we call *imagination* is a very forceful force in us. Given the strength we experience in them, our passions very commonly tend to be invalid, nonetheless they enliven our imagination. She moves, or pacifies, or enflames, or turns off the passions. Love, hate, wrath, concupiscence, so often rebellious toward reason, obey the empire of the imagination without repugnance. She provokes effects of violence, and through these all parts of the animated mechanism receive the impulse the moves them. She, based on the various representations she gives to objects, makes it so that eyes spill tears, the bosom exhales gasps, the body covers itself in sweat, delirious anger, the rupture of veins or arteries, mortiferous convulsions of the nerves.

Despite this antagonistic stance toward figurative language, tropes are not hard to come by. And the fact that Feijóo would write something like “potencia potentísima” to paint a picture of the power of one’s imagination over reason suggests that he shared our complicated relationship with linguistic signs. He could only work with the tools that he had, and this led him further toward the use of the kind of metaphoric imagery against which he warned.

Feijóo’s oscillating double antithesis, the back and forth of “Ella las mueve, o las aquieta, las enciende, o las apaga” above describes the imagination’s unwelcome dominion

over the passions. The two pairs of opposing actions simultaneously rely on highly metaphorical tropes involving illustrations of movement, pacification, combustion, and the conclusion of excitement. Similarly, the *imaginativa* violently provokes all parts of what Feijóo calls an “animada máquina” (“machine of animation”) instead of simply, less figuratively, naming the human body as “cuerpo” (“body”).

Feijóo later intensifies the portrayal of the imagination’s abuse of one’s reason. He calls it is an unnatural control: “viene a ser como tiránico, violento, y usurpado; porque es de inferior a superior; de la parte sensitiva a la racional” (“comes to be something tyrannical-like, violent, and usurping. It goes from inferior to superior, the sensitive to the rational”; par. 10). The characterization Feijóo makes of the mind’s disproportionate lure for imaginative elation charts the same language Descartes, Pascal, Port Royalists, and other French rationalists used before him. Something can be said about the effect of using terms associated with acts of aggression in the context of rhetoric. Feijóo express his concern about the regulation of thought and speech by exploiting terms as emotionally charged as “tiránico, violento, y usurpado.” The feelings associated with these expressions are effective to the extent they can be persuasive, and they are persuasive only to the extent they can move his reader’s imagination. As I will also show in subsequent chapters on texts by Verney and Espejo, a resilient rationalist orientation in Feijóo’s worldview did not convert incendiary rhetoric into a relic of a generation of writers among which he did not count himself. A paradox we find in his writing is that references to usurpation and violence cannot be regulated in isolation. He speaks of ideas disturbing the mind’s tranquility using language that similarly provokes one’s pathos.

## ***Hypotyposis* and The Degeneration of Pure Nature**

An illustration in which truth evolves into a perverse version of its original form showcases Feijóo's use of the grotesque as a rhetorical device. In "Origen de la Fábula en la Historia," he visualizes the evolution of change that the language of historical narratives endure over time through language when he relates events involving a natural spring in Greece that delivers water to a nearby river and lake. The relatively brief anecdote on the origin of the River Styx in mythology and its associations with the dead allegorize Feijóo's portrayal of historical falsehood as a violation of nature's purity (par. 9). He tells his reader that what remains of a more accurate telling of the River Styx are unfaithful characteristics caused by a vulgar admiration by the public for narrative styles founded on the magnificence of wonder (par. 26). Over time, human populations overdrew on their own ingenuity, which led to the "mala adjetivación de ideas" ("the meager neologisms") of poets who broadcasted an alternative reality until truth and fable became immortally espoused in mythology (par. 8).

*Topografía* (description of physical landscape) and *pragmatografía* (description of things) are among the most salient devices in Feijóo's repertoire for the grotesque sights and sounds in "Origen de la fábula en la Historia." What defines Feijóo's rhetoric of the aberrant is *hypotyposis*, the use of language to vividly portray an image in another's imagination. Feijóo directs his reader's attention from the water to the wild beasts as they flee from the vicinity, and then to the plants that wither from the hostile conditions at the bank (par. 8). He highlights gothic notions associated with darkness, fear, putrefaction, and death, even stating multiple times that the water instantly kills upon the touch (par. 8). The only concept relating to life in the story, paradoxically, are the fish, but, even so, their flesh

is venomous when consumed. Feijóo increases the spectacle as he continues to paint colors in the mind: “[un] muho espeso, del color de orín de cobre, taraceado de negro, sobrenada en ella, moviéndose al arbitrio de los vientos, y formando borbollones, como de betún, y brea” (“a thick rust-colored mud with black highlights sitting on the surface, moving around with the wind, and forming bubbles like of bitumen and pitch”; par. 9).

Feijóo enacts an interesting form of *amplificatio* and *acumulatio* when he transitions from paragraph 8 to 9. Initially, as I mention above, we read that the flesh of the fish inhabiting the body of water is poisonous for human consumption. In the subsequent passage, Feijóo returns to the same point only to add that someone trustworthy recently returned from the location in Greece and attested that even sustaining such repulsive marine life was impossible there (par. 9). Feijóo’s reversal builds intensity by quickly eclipsing what he already presents a few lines previously as the worst setting imaginable.

Portrayed in the same way as the water of the River Styx, Feijóo’s concept of pure language is highly susceptible to spoiling. Similarly, neither can be contained it in a vessel that separates it from an environment determined to pervert them.<sup>26</sup> The passages by Feijóo on the River Styx tell the story of a natural event having transformed into myth. But the path the water takes in the account can be read allegorically as the process he believed accurate historical occurrences travel from their original purity to their future corrupted forms. For Feijóo and others heavily influenced by rationalism, it was not a far stretch of the imagination to say that the rhetoric of mathematics, geometry, and logic are freely sourced from nature like the spring that feeds the River Styx. But narrative structure degenerates over time and geographic distance it travels though time and over space until it becomes something new. Rationalizing language was the remedy for Feijóo to regulate

communication, to prevent historical truth from becoming fable, and to induce clear thinking on an individual during education.

Fear and the grotesque are only a few examples of the tools Feijóo uses to extract an emotional toll on his reader. In a passage in which he laments that people weep as others represent adversities on stage, Feijóo relies on *amplificatio*, *acumulatio*, definition, and figures of logic to sway his reader's sense of pathos in the direction he wants. He uses *exclamatio*, an intense emotional manifestation, construed through the repetition of an explanatory adjective (qué) at the start of a various sentences:

Sin embargo de saber, y representarles el entendimiento, que toda aquella narración es fabulosa, sin mezcla de un átomo de realidad, experimentan en su corazón todos aquellos afectos, que podrían producir los sucesos, siendo verdaderos; y reales. ¡Qué deseos de ver feliz a un Héroe de ilustres prendas! ¡Qué sustos al contemplarle amenazado de algún revés de la fortuna! ¡Qué lástima hacia un objeto, y al mismo tiempo, qué ira hacia otro, al representárseles maltratada una mujer virtuosa por un marido brutal! ¡Qué complacencia, mezclada con admiración, al exponerles acciones propias de una virtud excelsa! ¡Qué enojos contra la fortuna, o por mejor decir contra los siniestros dispensadores de ella, en la exaltación de un malvado, y en el abatimiento de un sujeto de ilustre mérito! (“Despotismo,” par. 14)

Notwithstanding knowing, and having it in their mind, that all that narration is fantastic, without a drop of truth mingled in it, they undergo all those emotions in their heart which the events would produce had they been true and real. What a desire to witness a hero dressed in illustrious attire! Such fright at seeing the threat of some good fortune undone! Such pity toward one object, and at the same time,

such wrath toward another, at seeing a virtuous woman maltreated by a brutal husband! Such gratification, mixed with admiration, being shown actions pertaining to an exalted virtue! Such anger against fortune, or better yet, against the sinister allocations of it, in the elation of a malefactor, and in the downfall of the subject of notable merit!

Feijóo grapples with the fact that humans live in stories. The Enlightenment rationalism that shapes Feijóo's poetics leads him to devalue that the factual falsehood reflected in a narrative does not regulate the degree to which it forms part culture and lived experience. As if in an alarmed state of awe at the power of language, Feijóo writes "sin una mezcla un átomo de realidad" in reference to fables. The censure of allegories and metaphors is for Feijóo one step in the right direction for rationalizing speech by keeping words pointed in the direction of what is real.

In the final half of the passage above, Feijóo's repetition of the exclamatory statements aims to convey a strong emotional reaction in his reader to dissuade him or her of the virtues of granting the emotions power over the imagination. One paragraph later, Feijóo again reinforces emotional rhetorical interrogatives using *quaesitum*. He again asks why people in the theater respond so movingly to the actions they see and hear when all is everything is fiction: "¿Por qué temen? ¿Por qué se irritan? ¿Por qué se enternecen? ¿Por qué se conduelen? ¿Por qué prevalece en ellos la potencia imaginativa a la intelectual?" ("Why do they fear? Why do they become irritated? Why are they moved? Why do they grieve? Why does the imaginative faculty prevail in them over that of the intellect?"; "Despotismo," par. 15). And further, he asks:



¿Qué es esto sino un ejercicio de potencia tiránica, un declarado *Despotismo de la Imaginativa*, una violenta intrusión de ésta en los derechos de entendimiento, una usurpación, que ejerce la facultad inferior sobre los fueros de la superior? (par. 15)

What is this, but an exercise in tyrannical power, a declared *Despotism of the imagination*, a violent intrusion of it in the rights of the understanding, an usurpation which exerts an inferior faculty on the privileges of superior one?

The power the imagination has over clear and distinct thought is one of tyranny for Feijóo. He calls it a violent intrusion of an inferior faculty (fantasy) over one much higher (reason). Like in previous examples from his writings, the emotional response in his reader is an important instrument of persuasion. But unlike when he critiques those who cry in the theater, here Feijóo draws a sense of pathos in his audience in presenting an injustice on the world stage.

### **Memory and The Failure of Language**

References Feijóo makes to the unwelcome presence of memory in historiography are consistent with the traditions from which Port Royalists sought to escape. In mathematics, logic, and geometry, mental souvenirs of human experiences are irrelevant, at best. Part of what gives way for rationalists to establish what they considered well-founded certainty in their conclusions is, in fact, their own renunciation of the past. *Los novatores*, as the name suggests, sought to modernize culture, to guide contemporary generations away from Scholastic forms of thought pervasive during centuries prior. The new dynamic that Cartesian rationalism forges with eloquence involves a schism between knowledge and memory similar to what we witness in Feijóo's telling of water, a symbol of life in nature, ss

it changes. In terms of the historical accuracy, any shift from *scientia* to *memoria* is a degeneration. Expelling memory from historiography is consistent with Feijóo's condemnation of truthful narrations based on exegesis in "Reflexiones sobre la historia" from volume 4 of *Teatro crítico universal* (1730).

Unlike human history, Feijóo finds the language of the natural sciences atemporal, objective, and has no use for collective conscious beyond what is needed to record data. Where there is memory, figurative expression follows. He highlights *amplificatio*, tropes, and figures of thought as building blocks of human memory at the expense of never-ending modifications to narratives over centuries. No two people tell the same story, and no one person tells the same story twice. But when Pythagoras and Pascal, in their respective places and eras, evaluate the relationship of a hypotenuse to the other two sides of a triangle, they are effectively telling the same story.

My reading of the presence of rationalist thought in works like "Reflexiones" adds to the scholarship of others before me, such as that of Fernando Bahr, who identified insightful parallels between Feijóo's *carta* and *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697) by the French skeptic Pierre Bayle. Bayle's influence on Feijóo's understanding of rhetoric is evident in the way in which the Frenchman problematized historical accuracies and misdirection as derivatives of language.

Feijóo does not consider human testimony a viable source of truth given that the speculative facts can almost speak for themselves. True memory in Feijóo's worldview is a few shades shy of an oxymoron. It represents the shortcomings and everything it could *not* be. Because humans lack a fixed archive of the past, what mental recollection individuals or communities can elicit is precisely the language of figurative accounts of events in nature.

In “Reflexiones sobre la Historia,” Feijóo delegitimizes memory for the same reason that he felt that it was impermissible in the field of jurisprudence. Earlier I describe how Aristotle, in the *Art of Rhetoric*, classifies a witness’s testimony as inartistic information. Feijóo finds memory far too artistic — It provides errors a host. The people most removed from historical events are public orators in court and historians whose profession relies exclusively on finding inventive ways to apply new colors to even older imperfections. It was for this reason the Feijóo considers Herodotus a novelist. History, like a court of justice, is concerned with the facts and only with the facts, despite the role of memory, and, by default, rhetoric.

What Feijóo considers “[un] historiador cabal” is someone who followed the Cartesian method. An author, historian, or orator, should fathom, from one inception, all the primary occurrences on an event (“Reflexiones,” par. 18). It is an idea he claims he borrowed from François Fénelon, a French poet, theologian, and Archbishop of Cambria. He references Fénelon in stating that, ideally, the language of historiography would be as transparent as the language of speculative truth, like geometry. It is a concept like what Walter Benjamin describes in “The Task of The Translator” (1921) when he writes that of a translator’s work can have the effect of liberating the language “imprisoned” in the original (163). Rationalist-oriented radicals like Feijóo sought to liberate speech they viewed as bound by cumbersome stylistic regalia. The following passage by Feijóo illustrates this point on how, he believes, an author ought think about his material prior to applying it to language, how he can translate nature into more pure speech than what can be said through traditional means of eloquence: “[que] comprenda [la historia] y abrace toda en la mente, como si de una sola ojeada: que la vuelva y revuelva de todos lados, hasta encontrar

su verdadero punto de vista” (“The historian should grasp it and embrace it all in his mind, as if from one glance. He should go study it front and back until finding the true point of reference”; par. 18). The same steps that Descartes and French rationalists follows serves as a historiographical point of departure. They celebrated an ability one has “to observe” a concept clearly and distinctly in the mind. Feijóo applies this notion to the writing of history in the context of what it meant to describe events without violating a *true* view of the world through mimesis.

### **Feijóo and The Rattle of Rhetoric**

An analogy Feijóo presents in “Despotismo, o dominio tiránico de la imaginación” frames the way in which his rationalist worldview distinguishes structure from chaos. The noise from a toy rattle is compared to language that relies on the impact force of sensationalism to capture one’s attention. He presents music as a rational organization of sound which epitomizes the oratory that would be in tune with Feijóo’s model of the European Enlightenment:

Representa la intelectiva a la voluntad, como más conveniente, un bien sólido, y duradero; la imaginativa un bien leve, inconstante, y fugitivo. No siempre, a la verdad, prevalece ordinariamente, por lo menos en todas aquellas ocasiones (las cuales son muy frecuentes) en que por la grande impresión, que hizo el objeto en la imaginativa, es muy viva la imagen de él, que esta potencia presenta a la voluntad; habiéndose entonces la voluntad como un niño, que prefiere el bullicioso retintín de un cascabel a la sonora gravedad de una arpa. (par. 11).

To the will, the intellect represents, as a convenience, a solid and lasting good; to the imagination, one that is light, inconstant, and fugitive. The intellect does not always prevail in truth, not at least in all those moments (which are quite frequent) in which an object makes a grand impression on the imagination, a vivid image presented to the will. The will is then like a child who prefers the boisterous clink of a rattle to the sonorous gravity of a harp.

The *onomatopoeia* “retintín” offers a glimpse of what Feijóo accepts as seamless rhetoric. But his concern is with speech that misdirects the mind, tyrannical in its obnoxiousness. Strikingly, Feijóo portrays one’s rational faculties as a child entrapped by the clatters of a bell making it impossible to think clearly. The arpeggio that Feijóo alludes to would produce music, something much more in line with formal logic of French rationalist culture.

Feijóo similarly shows reveals various labors for keeping his readers’ attention on his writing. Unlike Verney, whom I discuss in the next chapter, Feijóo’s assumed readers were members of popular society, the same people he characterizes as being conditioned irrational mental stimulus, or noise, as he calls it. Below, I point to rhetorical markers in Feijóo’s writing that suggest ways he sought to economize his prose in order to regulate his thought but, just as importantly, that of his audience.

Clearly aware of rhetoric’s ability to mesmerize, Feijóo engages his own strategies to keep his audience focused. In paragraph 12 of “Despotismo,” he explores the epistemological and moral implications of various degrees of influence on one’s psyche. In using noticeably prolonged sentence structures, Feijóo’s discourse quickly enters an

impervious digression consisting of highly technical expressions on the theory of the mind. His rhetoric then abruptly alters its course, almost as if he were in the middle of a thought:

Mas porque este asunto, a causa de que en él entran muchos cabos Físicos, Metafísicos, y aun Teológicos, podría enredarnos en una discusión larguísima; sin apurar la fuerza del argumento, pasaría a otro más claro, más sensible, más proporcionado a la inteligencia de todo el mundo, y en cuya materia no ocurren los tropiezos, que podríamos hallar en la del antecedente. (par. 13).

But because that this topic, given that it opens to the door to topics on physics, metaphysics, and even theology, could ensnare us in a prolonged discussion without aiding the argument, I will pass to one that is more clear, sensible, and more proportioned to the intelligence of all the world, and in whose subject matter hurdles do not happen, which we could find in the preceding one.

Feijóo reflects on the fact that he finds himself in a line of reasoning of rather esoteric material. After he catches himself from straying from his preferred style, which he identifies as captivating, forceful, clear, proportioned, and with reason-based intrigue, Feijóo notably reconstitutes his performance. It certainly challenges the notion that Feijóo wrote without being aware of it, as if ideas were molded through a sense of nature and without an intervening rhetorical measure. It stands as a moment of *ignoresis* regarding the nature of his own prose, and it reveals a pronounced indication that he is keenly aware of form simply after producing meaning as if it sprung naturally from him. His linguistic concern appears even more candid when he reflects on it in prose. As somewhat of an aside, he writes of the need to maintain a firm grasp over his reader's imagination. We can see the intercourse between naturalness and regulation in Feijóo, as something

paradoxically regulated yet natural. His aspired theoretical balance nods to the rational sciences of mathematics and geometry in the sense that the role of human inventiveness does not extend beyond the tasks of discovery and clarification.

Following paragraph 13 of “Despotismo,” paragraphs 14 and 15 stand out as moments when Feijóo’s epistolary structure effectively appeals to the reader’s emotions through tropes and rhetorical figures. His discourse transitions from writing in the long monotonous and dense style seen above to of a much brisker rhythm, performing the guidelines indicated earlier when he contrasts the captivating noise that a rattle makes to a majestic, yet soporific, harp. Whereas in some passages he uses imagery of violence and the grotesque, he also relies on clarity of expression and simple repetitions to write eloquently, which are methods that better correspond with his general theories outlined in this chapter.

We can read the way in which Feijóo adjusts his form as he repeats the same word at the start of successive clauses or sentences, a figure called anaphora. The most significant example is in the first sentence of the paragraph which contains over twenty brief clauses divided by commas, colons, or semicolons. Instead of encountering yet another elongated discussion on a single dense and esoteric subject, his reader senses a modification in language consisting of brief units of easily comprehensible content:

Pocos son los que ignoran, o por lo que experimentan en sí mismos, o porque lo oyeron a otros, lo que pasa en los que tienen el corazón más sensible, o el alma más dispuesta; ya a los sentimientos de la ternura amatoria, ya de la compasión de los males ajenos, ya de la estimación afectuosa de las virtudes, o aversión a los vicios que reconocen en otros, cuando leen una Comedia, una Novela, o cualquiera Historia

fabulosa; donde se representan con imágenes vivas, expresiones insinuantes, y descripciones patéticas, sucesos ya prósperos, ya adversos: empeños, o pretensiones, ya de feliz, ya de infeliz éxito, ya virtudes amables, ya detestables vicios. (“Despotismo,” par. 14)

Few are those who ignore, be it that they experience it in themselves, or that they heard it from others, what it is that occurs in the most sensible of hearts, or in the most amenable of spirits, be it toward loving affection, or toward an aversion to vices seen in others, when they read a play, novel, or any fabled history in which vivid imagery, insinuating expressions, and pathetic descriptions are represented, be it about prosperous or adverse happenings, ventures or aspirations of fortunate or unfortunate finales, or favorable virtues or unfavorable vices.

The conjunction “o” and the adverb “ya,” whose function is also that of a conjunction, repeat a total of fourteen times. The effect restricts the reader’s attention through easily comprehensible bits of expressions. The anaphora returns Feijóo’s writing to a place of reason in which the devices for clarity equally function as embellishment.

