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**GOLDEN AGE JESUIT: JUAN EUSEBIO NIEREMBERG
AND THE RHETORIC OF DISCERNMENT IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SPAIN**

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SHORT ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the Jesuit and Ignatian influence on the works of Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (1595-1658), who was a prolific and widely published author and a member of the Society of Jesus in Spain. He wrote several works across different literary genres both in Spanish and Latin, but was best known for his popular works in Spanish: two miscellanies of natural philosophy, *Curiosa filosofia* (1630) and *Oculto filosofia* (1633); a catechism, the *Práctica del catecismo romano* (1640); his ascetical treatises, especially *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* (1640); and his ‘advice-books’ to princes and nobles, most notably *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* (1642).

As a member of the Jesuit Order, Nieremberg wrote these works with the intention to ‘save souls’, this being the main apostolic goal of the Society. While they provide people with knowledge (‘noticia’) – whether doctrinal, natural, spiritual, or political – these works teach readers to view human existence according to its true end: God’s will of salvation. All things of the temporal world are portrayed as a means to that end.

In order to accomplish this goal, Nieremberg incorporates elements from Loyola’s *Ejercicios espirituales* (1548), the spiritual foundation of the Jesuit Order, and develops a rhetorical strategy which encourages readers to discern the will of God in the world they inhabit. He also develops this rhetoric according to some of the principal literary and artistic conventions of the seventeenth century, and provides an important example of how a prominent Jesuit writer came to express the apostolic and spiritual principles of his Order, but in the language and imagery of Spain’s Siglo de Oro.

LONG ABSTRACT

Golden Age Jesuit: Juan Eusebio Nieremberg and the Rhetoric of Discernment in Seventeenth-Century Spain

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Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (1595-1658) was an erudite Jesuit ascetic of seventeenth-century Spain. He spent most of his life in the Colegio Imperial de Madrid, where he was a well-known teacher and confessor to the royal court. He is primarily remembered as an eclectic thinker and a prolific writer. Publishing some seventy-five works in Spanish and Latin, many of which were translated throughout Europe and abroad, his writing represents several literary genres, such as catechetical and devotional literature, natural philosophy, hagiographic biography, ‘advice-books’ for nobles and princes, theological treatises, an epistolary, and a collection of aphorisms. Some of his texts were also used for public readings and the delivery of sermons. As a prominent writer, his influence on the culture of the Golden Age can be seen in the development of catechetical practices, the dissemination of spiritual literature, and the cultivation of Neo-Platonic thought in his work. He has also received some attention from scholars in the areas of religious and scientific discourse in Counter-Reformation Spain, the history of Catholic printing in Europe and the Jesuit missions of Latin America, and the use of rhetorical techniques in devotional texts, especially around the theme of death.

Although Nieremberg was widely known in Spain and Europe, he is one of the forgotten writers of the Spanish Golden Age. He merits greater scholarly attention than

he has hitherto received, as a prolific author who represents the encounter of two flourishing aspects of seventeenth-century Spain, that of his own spirituality in the Society of Jesus, and that of the cultural and literary production of the wider society. As a writer of prose, Nieremberg develops the principal components of the Jesuit spiritual tradition, which had been founded by St Ignatius Loyola and the first Jesuits (1540), and is most clearly stated both in Loyola's *Ejercicios espirituales* (1548) and in the main apostolic goals the Order set for itself. In turn, Nieremberg expresses these ideas in the language and imagery of the wider culture, such as the dialectic between *ser* and *parecer*, and the *vanitas* tradition. This thesis examines the Jesuit and Ignatian character of Nieremberg's work and, while part of its aim is to restore him to a place of prominence in the Golden Age, it is also intended to show how, through his works, Jesuit ideals were given expression within some of the principal conventions of seventeenth-century Spanish literature and allowed him to develop what I call a *rhetoric of discernment*.

St Ignatius wrote the *Ejercicios espirituales* as a manual intended to help people discern the will of God in their lives: 'buscar y hallar la voluntad divina'. As the name of the method indicates, it consists of various meditations, contemplations, and other similar exercises of mental prayer, or 'operaciones espirituales', for fulfilling this goal. While individual exercises might serve a particular purpose – such as coming to terms with one's own sins, experiencing the healing effects of God's mercy, cultivating the proper attitude toward created things, or recognizing the beneficence and love that the Creator bestows on the human creature – they also guide practitioners to a clearer understanding of God's will.

The Ignatian approach to discernment in the spiritual life and the type of mental prayer this involves has been interpreted in different ways, and became controversial in

the sixteenth-century, most notably in Spain, where theologians and Inquisitors came to be cautious of any type of prayer that might lead people to follow the so-called heretical teachings of the illuminists. The spiritual and religious climate of seventeenth-century Spain also encouraged people to embrace the more external displays of religious devotion and liturgical ceremony rather than the individual cultivation of the spiritual life which allows people to discern the will of God. For these reasons, Jesuits of the seventeenth century were careful not to place too much stress on those aspects of the Exercises that require retreatants to discern for themselves how God is speaking to them.

While Nieremberg never wrote a commentary on how discernment works in the Spiritual Exercises, his works are nonetheless rooted in the notion that God's will for the salvation of humankind is discernable in the world, and he therefore aims to teach as many people as possible how to read this message. Nieremberg begins several of his texts with the idea that the lack of proper 'noticia' and 'estimación' leads people astray on the Christian journey. A better knowledge of the created world, the things in it, and the artistry of its design, will not only guide people to viewing it aright, but also enable them to embrace it in such a way that they reorder their lives according to its divine end. It is in this sense that Nieremberg develops a rhetorical strategy for persuading people how to discern the will of God in the world they inhabit. In doing so, he alludes to many of the Ignatian exercises in his texts, such as the 'Principio y fundamento', the 'Confesión general', and 'Contemplación para alcanzar amor', which are indicative of the significance they held for him and which contribute to the particular direction he gave to his writing.

The first chapter of this thesis situates Nieremberg as an influential intellectual and prominent Jesuit author of the Golden Age and presents an overview of the currents of thought and the spiritual climate that influenced his writing, while each of the

following four chapters examines the popular Castilian texts for which he was best known in seventeenth-century Spain. The second chapter focuses on Nieremberg's presentation of doctrinal knowledge in the three part *Práctica del catecismo romano* (1640), which he wrote not only for the benefit of readers, but also of listeners. The first two parts contain lessons to be read aloud in the public setting of a catechetical lesson or a parish mass, and could be used both on Sundays and special feasts. However, the third part contains a collection of 'exemplos', which he includes in order to illustrate these doctrinal lessons in a more accessible, anecdotal, manner. By adapting the communicative function of the catechism in this way, Nieremberg gives doctrine a voice, as he aims to teach and please people with what he terms 'otros divertimientos'. Just as Jesuits of the seventeenth century used these types of stories as a way of leading people through parts of the Spiritual Exercises, so Nieremberg uses the 'exemplos' to help people assimilate the doctrinal lessons in such a way that they live according to God's plan of salvation.

While the catechism provides the foundational knowledge of the faith all Christians must have, Nieremberg also wrote two miscellanies of natural philosophy in order to teach readers how to view the will of God in the created order. Published in 1630 and 1633, *Curiosa filosofía* and *Ocultá filosofía* provide people with 'noticia' about the natural world and its operations, but they also teach readers how to discern the true meaning of natural things through the use of 'ingenio'. Wit grants people the ability to look beyond the appearances of natural phenomena, and so enables them to discover the 'ingenio' of the Creator in created things. The third chapter looks at how knowledge of this kind can lead readers 'ad perfectam cognitionem', as the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* puts it, and serve as a bridge to salvation. As these texts show how God's will is

imprinted in creation, Nieremberg urges his readers to contemplate its significance and to order their lives accordingly.

Nieremberg's ascetic spirituality is most obvious in his treatise *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* (1640), especially as he focuses the attention of his readers on the inevitability of human death and the process of bodily decomposition. All things temporal and worldly must first be seen in this way, since they are not meant to be embraced as ends in themselves but as a means to a higher end: eternal salvation. Social honor, material possessions, and wealth must therefore be replaced with the 'santas obras' of Christian virtue. The fourth chapter explains how Nieremberg uses the imagery of death of the *vanitas* tradition as a technique in order to persuade people to discern the ephemeral nature of worldly things in comparison to life everlasting. He instructs readers to put things in their proper perspective, and hence to avoid the ensnarement of disordered attachments. In this sense, the treatise guides people through a process of *desengaño*, as they come to view things for what they really are through the dialectic of *ser* and *parecer*. At the same time, Nieremberg leads people in a meditative reading of passages from his text with the aim of teaching them how to recognize the beneficence of divine love in their lives. In other words, he guides readers in a process of spiritual discernment similar to the one Loyola sets out in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

In each of the works presented throughout these chapters, 'noticia' is portrayed as a bridge to salvation, as long as readers discern its true meaning and assimilate the lessons it teaches – whether it treats catechetical, natural, or spiritual matters. But Nieremberg also sought to address the nation as a whole, and wrote *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* (1642) as a way of facing the dire situation of decline into which the Spanish empire had fallen. The fifth chapter examines how with this treatise Nieremberg broadens the scope of his message and urges the body politic to view the political,

economic, and military setbacks as a sign of divine displeasure with the nation. Since God is punishing Spaniards for their sins, they must discern the religious significance of their predicament and apply the remedy to their lives. It is less concerned with personal than with national salvation, and his analysis of the situation leads to a cure for the country, which will come about if people, especially the leaders, embrace penitence and reform their lives. Here Nieremberg portrays the ascetical implement of the 'cilicio' as a metaphorical weapon of great power. This required 'enmienda' represents the way in which prudent governors must model the ascetical 'remedio', purge themselves of sin, and restore the country to its once great stature by leading the way to moral reform.

While Nieremberg aims to provide 'noticia' in these texts, his aim is to present it in such a way that people are persuaded to discern the will of God in the world they inhabit and to reorder their lives appropriately. As a prominent intellectual of the Golden Age, Nieremberg incorporates the principal elements of his spiritual tradition in the Jesuit Order and its apostolic goal to 'save souls' into his writing, and creates what can be identified as a rhetoric of discernment. Readers and listeners alike are not only taught how to attain Christian salvation, but to apply this knowledge to the self. By expressing his spiritual vision through the currents of thought and the cultural tastes of his time, Nieremberg portrays how a Jesuit writer sought to develop the spiritual and apostolic tradition of the Society in the language and imagery of seventeenth-century Spain.

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Bibliographical Abbreviations

<i>AHSI</i>	<i>Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu</i>
BAC	Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos
BAE	Biblioteca de Autores Españoles
<i>BCJ</i>	<i>Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus</i>
CSIC	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas
<i>DHCJ</i>	<i>Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús</i>
<i>DEI</i>	<i>Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana</i>
<i>DS</i>	<i>Dictionnaire de spiritualité</i>
IHSI	Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu
IJS	Institute of Jesuit Sources
<i>MHSI</i>	<i>Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu</i>
<i>OED</i>	The Oxford English Dictionary
OUP	Oxford University Press
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
<i>Tesoro</i>	<i>Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española</i>
<i>Autoridades</i>	<i>Diccionario de Autoridades</i>

Transcription and Citation of Early Modern Sources

Although editorial conventions vary widely in early modern Spain, I have tried to maintain original spelling when quoting from primary and related sources. But in order to facilitate the reading of the thesis, I have adapted the spelling in the following cases:

- the long / *ŷ* / has been replaced with / *s* /, while double consonants have been retained, i.e. ‘*eminentiŷsimo*’ now reads ‘*eminentissimo*’
- contractions have been expanded, such as ‘*cõ*’ to ‘*co[n]*’
- early modern uses of / *u* /, / *v* /, / *b* /, / *i* /, and / *j* / have been regularized to reflect their contemporary use and phonetic value; i.e. ‘*Iuan*’ has been changed to ‘*Juan*’, ‘*deuer*’ to ‘*deber*’
- the initial / *h* / has been added to the verb *haber*, i.e. ‘*aver*’ or ‘*auer*’ now reads ‘*haber*’
- accents have been added to the names of book titles, such as the *Práctica del catecismo romano*
- the / *gu* / has been changed to / *hu* /, such as ‘*guessos*’ to ‘*huessos*’
- any other additions or alterations to orthography are included in square brackets

Where I have quoted from the preliminary material of a primary source, such as an *Aprobación*, *Censura*, Prologue, Note to the Reader, or Index, pages are cited according to the mark of the pilcrow / ¶ /, or / ¶¶ /, as used by early modern editors and printers: i.e. pp. ¶2^v-¶¶1^r.

Also, printers often only numbered the front, or *recto*, side of folios. In these cases, they are cited according to the recto and verso sides of the appropriate page: i.e. pp. 22^r-24^v.

Chapter One

Introduction

*Recibí gusto de ver el amor, el término, la solicitud
y la industria con que aquellos benditos padres y
maestros enseñaban a aquellos niños, enderezando
las tiernas varas de su juventud, por que no torciesen
ni tomasen mal siniestro en el camino de la virtud,
que justamente con las letras les mostraban.*

– Cervantes¹

On the south side of the Plaza Mayor, in the center of Madrid, there is an archway that opens onto the street called Toledo. Exiting the *plaza* here, pedestrians find themselves immersed in the oldest part of the city, which has now come to be known as the Madrid of the Habsburgs. It is in this and the surrounding neighborhoods where *la villa* was transformed into the capital of Spain with the arrival of Philip II and his court in 1561. Not surprisingly, the first structure to catch the eye is a seventeenth-century church, today the Church of San Isidro el Real, whose plain, blunt towers still dominate the block. Holding the relics of the city's patron saint whose name it bears, the building remains an important religious landmark in the city, as from 1885 to 1993 it was the cathedral of the diocese. But in the seventeenth century it served another purpose. Known then as the Iglesia de San Francisco Javier, it was built as the Church of the Colegio Imperial of the Society of Jesus, and for over a century it represented one of the intellectual, cultural, and religious hubs of the capital. It was behind these walls, in a room far removed from the bustle of the main entrance and central corridors, that Juan

¹ Miguel de Cervantes, 'El coloquio de los perros', in *Novelas ejemplares* [1613], ed. by Harry Sieber, 2 vols (Madrid: Cátedra, 2002 and 2005), II (2002), 316.

Eusebio Nieremberg (1595-1658) spent almost his whole life – first as a student, then as teacher and confessor in the Jesuit Order – and where he came to be best known as an important intellectual and one of the most popular and prolific writers of religious and devotional literature in seventeenth-century Spain.²

In his lifetime, Nieremberg published in both Spanish and Latin some seventy-five works of considerable length (for a complete list, see Appendix 1).³ Since many of his works were translated into several languages, he was widely read not only in Spain, but also Europe, and beyond, in the overseas missions. His writing is characterized by a great diversity of subject-matter – theology, philosophy, ascetical spirituality, sacred oratory, biblical exegesis, and natural philosophy – as well as of genre, including treatises on the education of princes and nobles, a catechism, and an epistolary. He also contributed to and edited a four-volume series of hagiographic biographies of Jesuits, including a biography of Ignatius Loyola, while his Spanish translation of the *De imitatione Christi* by Thomas Kempis was continuously in print until the middle of the nineteenth century, with numerous editions between 1649 and 1842.⁴ Among his most important works are *De arte voluntatis* (1631), *Curiosa y oculta filosofía* (1630-33), *Historia naturæ, maxime peregrinæ* (1635), and *De la hermosura de Dios y su amabilidad* (1641). But he is best remembered as the author of the ascetical treatise *De*

² Biographical accounts of Nieremberg describe him as a saintly and ascetical recluse, who lived in the most interior part of the Jesuit residence; see Alonso de Andrade, 'P. Juan Eusebio Nieremberg' [1666], in *Varones ilustres de la Compañía de Jesús*, 2nd edn, 9 vols (Bilbao: El Mensajero del Corazón de Jesús, 1887-92), VIII (1891), 716; and Hugues Didier, *Vida y pensamiento de Juan E. Nieremberg*, trans. by M. Navarro Carnicer (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1976), p. 66. On Nieremberg as a known intellectual, see Stephen Haliczzer, *Between Exaltation and Infamy: Female Mystics in the Golden Age of Spain* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), p. 11; also Henry Kamen, *Spain 1469-1714: A Society of Conflict* (London: Pearson, 2005), pp. 194-95. For more on the construction and dedication of the church, see José Simón Díaz, *Historia del Colegio Imperial*, 2 vols (Madrid: CSIC, 1952 and 1959), I, 127-29.

³ Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus [BCJ]* [1890-1932], 12 vols (Héverlé-Louvain: Éditions de la Bibliothèque SJ, 1960), v, 1725-66. See also Ludwig Koch, *Jesuiten-Lexikon: Die Gesellschaft Jesu einst und jetzt*, 2 vols (Löwen-Heverlee: Verlag der Bibliothek SJ, 1962) II, 1295-96. According to Didier, Nieremberg wrote over 10,000 folio pages; *Vida y pensamiento*, p. 7.

⁴ Over forty editions were printed in Spain between 1656 and 1842. Didier cites an earlier edition (Lisbon, 1649); p. 514. See also Sommervogel, *BCJ*, v, 157-62.

la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno (1640), which was published in over sixty editions in Spain before the end of the eighteenth century, and was translated throughout Europe and the American missions.⁵ Despite this, Nieremberg holds a curious place in the history of Spanish literature. Menéndez Pelayo may have included him among ‘los cinco o seis grandes prosistas de nuestro siglo XVII’, yet by 1958 Ignacio Iparraguirre commemorated the third centenary of his death by referring to him as ‘un escritor ascético olvidado’.⁶ Whatever may be the reasons for this neglect, our understanding of the Golden Age can hardly be complete if one of its major writers continues to be ignored. Part of the aim of this thesis, therefore, will be to restore Nieremberg to his proper place as a prominent Jesuit writer in the culture of seventeenth-century Spain.

Little is known about Nieremberg. In the year of his death the Jesuit Alonso de Andrade (1590-1672) wrote an account of his life, the *Breve relación de la vida del padre Juan Eusebio Nieremberg* (1658), which was later expanded and included in Andrade’s volume of *Varones ilustres en santidad, letras, y zelo de la Compañía de Jesús* (1666). But, as with most religious biographies of the day, both versions are hagiographic rather than scholarly, and are meant to inspire piety rather than provide historical information for its own sake.⁷ In 1957 the Biblioteca de Autores Españoles published four of Nieremberg’s treatises. These two volumes represent the most recent

⁵ See Sommervogel, *BCJ*, v, 1737-40; Koch, II, 1295-96.

⁶ Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de las ideas estéticas en España* [1883-91], 2nd edn, 5 vols (Santander: Aldus, 1946-47), II (1947), 105; and Ignacio Iparraguirre, ‘Un escritor ascético olvidado: el Padre Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (1595-1658)’, *Estudios eclesiásticos*, 32 (1958), 427-48. Iparraguirre considers Nieremberg to be one of the most widely read Jesuits of seventeenth-century Spain. For more regarding the decline of interest in Nieremberg, see Didier, pp. 8-11; Iparraguirre, pp. 428, 443.

⁷ See Sommervogel, *BCJ*, I, 322-23, 325-26. The *Breve relación* was appended to Andrade’s larger work, *Vida del venerable padre Francisco Aguado* (Madrid: Joseph Fernandez de Buendía, 1658). The expanded version, *Vida del muy espiritual, y erudito Padre Juan Eusebio Nieremberg*, was published in *Varones ilustres en santidad, letras, y zelo de las almas. Tomo quinto, a los quatro que sacó a luz el Venerable, y Erudito Padre Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, de la Compañía de Jesús* (Madrid: Joseph Fernandez de Buendía, 1666), pp. 1-57. Andrade’s portrayal of Nieremberg includes several miraculous events, and even describes his birth to an aged mother in much the same way as that of John the Baptist. According to Didier, the work was an attempt to have him beatified; p. 43.

printing of any of his works. The first includes an overview of Nieremberg's life in the 'Estudio preliminar', but it is limited to the sources available at the time.⁸ Hugues Didier was able to add to our knowledge of Nieremberg's life in the 1970s by consulting the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus; his *Vida y pensamiento de Juan E. Nieremberg* (1976) remains the only comprehensive study of the once famous author. No modern critical edition of his works has been produced. However, the quantity of books he wrote and the breadth of their subject-matter provide us with a vivid picture of both the author and the religious and intellectual climate of seventeenth-century Spain.

The aim of this thesis is to portray Nieremberg's contribution to Golden Age culture as a Jesuit writer. I hope to show how his popular works in Spanish relate not only to the wider literary and artistic production of the century, but also to the spiritual and apostolic ideals of the Jesuit order, especially that of discernment. This Ignatian principle can be identified as a hermeneutical key to reading his texts, but it also forms a persuasive voice in them, through what shall I term his rhetoric of discernment. Nieremberg is certainly both an erudite and eclectic writer, but he also needs to be considered as one who is indebted to the roots of his particular spiritual formation.

Juan Eusebio Nieremberg

Juan Eusebio was the only son of Gottfried Nieremberg and Regina Otin, who arrived in Madrid with the retinue of María de Austria (1528-1603), daughter of Charles V and sister of Philip II. After the death of her husband, the emperor Maximilian II (1527-76),

⁸ *Obras escogidas del R. P. Juan Eusebio Nieremberg*, ed. by Eduardo Zepeda-Henríquez, 2 vols, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles [BAE] 103 and 104 (Madrid: Atlas, 1957). Volume I includes *Vida divina, y camino real para la perfección* (1633) and *Aprecio, y estima de la divina gracia* (1638), Volume II includes *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* (1640) and *De la hermosura de Dios y su amabilidad* (1641); see also Zepeda-Henríquez's 'Estudio preliminar' in vol. I (pp. xiii-xli), and his 'Prólogo' in vol. II (pp. ix-xvii).

the empress returned to Madrid in 1581. Although Nieremberg's parents were of Germanic origin, he was born and raised in Spain, in the environs of the royal court, and in due course entered the sphere of Jesuit influence as a student of humanities and Latin in their Colegio Imperial. The Jesuits had founded the school in 1572, but in 1603, through the beneficence of the empress, it was granted an imperial charter to educate nobles and the children of royal servants.⁹ Nieremberg was a member of the school's Marian sodality, and became thoroughly immersed in the catechetical and devotional practices of the time.¹⁰ Around 1611 he enrolled in the University of Salamanca, where he planned to complete studies in civil and canon law, and where he once again came into contact with the Jesuits. In 1614, after making the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola, he decided to abandon his studies and become a member of the Society of Jesus.

Juan Eusebio began his training as a novice in Villagarcía del Campo (Valladolid) on 31 March 1614, but because of opposition from his father, who wanted an heir, he was forced to return to the capital. Committed nonetheless to seeking entry into the Order, he stayed briefly with the Jesuits in Navalcarnero and once again entered the novitiate, this time in Madrid, where he pronounced his first vows on 3 April 1616. In both Villagarcía and Madrid he was instilled with the ascetical rigor of his superiors, especially that of Francisco Aguado (1571-1654), which, as we will see, would come to influence his spiritual outlook. He was then sent to Huete to study Greek and Hebrew, and to continue his studies in Latin. By 1619 he was living at the Jesuit college in Alcalá de Henares, where he remained until 1623. During this time he completed courses in Arts and Theology. It is also likely that while in Alcalá he began to teach

⁹ José Martínez de la Escalera, 'Felipe IV fundador de los estudios reales', *Anales del Instituto de Estudios Madrileños*, 23 (1986), 175-97. See also Simón Díaz, I, 33-37, 71.

¹⁰ My summary of Nieremberg's life follows Didier; see 'Los acontecimientos biográficos ciertos', in *Vida y pensamiento*, pp. 45-54. Regarding the sodality, see Simón Díaz, I, 46-47.

Latin at the college.¹¹ Nieremberg was ordained to the priesthood in 1623, and soon after moved to the Colegio Imperial de Madrid, where by 1628 he was listed as holding the Chair of Natural Philosophy for the school's new curriculum of *estudios reales*.¹² Following the normal course of Jesuit formation, he professed his final vows in the Order on 4 July 1633. It was around this time that he also began to teach sacred Scripture. By 1629 he had already published his first book, *Obras y días: manual de señores y príncipes*, which had been commissioned by the Count Duke Olivares.¹³ Nieremberg himself had been educated in the courtly circles, and on his return to Madrid he seems to have attracted the attention of the *valido* as a suitable writer for the manual.¹⁴ He continued to write for the rest of his life. He died on 7 April 1658. His unpublished manuscripts, consisting mainly of Mariological treatises, were published posthumously in Lyon and Olomouc.

Nieremberg was an important figure in the Society. As a fully professed Jesuit he served as confessor and spiritual father to the younger members of the Order, and it is thought that he was asked to serve as the Master of Novices, a position of authority he

¹¹ Didier, pp. 48-51.

¹² Didier, p. 58. In his biography of Loyola, Nieremberg mentions being at the Colegio Imperial in 1623, *Vida del patriarca san Ignacio de Loyola* (Zaragoza: Hospital Real, 1631), p. 100^v. In 1628 Nieremberg was listed as the teacher of *Historia animalium* and natural philosophy, and later began to teach sacred Scripture; *Historia del Colegio Imperial*, I, 97, 121-23. The program of *estudios reales* had been set up in the Colegio Imperial in order to assist political and economic reform in the capital, which included the proper education of nobles; see Martínez de la Escalera, pp. 175-97; and John H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 188.

¹³ Nieremberg refers to the commission in his dedication of the book to Olivares; *Obras y días* (Madrid: Viuda de Alonso Martín, 1629), p. ¶2^r.

¹⁴ From 1631 to 1643 the Count Duke's confessor was Francisco Aguado, who – after holding the position of Master of Novices in Madrid where Nieremberg completed his initial training as a Jesuit (1614-16) – later served as the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits in Madrid from 1627 to 1630 (Toledo Province). The source of the commission is unknown, but it seems likely that Aguado may have recommended Nieremberg's name to Olivares. See also 'Francisco Aguado', in *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús [DHCJ]*, ed. by Charles O'Neill and Joaquín M^a Domínguez, 4 vols (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu [IHSI], 2001), I, 20. Didier briefly notes Aguado's influence over Olivares in matters involving Jesuits; see *Vida y pensamiento*, p. 65.

rejected in the spirit of humility.¹⁵ During his life he also caught the attention of both the Church and the Crown. In 1640 he published the popular *Práctica del catecismo romano*, which, he suggests, the Spanish bishops asked him to write.¹⁶ He was also asked to approve or censor various texts for publication, the most notable instance being the *aprobación* he wrote for Quevedo's *La cuna y la sepultura* (1633).¹⁷ He was also appointed to serve as a member of a commission set up by Philip IV to uphold the controversial doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.¹⁸ This happened toward the end of his life, in the 1650s, when he wrote some ten Marian treatises. He was, moreover, chosen by Philip IV to be the confessor of his cousin, Margarita de Saboya.¹⁹

The majority of Nieremberg's works fall into the category of spiritual asceticism. In fact, his ascetical voice is present not only in his devotional and religious texts, but also in his treatises on the education of princes and nobles, his natural philosophy, and his lives of Jesuits. Not surprisingly, his hagiographers describe him as a severely ascetical man, and the modern reader is even led to believe that excessive penitential practices may have contributed to the cause of his death: 'Siempre andaba vestido de

¹⁵ Andrade, p. 729. No record of the appointment has been found; see Didier, p. 52.

¹⁶ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano, y doctrina Christiana, sacada principalmente de los catecismos de Pio V y Clemente VIII compuestos conforme al decreto del santo Concilio Tridentino* [1640] (Madrid: María de Quiñones, 1646), p. ¶¶1^r. I will treat the question of Nieremberg's authorship and the publication of the catechism in Chapter 2.

¹⁷ See 'Aprobación del Padre Juan Eusebio, de la Compañía de Jesús', in *La cuna y la sepultura: para el conocimiento propio y desengaño de las cosas ajenas* (Madrid: María de Quiñones, 1634), pp. ¶2^v-¶3^r. For more information on the *aprobaciones* Nieremberg wrote for this and other works of Quevedo, see José Simón Díaz, *Jesuitas de los siglos XVI y XVII: escritos localizados* (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Salamanca, 1975), pp. 249-50; and Pablo Jauralde Pou, *Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645)* (Madrid: Castalia, 1999), pp. 497, 654, 669, 682.

¹⁸ Didier, p. 66. Nieremberg's participation in the theological commission is also mentioned in the Andrade biography; pp. 728, 735. For a brief overview of Nieremberg's involvement in the debate, see Pedro de Alcántara Martínez, 'Relaciones y débito según los teólogos salmantinos', in *Virgo Immaculada. Acta congressus mariologici-mariani*, XI (Rome: Academia Mariana Internationalis, 1957), pp. 247-51; and Dubosc de Pesquidoux, *L'Immaculée Conception: histoire d'un dogme*, 2 vols (Tours: A. Mame et fils, 1898), I, 447-55. Nieremberg's first Marian treatise, *De perpetuo obiecto festi Immaculate Conceptionis Virginis*, was published in Valencia in 1653; Sommervogel, *BCJ*, v, 1756. He defended the Immaculate Conception as early as 1631; see *Vida del patriarca*, p. 77^f.

¹⁹ Didier, p. 66; Andrade, p. 720.

cilicios [...] tan ásperos y pesados, que le quebrantaron los huesos, en tanto grado, que cuando murió, le hallaron las costillas quebradas cerca del estómago, y un hoyo tan capaz, que cabía en él un puño.²⁰

Faithful Son of St Ignatius

Nieremberg belonged to the spiritual tradition of Ignatius Loyola, whose *Ejercicios espirituales* (1548) played a fundamental role in forming Jesuit identity and spirituality.²¹ During his time as a student in the University of Paris (1528-35), Loyola gave the Spiritual Exercises to a small group of friends. This experience led them to band together to form the Society in 1540. In order to seek the Church's approval of their union, they drafted a document called the *Fórmula del Instituto* (1540, 1550), which expresses their desire to uphold and spread the Catholic faith through the ministries of teaching doctrine, preaching, giving the Spiritual Exercises, offering spiritual consolation to those in need, and administering the Sacraments. Other ministries include works of charity, such as visiting people in hospitals and prisons; and specific attention is given to the teaching of children and the ignorant. In short, their purpose was the 'provecho de las almas en la vida y doctrina cristiana'.²² According to John O'Malley, no other phrase occurs more frequently in the documents of the early Society than this express desire 'to help souls'. O'Malley explains how the term *alma* in Jesuit usage signifies the whole person. The Jesuits provided food and shelter for the body, and learning for the mind, but their main goal was the cultivation of the interior

²⁰ Andrade, p. 721.

²¹ In the following chapters I will continue to refer to the Ignatian text by its original Spanish title in italics, *Ejercicios espirituales*, while the method explained in it will be referred to in English and capitalized as the Spiritual Exercises.

²² The *Fórmula del Instituto* was first approved in 1540 by Pope Paul III. An expanded version of it was later approved by Pope Julius III in 1550; see Ignatius Loyola, *Obras de San Ignacio de Loyola*, ed. by Ignacio Iparraguirre, Cándido de Dalmases, and Manuel Ruiz Jurado, 6th edn (Madrid: BAC, 1997), pp. 455-60.

life: ‘They sought to be mediators of an immediate experience of God that would lead to an inner change of heart or a deepening of religious sensibilities already present.’²³

As the Order grew, its members began to see themselves as teachers of Christianity, or *Christianitas*, that is, the fundamental beliefs and practices of the Church. They faced the challenge of becoming an expanding organization of international proportions, and began to flourish in the field of education, as many schools and universities were set up under their leadership.²⁴ They preached in the cities where they lived, conducted missions in rural areas, and offered catechesis to all sectors of the population, while remaining faithful to their original foundation and charism in the Spiritual Exercises. As a tool designed to cultivate the interior life, this method remained the best way for them to ‘help souls’.

Loyola designed the text of the *Ejercicios* to help people discern the will of God in their lives. On one level, it reflects his own spiritual conversion and the steps he took as a layman to discern the will of God. This encouraged him in turn to translate it into a flexible method for others to follow, and it later came to form the way of life he adopted for himself as a vowed religious. According to Javier Melloni, the life of St Ignatius can be described as an ongoing exercise in discernment: ‘lo que en la historia significa un discernimiento continuo, una disposición permanente de escucha’.²⁵ But on another level, the focus on discernment represents the spiritual doctrine he came to apply to the Order as a whole. Its establishment cannot be understood without the Exercises, which

²³ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 18-19. Spiritual writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often portrayed the soul to represent the whole person; see also Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* [1611] [*Tesoro*], ed. by Martín de Riquer (Barcelona: Editorial Alta Fulla, 2003), p. 92; s.v. Alma.

²⁴ O’Malley, p. 18. By 1580 the Jesuits administered 144 schools in various European countries and overseas missions; by 1615, there were 372; William Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources [IJS], 1986), pp. 96-98.

²⁵ Javier Melloni, ‘Los ejercicios espirituales, un eslabón en la tradición de occidente’, in *EIDES (Escola ignasiana d’espiritualitat)*, 23 (1998), 5-47 (p. 16).

ought to be considered a foundational document of the Society: ‘Following their full course would be prescribed for all novices who joined the order. They would help the individual tap his inner resources [...] and they provided clear yet flexible principles for his own spiritual journey and of those he wanted to “help”.’²⁶

In the four and a half centuries since the Order was founded, the interpretation of the Exercises has varied. This was already true by the time of the first centenary of the Society, in 1640, when Nieremberg had already established himself as a well-known writer, as I will explain below in greater detail. An emphasis on discernment would have been familiar to Nieremberg. He consistently urges his readers to discern the meaning of things and to value them accordingly. He insists upon the proper distinction between virtue and vice, but his message is not only a moral one: the path to salvation must be discerned and applied to the self.

Although his popular works vary in their subject-matter and were originally designed for distinct audiences, they relate to the Ignatian dynamic of discernment in two ways. The first is their common focus on two terms: ‘noticia’ and ‘estimación’. ‘Noticia’ speaks of the proper knowledge, or *conocimiento*, of things: it signifies the search for the true meaning of something.²⁷ ‘Estimación’ applies a sense of value to this knowledge, and leads to the making of a judgment. It sheds light on those things which are of greater meaning and value to the reader, and involves comparing them with things of lesser value. The second way they relate to discernment is through the application of this knowledge to the self and the personal impact it is meant to have on readers. Nieremberg’s texts provide knowledge in several categories, but always in the wider context of the true destiny of humans: eternal salvation. All things must serve as a

²⁶ O’Malley, p. 37.

²⁷ ‘Noticia’ means knowledge: ‘el conocimiento de alguna cosa’; *Tesoro*, p. 831; s.v. Noticia.

means to this greater end. Nieremberg overturns the worldly perception of things and encourages his readers to discern the will of God at any point on the road to salvation.

While Nieremberg draws from the principles of his spiritual tradition to reflect this journey, many of his works directly relate to the defining ministries of the Society – catechesis, teaching, and preaching – which had begun to form the way Jesuits saw themselves and their spiritual doctrine. But he also developed his ideas according to the religious and intellectual currents of the new century. At this point, the place that discernment holds in the Christian tradition and how it came to be a prominent aspect of Nieremberg’s thought merit further attention. In the following sections I will therefore consider its meaning and spiritual context, its relevance to the religious climate of early modern Spain, the expression it came to have in the Jesuit Order, and how Nieremberg, with a keen awareness of the literary tastes of the Golden Age, came to apply it to his texts.

Christian Discernment

At its most basic level, discernment may be defined as the ability to perceive things clearly; it comes from the Latin root *cernere*: to distinguish, to differentiate, or to separate.²⁸ But it also signifies an act of judgment or evaluation; to discern is to observe or to examine something in order to understand it better. As a cognitive act, it signifies a search for truth: the discerning subject attempts to see things clearly and evaluate them appropriately. The quest for truth often requires a detailed reading of available data, a difficult exercise when the appearances of things are deceptive. While this can happen as an intellectual exercise, discernment may also require subjects to read their emotions

²⁸ *The Oxford English Dictionary* [OED], IV, 729; s.v. Discern. See also *Tesoro*, p. 475; s.v. Discernir; *Diccionario de autoridades* [Autoridades] [1726-39], ed. by Martín de Riquer, 3 vols (Madrid: Gredos, 1984), II, 295; s.v. Discernimiento, Discernir.

or affect, or to perform an examination of conscience (*conciencia*), in order to determine how they should think or should act. In this sense, discernment relates to the development of self-knowledge and the application of it to the will and enables an individual to make the right choices.

Discernment also has a spiritual dimension when its exercise is illumined by religious faith. If limited to the exercise of reason and the subsequent actualization of the will, it is purely rational, but when the exercise of reason also involves a concern for the divine, it is spiritual. Spiritual discernment can therefore be defined as the search for God's will in one's life. According to Manuel Ruiz Jurado, it enables people to act according to their own free will, but by applying an understanding of God's will to guide it: 'lo que es verdadera voluntad de Dios que pensemos, aceptemos, digamos o hagamos, lo que es bueno, agradable y perfecto a los ojos de Dios'.²⁹

The roots of spiritual discernment in the Christian tradition can be found in the writings of the earliest Christian communities, the Gospels and the Pauline letters, which speak of it in terms of reading the signs of the times and perceiving the manifestation of the divine in the created world. Resting on this biblical foundation, it came to be regarded as one of the pillars of Christian spirituality, and over the centuries several approaches to its exercise have been developed. The earliest forms of spiritual discernment are related to the development of Christian ascetical practices.³⁰ In its most

²⁹ Manuel Ruiz Jurado, *El discernimiento espiritual: teología, historia, práctica* (Madrid: BAC, 2002), p. 13. My definition of discernment closely follows Ruiz Jurado's treatment of it; see pp. 6-40. See also 'Discernement des esprits', in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité [DS]*, ed. by Marcel Viller and others, 17 vols (Paris: Beauchesne, 1937-95), III (1957), 1222-91.

³⁰ See, for example, Matthew 13:11-13; Luke 12: 54-56; I Corinthians 12:7-10; and II Corinthians 11:13-14. For more on the notion of discernment in the Bible, see Ruiz Jurado, pp. 22-32. The term 'asceticism' comes from the Greek 'askeo', *ασκέω*, meaning physical or mental exercise, or training; see Balbino Marcos Villanueva, *La ascética de los jesuitas en los auto sacramentales de Calderón de la Barca* (Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto, 1973), pp. 35-41; Marcos Villanueva, 'Planteamiento general del problema y sentido de los términos "ascética" y "mística" dentro del campo religioso', in *Historia de la Iglesia en España*, ed. by Ricardo García Villoslada, 5 vols (Madrid: BAC, 1979-82), III.ii (1980), 448-50. For more on the etymology of asceticism and an introduction to its Christian significance, see *DS*, I, 936-38;

general sense, ascesis signifies the practice of self-discipline. In the ancient world it acquired a spiritual or moral meaning, which the Stoics used to develop their doctrine of mastering the self and controlling the passions.³¹ This blend of self-denial and inner struggle on the road to moral perfection was then introduced into Christian thought by the Church Fathers.

The practice of spiritual discernment began to grow more broadly as a form of lay and religious piety in the late medieval period, and came to be associated with the movement of *devotio moderna* which was founded by the Dutch preacher Gerard Groot (1340-84). It consisted of the combination of intense mental and vocal prayer, good works, and devotional practices. *Devotio* signifies the opening of the self and the desire to do the will of God: ‘Elle peut être en effet l’acte intérieur de la volonté qui se donne à Dieu avec générosité et ferveur.’³² In its most succinct form, *devotio moderna*, is a path to Christian perfection based on the contemplation of Christ’s humanity, most widely represented by the *De imitatione Christi* of Thomas Kempis (1380-1471), which first appeared around 1441 and was commonly known as the *Contemptus mundi*. As *devotio moderna* spread across Europe, it found fresh life in the culture of religious renewal taking shape in early sixteenth-century Spain.

The religious and spiritual climate of early modern Spain gave birth to some of the richest forms of spiritual discernment in the Christian tradition. Devotional literature thrived in post-Tridentine Spain, and made a significant impact on the printing industry and the book trade.³³ The Carmelites Teresa of Ávila (1515-85) and John of the

s.v. Ascèse, Ascétisme; also *OED*, I, 679; s.v. Ascesis, Ascetic.

³¹ Marcos Villanueva, *La ascética de los Jesuitas*, pp. 35-36.

³² ‘Devotio’, in *DS*, III, 708. See also ‘Devotio Moderna: su influjo en la Compañía de Jesús’, in *DHCH*, II, 1106.

³³ For more on the editorial production of religious and devotional literature in early modern Spain, see Don Cruickshank, ‘“Literature” and the Book Trade in Golden-Age Spain’, *Modern Language Review*, 73 (1978), 799-824; Keith Whinnom, ‘The Problem of the “Best-Seller” in Spanish Golden-Age Literature’,

Cross (1542-91) wrote of their religious experiences as mystical encounters with God, and the spiritual doctrine they produced reflects the level of importance that was given to the cultivation of the interior life in Christian spirituality. Aspects of *devotio moderna* also had a lasting influence on Ignatius Loyola, and the *Imitatio* was seminal to the spiritual doctrine he developed.³⁴ He recommended the periodic rereading of it, and even suggests reading it during the Second Week of the Exercises, which also explains why Nieremberg may have thought it important to make a fresh Castilian translation.³⁵ Loyola's method focuses on the life of Christ; however its main purpose, to which I now turn, is that of discerning God's will.

The Ignatian Exercises: '*buscar y hallar la voluntad de Dios*'

The *Ejercicios espirituales*, first printed in 1548, emerged as one of the most accessible and comprehensive pedagogical approaches to spiritual discernment in the modern era. It is important to note that St Ignatius inherited many of the components of his method from earlier ones. Two texts had a formative effect on him during his seven-month convalescence at Loyola after being wounded in Pamplona in May 1521: the *Vita Christi* of Ludolph of Saxony (1314-78), and Voragine's *Flos Sanctorum*, both of which

Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, 57 (1980), 189-98; Sara Nalle, 'Literacy and Culture in Early Modern Castile', *Past and Present*, 125 (1989), 69-96; and, more recently, Alison Weber, 'Religious Literature in Early Modern Spain', in *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature*, ed. by David Thatcher Gies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 149-58.

³⁴ See Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, trans. by William J. Young and ed. by George E. Ganss (St Louis: IJS, 1972), pp. 152-57; the editors' comments in *Obras de San Ignacio*, p. 102; Melloni, pp. 7-9; and Luís Gonçalves da Câmara, *Remembering Iñigo. Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius Loyola: The Memoriale of Luís Gonçalves da Câmara* [1555], ed. and trans. Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph Munitiz (St Louis: IJS, 2004), p. 58.

³⁵ See Loyola, *Ejercicios espirituales* [§100], in *Obras de San Ignacio*, p. 248. Fray Luis de Granada's translation, originally published in 1536, was the most printed Spanish-language edition of the *Imitatio* in the sixteenth century. Nieremberg's translation, which first appeared in 1649 (see above, p. 2, n. 4), replaced it as the most popular Spanish edition, though he gives no reason for having made a new translation. For more on these and other editions in Castilian, see Ignacio de Janer and Milá de La Roca, *Catálogo de la colección bibliográfica de la Imitatio Christi (Kempis)* (Barcelona: Diputación Provincial de Barcelona / Biblioteca Central, 1968), pp. 38-93.

he mentions in his autobiography.³⁶ By reading them, the soldier-turned-pilgrim was encouraged to do good and saintly deeds in the name of Christ. Two other texts he came across would also prove to be formative of his vision: during his stay at Montserrat and Manresa (1522-23) he began to read the *De imitatione Christi*, alongside a manual of spiritual exercises of García Jiménez de Cisneros, abbot of Montserrat. Scholars of the Exercises have been able to establish the influence these books had on the saint and his method: ‘El peregrino no inventó un método de oración, sino que lo recibió de la Tradición secular que le precedía y que él supo asimilar, sintetizar y exponer con gran pedagogía.’³⁷

Loyola began to compose the *Ejercicios* in 1522 while still in Manresa. Since he himself had received great spiritual benefit from a systematic approach to prayer, the Sacraments, and various penances, he was moved to record these steps in a notebook, which he would later share with others. He begins by describing his method as an ascetical program intended to help all sorts of people, lay or religious, to rid their souls of vice, or ‘afecciones desordenadas’. What is unique to the method, however, is how all of the exercises in it are oriented to facilitate the seeking and finding – ‘buscar y hallar’ – of God’s will:

Por este nombre, ejercicios espirituales, se entiende todo modo de examinar la consciencia, de meditar, de contemplar, de orar vocal y mental, y de otras espirituales operaciones, según que adelante se

³⁶ *Autobiografía* [§5], in *Obras de San Ignacio* (all further quotations from the *Autobiografía* will come from this edition). Ignatius read a Castilian edition of the *Vita Christi* of Ludolph of Saxony translated by Fray Ambrosio de Montesinos, published in 1502 or 1503. He also read a Castilian translation of the *Flos Sanctorum* (*Legenda Aurea*) of Jacobus de Voragine (d. 1298), which had been prepared by Fray Gauberto Vagad. This was published in Zaragoza (date unknown), and reprinted in Toledo in 1511. Often referred to as the *Gersoncito*, the *Imitatio* was attributed to Jean Gerson (1363-1429) in the sixteenth century, but the author is now thought to have been Thomas Kempis. See Guibert, pp. 152-57; *Obras de San Ignacio*, p. 102; and Melloni, pp. 7-9.

³⁷ Melloni suggests that in Montserrat Loyola had access to the *Compendio breve de ejercicios espirituales* (c.1555) of Fray García de Cisneros, which was available in manuscript form at the monastery during the 1520s; pp. 8-12, 20.

dirá. Porque así como el pasear, caminar y correr son ejercicios corporales; por la misma manera, todo modo de preparar y disponer el ánima, para quitar de sí todas las affecciones desordenadas y, después de quitadas, para buscar y hallar la voluntad divina en la disposición de su vida para la salud del ánima, se llaman ejercicios espirituales [§1].³⁸

This definition of the method appears as the first of twenty introductory notes, or Annotations, preceding the text, and indicates the great significance Loyola gave to discernment. In addition to the meditations and contemplations, the ‘spirituales operaciones’ include the ‘Examen general de consciencia’ [§32], or the review of the sins committed in one’s life, whether in thought, word, or deed [§§33, 38, 42]; the ‘Confesión general’ [§44], which is the sacramental confession of all these sins to a confessor; and the reformation of life (‘Para emendar y reformar la propia vida y estado’), which results in the proper ordering of one’s life in praise and service of the Lord: ‘poniendo su creación, vida y estado para gloria y alabanza de Dios nuestro Señor y salvación de su propia ánima’ [§189].

Loyola also includes various guidelines for the making of an ‘Elección’, or choice, regarding one’s life and how to know what best to do with it [§§169-88]. At the end of the text there are also several rules and notes regarding the discernment of spirits [§§313-36], and the treatment of scruples [§§345-51], which are intended to aid in the spiritual guidance of retreatants. These components mark distinct moments of spiritual progress, but they all contribute to the overall aim of the discernment of God’s will. According to Melloni: ‘se propone como objetivo el “buscar y hallar” la voluntad de Dios para cada uno. Esta búsqueda de la voluntad de Dios como fin último de todas las

³⁸ Ignatius Loyola, *Exercitia spiritualia: textus autographus* [1548], in *MHSI*, 100, ed. by Joseph Calveras and Cándido de Dalmases (Rome: IHSI, 1969), pp. 140-417. All quotations taken from the *Ejercicios espirituales* will come from this edition, and will be cited according to their section numbers (i.e. [§1]).

oraciones es lo que da su especificidad a la mistagogía de los *Ejercicios*.³⁹

While it forms the principal dynamic of the method, the word ‘discernimiento’ is not part of Ignatian terminology. In order to address the discernment of spirits Loyola uses the term ‘discreción’, which appears in the second week (‘quando se toma hasaz claridad y cognoscimiento, por experientia de consolationes y dessolaciones, y por experientia de discreción de varios espíritus’ [§176]), and again at the end of the manual (‘Reglas para el mismo efecto con mayor discreción de espíritus’ [§328]). The verb ‘discernir’ appears only once, and is used in the same set of rules for the discernment of spirits: ‘la persona espiritual [...] debe con mucha vigilancia y atención mirar y discernir’ [§336]. The verb ‘distinguir’ does not appear in the Exercises, while, on the other hand, the verbs ‘buscar’ and ‘hallar’ are used with great frequency; the first appears fourteen times, the latter, forty-seven.⁴⁰

Although the rules for the discernment of spirits are placed at the end, they are an essential component of the text. For example, the fifteenth annotation rests on the presupposition that God freely communicates with the human subject, who is encouraged to discriminate between the experiences of ‘consolación’ and ‘desolación’. This can also be seen in rules for the making of decisions regarding the state of one’s life, where Loyola upholds that divine love may be directly experienced in a person: ‘que aquel amor que me mueve y me haze elegir la tal cosa, descienda de arriba, del amor de Dios’ [§184]. With the help of a director, practitioners must therefore identify

³⁹ Melloni, p. 21. Michael Buckley comes to the same conclusion, that the combination of the various Ignatian exercises contributes to the greater function of discernment: ‘todas las cuales son sintomáticamente importantes para buscar, encontrar y elegir la voluntad de Dios’; see ‘Discernimiento’, in *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana [DEI]*, ed. by José García de Castro and others, 2 vols (Bilbao: Mensajero / Santander: Sal Terrae, 2007), 1, 607.