While Feijóo mentions at the end of paragraph 11 that some readers are more susceptible to “el bullicioso retintín de un cascabel a la sonora gravedad de un arpa” (“the boisterous ring of a rattle to the sonorous gravity of a harp”), the same rhetorical antithesis is played out in this example. The music produced by a harp is compared to the measured and profound topics fit for those few to whom such discussions of theology and metaphysics were agreeable. This is precisely what Feijóo recognizably avoids keeping his general reader’s attention close, and his or her wandering imagination at bay.



As I outlined above, Feijóo's association of figurative language with abject fantasy points to significant shifts in the theory of literature regarding what arguments one ought to use, why, and how the words should communicate them. I trace the form of his censure of the imagination's sway over the intellect in "Despotismo, o dominio tiránico de la imaginación" (1753), "Elocuencia es naturaleza, y no Arte" (1745), and "Origen de la fábula en la Historia" (1742). Whereas in "La elocuencia es naturaleza y no Arte" he asserts that the methodical application of rhetorical devices is fit for only those who lack a natural gift for persuasiveness, "Despotismo, o dominio tiránico de la imaginación" tells a slightly different story, one at least in which the Galician intentionally imposes various strategies to provide clarity as well as embellishment. Feijóo's distrust of figurative expression can be read as discourse itself on the kind of language that challenges clear and direction communication.

Feijóo was no stranger to the vividness of discourse despite his clear censure of its effect on the imagination. His rhetorical discourse frequently resorts to moving imagery to convey his position against comparably powerful imaginative notions in one's mind. Feijóo's complicated relationship with language is such that he finds figurative discourse to be a much more expedient vehicle for conveying what he disliked, even though the target of his disdain was the very thing he had to express it. To borrow and invert a concept from Audre Lorde: sometimes one's tools decide the house. And like Paul de Man finds, "the use and abuse of language cannot be separated" (21). Feijóo's writing begs the question about what a language would look like if it could be as transparent as those that govern geometry and math.

We can better understand Feijóo's advocacy for a rational, regulated, style of language while simultaneously relying on creatively visual references is by remembering that his prose resembles that of the authors who influence his thought. Some of the most figuratively poetic statements by French rationalists were about how metaphors and allegories drove them mad. And for radicals like Feijóo, the mimesis of contemporary French art was not a sign of limitation.

Feijóo's views on the poetics for the language of non-Sacred truths constitute an important transformation during the first half of Spain's eighteenth century. So far, I have also argued that the theory that shaped Feijóo's reading of rhetoric was French rationalism from the seventeenth century. Evidence for this position can be traced back to the role of philosophical doubt in his critique of history and oratory and, the delegitimization of artistic presentations, and to his depiction of profane truth as entirely speculative.

### CHAPTER THREE: On Monsters, Mummies, Masks, and Wax: Luís António Verney and Figures of Good Sense

Whereas Benito Feijóo was representative of the debates in favor of the rationalization of historiographic eloquence in eighteenth-century Spain, the Jesuit-trained Luís António Verney (1713-1792) occupied a very similar role as a radical reformer in the context of Portugal. His *O verdadeiro método de estudar no Portugal moderno* (1746) was a declaration for the modernization of the Jesuit plan of studies (*Ratio Studiorum*). Like Feijóo's *Cartas eruditas*, *O verdadeiro método* is of the epistolary genre. The sixteen letters are directed to a person of authority at the University of Coimbra on instructing the youth in orthography, grammar, Classical languages, rhetoric, poetry, philosophy, medicine, ethics, physics, and theology. In what follows, I argue that Letters 5 and 6 on rhetoric display the influence of Cartesian rationalism as seen in the celebration of clear and distinct reasoning and in the denunciation of allegories and metaphors. In a close-reading of the critique of the *loci* for rhetorical invention, first I make the case the figures of diction are an avenue for Verney to experiment with form using Cartesian rationalism without jeopardizing the clearness and distinctness of the content. My analysis of the tropes in *O verdadeiro método de estudar* then points to yet another way in which Verney sought to have his regulated rhetorical cake and eat it too. Metaphors and allegories are concentrated in three areas of his thought. These involve the formal sciences, physical nature at large, and metaliterary attacks on figurative language itself. Like Feijóo, Verney is driven to decry figurative language as an aberration of truth, logic, and nature. I find that a major difficulty Verney faced was how to moderate his passions while discussing these ideas. He

understood rhetoric as the theater of clear thinking and reasoning. And he saw the well-being of Portugal's political and cultural future as contingent on the study and performance of rhetoric in each successive generation, which goes to show his emotional investment in the question at hand. The figurative devices rationalists termed unreasonable prove to be the most expedient for Verney to express his frustration toward the rhetorical practices popular during the Baroque and enforced by Jesuits during his life.

### **Figures of Diction: From Rationalism to Form of Thought**

The Scholastic tradition of historiographical discourse accounts for the impossibility of objective truth statements about the past and allows a figurative license on the expressions of human understanding. To amplify the virtues of a Saint, or to speak of events to some degree unknown, made one no less an effective speaker in making claims that comparatively would have been detrimental for the mathematician or logician.

Verney was aware of the influence figures have on the fabric of discourse. He acknowledges that language without rhetoric is impossible and therefore demands that devices be constrained to adorn without mediating the meaning to a large degree. In one passage, he criticizes the panegyric of a renowned but unnamed Portuguese preacher who strung the entirety of his speech based on a misguided interpretation of a term (Letter 5, 139). “[É]ste modo de falar nam é propio, é translatio” (“this way of speaking is not proper, it is metaphor”), he states, in response, as if truth and translation (metaphor) may never sit at the same side at the table (Letter 5, 139).<sup>2</sup> The ideal language had a name. It was called exactness. If the Enlightenment in general was a forward-oriented, progressive, era, then

rationalism had Verney believing that improvement in the context of eloquence implied embracing a firm conservative stance to language.

The figures of diction in Verney's writing exhibit a concern for form in ways that seek to avoid misdirecting the reader from the central issues at hand. Such was the problem with metaphorical speech. Verney's heavy use of chiasmus, the inverted duplication of ideas, and repetitions in general, can be read through New Formalist criticism as an attempt to entertain his audience's attention on his subject matter without adulterating the content with the more imaginative devices. Figures of diction possess a closer relationship to logic than to tropes. Although structure evidently differentiates the allegory from the metaphor and this from the metonym, a repetition's interrelations are strictly formal. And more importantly, for Verney, such organization induces much less proclivity to induce ambiguity.

Like triangles in geometry, Verney's ideas are often arranged in triads, sometimes with an important term situated between a pair of repetitions. Aside from embodying a standard triangle, with its base points separated by a non-conforming middle, these devices by Verney create moments of eloquent tension as the spectator transitions from a escalation, pinnacle, and a final downward release upon bringing about a reiteration of a term stated previously.

Nearly the entirety of Verney's treatise on rhetoric, Letters 5 and 6, center on questions of *inventio* (the creation of content) and *dispositio* (arrangement). For Verney, *elocutio*, the value-added amount of figurative meaning in an expression, was for poets. *Memoria* and *pronunciatio* (information retention and pitch, rate, and voice quality) were consequences of natural talent. Instead, Verney speaks of just proportions, perfect wholes

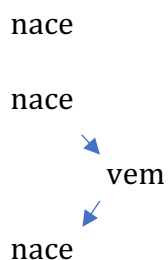
consisting of multiple parts, and of the act of adorning through the harmony of thought (Letter 5, 52). In a passage discussing form and content, we read an act of unravelling in which the verb “nacer” leads from one idea to the next in a way that resembles the close-fitting inferences of logic:

Desta falta, de nam saber buscar as provas, nace a segunda, e tam importante, da *Dispozisam*. Pois nam tendo argumentos propios, nam podem dispolos em maneira, que formen uma orasam unida: na qual o exordio, ou seja *unido*, ou *separado*, forme um perfeito corpo com o todo: e em que as partes observem, a sua justa proporsam, e tal, que umas sirvam de aclarar as outras: e conduzam para o fim, de persuadir o que se quer. Desta mesma falta nace, a da *Locusam*: sendo certo, que quem nam acha um argumento, acomodado ao que quer, mas vai buscando sutilezas; nam encontra com palavras proprias, para expremir un pensamento sezudo, e nobre: nem acha aquelas que sam necessarias, para ornar con armonia os pensamentos; de sorte que fasam uma orasam armonioza, e agradavel, sem ser afetada: o que nam tem pouca dificuldade. De que vem, que comumente enchem o discurso, de mil tropos e figuras, fora do seu lugar; que mostram, o pouco talento do Pregador, e a ignorancia, da sua propria lingua. Nace da qui tambem, nam saber escrever uma carta, ou formar qualquer outro discurso, que posa persuadir. Finalmente nace, o nam saber discorrer com propriedade, em materia alguma. (Letter 5, 151)

From this error, that of not knowing how to search out proofs, gives rise to the second one particularly important to *dispositio*. Not having their own evidence, they cannot arrange them in a way that forms a unified idea, in which *exordio*, be it unified or separated, forms a perfect body with the whole, in which the parts reflect,

in their proper positions, their just proportion. As such, some of them serve to elucidate others and carry on to persuade of what one wants to persuade. And from this error follows that of *elocutio*, being certain that he who cannot find an argument pertinent to what he wants goes in search of subtleties to express noble and wise thoughts. Neither do they find those which are necessary to adorn thoughts with harmony, as such, they would create a harmonious and pleasant thought without influencing affectively, which is no small task. And from this it follows that continually they fill their speech unfittingly with a thousand tropes and figures, which shows the little talent of the preachers and his ignorance of his own language. What then also follows from this is not knowing how to write a message or form any other kind of speech that is capable of persuading. Ultimately, from this, follows not knowing how to speak straight, on any topic.

Logical reasoning was based on the idea that one thought can give inference to another by rational means. Verney's quadruple use of "nacer" appeals to a sense of assuredness, fixedness, in that the concepts listed share a theoretical bond despite their differences. There can be no doubt that "nacer" is figurative. Still, few actions in nature illustrate the immediate transfer of meaning from one object to another better than exists in speculative reasoning. And the figure, taken in its entirety, creates the following shape when we isolate the terms:



nace

Although technically not a chiasmus, this device does convey balance, symmetry, and the idea of closedness. Its resemblance to the pinnacle form appeals to the same notions of a triangle but rendered through his rhetoric.

Verney often follows similar patterns. In a passage in which he expands on the effectiveness of repetition on the mind, his language takes on a slightly simplified rendition of the triangle profile that I describe above:

Aquela grande repetisam, ante, aqueles muitos sinonimos, nam sam inutis na Retorica antes sam de infinito preso: porque mostram o que se-pretende em tanta luz, e de tantas partes; que é imposivel o-ignorálo: imprimem com tanta forsa uma verdade, desobrem todas as circunstancias com tanta clareza; que é imposivel nam admetilas. (Letter 6, 160)

Those long repetitions, those many synonyms, are not useless in rhetoric, but in fact are of infinite worth because they demonstrate what one wants to show with so much light and so many angles that it is impossible to ignore it. It impresses a truth with such force that people can discover the state of affairs with such clarity that it is impossible not to notice it]

A tri-part figure is formed as a nearly synonymous beginning and conclusion enclose the main verb portraying the effect of repetition over the imagination:

imposivel o-ignorálo  
    ↓  
    imprimem  
    ↓  
imposivel nam admetilas

The first and last sentences state the same content despite slight variations in wording.



“Imprimir” is the object of the figure in the same way that Verney’s assertion is about the power repetition had on the mind.

Verney again structures his discourse with a pair of slightly asymmetrical phrases surrounding a main statement on the effect repetition has on the imagination. The author emphasizes that the orator’s task at the pulpit ought to be an historical constant – a simple praise of God in the epideictic style:

Nam se lembra o Pregador, que o assunto sempre é o mesmo: que é, dar graças a Deus, por descobrir, com altíssima providencia, os sacrilegos: e com isto mostrar, a sua misericordia, mansidam, e justisa: e que este assunto sempre se deve inculcar, variando unicamente as palavras, com mais ou menos ingenho, segundo o cabedal de quem fala. Nam adverte, que faria muito maior impresam, pintar a atrocidade daquele delito, de uma parte; e da outra, as infinitas virtudes, que Deus quiz mostrar, naquele castigo. Nada disto lembra ao Pregador. O que emporta é subtilizar bem. (Letter 5, 133)

The preacher neglects that the point is always the same, which is to give thanks to God for revealing, in the highest providence, what is sacrilegious. And with that show, in his mercery, kindness, and justice. And one always ought to insist this point, by changing the wording with more or less inventiveness, according to his own idiosyncrasies. He neglects that it would be much more impactful on one hand to paint the atrocities of transgression on one hand and on the other the infinite virtues which God wished to bestow in his punishment.

Verney’s criticism of Jesuit preachers who abandoned such restraint for less modest rhetorical feats takes the following shape:

Nam se lembra o Pregador, que o assumpto sempre é o mesmo



Nam adverte, que faria muito maior impresam



Nada disto lembra ao Pregador

The ubiquitous negations over three consecutive sentences alter the tone of the device at large in ways that differ from the previous two examples. The negative assertions infuse a particular gravity to the message. Strictly in terms of diction, a configuration in which a single impactful verb divides a repetition assumes a certain meaning. The figure hails back to a few moments prior in the text to reinforce a rhetorical, pathetic, appeal. Verney's criticism in the passage above is far from disorderly. And such form indirectly provides his performance a degree of ethos and logos. The movement visualizes a triangle trope and acts as a symbol of figures of reason. The reader returns to the place from which the device starts, adding a sense of wholeness and closure to Verney's language, akin to the way in which a valid conclusion in logic or mathematics only presents ideas synthesized from previous and explicit premises.

Verney found found figures of diction to be "tolerable" embellishments. Logical inferences became figures for the weaving of two or more pairs of repetitions in literature. This appears as Verney differentiates wit, judgment, knowledge, and critique: "É coiza digna de observar, que nestes paizes, a maior parte dos que estudam, confundem o Ingenho, com o Juizo: o Juizo, com a Doutrina: esta, com o Criterio: fendo coizas na verdade bem diferentes" ("Something worth observing is that in these countries, the greater part of those that study, they confuse wit with judgment, judgment with doctrine, and the latter with critique, being things, in fact, quite different"; Letter 6, 188). It is interesting to note that wit and critique are spaced farthest apart, occupying opposite ends of the thought. The

placement corresponds with the central motif of Letters 5 and 6 which argues for the disassociation of Scholastic and Baroque conceit from the Enlightenment's true and fixed reason-based gaze. The first and last terms in the quote above transferers meaning in an explicitly logical fashion:

o Ingenho, com o Juizo:

o Juizo, com a Doutrina:

esta, com o Criterio

Wit and critique are linked in a seamless chain of diction. What results is an embellishment of language through movements of structural organization in tune with rhetorical ideals of French Neoclassicism. Believing that his opponents at the pulpit acted as if they were one in the same, Verney states is that the four terms (wit, judgment, doctrine, and critique) were anything *but* connected.. That one of the concepts were naturally hinged to any other was precisely the misunderstanding he sought to amend in *O verdadeiro método*.

Verney envisaged that rhetoric should be to logic what physics is to nature. As such, it consisted of primary axioms which one could study:

Muito necesario é, estudar a natureza: estudar o carater das Paixoens: falar naturalmente: que só assim se fala eloquente, e só assim se persuade. Este é o primeiro ponto, ou o mais importante, em materia da Retorica. (Letter 6, 162)

It is very necessary to study nature, to study the character of passions, to speak naturally, for only this way can one speak eloquently, and only this way can persuasion occur.

The diction suggests an embellishment based on structured reasoning:

Estudar a natureza

Estudar o carater

Falar *naturalmente*

The form in the paragraph above resembles *correlatio*, a mode of repetition based not on syntax uniformity but on the symmetrical development of ideas based on the order in which they are presented. Whereas “estudar” appears twice identically, the references to nature take the shape of *annominatio*, a subsection of figures of repetition in which a sequence undergoes slight variations, and *derivatio*, when it presents morphological derivatives. For an added flair, the subsequent brief repetition in passive voice provides a sense of closure to an already resolute conveyance (“que só asim se fala eloquente” and “só asim se persuade”).

Meaning is malleable. The same piece of art may serve opposing ideologies. The chiasmus was a common figure of wit in the Iberian Peninsula prior to the Enlightenment. But because the rhetorical figure need not be an exact inverted repetition, at that time it also doubled as an embodiment of imperfect symmetry, a non-spherical pearl, the Baroque conception of nature. In Verney, we see that by Portugal’s mid-eighteenth century the chiasmus was reconditioned to place a greater emphasis on balance and symmetry. In this way, it represented an assertion of the rational order of the abstract theories that governed the laws of nature. In the examples that follow, the figures are simple and concise. They are oriented toward rendering as much clarity as embellishment. And in this context, rationalist thought moved Verney to use geometrically-inspired modifiers such as “dezigual” (“unequal”) to describe the rhetoric that flows from one’s emotions (Letter 6, 157).

The following chiasmus is situated in a discussion on the association between the brain and words. A common eighteenth-century understanding of the mind likened it to a fibrous surface. As they passed the eyes and ears, ideas left physical impressions in their wake: “A alma agitada, imprime novo movimento nas fibras, e estas na machina: de que nacam as palavras: com as quais dando-se dezafogo à ira, que moveo a machina, se dá tambem repouzo, à alma” (“An agitated spirit imprints new movement on the fibers, and these move the entire mechanism from which words are born, with which, when stoking the flames of anger, moves the machine, which then gives rest to the mechanism”; Letter 6, 157). The structure is:

a alma → na machina

a machina → à alma

The circular association of the language presents a form than embellishes with its rational simplicity.

Chiasmus takes on unassuming word pairs in Verney’s writing. It allowed him to seemingly anchor his adornments in the text itself. Verney critiques the oratory of a preacher who, in his digressions, failed to make clear to the audience the customary plea to avoid vice. To which Verney exclaims, “Mas o que dali se-segue é, sair o auditorio tam persuadido, da pouca capacidade do Pregador, como pouco persuadido, do que ele determinára persuadir lhe” (“What follows is to exit the auditory just as much persuaded of how little talent the preacher has as of how little persuaded of what it is he wanted to persuade”; Letter 5, 130). Verney inverts the order of two words in the sentence:

persuadido → pouca

pouco → persuadido

Unlike the previous instances of chiasmus, in which form mirrored content, the current figure appears to be more about restrained wit on Verney's part than about representing the shape or movement of the idea described with the words. But taken simply as adornment, the simple chiasmus plays on rational circularity.

When Verney uses alliteration, *annominatio* and *derivatio* are never far away. Again, I interpret such figures in Verney's diction as evidence of a theory of eloquence centered on the rationalist culture of regulating the building blocks of communication. Verney used *annominatio* and *derivatio* quite often in his letters on rhetorical theory. It seems rather fitting that the word for "persuasion" is the object in the following example on what Verney saw as the effect of rational truth on the understanding:

Ninguém deixa de se persuadir, de uma verdade clara. Verdade é que muitos se persuadem, da aparência: mas também é certo, que os move a verdade, que nela imaginam. Assimque só a verdade é a que persuade, quando se lhe dá atensam. A forsa que os omens fazem, para diverter os olhos do intendimento, para outra parte; é a que impede, que a verdade nam triunfe, produzindo o seu efeito, que é a persuazam. (Letter 6, 189)

No one fails to be persuaded by clear truth. The fact is that many are convinced by the appearance. But it is also true that many are persuaded by the truth they imagine in it. Therefore, only the truth is what persuades when one pays close attention. The industry men devote to entertain the eyes of the understanding toward other things is what impedes, what makes it so truth does not triumph producing its end, which is persuasion.

Taken as an interchange between truth and persuasion, the diction presents the following pattern of words:

persuadir / verdade / verdade / persuadem / verdade / persuade / verdade /  
persuazam

Each advent of “verdade,” as in rational truth, remains semantically unchanged throughout the passage as a constant and universal backdrop to the countless paths that one could take to induce belief, legitimate or otherwise. In the quote cited above, persuasion and truth play on one another even though the former term never appears the same way twice. One can sense a feeling of discursive stability in response to a rationalist opposition to more imaginative conceits.

Verney builds renditions of *derivatio* using various degrees of complexity throughout his letters on rhetoric. The simpler his diction, the more one senses that Verney was content with what he felt a conservative discursive arsenal could communicate. Some examples take on a single repeated term in placed near the original word. The following passage relies on *derivatio* in discussing what natural mean in French Neoclassical theory:

suposta aquela particular dispozisam, e semelhansa dos nosos corpos, deixamos persuadir daquela *paixam*, que vemos nos outros: dos mesmos sentimentos: dos mesmos afetos: se nam se acha algum *obstaculo*, que empesa o curso da *natureza*. *Naturalmente* inclinamos a ter *compaixam*, de uma pessoa, que mostra estar sumamente aflita: rimos quando nos achamos, em um grande divertimento dos sentidos. (*Italics mine*, Letter 6, 159)

Assuming the shared disposition and sameness of our bodies, we become persuaded of that *passion* we see in others, of those same feelings, of those same affections,

provided there is not an *obstacle* impeding the course of *nature*. *Naturally*, we are inclined to feel *compassion* toward someone seen deeply afflicted, we laugh when we find ourselves entertained through the senses.

The first sentence ends where the second begins by pointing toward the same concept — nature (*natureza/naturalmente*). The immediacy of the *derivatio* renditions focus the reader’s attention an unobstructed progression. It is an example of regulating rhetoric to the highest degree.

Like Feijóo, Verney was concerned that emotions, joined with thought, could replace clear and distinct thought. The rendition of *derivatio* in the passage above also presents references to nature in an act of splitting terms synonymous with emotions. :

paixam  
natureza  
naturalmente  
compaixam

The language referring to nature alienate those associated with human emotions (*paixam, compaixam*). The passions were the antithesis of logic, mathematics, and geometry, notions evidencing that a proverbial center really did hold. To further this point, the word “*obstaculo*” occupies the core of an even broader view of Verney’s diction in the passage:

paixam  
natureza  
obftaculo  
naturalmente  
compaixam



Through this figure, we read the textural movements pertinent to eighteenth-century theories on the rational regulation of thought and speech which held that the emotions (pathos) were the central obstacles working against clarity and naturalness.

Verney uses figures of speech as the object of his figures of repetition. In one example, he stacks similes deductively in one sentence as he opposes natural, solid, and useful arguments to the subtleties popular with Portuguese orators during his time:

Este é o defeito geral, da maior parte destes Pregadores, que comumente se servem de ideias gerais, que nam calsam bem ao auditorio, e de que nam se tira fruto algum: pois tam ridiculo é falando a omens doutos, querer lhe explicar, as pesoas da Trindade &c. como falando a pesoas ignorantes, servir se de ideias especulativas; ou, falando às Freiras, pregar da-politica de Machiavelo, e aos Rusticos, do-  
*Principium quo in divinis: da-Existencia definitive, y circunscriptiva na Eucharistia* &c. como eue ja ouvi a alguns pregadores, e mestres. (Letter 5, 149)

This is the general defect of most of these preachers who often make use of broad ideas that are unsuitable for their audience, which proves fruitless. It is just as ridiculous to have learned men explain the Trinity to people as it is to have ignorant folk make use of speculative ideas, or to have nuns preach on Machiavelli's politics, or rustic folk on *Principium quo in divinis: da-Existencia definitive, y circunscriptiva na Eucharistia*.

One of the features that make the passage interesting is Verney's triple simile which relied only on a single utterance of "como." This is possible with the figure zeugma, the figure of omission in which an idea expressed simply is then inferred in the remaining instances when the passage requires it. Verney begins with a standard simile and successively

stripped it of its formal parts without jeopardizing the understanding of the overall thought. The *zeugma* advances seamlessly even though “como” and “falando” faded from the text, a process of rhetorical, logical, distillation. The figure of omission moves from top to bottom, or from greater complexity down toward greater simplicity of expression. The language is purified as units of speech become superfluous to communication. It is the epitome of Cartesian clear and distinct thought, in which indisputably essential ideas are warranted.

A lack of eloquence for Verney could be more than simply too much unregulated wit, or *ingenho*. He insists that eloquence is void if an orator is unable to adapt his content to his audience effectively. In Letter 5, Verney analyzes a sermon that served as a model because the speaker accommodated the content to lessons that were relevant to the spectators (Letter 5, 149). In praising the orator’s language, Verney’s language weaves three embellishing repetitions across two sentences: “Nam avia asumto mais propio, ao lugar: porque nam avia lugar mais profanado com asoens, e intensoens pecaminozas. Este era um asumto novo: nam sutil, e ridiculo; mas verdadeiro, e mui propio” (“There was no topic more fitting for the place for there was no place more desecrated with actions and wicked intentions. This was a new topic, neither subtle nor ridiculous, but rather true and quite oportune”; Letter 5, 149). The first doubling begins at the start of the passage as a comparative turn of phrase:

Nam avia...mais...

porque

nam avia...mais...

This repetition arrives early in the sentence, its closure comes swiftly, and does not interfere with clarity of the content.

The second takes on the ideas that complete Verney's comparison figure:

nam avia *asumto*

nam avia lugar

era um *asumto*

The phrase "nam avia" is restated but "asumto" remains delayed for rhetorical suspense.

Lastly, the third occurrence of repetition in this passage emerges from the one that proceeding it:

Nam avia asumto mais *propio*

porque nam avia lugar mais *profanado*

mas verdadeiro, e mui *propio*

The "profanado" and the repeated "propio" further add to Verney's thought construct. The figure is another instance of his own restrained search for adornment. The word "profanado" acts as something like a false repetition that finalizes in only sharing the first syllable with the two identical words before and after it. A subtle playfulness is at work in the shifting phoneme /pro/ to the atonic position. The four terms preceding "profanado." give the spectator a sense of *déjà vu* in diction before failing to materialize again beyond the first three letters of the word. Logic, as well as Cartesian rationalism in general, is the underlying catalyst for informing the structure described above. The form constrains the content in ways that circumscribe the spectator's imagination to something stated only a few moments prior.

Verney's figures of diction consisting of simple repetitions are often more brief and more concise than the examples above. As a backdrop to the perils of poetic expression, bare repetition was his alternative. One case is found in Letter 6 in reference to a contemporary of Verney whose defects in oratory, he lamented, ran wild in Portugal. It was someone found to be "nam dizendo o que deve e dizendo o que nam deve" ("not saying what he should and saying what he should not"; Letter 6, 184-85). In this utterance, a delicate conceit in form embellishes without painting tropes in his reader's imagination.

Cartesian rationalism informed the French Neoclassical view according to which eloquence ought never to capitalize on generous appeals to probability or figurative meaning to justify confusing language. Verney communicates the credo with expressiveness aided by repetition: "Ora este é o ponto que se deve advertir, com mais circumspectam: este é o defeito que se deve fugir, com mais cautela" ("Now this is the point that should be forewarned with the most discretion: this is the defect from which one should flee most cautiously"; Letter 6, 165). The statement presents notions of logos and ethos while steering clear of any appeals to the emotions. The duplication of form makes it nearly impossible for the reader to feel disoriented in the language – its flow is briefly familiar, which in turn creates a moment of trust in Verney (ethos) and a belief that the matter is well-founded (logos).

Verney's movements with diction show a delicate balancing act that seeks to maintain a highly regulated discourse without recurring to impossibly dry axioms. He believed there was a natural, rational embellishment which, when achieved, exposes metaphors and allegories as cheap forms of entertainment. To further describe the relationship between certainty and conceit, Verney resorts to a brief figure of diction:

fica claro, qual é o estilo dos Poetas. Querem os Poetas... agradar, e elevar o animo dos ouvintes, com coizas extraordinaries e maravilhozas: e nam podendo chegar ao fim que se propoem, senam sustentando a sublimidade das coizas que dizem, com o sublime das palavras que uzam; daqui vem, que nam se sugeitam às leis do uzo comum; mas formam, para se explicar, um idioma novo.

(Letter 6, 171)

The style of poets is clear. Poets want...to delight, elevate, and lift the audience's spirit with extraordinary and wonderful things. They are unable to reach what they want unless they use words to supplement the sublime features of what they say. From this we gather that they do not subject themselves to the laws of normal language use. Rather, to explain themselves, they create a new language.

The parallel resonance of the phrases “a sublimidade das coizas que dizem” and “com o sublime das palavras que uzam” reinforces that a rational, direct relationship between ideas and words needs to exist. Sensationalism, not truth, was the poetic goal for poets in Verney's eye (Letter 6, 171). It was an outlook not sympathetic to Aristotle's view that poetry spoke to universally shared truths of human experience.

One of the paths Verney sought to regulate rhetoric was to discourage popular the association of sacred, mythological, and profane histories. history often carried out for the sake of weaving a visual tapestry with words. Verney stresses that the Council of Trent banned the application of Sacred subject matters in profane oratory (Letter 5, 119). The rhetorical emphasis of the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* was widely known, but for Verney it defied religious truths that preachers spoke of the faith by alluding to pagan mythology as figures of speech or even as examples — For Verney, a story referencing Apollo's

achievements included in oratory about the virtues of a Catholic Saint is as irrational as strive for clear and simple language using tropes.

Of the five canons of classic rhetoric, *inventio*, *distributio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, *pronunciatio*, Verney's letters relate only to the first two. Like in geometry or logic, nuance does more harm than good in the true-false dichotomy of speculative truths. For example, Verney reminds is reader the rationalist precept Feijóo cited according to which there rhetorical ornaments can either be natural or abuses of what is good and pure (Letter 6, 172). Verney's "true" method of communication simply involves clarity of expression (Letter 6, 172) as if clarity-of-expression were a thing that existed in a state of prelapsarian purity. Such was the way Verney perceived the seamless relationship a speaker had to the ideas he or she sought to declare:

a primeira e importantissima regra da Invensam é, intender bem a materia, que se trata: porque só asim facilmente se incontram, os argumentos proporcionados ao sugeito: e tam facilmente se incontram, que naturalmente se apresentam, caiem da boca, e da pena. (Letter 6, 187)

The first and more important rule of invention is to understand well the subject treated, because only that that well-proportioned arguments for the topic be easily established. And as easily as they can be established, naturally presenting themselves, they will fall from the mouth and quill.

For Verney, no barrier divided content from the language that expressed it. Aptitude in *inventio* was a question of having studied one's discipline. And apart from *distributio*, undoubtably out of a rationalist concern for structure, what remained of Jesuit rhetoric and poetics for the Portuguese radical could to be discarded in the same way that Descartes and

the rationalists in his wake sought to divorce or clear and distinct truths from Scholasticism's alleged false perceptions.

The diction in the previous example also performs something resembling a seamless transfer of ideas. The sequence involves true knowledge, which leads to the ready possession of arguments and to a situation in which language springs freely:

intender bem a materia → facilmente se encontram os argumentos

e facilmente se encontram → caiem da boca e da pena

Verney repeats the middle concept in a fashion that recalls the Port Royalists' Cartesian formal logic which stipulates interlocking ideas to avoid gaps in the chain of reasoning. As the subject of the repetition, the middle term is canceled out of the larger thought by inference in propositional logic.

A → B

B → C

A = C

Overall, we can now say that Verney practices what he preaches when we read that his form traces the rationalist theory of language he embraces. But a closer look at his abundant use of tropes in Letters 5 and 6, to which I turn in the following sections, reveals that Verney allowed specific exceptions for tropes. Like in the passage above, he found it more natural to speak through metaphors about words falling from pens than to state simply that orators with expertise in their discipline might identify topics for discussion with more ease than someone outside the field. Much of the figurative language in Letters 5 and 6 follow the format seen in Feijóo's writing in which metaphors and allegories are reserved for criticizing the cognitive process that reasons through figurative meaning.

### **Tropes: The Rational, the Natural, and the Ugly**

Nothing prevented Verney from using metaphors in defense of French neoclassical ideals of order and reason. The same applies to his denouncement of the rhetoric practiced and prescribed by the Jesuit orators he observed. Tropes truly are a double-edged sword for Verney. For as much as he seeks to express his negative emotions toward figurative speech, the more his reader encounters metaphors. Verney wrote as if peace through peaceful means was impossible, and that fighting fire with fire was the best route to eradicate discourse that allegedly led to falsity, not truth. Language *about* language could be as figurative as the speech that Verney disregarded, although he did resort to a few common themes when he did so: mathematics (the abstract and rational); what was physical in nature; and its opposite, the “monstruous” — i.e., abnormal, grotesque, unnatural. I propose we can read this meta-literary cycle of criticize-utilize as a utilitarian process by Verney to presumably purify thought and discourse in the culture around him using defamation.

Feijóo understood painting entirely as art, and therefore not something to which rationalization was easily applicable. Verney, in contrast, seizes the trope of painting to illustrate his views on the regulation of rhetoric.<sup>27</sup> This allows him to address mimesis and nature from a different vantage point. In the following passage on similitude, Verney makes evident how he interprets the way in which language and the visual arts intersect:

Um pintor famoso...que quer delinear um painel istoriado, nam só pinta as figuras, que devem intrar no quadro; mas procura, que cada uma esteja nanquele ato, que exprima, o para que ele ali a poem: nem só isto, mas até no rosto lhe pinta,



aqueles accidentes, que denotam a paixam, de que sam produzidos...Isto pois é o que procura imitar, o pintor: e se chega a imitálo bem, só este é o bom pintor. O Retorico nam tem cores, com que imitar a natureza, como o pintor: mas tem palavras, para imitar aquelas, que profere um omem dominado da paixam, que ele quer persuadir: e como estas paixoens tenham, diferentes carateres; é necessario que se sirva de diferentes Figuras, para as expremir. (Letter 6, 158)

An famous painter... wanting to depict a historical likeness, not only paints the figures that ought to be included in the work, but procures that every one of them in the act conveys what he put it there for. It is not only that: even on the face he must paint the traits that show the characterization. This is, then, what the painter strives for. If he manages to imitate his subject well, then is a good painter. The rhetorician does not have colors with which to imitate nature like the painter. But he has words to imitate those spoken by a man dominated by passion, whom he looks to persuade. And as each of these passions have different impressions, it is necessary that one chooses between different figures for what he wants to convey.

For Verney, imitation is the measure of what one does with language. The supreme form of mimesis in art and rhetoric is that which represents content so effectively that it would seem as if the stroke of the master cancelled itself out from its place as mediator between the mind and the world of objects. This is what Verney refers to as the perspective of reason. Like lines and angles painted on canvas, well-regulated language for Verney is a window for observing facts through the eye of reason.

Painting functions as a model and trope in Verney's letters on rhetoric for the theoretical link that lines on a canvas would have with geometry. In true French rationalist

style, he insists that he admires geometry because it explains truth clearly (170). A written triangle, although inevitably less-than exact, nonetheless provides a seamless mental transfer of the immaterial and perfect shape that reason contemplates and manipulates:

Um omem douto advertidamente chamou à Retorica, a Perspetiva da-razam: porque na ordem intelectual faz o mesmo, que a Perspetiva, nas distancias locais. Emu ma taboa liza, ideia a pintura um palacio, com imensa profundidade: e muitas vezes com tal artificio, e tam semelhante ao natural, que se enganam os olhos. Nam sam as cores que originam, esta delicioza equivocacam; porque com uma só cor, se consegue o mesmo intento: mas a dispozisam das partes, o saber pór cada um ana sua justa disitancia, o saber lhe dar as sombras, com proporsam da arte, produz efte maravilhozo efeito: e faz que eu veja, reconhesa, e admire, o que de outra sorte nam poderia ver. Este mefmo é o cazo da Retorica. Ela tem forsa tal, que me obriga a descobrir, o que eu de outra forte nam veria. Os materiais podem ser simplezes, as razoens mui fingelas; mas a dispozisam delas fará efeitos tais, que sem ela am se-consequiriam. (Letter 5, 127)

A learned man advertently named rhetoric as reason's perspective, because in the realm of the intellect it does the same thing. Over a tabula rasa, it can visualize a painting of a palace of immense depth with such artifice and with such resemblance to what natural that the eye of the beholder is deceived. The colors are not what gave way to this delightful error because with one single color someone can achieve the same end. But the distribution of the parts, knowing how to place each one in its precise placement, and knowing how to give it shading with proportions of the artform, produce this marvelous effect. And it makes it so I see, recognize, and

admire what by other means I would not be able to see. This very thing is the case with rhetoric. She has such force, that she compels me to discover what by other means I could not. The objects may be simple, the reasoning uninvolved, but their arrangement of them will make what would be impossible without it.

The passage above is a particularly eloquent celebration of the power of mimesis. Verney's rhetoric characterizes mimesis as a trick played on the mind, what he labels a delightful mistake. This is perhaps the only occasion in *O verdadeiro método de estudar* in which the author applauds what he clearly defines as illusion. Verisimilar perspective in geometry involves manipulating entirely rational entities. Achieving the same degree of appearance of truth in painting and oratory is correspondingly a question of treating objects of reason: geometry in one and logic in the other.

In mathematics, geometry, and logic, colors are irrelevant in creating verisimilar mimesis. Objects of reason, by definition, do not concern objects of sensory input. What rationalists and even Aristotle called "accidents" were the particularities of an empirical sample, like the idiosyncrasies of a carpenter's hand in producing even simply a generic chair. In a struggle of form and content, for Verney these do not appear as defining characteristics inherent to an idea. He regards the highly figurative language of the Jesuits as violent colorings of the imagination. Facts of firm foundations should be drawn, figuratively or literally, "com um só cor" ("with one color alone"; Letter 5, 127) over a *tabula rasa*.

The resemblances Verney finds in geometry, painting, and rhetoric point to a rationalist relationship that he believed persuasion would have with facts. The marvelous effect about which Verney states "faz que eu veja" ("forces me to see") and "me obriga ver"

("compels me to see") characterizes a form of induced conviction very much unlike the Classical understanding of eloquence. Artistic appeals, for example, seemed to hold no function. Pierre de La Ramée (Peter Ramus, 1515-1572), the French Aristotelian logician and educational reformer, was believed to have helped popularize Zeno's ancient depiction of rhetorical prowess as an open palm and that of logical inference as a closed fist.<sup>28</sup> A firm, grounded method of thinking and speaking for Verney was a recipe for expressing ideas in terms as simply and plainly so as that decisiveness would render persuasion irrelevant.

Whereas metaphors, hyperboles, and allegories are presented as unnecessary colorings of learned discourse, figures that aid clear communication are portrayed as if naturally mimetic against a transparent backdrop of objects and facts. In Letter 6, such a relationship beckons an image in which a single, plain color that delineates shapes on white canvas is to geometric truth what a restrained use of tropes and figures is to proper rhetoric: "Em uma palavra, primeiro ouveram Figuras, doque ouvése arte de Retorica: aqual nada mais é, doque a observam das-naturais Figuras" ("In a nutshell, people first heard figures, not the art of rhetoric, which is nothing more than the observation of natural figures"; Letter 6 162). In the same way that the laws of physics, mathematics, and geometry exists prior to human understanding of them, for Verney rhetorical devices precede their taxonomy by rhetoricians.

Tropes involving painting and sight similarly arose when Verney adds pathetic devices to express his frustration toward what he felt was meager oratorical talent of Portuguese students. Emotional responses lead to what he recognizes as a similar abuse of language. Under rationalism, a mismanagement of one's reasoning can be *sincretismo*, a figure that attributes a sensory characteristic to an idea unnaturally. In the follow example,

Verney uses the device to give visual property to something entirely abstract: “os que procuram estes asuntos, nam sabem o seo officio, nem de que cor é pregar” (“those who procure these matters know not what their calling is, nor the color of preaching”; Letter 5, 148). The color of which he speaks in religious oratory, of course, refers to something entirely different than a visual sensation. Sacred rhetoric does not possess “a color,” which is one reason why Verney’s language can be read as highly figurative even in moments in which he critiques that very diction as unnatural and overly mediated.

Tropes of painting shed light on the relationship Verney envisioned between rhetoric and the imagination. Some of the Neoclassical and rationalistic optimism toward human potential on the world stage created an idealistic characterization of language’s precision as well as a blind eye to how much form mediates meaning. For example, words and thought were one in the following example:

Sendo pois, as nosas palavras, consequencias dos movimentos d’alma, e  
conrespondendo perfeitamente, aos nosos pensamentos; é claro, que o discurso de  
um omem, que está sumamente agitado, deve ser dezigual. Algumas vezes parece  
este omem difuzo, e fórma uma exata pintura, das coizas que sam objeto, da sua  
paixam. (Letter 6, 157)

Given that our words are the result of the movements of the soul and correspond perfectly with our thoughts, it follows clearly that the discourse of a man who is exceptionally disturbed ought to be imbalanced. Sometimes it seems that this man forms an exact image of things that are the object of his passion.