⁴⁰ Cf. ‘Buscar’, ‘Discernir’, ‘Discreción’, and ‘Hallar’, *Concordancia ignaciana*, ed. by Ignacio Echarte (Bilbao: Mensajero / St Louis: IJS, 1996), pp. 115, 387-90, 614-15. In the *Versio vulgata* of 1548, the discernment of spirits is expressed as ‘diversorum spirituum’ [§176], while in the rules it is expressed in terms of ‘discretio’ (‘Regulae aliae utiles ad pleniorum spirituum discretionem’ [§328]); *discernir* is translated in Latin as ‘distinguere’ [§336].

the source of these inner promptings and decide whether or not they come from God. Loyola also recalls the Pauline image of the angel of light to remind the director that the experience of consolation is at times a trick of the devil (II Corinthians 11:14): ‘proprio es del ángel malo, que se forma sub angelo luçis, entrar con la ánima devota y salir consigo; [...] poco a poco procura de salirse, trayendo a la ánima a sus engaños cubiertos’ [§332].

Since the work was written as a manual for a director to guide another person through the method, the Annotations instruct the director how to ‘give’ the Exercises to a practitioner or retreatant. The fourth annotation explains the basic structure, which is divided into four parts, or ‘weeks’, and spans the course of about thirty days. Each of the four weeks centers on a thematic group of ‘contemplaciones’, and they are arranged in the following manner: Week One, the reality of sin; Week Two, the life and public ministry of Christ; Week Three, the Passion of Christ; and Week Four, Christ’s Resurrection. Practitioners begin the method by applying their own personal life story to the contemplations on sin with the goal of recognizing and ridding the self of any sinful compulsions, such as the attraction to money, honor, titles, or material possessions.

Once this has been accomplished, retreatants then contemplate the events of Christ’s life and the significance of human salvation, with the aim of identifying their own response to them. Some people are guided at the end of the second week in the process of making the ‘elección’ regarding the state of their lives, such as whether or not to enter religious life, while others are encouraged to live out the commitments they have already made, for instance, if they are married or have professed other religious vows [§§169-89]. The root of the question, however, centers on how each person is called to serve the Lord best according to his or her capacities, commitments, and desires.

In the final exercise of the fourth week, the ‘Contemplación para alcanzar amor’ [§230], retreatants reflect on the goodness of life and creation, and come to view themselves as recipients of God’s love and care for the world: ‘el primer punto es traer a la memoria los beneficios rescibidos de creación, redemptión y dones particulares; ponderando con mucho afecto cuánto ha hecho nuestro Señor por mí, y cuánto me ha dado de lo que tiene’ [§234]. This point then culminates in the prayer of the *Suscipe*, and comes to signify an individual’s desire to love and serve the Lord.⁴¹ Just as Loyola introduces the Exercises by describing them as a method of seeking and finding the will of God, so he intends them to end in the retreatant’s free acceptance of it. Above all, the Annotations set the tone for giving the Exercises and guiding someone in a flexible and personalized manner through the contemplations, which, according to Antonio Guillén, establish the foundation for spiritual discernment: ‘La contemplación es, junto con el discernimiento, la base fundamental de los Ejercicios ignacianos. Ambos elementos se condicionan y reclaman mutuamente [...]. Son los railes paralelos sobre los cuáles discurre y avanza el proceso completo de los *Ejercicios*.’⁴²

However, discernment in the Exercises cannot be understood apart from the context of Christian salvation, as is clear from the preamble of the text, the ‘Principio y fundamento’: ‘El hombre es criado para alabar, hazer reverencia, y servir a Dios nuestro Señor, y mediante esto, salvar su ánima’ [§23]. Any decisions made during the course of the Exercises must be consistent with this understanding. According to Loyola, all created things are to be used as means to this greater end: ‘de donde se sigue que el hombre ha de usar dellas, quanto le ayudan para su fin, y tanto debe quitarse dellas,

⁴¹ St Ignatius composed the *Suscipe, Domine* as follows: ‘Tomad, Señor, y recibid toda mi libertad, mi memoria, mi entendimiento y toda mi voluntad, todo mi haber y poseer; Vos me lo distes, a Vos, Señor, lo torno; todo es vuestro, disponed a toda vuestra voluntad; dadme vuestro amor y gracia, que ésta me basta’ [§234]. See the editors’ notes in *Obras de San Ignacio*, p. 273; and Gabriel M^a Verd, ‘Tomad, Señor’, in *DEI*, II, 1708-15.

⁴² Cf. ‘Contemplación’, *DEI*, I, 445-46.

quanto para ello le impiden'.⁴³ The 'Principio y fundamento' is not part of the 'contemplaciones'. Nonetheless, it is significant because it identifies their aim: personal salvation. The Jesuits would place a great deal of emphasis on this end, which came to be a well-known aspect of their teaching in seventeenth-century Spain. For example, this is how Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) describes the Jesuit teachers in *El coloquio de los perros*: 'les pintaban la fealdad y horror de los vicios y les dibujaban la hermosura de las virtudes, para que, aborrecidos de ellos y amadas ellas, consiguiesen el fin para que fueron creados'.⁴⁴ The distinction between 'means' and 'end' in human life also came to form a significant part of the Jesuit spiritual doctrine and, as I will show, it occupies an important position in Nieremberg's spiritual outlook.

Discernment in Early Modern Spain

While the Ignatian Exercises could be adapted and applied to the lives of many different people, the idea that individuals could freely dispose themselves to the direct experience of divine love – that a person could enter into a process of personal spiritual discernment – came to be seen as suspect in sixteenth-century Spain, and Loyola soon encountered resistance. The spiritual climate in Spain was changing just as he began to write the *Ejercicios* in the early 1520s, and the teachings they contained were interpreted by some theologians as a form of illuminism, which advocated the merits of meditative and imaginative prayer over formal liturgies and ceremonies as a means of union with God.⁴⁵

⁴³ For more on the 'Principio y fundamento', see Guibert, pp. 128-30, and the editors' note in *Obras de San Ignacio*, pp. 228-29.

⁴⁴ Miguel de Cervantes, 'El coloquio de los perros', II, 316. Berganza gives Cipión a full account of what he has observed of the Jesuit teachers; see pp. 313-23.

⁴⁵ For more on the spread of illuminism, see Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., 1992), pp. 13, 26, 33. See also John H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716* [1963] (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 212-15; Haliczzer, pp. 4, 317; and Pere Santoja, *La herejía de los alumbrados y la espiritualidad en la España del siglo XVI: Inquisición y sociedad* (Valencia: Biblioteca Valenciana, 2001).

Suspensions such as these eventually led the Dominican friar Juan de la Cruz (d. 1568) to write his *Diálogo sobre la necesidad y provecho de la oración y divinos loores vocales* in 1555 to counter what he saw as the dangers of all forms of mental prayer and the heresies into which they might lead.

By 1520 illuminism had attracted many followers, especially in Alcalá and Toledo. Reactions to it led to the arrests in 1524 of two of its leaders, the Franciscan nun Isabel de la Cruz and her disciple, the layman Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz; in the following year the Holy Office issued a condemnation of forty-eight illuminist propositions.⁴⁶ Loyola had gone to Alcalá in 1526 with the intention of studying theology in the university. But his wish to engage people in spiritual conversation, to speak about church doctrine, and, ultimately, to share his method of the Exercises, soon got him into trouble. Referring to himself in the third person as the ‘pilgrim’, he relates in his autobiography how he and his followers had attracted the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities: ‘Y llegó la cosa hasta Toledo a los inquisidores; los cuales venidos [a] Alcalá, fue avisado el pelegrino por el huésped dellos, diciéndole que les llamaban los ensayalados, y creo que alumbrados, y que habían de hacer carnicería en ellos’ [§58].⁴⁷ He was held for questioning on more than one occasion, and imprisoned for forty-two days. He left the city in 1527 and ended up in Salamanca, where he and a companion soon found themselves under suspicion and once again in prison for the same reasons. Since they had not completed their studies, and therefore could not speak with the authority of an academic degree in theology, they were accused yet again of teaching as ‘iluminados’.⁴⁸ Ignatius then decided to continue his studies outside Spain,

⁴⁶ Elliott, p. 214; Hamilton, pp. 51-53.

⁴⁷ The term ‘ensayalado’ describes their manner of dress, and can be translated as ‘sack-cloth wearers’, *Autoridades*, II, 493; s.v. Ensayalado.

⁴⁸ In his autobiography, Loyola relates: ‘Vosotros no sois letrados, dice el fraile, y habláis de virtudes y de

in Paris, where he would form a friendship with those who later helped him to found the Jesuit Order.

The return of the Ignatian Exercises to Spain was, for the most part, a success. They came with the arrival of Pierre Favre (1506-46), who, according to Ignatius, was the best spiritual director of the nascent Society.⁴⁹ Favre began his work in Valladolid in 1541, in proximity to the Habsburg Court, where he soon gained the favor of the Spanish nobility. By the end of the sixteenth century an entire network for guiding people through the Exercises had been established. The first generation of Spanish Jesuits gave them to members of the ruling class in the urban centers of Madrid, Valencia, and Zaragoza, but also to the peasants and merchants who frequented the markets in places such as Medina del Campo and Burgos. Their greatest achievements were, however, in Valladolid, Alcalá de Henares, and, eventually Salamanca, where they came into contact with civic, academic, and ecclesial authorities.⁵⁰ One of the more renowned spiritual directors during this time was Baltasar Álvarez (1533-80), who is now remembered for having helped many people of influence, among them Teresa of Ávila. According to Iparraguirre, this initial phase of practice, from 1540 to 1580, can be characterized as truly Ignatian, in line with what their author had intended.⁵¹

But the Jesuits encountered further resistance to their work, especially in Salamanca, where the Dominican theologian Melchor Cano (1509-60) mounted a fierce

vicios; y desto ninguno pueda hablar sino en una de dos maneras: o por letras, o por Espíritu Santo. [...] Pues agora que hay tantos errores de Erasmo y de tantos otros que han engañado al mundo, ¿no queréis declarar lo que os decís?' [§65].

⁴⁹ See 'Pierre Favre', in *DHCH*, II, 1369-70.

⁵⁰ See Ignacio Iparraguirre's chapter 'Penetración profunda en la corte y universidad españolas', in *Historia de los ejercicios de San Ignacio*, 3 vols (Bilbao: Mensajero del Corazón de Jesús, 1955), II, 48-88.

⁵¹ It is worth noting that the mystical approach to prayer and contemplation employed by Álvarez was questioned in Jesuit circles, see Bangert, pp. 62-63; Iparraguirre, II, 55.

campaign against the Society.⁵² Repeating the fear that the Exercises were a source of *alumbrista* teachings, Cano urged Juan Martínez Siliceo, who had been appointed Archbishop of Toledo in 1546, to have them investigated. In a short treatise he wrote in the 1550s condemning the spiritual practices of the Jesuits, Cano objected, for example, to Loyola's image of the director as that of a balance in Annotation Fifteen ('mas estando en medio, como un peso, [el que da los ejercicios] dexe immediate obrar al Criador con la criatura, y la criatura con su Criador y Señor' [§15]). He felt that it was dangerous to let the retreatant wrestle with such matters. However, the resulting censure in 1553 would prove ineffectual, given that Pope Paul III had officially approved the method in 1548.⁵³ The Jesuits continued giving the Exercises, and their work in spiritual direction began to flourish in the following decades.⁵⁴

Nieremberg and the Exercises

Just how familiar the Spanish Jesuits of the seventeenth century were with the Exercises is difficult to say. Nieremberg made some form of them during his time as a student in Salamanca in 1614, but how well he knew the text and could identify the notion of spiritual discernment in it is unclear.⁵⁵ Just before he died, Loyola had sketched out some incomplete instructions for giving the Exercises. These were later enhanced and published posthumously in the *Directoria Ignatiana* (1591) at the Roman College, but

⁵² See Terence O'Reilly, 'The Spiritual Exercises and Illuminism in Spain: Dominican Critics of the Early Society of Jesus', in *Ite inflamate omnia*, ed. by Thomas McCoog (Rome: IHSI, 2010), p. 220.

⁵³ See Melchor Cano, *Censura y parecer contra el Instituto de los Padres Jesuitas*, as quoted by O'Reilly, p. 220. See also 'Ejercicios espirituales', in *DHCJ*, II, 1223-30; and 'Melchor Cano', in *DHCJ*, I, 636-37.

⁵⁴ Iparraguirre, II, 72-73.

⁵⁵ Hugues Didier, 'Denys l'Aréopagite dans l'œuvre de Juan Eusebio Nieremberg S.J. (1595-1658)', *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité*, 51 (1975), 138. See also Guibert, pp. 281-82; Iparraguirre, III, 173; O'Reilly, pp. 224-28.

this text was not made widely available.⁵⁶ Ignatius took a significant step by appointing Jerónimo Nadal (1507-80) as the official Visitor of the Spanish Provinces from 1553 to 1554. His main task was to address the Jesuits on the true nature of the Society: he spoke on what it meant to live, work, and pray in fidelity to the charism of the founder.⁵⁷ As the personal representative of Ignatius, Nadal had a significant hand in forming the first generation of Jesuits in Spain, and a decision he made in Rome in 1557 was to have a lasting influence on the whole Society. In his role as rector of the Roman College he proposed that the Jesuits in his charge periodically be given an abbreviated version of the Exercises, and by 1608 the Society had promulgated a decree requiring each Jesuit to spend eight or ten consecutive days every year practicing the Ignatian method. While this approach was not original to Loyola's understanding of how Jesuits should make the Exercises, it underscores their importance in the Society of the early seventeenth century.⁵⁸

But the character and profile of the Society had changed. If at first it consisted of a small group of ten men who bonded together in spiritual zeal, it soon became a religious order international in scale. In 1580 there were 1,440 Jesuits in Spain, and in 1615 they numbered 2,173.⁵⁹ By 1626, just over eighty years after its foundation, it consisted of 15,544 members in Provinces spread throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas.⁶⁰ Inevitably, then, the Society grew into an institutional organization, and

⁵⁶ See Guibert, pp. 244-47; the editors' 'Introducción [al *Directorio autógrafa de Ejercicios*]' in *Obras de San Ignacio*, pp. 309-11; and Miguel Lop, 'Directorios', in *DEI*, I, 606. The text of *Ejercicios* was not always readily available in the seventeenth century. It was first printed in Rome in 1548, in Latin, but was not printed in Spanish until 1615, also in Rome. A Latin edition was printed in Burgos (1574), while Spanish editions were printed in Seville (1628), Mallorca (1650, 1686), and Toledo (1663); see Sommervogel, *BCJ*, v, 59-67. For more on the demand of the text, see also Iparraguirre, II, 350-73.

⁵⁷ See William Bangert's chapter 'The Alcalá Conferences', in *Jerome Nadal, S.J. 1507-1580*, ed. by Thomas McCoog (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1992), pp. 113-34.

⁵⁸ Bangert, pp. 207-09.

⁵⁹ Elliott, pp. 368-69.

⁶⁰ Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, p. 179.

was faced with the task of maintaining its apostolic momentum in schools, parishes, and rural and foreign missions just as it was trying to define the nature of its spiritual doctrine. The immediate impact of the criticism led by Cano against the Jesuits had been minimal, but its sting would eventually be felt. Above all, they wanted to avoid the accusation of spreading illuminist teachings, and the measures they took are evident in the ways they began to describe their style of contemplation.⁶¹

This led to a debate regarding the nature of Ignatian prayer and its relationship to the more mystical currents of spirituality. The founder had certainly had his own mystical experiences, but the aim of spiritual perfection in the Exercises has more to do with freeing the self from disordered attachments and discerning the divine will than with achieving mystical union with God. A person might experience such union, but this was considered an especially rare and ‘holy gift’.⁶² Moreover, the seventeenth century brought with it a new religious climate, which would have an impact upon Nieremberg and his understanding of spiritual matters. Greater emphasis was placed on the more external forms of penance and devotion, and the history of the Exercises began to take another direction. Four factors would determine the course it took.

The first has to do with the growing importance of ascetical practices in religious life. In Spain the Jesuits began to set up their houses not so much as retreat centers where a range of people could make the Exercises, but as places of prayer, solitude, and study for the younger members of the Order. Less emphasis was placed on providing the full four weeks of Exercises for the laity.⁶³ But, more than anywhere else, in Spain

⁶¹ Cf. ‘Directorios’, *DEI*, I, 603-06. For more on the fear of illuminism in the Society, see Guibert, pp. 558-64; and O’Reilly, pp. 199-228.

⁶² Guibert, p. 562. The only reference in the *Ejercicios* to the traditional ‘three ways’ of mystical prayer – Purgation, Illumination, and Union – appears in the Annotations [§10], but is limited to the first two ways. See also ‘Mística ignaciana’, *DEI*, II, 1255-64.

⁶³ Iparraguirre, III, 175-76.

the Jesuits increasingly began to promote ascetical practices as a model of spiritual perfection, and they moved toward embracing a more eremitical style of living. This is evident in the image of the ideal Jesuit later portrayed by Nieremberg in his four-volume series of *Varones ilustres de la Compañía de Jesús*, published between 1643 and 1647: ‘Cuanto uno hacía más horas de oración, más prolongadas y múltiples penitencias, estaba más encerrado en casa, hacía más actos de humildad, vivía más ensimismado en su interior, tanto más vivía su vocación.’⁶⁴ One of the Jesuits most often identified with this ascetic current is Francis Borgia (1510-72), whose own religious conversion led him to reject his titles as Duke of Gandía and Viceroy of Catalonia in order to become a Jesuit, at first secretly, in 1546. The impact he had on the Society should not be underestimated. He served as its third Superior General from 1565 to 1572, and is remembered for having promoted many of these tendencies in the official proceedings of the Society. He had a preference for mortification and austere living, and eventually added an extra hour of prayer to the daily schedule of Jesuits.⁶⁵ For the most part, these changes were well received in Spain.

Second, the apostolic focus of the Society had changed. As the Order continued to open schools, its members devoted a large part of their ministerial energies to the

⁶⁴ Iparraguirre, III, 175. Nieremberg wrote and compiled several hagiographic biographies of Jesuits in *Ideas de virtud en algunos claros varones de la Compañía de Jesús* (1643), *Firmamento religioso en algunos claros varones de la Compañía de Jesús* (1644), *Honor del gran patriarca San Ignacio de Loyola fundador de la Compañía de Jesús* (1645), and *Vidas exemplares, y venerables memorias de algunos claros varones de la Compañía de Jesús* (1647). The series was continued by Alonso de Andrade (1590-1672), who published volumes V (1666) and VI (1667) of *Varones ilustres en santidad, letras, y zelo, de las almas. De la Compañía de Jesús*, and was later reordered and expanded by Joseph Cassani (1673-1750) in 1734 and 1736; see ‘Alphonse de Andrade’ and ‘Joseph Cassani’, in Sommervogel, *BCJ*, I, 317-19, and II, 812-16.

⁶⁵ For more on Borgia, see Guibert, pp. 87, 191-99; Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, pp. 84-52; and Cándido de Dalmases, *Francis Borgia, Grandee of Spain, Jesuit, Saint*, trans. by Cornelius Michael Buckley (St Louis: IJS, 1991), pp. 157-82. On 20 September 1548, after Borgia had entered the Society and begun his studies in theology, Loyola instructed him to reduce his prayer time (‘sería que la mitad de toda se quitase’), to reduce his fasting (‘en guardar y fortificar el estómago con las otras fuerzas naturales, y no en debilitarlas’), and to save his body from severe mortifications (‘sería en quitar de mí todo aquello que pueda parecer a gota alguna de sangre’); ‘Carta a Francisco de Borja, Duque de Gandía’, in *Obras de San Ignacio*, pp. 829-32.

formation of the Marian Congregations, or sodalities. These weekly gatherings were meant to stimulate piety, and were extremely popular not only in Spain, but in other parts of Europe.⁶⁶ The fathers would deliver spiritual talks and catechetical sermons, and the congregants often participated in public forms of penance. Priority was given to such rituals, which also took the form of processions and liturgies.⁶⁷

Third, while the first generation of Jesuits had come into contact with Ignatius or the other founders of the Order, such as Pierre Favre, and was familiar with their way of giving the Exercises, the second generation was not. As a result, the Jesuits began to lose touch with the authentically Ignatian approach. In the prologue of his *Camino espiritual* (1626), the first of two commentaries he wrote on the meaning and practice of the Spiritual Exercises, Luis de la Palma (1559-1641) urges his fellow Jesuits to remain rooted in the spiritual doctrine of the founder, which suggests that few of them, in his view, were:

Y habiendo yo tenido mucho tiempo este libro en las manos, y considerando el valor de esta piedra preciosa, me maravillaba conmigo mismo cómo no había muchos, principalmente de los hijos de San Ignacio, que reverenciasen con toda devoción este libro como gran reliquia, no de su cuerpo, sino de su espíritu, y que con atención le leyesen, y con piedad le escudriñasen, y con provecho suyo y de sus prójimos averiguasen las razones de todo

⁶⁶ See Iparraguirre, III, 179; O'Malley, pp. 196-99; and Bangert, pp. 106-07. According to Bangert, the apostolic reach of the sodalities was even greater than that of the schools.

⁶⁷ One has only to recall the festivities that took place in Madrid surrounding the canonization of Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier in 1622. The Jesuits built immense altars in honor of the new saints, and the church of the Colegio Imperial was ornately decorated. The school also hosted a poetry competition which involved the participation of both Lope de Vega (1562-1635) and the young alumnus Calderón de La Barca (1600-81). See Simón Díaz, *Historia del Colegio Imperial*, I, 59; Florencio Segura, 'Calderón y la escenografía de los Jesuitas', *Razón y fe*, 205 (1982), 15-32; Ignacio Arellano, 'Enseñanza y diversión en fiestas hagiográficas jesuitas', in *Doctrina y diversión en la cultura española novohispana*, ed. by Ignacio Arellano and Robin Ann Rice (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2009), pp. 27-54; and Don Cruickshank, *Don Pedro Calderón* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 62 (Calderón won second prize for his *quintillas* on Francis, and first prize for his *romance* on Ignatius).

lo que se dice en él.⁶⁸

Fourth, the Jesuits also found that in order to give the Exercises, they had to adapt them to the needs of people who were less advanced in the spiritual life. One method to emerge was the preaching of ‘ejemplos’, moral stories intended to persuade people to reform their lives. This approach was successful in Salamanca, where the Irish Jesuit William Bathe (1564-1614) assembled a selection of tales for this purpose.⁶⁹ It is worth noting that this approach to giving the Exercises would have an impact in the apostolic work and preaching of the Jesuits in rural missions, and it is an adaptation of the Ignatian method that Nieremberg would apply to his catechism in 1640, which I will discuss in the following chapter.