The emphasis is on mimesis, on how words (represented by the trope of painting) cast a truthful depiction of the emotions Verney desired to see regulated. The bridge from mind to utterance was perfect, or true, in the sense that it is seamless.

Under Verney's rationalist conception of discourse, language should not attempt to create a truth of its own. This is the conflict he had with allegorical interpretation.

Regulating thought to conform with experience or theological truth was the basis of Verney's "natural" rhetoric:

nature/truth → imagination → language.

Verney's recurring trope of painting highlights this point: "A mais medonha cobra pintada, agrada: as coizas mais ordinarias, quando sam bem explicadas, nam podem dezagradar" ("The most hideous painted cobra pleases. The most ordinary things, when well explained, cannot dissatisfy"; Letter 6, 172). The element of attraction in a work of art is not strictly a question of content. There is a sense of falsehood when a lacuna of figurability basks in the disjunction of what is true to nature and the shapes on to the canvas of cognition. For this reason, Verney states that the first and foremost ornament is truth itself (Letter 6, 172). Again, the greatest mimesis for Verney, it seems, is that which is so expressive of an object that it appears to erase marks of the hand that sketches it.

Whereas Feijóo repeated imagery about ears as a metaphor for discernment, Verney looks to the eyes for the same effect. What is especially notable here is the reinterpretation of what visualization means on the heels of Cartesian rationalism and applied to the theory of rhetoric. It takes the certainty associated with observation using the naked eye and relates it to the idea of grasping a concept intellectually, as something independent of the senses. Verney's use of painting as a metaphor for giving a "true" shape to language is

understandably closely followed by tropes about sight. He uses figures referencing the eye of reason to describe rhetorical ornaments he believed distracted more than they represented. Too many people, he writes, forfeit the eye's rational discernment for a superficial veil over the natural beauty of clarity (Letter 6, 172). Reason personified is portrayed as unreceptive to the plasticity of interpretive meaning.

Painting, then, is a trope with which Verney inserts himself into contemporary debates on the rationalization of language. The paradox, of course, is that he was concerned with figurative language, the speaking of one thing by talking about another. We can understand Verney's imagery of putting paint to canvas in the context of his criticism when we recall that he portrays the craft in logical and geometrical terms, one whose product is judged on how insignificantly it intercedes with what simply exists in nature.

Much of the visual repertoire Verney uses in his letters on rhetoric involve his looking to ornaments found physically outside. The wilderness, jewels, the Sun, planets, and spiderwebs are just some of these. Sight is personified as an entity vulnerable to beholding off-putting rhetorical devices:

sam poucos os omens, que saibam abrasar, uma distribuisam moderada de ornamentos, no discurso. A maior parte dos que escrevem, sam como aquelas pessoas, que nam tem educasam de Corte. Estas, para se moftrarem bem informadas, e de boa eleisam; carregam tanto os vestidos de oiro, e a cabeça de joias; que em lugar de parecerem bem, ofendem a vista. (Letter 6, 164)

Few men are those who know how to forge a moderate allocation of ornaments in

discourse. Most who write are like those who are unfamiliar with the courts. To appear well read and notable, they burden their attire with gold and their heads with gems. Instead of impressing, they offend their own appearance.

Similarly, the craft of jewelry as a figure for rhetorical theory again brings rhetoric close to nature in Letter 5:

Os diamantes, os rubis, e outras pedras preciosas são belas, e servem de grande ornamento: mas segundo o lugar em que estão. Encastoadas com artificio, mostra toda a sua galantaria, e dão novo lustre à mesma prata, e ouro que as ordea; e ornamento muito as pessoas, que as trazem: postas porém sem ordem em um monte, ou misturadas com outras pedras, não parecem preciosas, mas ou pedras grosseiras, ou cristais. (Letter 5, 126)

Diamonds, rubies, and other precious stones are beautiful and serve as great ornament, but this is contingent on their arrangement. When dressed in artifice, they show all their gallantry, they give new life to the very silver and gold they are made of, and they adorn those who wear them. But placed without any particular arrangement, in a mound, or mixed with other stones, they do not appear precious, but rather ordinary stones or crystals.

For Verney, reason's gaze demanded a well-regulated distribution of ideas (*dispositio*), not a well-intended collage, and especially not with "joias" conceits, metaphors, and appeals to pathos. As pure products of nature, gems and diamonds display metaphorical imagery in accordance with the kind of eloquence Verney advocates.

Verney draws *inventio*, or material, from a wide variety of phenomena in the physical world. Whereas he turns to precious stones found on nature's floor for allegorical



examples on a micro level, he also directs his reader's mind to the firmament for parallels of a much larger scale. As in previous examples, for Verney creating content with language depends as sense of *distributio*, or form. He makes this point by referring his reader to the Moon: "Quem vise a Lua de perto, acharia um globo, fem diversidade alguma deste terrestre" ("He who sees the Moon up close would a spherical object no different than what is on this earth"; Letter 5, 126). He then continues outward to the Sun: "Quem examináse de vizinho o Sol, nam veria mais, que uma fogueira" ("He who observes the sun up close would see nothing but fire"; Letter 5, 126). Lastly, he takes the center of the image, the Sun, and refashions it to the periphery of an even larger system:

O Sol posto no centro do Univerfo, segundo a ipoteze (que agora suponho) de Copernico, dá aos omens, e gloria ao seu criador. Se se chegáse mais vizinho a nós, queimaria tudo: e acabava se o Mundo. E cisaqui o efeito, da boa proporsam e ordem. (Letter 5, 126)

The Sun, placed in the center of the universe according to the hypothesis (which I now suppose) of Copernicus, is given to man and gives glory to its creator. If it gets closer us, it would burn everything and the world would end. Therein lies the key: proper proportions and order.

The idea is that distance, like perspective, defines the observed content. The same notion was applied is also applied to the vast symmetrical arrangement of celestial planets and stars (Letter 5, 126). The figurative allusions with which Verney opens his first letter on rhetoric are full of references to issues that interested natural philosophers at the time. And his somewhat reluctant endorsement of the Copernican heliocentric hypothesis in the passage above leaves little doubt about his simultaneous ambition to rebuke Scholastic

rhetoric, and at the same time, soften the adversarial notions associated with it. This was matched by his stance toward Scholastics who had not yet embraced the modern astronomical worldview, unlike Descartes and numerous modern philosophers and rhetoricians.

The animal kingdom offered Verney different avenues to express himself figuratively while looking to nature for a framework. A spider web is one such example. He forgoes the opportunity to dwell on their artistic symmetry in the wild and instead amplifies other interpretations of their characteristics. Verney turns spiderwebs into examples of deceitful artifice. His attack is directed toward, no other, but his compatriot Father Vieira over his famous oratorical style:

Quanto aos sermoens, e orasoens, deixou se arrebatado, do estilo do seu tempo; e talvez foi aquele que com o seu exemplo, deu materia a tanta sutileza, que sam as que destruem a Eloquencia. Nos seus sermoens, nam achará V. P. artificio algum retorico, nem uma Eloquencia que persuada. Muitos, que gostam daquelas galantarias, lendo o sairám divertidos: mas nenhum homem de juizo exato, sairá perfuadido delas. Sam daquelas teias de aranha, bonitas para se observarem, mas que nam prendem ninguem. (Letter 6, 206)

As for sermons and speeches, he let himself get carried away in the style of his time, and perhaps he was the one who, with his example, provided the material for subtlety that ruined eloquence. In his sermons you will not find any persuasive rhetorical device or touch of eloquence. Many of those fond of such gallantries may be entertained when reading them, but no man of exact judgment will be persuaded

by them. They are like those spider webs that are beautiful to look at but catch no one.

In this way Verney molds the idea of a spider web to shape the story he wanted his reader to hear. Nonetheless, nature, or at least artifice found in it, is the source for Verney's poetic simile.

The phrases "deixou se arrebatado, do estilo do seu tempo" and "sam as ("sutilezas") que destruem a Eloquencia" are also significant uses of figurative language from Verney's pen. The metaphors portray Scholastic Baroque in the worst possible light. A well-educated person of religious orders appears helpless against falling victim to an irrational frenzy of destructive stylistic idiosyncrasies. We can assume that for Verney the modern rationalist clarity could anchor language in the same way physics does to the natural world.

When it did abandon its ties to reason, or at least physical nature, Verney's figurative language often embraces the opposite extreme: monsters. Likewise, to wield language without strict logical composure is to "empunha a espada para combater com um inimigo imaginario" ("to wield a sword to combat an imaginary enemy"; Letter 5, 160).

While opposing what he calls "oratorical collages of content" (Letter 5, 150-51), Verney finds that orators and writers should not force a structure foreign to the natural needs of the meaning expressed. But to state that the content one deals with cries out for a form true to itself is to speak either like a romantic poet or the opposite extreme: an Enlightenment rationalist. One gets the sense that Verney viewed texts as if they possess their own internal reason for being. It is as if the human or artistic presence in shaping a story has an expedient mediating role at best – not because the text has "a life of its own," but rather in that language can look to logic as a structural guiding light.

Monsters are what nature never meant to produce. An aphorism that Verney never stated explicitly in his Letters 5 and 6 on rhetoric, but nonetheless epitomizes his view on language, is “truthfulness follows naturalness.” He uses comparable Portuguese nouns constantly in his work. Having argued in Letter 6 that figures are the foundation of eloquence (Letter 6, 160), Verney then specifies the relationship between passion, exactness, and naturalness in the use of language. He writes that rhetorical devices must be natural, and that those who submit to speaking well must allow themselves to be guided by a regulated passion (Letter 6, 161). But this statement on the emotions reveals the fractures of a worldview in which it is understood that discourse should mirror rationalist reasoning. To use a trope that he might have agreed with, there is a problem “squaring the circle” in this imagined ideal rhetoric. To deliver oneself to the direction of a passion, while regulating it, is an oxymoron, which, when used poetically, is of a category of the figures of thought containing devices of logic, along with antithesis, paradox, and cohabitation. The idea of “*uma paixam arrezoadá*” characterizes the impact the New Science had on Verney’s approach to the rhetoric of oratory and writing. It also typifies various contradictions. The reader of *O verdadeiro método de estudar no Portugal moderno* is left to decide how to resolve conflicts involving “passionate yet orderly”, “natural yet prescribed,” and how to interpret the figurative expressions presented in the criticism of the very same figurative expression.

Disorder alone is monstrous for a rationalist. Verney grants himself the liberty to incorporate tropes that relate the eyes, and beauty in general, to standards of symmetry. We can take Verney’s use of allegory immediately following this precept as an illustration of what this looks like: “*Nam á maior beleza em uma cara, que os olhos: mas se um rosto*

nacèse com mais de dois; se chegáse a ter meia duzia, seria um monstro” (“There is no greater beauty in the face than the eyes. But if a face were born with more than two, suppose half a dozen, then it would be a monster”; Letter 6, 156-57). And shortly following this passage in Letter 6, he echoes that those who disregard a proper use of figures in their language “dam à luz partos monstruozos” (“gives birth to monstrosities”; Letter 6, 160). Eloquent expression for Verney involves balance, perhaps nothing overly unexpected, and never too much of a good thing.

Although it asserted that the Earth is not the center of the universe, the Enlightenment placed mankind at the center of beauty. The topic of the human body provided Verney an abundance of figurative material to discuss natural eloquence. While not technically a trope, the following simile by Verney visualizes his thoughts on orators who can maintain their language specific to the questions at hand:

Pois asimcomo nenhuma molher feisima merece ser louvada, porque é filha, de uma molher mui bonita: antes polo contrario, a fermozura da maen dá ocaziam, paraque no-admiremos da filha: asim tambem as virtudes dos pasados, nam servem de panegirico aos presentes. (Letter 6, 179)

In that no unsightly woman deserves compliment for being daughter of a beautiful woman, (on the contrary, the beauty of the mother raises the occasion not to admire the daughter), it is also true that past virtues do not serve as praises of what is current.

Descartes’s advocacy for adhering to clear and distinct concepts in natural philosophy involves disregarding aspects of them that are coincidental, or accidental, to their most basic characterization. Colors would have no place in a discussion on geometric shapes, as I

signaled previously. In logic, considering irrelevant characteristics in thought is the epitome of a fallacy.

The difference for Verney between non-obtrusive figurative expressions and those which serves a purely decorative function could be found in what splits allegories from *exemplum* and *similitudo*. The latter are figures of argumentation, not embellishment — Respectively, one references distinct occurrences and personages, fictional or historical. The other resonates more with the general patterns in life or nature and possess an element of argumentation and substantiation that tropes lack. Following another protest of preachers in Portugal who intermingled profane and sacred history, Verney turns his focus to the ancient world to clarify his thought on the matter:

[S]uponha que o cazo sucedia no Egito, aonde antigamente se expunham os cadaveres, diante dos juizes, para serem julgados. Um publico acusador, referia todos os defeitos, e respondia aos louvores, que name ram fundados. Se o omem era de boa fama, dava se a sentensa a seu favor, e enterava se com onra e panegirico acompanhado de grandes louvores do Povo: se era condenado, privava se de sepultura, e a sua memoria ficava abominavel: Que coiza julga V. P. que diria o noso Pregador, neste cazo? (Letter 5, 130-31)

[S]uppose that this took place in Egypt, where long ago dead bodies were brought to stand trial before judges. A public prosecutor would make an account of all the faults and respond to the praises that were raised. If the deceased was of good fame, then the verdict would be given in his favor, and he would be received by the public with great praise. If he was condemned, then he would be deprived of a burial and

his memory would be in shame. How does this seem to you? What should our preacher about this situation?

Verney's reference to a believed practice from ancient Egyptian culture to illustrate a problem regarding the use of language in eighteenth-century Portugal likewise would be impossible without a figurative imagination of his own. One way readers might interpret what Verney means when he insists that figurative language is abuse but in separate occasions displays its use can be to find that his appealing to the grotesque, or simply the unnatural, had a very specific role. In its earliest manifestations, Hispanic Enlightenment literature seems to hold a very utilitarian, didactic responsibility in society.

In Letters 5 and 6, Verney does not advocate banishing all tropes and exploiting every figure of speech from rhetorical discourse. As outlined above, he uses a wide array of metaphors and hyperbole in denouncing contemporaries when he feels the speakers exhausted *comparación* and *símile* (figures of argumentation), antithesis and *oxímoron* (figures of logic), *digresión* and its shorter rendition *paréntesis* (figures of amplification), to the point of producing something comparable to an aberrant hybrid species of language.

Rhetoric holds two opposing functions for Verney. It either sheds light on facts or it dresses them in disingenuous attire. This dichotomy defines the difference between the true orator and the maligner:

Nisto é que está o empenho do Orador, em que descobrir a verdade: mostrála em toda a sua clareza: e manifestar o erro oposto. Nisto se distingue o verdadeiro Orador, do Declamador. Este, contentando se das aparencias, veste o erro com a mascara da verdade: o Orador porem descobre e manifesta o erro, e poem a verdade em toda a sua luz. (Letter 5, 189)

In this lies the task of the orator, to discover the truth: to show it in all its clarity and manifest the opposite error. In this the true orator distinguishes himself from the bombastic. This one, is content with appearances, is clothed in error with a mask of truthfulness. The orator, however, uncovers error, and places truth in all its light. Truth is depicted as a collection of innate ideas existing prior to human contact, as discovered, not fashioned. The purpose of oratory and the written word appears to showcase what “is there.” Rhetoric becomes a mask, a violation of nature and a corrupt middleman between data and the imagination.

An image by Verney along the same lines identifies the content from notorious orators around him as “narizes de cera” (“noses of wax”; Letter 6, 186). It plays on the same notion of a mask from the example above while amplifying even more aspects of fabrication and malleability. Interestingly, wax serves as an important functions in Descartes’s thought experiments. In the final half the of his Second Meditation, he focusses solely on the way in which wax only appears to problematize the connection of form and content: the shape someone grants it does not inform what it is.

Verney was convinced that figurative expression was a greater source of confusion than adornment. We can read that what rationalists interpreted as violations of “unnatural” speech, especially that which characterized popular Baroque allegorical expression, is entrenched in Verney’s thought by Portugal’s mid eighteenth-century.

My close reading of Verney’s figures of diction in Letters 5 and 6 of *O verdadeiro método de estudar no Portugal moderno* reveals that he often leans heavily on even the most basic and structured forms of them. His rhetorical form can be interpreted through modes of adorning and regulating attention. In many ways this is compatible with the



logical and rhetorical developments in rationalism and Neoclassicism presented at the beginning of this study, and especially with the regulatory critique of Sacred theology and inventive conceit as foundations for historiographic argumentation. I have shown also that Verney's figurative language falls into specific categories relating to rationalist Enlightenment culture. The references to geometry (painting) and physical nature (planets, spiderwebs, gems, the human body) are the most common. His vibrant exercise of metaphors contradicts his theory of rhetoric. Verney's most metaphorical use of speech is used to undermine that the same tools on which he relies. As with the French rationalist authors who influenced his thought, deeply moving spectacles of the imagination were the most expedient means of vilifying what he believed contributed to the underdevelopment of Portugal's cultural development. Unregulated speech is seen as unnatural in the sense that monsters, mummies, masks, and figures of wax defied the objects that nature designs.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Dialogues in Form: Francisco Javier Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo, the Rejection of Jesuit Eloquence, and the Regulation of Rhetoric in Quito**

Francisco Javier Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo (1747–1795) was born in Quito, then part of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, to a mulatto mother and her full-blooded Indian husband. Despite considerable social barriers, Espejo's dedication to improve the social and educational well-being of his fellow *quiteños* was made known through his work as founder and editor of Quito's first newspaper and as director of the town's first public library. After studying under the Jesuits and receiving degrees in civil and canon law, he became a physician like his father. Espejo's treatise advocating for vaccination against communicable diseases, *Reflexiones sobre las viruelas* (1785), was monumental for its time. He published radical political material under different names and spent the last five years of his life incarcerated on charges of conspiracy to overthrow the Viceroy of New Granada.

*El nuevo Luciano de Quito o Despertador de los ingenios quiteños en nueve conversaciones eruditas para el estímulo de la literatura* (1779) first circulated under the pseudonym Don Javier de Cía Apéstegui y Perocha. While the totality of Espejo's social critiques were aimed at the stagnation of medicine, science, and arts in New Granada, the primary satirical target was Jesuit logic, rhetoric, and poetics. The point of departure for the dialogues was a rhetorically grandiose sermon delivered by Sancho Escobar in Quito's cathedral during Lent in March of 1779. Throughout the work, the characters Mera and Murillo exchange critiques of Escobar's choice of language. Mera is, Espejo's alter ego, and, like the author, is a product of the Jesuit education practices who has come to believe that the Enlightenment holds the keys to mending flaws in language by exposing unregulated

epistemological liberties in granting the imagination the fountain of argumentative material in questions of non-Sacred history. Mera's counterpart, Murillo, is a caricature of an educated contemporary of Quito: physicians and pseudointellectuals who found in Escobar an example of eloquence and evidence and of the virtues of the Jesuit education in general.

The title of *El nuevo Luciano* makes an explicit reference to the influence of the ancient satirist and rhetorician Lucian of Samosata (ca. 125-ca. 180). The exaggerations, digressions, and utilitarian and didactic irony in Espejo's work places it among those of the Menippean genre, a decisively important literary tradition in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>29</sup> Much of Mera's views on eloquence can be traced across the Atlantic to *Les Entretiens D'Ariste et D'Eugene* (1673) by Dominique Bouhours (1628-1702), *Delle Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto* (1708) by Luis Antonio Muratori (1672-1750), and *O Verdadeiro método de estudar no Portual moderno* (1746) by Luís António Verney (1713-1792).

A consideration for Espejo's career as a physician offers add to our understanding of his aversion to probabilistic reasoning. In Daniel Schwartz's research, critics of probabilism viewed the theory of medicine as the Achille's heel of the debate (382-83). The critique centers on the question: In what world would a surgeon justifiably prescribe the less probable of two procedures? To admit that a physician of the body might operate under a different standard than that of a confessor, a physician of the soul, would be to appear blatantly inconsistent.

Unlike Feijóo and Verney, Espejo viewed poor literary taste in very political terms toward the culture across the Atlantic colonizing Quito. And Mera's referring to "oraciones

cargadas de fastidiosísimos pleonasmos” (“sentences burdended with tendious pleonasms”) as rhetoric *a la española* comes straight from French writers’ guidebook in which one learned to ridicule Seneca’s abundant expressive delicacies as Espejo does (38, 152). Although lacking the same political implications associated with Spain, *predicar a la italiana* similarly involved “empujar descripciones sobre descripciones, en formar un estilo florido y cortesantemente halagüeño, con un asunto ridículo y echado al desgaire” (“forcing descriptions over descriptions in forming a flowery and flattering style, in a ridiculous air of carelessness”; 156).

In the spirit of New Formalist Criticism, the political repercussions of Espejo advocating tropes and turns of phrase associated with French authors are numerous. While Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* (1983) finds that the circulated written word was a factor in the formation of a sense of a Latin American identity, something not entirely foreign to that idea can be argued about the disassociation with Spanish rhetorical practices by someone of such a patriotic conscious as Espejo, who understood literary aesthetic decisions as inseparable from one’s thought processes. For Feijóo and Verney, the French forms of writing and speaking were insignias of modernity. But Espejo sought to replace the colonial subjects’ discursive and stylistic habits. The devices of adornment resembling Spanish culture and convention were portrayed as forms of excess, expendable and unnatural, which in the years leading up to the Quito Revolt of 1809 translated as the Spanish claim to power by metonymy.<sup>30</sup> Espejo’s frequent formal devices of diction can be read through the lens of an acceptance of embellishments free of the imagination’s impact as told through French rationalist thought. The paradox of Espejo’s writing is that the most

figurative imagery, the moments of greatest emotional allure, are reserved for blaming writers who find use in highly visual metaphors, allegories, and pathetic appeals.

Espejo took the anti-French attitude of his Ecuadorian and Spanish contemporaries toward forms of expression and turned it into a literary device to lay the groundwork for a defense of neoclassical rhetoric and political reform. Murillo quickly notes the French rationalist undertones in Mera's critiques and reforms (20). Later, he portrays Jansenism as an evil cast and a cult of reason (68). There was no denial of the primary two spheres of transatlantic influence within which people of Quito thought and spoke. Whereas Murillo casts Mera as a product of French culture, determined to instill a new poetics of cold hard naturalness, Mera repeats denunciations from French rationalism to portray Murillo as product of the loftiest poets who, to say something, must exhaust the use of metaphors and allegories (21).

Cartesian literary tendencies from France offered Espejo an alternative to the ubiquitous methods Spain imposed. Unlike for Feijóo and Verney, improving the conditions of the Espejo's world required disruptions in international relations. For Feijóo and Verney, the harm to society that concerned them came from the ground up as a lack of education on the regulation of discourse. For a precursor to independence like Espejo, Quito's impediments flowed top down from the Iberian Peninsula. In his final statement in *El nuevo Luciano*, Espejo's mouthpiece states that he sees nothing around him but a whirlwind of barbarity and chained slaves (167). He calls for conditions in Quito that would produce a new generation of political leaders capable of forging a new union with the rest of human society (167). The idea that no human could be destined to a role of servitude according to a law of nature was in line with the writings of the political philosopher Samuel Pufendorf

(1632-1694) in his *De iure naturae et gentium* (1672), a work the character Mera praises early in *El nuevo Luciano* (58).

Mera relishes in the fact that Murillo identifies aspects of contemporary French aesthetics in his verbal presentation. Mera links good taste to a foundation in rationalism, which is universal and has nothing to do with Gallocentrism: to preach like the French is not to follow trends, it is to preach judiciously (155). Eloquence required knowledge of what is natural, and then harnessing it to with the most precise method (156). Such references to a universal and strict methodology in the context of a discussion on nature and art are linked to Espejo's explicit nods to Blaise Pascal. Mera admits that his objections to probabilistic reasoning began after reading Pascal's *Lettres provinciales* (116). The mathematician and adamant critic of Jesuit oratory and probabilism exercised enormous influence over Espejo, as revealed in *El nuevo Luciano*. Mera recommends two books to Murillo: *Moral práctica de los jesuitas* (1690) by Antoine Arnauld and *Lettres provinciales* (1657) by Blaise Pascal (110). Both are treated as works that use clarity to lead impious and pernicious propositions back to Christianity (117).

Espejo and Pascal argued that assaults on the faith conveyed from pulpits by those whose responsibility it was to guide people to embrace the gospel. In *El nuevo Luciano*, Mera framed his defense against charges of heresy using the same language as Pascal in *Lettres provinciales* for the same charges. Mera's reciting of the French mathematician's words amounts to nearly the longest direct passage inserted the text (114-15), second only to one from Bouhours. As in Pascal's *Lettres*, *El nuevo Luciano* includes a defense of satire as an act of justice for regulating error (114-15). Mera declared that *Cartas* was a model of

rhetoric in the Enlightenment, in addition to putting what he calls the monstrous opinions of Jesuit probabilistic reasoning in their natural color (122).

French names abound in Mera's references to the practice of regulating imaginative wit. The French Benedictine Jean Mabillon (1632-1707) was included, for writing that Jesuit orators treated Catholic dogma as rhetorical playthings with their allegorical rummaging (165-66). Mera applauds Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757) for his simple yet eloquent language adorned with true spirit (383). The same character twice references Charles Rollin (1661-1741) and his *Traité des Études* (1726-31), in which the author chastises rhetoric built on appeals to the imagination instead of the intellect (40, 137). Mera does the same with Joseph Omer Joly de Fleury (1715-1810), who prescribed orators to follow the most literal, simple, and direct path (86). The language of regulation and logic from Port-Royal authors imparted traces of its influence in more than just Espejo's figures of diction and tropes. Similes such as "como caídas de la naturaleza" ("as if fallen from nature") refer to clarity of thought, and thereafter speech (24). Through Mera's characterization, Espejo accuses Jesuits of taking the most clear truths and the axioms best delivered to mankind and presenting them "[c]omo debajo de unas nubes misteriosas" ("as if cast under clouds of mystery"; 79).

### ***El nuevo Luciano de Quito (1779): Grounding Eloquence of Diction in Form***

Before discussing tropes, first I will analyze the way Espejo's formal diction imparts rationalist ideas on nonobstructive embellishments, simplicity, and clarity. When reading the Socratic dialogue between Dr. Murillo and Dr. Mera, one can begin to sense a conflict between the *esdrújula* and the *agudo*. In the former, the placement of the tonic vowel

creates a impression that is eventful, vivacious, and light. In the other, the stress in the final syllable imparts stillness, severity, assertiveness, and closure. This is more apparent near the start of *El nuevo Luciano* since Dr. Mera has yet to persuade his interlocutor to disavow probabilism and bloated figurative language as legitimate foundations for eloquence. In the first two dialogues, Murillo uses the *esdrújula* constantly, not the least when he expresses excitement prior to attending Escobar's sermon and joyfully anticipates the orator's "garambaines tinterales con muchos esdrújulus [sic] consonantes" ("frivolous spreads of consonants in estrújulos"; 19). But such is the case when he talks of "las volantes vísperas de la estacionaria porción de la tarde de ayer" ("yesterday afternoon's dose of high-flyers") (15) and of "la oficina vulcánica de los famélicos condimentos" ("the volcanic case of famished condiments"; 39).<sup>31</sup>

This is not to say that Mera is wholly averse to the *esdrújula*. Instead, he is convinced that if a thought requires that it be expressed clearly then its use is simply justified. The question points to a central concern for the Mera throughout the text: When are words a vehicle for ideas, and when do they cloak the original meaning as unfaithful mediators? In the following example, we see the *esdrújula* portrayed as subordinate to the *agudo* and in what contexts Mera (i.e. Espejo) even thought it was permissible. Mera tells Murillo that the ideal orator possesses "un sólido juicio con una sana voluntad" ("a solid judgment with a healthy will"; 56). While most often a symbol of Murillo and the deceptive mind and overwrought tropes and figures that he prefers, the role of the *estrújula* reclaims some sense of resoluteness through Mera's word "sólido." Its role is to modify a noun in a straight-forward, stable, fashion.



The neoclassical precepts that Mera brings to the forefront can be found in his diction. To take the same passage from above, “Sólido juicio” and “sana voluntad” are of an equal number of syllables. And in both units, the initial vowels are tonic. The utterance ends with “voluntad.” Placed at the end of the sentence, the effect is a uniform drumline of parallelism to the ear that alludes to a rational organization, which corresponds to ideas expressed verbally through the words — The stress in the final vowel naturally communicates a meaning of firmness in a way the *esdrújula* “sólido” could only aspire to do abstractly.

The most common figures of omission generally include ellipsis (the suppression of a word or phrase easily understood in context), syllepsis (a word used figuratively and literally in the same setting), zeugma (a term uttered once that governs a series of parts in a sentence), asyndeton (the erasure of conjunctions between clauses), and *reticencia* (*aposiopesis* in Greek: the explicit unwillingness to continue speech). They excise elements from a rhetorical discourse that are superfluous although grammatically necessary (Azaustre and Casas, 106). A device portrayed as liberator of language burdened by aesthetic protocol would be precisely the tool that we would expect might appeal to someone influenced by French rationalists who vehemently attacked Jesuits by virtue that their inventiveness had long driven the reasoning behind their words into the ground. Asyndeton and *zeugma* are figures of omission that signal to the reader that the speaker has shortcuts at his or her disposal between the thought he or she wants to communicate and the art of expressing it. For someone like Espejo, figures of omission bypass an unnecessary medium. In the case of *reticencia*, however, the speaker displays an explicitly

discursive reluctance to some degree toward continuing down the path of donning an idea with words.

There is a disproportion in the way in which Espejo allocates figures of omission in Mera and Murillo's speech: Nearly every rendition of figures of omission comes from Mera. Considering this, I will focus on asyndeton, zeugma, and *reticencia* to make the case that they substantiate the influence that Cartesian and French neoclassical theories of language had on Espejo's rhetorical ideal.

In "Conversación octava: teología moral jesuística," Mera makes use of *asíndeton* in combination with *quaesitum*, the emotionally moving rhetorical question left open-ended. It is in response to the moral laxity of the theory of probabilism. The rhetorical question would demand more than a simple yes/no response: "Pregunto, ¿dónde está hoy su probabilidad, su certidumbre, su prudencia?" ("I ask, where today lies their probability, their certainty, their prudence?"; 102).

There is also an important component of *conclatio*, the reworking of a previously used term to give a slightly altered definition, in Mera's above-mentioned utterance "probabilidad." The probability he describes in the passage, despite sharing the same word, is antithesis to what it meant in Jesuit poetics. One was regulated by an Early Modern methodology, a science of mathematics led by figures such as Pascal. The other was what Espejo characterizes countless times as the deficiency of rational thought and regulated rhetoric. Both led to complications for Catholicism as moral laxity and dogmatic heresy. Espejo's alter ego repeats the same formula of *quaesitum* + *asíndeton* shortly after, as he discusses what probabilism does to Holy Scripture: "¿Cuál será el fruto de tantas desgracias? No otra cosa que la corrupción, la profunda ignorancia, el triunfo del vicio"

("What will the fruits be of so many misfortunes? Nothing but the corruption, the profound ignorance, and the triumph of vice"; 104).

We can find many examples in which Mera used the *asíndeton* without the accompaniment of rhetorical questions. Reflecting on Don Sancho's language, Mera discloses the form with which he would have delivered similar content: "Yo en semejante conyuntura, sin recelo empezaría comparando el dolor de la Virgen, primeramente con el mar, su extension, su profundidad, su flujo y reflujo, sus ondas, sus tempestades, su abismo" ("In such a predicament, without hesitation I would start by comparing the Virgin's suffering first with the sea, its extension, its ebb and flow, its waves, its storms, its abyss"; 152). And by concluding the device with abyss, Mera adds more gravity than what omitting a conjunction alone would have created. Also worth noting is that in his prescription he calls not for allegories but for their less-figurative cousins: simple comparisons.

Throughout *El nuevo Luciano*, Mera blames the pervasiveness of irrational eloquence on preachers. He believes they concede injudiciously to the masses' whimsical demands for imaginative sensationalism. Orators recognized a demand, and then supplied it. Mera conveys the public-orator relationship with the following *asíndeton*: "los oyentes querían asuntos nuevos, pinturas luminosas, descripciones exquisitas, antítesis galanas, transiciones delicadas" ("the crowd wanted new matters, luminous paintings, exquisite descriptions, gallant antithesis, delicate transitions"; 155). Like with "probabilidad" ("probability") in the aforementioned example, "transiciones delicadas" ("delicate transitions") can be read two ways, one following French rationalist thought and following rather more imaginative impulses. But clearly Mera means that the latter is what the

ignorant audience wants to hear, and not “delicate,” as in the gentle and measured shifts that logic, mathematics, and geometry aim to make between one premise and another. Thus, Mera identifies “[el] vicio dominante entre los nuestros de querer sobresalir” (“the dominant vice of those around us of taking a fancy to stand out”): the efforts of orators to please their untrained audience by using flashy adornments and other rhetorical maneuvers that disorder their reasoning and appeal to their imagination (150). He develops the idea further using a rather complex form of *asíndeton*: “Culpe Vm. al vicio dominante entre los nuestros de querer sobresalir y por lo mismo de hablar, de pensar, de accionar con arrogancia, con fasto, con singularidad” (“Blame the dominant vice of those around us of taking a fancy to stand out, and for the same to speak, think, and to act arrogantly with splendor and singularity”; 150). A New Formalist approach to *El nuevo Luciano* adds new sense of meaning to the contour of Espejo’s diction, arranged below for illustration:

de querer sobresalir y por lo mismo  
de hablar,  
de pensar,  
de accionar con arrogancia,  
con fasto,  
con singularidad

As with others we have seen, the passage can be read as indicative of the presence of French rationalist thought in the meticulous transfer from one idea to another. The last three units materialize seamlessly from the three that precede them through a mediator, which also creates an evident symmetry.

Mera expands on what it meant to vainly seek distinguished thought in oratory. Espejo's character does this with a phrase that plays on various figures of diction. While clearly lacking the grammatically necessary conjunction, the more interesting figure is in fact the subtle yet sophisticated transition from one set of triple statements to the next. It is as if Mera, the alter ego of Espejo, experiments with rhetorical embellishments on the level of form as if the outcome does not violate the purity of the meaning conveyed, a major concern for rationalists.

Propositions like those in the examples above often served as material for Mera's figures of diction even, when the *asíndeton* did not play a part in it. In one instance, Mera cites a radical who used figures of diction in a similar fashion as Espejo. He extensively quotes Father José Francisco de Isla's *Historia del Famoso predicador fray Gerundio de Campazas*. (1758), a Spanish satire centered on critiquing Jesuit embellishments from the pulpit that undeniably influenced Espejo's thought in Quito. Both writers satirize the established rhetorical praxis in favor of restraint on poetic license.<sup>32</sup> Although Isla's name was omitted, certainly because *Fray Gerundio* was censored, the letters "P. J. F. I. D. L. C. D. J." evidently denoted Padre José Francisco Isla de la Compañía de Jesús (157).

Near the conclusion of *El nuevo Luciano*, the prolonged passage from *Fray Gerundio* portrays the entertained spectator of figurative oratory as if inebriated by vivid expressions. The following is but a brief excerpt of the material from Isla's satire that Mera shares with Murillo:

Están los oyentes escuchando un sermón con la boca abierta, embelesados con la presencia del predicador, con el garbo de las acciones, con lo sonoro de la voz, con lo que llaman elevación de estilo, con el cortadillo de las cláusulas, con la viveza

de las expresiones, con lo bien sentido de los efectos, con la agudeza de los reparos, con el aparente desenredo de las soluciones, con la falsa brillantez de los pensamientos. (157-58)

The listeners hear the sermon with their mouths open, enraptured by the preacher's presence, by the grace of the actions, by the resonance of the voice, by what they call the elevation of style, by the bits of clauses, by the vividness of the expressions, of the bits of phrases, by the meaning meticulously delivered, by the acuity of the quibble, by the apparent resolutions, by the false brilliance of the thoughts.

In one of the most theatrical moments of Isla's rhetoric, the reader's attention centers on the anaphora, the repetition of a term or a group of words at the beginning of consecutive clauses, lines, or sentences. The preposition "con" is echoed eleven times in successive clauses in a sardonic portrayal of someone entrapped in another's discourse. Isla's repeating prepositional phrases and concluding *asíndeton* provided a blueprint for Espejo in my previous examples.

In "Conversación segunda," Mera uses the anaphora combined with the *asíndeton* to ridicule witticisms in Don Sancho's oratory. Both figures ground assertiveness. He states, "todo era producir agudezas, sin un átomo de persuasiva, de método, de juicio" ("everything was about producing witticisms, without an atom of persuasiveness, of method, of judgment"; 16). And in the final pages of the text, Mera fashions the figure again and in reference to the same speech: "Mas a la verdad es, que no fue ese sermón sino un conjunto de centones piadosos, sin orden, sin método, sin arte, sin oportunidad" ("But the truth was that this sermon was nothing more than a collection of emotional blows, without order, without method, without art, without proper timing"; 159). Mera frequently

constructs the anaphora using an assortment of prepositions and terms. In the final dialogue, when Murillo comes to terms with Mera on rhetorical theory, Murillo is who uses seven consecutive statements originating with the words “en la” and separated by a comma for the purpose of rhetorical stress (128-29).<sup>33</sup> And passions found another avenue in a triple *comparación* in the following pathetic expression: “ese gusto viciado de querer siempre lo brillante más que lo sólido, lo metafórico más que lo propio, y lo hiperbólico más que lo natural” (“this tainted appeal of wanting what is the most brilliant, what is the most firm, the metaphorical more than what is proper, and the hyperbolic more than what is natural”; 19). Aside from the diction, Espejo opted for the more ornamental forms of showing likeness or distinction. Unlike the more dialectic figures *exemplum* and *similitudo*, the *símil* (similarity) and *comparación* (difference) are purely decorative.

The *zeugma* in tandem with the anaphora in Espejo’s diction together significantly contribute to Mera’s characterization as one of rational mind and language. The following example can be interpreted, paradoxically, as synchronized figures of omission and repetition. The five utterances of “si” is the anaphora that precedes the two *zeugmas* “echan los ojos” and “[direct object] + ven.”

[H]a estado siempre desacreditada para con los extranjeros; si echan los ojos en la población, la ven desierta; si en la política, baja y doble; si en las letras, bárbara e ignorante; si en la política, inculta y orgullosa; si en la arquitectura, humilde y vulgarísimo, y así en todo lo demás. (55)

It always has been discredited by foreigners; if they look at the populace, they find it bare; if at the politics, lowly and backward; if at the literature, barbaric and

ignorant; if at the politics, unrefined and proud; if at the architecture, humble and deeply vulgar, and likewise with everything else there is.

Espejo's affront on Spain's literature tradition (*letras*) is preceded and followed by dual references to its political deficiencies (*si en la política*). Spain, not Quito, is the subject of the artistic device. Espejo uses a rational, formal embellishment (anaphora) in his condemnation of the colonizing power as the political personification of an imagination left abandoned to wander. Culturally, the European nation was an oxymoron for Espejo. And to be the colony of a contradiction was to exist twice removed from the Enlightenment.

In *el nuevo Luciano de Quito*, the rhetorical devices of diction categorized as "oblique" occupy a liminal space between figures and tropes. Espejo uses the *reticencia* in specific occasions during the conversation between Mera and Murillo. My attention is drawn to this figure for the way in which its renditions announce moments of literary awareness in ways that tropes, figures of speech, and other figures of diction, do not. The following examples shed light on the tensions between thoughts and language. All of this is to be understood against Espejo's mental habits of Cartesian rationalism and French Neoclassicism. Mera uses language somewhat unwillingly as he struggles to bridge the gap between mental constructs and the words to communicate them to his interlocutor. Running the risk of infringing on truth, he opts for silence: "Explícole a Vm. este misterio en dos palabras sintiendo no poder explicarme bastantemente, porque el asunto es bien largo y digno de algunas prolijas conversaciones" ("I explain this mystery to you briefly for feeling that I cannot explain myself to an adequate degree, because the matter is quite long and worthy of lengthy conversations"; 110-11). The concept of worthiness in rendering the ideas in one's mind into expression contrasts the way in which Mera paints Jesuit



probabilism in ethics and allegories in oratory as acts of defilement of nature's truth. The transformation of thoughts through summarization creates something else unnatural or untrue.