Undoubtedly, the seventeenth century presented the Jesuits with challenges on many fronts. Given this new climate, they began to focus more on resigning and conforming the will to that of the divine and less on promoting the process by which individuals make careful decisions and come to accept the will of God.⁷⁰ But if these factors had allowed them to drift away from their earlier focus on helping souls by cultivating the interior life of the individual, the notion of discernment and the search for God’s will was not lost and would remain crucial to their outlook. In the case of Nieremberg it would come to form part of the rhetorical strategy that runs through his popular texts. In the following sections I will consider how he emerged as a writer, the intellectual framework of his writing, and the currents of thought that would come to

⁶⁸ Luis de la Palma, *Camino espiritual* [1626], in *Obras completas*, ed. by Camilo M^a Abad, 3 vols, BAE 144, 145, 160 (Madrid: Real Académica Española, 1961-63), II (1962), 18. The second part to this work, *Práctica, y breve declaración del camino espiritual*, was published in 1629.

⁶⁹ Bathe’s *ejemplos* were compiled and published in 1604 by Pedro Manrique in *Aparejos para administrar el sacramento de la penitencia con mas facilidad y fruto [...]. Recogidos por el licenciado don Pedro Manrique* (Milan: Marco Tulio Malatesta, 1604); Iparraguirre, II, 86-88.

⁷⁰ For a succinct description of this shift in focus, see ‘Indiferencia’, in *DEI*, II, 1020-21.

influence him.

Jesuit Ministry of the Word

While in Spain some Jesuits, such as La Palma, attempted to interpret and promote the Exercises, the availability of commentaries such as his was scant. What emerged instead was an abundant production of spiritual literature which, according to Iparraguirre, was imbued with the ‘Ignatian spirit’.⁷¹ The original companions of the Society did not devote themselves to publishing books, which they did not see as part of their ministry. This was the sentiment of Alfonso Salmerón (1515-85), who felt that the ideals of simplicity, modesty, and charity might be better served in other ways, lest Jesuits were to become too dedicated to writing.⁷² However, they soon discovered how printed materials could help them in their ministries, and by the end of the sixteenth century they began publishing in many disciplines. Loyola himself had gone to great efforts to provide for a printing press at the college in Rome, and because of the need for affordable texts at many of their schools and dissatisfaction with the readily available materials, Jesuits began to compile and print their own texts. Before he died, Loyola had given Juan Polanco (1517-76) the order to write the *Breve directorium* (1554) on the practice of hearing confessions, which was the first book on ministry published by the Society. Nadal had also begun to praise Jesuits for writing books, and in 1594 published his *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*.⁷³

⁷¹ Iparraguirre writes: ‘De aquí procede la aparente antinomia que por un lado la producción literaria de explanaciones de ejercicios fue en España la más escasa de Europa, y que por otro la literatura espiritual fue la más impregnada del espíritu ignaciano. Baste recordar los libros de La Palma, La Puente, Nieremberg y el tratado sobre ejercicios del P. Suárez’; III, 178-79.

⁷² Salmerón held this opinion, even though an oration he gave at the Council of Trent was itself printed; O’Malley, p. 114. See also O’Malley, ‘Renaissance Humanism and the Religious Culture of the First Jesuits’, *Heythrop Journal*, 31 (1990), 471-87 (pp. 479-80).

⁷³ For more on Loyola’s establishment of the press and his commissioning of texts, see O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, pp. 114-15. According to José Luis Betrán, the first published work by a Jesuit author may have been the sermons of Peter Canisius (1521-97) in 1543; ‘El bonete y la pluma: la producción impresa de los autores jesuitas españoles durante los siglos XVI y XVII’, in *La Compañía de Jesús y su proyección*

As the seventeenth century unfolded, Jesuits published a large number of books and treatises, and the exercise of writing came to be seen as an important means of saving souls. Along with preaching, lecturing, and engaging others in spiritual conversation, writing came to be considered part of what O'Malley has called the Jesuit 'ministry of the word'.⁷⁴ Certain Jesuits achieved acclaim: the works of Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1527-1611), Luis de Molina (1535-1600), Juan de Mariana (1536-1624), José de Acosta (1540-1600), and Francisco Suárez (1548-1617) – as well as those of Baltasar Gracián (1601-58), who wrote for both secular and religious purposes – were widely known in Spain and beyond. While commentaries on the Exercises were few, especially in Spain, spiritual treatises of authors such as Luis de la Puente (1554-1624), *Meditaciones de los misterios de nuestra santa fe* (1605), and Alonso Rodríguez (1538-1616), *Ejercicio de perfección y virtudes cristianas* (1609), in addition to those of La Palma and Nieremberg, came to have a wide circulation, and, more importantly, they bear the stamp of the Ignatian Exercises:

Muchos de los grandes tratados espirituales del siglo XVII no son más que ampliaciones de temas meditados en los ejercicios. [...] Van aplicando los principios ignacianos a otras materias, pero realizan la aplicación siguiendo los grandes principios de los ejercicios. A través de sus consideraciones se descubre el pensamiento y la táctica de san Ignacio, presente espiritualmente en todas sus páginas. Estos tratados condensan la vivencia de este

mediática en la Edad Moderna, ed. by José Luis Betrán (Madrid: Silex, 2010), p. 26; also Sommervogel, II, 617.

⁷⁴ For more on the 'ministry of the Word', see O'Malley, pp. 91-115, and Félix Herrero Salgado, 'El ministerio de la palabra en las Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús', in *La oratoria sagrada española de los siglos XVI y XVII*, 5 vols (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1996-2006), III (2001), 50-93. In his biography of Loyola, Nieremberg dedicates a chapter to Jesuit writers: 'Pues assi como assistio la Reyna de los Cielos, a lo que escribió nuestro Santo Padre [San Ignacio], [los *Ejercicios* y las *Constituciones*,] assi ha favorecido a sus hijos en sus escritos. Mirense, quales hayan sido los Escritores mas insignes de nuestra Compañía en todos los generos de doctrina'; *Vida del patriarca*, pp. 77^r-80^v, (p. 77^v).

estilo de ejercicios.⁷⁵

Here Nieremberg stands out as a significant figure because of the great number of his publications, their multiple editions and translations, and his popular approach.⁷⁶

Whereas many of the authors, such as Rodríguez, wrote their works for a specifically Jesuit or religious readership, Nieremberg aimed to reach readers of all sorts, lay and religious, including beginners, the more proficient, and those advanced in their spiritual journey. But just how Ignatian was Nieremberg's outlook?

The importance he gave to the foundation and purpose of the Society is clear from the number of hagiographic Jesuit biographies he published. His volumes of *Varones ilustres*, which together include over 400 lives, were so valued by the Order that the work was continually edited and expanded in the century after his death.⁷⁷ Although they lack the historical accuracy of modern biographies, they portray the apostolic fervor of the early Society, its various ministries in both urban and rural settings, and its global spread to overseas missions. Nieremberg's translation of the *De imitatione Christi* also reflects how aware he was of the importance this text and its teachings had in the spiritual outlook of Loyola. But his admiration for the founder is most evident in his *Vida del glorioso patriarca San Ignacio de Loyola* (1631), which I will discuss in greater detail below. Subsequent editions of the biography include a short treatise, *Del zelo y sabiduría de San Ignacio en la fundación de la Compañía de*

⁷⁵ Iparraguirre, III, 476. The *Meditaciones* of La Puente was eventually printed in various languages in over 400 editions, while the *Ejercicio de perfección* was printed in over 300 editions in twenty-three languages; see 'La Puente, Luis de', in *DHCJ*, III, 2244; and John Patrick Donnelly, 'Alonso Rodríguez' *Ejercicio*: A Neglected Classic', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 11 (1980), 16-24.

⁷⁶ For a comprehensive overview of Jesuit publications during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Spain, see Betrán, pp. 23-75; and Guibert, 'The Spiritual Writers of the Seventeenth Century', pp. 313-73. Earlier studies include Ignacio Elizalde, 'Aportación de los Jesuitas a la literatura española', in *Varia bibliográfica: homenaje a José Simón Díaz*, ed. by Kurt Reichenberger (Zaragoza: Kassel, 1988), pp. 243-53; and Camilo M^a Abad's section on Jesuit writers in 'Introducción general: ascetas y místicos españoles del Siglo de Oro anteriores al V. P. Luis de la Puente, S.J. y contemporáneos de él', in *El venerable P. Luis de la Puente de la Compañía de Jesús. Sus libros y su doctrina espiritual* (Santander: Comillas, 1954), pp. 60-93.

⁷⁷ See above, p. 26, n. 64.

Jesús (1645), which reflects the fervor that built up in celebration of the Society's first centenary. While the treatise may not portray the spiritual sensibilities of the founder, it is a triumphalist account of the Order's foundation and its particular combination of contemplative prayer and apostolic activities in comparison with those of the conventual religious orders.

According to Didier, the Ignatian influence on the writings of Nieremberg is not insignificant, and he goes on to explain how in several of his treatises Nieremberg elucidates his own ideas by citing or adapting passages from the *Ejercicios*. For example, in *Homiliae catenatae* (1646) Nieremberg includes several key exercises from the Second Week, including the 'elección' [§§169-89], the 'llamamiento del Rey eternal' [§§91-100], the 'meditación de dos banderas' [§§136-48], the 'tres binarios de hombres' [§§149-57], and the 'tres maneras de humildad' [§§164-68].⁷⁸ Didier also considers parts of *Vida divina, camino real* (1633) to be directly inspired by some of the main concepts developed in the Exercises, especially the notion of spiritual indifference, which is developed in the 'Principio y fundamento' [§20]. He similarly applies part of this passage to the end of Lesson II in the *Práctica del catecismo romano* in order to remind readers of the ultimate purpose in life ('Mire pues el hombre la grandeza del fin para que fue criado, y el grande poder de aquel Señor Omnipotente que le criò'), and he also paraphrases passages from the First Week meditations on sin in *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* (1640) and *Prodigio del amor divino* (1641) ([§§52, 58, 60]).⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Nieremberg, *Homiliae catenatae* [1646] (Lyon: Joannis Baudrand, 1649), pp. 338-39; as cited by Didier, *Vida y pensamiento*, p. 122.

⁷⁹ Nieremberg, *Práctica del Catecismo romano* [1646], p. 7; see also Didier, pp. 127-29, 142, 146-48. For more on the influence of the Spiritual Exercises in Nieremberg, see Didier's Chapter 3, 'Una espiritualidad ignaciana', which includes a concordance of textual passages taken from both the *Ejercicios* of Loyola and the treatises of Nieremberg; pp. 119-55, see also Didier, 'Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (1595-1658): una paradoja cultural e histórica', *Manresa*, 45 (1973), 131-44 (p. 133).

Nieremberg's awareness of both the mission of the Society and the main tenets of its spirituality is perhaps most evident in his biography of Loyola. This includes a section on the *Fórmula del Instituto*, noting the ministerial activities Jesuits ought to undertake, and in Chapter 14, 'De la extraordinaria Fè de S. Ignacio, y su prudencia sobrenatural', he again signals the importance of several components of the Ignatian method, including the 'Principio y fundamento', the meditation on the 'tres maneras de humildad', and the rules for making a good 'Elección'.⁸⁰ Furthermore, he also stresses the intense introspection required for the discernment of spirits:

Hanse de examinar muy rigurosamente nuestros pensamientos,
mirando a su principio, medio, y fin, que si todo es bueno son del
Angel bueno, mas si en el discurso se hallare alguna cosa que
desdiga y aparte de lo bueno, o del mayor bien que una alma antes
habia buscado, y determinado, o que le aflija y perturbe, señal es
que no es del buen espiritu.

Nieremberg was clearly able to recognize the significance that discernment has in the spiritual doctrine of the Society, and I aim to show how it would come to be formative for his vision as a Jesuit author and his practice of the ministry of the word. But to view him solely in the light of the Exercises is insufficient, as he is best described as an eclectic writer, who draws from many sources, biblical and patristic, as well as from ancient philosophers and early modern humanists.⁸¹ His texts also reflect the literary

⁸⁰ Nieremberg, *Vida del patriarca*, pp. 28^r-33^v, 43^v-44^r. This work was based on the earlier work of Ribadeneyra, *Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola* (see Nieremberg, pp. 42^r, 90^v), first published in Latin in 1572, in Spanish in 1583; see Jodi Bilinkoff, 'The Many "Lives" of Pedro de Ribadeneyra', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 52 (1999), 180-96. Exaggerating the asceticism of Loyola, Nieremberg depicts him as the personification of the *Contemptus mundi* (pp. 27^r, 51^r), over-emphasizes his practice of mortifications (pp. 55^r-56^r), and even suggests that he gave preference to them over contemplation (p. 32^v). As General of the Order, Loyola had requested other Jesuits to reduce these practices in order to safeguard their health (see above, p. 26, n. 65). This was the only work by Nieremberg to be censured by the Order, since it offers an embellished and fantastical portrayal of Loyola; see Andrade, p. 729, and Didier, *Vida y pensamiento*, pp. 64, 100, 119.

⁸¹ Nieremberg, *Vida del patriarca*, pp. 31^v-32^r. Didier, pp. 14, 156; and Zepeda-Henríquez, 'Estudio preliminar', in *Obras escogidas*, I, xx. For a comprehensive list of the authors and works read and cited

tastes and the cultural aesthetics of seventeenth-century Spain, among which neo-Platonic and neo-Stoical elements are especially significant. In the final section of this chapter I will outline the presence of these two currents in Nieremberg's works, in order to offer a fuller picture of him as a Jesuit writer of the Golden Age.

Erudite Eclecticism

As they became established, the Jesuits learned to articulate their religious and spiritual doctrine not in a cultural vacuum, but in the language and imagery of the surrounding culture. In a letter he wrote to the Jesuits in the Council of Trent (1545-63), Loyola encouraged them to adapt to the sensibilities of the people with whom they dealt: 'podemos para el bien, alabar o conformar con uno cerca alguna cosa particular buena, disimulando en las otras cosas que malas tiene, y ganando su amor hacemos nuestras cosas mejor; y así, entrando con él, salimos con nosotros'.⁸² According to William Bangert, members of the Order actively sought to take the pulse of their surroundings and were never removed from the currents of thought that flowed around them. This approach has been termed the rhetorical dimension of Jesuit ministries, which became characteristic of their way of proceeding; in order to persuade their audiences they had to adapt to the circumstances of time and place.⁸³

Nieremberg ought to be viewed in a similar manner. Just as the religious climate of his century formed his knowledge and practice of spiritual matters, the contemporary intellectual currents marked the language and imagery of his texts. The most dominant

by Nieremberg, see Didier's appendix, pp. 517-74.

⁸² Loyola, 'Carta a los PP. Broet y Salmerón' [September 1541], in *Obras de San Ignacio*, p. 753.

⁸³ Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, p. 272; O'Malley, 'Renaissance Humanism and the Religious Culture of the First Jesuits', p. 479. For more on Jesuits and cultural adaptation, see O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, pp. 111-12; for an introduction to the cultural influences on Jesuit writers and their adaptations, see Guibert, pp. 317-18.

current of thought in Nieremberg is the strand of Neo-Platonism that came to influence writers of religious and devotional texts in the early modern period. In Didier's opinion, Nieremberg is ultimately concerned with eternal existence, and Didier questions his fidelity to the teachings of the Exercises: 'La espiritualidad de Nieremberg no es realmente ignaciana, si bien haya tomado cierto número de sus elementos [del] Fundador de la Compañía de Jesús [...]. Mas de los *Ejercicios Espirituales*, ¿no quedan sino residuos a menudo falsificados en uno de sus mejores autores!'⁸⁴

Neo-Platonism was first developed by writers of the Italian Renaissance who wished to emphasize the proportion, balance, and harmony they saw in creation. Marsilio Ficino's (1433-99) translations of Plato had reinvigorated an interest in Platonic thought in the West, and the rebirth of Neo-Platonism is often attributed to the diffusion of Ficino's texts, namely the *De amore* (1484). This aesthetic circulated in Spain in the works of Leone Ebreo (c.1465- c.1521) and Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529).⁸⁵ In Christian terms, Neo-Platonism represented a way of formulating the ascent of the soul from the material world to the eternal, and became instrumental in giving poetic voice to the notion of spiritual transcendence. For example, Colin Thompson shows how this can be seen in Fray Luis de León, who, in his ode to the night sky, uses the Platonic metaphor of the prison to speak of the soul's entrapment in the body: 'Morada de grandeza, | templo de claridad y hermosura, | el alma, que a tu alteza | nació, ¿qué desventura | la tiene en esta cárcel baja, oscura?'⁸⁶ Neo-Platonism also provided a conceptual framework for illustrating the relationship between the temporal and the

⁸⁴ Didier, p. 137.

⁸⁵ The first Spanish translation of Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore* (1535) appeared in 1568, while Castiglione's *Il cortegiano* (1528) had already been made popular by Juan Boscán's translation in 1534 (*El cortesano*). See Jeremy Robbins, 'Renaissance and Baroque: Continuity and Transformation in Early Modern Spain', in *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature*, pp. 137-48 (pp. 141-42).

⁸⁶ As quoted by Colin P. Thompson, *The Strife of Tongues: Fray Luis de León and the Golden Age of Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 78.

eternal worlds, and allowed writers such as Nieremberg to explore the position of the human individual in them. *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* depicts human existence as a journey through the illusory world of the temporal domain to the fullness of eternity and therefore stresses the need to see how material things have no lasting value, but are perishable trappings which the senses mistake for reality.

Neo-Platonism also allowed religious writers to develop the Augustinian metaphor of the ‘book of nature’ in order to explore the concepts of divine love and beauty in the world. For example, in the *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe* (1583) Fray Luis de Granada (1504-88) adopts a positive, or cataphatic, theology of coming to know God in creation and teaches readers to see how the created order and the presence of grace in it mirror the greater beauty and perfection of the Creator: ‘En lo cual parece que estas dos tan principales obras de nuestro Señor nos son dos grandes libros en que podemos leer y estudiar toda la vida, para venir por ellas al conocimiento dél, y de la grandeza y hermosura de sus perfecciones.’⁸⁷

The strand of Neo-Platonism in Nieremberg bears strong resemblance to the treatment of nature and grace in Luis de Granada, and although his texts of natural philosophy (*Curiosa filosofía* and *Oculto filosofía*) are less catechetical than the *Símbolo*, they rest on the same Augustinian principle that the eternal grandeur of God is discernible in the temporal realm of existence: ‘No entramos en la plaça deste mundo para espectáculo mayor, ni [h]ay cosa mayor q[ue] ver sino a Dios, [...], la fuente de las essencias, la matriz de las naturalezas, el tesoro de las perfecciones.’⁸⁸ All created things point to their origin in the Creator, and, in *Del aprecio y estima de la divina*

⁸⁷ Luis de Granada, *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe* [1583], ed. by José María Balcells (Madrid: Cátedra, 1989), p. 110.

⁸⁸ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofía. De la simpatía y antipatía de las cosas, artificio de la naturaleza, y noticia natural del mundo. Y segunda parte de la Curiosa filosofía. Contiene historias notables* (Madrid: Imprenta del Reyno, 1633), p. 111^v.

gracia (1638), Nieremberg explains how the effects of divine grace stir the human heart to seek and find the true source of perfection: ‘Tiene el hombre dentro de si una cosa mas que humana, y comienza à entrar en otra tierra, otros ayres, otra Region Celestial diferente de la del mundo, donde no se guia por los nortes de los sentidos, y razon humana.’⁸⁹

But Neo-Platonism also gave expression to a negative, or apophatic, theology, which was developed by the mystics. They wrote about their spiritual union with God in terms of darkness, mystery, and unknowing.⁹⁰ At times Nieremberg also has recourse to the *via negativa* of this tradition, which is how he introduces his treatise *De la hermosura de Dios* (1641): ‘Gran verdad es lo que tantas vezes repiten los Santos, que el Ser divino es inefable. Ni fue sin causa lo poco que san Dionisio Areopagita dixo de Dios en su *Mistica Teologia*.’⁹¹ This then leads him to describe the ways in which the dazzling light of God’s beauty renders the believer both blind and speechless:

Aquel inmenso pielago de essencia [...] està tan lexos de poder explicarse con vocablos, que ni los conceptos pueden llegar a conocerle: solo puede nuestro entendimiento admirarle, pero no comprehenderle. Assi como los ojos no puede[n] detenerse en mirar al Sol sin cegarse, por lo qual les es su claridad incomprehensible. Con infinitas mas ventajas excede la luz divina

⁸⁹ Nieremberg, *Del aprecio [y estima] de la divina gracia* [1638], in *Obras christianas, espirituales, y philosophicas del P. Juan Eusebio Nieremberg* [1651], 3 vols (Seville: Lucas Martin de Hermosilla, 1686), I, 218-480 (p. 427).

⁹⁰ For more on the Platonic roots and their development in the mysticism of John of the Cross, see Colin Thompson, *St John of the Cross: Songs in the Night* (London: SPCK, 2008), pp. 135-54.

⁹¹ This line comes from Nieremberg’s dedication of the treatise to the sister of the Count Duke Olivares, María Leonor de Guzmán, Condesa de Monterrey; *De la hermosura de Dios y su amabilidad* (Madrid: Juan Sanchez, 1641), p. ¶ 3^v. The foundations of apophatic theology, its connection to Neo-Platonic thought, and its influence on Western mysticism can be traced to pseudo-Dionysius (c. 500), in his *Mystical Theology*; for more information, see ‘Denys L’Aréopagite (Le Pseudo)’, *DS*, III, 244-429. For more on Nieremberg and the pseudo-Dionysius, see Didier, ‘Denys l’Aréopagite dans l’œuvre de Juan Eusebio Nieremberg S.J.’, pp. 137-50.

a la vista de nuestra alma.⁹²

Didier deems *De la hermosura de Dios* ‘una obra neoplatónica por excelencia’ because it portrays all creaturely existence as a pale reflection of the purest form of beauty in the Creator.⁹³ In the opinion of Zepeda-Henríquez, ‘el Padre Juan Eusebio [...] descende en línea recta de la mejor rama de la mística española’.⁹⁴

Nieremberg’s focus on the nature of things and their true value also reflects the increased popularity of Stoicism in seventeenth-century Spain, through the diffusion of the works of the Netherlandish humanist Justus Lipsius (1547-1616). His *De constancia* (1584) and *Politicorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex* (1589), which put Stoical ideas in Christian terms, were both translated into Spanish before 1615, and their influence would be especially felt in the spheres of moral and political discourse.⁹⁵ Neo-Stoicism rests on the principle that humans have the ability to understand, by the exercise of reason, the true nature of an object. In this sense, it relates to the exercise of discernment, which in moral terms involves the judgment of something not only as true or false, but also as good or bad. Neo-Stoical writers emphasized that the truly valuable things in life must be separated from those that are not, and gave literary expression to the contrast between *ser* and *parecer*. The dichotomy between the true identity of something and its appearance flourished in seventeenth-century Spanish literature and

⁹² Nieremberg, *De la hermosura de Dios*, p. 2.

⁹³ Didier, *Vida y pensamiento*, pp. 186-87. For more on the influence of Neo-Platonism in Nieremberg, see Didier’s chapter ‘Filosofía y fe cristiana’, pp. 156-206.

⁹⁴ Zepeda-Henríquez, ‘Misticismo y estética en el tratado *De la hermosura de Dios y su amabilidad*’, in the ‘Estudio preliminar’ of *Obras escogidas*, I, xxx-xxxiv (p. xxxiii). For more on the mystical interpretation of Nieremberg’s works, see also Zepeda-Henríquez, ‘Dilucidaciones en torno a la mística del Padre Nieremberg’, in the ‘Prólogo’ of *Obras escogidas*, II, xiv-xvii; and Otis H. Green, ‘The Historical Problem of Castilian Mysticism’, *Hispanic Review*, 6 (1938), 93-101.

⁹⁵ Jeremy Robbins, *Arts of Perception: The Epistemological Mentality of the Spanish Baroque, 1580-1720* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p. 41. For more information on the influence of neo-Stoicism in seventeenth-century Spain, see the following two chapters by Robbins: ‘Neostoicism, Value Judgment and Moral Perception’, in *Arts of Perception*, pp. 39-63; and ‘Renaissance and Baroque: Continuity and Transformation in Early Modern Spain’, pp. 137-48.

became instrumental in developing the notion of *desengaño*, or the process by which an individual gains awareness of having lived in a state of deception (*engaño*).

Moralists in this tradition gave much attention to the correct judgment of things; they urged their readers to practice self-knowledge, to concentrate on matters within their power ('lo propio') as opposed to those over which they had no control ('lo ajeno'), and thereby to free themselves from the control of their passions and desires. But Spanish writers also developed the notion of *desengaño* as a way to address the growing instability that permeated all aspects of life. Fiscal, political, and military problems continued to erode the foundation of empire that had been built in the previous century, and led to an increased awareness of decline and defeat on many fronts.

The most famous neo-Stoical writer in Spain was Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645), who had been a student of the Jesuits in Madrid. He helped to disseminate the philosophy of the Stoics through the translation of their works, such as the *Epicteto y Phocílides en español con consonantes. Con el origen de los estoicos y su defensa contra Plutarco, y la defensa de Epicuro, contra la común opinión*, first published in 1635. But he also developed his own neo-Stoical voice in works such as *La cuna y la sepultura: para el conocimiento propio y desengaño de las cosas ajenas*. Like the Neo-Platonists, Quevedo upholds the Christian notion that human life is a pilgrimage: 'Dentro de tu propio cuerpo, por pequeño que te parece, peregrinas.' Nevertheless, he then goes on to warn readers against the allure of the passions: 'y si no miras bien por donde te llevas [*sic*] tus deseos, te perderás dentro de tan pequeño vaso para siempre'. With a view to Christian salvation and the possibility of not attaining it, Quevedo places emphasis on the fragility of the human condition and the need for self-knowledge: 'Mira que eres el que a poco que no fuiste y el que, siendo, eres poco, y el que de aquí a poco

no serás; verás como tu vanidad se castiga y se da por vencida.’⁹⁶

The attempt to reconcile Stoicism with Christianity was looked upon favorably by the Jesuits. Nieremberg himself helped to promote the writings of Quevedo, commenting in his *aprobación* of *La cuna y la sepultura*: ‘Parece que Epicteto se nos ha vuelto español, [...] que Séneca cristiano.’ In the *aprobación* of Quevedo’s translation of Epictetus, he further states: ‘Los estoicos merecen el origen sagrado que aqui se les da. [...] Quan cerca andaban de la doctrina Christiana.’⁹⁷ Nieremberg’s own writing also reflects his attraction to these teachings and the ways they could be adapted to Christian doctrine. Although *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* bears the imprint of Neo-Platonic thought, as mentioned above, the treatise is also notable for the neo-Stoical overtones of its spiritual outlook. This is immediately evident in its subtitle: *Crisol de desengaños con la memoria de la eternidad, postrimerías humanas y principales misterios divinos*. It portrays the temporal world as a deceptive show of items lacking true value: ‘assi es, que la prosperidad humana, que viene rodeada de los bienes de la tierra, los vende por verdaderos bienes, pintandolos grandes, seguros y duraderos; pero no son nada menos; por lo qual, todo es engaño y ficcion, como lo echò bien de ver Seneca’. He then supports this teaching with Christian Scripture, and recalls the parable of the sower used by Jesus to depict how the riches and pleasures of earthly life choke the word of God as it is sown in the human heart: ‘Por esto Christo nuestro Redentor llamò a las riquezas engaños, diciendo que la palabra divina se ahogaba con la

⁹⁶ Quevedo, *La cuna y la sepultura, Doctrina moral*, ed. by Celsa Carmen García Valdés (Madrid: Cátedra, 2008), pp. 74, 78. For more on Quevedo’s neo-Stoical writings, see Robbins, *Arts of Perception*, pp. 42-44; Henry Ettinghausen, *Quevedo neoestoico* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad Navarra, 2009).

⁹⁷ Quevedo, p. ¶3^r; and *Epicteto, y Phocílides en español con consonantes* (Madrid: Pedro Coello, 1635), p. ¶3^v. Not only did the Jesuits help to bring Lipsius back to the Catholic faith in 1590, they protected him and disseminated his beliefs; see Peter Russell, ‘Spanish Literature (1474-1681)’, in *Spain: A Companion to Spanish Studies*, ed. by Peter Russell (London: Methuen, 1973), pp. 265-380 (p. 335).

falsedad y engaño de las riquezas.⁹⁸

Conclusion

The currents of thought that came to define the literary culture of seventeenth-century Spain, especially its philosophical, religious, and devotional texts, clearly form a significant part of Nieremberg's intellectual world. But while they may have contributed to his intellectual formation, the spiritual doctrine of the Society and its own focus on discernment have a significant presence in his works and ought to be given their due credit. My thesis will focus on how his Ignatian outlook is expressed according to the circumstances of his time and place. In order to do so, I will analyze a sample of works which I believe to be representative of Nieremberg's writing, both in genre and subject-matter. Chapter 2 presents an overview of his *Práctica del catecismo romano* and how it combines aspects of Ignatian introspection and self-awareness with the instruction of doctrine for the less advanced reader. Chapter 3 treats Nieremberg's texts of natural philosophy – *Curiosa filosofía* and *Oculto filosofía* – in which he presents the created order in terms of a spiritual contemplation for the more learned reader: the meaning of Creation must be discerned and applied to the self. Chapter 4 examines the rhetorical strategies and the visual imagery of his ascetical writing, especially *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno*, and how it relates to the Ignatian dynamic of seeking and finding the will of God for the more spiritually advanced. Finally, Chapter 5 considers the restorative effects the reformation of life might have on the body politic in *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* (1642) and the wider message

⁹⁸ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* (Madrid: María de Quiñones, 1640), pp. 252-53. The parable of the sower appears in the synoptic Gospels: Matthew 13:22, Mark 4:19, and Luke 8:14. For more on the neo-Stoical influences in Nieremberg, see Didier's chapter 'Filosofía y fe cristiana', in *Vida y pensamiento*, pp. 156-206.

of spiritual conversion Nieremberg delivers to the people of Spain.

While these texts were written for different types of readers, they were intended to reach a wide readership, and are representative of the range of Nieremberg's work and of how it would have been best known to the seventeenth-century public. They will therefore help to restore him to the place he deserves in the history of Golden Age writing, but they will also help us to understand the Ignatian and Jesuit character of his perspective. His texts reflect the dominant currents of thought, the religious sensibilities, and even the social and political situation of the seventeenth century, yet they should also be seen as a product of the author's spiritual and apostolic outlook to help people discern 'el fin para que fueron creados'.

Chapter Two¹

Catechetical Innovations

*Ya lo dijo esta mañana
el señor cura en el Usebio.*

– Un anciano²

Introduction

Nieremberg was perhaps best known in his day for two of the four works he published in 1640, his ascetical treatise *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* and his popular catechism, the *Práctica del catecismo romano, y doctrina Christiana*.³ Both were published in numerous editions in Spain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but they have something else in common, since both were used widely as texts to be read in a communal setting. This aspect of their dissemination has not received the attention of

¹ An early draft of this chapter has been published, see D. Scott Hendrickson, ‘A Jesuit Catechism: Aspects of Discernment in Juan Eusebio Nieremberg’s *Doctrina Christiana* (1640)’, in *Los jesuitas: religión, política y educación (siglos XVI-XVIII)*, ed. by José Martínez Millán, Henar Pizarro Llorente and Esther Jiménez Pablo, 3 vols (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2012), II, 1221-36.

² P. E. Regatillo, ‘Prólogo’, in Nieremberg, *Aprecio y estima de la divina gracia* [1638] (Madrid: Apostolado de la Prensa, 1947), p. 7.

³ *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno. Crisol de desengaños con la memoria de la eternidad, postrimerías humanas y principales misterios divinos* (1640); and *Práctica del catecismo romano, y doctrina Christiana sacada principalmente de los catecismos de Pio V y Clemente VIII compuestos conforme al decreto del santo Concilio Tridentino* (Madrid: Diego Díaz de la Carrera, 1640). While I consider Nieremberg to be the final author of the catechism, the extent of his authorship is not entirely clear. The original author is thought to have been the Jesuit missionary Jerónimo López (1590-1658), who initially discussed his plans for the text with Nieremberg; see Martín de la Naja, *El misionero perfecto. Deducido de la vida, virtudes, predicación, y misiones del venerable, y apostólico predicador Padre Jerónimo López* (Zaragoza: Pasqual Bueno, 1678), pp. 207-09. See also Sommervogel, *BCJ*, IV, 1952-53; and Juan M^a Solá, ‘El catecismo único en España’, *Razón y fe*, 16 (1906), 58-71 (pp. 61-62). Three years after it was published, Fray Martín Ximénez referred to the catechism as one of Nieremberg’s principal works; see Nieremberg, *Partida a la eternidad, y preparación para la muerte* (Zaragoza: Pedro Verges, 1643), p. ¶¶1^v.

critics it merits.⁴ Preachers read from them in order to supplement, or even to formulate, their sermons, while catechists used them in public readings for the teaching of church doctrine and Christian virtues. Well into the eighteenth century the Jesuit Pedro de Calatayud (1689-1773) continued to recommend the use of both books for these purposes.⁵ The *Práctica del catecismo romano* was one of the most frequently published catechisms in Spain during the seventeenth century, a noteworthy fact given the number of these produced both before and after the Council of Trent (1545-63). It was so widely used that it came to be known more commonly by the name of the author: ‘Lo cierto es que sí debió conseguir un notable éxito a nivel popular, pues, [...] fue durante mucho tiempo el libro de texto de muchas parroquias, haciendo por él lectura catequística a todo el pueblo, el cual acudía con gusto y provecho a lo que él llamaba *El Eusebio*.’⁶

Nieremberg’s catechism is similar to the dozens of *Doctrinas* that were

⁴ Luis Resines lists ten editions of the catechism printed in Spain from 1640 to 1686, plus five more in the next century, from 1718 to 1794; *La catequesis en España: historia y textos* (Madrid: BAC, 1997), p. 330. See also Sommervogel, *BCJ*, v, 1740-42. For a complete list of the catechisms published in Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Resines, pp. 191-207, 329-33. Earlier studies include: Cecilio Gómez Rodeles, *La Compañía de Jesús catequista* (Madrid: G. L. Horno, 1913); Daniel Llorente, ‘Práctica del catecismo romano’, *Revista catequística*, 16 (1926), 261-65. Many dioceses recommended that the catechism be used in parishes for the purposes of preaching and public readings; see *Constituciones synodales del arzobispado de Valencia* (Valencia: Bernardo Noques, 1657), pp. 13-14.

⁵ In a chapter entitled ‘De el exercicio de predicar la palabra divina’, Calatayud lists the treatise as one of the preferred texts for preparing a homily, while the catechism is given prominence in a subsequent section regarding ‘el arte de doctrinar’; Pedro de Calatayud, *Misiones y Sermones. Arte, y methodo con que las establece [...] en dos tomos* (Madrid: Eugenio Bieco, 1754), I, 82-85. Calatayud proposes in a previous publication that priests should be required to read from Nieremberg’s catechism for a period of half an hour at solemn masses; *Juizio de sacerdotes, doctrina práctica, y anatomía de sus conciencias* (Valencia: Joseph Estevan Dolz, 1736), pp. 161, 289-90.

⁶ Resines, *La catequesis en España*, pp. 351-52. The treatise (*De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno*) may also have been referred to as the *Eusebio*; see Antonio Astráin, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Asistencia de España*, 6 vols (Madrid: Razón y Fe, 1916), v, 97; Guibert, *The Jesuits*, pp. 318-19; Iparraguirre, p. 427. According to Victorino Capánaga, both texts were read from during mass, so much so that even in the twentieth century parishioners referred to the remarks of the priest as the ‘Usebio’; ‘San Agustín y el P. Nieremberg’, *Augustinus*, 3 (1958), 529-40 (p. 529). One or more of Nieremberg’s texts achieved popular acclaim in the same way people referred to the *Contemptus mundi* as the *Gersoncito* (see above, p. 15, n. 36), or the *Gramática sobre la lengua castellana* (1492) of Antonio de Nebrija (1442-1522) as the *Nebrija*.

circulating in parishes, schools, and rural missions. It presents the tenets of Catholic teaching according to a pedagogical schema, in the native language of its intended audience, Castilian Spanish. But two aspects of the text represent a catechetical innovation: first, Nieremberg adapts the function of the catechism so that it can be used for both teaching and preaching, and second, he further enhances it by adding several rhetorical ‘exemplos’, or tales, to illustrate the subject-matter. While he seeks to instruct readers in the mysteries of the faith, he includes these ‘exemplos’ to move them toward leading a life of virtue: ‘porque no solo se debe procurar ilustrar el entendimiento para el conocimiento de los misterios de la Fè, sino mover la voluntad para abraçar la virtud, y h[u]ir los vicios’.⁷ As the doctrinal lessons provide ‘noticia’, the tales show how important it was for Nieremberg that knowledge itself was insufficient and that its moral and spiritual meaning needed to be embraced.

Belonging to the rhetorical tradition of the *exemplum*, the catechetical tale is intended to capture the attention of readers or listeners, who should then imitate its teaching. In the early modern period moral examples were used by writers to enhance the didactic function of their texts. Placed in a religious context, they were also used to illustrate aspects of the spiritual life. Loyola applied a similar technique in the *Ejercicios espirituales*, and in the seventeenth century the Spanish Jesuits increasingly used the ‘exemplo’ in their ministries of preaching and catechesis, and, more significantly, in giving an abbreviated version of the Exercises.⁸ In this sense, the ‘exemplo’ relates to the overall aim developed by the Jesuits of helping people discern aspects of their spiritual life. Nieremberg’s tales even include some of the techniques of

⁷ Nieremberg, ‘Prólogo y advertencia’, in *Práctica del catecismo romano* (1646), p. ¶¶3^r. All textual references in this chapter are from this edition.

⁸ For more on the rhetorical techniques of the Exercises, see ‘Meditación’, in *DEI*, II, 1205-11.

discernment used by Loyola in the *Ejercicios*. In this chapter I aim to show how Nieremberg's use of the 'exemplo' contributes to the rhetorical function of the catechism, but also how it relates to the Jesuit focus on discernment and the cultivation of the interior life. In the context of Jesuit ministries, the *Práctica del catecismo romano* is a product of Nieremberg's desire to help souls, and it is also an example of how he adopted aspects of the Ignatian method and applied them to his texts.

Catechetical Context: 'otros catecismos muy aprobados'

In order to see how discernment functions in the 'exemplos', it is important to understand why Nieremberg wrote a catechism and how he intended it to be used. According to its unabridged title, Nieremberg's 'Doctrina' is primarily based on the Roman Catechism, which had been commissioned during the final proceedings of the Council of Trent.⁹ Pius v (1566-72) issued the *Catechismus ex decreto Concilii Tridentini ad Parochos* in the same year he was elected to the pontificate and three years after the close of the Council. Originally written in Latin under the direction of Cardinal Charles Borromeo (1538-84), the reform-minded Archbishop of Milan, the Roman Catechism was intended to aid parish priests in their duties of teaching and, above all, preaching Catholic doctrine.¹⁰ But while it was first printed in Spain in 1577, it was not translated into Spanish until 1777, over two hundred years after it had been

⁹ For the full title, see p. 43, n. 3. On 26 February 1562, the Council of Trent formed a commission to censor books considered to be dangerous or heretical. A subsequent decree on 4 December 1563 states the Council's intention to publish a catechism; Concilium Tridentinum, 'Sessio XVIII: Decretum librorum delectu et omnibus ad concilium fide publica invitandis' and 'Sessio XXV: Super indice librorum, catechismo, breviario et missali', in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), II, 723, 797 (for quotations from these decrees, see Appendix II).

¹⁰ Resines, *La catequesis en España*, p. 187. For more information regarding the commissioning and redaction of the Roman Catechism, see Pedro Rodríguez and Raúl Lanzetti, *El Catecismo Romano: fuentes e historia del texto y de la redacción* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1982), pp. 59-66.

commissioned.¹¹

According to Nieremberg, the Roman Catechism was neither accessible nor useful for the purposes for which it was created, and it was this view that led him to produce a new type of catechism three-quarters of a century later. However, he begins his own text by promising that he has done nothing other than copy and rearrange the material from previously published Doctrines, namely the Roman text and three other catechisms that had already been approved by the Holy See:

Nadie la ha compuesto de nuevo, sino solo dispuesto, y recopilado, ò trasladado, de otros Catecismos muy aprobados, como son el de Pio Quinto, el de Clemente Octavo, y Cardenal Belarmino, el del Beato Fr. Bartolomè de los Martires, y la Doctrina Portuguesa del Venerable Padre fray Luis de Granada.¹²

Except for the Roman Catechism, all the catechisms named here were available in Spanish editions.¹³ What is more, these texts represent a fraction of the numerous

¹¹ The Castilian translation of the Roman Catechism was blocked by the Inquisition under Philip II because of its connection to the censored catechism of Bartolomé de Carranza (1503-76), *Comentarios sobre el catechismo Christiano* (1558); see Resines, *La catequesis en España*, pp. 189, 414-15; Pedro Rodríguez, *El Catecismo Romano ante Felipe II y la Inquisición española* (Madrid: Rialp, 1998), pp. 15, 38-39, 148-49, 168-69; Rodríguez and Lanzetti, pp. 67-71; and Helen Rawlings, *Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Spain* (London: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 42-44. When Bishop Juan Lorenzo de Irigoyen commissioned the 1777 Spanish edition of the Roman Catechism, he criticized the adaptations that other authors such as Nieremberg had made to it: ‘en cuya comparacion no tienen que ver los demás Catecismos, que el amor à la novedad [h]a despierto’; *Catecismo romano: compuesto por decreto del Sagrado Concilio Tridentino para los párrocos de todo la Iglesia [...] Traducido por Lorenzo Agustin de Manterola*, 2 vols (Pamplona: Benito de Coscoyuela, 1777), I, xxii.

¹² Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶¶2^v.

¹³ Fray Luis de Granada published his catechism, *Compendio de doctrina Christiana*, in 1559, the same year in which three of his books (*Libro de la oración* [1545], *Guía de pecadores* [1556], and *Manual de diversas oraciones y espirituales ejercicios* [1557]) appeared on the *Index*, the *Cathologus librorum qui prohibentur*; see the editor’s introduction, Granada, *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe*, pp. 11-31. The Spanish edition of the *Compendio* was printed in Madrid in 1595. A translation of the *Catecismo da doutrina Christia[ana]* (1562) of Bartolomé de los Mártires (1514-90) had already been printed in Madrid in 1563; for more on these translations, see Resines, *La catequesis en España*, p. 194. In 1597 Clement VIII (1592-1605) commissioned the Jesuit Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) to write the *Dichiaratione piu copiosa della dottrina cristiana* (1598), which was later abridged and republished in subsequent years. Its Spanish edition, *Declaración copiosa de la doctrina Christiana*, was first printed in 1615; see Sommervogel, *BCJ*, I, 1182-1204; Resines, p. 332; and ‘Roberto Belarmino’, in *DHCJ*, I, 388.

catechisms that were printed in Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

According to Luis Resines, no fewer than 196 catechisms were produced during the sixteenth century alone, many of which went through numerous editions.¹⁴

The pioneer of catechetical pedagogy in the Iberian Peninsula had been Juan de Ávila (1500-69), a secular priest who, because of his creative and popular instructional methods, came to be known as the ‘apóstol de Andalucía’. His techniques included the use of memorable songs and chants, which he indicates in the title of his own catechism: *Doctrina Christiana que se canta: Oydnos vos por amor de Dios*. Printed in Baeza around 1550, it was frequently published in other Spanish cities in the following two decades.¹⁵ The catechisms of two Jesuits, Gaspar Astete (1537-1601), *Doctrina Christiana y documentos de criança*, published in 1576, and Jerónimo de Ripalda (1535-1618), *Doctrina Christiana con una exposición breve*, from 1591, also circulated widely in Spain.¹⁶ Like Juan de Ávila’s, these texts were designed to facilitate the comprehension and memorization of doctrinal teachings, which were presented in the popular format of a short dialogue between a ‘Maestro’ and a ‘Discipulo’.¹⁷ So what prompted Nieremberg to write another catechism? What did he hope to contribute to the volumes of similar doctrinal texts, ‘muy aprobados’ and already in circulation?

Nieremberg and Trent

Nieremberg’s catechism rests on the foundation of two decrees promulgated at Trent,

¹⁴ Resines, *La catequesis en España*, p. 190. For the author’s comprehensive list, see ‘Catecismos españoles del XVI’, pp. 191-99.

¹⁵ Resines, *La catequesis en España*, p. 193.

¹⁶ Resines, *La catequesis en España*, pp. 237-48. See also Resines, *Catecismos de Astete y Ripalda* (Madrid: BAC, 1987), pp. 3-10.

¹⁷ Jesús Gómez presents an overview of catechisms arranged in the format of a dialogue in ‘Catecismos dialogados españoles (siglo XVI)’, *Edad de Oro*, 8 (1989), 117-28.

both addressing the reform of doctrinal instruction.¹⁸ For the first, he cites a decree passed by the Council in its penultimate session on 11 November 1563 (Sessio XXIV, Canon VII), which mandates bishops to ensure that not only the Church's teachings on the sacraments, but also all Catholic doctrine be both translated and explained to the faithful in the vernacular.¹⁹ Encouraging preachers and catechists to avoid the distraction of what it termed 'useless questions', the aim of the decree was to implant the precepts of salvation in the hearts of the faithful: 'eademque in omnium cordibus (postpositis inutilibus quaestionibus) inserere'; in other words, this should be done in an effective, or practical, manner, and in the vernacular.²⁰ The second decree he cites was promulgated closer to the beginning of the Council, on 17 June 1546. It refers more specifically to the time and place of doctrinal instruction, and had the aim of reaching a greater number of people. It instructs priests, bishops, and appropriately appointed catechists to teach doctrine every Sunday and on all feast days of the church calendar, and states that this instruction should include the teaching of Christian virtue.²¹

In the context of these two decrees, Nieremberg presents the case for making his catechism available throughout Spain. First, it is his opinion that the public is too ignorant regarding the mysteries of the faith. He considers this ignorance particularly deplorable in Spain, the 'flor' of Christendom:

¹⁸ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶8^r.

¹⁹ Concilium Tridentinum, II, 764 (see Appendix II).

²⁰ The decree on reform corresponds with similar deliberations from a year earlier regarding the use of the vernacular in the mass. On 17 September 1562, 'Sessio XXII, caput VIII: Doctrina et canones de sanctissimo missae sacrificio', the Council decreed that, while Latin should be retained for the celebration of the mass, priests and catechists were instructed to explain the different parts of the mass in the vernacular. This instruction was intended to occur on Sundays and feast days when people were attending liturgical services, and it included teaching the meaning of various prayers and the articles of the faith; Concilium Tridentinum, II, 735 (see Appendix II).

²¹ Concilium Tridentinum, 'Sessio V, Decretum secundum: Super lectione et praedicatione', II, 667-70 (see Appendix II).

Como sea la Fè el principio de la vida Christiana, ha procurado el enemigo comun poner vicio en el fundamento, para que el edificio no se logre, procurando tan grande ignorancia de los misterios de la Fè, que es para llorar con lagrimas de sangre la poca noticia que tienen dellos, aun los que la tienen muy grande de los negocios de la tierra. No es creible lo que passa en esta materia, ni se puede dezir sin lastima, y quebrantado del coraçon, que en medio de la Christia[n]dad, y en la flor della (digo con dolor aun menos de lo que he topado) aya personas cargadas de años, y de obligaciones, y con frecuencia de los Sacramentos, que ignoren totalmente lo que les importa.²²

Nieremberg claims that vast sectors of the public are in need of doctrinal instruction, including holders of offices and those charged with responsibilities ('los [...] de los negocios de la tierra', and 'personas de obligaciones'). Even the people who regularly partake of the sacraments are included among the ignorant ('personas [...] con frecuencia de los Sacramentos'); people who would have been married in the Church, who attend mass, and go to confession on a regular basis. They too lack the necessary knowledge regarding the mysteries of the faith: 'que es para llorar con lagrimas de sangre la poca noticia que tienen dellos'. Imagine the rest of the population, the author implies, who do not regularly participate in the sacramental life of the Church. The mention of 'noticia' also merits attention, as it will come to form a significant aspect of Nieremberg's spiritual outlook. While, in this passage, it signals the lack of proper knowledge concerning the teaching of the Church, it also represents the wider aim of catechesis: 'que no es menos que la salvación eterna'.²³ In order to discern between right and wrong on the path to Christian salvation, those who are beginning the journey must have the appropriate 'noticia' to reflect and make the right decisions.

²² Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶¶1^v.

²³ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶¶1^f.

The second reason for the dissemination of the catechism is that Nieremberg also considers it to be a direct response to Trent's call for the renewal of preaching. If the commissioning of the Roman Catechism had been an attempt to remedy the homiletic deficiencies of undereducated priests, Nieremberg continues to hold them responsible for the lack of adequate instruction in the pulpit: 'si no son tan exercitados en estudios, y actos publicos, tienen en esto encogimiento, y dificultad, y es cosa en que ocurre[n] muchos impedimentos'. According to Fernando Bouza, Nieremberg's Doctrine 'pretextaba la incapacidad de muchos curas de almas *sacar* sermones del Catecismo Romano, que podían llegar a tener o no'.²⁴ But this is not the only problem, as he also faults the more learned preachers for their stylistic excesses: 'si [...] son doctos, lo suelen hazer con mayor agudeza de la que es el pueblo capaz, ò se divierten à algunos conceptos que no son de tanto provecho para los oyentes, como de aplauso al Predicador'.²⁵ Preachers of this sort began to decorate their sermons with puns and aphorisms, and came to be highly lauded in the seventeenth century. They adopted the aesthetics of *conceptismo* which had been cultivated by writers of the period, most notably Quevedo and Nieremberg's fellow-Jesuit Gracián. The most renowned of the *conceptista* orators was the Trinitarian friar and court preacher Hortensio Félix Paravicino (1580-1633), whose style was admired by Gracián, with some reservation: 'juntó lo ingenioso del pensar con lo bizarro del decir; es más admirable que imitable'.²⁶

Opposition to preaching in the evolving *conceptista* style could already be heard

²⁴ Fernando Bouza, 'Da golosina y otras industrias jesuíticas: de la prédica a la imprenta', in *Escrituras de la modernidad: los Jesuitas entre cultura retórica y cultura científica*, ed. by Perla Chinchilla and Antonella Romano (Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana, 2008), pp. 305-25 (p. 319).

²⁵ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶¶2^f.

²⁶ Baltasar Gracián, *Agudeza y arte de ingenio* [1648], ed. by Ceferino Peralta, Jorge M. Ayala, and José M^a Andreu, 2 vols (Zaragoza: Larumbe, 2004), II, 640. 'Lo ingenioso del pensar' in Gracián's comment reflects *conceptista* thought. In the seventeenth century 'bizarro' meant 'fine' or 'handsome'; *Tesoro*, p. 219; s.v. Bizarria. According to John O'Malley, many Jesuits in Europe and abroad shared Gracián's admiration of *conceptista* preaching; see 'Predicación', in *DHCH*, IV, 3221.

in Spain in the final decades of the sixteenth century, and it would eventually be deemed unacceptable, as Nieremberg discovered, by those with authority in the Society of Jesus.²⁷ Early in his training the young Juan Eusebio had been reprimanded by his master of studies for a homily he delivered in the refectory pulpit. Now critical in his catechism of the style, he probably never forgot the reproach he had received years before: ‘El santo P. Gaspar Sanchez, que se halló presente y era su maestro en las letras y en espíritu, en saliendo del refectorio, le dijo: “¿También el H[ermano] Eusebio habla crítico y dice delicados pensamientos y conceptos sin provecho?”’.²⁸

The catechism therefore emerges in the context of Catholic renewal in the post-Tridentine period, and the problems that persisted led Nieremberg to develop a more suitable text both for preachers and their audiences. It is for this reason that he mentions four specific works in his prologue. The catechisms of Borromeo and Bellarmine had been written under papal commission. But while Borromeo’s had been designed to help priests study doctrine in order to preach it, Bellarmine’s catechism had followed the simpler and more popular format of the didactic dialogue, and was more suited for teaching. However, the Portuguese texts by Luis de Granada and Bartolomé de los Mártires had been prepared more specifically for preaching doctrinal lessons, in the vernacular. Not only were they appropriate for priests to study, they were designed as texts to be read out loud in the public setting of a congregation:

²⁷ According to José Jurado, opposition to the aesthetics of *conceptismo* was expressed well before it was adopted as a style of preaching or writing in the seventeenth century: ‘A partir de 1588 [...] los tratadistas españoles de elocuencia sagrada vienen ya castigando con dureza el estilo retorcido, hinchado y culto’; ‘El Fray Gerundio y la oratoria sagrada barroca’, *Edad de Oro*, 8 (1989), 97-105 (p. 100).

²⁸ Andrade, VIII, 713. Having entered the Jesuit Order in 1614, Juan Eusebio would have preached his sermon around the same time the Jesuit General began to discourage the use of *conceptismo* in the pulpit: ‘Déjà en 1617, le Père Vitelleschi [1615-46] avertissait le Provincial de Castille, Juan de Montemayor, qu’il devait apprendre aux étudiants de la Compagnie à prêcher contre le péché et non à s’amuser ingénieusement à des recherches de mots ou à des phrases étudiées’; L. Stinglhamber, ‘Baltasar Gracián et la Compagnie de Jésus’, *Hispanic Review*, 22 (1954), 195-207 (p. 198). See also Astráin, VI, 111.

Como conociessen los Obispos de Portugal, compuso por si mismo el santo Fray Bartolome de los Martires, Arçobispo de Braga, una Doctrina estendida, para que se leyese publicamente en las Iglesias; y tambien el Venerable Padre Fray Luis de Granada, por orden de la Reina Doña Catalina de Portugal, compuso otra excelente en Portuguès, para el mismo fin de que se leyese al pueblo.²⁹

If all four catechisms had been deemed ‘muy aprobados’, it is the suitability of these preached texts, their communicative function, which would influence the creation of the *Práctica del catecismo romano* as it attempted to create a bridge between practical catechesis and effective sermons.

The Voice of Doctrine

Although the Roman catechism had been prepared by ‘hombres muy doctos’, the heart of the issue for Nieremberg was that it had simply proved to be impractical as a catechetical tool. The Spanish bishops themselves were calling not only for a new catechism, but also for one that would meet the needs of both the catechists and their audiences: ‘desearon algunos zelosissimos Obispos otros Catecismos en estilo acomodado al Pueblo, [...] compuesto en le[n]gua vulgar un Catecismo, que fuesse como Práctica del Romano’.³⁰ Since the Portuguese texts had been designed with preaching in mind, reading from them could complement, or even replace, the delivery of a homily. According to Luis de Granada, doctrine should have a voice in the same way the stone tablets of the Decalogue were intended to ‘preach’:

²⁹ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶¶2^f.

³⁰ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶8^v. He goes on to suggest that the bishops had specifically appointed him to create a new catechism: ‘Y aunque la execucion deste trabajo se mandò a quien menos podia dar la satisfacion que pide, [...] Dios N. Señor [...] serà servido’; pp. ¶8^v-¶¶1^r. The 1646 edition contains a list of over thirty-five dioceses in which the bishops both approved the text and granted indulgences for those who taught, studied, read, or listened to its contents; see pp. ¶2^v-¶7^f.

Y porque no pudiesse caber olvido de cosa ta[n] necessaria, mandò a Moisen, que [...] levantassen unas grandes piedras, y escribiesen en ellas las palabras desta ley, para que los que entrassen y saliessen por aquellos caminos, viessen aquella escritura, y oyessen la voz de aquellos mudos predicadores.³¹

Nieremberg adapts his catechism so that, not unlike Granada's, it is at once a catechism, and a compendium of doctrinal homilies. He adjusts it in language and function, and therein gives doctrine a voice.

But it is also for this reason that Nieremberg adds a variety of 'exemplos' to the catechism. Having appropriately adapted the communicative function of the doctrinal voice, the 'exemplos' serve as colorful vignettes and further enhance the narrative style of the catechetical reading. The text is therefore divided into three main parts. The first contains the lessons to be read on Sundays throughout the year, while the second contains lessons arranged according to the major feasts of the church calendar. According to Nieremberg, this adaptation is already an improvement, because not even the Portuguese catechisms provide a full cycle of lessons for both Sundays and feasts.³² These two parts lead readers or listeners through all the aspects of Christian life, from the profession of the faith to the practice of virtue, and to eternal judgment and the afterlife, which was a common didactic feature of catechisms. Bellarmine, for example, begins the *Declaración copiosa de la doctrina Christiana* with the question 'que cosa sea

³¹ Fray Luis de Granada, *Compendio de doctrina Christiana* [...]. Traducido de lengua portuguesa en nuestro vulgar castellano por el Padre Fray Enriq[ue] de Almeyda [1559] (Madrid: Viuda de P. Madrigal, 1595), p. 5. A marginal note gives the appropriate biblical reference in Deuteronomy, which speaks of the Decalogue's origin as it is both written and proclaimed (Deuteronomy 27:8, 14), see *Biblia Sacra Vulgata* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969). The Spanish translation of the *Compendio* was published with a short collection of his homilies in the appendix, so that it could easily fulfill the dual purpose of doctrinal instruction and preaching.

³² Nieremberg states: 'pero esta diligencia se estrechò solo a Portugal, y no tienen determinadas, ni medidas lecciones para las fiestas del año', pp. ¶¶2^{r-v}.

la Doctrina Christiana, y quales son las partes principales de ella’, and guides the reader from the more fundamental elements of Catholic belief to the ways in which these beliefs are put into practice and cultivate the desire to do charitable deeds.³³ Both texts conclude with the *postrimerías*, the Four Last Things (Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell), as an indication of how Christian life ends in the temporal world. Death is the portal to the afterlife, but the Christian is first judged according to how well the teachings in the previous chapters have been implemented.³⁴

The third part contains the tales, which are intended to illustrate the doctrinal lessons in the first two: ‘añadense al fin algunos exemplos de los pu[n]tos mas principales de la Doctrina’. Following the same scheme, it is divided into fourteen categories, each consisting of a number of examples which offer snapshots of the Christian life.³⁵ It begins with stories illustrating the articles of the Creed, and progresses through the different precepts, prayers, and practices the Church teaches. This first section contains lessons on the sign of the cross, the omnipotence of God, and the unity of the Holy Trinity (‘Exemplos de la Doctrina’), while later sections treat the sacramental life of the Church (‘Exemplos de los Sacramentos’). Some of the categories are more scriptural in their subject-matter, such as the section on the Beatitudes from the Gospel of Matthew (‘Exemplos de las ocho Bienaventuranças’), one on the ten

³³ Bellarmine, *Declaración copiosa de la doctrina Christiana* [1615] (Seville: Nicolas Rodriguez, 1641), pp. 1^r-2^v, 168^r-169^f. See also the ‘Indice’ at the back of the book, pp. 173^v-84^r.

³⁴ This didactic scheme was widely used in devotional writing, and is evident in the *ars moriendi* and *vanitas* texts of the early modern period. They pertain to a genre of literature formed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which centered on the preparation of a good death. One of the first texts of this type was the *De praeparatione ad mortem* (1534) of Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536); see Fernando Martínez Gil, *Muerte y sociedad en la España de los Austrias* (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2000), pp. 57, 73.

³⁵ Nieremberg, *Exemplos de la doctrina Christiana* [1640], in *Práctica del catecismo romano* (1646), pp. 328-86. There are 148 examples in total. While Granada’s *Compendio* does not contain an *ejemplario*, he offers occasional brief narrations as ‘exemplos’ to elucidate the doctrinal teachings. In 1641, a year after the publication of Nieremberg’s catechism, the Spanish edition of Bellarmine’s *Doctrina Christiana* was published ‘con adiciones de exemplos al fin de los capitulos, por el Maestro Sebastian de Lyrio’, as stated in the unabridged title.

commandments from the Books of Exodus and Deuteronomy ('Exemplos de los Mandamientos'), and one on the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians ('Exemplos de las Virtudes Teologales'). Other sections are more aligned to Catholic tradition ('Exemplos de los Mandamientos de la Iglesia'), and deal with the more practical matters of going to mass, fasting, and tithing ('De oír misa', 'Del ayuno', and 'De los diezmos'). The following section illustrates the benefits of prayer, which includes reciting the Our Father and the Hail Mary ('Exemplos de la Oracion'), while the virtues of Christian living are depicted in tales concerning corporal and spiritual works of mercy, such as giving alms and feeding the hungry in the former, and forgiving one's enemy in the latter ('Exemplos de las Obras de misericordia [corporales]', and 'Exemplos de las Obras de misericordia espirituales'). Nieremberg then closes with a set of examples on the Four Last Things ('Exemplos de las Postrimerías').

In accord with this didactic scheme, the 1646 edition of the catechism was bound with a copy of Nieremberg's treatise on the preparation of a good death, *Partida a la eternidad* (1643), appended to the back.³⁶ The passage to the afterlife is a prominent theme in Nieremberg's works, where it forms part of his treatment of discernment. In Chapter 4 I will show how the visually descriptive narrative of *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* presents the earthly existence of human life in the same shocking images of death portrayed by Juan de Valdés Leal (1622-90) in the *Jeroglíficos de nuestras postrimerías* (1672).³⁷ While both the treatise and the paintings guide readers or viewers to discern and embrace the more authentic values of the Christian life, the

³⁶ Nieremberg, *Partida a la eternidad, y preparación para la muerte* [1643] (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1645), in *Práctica del catecismo romano* (1646).

³⁷ The paintings are reproduced in Appendix IV.

‘exemplos’ in the *Práctica del catecismo romano* illustrate how these values are to be practiced in daily life.³⁸

Nieremberg’s ‘Doctrina’ holds a distinctive place in the history of catechesis in Spain, as it was the first catechism printed in Spanish which could be read during mass throughout the year. The impact it had on the teaching and preaching of doctrine would be felt as many authors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries copied the model both adopted and expanded by him: ‘sobre todo es la *Práctica del catecismo romano y doctrina christiana* de Juan Eusebio Nieremberg en 1640, la obra que consolida este estilo’.³⁹ While it is noteworthy for its contribution to the liturgical and catechetical practices of the time, the same can be said of the didactic implications of its style, and the ‘exemplos’, to which I now turn, allow it to become a tool for reaching readers and listeners at the level of the will and engaging them in the exercise of discernment.

The Catechetical Examples: ‘*otros divertimientos*’

In the translation of Granada’s *Compendio*, Enrique de Almeyda states that while it was meant to explain doctrine to the faithful, it was also designed to reach them at a deeper level, the interior domain of emotions and the will: ‘Este libro de doctrina Christiana se ordenò [...] para que la falta de la voz viva supliesse la letra muerta, que todavia puede obrar en los coraçones de los oye[n]tes.’⁴⁰ Granada clearly follows the Tridentine

³⁸ It has been suggested that Miguel de Mañara, who commissioned the *Jeroglíficos*, was familiar with the writings of Nieremberg, and that the image of the scales in them may have come from the comparison of vices and virtues in the *Práctica del catecismo romano*; see Alejandro Guichot y Sierra, *Los famosos jeroglíficos de la muerte de Juan de Valdés Leal, de 1672: análisis de sus alegorías* (Seville: Imprenta de Álvarez y Rodríguez, 1930), pp. 34-36. See also Jonathan Brown, ‘Hieroglyphs of Death and Salvation: The Decoration of the Church of the Hermandad de la Caridad, Sevilla’, *The Art Bulletin*, 52 (1970), 265-77 (pp. 270-71).

³⁹ Resines includes a list of eighteenth-century Spanish authors who emulated Nieremberg’s style; *La catequesis en España*, p. 375.

⁴⁰ Granada, *Compendio*, p. 564.

directive to implant doctrine in the hearts of Christians ('in omnium cordibus inserere'). Nieremberg intends to move people in a similar way, but with his 'exemplos': 'porque se suele mover mucho el Pueblo con semejantes historias'.⁴¹ Don Juan Manuel had applied the same principle to the *exempla* in *El conde Lucanor* (1330-35): 'E a esta semejança, con la merçed de Dios, será fecho este libro e los que lo leyeren si por su voluntad tomaren plazer de las cosas provechosas que y fallaren, será bien.'⁴² The Jesuits of the seventeenth century placed a great deal of emphasis on the arts of persuasion, and increasingly began to employ them in many of their apostolic activities, whether they were teaching in their schools or catechizing in rural missions. This was especially true of their style of preaching, which the founders of the Order had already begun to develop in the mid-sixteenth century: '[they] of course believed that instruction was integral to any good sermon, but of the three traditional aims of preaching – to teach, to move, to please – the early Jesuits saw the second as the most important'.⁴³ Nieremberg expresses his desire to accomplish all three. If at first he states his dual goal to *instruct* and *move* ('ilustrar el entendimiento' and 'mover la voluntad'), the examples are also meant to *please* his listening audience: 'y por esso se han escusado otros divertimientos, aplicaciones, y discursos en la declaracion de los Evangelios'.⁴⁴

As a student and then professor of the Colegio Imperial, Nieremberg was steeped in the humanist tradition, and would have been trained in the rhetorical techniques a

⁴¹ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶¶3^f.

⁴² Don Juan Manuel, *El conde Lucanor* [1330-35], ed. by Alfonso I. Sotelo (Mexico City: Red Editorial Iberoamericana, 1993), p. 73.

⁴³ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 96.

⁴⁴ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶¶2^v. For more on Jesuits, moral teaching, and entertainment, see Arellano, pp. 27-53.

speaker could use to persuade and move hearers.⁴⁵ As a rhetorical device, the *exemplum* was used by Greek and Latin orators to prove a point or to sway the opinion of an audience. In Book II of his *Rhetorica* Aristotle defines the oratorical example as a past event based on fact, or as an illustrative parallel, or fable, based on invention.⁴⁶ Fact or fiction, its function was to clarify abstract reasoning. As a past event of historical significance, Quintilian defines the *exemplum* as a practical device used by the speaker to prove a point or to persuade a listener.⁴⁷ In the sixteenth century Luis de Granada applied many of the same rhetorical devices to preaching in his extensive *Rhetorica ecclesiastica* (1576). The ‘exemplum’, he states, serves the purpose of adorning the subject-matter of sacred oratory, while it also illustrates difficult concepts: ‘Ante oculos ponit, cum exprimit omnia perspicue, ut res dicta prope manu tentari possit.’⁴⁸ This visual aspect of the ‘exemplo’ is important to note, as I will show how Nieremberg presents his tales through familiar and folkloric images so that a sermon may become more palatable: ‘sin empacho de los oyentes’.⁴⁹ According to José Aragüés Aldaz, Golden Age orators adopted the use of rhetorical examples in order to clarify the

⁴⁵ For more on the inclusion of rhetoric in the Jesuit curriculum, see O’Malley, ‘How Jesuits First Became Involved in Education’, in *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives*, ed. by Vincent J. Duminuco (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), pp. 56-74. For more on the curriculum Nieremberg would have followed as student of the Colegio Imperial, see Simón Díaz, *Historia del Colegio Imperial*, I, 45-52. In the following chapter I will discuss aspects of the pedagogical approach of the Colegio Imperial in greater detail.

⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. by Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), II, 2219-20.

⁴⁷ Quintilian states: ‘Potentissimum autem est inter ea quae sunt huius generis exemplum, id est rei gestae aut ut gestae utilis ad persuadendum id quo intenderis commemoratio’; *Institutio oratoria*, in *Institutionis oratoriae liber decimus*, ed. by W. Peterson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), p. 50.

⁴⁸ See Granada, *Retórica eclesiástica II* [1576], in *Obras completas XXIII*, ed. by Álvaro Hueriga (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1999), p. 243 (Libro quinto, Cap. XIV).

⁴⁹ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶¶2^v. ‘Sin empacho’ implies that the doctrinal lesson is easy to hear and digest: ‘vale algunas vezes turbarse y ocuparse con fastidio [...]. Empacho de estómago, quando no se ha hecho digestión’; *Tesoro*, p. 507; s.v. Empacharse.

meaning of a sermon in an appealing manner.⁵⁰ In this sense, the *exemplum* is not only persuasive, it contributes to the ways in which listeners are engaged to perceive, or discern, the message of a preacher.

In order to apply the ‘*exemplos*’ to doctrine, Nieremberg instructs the orator to use prudence: ‘*algunas vezes convendria proponerselas segun la ocasion, y circunstancias que la prudencia dictare*’.⁵¹ Members of the Society were also trained to embrace prudence in their methods of evangelization: ‘*Essential to this success was the orator’s ability to be in touch with the feelings and needs of his audience and to adapt himself and his speech accordingly*’.⁵² In the seventeenth century the Jesuit Juan Baptista Escardó (1581-1652), gave similar advice: ‘*que si bien el predicador ha de estar adornado de todas las virtudes; en la de la prude[n]cia, y cirunspeccio[n], se ha de esmerar*’. The brilliant preacher was the one able to reflect on the most appropriate way to address his hearers: ‘*El varo[n] prudente, ha de pesar muy bien las palabras q[ue] ha de dezir en unas balanças finas*’.⁵³

While Nieremberg admits that the ‘*exemplos*’ are included as something additional, he nonetheless praises them for the ways in which they enhance the catechetical process: ‘*es verdad, que se añaden tambien algunas cosas [...] para que tengan bastantemente los Fieles noticia de la Fè, remedio de sus costumbres, y avisos*

⁵⁰ José Aragüés Aldaz, *Deus concionator: mundo predicado y retórica del exemplum en los Siglos de Oro* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), p. 82. See also Aragüés Aldaz, ‘Preceptiva, sermón barroco y contención oratoria: el lugar del ejemplo histórico’, *Criticón*, 84-85 (2002), 81-99; and Cristóbal Cuevas, ‘Para la historia del *exemplum* en el barroco español (el *Itinerario* de Andrade)’, *Edad de Oro*, 8 (1989), 59-75 (pp. 59, 66).

⁵¹ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶¶3^f.

⁵² O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 255.

⁵³ Juan Baptista Escardó, *Rhetorica Christiana, o idea de los que dessean predicar con espíritu, y fruto de las almas* (Mallorca: Los Herederos de Gabriel, 1647), p. 500^f. In this case the verb ‘*esmerarse*’ signifies the quality of the preacher: ‘*Esmerado, lo estremado de bueno*’; *Tesoro*, p. 548; s.v. *Esmerarse*. Nieremberg’s emphasis on prudence merits attention. While in the catechism it signals his awareness of the rhetorical dimension of catechesis, in Chapter 5 I hope to show how it also relates to his wider treatment of discernment.

convenientes para su salvación'.⁵⁴ The link between 'noticia' and the 'remedio de costumbres' is significant, since this is where discernment begins. On the one hand, the stories provide the necessary 'noticia' to live a good Christian life, but this knowledge must somehow be appropriated by those being catechized. The 'remedio de costumbres', or the reform of the self, must happen at a personal level.⁵⁵ In the following sections I will show how the 'exemplos' engage listeners in this process.

Narrative Appeal: 'caminando por España'

The first example to be analyzed illustrates one of the ten commandments, 'no jurar', which prohibits taking the Lord's name in vain ('un juramento').⁵⁶ The doctrinal lesson first appears in Lesson XI of Part I, but Nieremberg illustrates the teaching with this complementary tale in Part III about a mule-driver in the folkloric setting of a *venta*:

Un Hermano de la Compañía, muy siervo de Dios, caminando por España, hizo noche en una venta adonde halló un harriero gran jurador, que tras cada palabra arrojaba un juramento. Llegòse a èl el Hermano, y le rogò que no jurasse tanto sin necessidad. El harriero haziendo burla de lo que se le pedia, començo a jurar mas, y a dezir: Voto a tal Padre, que no juro; [¿] pues esto es jurar? Reprehendiole asperamente el Hermano: pero ni por esso bastò, hasta que viendo que era perder tiempo, le dexò. Aquella noche, como a la mitad della, estando toda la gente sossegada, se oyò dentro, y fuera de la venta tan gran ruido, que puso espanto a los que en ella se hallaron. Creciendo el ruido mas, y mas, tuvieron necessidad de levantarse, y tomar luzes

⁵⁴ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. ¶¶2^v.

⁵⁵ 'Remedio de costumbres' or 'reforma de vida' signifies the Jesuit focus on 'helping souls', and represents the development of the spiritual life and the personal relationship with the Lord; O'Malley, pp. 18-19.