Similar movements revealing an unwillingness to taint ideas with language can be found when Mera states he will not transform ideas into discourse. His justification for avoiding rhetoric is that the process would stretch far too long to do justice to the thought (106). And earlier he tells Murillo that he would rather not explain an idea because he would never complete his idea (79). At one point, Mera speaks his mind regarding Jesuit rhetoric in such a manner that it sparks a visceral reaction in Murillo, who then asks if perhaps Mera ought to have minced his words. Mera's reaction suggests that to do so would have in fact been the greater fault. It would be an act of treason against truth to mean one thing and to say another (124). Once committed to putting ideas to thought, communication must project it truthfully (214).

Figures of *reticencia* also appear in Murillo's characterization, but only because he has been conditioned by Jesuit allegorical rhetoric to the point in which his mind became too soft to face the naked truth in Mera's rational language. Examples take the shape of emotional figures of *deprecatio*, a fervent plea, when Murillo implores for Mera to cease talking or simply to change the subject. Murillo does so by using statements like "Basta, basta" ("enough, enough") and "Sólo con este ejemplo quedo contento, y basta para el escarmiento, y que Vm. deje de decir más, porque me horroriza" ("With this example alone I am content. It functions as a lesson, and may it stop you from saying more, because I am terrified"; 101, 106).

Using various figures of diction, Espejo portrays Murillo as precisely the orator whom Arnauld and Nicole denigrated in their treatise on formal logic. The character relies on what rationalists believed was irrational, unnecessary, unnatural, flowery language that violated human reasoning by subverting the imagination. Figures of diction appealed to Espejo, like they did to Verney before him, for the way in which rational movements can embellish a text. Forms of repetition, omission, and position might satisfy a tendency to reach for devices that for the same end might introduce interpretative connections between ideas too much in the forefront of an observer's imagination. In the *quisamo*, for example, adornment does not come at the expense of clarity of meaning.

### ***El nuevo Luciano de Quito: Tropes of Nature Disturbed***

There is something to be said regarding Espejo's reliance on hyperbole, metonym, irony, and metaphor even in the character acting as his alter ego. In what follows, I focus primarily on the use of irony and metaphor in Mera's speech to illustrate Espejo's repudiation of figurative language, but also to argue that irrational discourse (such as tropes) was a legitimate medium if used to criticize that very thing.

A review of Mera's facetious praises of Jesuit rhetoric soon reveals that it held an exclusive purpose. Every example I found of the trope is aimed at praising or blaming probabilism and those who defended it. But only on the surface of meaning can we say he was adulatory. Beneath the language, he severely ridiculed the theory.

Luis de Molina (1535-1600), Francisco Suárez (1548-1617), and Juan Caramuel (1606-1682) are targets of Espejo's irony. At one point, Mera refers to the opinions (a figure for probabilism) of Suárez and Molinas as awe-inspiring, simultaneously blaming

them for destroying God's church (70). Similarly, he satirically labels Caramuel "finísimo" ("very fine") as a probabilist (103).

A single theme is repeated in the false praise Mera aims at probabilism in *El nuevo Luciano*. Like the imaginative mind that prefers allegories to reason, the theory feeds off acts of creation. It produces something that was not in the world and at best only contains the remnants of what was once true, a Frankenstein of rhetoric. This helps explain why so many of Mera's tropes and figures of speech center on monsters in the context of discussing Scholastic probabilism as a faulty and pernicious logic. It also sheds light on the reason why Espejo, like Verney and Feijóo, believed *inventio* should be omitted from the start, or from any part, of the five canons of rhetoric that Cicero outlined in *De Inventione*. Arrangement, style, memory, and delivery can carry an orator as far as he would ever need. When *inventio* is a "natural" mental process, then it is hardly an act of creation. The Holy books have sufficient material one can use for sacred oratory. Praising, blaming, and *amplificatio* hold enough tools for the profane. If one could take what is in nature, and if nature is synonymous with "true," then the need to invent is null.

Probabilism becomes a prodigious metamorphosis, a process that converts falsities into praise-worthy virtues (101). There are two levels of sarcasm in Mera's referring to it as the new system of benignity. He was ironic in depicting its goodwill (112) and in calling it "bien meritorio" ("quite meritorious") for transforming evil into righteousness (100). In "Conversacion segunda," Mera terms probabilism an exquisite and refined knowledge (14). We can take Mera's praise with a grain of salt as he uses "brillantes" ("brilliant") in a negative light to modify the imagery that mindless orators craft from irrational logic (139). And at one point Mera presents a moral argument for which Murillo cannot find a sound

justification. The latter becomes frightened at such logic, to which Mera responds: “Vea Vm., aquí ese horror le viene de no ser buen probablista” (“See there, this horror you sense comes from not being a proper probabilist”; 101).

Unlike metaphors, irony is an inversion in meaning. But it does not invite foreign objects in a sentence. Mera does this when he introduces “los mayores monstruos del mundo” (“the greatest monsters of the world] in a statement on defending past human behaviors”; 98). Freaks of nature occupy a large portion of the figurative language Espejo uses in Mera’s speech. Inventive meaning comes from, and leads to, ignorance, “la fecunda madre de monstruosos errores” (“the fecund mother of monstrous errors”; 91). To preach allegorically is to lie, and be a liar is to be the most horrible monster in the republic of letters (134).

Allegorical preaching and probabilism meet at the hip for Espejo. Both rely on the freedom to make disparate objects seem one. Tropes mock the law of non-contradiction in logic. In the first conversation between the two interlocutors, Mera detests metaphors and allegories because one can supply his or her own meaning to things (9). But the proverbial center simply does not hold, not for the least because the readings that Mera shares with Murillo include figurative language from esteemed writers. In one example, Mera quotes Isla’s *Historia de Fray Gerundio de Campazas* (1758) in which Jesuit oratory is “una escoba desatada” (“an untied broom”; 157-58). And as I demonstrated, metaphors by Espejo’s own hand abound.

In *El nuevo Luciano*, talk of restraint (*enmendar*, *moderar*, and *corregir*) juxtaposes the vivid metaphors Espejo uses to portray what French rationalists saw as the arbitrariness with which the imagination connected ideas. When Murillo felt the speech

became interesting was when Mera sensed that orator Don Sancho “desató su lenguaje” (“unleashed his language”; 150). This figure of the release of language speaks to an unchecked accountability of word use. There is a sense of surrender and forfeit in what Mera asks in a pathetic figure of speech: “¿Quién no ve que la razón humana destituida de la ciencia se abandona toda a su débil y desviado *raciocinio*?” (“Who cannot see that human reason, when destitute of science, abandons itself entirely to weak and deviated reasoning?”; 104). The debts to Cartesianism and the Port Royalists treatise on formal logic could not be clearer.

Even poetry is true insofar as it manages to keep its feet on the ground. *Distinctio*, or *paradiástole* in Greek, is a figure of dialogue and argumentation used to reject equivocal uses of a given term. Mera uses the *distinctio* after Murillo shares the joy he finds when orators intensify their figurative discourse “to the sky. It resembles the tragic story of Icarus: “Eso que llama Vm. subir al cielo llamo yo apartarse de la imitación de la naturaleza, y huir del alma de la poesía y elevarse a la esfera del fuego” (“What you call raising up toward the heavens is what I call moving away from the imitation of nature, fleeing from the soul of poetry, and rising to the sphere of fire”; 20). And for as much as he vilifies those who weave mythology and truth to appear eloquent, Espejo pulls from Greek lore for poetic effect when declaring that Jesuit preachers exhausted their resources, such as when he writes that those who most believe that they indulge in the Fount of Aganippe in fact have not a drop of it (20).

When not portrayed figuratively by Murillo as a poetic suspension of life, the irrational thought process that legitimized Jesuit oratory and probabilism warranted metaphors of corruption, contagions, and vice. It was a disease that seemingly produced

symptoms of nausea only in the rationally minded uninfected bystanders and never in those infected (43). In one sentence alone, Mera uses images of infestation and decay three times in reference to the Jesuit artistic tradition: “la corrupción infestó a casi todos los cuerpos literarios, entre los que ninguno contrajo en tanto grado el contagio ni más, que nuestra Compañía” (“The corruption infected almost all literary spaces, among which none contracted the contagion to such a degree, or more, than our company”; 105-06). This infestation or corruption was equal parts rational, rhetorical, and moral.

Even when treated separately, the imagination and probabilism are draped in the same metaphors, as if indicating that they spring from the same mental and moral errors. In *El nuevo Luciano*, the Ancients were portrayed as if they did not use figurative language in the same way the Jesuits did during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a time Mera portrays as if everything conspired to corrupt the brain with lively concepts that were unseen previously (16). What he calls rhetorical corruption came from the century obsessed with allegories, false shimmers, gallantry of wits, and the stale sound of Latinisms (132). For Espejo, to bask in sentences laden with words that only adorn as somewhat empty and foreign sounds in the ear is to demand even meeker standards of discourse theory. Even equivocation is construed in *El nuevo Luciano* as pernicious. For rationalists theorizing about truth, as we saw in *Port-Royal Logic*, geometry was the bellwether of clarity of expression because its terms were undeniable, unequivocal, nearly medium-less, and opposed to indulgences of nebulous Latin vowels in the ear (132).

Such rebukes convey Espejo’s disgust and moral concerns. Preachers and other religious leaders who relied on rhetorical trickery only encouraged their parishioners to similarly justify their own illicit thinking and behavior. To obviate logical, rhetorical, and

moral sins, *El nuevo Luciano* proposes a clear methodology that lays bare the corruption of the opinions inspired by probabilism (110). Using even more rhetorical weight, Espejo describes this as a vice contrary to the close ties that bind society (36). Equivocation, interpretation, and other rhetorical figures are dangerous to hearts and minds: it dissolves the natural and agreeable treatment between all people (36). Figurative rhetoric and probabilism in general inspired metaphors of corruption that reflected, for Espejo, its enslaved individual and the mental slavery on the individual and Catholic society at large. To have one's brain inverted was to be subjected to allegories, subtle interpretations, or, hyperbolically, "mil locuras ajenas al sentido genuino serio y sagrada de la Escritura" ("a thousand insanities unaffiliated with the authentic serious and sacred meaning of scripture"; 131). Those who used rhetoric in such a manner were, in Catholic terms, possessed by the devil (88, 136). Figurative language was cheap: laziness possessed those who ought to have been employed in real study (121). Those who only judged rhetorical quality based on an emotional response to it were inebriated (135, 142) or prisoners of vice, disgraceful slaves to vulgar corruption (43).

Perhaps Espejo's most forceful statement to condemn false eloquence as a force of slavery over the reason and the will appears at the end of the ninth and final conversation, on the topic of Sacred oratory. Mera uses the figure of diction anaphora to bring the weight of reverberation to the topic already treated in metaphor:

no veo más que el confuso torbellino de la barbarie, no veo más que padrones  
vergonzosísimos de una pésima educación; no veo más que esclavos abatidos y  
encadenados afrentosamente a la licencia a las pasiones y al vicio. (167)

I see nothing but the confused whirlwind of barbarism, I see nothing more than the shameful models of a terrible education; I see nothing but abject and chained slaves to passion and vice.

As in many passages of *El nuevo Luciano*, artistic meaning (“el confuso torbellino de la barbarie” and “esclavos abatidos y encadenados”) has a place, and it occupies it rather conspicuously. Tropes and structured movements of figures of diction often meet in the same thought. The theory that informed the rhetorical decisions can be traced to rationalist thought in France. The irony in his using figurative language to criticize it comes from the fact that Espejo’s ideal rhetoric converged with the complicated reality of language. Figurative speech supplemented the emotional quality not accessible to him had he kept his devices strictly under the umbrella of direct speech. Although seen throughout *El nuevo Luciano*, Espejo’s metaphors and allegories develop dramatically in number and intensity in *La ciencia blancardina* to underscore his opinions further.

### ***Ciencia blancardina: The Demons of Demonstrative Rhetoric and the Transcribing of Nature***

Whereas *El nuevo Luciano de Quito* was political, focusing on education and mental processes, *La ciencia blancardina* (1781) was personal. After portrayed as an impious and heretic atheist, Espejo subjected Quito’s official censor, Juan de Arauz, to lengthy conversations on aesthetics through the character Moisés Blancardo. Arauz harshly criticized the still anonymous author of *El nuevo Luciano* as part of his formal approval and praise of a figuratively embellished funerary speech eulogy delivered by Don Ramón de Yépez in 1780. Espejo weaves direct passages from Arauz’s (Blancardo’s) literary



commentary with reflexive digressions from the partisans aimed at demonstrating how little Arauz knows about true eloquence.

In true French neoclassical fashion, Espejo's characters praise the language of important writers of Antiquity. They recommend Cicero and Quintilian for mastering the most important genres of rhetoric for sacred and historiographic oratory. This was, of course, the demonstrative praising and blaming, with its clearly defined parts: exhortation, narration, confirmation, and peroration. (376, 293, 294, 350). And it is impossible to speak of Longinus's influence in Espejo's era without mentioning that of Boileau (294). Like with Feijóo, Verney, and many French writings, Espejo believes Seneca infected Spain more than elsewhere with literary vices (350). For his "juegos de palabra" ("word games"), antithesis, and witticisms, Seneca was known as an early pillager of eloquence from the Iberian Peninsula (335).

Espejo references *On Christian Doctrine* multiple times in *Ciencia blancardina* when emphasizing that intelligibility is the one rule orators absolutely must follow, if nothing else (307, 370). Precision of thought is the fruit of lecture or study, but rather it hinges on familiarizing oneself with the nature of the understanding, a view Espejo's mouthpiece believes Descartes had taught the world (361). San Agustín held an important place in Port Royalists' *Logique, ou l'Art de penser* and in Cartesianism in general. Theological debates on free will and grace, concerned those associated with the Port Royal Abbey and the Jesuits. The latter emphasized agency and frequent confession, and the Port Royalists a more encompassing interpretation of grace that presupposed for a somewhat determinist worldview influencing one's choices. As Stephen Menn argues in *Descartes and Augustine*, the Frenchman borrowed heavily from the other when he based his methodology

underpinning *Principles of Philosophy* and *Meditations* on Agustín's theological call to reject external authorities and instead to turn the mind's eye inward for a firm religious convictions found within one's thought (245). French and Hispanic rationalists long after Descartes applied the methodology to rhetoric.

The school of rhetoric espoused by the French neoclassicist remains Espejo's standard of logical and rhetorical excellence in Quito. After considering what local orators say to appear eloquent, Mera finds it would be best that some things simply be left said in the French style (382). Even though they portray imaginative preachers as haunted by unnatural forces negatively, Mera and Murillo state that the best thing to happen to some orators is to be possessed by the spirit of glory like the French (382).<sup>34</sup>

### ***Ciencia blancardina: Figures of Diction as Devices for Clarity***

Numerous figures of diction in Espejo's rhetorical arsenal for *Ciencia blancardina* are suggestive of the ideals of Cartesian rationalist. The author again portrays Descartes as the one who discovered that the understanding, at its most basic level, is pure thought, which ought to adhere to a logic, or art of thinking (361). At its core, the method relies on a binary structure. Likewise, Espejo often uses an the antithesis for rhetorical effect. Mera explains that an art is required to regulate thought judiciously: "es o claro u oscuro, será su modo de pensar brillante, o tenebroso, confuso, o claro, estéril o fecundo" ("thought is either clear or dark, its mode of thinking brilliant or desconcerted, tenebrous, or clear, barren, or fecund"; 361). In their resemblance to *paráfrasis* (figure of amplification that reiterates an idea) and the *epífrasis* (figure of accumulation for adding new ideas to a

thought that seemed completed), the final pair of ideas “estéril o fecundo” of ideas functions more as an embellishment than as a direct argumentative statement.

Espejo often engages the trope of darkness in groupings of three. As *paráfrasis*, Murillo inserts similar images in a statement on the way in which Jesuits received *El nuevo Luciano*: “Sin duda que rabiarian de dolor y de cólera. Porque Vm. reparó en los jesuitas, en los blancardos y algunos otros oradores por mal nombre, tierra, sombra, tiniebla, nada en comparación de Flechier, Bossuet, y Mascarón” (“Surely they would rage with pain and anger. Because you, Mera, disclaimed the Jesuits, the *blancardos* and other orators of bad name, dirt, shade, darkness, second-class to Flechier, Bossuet, or Mascarón”; 340). The downward crescendo into nothingness is a brief poetic aside. The repetitive form adds gravity to content relating to darkness/ignorance and to those whose insight Espejo believed relied entirely on the language of the senses/imagination.

Poetic imagery of darkness again is achieved through figures of repetition as Murillo rejects Jesuit rhetorical habits. In moments in *Ciencia blancardina*, Murillo’s emotions overcome his composure in attacks on the oratory taught to the youth of Quito:

Basta ponérsele a un predicador en la cabeza, y lo malo será que no lo tome por mania de por vida. Entonces, en viendo una sola leve sombra, de que podrá deducirse la locura, que ha barruntado, allá se mete, torciendo, retorciendo y extorciendo, aunque sea no más que una palabrita; basta una sombra, sí, Señor [...] ¿Por qué no diré que esta sombra es propia y característica de los Blancardos, que viven en sombras, andan en sombras, y vegetan troncos elevados para la sombra, y para una sombra de juníperos? (312)

All it takes is to get a preacher in his head, the what's worse is that he won't see it the craze behind it. Then, upon seeing a slight shadow from which madness he imagines can be strewn, he starts twisting, wringing, and exorcizing, be it only a term. A shadow suffices, it's true... Why should I not say that this shadow art is characteristic of the *blancardos*, who live in shadows, walk in shadows, and loiter in elevated trunks for shade, and for a juniper shade?

The passage portrays Jesuit preachers in a way that suggests that they rely on the obscurity of language to extract some dark power. Inside the larger figure of the seven-repeating word "sombra," Espejo still recurs to the triple structure as seen in other passages when he states "torciendo, retorciendo y extorciendo" as a *paráfrasis* based on *annominatio*. The minor adding and altering of two-letter prefixes to the root word in the triple-run of *torciendo-retorciendo-extorciendo* brings considerable figurative meaning to the table. The three gerund verbs appear as a brief slip in eloquence. It is as if, like Feijóo, a more visually, figurative, and moving mode of speech manages to break the surface at times despite the force of suppression that reason exerts to control it.

In one passage when his language did not appear full of nonsensical vocabulary, Moisés Blancardo tells of where he learned to speak. Almost apologetically, Blancardo explains his upbringing in school. It is a passage in that resembles statements by Fray Gerundio de Campazas in Father Islas' satirical novel. Blancardo describes: "allí he aprendido a mi juicio todo, todo lo que puede saber un honrado Padre Maestro, para ser lo más que puede ser, y todo aquello a que puede aspirar un religioso, lleno de deseo de ser tenido por sabio" (293). The words "puede" and "ser" alternate three times. The triple weaving of "puede" and "ser" provides a stagnated sense of falling short of a desired goal.

There is also a feeling of perpetual uncertainty representative of the infinitely imaginative license on which Jesuit probabilism, and oratory, relied.

The ideal eloquence for Espejo was one in which truth itself could be, so to speak, a rhetorical figure. Discourse should be as clear and distinct as the arguments and language of analytical geometry. In *Ciencia blancardina* we read are tautologies that attempt to state what is recently established. A tautology is a form of repetition in logic. It is an utterance of some broad and irrefutable statement or one that replicates what already has been said with different language. Espejo uses this device as a form of rational *amplificatio*. Mera's interpretation of the praise Arauz gave of Yépez's speech finds that it was "escrita sin buena lógica y sin un átomo de buena retórica" ("written without genuine logic, and without a scrap of genuine rhetoric"; 364). The transference from a lack of logic to a lack of rhetoric certainly builds a feeling of intensity. But the part can already be inferred from the whole. The rationalists placed rhetoric within the larger umbrella of logic, as secondary to the whole. Poor logic must lead to poor rhetoric. Inversely, rational eloquence in the context of poor thinking would be a contradiction.

One of Espejo's most frequent figures for minimizing the distortion of language were brief repetitions, like anaphora. The author uses *annominatio*, metonym (a reference one idea through an attribute associated with it) and *quaesitum* in response to Arauz's critique of the prequel to *Ciencia blancardina* for greater rhetorical effect: "¿Quién es envidioso, el aprobante o el autor del *Nuevo Luciano*? ¿Quién es la misma envidia, su aprobación o mis diálogos?" ("Who is envious, the critic or the author or *Nuevo Luciano*? Who is envy itself, the estimation, or my dialogues?"; 436). This unmistakable recycling of words speaks to a ubiquitous theme in texts by Feijóo, Verney, Espejo, and Port-Royalists. The *annominatio*

and other figures of diction in their works reflect the reforms of Scholastic rhetoric and poetics stipulated by Cartesian logicians and neoclassicists during the long eighteenth century. We can see that Espejo's retrieving of words in such brief succession points to a sense of self-imposed scarcity of words, a restraint on eloquence.