⁵⁶ There are different interpretations of the word *juramento*: the swearing of a legal oath or the irreverent use of the name of God. In this case, *jurar* means to speak profanely; *Tesoro*, p. 723; s.v. Jurar, Juramento, Juramentarse. St Ignatius also explains the gravity of this sin in the First Week of the Exercises [§§38-41].

para ver que seria aquello. Andando, pues, de una en otra parte mirandolo todo, dieron con el harriero muerto entre los pies de las cabalgaduras dentro de la caballeriza. El Hermano le hizo poner sobre un poyo, y dixo a los que se hallaron presentes: Cubrid a esse mal[a]venturado con algo, hasta que sea de dia, que le llevemos al pueblo para que le entierren. Hizieronlo assi, y fueronse a reposar: mas a la mañana, cuando acudieron al cuerpo, para llevarlo, no lo hallaron.⁵⁷

Although the Jesuit brother implores the *arriero* to control his swearing, his admonition is ignored: ‘haziendo burla de lo que se le pedia, començo a jurar mas’. The *arriero* is mysteriously struck dead, as it is implied that he is gravely punished for his irreverent sin, but the disappearance of his body further suggests that he has also been denied the rite of Christian burial. The lesson to obey the commandment is clear. What is interesting about Nieremberg’s tale, however, is how he teaches a doctrinal lesson with a shocking story in words and images which have a particular resonance in the Golden Age. As Alfredo Alvar suggests, the roadside inn was a customary fixture in the cultural landscape of seventeenth-century Spain, and it was part of the daily reality in and around the villages of the countryside.⁵⁸ The Jesuit character performs a catechetical role not in the parish or college, but in the more secular setting of the rustic

⁵⁷ Nieremberg attributes the story to the Jesuit Alejandro Faya, who published it in his 1633 collection of ‘exemplos’; *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 341; see Alexandro Faya de Saona, *Suma de exemplos de virtudes y vicios. Segunda [y tercera] parte* (Lisboa: Giraldo Pérez de la Viña, 1633), pp. 127^v-128^r. The first part of this work was published a year earlier: *Suma de exemplos de virtudes, y vicios. Primera parte* (Seville: Francisco de Lyra, 1632). While Faya does not state the provenance of the tale, he notes in the *Primera parte* that a some of his examples regarding Jesuits come from the Jesuit historian Nicolás Orlandini (1553-1606), whose *Historiae Societatis Iesu prima pars* (Rome: Bartholomaeum, 1614) was published posthumously; p. ¶4^v. There is no reference to the tale in Orlandini’s index. See also ‘Niccolò Orlandini’, in *DHCJ*, III, 2924; and ‘Nicolas Orlandini’, in Sommervogel, *BCJ*, v, 1934-35. Nieremberg also includes ‘exemplos’ of Faya in other works, see *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* (1640), p. 91.

⁵⁸ See Alfredo Alvar, ‘Viajes, posadas, caminos y viajeros’, in *La vida cotidiana en la España de Velázquez*, ed. by José N. Alcalá Zamora (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1999), p. 109. For more on the demographics of travellers, see Carlos Gómez-Centurión Jiménez, ‘Los horizontes geográficos de los españoles’, also in *La vida cotidiana en la España de Velázquez*, pp. 29-41 (p. 37).

inn. Just as Juan de Ávila had once taken his catechetical methods to the streets and plazas, so now the subject-matter of the doctrinal message is given a popular treatment.

The *venta* may not be a typical setting for a catechetical lesson, but while it is a familiar place, it is also folkloric. For example, some of the more famous scenes in *Don Quijote* take place at the *venta*: one has only to remember the episode in which Alonso Quijana is dubbed a knight by the innkeeper.⁵⁹ His first day of adventures takes him to the inn where, having strategically placed his armor and weapons over the top of a well, he passes the night in chivalric vigil. But the knight-to-be finds his noble cause threatened when an *arriero* later comes to fetch water for his beasts. Their encounter develops into a noisy brawl, and, as in Nieremberg's tale, all the other guests are roused from their quarters: 'al ruido acudió toda la gente de la venta'.⁶⁰ The episode is resolved when the dubbing takes place the next morning. Cervantes stages the scene for comic purposes, and while the context of the incident varies greatly from that of Nieremberg's tale, the two episodes share many of the same narrative elements. Both stories portray a character on a journey, 'caminando por España', who is then involved in a brawl with a mule-driver at an inn in the middle of the night. Whether or not Nieremberg intended to evoke the Cervantine episode is uncertain. The folkloric setting, however, enhances the narrative appeal of the doctrinal lesson. Cervantes begins his exemplary tale 'Rinconete y Cortadillo' in a similar manner. The two boys meet at the 'venta del Molinillo' before setting out on their journey through Castile and Andalusia.⁶¹

Similar rhetorical techniques were used to enhance the didactic function of literature in the post-Tridentine period, as writers upheld the Horatian maxim that their

⁵⁹ Miguel de Cervantes, *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* [1605, 1615], ed. by Luis Andrés Murillo, 2 vols (Madrid: Castalia, 1978), I, 82-94.

⁶⁰ Cervantes, I, 91.

⁶¹ Cervantes, 'Rinconete y Cortadillo', in *Novelas ejemplares*, I, 191.

works should both teach and please (*prodesse et delectare*).⁶² This was true for authors of religious and secular texts, especially in the genre of exemplar literature. Cervantes states, for example, that if his *Novelas ejemplares* (1613) are meant to be beneficial to the reader ('no hay ninguna de quien no se pueda sacar algún ejemplo provechoso'), they are also to be enjoyed: 'Mi intento ha sido poner en la plaza de nuestra república una mesa de trucos, donde cada uno pueda llegar a entretenerse.'⁶³ Like his novels, the stories of Cervantes are meant to entertain the *desocupado lector*, more so than the catechetical tales. However, Nieremberg's attempt to engage the listener is not entirely dissimilar. While the function of catechetical instruction has a different didactic aim, Nieremberg gives dull doctrine a livelier voice by illustrating it with 'divertimientos' and 'aplicaciones'.⁶⁴ According to Escardó, the more enjoyable a sermon is, the greater its effect will be: 'que si esto haze, si viene gustoso al oyente, facilme[n]te moverá en el, los afectos que quisiere'.⁶⁵

Nieremberg adds a further nuance to the episode in the figure of the Jesuit, 'un Hermano de la Compañía'.⁶⁶ He is not a priest, but a brother, a non-ordained and

⁶² See Jeremy Robbins, *The Challenges of Uncertainty: An Introduction to Seventeenth-Century Spanish Literature* (London: Duckworth, 1998), p. 15; and Stephen Boyd, 'Introduction', in *A Companion to Cervantes's Novelas ejemplares*, ed. by Stephen Boyd (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2005), pp. 1-46 (pp. 8-12). For more on the literary theory of Horace, see C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry: The 'Ars Poetica'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 352-54; and R. Lyne, 'Augustan Poetry and Society', in *The Oxford History of the Classical World*, ed. by John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray (Oxford: OUP, 1986), pp. 592-615.

⁶³ Cervantes, 'Prólogo al Lector', in *Novelas ejemplares*, I, 52. Regarding Cervantes and seventeenth-century Spanish literary theory, see Boyd, 'Cervantes's Exemplary Prologue', in *A Companion to Cervantes's Novelas ejemplares*, pp. 47-68; William C. Atkinson, 'Cervantes, El Pinciano, and the *Novelas ejemplares*', *Hispanic Review*, 16 (1948), 189-208.

⁶⁴ Covarrubias defines 'divertirse' as a change or a break in spoken discourse, 'Salirse uno del propósito en que va hablando, o dexar los negocios y, por descansar, ocuparse en alguna cosa de contento', while 'aplicar' is described in terms of personal assimilation: 'Acomodar una cosa con otra; y en la oración y razonamiento el exemplo dicho cotejarle con lo que haze a nuestro propósito'; *Tesoro*, s.v. Aplicar and Divertirse, pp. 132, 478.

⁶⁵ Escardó, p. 428^r.

⁶⁶ The Jesuit character is identified by Faya in a marginal note as a Spaniard named 'Hermano Luis Ruiz'; *Suma de exemplos [...] Segunda parte*, p. 127^v. Like priests, the brothers wore the black cassock and

uneducated member of the Order whose principal tasks involved manual labor and the daily maintenance of the houses and colleges. Although he is referred to as ‘Padre’, the social status of the brother is not so different from that of the *arriero*, and he has more in common with the vast majority of uneducated listeners in the parishes dotting rural Spain. Hence the lesson has been taught not by a figure of authority – a theologian, a canon lawyer, or a priest – but by a humble, uneducated ‘siervo de Dios’, whose merit is due to his example of piety more than to his status. If the narrative of the story is appealing, it also speaks to the *pueblo*.

That Nieremberg’s character is first described as ‘caminando por España’ merits further comment. On the one hand, the examples portray a cross-section of the Spanish populace. They contain a wide range of traditional characters including men and women of every age group and economic class. The stories include scenes of peasants and bishops, as well as servants, prostitutes, monks, and foreigners. More importantly, they include both saints and sinners alike. Whereas one tale may speak of a greedy gentleman who hoards his earthly treasures, another portrays the generosity of the rich nobleman who gives alms to the poor. Some women are depicted as temptresses who entice men to sin, others are portrayed for their saintly and virtuous lives; and while the friar, the priest, or the brother may represent the Church and its doctrine, at times they too are portrayed as sinners. The stories are crafted to have a bearing on the lives of the listeners, who would be able to recognize themselves in them and relate to their circumstances, for the same reason that the characters in the exemplary narratives of

could easily be mistaken for one of the Fathers of the Society, which most likely explains why the *arriero* would refer to the ‘Hermano’ as ‘Padre’. Nieremberg later published a short biography of Luis Ruiz written by Christobal de Castro, who does not mention the specific episode in question, but alludes to the occurrence of several others: ‘muchas cosas passaron por este fervoroso Hermano, que por evitar prolixidad dexo: porque de las dichas se verá su virtud, y verdad, y el tesòn, que tuvo en todo lo q[ue] era servicio de Dios’. Nieremberg, *Vidas exemplares, y venerables memorias de algunos claros varones de la Compañia de Jesús* (Madrid: Alo[n]so de Paredes, ju[n]to a los Estudios de la Co[m]pa[n]ia, 1647), pp. 391-403 (p. 402).

Cervantes walk the open roads of Spain: they are ‘studies of life, mirrors wherein man may study himself’.⁶⁷

Not surprisingly, religious characters feature prominently in the ‘exemplos’. Just as there are Jesuits, there are also Dominicans, Franciscans, Carthusians, Cistercians, nuns, and ‘beatas’. Their presence may seem exaggerated to the modern reader, though it should be remembered that Spanish society of the period had large numbers of clergy.⁶⁸ Yet most of these characters do not represent particular offices of the institutional Church, such as the bishop or the Inquisitor. Their purpose is rather one of comparison. As model Christians, they demonstrate the piety of saintly *religiosos* and, when necessary, perform penance for their sins. They portray the exemplary life of self-denial and Christian service, so that if listeners are able to relate to the examples, they may also be encouraged to lead devout lives. The Council of Trent had emphasized this didactic aspect of the consecrated life, considering religious men and women to be living examples and mirrors of sanctity: ‘in eos tamquam speculum reliqui oculos iniiciunt ex iique sumunt, quod imitentur’.⁶⁹ The faithful should then imitate the examples of the *religiosos*. Just as Luis de Granada had praised the ‘exemplo’ for its vivid appeal to the imagination (‘ante oculos ponit’), Nieremberg’s listeners are meant to imagine specific, often dramatic, scenes, the more effectively to draw the moral lessons from them.

While the tales speak to a whole cross-section of listeners, ‘caminando por España’ also evokes the making of a pilgrimage, a journey which often immerses the

⁶⁷ Atkinson, pp. 198-99.

⁶⁸ According to Elliott, statistics show that there were up to 200,000 secular and religious clergy in Spain during the reign of Philip IV; *Imperial Spain*, p. 312. See also Rawlings, pp. 124-25.

⁶⁹ Concilium Tridentinum, ‘Sessio XXII, 17 September 1562: Decretum de reformatione, canon I’, II, 737 (see Appendix II).

character in a process of greater self-awareness. As pilgrims meet other characters and enter into dialogue with them, they learn more about themselves. The travelers in *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* (1617) by Cervantes and *El Criticón* (1651, 1653, and 1657) by Gracián proceed in this manner.⁷⁰ Their encounters variously teach about the vices one must avoid and the virtues one ought to embrace in the journey of life. When Critilo and Andrenio, for example, enter Gracián's great 'plaza del mundo' they are instructed to observe the display of humanity: 'Venid a esta parte de la feria y hallaréis todo lo que hace al propósito para ser personas.'⁷¹ The plaza that had once represented the idyllic paradise of God's creation, full of 'los bienes, las virtudes y los premios, las felicidades y contentos', is now corrupted by sin: 'al instante salieron de tropel todos los males, apoderándose a porfia de toda la redondez de la tierra'.⁷²

Religious plays in the seventeenth century likewise portray the sins of their characters, who are often led to reform their lives by some sort of divine intervention – a miraculous sign, or a spiritual awakening. In Calderón's *La devoción de la cruz* (1629) Eusebio is overcome with desire and attempts to rape Julia, who, unbeknownst to him, is his twin sister. The lustful act is prevented, however, when he sees the mark of the cross on her breast and decides to leave her at peace in the convent: 'Señal prodigiosa ha sido, | y no permitan los cielos | que, aunque tanto los ofenda, | pierda a la cruz el respeto. | [...] Quédate en tu religión, | Julia. Yo no te desprecio, pues más agora te adoro.'⁷³ Even notorious sinners like Eusebio can be mysteriously guided to adopt a virtuous course of

⁷⁰ For more on the character of the pilgrim in the literature of the Counter-Reformation in Spain, see the editor's introduction to Cervantes, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* [1617], ed. by Juan Bautista Avallé-Arce (Madrid: Castalia, 1969), pp. 7-27.

⁷¹ Gracián, 'Crisi Decimatercia: La feria de todo el Mundo', in *El Criticón* [1651, 1653, 1657], ed. by Elena Cantarino (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2007), p. 259.

⁷² Gracián, pp. 256-57.

⁷³ Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *La devoción de la cruz* [1629], ed. by Manuel Delgado (Madrid: Cátedra, 2000), p. 207.

behavior. The presence of the cross acts as a sign to him to turn his back on evil, although he has not yet discerned its true meaning. Devout faith and the practice of good works are necessary for salvation, but they must also trust in the effects of divine grace. Such is the case with Paulo in Tirso de Molina's *El condenado por desconfiado* (1635). Although he is a hermit and given over to a life of solitude in the desert, he becomes over-confident in the example of his life and seeks certainty about his ultimate salvation: 'Treinta años de edad tengo, Señor mío, | y los diez he gastado en el desierto, | y si viviera un siglo, un siglo fio | que lo mismo ha de ser. Esto os advierto: si esto cumplo Señor, con fuerza y brío | ¿qué fin he de tener?'⁷⁴

Nieremberg's 'exemplos' are not allegorical or theatrical representations of this kind, but they portray the same fallen world through which the Christian must travel. They are written to be accessible and appealing, to have an impact upon the imagination of the listener, but some examples nevertheless privilege self-awareness and, more specifically, the exercise of discernment. In the following sections I aim to show how in two other tales Nieremberg draws from the spiritual outlook of the Ignatian method in order to teach their lessons.

Contemplating the Example: 'le trajo a la memoria'

My second 'exemplo' illustrates one of the divine attributes: 'Como Dios es Omnipotente'. The tale tells how even a monarch must humbly accept this teaching, and shows how he learns the lesson and assimilates its meaning by applying the three powers of the soul: memory, understanding, and will. It begins when the main character, an unidentified king, rebukes the teaching as he hears it proclaimed in the

⁷⁴ Tirso de Molina (attrib.), *El condenado por desconfiado* [1635], ed. by Alfredo Rodríguez López-Vázquez (Madrid: Cátedra, 2008), p. 150.

recitation of the Magnificat.⁷⁵ Conceited and over-confident in his own royal sovereignty, he orders the clergy to erase the phrase from their prayer books:

San Antonio escribe de un Rey, que pensaba que Dios no era poderoso para quitarle su Reino, y oyendo cantar en la Iglesia aquel Verso de la Magnificat: *Deposuit potentes de sede, & exaltavit humiles*, llamò de presto a los Clerigos: ma[n]dales que borren de sus libros aquellas palabras, porque dize son falsas, y nadie me podrá quitar à mi señorío, ni tengo de consentir se diga lo contrario a desto.

The king, however, is punished for his contempt by being stripped of his authority as he leaves the palace to take a bath. God sends an angel to assume his identity, who dupes the royal entourage into believing that he is in fact their king:

Y fue assi, que vinie[n]do un dia el altivo Principe a bañarse con mucho acompañamie[n]to, a un baño que estaba fuera de la ciudad, desnudòse sus vestidos, y pusolos a la puerta del baño, y dexando todos los criados fuera, entròse dentro solo, y lavòse de espacio. Entretanto baxò del cielo un Angel, por mandado de Dios, que tomando la figura del Rey, saliò del baño, y los criados que aguardaban a la puerta, persuadidos que era su señor, vistieronle, y acompañaronle a[1] Palacio.

When the monarch finishes his bath he finds only a pile of rags left behind by the angel. He dresses himself in them and makes his way back to the palace, where he is mocked and taken to be insane when he tries to reclaim his throne: ‘Los q[ue] habia[n] visto al Angel en su figura, y q[ue] habia buuelto à Palacio con el ordinario acompañamiento, tuvieron al pobre desarrapado y andrajoso por loco, y que su locura le hazia desvariar, è

⁷⁵ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, pp. 331-32. See also Luke 1:46-55; the king is opposed to the proclamation of verse 52.

imaginarse Rey, y assi se burlaba[n] dèl como de un tonto.⁷⁶ Thus the sovereign who had objected to the proclamation of God's omnipotence now finds it to be true: *He has been brought down from his throne*. The figure of the king in Calderón de la Barca's *El gran teatro del mundo* (1633-35) similarly learns that not even he is exempt from following the Law of God: 'desde el pobre al rey, | para enmendar al que errare | y enseñar al que ignorare, | con el apunto, a mi Ley'.⁷⁷

In the end, the king is returned to his rightful place of authority. Yet, as Nieremberg relates it, the sovereign both discovers the error of his ways and acts to amend them. He contemplates his sin, humbles himself before the Lord's messenger, and repents. In other words, Nieremberg suggests, he appropriately examines the state of his soul:

A todo esto estaban los circunstantes haziendo donaire y trisca, diziendole sus dichos, en lo qual se entretuvieron buen rato de tiempo, hasta que finalmente el Angel le llamò aparte, y estando a solas, le traxo a la memoria su grande soberbia, y las palabras blasfemas, y arrogantes que habia dicho. Mostròle, como no solo se le habia quitado el Reino, mas que tambien le habian tenido por loco, y sin juizio. Amonestòle a que apre[n]diesse à humillarse, y no ensoberveciesse. Reconociò con esto su pecado el ya arrepentido Rey, y el Angel le vistio sus vestiduras, y desaparecio, y èl saliò fuera a los suyos, y dio cuenta de lo que por èl habia passado.⁷⁸

That the king recognizes his sins is signaled by the verbal phrase 'dar[se] cuenta', to become aware and to realize: 'dio cuenta de lo que por èl habia passado'. But the way

⁷⁶ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 331.

⁷⁷ Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *El gran teatro del mundo* [1633-35], ed. by Eugenio Frutos Cortés (Madrid: Cátedra, 2001), p. 55. Calderón's time as a student in the Colegio Imperial de Madrid coincided with Nieremberg's final years of study.

⁷⁸ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 332.

in which he does so is important to note, for it follows the pattern of an Ignatian exercise. According to Loyola, one begins the Exercises by employing the three powers of the soul, as introduced in the First Week contemplations on sin: ‘El primer puncto será traer la memoria sobre el primer pecado, que fue de los ángeles, y luego sobre el mismo entendimiento discurriendo, luego la voluntad, queriendo todo esto memorar y entender’ [§50].⁷⁹ In this way, the application of each faculty not only becomes a guide to achieving spiritual perfection, but also marks each step in one’s progress: ‘San Ignacio va disponiendo simultáneamente al alma para que [...] ordene todas sus potencias.’⁸⁰ The things of the memory are recalled so that they may be understood and applied to the will, which results in conforming the will to that of God.

In Nieremberg’s lesson the angel takes the king aside and has him call to mind his past attitude of pride and his words of conceit: ‘estando a solas le traxo a la memoria su grande soberbia, y las palabras blasfemas, y arrogantes que habia dicho’. By first applying the faculty of the memory, the king is guided by the angel in a meditation of the scene in which he has been involved. While he reviews his sins, the angel shows him both the loss of his throne and the treatment he received when he tried to recover his rightful title: ‘Mostròle como no solo se le habia quitado el Reino, mas que tambien le habian tenido por loco, y sin juicio.’ It is then implied that the monarch has mentally processed his faults: ‘reconocio [...], y dio cuenta’. Once restored to his throne, the king must humble himself and amend his life. In other words, he must act on what he

⁷⁹ According to the editors, ‘San Ignacio [...] aquí explica el mecanismo de su famoso método de la meditación con las tres potencias, que no es otra cosa que la aplicación sucesiva de la memoria, entendimiento y voluntad a la consideración de una verdad con objeto de dar al entendimiento la convicción y a la voluntad la fuerza necesaria para que puedan realizar lo que ven y deben ejecutar’; *Obras de San Ignacio*, p. 237. This method dates to the thirteenth century and can be found in the writings of St Bonaventure (1221-1274) and Raymond Lull (1232-1315). Guibert states that Loyola simplified the method by making it more flexible; p. 168.

⁸⁰ ‘Introducción’, in *Obras de San Ignacio*, p. 188. Quevedo also signals the importance of appropriately ordering the three powers of the soul; see *La cuna y la sepultura, Doctrina moral* [1634], pp. 83-96.

has remembered and learned: '[el Angel] amonestòle a que apre[n]diesse a humillarse y no ensoberveciesse'. It becomes apparent that the angel has directed the king, once again covered in his royal robes, in a form of meditation through which he has been able to recognize his own disorder. That he is taught to humble himself and to control his pride signals the application of this lesson to the will.

While Nieremberg attributes the tale to Saint Anthony, it also appears in *El conde Lucanor*: 'Exemplo LI', 'Lo que conteçió a un rey christiano que era muy poderoso e muy soberbioso'.⁸¹ However, Don Juan Manuel's narration places greater stress on how the monarch is punished for his sins. Not only is the king mocked by his entourage as he tries to regain the throne, but he is beaten, first at the entrance to the palace where the gatekeeper fails to recognize his true identity and then again outside the queen's quarters. Punished severely in this way, Don Juan Manuel's king comes to realize the disorder of his pride, as he shows great sorrow and repentance: 'E desde esto fue entendiendo, começó a aver tan grant dolor e tan grant repentimiento en su coraçón, [...] e vio quanto mal andante en el su cuerpo estaba, e por ende, nunca ál fazia sinon llorar e matarse e pedir merced a nuestro señor Dios.'⁸² Although he may have seen, 'vio', and understood, 'fue entendiendo', what had happened to him, this is a result of the punishment he receives and the poor condition of his beaten body: 'vio quanto mal andante en el su cuerpo estaba'. His sin weighs on his conscience, but the angel does not guide him in a meditation on his faults.

Both Nieremberg's and Don Juan Manuel's renderings of the story portray the same moral lesson of sin, repentance, and forgiveness, but the Jesuit's abbreviated

⁸¹ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 331. A marginal note also lists the source as 'San Antonio en su Theolo. P. 2 tra. 3 § 4 Et in vitis Patr'. This may be the theologian Antoninus of Florence (1389-1459), who wrote the *Summa confessionalis* (1472), and the *Summa theologica moralis* (1477). Don Juan Manuel, 'Exemplo LI', pp. 301-10.