Time and again, Espejo uses words for irrational emotions in devices of rhetoric impression as if the sign were completely free from the action he would have never wanted to experience in oratory. Three passages from Espejo satire *Ciencia blanconrdina* use of the verb "reír" in simple repetition, which circumscribe his rhetorical flair and made his diction appear rational, even austere. Mera states that pagans taught how to speak eloquently; the religious Fathers, in contrast, taught how to speak like a Christian ("Christian-like"; 381). But if a Cicero, a Demosthenes, a Quintilian, or a Longinus were to witness the oratory in Espejo's Quito, Mera insists, "Reiráse a carcajadas, y tendrá mucha razón de reírse, vengando con la risa la injuria que se le hace" ("He would laugh out loud, and he would have much reason for laughing, avenging with laughter the injury done to him"; 341). In reflecting on the language he observes in society, Murillo is also led to laughter: "Ríome y me he de reír" ("I laugh, for I ought to laugh"; 328). In the final pages of the text, we find similar forms of *annominatio*: "Ríese, pues, de la temeridad ajena, y se reirá para siempre" ("he laughs, well, at the recklessness of others, and he will laugh forever"; 432). And we find it again, a few lines later: "tratado con franqueza, se ve que es mucho lo que ríe a vista de todos, pero muchísimo más es lo que a sus solas se ríe" ("frankly, a lot of laughter occurs openly, but even much more laughter occurs in private"; 432). Espejo was clearly not averse to playing with language. He toys with the sign, not with the meaning it signifies. To experiment liberally with meaning would make his speech allegorical. Instead of using

words to produce the feeling of laughter in the spectator's imagination for rhetorical effect, Espejo manipulates the verb representing the same action but quarantined from where the reader's emotions lie.

Espejo often relies on brief pauses of *paráfrasis* based on *annominatio*. The result is an extension and amplification of a thought without the involvement of foreign ideas in a statement's main message. For example, the methodology of orators, Mera states, "no es ni puede ser pauta para reglar el modo de pensar" ("is not nor cannot be the guideline for the method of regulating thought"; 361). And Murillo asks Blancardo if "en esa casa blancardina hay, hubo o habrá cátedra de retórica" ("in the *blancardian* house there is, was, or will be a professorship of rhetoric"; 293). Using the same figure of diction, Murillo rhetorically asks if Blancardo "juzga que todos piensan, deben pensar y pensarán" ("assesses, that all think, should think, and will think") that the Jesuit oratory they listen to should be a timeless model of rhetoric (273). Also, Mera, references the heroes of the Classical period before stating that "todos ellos ejercieron o pudieron ejercer el apetecido secreto de hablar y de pensar en el modo sublime" ("a lot of them exercised or managed to exercise the desirable secret of speaking y of thinking in the sublime method"; 292). Here, I reiterate, we read the emphasis on logical representation in the sublime mode. Upon considering Espejo's rhetoric closely, we detect a delicate treatment of speech. Espejo seizes upon a word and through the *annominatio* he bends it with morphological variations, or otherwise, without deforming the logic of the language in the manner he thought Scholastic probabilism did through figurative interpretation.

Espejo inverts word order in ways not entirely classified as *chiasmus*. One example arises in a discussion on Bouhours. In a manner that recalls the Frenchman's treatises on

theory, Espejo portrays language as if long abused by Scholastic reasoning, too delicate to withstand more than simple and elegant movements of diction, and insists that *le bel sprit* is a rarity. I am especially interested in a figure of diction that Espejo uses here to recall Bouhours' language for defining eloquence: "El Padre Bouhours, pintando con belleza de espíritu, un espíritu bello, ha dicho que él es una cosa muy rara" ("Father Bouhours, painting with beauty of spirit, has said that he is quite a rarity"; 423). The element of adornment is imaginatively austere. When Espejo inverts the words for beauty and sprit, none of the material for such embellishment is sourced from beyond the information already contained in the sentence, which is how one would identify metaphors, tropes, and even similes. The language is, in a sense, faithful to itself.

Having undergone a reform since *El nuevo Luciano*, Murillo grows frustrated with Blancardo's education in rational discursive logic. Murillo's grievances emerge through a form of chiasmus with a complimenting element of irony. He states "docto" ("educated") and "sabio" ("wise") as a unit joined by a conjunction, which is also surrounded on both sides by each corresponding word: "Yo sé cuál es su aplauso, cuál es el que tiene y logra. Es de jesuita blanco, que es lo más que puede ser un hombre docto, docto y sabio, sabio" ("I know your praise, and what it holds and accomplishes. It is of a *blanco* Jesuit, which is the most what a learned man can be, learned and wise, wise"; 428). Espejo places a similar turn of diction in Mera's speech when, after hearing Murillo read a passage from a heavily embellished sermon, he declares, with an air of severity and firmness: "Éste es portento, éste es prodigio, monstruo es éste" ("This is sensationalist, this is prodigious, monstrous this is"; 313). As a response to something so aggravating to Mera (Espejo), the fixed configuration of the parison parallelism (a marked symmetry in syntax structure) suggests



a moment of the regulation of the emotions, a rational response of language. There is a Neoclassical delicacy in the figure as if the adornment can waver only enough to allow for a refined *variatio* at the conclusion of the phrase, as in the release of tension from the repetition by altering the arrangement.

Espejo intensifies the complexity of his diction with the *commutatio* as meticulous rhetorical maneuverings of inventive restraint. The figure builds on the chiasmus, but additionally inverts grammatical functions. It shows an awareness of form as much as a limitation on words. For example, Mera lists several famous Greek thinkers who he believes “parecen oradores perfectos y grandes en asuntos vulgares y pequeños, y se muestran oradores pequeños para los grandes objetos” (“come across as perfect and great orators in common and small matters and show themselves to be small orators in matters of greatness”; 292). Again, there is a vigilant and restrained treatment of the ideas expressed. One can say that Espejo seeks adornment in balance, symmetry, and avoids what it is he believed allegories and metaphors impart on meaning.

Espejo presents an anti-probabilist thought experiment to reiterate that plainness and distinctness of rhetoric are superior to enigmatic conceptions. He tells his reader that when confronted by a stylistic *dubitatio*, an uncertainty involving two possible modes of action, the path of greater rationality will always lead to the lesser poetic offense, despite the risk of utter simplicity: “Es mejor...una apariencia de casualidad desgraciada...que no que nuestras inepticias, dichas con magisterio, persuadan a las gentes que somos pobres de talento, y aun *negados*” (“The casual show of disgrace is better than to have our ineptitudes conveyed with majesty, that they persuade people that we lack talent, let alone void of it”);

301). Continuing his diatribe, Espejo calls impressionist language depraved (350), and later the seductive splendor of a rhetorical artifice distant from the truth (389).

### ***Ciencia blancardina: Tropes of Madness***

In geometry, “oblique” refers to a line that crosses another indirectly, so as not to form a right square. In rhetoric, *figuras oblicuas* are the artistic devices that shed a dark light on ideas. They point to concepts not quite as indirectly as a trope but are explicitly more tenuous than the typical figure of thought. Espejo uses the device *reticencia* almost exclusively through Mera’s voice alone as if the character of greatest reasoning reached the threshold where literal meaning ended and poetic began but could not commit to continuing further with both feet. The language suggests a hindrance of discourse, such as when Mera pathetically states that we would not even speak of the science inhabiting his mind while ridiculing Jesuit forms of knowledge (412). For Espejo, *reticencia* does not arise out of a state of ignorance or of a lack of time. It comes from the encumbrance of putting ideas onto language and rhetorical units. The rationalist Enlightenment tradition championed unmediated language. And yet, in place of clear and distinct communication, it held *reticencia* at the center of their discourse on this topic. Such is the case with name *el no sé qué* and its originating *je ne sais quoi*. The paradox is the fact that the name for such a central concept for the rationalist tradition explicitly confesses the shortcomings of an impossibly optimistic rational, clear, and distinct use of language by acknowledging what it cannot communicate well.

Tropes are much more common in *Ciencia blancardina* than the playful taunting of oblique figures of thought. For example, the effect of logic and rhetoric in discourse is

poetically “aquel enlace y mano” (“that bind and hand”; 362). In many passages, metaphors of darkness convey ignorance within a physical location, i.e., “Quito es la misma noche” (“Quito is the night itself”; 325); or within the imagination, as in “que ella misma domine la cabeza del que duerme en las oscuridades del sueño y de la noche” (“that is it her herself who masters the head of he who sleeps in the darkness of dream and night”; 334). Like Feijóo, the term Espejo often uses for imagination is the feminine noun *fantasia*. Whereas for Locke the female was figuratively bound to eloquence due to qualities of subtlety, silence, and restraint, for Espejo she was linked to irrational thought and frivolous rhetoric. Rationalism places ideas in binary relationships. In *Ciencia blancardina*, this meant that a family of sane and foul sisters are the allegorical equivalents of logical and illogical uses of language, respectively. First, Murillo provides a metaphorical *prosopografía*, a vivid description of a person’s external aspects, about unfounded discourse:

Había en cierta ciudad dos hermanas de buena calidad, la una de juicio, y la otra descachalandrada como ella sola; por vestido tenía un gergón a modo de marcellez, peluca y flecos que terminaban en cascarrias, una camisa de cordellate, un medio capucho por cofia; toda ella despatarrada por las niguas que le entraban y salían; el rostro con media vara de sebo; el pelo enmarañado a largos nudos; y el cuerpo todo que destilaba negro aceite, despedía vapor grueso, hediondo, hacía caer andrajos, que los piojos los cargaban y movían de aquí para allí. (339-40)

Once in a certain city, there were two good-natured sisters, one sane, and the other unhinged as she was, wore a ruffled rag as a dress, a wig, and fringes with dried mud, a burlap shirt, half of a hood as cap, a complete wreck with fleas coming and going, half a stick of fat covering her face, her hair amassed in large knots, and her

hold body exuding a black oil, and giving off thick steam, fetid, releasing bits of rag as she went, which the fleas transported here and there.

Although here we learn of two sisters, only the irrational one warrants tropes for her representation. The rational counterpart requires no such figures, and therefore can be defined as the logical center *against which* one measures deviation, madness. She does, however, occupy the role of regulator on the other:

La hermana juiciosa, que lamentaba el triste pero voluntario estado de aquesta, la decía: mira, que toda pareces y eres en realidad un asco, causas horror a la vista y a la consideración; para nada sirves, porque Dios no puede aceptar tu disidia, y el Diablo te burla y te desprecia. Vuelve en ti, ponte aseada, muda de pensamientos, usa del rico patrimonio que dejó nuestro buen padre. (340)

The judicious sister, who lamented the sorry state but voluntary state of the other, said to her: Look, you look and are a disgust, you horrify at the sight and at simply the thought of you; given that Dog cannot accept your negligence, and the Devil scorns and despises you, pull yourself together, get clean, change your thoughts, use the bountiful inheritance left by our good father.

As I see it, the first sister's reaction reveals more of her character (*etopeya*) than of her external features:

Entonces esta sucia y desidiosa mujer le respondía: ¡ay, demonio de mujer! ¡hasta cuándo me atormentas! ¡nada me enfada si no tu envidia! ¡Soy la más hermosa mujer del mundo, y dale que parezco un asco! Vete, fea envidiosa, lejos de aquí, molesta, soberbia, melancólica, cruel y no hermana, sino la misma envidia. (340)

And then the dirty and negligent sister replied: Oh, devil of a woman! Until when will you torment me? Nothing bothers me but your jealousy. I am the most beautiful woman in the world, notwithstanding how I look! Go, you ugly and jealous one, far from here, you nuisance, arrogant, lowly, cruel *not* sister, but jealousy itself.

I emphasize that equating vain femininity to oratorical embellishments in content and form clearly was not exclusive to Espejo. The language describing the allegorized deficient rhetoric relies on the image of a woman in a grotesque state. This in fact resembles Feijóo's writing on the same subject in "Despotismo, o dominio tiránico de la imaginación," with the story of the woman who is led to vomit each time the idea of it arises in her imagination, usually from hearing talk of it ("Despotismo," par. 1-4). This also follows the Galician's "Origen de la fábula en Historia," in which we read of the degenerated water, plants, animals, and body of land at the River Styx as allegory of what unstable language does to historiography. Espejo uses the anaphora as he moves from the face, hair, and body of the woman in sentences that somewhat share a similar length and structure. He concludes his thought with the intensity of *peristasis*, which detains the reader's imagination on attendant circumstances, such as the pests that the woman's body houses and casts about as she walks (340).

Further uses of allegories based on females share much of the same structure seen the example from Espejo above. In what follows, Espejo places greater expressive *amplificatio* on conventions for which rationalist theorists advocated. The judgment of an author who lacks the restraint that reason offers the imagination is likened to "una crítica furiosa, una crítica despiadada, una crítica cruel y peor que una mujer celosa" ("a furious, ruthless critique, one more cruel than a jealous woman"; 278). Aside from the stress

created by simple triple repetition in the last quote, Espejo's *epífrasis* returns to the same idea more inventively and fervently. Thus, following what appeared to be its closure, we encounter a segue to a second, and more amplified, portrayal of her as infinitely unhinged:

[A]trevida, insolente, terrible, sin derecho, sin investidura, sin respeto, abrirá la entrañas de la tierra y hará parecer en juicio a los Muertos, sacudirá el polvo de sus escritos y los descarnará hasta volverlos armazón de huesos, o verdaderos esqueletos. Y si se acuerda de los que gozan vida, arrastrará a su terrible faz y a la espantosa presencia de su furibundo tribunal, a los más vivos y sus fúnebres panegíricos, a los más *vividores* y sus dolientes aprobaciones, y a todos los *Blancardos* y todos sus ignorantes pulpitables desahogos. (278-79)

[P]resumptuous, insolent, terrible, exposed, without respect, will open the bowels of the Earth and will bring the dead to judgment, will cast the dust from her writings and will debone them until they become reveal a framework of bones, or a real skeleton. And if she remembers those who do enjoy life, she will drag the most haunted and animated panegyrics, and the most unnerving and agonizing of speeches, and all the *blancardos* with all their ignorant and audible gasps to his dreadful presence, and to that of the ghastly tribunal.

The passage above intensifies exponentially the classical trope of rhetoric as a lady (“una dama”). It is not unlike Espejo’s attack on sacred oratory in Spain. The method of preaching was characteristic of from Spain, he states, before expanding further on her:

Dama de saya de cola, tontillo bordado, zapatito de tafilete, bata circasiana y muy petimetrona, aunque es verdad que casada con joven pulcro, de muchas narices,

espigado, vivaracho, active, pronto, llamado Don Concepto, de buena familia Antigua, y por eso con título de Señor de real discurso. (304)

A woman with a tail skirt, an embroidered petticoat, polished leather shoes, a Circassian-style gown, and very eccentric about it, nonetheless married to a tidy young man, who has his nose all about, tall, lively, punctual, named Don Conceit, of olden lineage, and for that reason given the title of Sir of real discourse.

He then gives logical, structured thinking a contrasting internal and external characterization. Enlightened rhetoric, again personified, is cognizant of her boundaries while also retaining a degree of masculinity in her resemblance and carriage: “una crítica mujer cristiana, con zapatos de hombre, saya larga de chamote, devota y de Dios [que] ejercería su oficio cuando le tocase, cuanto tuviese legítima jurisdicción, cuando fuese de su fuero y de su conocimiento la causa” (“a Christian woman with men’s shoes, wearing long attire for made for battle, dedicated and God-fearing, would carry out her function when called to it, when it was within her jurisdiction, and when she was knowledge for the task”; 278). This “Christian” lady, or Sacred rhetoric, knows her boundaries, or place.

The extent to which Espejo communicated indirectly through tropes confirms the influence that French rationalist writings had in influencing his thought, rhetoric, and satirical poetics. Statements like “Soy amigo de hablar con ingenuidad” (“I am a friend to honest speech] by Mera distinctly point to Port-Royalist ideas and turns of phrase”; 367). The same applies to his metaphors that connect studying the raw, unembellished concepts of physics with familiarizing oneself with a rhetoric of honesty, such as when Mera states that his merit comes from studying the “el vastísimo libro de la naturaleza” (“the exceptionally vast book of nature”; 326). In what may qualify as more of a simile than a

trope, in the final conversation in *Ciencia blancardina* Espejo's alter ego later repeats a similar depiction when he states that "la misma naturaleza parece que nos está insinuando con la voz de la razón" ("it is as if nature herself insinuates to us the voice a reason"; 414).

Themes of landscape make interesting appearances in Mera's language. I read it as evidence of the Enlightenment's presumptive return to nature was even applied to rhetoric and poetics, making a mathematical science out of oratory and historiography. Mera waxes poetically about Pascal for his rational knowledge and how he acquired it. He tells the others that the French mathematician was prohibited from studying geometry by his father but nonetheless had access to the Earth under his feet. The picture Espejo creates is one in which the reader imagines Pascal contemplating shapes and lines drawn in the ground with a stick until eventually arriving at "invenciones geométricas (que así puedo llamarlas)" ("geometric inventions"; 295). The *hypotyposis*, the salient mental image, of Pascal writing in the dirt allegorizes the almost seamless relationship Espejo envisioned between logic, language, and nature.

Like with the oblique figures discussed previously, the phrase "que así puedo llamarlas" from the citation above is a metaliterary gesture Espejo uses more than once to theorize a thin line between rational knowledge and language, both of which are central to Catholic ethics and morals. Nature speaks to the mind in a still, transparent, voice. Espejo's mouthpiece adds that the straight edge of reason provides life lessons if only someone wanted to hear its remarkably clear language, a language, Mera adds, differs little from what guides geometric demonstrations (332).

Discussions on social and political theories for behavior according to the notion of natural law later found an avenue for expansion within human language. Murillo speaks of



“leyes de la Retórica verdadera” (316). It consisted of an orderly and methodic expresión (316). Mera uses metaphors to the same point. For example, the fact that the Murillo in *Nuevo Luciano* expressed himself poorly “se le puede constar con demostraciones matemáticas” (“can be shown with mathematical demonstrations”; 406). After presenting an extensive translated quote from Bouhours on regulated discourse, Mera uses the word *transcribir* to describe the action he looks to carry out in applying the Frenchman’s ideas to Quito. This takes place within a larger metaphor on painting: “He aquí el bello lienzo que nos hace ver el citado Padre; y como mi ánimo es transcribir todos los colores que le pinta” (Here is the beautiful canvas that the Father we quoted makes us see; and as my intention is to transcribe all the colors that he paints”; 425). The difference between translating and transcribing is particularly important in the context of the discussion on the well-defined interaction of ideas under rationalism. Although it takes a poet to interpret, to transcribe is literal. To render a statement into Morse code, for example, sacrifices or alters nothing that concerns the concepts expressed in it. There is simply a new embodying medium, such as the difference between Roman and Arabic numerals.

Like we read in the previous chapter on Verney, the rationalist influence in Espejo’s poetics holds painting and rhetoric as similar art forms in believing that both should be measured based on their mimesis of truth, not inventive conceit. The aesthetic standard is seen as cynical toward the shaping of meaning by human language and as originating in French theorists. Clear and direct speech becomes incompatible with unmediated information. Espejo employs a variety of poetic imagery showcasing his distrust of the imagination as a *locus* for philosophical argumentation for this readers in Quito. To speak as clearly and as distinctly as Mera does, according to his interlocutors, is to “correr la

cortina para que veamos todos" ("to unfurl the curtain so that we all can see"; 359). Or, as Mera puts it: "para hablar como corresponde yo no hago más que abrir la puerta" ("to speak suitably, I do nothing more than just open the door"; 351). Espejo's satire suggests that rhetoric could and should serve a revelatory function, whether the discourse was sacred or profane. In that function, eloquence clears the dust and darkness that conceal the "truth" as "nature" would have it. But there is an inescapable exchange between a non-mediating rhetoric and the poetic metaphors Espejo writes to describe it.

## Conclusion

In this study, I surveyed thought and form in works by Benito Jerónimo Feijóo y Montenegro (1676-1764), Luís António Verney (1713-1792), and Francisco Javier Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo (1747-1795), to understand further the extent to which French rationalism shaped theories of rhetoric of the Transatlantic Hispanic Enlightenment.

In Chapter One, I outlined the tradition of probabilism and its relationship to historiography in the Iberian Peninsula. Pérez de Moya (1514-1596), the Royal Historian Ambrosio de Morales (1513-1591), and Jerónimo de San José (1587-1654) borrowed from Aristotle the idea that one could not demand of language a mathematical assurance in questions of in which the truth of a matter would involve ambiguity. Moral certitude was the highest mark for human testimony. The unsurmountable opacity between allegory and fact pushed the limits of the rhetorical license in historiography and preceded the corrective measures by those who looked to rationalism to regulate how ideas ought to connect to one another in areas beyond the formal sciences.

In seventeenth-century France, what René Descartes (1596-1650) saw as unstructured mental processes in history eventually led to his famous methodology for ascertaining only undeniable facts. This gave a heightened valuation of natural philosophy in mathematics, geometry, and logic. Sound judgment, then, was a question of universals, not particulars, of restraint, not inventiveness. Works by Dominique Bouhours (1628-1702) and Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711) that popularized these precepts in aesthetics proved to be influential in Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo. And like with the three authors I studied, the critique of eloquence by the French rationalists Blaise Pascal (1623-

1662), Pierre Nicole (1625-1695), and Antoine Arnauld (1612-1694) enveloped theological disputes with the Jesuits for allegedly treating fable and truth indiscriminately in their writing and oratory.

In Chapter Two, I analyzed works on rhetoric and the imagination in Feijóo's *Teatro crítico universal* (1726-39) and *Cartas eruditas* (1742-60). Feijóo primarily wrote for the general audience of Spain's eighteenth century. I argue that his attacks on Jesuit oratory and probabilism point to important French influences. And as I demonstrated, Feijóo closely charts French rationalist arguments in his own writings. Through that influence, Feijóo's language reveals an amalgamation of literary devices. Feijóo inherits a rhetorical repertoire for portraying allegories, metaphors, figurative language in general, and a vivid imagination, as infection, corruption, and a violation of nature. This, however, did not prevent him from writing with any less heightened figurative vigor. Feijóo understood his readers and he knew how to reach them with language. I identified passages in which Feijóo appeals, not to rational intellect, but to the grotesque. The Galician's depiction of the infamous River Styx in Greek mythology and its origin in nature is one example I analyzed. Feijóo resorts to figures of *amplificatio* to showcase the land, water, plants, animals, and air in vivid imagery, and *acumulatio* to create tension in his reader. The result is a spectacle of human attention about a story which also functioned as an allegory of the trajectory that historical fact endures over time and geography before it deteriorates as fable.

In Chapter Three, I argued that Cartesian rationalism had an enormous influence on Luís António Verney's *O verdadeiro método de estudar no Portugal moderno* (1746), the author's declaration for the modernization the Jesuit plan of studies. Through a close reading of Letters 5 and 6 on rhetoric, I demonstrated ways that Verney's discourse acted

on notions of geometry and logic. Using an assortment of figures of repetition, whose interrelations are strictly formal, Verney embellished his diction without jeopardizing the clearness and distinctness of his content. Verney also often structured his thought around triads, chiasmus, and an assortment of other rational and symmetrical restraints.

But Verney held no reservations over his wealth of imaginative tropes when praising or blaming figurative rhetoric. At best, language should be the geometry with which the painter produces verisimilar perspective, while metaphors Verney uses to deride emblematic meaning often involve objects in nature such as uncultivated precious stones, and intricate spiderwebs that nonetheless fail to capture their prey. In line with the French rationalist tradition, Verney presents tropes of monsters and mummies to cast irrational language as a violation of nature.

In Chapter Four, I traced the rationalist critique of rhetoric in two Menippean satires published in Quito by Francisco Javier Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo. The mulatto, and Indian-born physician and prerevolutionary was heavily influenced by Dominique Bouhours in France, whose *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (1671) laid the foundation for the dialogues between the two and three interlocutors in *El nuevo Luciano de Quito o Despertador de los ingenios quiteños en nueve conversaciones eruditas para el estímulo de la literatura* (1779) and in *Ciencia blancardina* (1781), respectively. Verney's treatise on reforming Portuguese education was equally paramount to Espejo's didactic purpose as he sought to raise awareness of the same abuses of language he alleged were imposed on youth in the Viceroyalty of New Granada. Espejo's arguments in his defense in *Ciencia blancardina* to the attacks by Jesuits critical of his assaults in *El nuevo Luciano* on their

figurative eloquence closely reflect those of the French rationalist Blaise Pascal in *Lettres provinciales* (1656-57) in shared points of contention.

Like Feijóo and Verney, Espejo placed the restraint of the imagination at the center of his theory of eloquence. Among other observations, the persistent use of the *estrújula* in characters satirizing Jesuit orators juxtaposed the figures of omission used by Espejo's alter ego. I interpreted the erasure of grammatically expendable signs as a form of restraint on eloquence, an act of bringing language down to a simpler, and clear and distinct, parlance. The figurative expressions used by Espejo's alter ego follow the tropes seen in Feijóo, Verney, and in the French rationalists who influenced them. They included mad sisters, monsters, drunkenness, and an unnatural metamorphosis.

Julie Greer Johnson makes an interesting case in "Satire in Colonial Spanish America" regarding Espejo's specific aim in publishing *El nuevo Luciano* and *Ciencia blancardina*, given that the Jesuits already had been expelled from the region in 1767. Her reading is that the texts served as a warning to the other religious orders who remained in the region (141). My hesitation to fully agree with this claim centers on the fact that Espejo hardly references other groups in his dialogues, which is not to say that the works did not also operate in a cautionary function. It is to say that in the late eighteenth century, probabilism and Jesuit rhetoric were stubbornly resistant. Redirecting deeply established habits of mind and therefore speech would prove to be a very different task than physically removing the Jesuits from cultural and geographical regions.

As this study has shown, the influence of Cartesian rationalism and French Neoclassicism on Feijóo, Verney, and Espejo can be read in the rhetorical motions of their form just as clearly in their explicit and figurative critiques of eloquence. To attack

metaphorical language was to attack language itself. Future considerations for scholarship might look at the collaboration or juxtaposition of content and form in any number of Feijóo's many essays and letters. The study of Menippean satire in the eighteenth century might also yield relevant findings in works that allegorize the Spanish language. Similar studies on works of prose in the Portuguese Enlightenment would also be invited. Lastly, scholars of Latin American literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century might consider exploring the language of treatises on education and eloquence.





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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Notes on translations: All translations following quotes in the original language are mine.

<sup>2</sup> He writes,

[C]omo las piedras preciosas no reciben tanto valor del nombre que tienen (pudiendo ser falsas y contrahechas) como de la persona en cuyas manos está: así mis obras con protector en quien se encierran tantas, y tan excelentes virtudes con tanta aprobación, y satisfacción de todos, podrán librarse de las calumnias, y contradicciones de los como Momos se ejercitan en inquirir inadvertencias ajenas. (Prologue)

<sup>3</sup> After Pérez de Moya traced the origin of figures in Greek and Roman mythological personages to Biblical figures or profane rulers, he transitioned to his treatment of the allegorical behind the specific characterization that poets, historians, and visual artists had given them. He provides many examples. For instance, Pan's upward-pointing horns represented one thing, his downward-point beard meant another (Book II, Chap 4), in contrast to why artists painted Apollo clean shaven (Book II, Chap 9). Later, the author posited that the three points of Neptune's trident symbolized the three unique properties inherent in water, because people could use it to swim, drink, in addition to fact that its distinctive characteristic was to maintain a movement on its own (Book II, Chap 8). Pérez de Moya meticulously presented Pagan fables in this manner.

<sup>4</sup> The Jesuit Francisco Suárez (1548-1617) and Luis de Molina (1535-1600) taught and studied in Salamanca, respectively. See Suárez's "De Bonitate et militia humanorum actuum" in *Opera Omnia* for his contribution to early developments of casuistic probabilism. Although not explicitly defending the theory or probabilism out right, Molina's strongly emphasized that liberty was the foundation of moral conduct, with grace added: See *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis et concordia*.

<sup>5</sup> Francisco Valerio Cifuentes, the editor of *Opúsculos castellanos de Ambrosio Morales* (1793), commented that Ambrosio Morales produced *Información de derecho por averiguación de historia* at the age of 75, which would be approximately 1588 (vol. 1, 432).

<sup>6</sup> Ambrosio Morales made an explicit appeal to Aristotle's *Ethics* as the earliest writer on the subject of moral truth:

Esta es una doctrina de Aristotles, muy recibida y aproboada por los Teólogos y Juristas. Enseñóla Aristotles al principio de las Ethicas, amonestando desde luego, como en toda la Filosofia moral (con ser tan alta y excelente) no podía nadie pedir demostraciones, ni razones eficaces y de total certidumbre: sino que se contentasen todos con unas razones probables, y de mediana eficacia. (442)

<sup>7</sup> The chapter “Rules for the Theater of Rhetoric” advised professors to ensure that pupils could identify “how often [a given author] exemplifies many principles in a single passage, how he clothes his arguments in figures of thought, and how again he combines figures of thought and word-figures to compel belief” (76).

<sup>8</sup> See *Europa y el pensamiento español del siglo XVIII* (35) by Francisco Blanco-Parody and Ruth Hill’s *Scepters and Sciences in the Spains: Four Humanists and the New Philosophy (ca. 1680-1740)* (Chapter 2).

<sup>9</sup> The German mathematician Leibniz obtained a copy of the manuscript of the *Regulae* in 1670 and it was first published in Dutch in 1684.

<sup>10</sup> Figurative language problematized how one should regulate their conduct:

Besides, fables make one imagine many events possible in which reality are not so, and even the most accurate histories, if they do not exactly misrepresent or exaggerate the value of things in order to render them more worthy of being read, at least omit in them all the circumstances which are basest and least notable and from this fact it follows that what is retained is not portrayed as it really is, and that those who regulate their conduct by examples which they derive from such a source, are liable to fall into the extravagances of the knights-errant of Romance, and form projects beyond their power of performance. (Discourse, 6)

<sup>11</sup> He writes,

Those who have the strongest power of reasoning, and who most skillfully arrange their thoughts in order to render them clear and intelligible, have the best power of persuasion even if they can but speak the language of Lower Brittany and have never learned Rhetoric. And those who have the most delightful original ideas and who know how to express them with the maximum of style and suavity, would not fail to be the best poets even if the art of Poetry were unknown to them.” (Discourse 6)

<sup>12</sup> He writes,

This is enough to lead all reasonable persons to come to this conclusion, with which we will finish this Logic: that the greatest of all follies is to employ our time and our life in anything else but that which will enable us to acquire one which will never end, since all the blessings and evils of this life are nothing in comparison with those of another; and since the danger of falling into these evils, as well as the difficulty of acquiring these blessings, is very great.

Those who come to this conclusion, and who follow it out in the conduct of their life, are wise and prudent, though they reason ill in all the matters of science; and those who do not come to it, however accurate they may be in everything beside, are treated of in the Scripture as foolish and infatuated and make a bad use of logic, of reason, and of life. (362)

<sup>13</sup> This rhetorical requirement banished figurative language: “De qué sirve trabajar para formarse un estilo ingenioso, florido, lleno de conceptos, de metáforas, y frases y expresiones nada vulgares, si el pueblo no entiende?” (168).

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 18, p. 312.

<sup>15</sup> See *Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto intorno le scienza e le arti*.

<sup>16</sup> In “The Heresy of Paraphrase” from *A Well Wrought Urn*, Cleanth Brooks, asserts in that poem’s conclusion “is a working out of the various tensions –whatever that means– by propositions, metaphors, symbols” (207).

<sup>17</sup> During the first decade of the twenty-first century, some theorists began to sense that the new historicist studies needed to take different directions. In 2002, Mark David Rasmussen writes that cultural studies in English Renaissance literature “appears to be exhausted, its excitement now long since cooled” (3). The result is a reconciliation between historicism and questions of form. Two years prior to Rasmussen’s statement on the interpretation of British texts, Ellen Rooney remarks in “Form and Contentment” on the necessary role that formalism looked to occupy in the upcoming years. She describes an unnecessary “flight from form” in fields that favor thematic or content-based analysis alone, and nothing less than a “retreat from reading” (31-32). In her view, Formalism is less of an ideology than simply a tool: “[It] is an unavoidable moment in the projects of both literary and cultural studies, fields that remain sufficiently entwined to engage one another’s serious attention and sufficiently distinct to yield autonomous scholarship and rival disciplinary formations” (18).<sup>1</sup> Rooney’s notion that there is something rather binary at stake for a post-structuralist to eschew categorically close reading for form reappears in different ways in other critics. Jonathan Loesberg defends aspects of the Enlightenment concepts on aesthetics in *A Return to Aesthetics: Autonomy, Indifference, and Postmodernism* (2005), while also recognizing the opportunities for historical and political critique. “The value of aesthetics,” he writes, “is that it offers ways or apprehending and interpreting things in the world” (74).

<sup>18</sup> One can interpret the rhetoric of mathematical equations or the way that instruments mediate the other fields of sciences.

<sup>19</sup> Baake, naturally, uses figurative language in writing the thesis of his book: “Revisiting the age-old debate about whether metaphor shapes theory or merely decorates it, I will show that it constitutes theory by ringing forth with signals, various meanings” (12).

<sup>20</sup> For studies that emphasize the influence of English thought on Feijoo’s writings, and especially that of Francis Bacon, see McCleelan p. 33, p. 44; Ardau p. 55; Urzainqui pp. 104-05; Herr pp. 32-33; Robbins p. 250; Sánchez-Blanco (2014) p. 317; Marichal p. 319; Reguera Rodríguez p. 309.

<sup>21</sup> Cited from Marañón, 38.

<sup>22</sup> “Hasta aquí sólo hemos regulado la Fe Humana respectivamente a la veracidad de los hombres; falta regularla en orden al conocimiento” (par. 41).

<sup>23</sup> “The *external* entailed the mark of authority on whom someone needed to rely, a credence that differed greatly from what one gave to a figure of Sacred knowledge. I call *internal* circumstances those which belong to the fact itself, and *external*, those which belong to the persons by of whose testimony we are led to believe it. This being done, if all the circumstances are such, that it never or rarely happens that the like circumstances are the concomitants of falsehood, our mind is led, naturally, to believe that it is true; and it is right to do so, especially in the conduct of life, which does not demand greater certainty, and which must often rest satisfied in many circumstances with the greatest probability.

And if, on the contrary, these circumstances are such as we very often find in connection with falsehood, reason determines, either that we remain in suspense, or that we consider as false what has been told us, when there is no appearance of its being true, although it may not be an utter impossibility.” (346)

<sup>24</sup> “Pretende el señor Huet, en virtud de ciertas analogías, que Prometeo es la misma persona que Mercurio; y después comprueba que otras analogías, que Mercurio es lo mismo que Moisés. Este género de pruebas es frecuentísimo en el señor Huet, el cual siguiendo semejanza que encuentre en Moisés respecto de alguna de ellas, le sirve para identificarle con cualquiera de las otras. Mas porque abajo combatiremos de intento este sistema, nos reduciremos ahora únicamente a la enumeración de las aplicaciones directas que hace el Autor.” (par. 14)

<sup>25</sup> Feijóo strongly defends French culture in various essays. In “Antipatía de franceses y españoles” (1728), he writes that French industry ought to motivate imitation in Spain not scorn (par. 13). And in his concluding statement, Feijóo confesses that there is no perfection in Europe like French perfection (par. 13).

<sup>26</sup> Meaning eats away at “no se puede conservar en cualquier materia que sea, porque todos los roe, y deshace” [cannot be conserved in any sort of vehicle, because (par. 8).

<sup>2</sup> In Chapter Three, quotes by Luís António Verney have slightly modernized spelling.

<sup>27</sup> The authors of the *Logic or the Art of Thinking (Port Royal Logic)* compared the arts of painting and speaking in Part 3, Chapter 20 “Fallacies committed in everyday life and in ordinary discourse.” In both disciplines, form and color should strike a balance in which the former speaks the loudest:

So although those who are knowledgeable about painting value the design infinitely more than the color or delicacy of line, the ignorant are more affected by a canvas whose colors are vivid and dazzling than by a more somber one whose design would be admirable.

We must admit, however, that false judgments are not so common in the arts, because those who know nothing about them defer more readily to the views of more informed people. But they are much more frequent in matters such as eloquence, which are within everyone’s jurisdiction, and about which the world takes the liberty of judging.

Preachers are called eloquent, for example, whenever their phrases are exact and when they use no inappropriate words ... For the purity of language and the number of figures are to eloquence as color is to painting, that is, they are only the lowest and most material part. But the important point is to form powerful conceptions and to express them in such a way that we evoke in our listeners' minds a vivid and luminous image that does not just present the bare idea of these things, but also expresses the emotions we feel for them. This can happen with people who speak imprecisely, using few elegant figures. It is rarely encountered in those who pay too much attention to words and embellishments, because their view distracts them from things that diminish the vigor of their thought. Painters remark, similarly, that artists who excel in colors do not usually excel in design, since the mind is not capable of this double attention, one aspect detracting from the other. (216-16)

<sup>28</sup> In his eighteenth-century rationalist worldview, Verney evidently favored the fist to the open palm. Sir Francis Bacon used the figure in Book 2 of *The Advancement of Learning* (see p. 411 of vol. 3 in *The Works of Francis Bacon* (1876)). For information on the history and use of Zeno's trope by Ramus and others in the Renaissance, see Wilbur Samuel Howell's *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700* (1961) p. 4 and *Poetics, Rhetoric, and Logic* (1975) pp. 76-77, as well as Edward J. P. Corbett's "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist" (1969).

<sup>29</sup> *Historia del Famoso predicador fray Gerundio de Campazas* (1758) by the Jesuit José Francisco de Isla y Rojo (1703-1781) is perhaps the most important example of Menippean in the Americas during the Enlightenment. In Spain, they include *Exequias de la lengua castellana* by Juan Pablo Forner y Segarra (1756-1797), published posthumously in 1871, *Eruditas a la violeta* (1772) by José Cadalso (1741-1782), and *La derrota de los pedants* (1789) by Leandro Fernández de Moratín (1760-1828). For a description of the salient features of the Menippean satire genre from its ancient tradition, see Mikhail Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*.

<sup>30</sup> For an extensive list of those affiliated with Espejo who were later involved in the Quito Revolt of 1909, see Carlos Freile's *Eugenio Espejo y su tiempo* (82-83).

<sup>31</sup> Murillos words "vísperas" and "vulcánica" are estrújulas in Spanish. The term in English is proparoxytone.

<sup>32</sup> See Rebecca Haidt, *Seduction and Sacrilege: Rhetorical Power in Fray Gerundio de Campazas* (2002).

<sup>33</sup> Murillo state: ¡Ah! Ya caigo en cuenta, y aunque yo sea lerdo, ahora no es menester mucho para entender lo que se me quiere decir. Entiendo, pues, que Vm. quiere descubrir que mi Señor Don Sancho de ninguna manera ha entrado en la buena latinidad, en la verdadera retórica, en la legítima poesía, en la exacta filosofía, en la teología más metódica, en la moral más Cristiana, en el íntimo conocimiento de la Escritura santa, y en tantas otras cosas que Vm. ha dicho, no es un perfecto orador. (128-29)

<sup>34</sup> Dominique Bouhours (1628-1702) is the most frequently cited theorist in *Ciencia blancardina* on clear and simple language, thus taking the place of Pascal in *El nuevo Luciano*. *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (1671) laid an important foundation for *El nuevo Luciano* and *Ciencia blancardia* — Ariste and Eugène hold six conversations in which they theorize about the nature of “true” wit, the famous *je ne sais quoi*, and well-regulated passions. Mera defines proper taste by citing directly from Bouhours dialogue “Le Bel Sprit” (424). He tells Blancardo that Descartes taught that a scientific method is required to regulate one’s reasoning (361), but for reading about it he recommends Bouhours (345). In *Le bel sprit*, Blancardo would find what was distasteful in an overly fecund imagination: effulgence and false thoughts (333). Beyond celebrating, Bouhours, Mera speaks highly of the author of *Traité des Études*, Charles Rollin, as a wise Frenchman and master of rhetoric (293).

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