⁸² Don Juan Manuel, pp. 305-06.

adaptation of it emphasizes the king's restoration to power under the guidance of the apparition. He focuses on the king's awareness, describes the experience in a scene that is reminiscent of an Ignatian contemplation, and signals to the listening audience that the lesson has been assimilated. While the vast majority of listeners would not have been able to relate to the status of a monarch, the lesson encourages them to examine their own lives and apply perhaps just a portion of the much greater humility the powerful king has had to accept.

Assimilating the Example: '*le contò el discurso de su vida*'

The third 'exemplo' to be analyzed also portrays a sinner who must contemplate an imagined scene and reflect upon his own situation, but here Nieremberg applies another technique from the Exercises, namely the 'confesión general', or the review of sins, from the First Week. Intended to illustrate the positive results of Christian prayer and the intercessory power of the Virgin Mary, the tale begins in an unidentified monastery, where a member of the community turns from God, commits an atrocious crime, and becomes a renegade:

En España cierto Religioso dexado de la mano de Dios, despues de haber muerto a su Prelado, se salio muy aprisa del Convento, y mudando traje, se fue con todo secreto y diligencia [a] la costa de la mar, y hallando ocasio[n], se embarcò para Berberia, donde renegò de Dios, y de su Iglesia, y se dio largamente a sus apetitos.⁸³

Not only has the monk killed his superior, 'su Prelado', he renounces his Christian faith and embraces a life of vice on the Berber coast. The monk, whom Nieremberg refers to

⁸³ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 357.

as a ‘monstruo’, has become a notorious sinner: a murderer and an apostate, given over, seemingly, to a life of perversion in a heathen land.

He settles into his new life, during which he takes a Moorish bride, inherits a dowry of properties, and fathers several children. But one day he ventures out to survey the mines on his land and, as he recites the *Salve Regina*, an old monastic habit he has apparently been unable to break, he sees a vision of the Virgin Mary, who presents him with the option of returning to the monastery:

Un dia yendo este monstruo a ver sus heredades, y unas minas suyas, y de su muger: depues de haber llegado, se apartò a solas un poco a rezarle a nuestra Señora una Salve, q[ue] cada dia la solia rezar, aun despues de haber renegado. Estandola rezando, se le aparecio nuestra Señora, y habiendole reprehendido por tantos y tan grav[e]s pecados, le prometio su ayuda si se bolvia [a] su Monasterio, &c., y perseveraba en su devocion. La Virgen desaparecio, y èl se fue a su casa muy triste, y pensativo, y como su muger lo echase de ver, y le preguntasse la causa de su tristeza, si era algun desastre. El llorando le contò el discurso de su vida, y lo que en las minas le habia sucedido.⁸⁴

As in the restoration of the humbled king, the story illustrates a visual experience that leads the sinner to repent. In this case the miraculous vision is the result of the sinner’s prayer rather than a guided contemplation. The sequence of events, however, is similar to the previous example, in that what at first might seem to be a story about a sinner who sees a vision and repents similarly becomes an episode presented within the framework of discernment. The monk first gathers himself in prayer (‘se apartò a solas un poco a

⁸⁴ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 357. Although in the example Nieremberg only refers to the prayer of the ‘*Salve*’, in Part II of the catechism he includes a lesson in which he explains the meaning of the prayer *Salve Regina*; ‘Para el dia de Assumpcion de nuestra Señora, 15 de agosto, Leccion xxv, Declarase la oracion de la Salve’, pp. 250-53.

rezarle a nuestra Señora’), which resembles the king’s private audience with the angel (‘le llamò a parte, [...] estando a solas’). But in the vision it is the Virgin Mary who admonishes him by recounting his sins and promises to come to his assistance should he return to the monastery. In other words, the sinner is reminded of his sins and of their gravity, and he must now choose to proceed by either ignoring the vision or returning to his previous life as a monk.

While this episode is less explicit regarding the application of the powers of the soul, it begins in the same way by placing the individual alone and in silence. Both episodes seem to suggest that before any lesson can be assimilated, the individual must embrace a degree of solitude, thereby establishing a parallel between the cultivation of the inner life and the external vision. Loyola states that in removing the self from the distraction of others, the soul ‘usa de sus potencias naturales más libremente, para buscar con diligencia lo que tanto desea’ [§20]. Nieremberg likewise signals that the visionary encounters with the angel and the Virgin are made possible in moments of retreat and drawing inward, and that solitude is an important first step. The characters are not forced into repentance, they are guided into the self, and if the previous example leads the sinner to turn inward and to engage the necessary faculties, in this example Nieremberg applies another spiritual exercise, the ‘confesión general’, which is a comprehensive review of the sins committed during a lifetime [§44].

Having been reminded of his faults, the monk must ponder his situation and act accordingly. Full of remorse (‘triste, y pensativo’), he goes home to his wife and comes to terms with himself by telling her the story of his life: ‘El llorando le contò el discurso de su vida.’ He then begins to see how, by the gravity of his sins, he had become a ‘monstruo’. The experience leads him back to the monastery where he humbles himself and asks to be given his due penance, but not before he recounts his story once more: ‘Entonces èl postrandose en tierra, dixo con extraño sentimiento, y lagrimas, que èl era

aquel malvado. Contò el sucesso de su vida perdida.⁸⁵ Ignatius teaches that in the making of a ‘confesión general’, the sinner profits in three ways.⁸⁶ In the first, greater benefit is received because of the remorse that is felt by the sinner: ‘haziéndola [h]ay mayor provecho y mérito, por el mayor dolor actual de todos pecados y malicias de toda su vida’ [§44].⁸⁷ In the second, an individual may profit more fully because greater interior knowledge is gained: ‘se conocen más interiormente los pecados y la malicia dellos que en el tiempo que el hombre no se daba así a las cosas internas’. And in the third, the confession opens the repentant sinner to a fuller experience of God’s grace: ‘El [...] es, conseqüenter, que estando más bien confessado y dispuesto, se halla más apto y más aparejado [...] para conservar en aumento de gratia.’

It is clear that the monk has benefited from both the intensity of his sorrow and the awareness of his faults. That he is able to grow in grace is perhaps evident in the mercy and pardon he will receive from his fellow monks, and where he had initially intended to survey the mines on his property, the episode ends by implying that he will earn a heavenly treasure of much greater value: ‘viviò, y muriò santamente.’⁸⁸ The man does not literally participate in the sacramental practice of confession or make the First Week meditations, but Nieremberg’s portrayal of his response to the vision resembles the exercise of self-examination stated in the *Ejercicios*, which he performs not once, but twice. The lesson is about the efficacy of intercessory prayer, yet it is also about the response of the sinner who is taught to examine what Loyola calls ‘las cosas internas’.

⁸⁵ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 357.

⁸⁶ The ‘confesión general’ appears as the first exercise in the *Ejercitatorio de vida espiritual* (1500), compiled by the abbot of Montserrat, García Jiménez de Cisneros; Melloni, 8-10.

⁸⁷ In the *Ejercicios espirituales* Loyola presents the ‘confesión general’ as a way to receive Communion with greater profit. All practitioners must perform a similar exercise during the First Week. See also [§56] and [§57].

⁸⁸ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 358.

Interestingly, the atrocious crime of the murder has been forgotten as the episode focuses instead on the state of the man's soul and his ability to face an ugly reality.

The application of the three powers of the soul and the use of the 'confesión general' are two examples of how Nieremberg incorporates the techniques of the Exercises into the catechism. Nonetheless, other tales also reflect a similar focus on the interior life. One aspect which receives prominence is that of remorse, which is clearly accentuated in both the king and the monk; the latter is portrayed as expressing himself with extraordinary emotion, 'con extraño sentimiento y lagrimas'.⁸⁹ Remorse has an important role in the Exercises because it implies both benefit and growth for the practitioner, which can be seen above in the second way of profiting from the 'confesión general' ('alcançando agora más conoscimiento [...], [h]abrá mayor provecho y mérito que antes [h]ubiera' [§44]).

Nieremberg includes remorse in several tales, such as one about a church official of a certain rank who loses his title. Angered and resentful over what has happened to him, he seeks revenge through the help of a satanic enchanter. In the meantime, having been restored to his original rank, the official experiences sorrow, which moves his conscience until he comes to his senses: 'començòse a entristecer, y remorderle la conciencia'.⁹⁰ According to Loyola, one way to achieve sorrow is by saying the colloquy prayer to the Virgin Mary, as if in conversation with her, that she may intercede before the Lord on behalf of the sinner: 'para que me alcance gracia de su Hijo y Señor [...] para que sienta interno conoscimiento de mis pecados y aborrescimiento dellos, [y] [...] que sienta el dessorden de mis operaciones, para que, aborresciendo, me

⁸⁹ Covarrubias defines 'extraño' as 'lo que es singular y extraordinario, como extraño caso'; *Tesoro*, pp. 568-69; s.v. Extraño.

⁹⁰ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 358. This example portrays the powerful intercession of the Virgin Mary, who helps the clergyman regain his office.

enmiende y me ordene' [§63].⁹¹ Remorse is not an end in itself, but the precondition for spiritual advancement. The deeper and the more internalized the knowledge of sin and the remorse for it becomes, the more possible it is to amend the sinful life.

In addition to remorse, however, Nieremberg emphasizes the stirrings of the moved soul. In turn, the characters must be able to recognize and address them appropriately. One of the tales illustrating the 'Mandamientos de la Iglesia', 'Del confessar', portrays a man who, having failed to confess his sins adequately, falls seriously ill, and it is only by turning inward that he is restored to health: 'A este ta[n] intolerable dolor, le sobrevino luego una fiebre maligna, con que mas, y mas se le iban aumentando las co[n]gojas y tormento en el cuerpo, hasta que el alma bolviesse sobre si y cayesse en la cuenta.' The anguished soul speaks of the troubled conscience, but it also leads the sinner to recognize it and own his guilt: 'finalmente la vino a reconocer'.⁹² Similarly, another tale portrays a monk who amends the capital sin of anger through a dose of introspection: 'en una comunidad de Religiosos vivia uno dellos inquieto, y que se dexaba muchas vezes llevar de la ira'.⁹³ As in the case of the ashamed sinner, the fault is corrected as the monk recognizes his inner turmoil: 'Con esto bolvio en si, y echò de ver [...] que dentro de si tenia al enemigo, contra quien era necessario pelear, [...] y hablando consigo, se dezia: Heme aqui que a[h]ora estoy solo, y soy vencido'.⁹⁴ Although the example is a brief depiction of how the vice controls his life and leaves him isolated, 'solo' and 'vencido', the sinful attitude is resolved not through abiding by

⁹¹ See 'Coloquios', in *DEI*, I, 341-46.

⁹² Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 349. A marginal note cites the source of this tale as 'Ex Annuis Socie ann. 1585 Prov. Mediol', which indicates that it may have been recorded as a specific incident in the annual reports of a Jesuit provincial superior.

⁹³ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 375. The source of the example is listed as 'In vitis PP 2 p. lib. De Patie[n]t 1, fortit. pa. 585'.

⁹⁴ Nieremberg, *Práctica del catecismo romano*, p. 375.

a precept or following a law, but through the more internal process whereby the individual confronts the state of his soul and acts on the self-knowledge that has been gained. By the use of phrases such as ‘caer en la cuenta’, ‘reconocer’ and ‘echar de ver dentro se sí’, Nieremberg marks the correlation between the stirring of ‘las cosas internas’ within the soul, self-awareness, and the ability of the sinner to respond.

The Wider Application of the *exemplo*

While Nieremberg has adapted his catechism by adjusting its narrative function for preaching, his inclusion of the *ejemplario* is an indication of how it relates not only to the wider context of catechesis, but also to the broader literary tastes of the seventeenth century. According to Cristóbal Cuevas, ‘al adentrarnos en el XVII, el gusto por los “ejemplos” no hace sino intensificarse’.⁹⁵ But as the ‘exemplo’ acquired prominence in catechisms, it increasingly contributed to the moralistic tone of their lessons, and while I have shown how Nieremberg applies elements from the Spiritual Exercises to his own catechism, the ‘exemplos’ too show a similar approach.

Catholic texts, for example, placed importance on a scrupulous participation in the sacraments, such as confession and the Eucharist, since it was only by the sacramental mediation of grace that the repentant sinner could experience God’s mercy. Both Catholic and Protestant catechisms came to portray human beings, in their sinful nature, as ineffectual collaborators with the workings of divine grace. As a result, authors began to use descriptive ‘exemplos’ in order to illustrate how characters are either rewarded or punished for the ways in which they behave: ‘Suelen consistir en una historia en la que el protagonista obtiene un premio inmediato por su conducta o por su

⁹⁵ Cuevas, p. 63.

fe ejemplar, o, al contrario, un castigo fulminante ante sus dudas, su conducta reprochable o su olvido de Dios.⁹⁶

Many of Nieremberg's 'exemplos' portray this moralistic approach, such as the tale depicting the swearing *arriero* who is struck dead because he refuses to amend his life. But the elements of moral rigor and religious scruple are only part of the story, which also reveals the deeper anthropological perspective of Nieremberg, as they bring into question his view of the efficacy of the human will and its participation in the greater design of eternal salvation. If he is true to his Jesuit spiritual tradition and its premise that the human being is not only able to discern the will of God, but also to act on that discernment, it should be possible to identify a hermeneutic of discernment in Nieremberg's desire to move the faithful so that the human will actively chooses what divine grace has revealed. Hence Bouza underscores the ability of the faithful to accept or reject the catechetical teachings: 'podían elegir entre la redención y la condenación'.⁹⁷

The Spiritual Exercises rest on the presupposition that God communicates with the retreatant: 'el mismo Criador y Señor se comunique a la su ánima devota abrazándola' [§15]. Loyola includes the rules for the 'Discreción de espíritus' precisely for the retreatants and their directors to identify such stirrings within the soul. Nieremberg's 'exemplos' are simple teachings for a less sophisticated audience, and do not contain exercises for the discernment of spirits. The vast majority of those listening to the catechetical readings, the typical parishioners of seventeenth-century Spain, would probably not be able to make the Spiritual Exercises. But the 'exemplos' represent a beginner's approach to discernment: they make the duller doctrinal teachings more appealing and, by drawing the listeners into their narrative, they inspire a dynamic

⁹⁶ Resines, *La catequesis en España*, pp. 336-39.

⁹⁷ Bouza, p. 308.

of comparison and imitation, and introduce hearers to the first basic steps of the spiritual introspection needed for the discernment of God's will. It is interesting to observe in this context that a particular use of 'exemplos' emerged in Spain early in the seventeenth century as a way of giving the Spiritual Exercises to people without having to explain some of the more advanced contemplations involving mental prayer.⁹⁸ The Jesuit William Bathe spent many years giving the Exercises, and his experience led him to arrange several of the 'contemplaciones' according to various 'exemplos', which were later compiled and published in Spanish and Latin.⁹⁹ According to Iparraguirre, these 'exemplos' consist of narrations intended to engage the practitioners of the Ignatian method in the same way Nieremberg would use them in his catechism: 'muestran su actitud de adaptación, su percepción del medio ambiente, su sentido de la realidad y su don de atracción'.¹⁰⁰

In the wider context of literary production, 'exemplos' were also used with frequency in spiritual and devotional treatises both in Spain and in Europe. Nieremberg's *De la diferencia en entre lo temporal y eterno* includes several of them, which he uses to illustrate how the material world is nothing in comparison to life in the eternal. Other writers such as François de Sales also included them in their works.

⁹⁸ Iparraguirre, *Historia de los ejercicios*, II, 86. It is worth recalling how St Ignatius reminded the Jesuits at the Council of Trent that they could give the First Week of the Exercises to anyone, while the rest of the method should be reserved for exceptional individuals: 'personas raras y dispuestas para disponer sus vidas por vía de las elecciones', 'Carta a los Padres enviados a Trento' (1546), in *Obras de San Ignacio*, p. 785.

⁹⁹ See above, p. 28, n. 69. Bathe's 'exemplos' were later translated and published with a title more closely reflecting the application of the examples to the Exercises: *Sacra tempe seu de sacro exercitiorum secessu exempla* (1622). See 'Guillaume Bathe', Sommervogel, *BCJ*, I, 1012-13; according to the editor, 'Cet ouvrage offre plusieurs bizarreries', I, 1012. See also 'William Bathe', *DHCJ*, I, 370.

¹⁰⁰ Iparraguirre goes on to state: 'Se inició [...] un nuevo sistema de atracción y apostolado [...] llamado de ejemplos, en los que concentraban de modo plástico y vivo algún punto doctrinal', and he describes the *Aparejos* in the following manner: 'Se abre el libro con un capítulo introductorio en que intenta ver a los hombres ocupados en negocios las razones que tienen para desentenderse de ellos y emplear algunos días en la práctica de los Ejercicios. Siguen los 25 ejemplos, cifra y resumen de lo más sustancioso del librito ignaciano [...]. Se pone en casos sucedidos a otros, como en un espejo, lo que se quiere suceda al que está delante'; II, 86-87.

Sales illustrates parts of his *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu* (1616) by explaining that although some examples may be difficult to believe on account of their miraculous events, they serve to inflame the reader with the love of God:

J'ai trouvé une histoire laquelle pour être extrêmement admirable n'en est plus croyable aux amants sacrés; puisque, comme dit le saint Apôtre [I Corinthians 13: 4, 7], la charité croit très volontiers toutes choses, c'est-à-dire elle ne pense pas aisément qu'on mente, et s'il n'y a des marques apparentes de fausseté en ce qu'on lui représente, elle ne fait pas difficulté de les croire, mais surtout quand ce sont choses qui exaltent et magnifient l'amour de Dieu envers les hommes ou l'amour des hommes envers Dieu.¹⁰¹

It is not easy to say just how Nieremberg's audience would have reacted to his 'exemplos', especially those which presented them with a shocking conclusion. What is certain, though, is that the form was widely used in the Spanish Golden Age, from the catechetical tale of the Jesuit preacher to the literary examples of Cervantes. And while they differ in function and style, it is clear that Nieremberg was aware how much impact they could have on a reader or listener. They represent his desire to 'help souls' on the road to discernment by adapting his instructional methods to the circumstances of his own time and place.

Conclusion

The emergence of Nieremberg's catechism in seventeenth-century Spain directly relates

¹⁰¹ Saint François de Sales, *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu* [1616], in *Oeuvres*, ed. by André Ravier with Roger Devos (Brugge: Gallimard, 1969), p. 698. See also Robert Ricard, 'Aportaciones a la historia del "exemplum" en la literatura moderna', in *Estudios de la literatura religiosa* (Madrid: Gredos, 1964), pp. 200-26 (pp. 207-08); Cuevas, pp. 60-63.

to many of the issues regarding Catholic renewal in the post-Tridentine period. The polemics surrounding sacred oratory and the perceived ignorance of the *pueblo* were among the most pressing. By adapting the function of his text for the purpose of public reading and homiletic discourse, Nieremberg clearly intends to reach the largest audience possible so as to teach doctrine in a more practical manner. For this reason he rejects the more cultivated style of *conceptista* preaching, but also provides unlearned preachers with a functional catechism in order to perform their duties. His audience must apply the doctrine to their lives by making decisions in accordance with the teachings it contains. It is in this explicit desire to provide ‘noticia’ and to move hearers to the ‘remedio de costumbres’ that Nieremberg implies the exercise of discernment.

His inclusion of an ‘ejemplario’ is significant because it enhances the practical function of the catechism and puts the teachings into a narrative form for preaching. But it also enhances the rhetorical function of the text, granting it the ability to teach, please, and move a listening audience. Although in the catechism he may not explicitly articulate the role that the Spiritual Exercises have in his own spiritual tradition, he directs people to reflect upon their ‘cosas internas’ with some of the same techniques. Nieremberg applies Loyola’s basic concern of promoting self-awareness to his rhetorical examples so that listeners may begin to examine the self and assimilate the teachings. Each of the ‘exemplos’ I have studied involves a sinner, in solitude or unfamiliar surroundings, who has a visual experience that guides him to introspection, and who must discern not only the meaning of the lesson, but also thereby the path to salvation.

Chapter Three

Contemplating the Book of Nature

*Pero apenas cesò, quando dixeron
quantos su voz oyeron,
que Eusebio Nieremberg la dictaba,
ò que el mismo Aristoteles la hablaba*

– Lope de Vega¹

Introduction

In the bulk of his literary production Nieremberg concentrates on the Christian journey to spiritual perfection, but his interests were not limited to catechetical, ascetical, or even theological issues and, like many of his contemporaries in Spain and Europe, he was fascinated with the natural world and how to read its operations. His work in this area begins with the *Prolusión a la doctrina y historia natural* (1629), one of the earliest titles he published.² It served as the inaugural lecture he delivered as the teacher of natural history in the Colegio Imperial de Madrid, and it was to become the prologue to the two miscellanies he subsequently wrote in Spanish, the *Curiosa filosofía, y tesoro de maravillas de la naturaleza* (1630), and the *Oculto filosofía, de la simpatía y antipatía de las cosas, artificio de la naturaleza, y noticia natural del mundo* (1633).³ During this

¹ Félix Lope de Vega, ‘Isagoge a los estudios reales’ [1629], in *Curiosa, y oculta filosofía* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1639), pp. 186^v-87^r.

² Nieremberg, *Prolusión a la doctrina y historia natural, que hizo el Padre Juan Eusebio Nieremberg de la Compañía de Jesús, el primer día que leyò en los Estudios Reales del Colegio Imperial de la misma Compañía en esta Corte* (Madrid: Andrés de Parra, 1629).

³ Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofía, y tesoro de maravillas de la naturaleza, examinadas en varias cuestiones naturales. Contienen historias muy notables. Averiguanse secretos, y problemas de la naturaleza, con*

period he also published two further works of a similar kind, the *Sigalion, sive de sapientia mythica* (1629), which includes a Latin translation of several passages from the *Prolusión*, and the *Historia naturæ, maxime peregrinæ* (1635), an encyclopedic volume containing descriptions and illustrations of the plants and animals of the New World.⁴

Nieremberg's aim is to provide readers with knowledge about the natural world, but his greater goal is for them to admire the grandeur of nature and to reverence its Creator. In this sense, his approach is similar to that of Fray Luis de Granada, who wrote the *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe* (1583) half a century earlier for similar purposes: 'vistas estas grandezas del Criador, reconozcamos la grande obligación que tenemos a amar, servir, y honrar a un tan gran Señor'.⁵ However, Nieremberg introduces a new element, as he also aims to uncover the divine secrets hidden within the design of creation: 'A[h]ora tomaremos mas de proposito esta empresa, violaremos su mas guardado retiro, llegarèmos a lo arduo, a lo dificultoso, a lo innacesible della.'⁶ Nature must not simply be studied, its hidden meaning needs to be discerned.

filosofía nueva. Explicanse lugares dificultosos de la Escritura. Obra muy útil, no solo para los curiosos, sino para doctos escriturarios, filósofos, y médicos (Madrid: Imprenta del Reyno, 1630), and *Oculto filosofía. De la simpatía y antipatía de las cosas, artificio de la naturaleza, y noticia natural del mundo. Y segunda parte de la Curiosa filosofía. Contiene historias notables. Averiguanse muchos secretos, y problemas de la naturaleza. Explicanse lugares dificultosos de la Escritura* (1633). These works were printed in several editions and, along with the *Prolusión*, were eventually published together in one volume: *Curiosa, y oculta filosofía. Primera, y segunda parte de las maravillas de la naturaleza* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1643 and Alcalá: Imprenta de Maria Fernandez, 1649); see Sommervogel, *BCJ*, v, 1730-31; and Antonio Palau y Dulcet, *Manual del librero hispanoamericano*, 2nd edition, 28 vols (Barcelona: Librería Palau, 1923-77), XI (1958), 39-42.

⁴ Nieremberg, *Sigalion, sive de sapientia mythica* (Madrid: Imprenta del Reyno, 1629); and *Historia naturæ, maxime peregrinæ* (Antwerp: Officina Plantiniana, 1635). For more on the *Sigalion*, see John Slater, 'Fables of Communication: The Rhetoric of Investigative Methodology and Golden Age Literature', in *Más allá de la leyenda negra: España y la Revolución Científica*, ed. by Víctor Navarro Brotóns and William Eamon (Valencia: Instituto de la Ciencia y Documentación López Piñero, 2007), pp. 209-20.

⁵ Fray Luis de Granada, *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe*, p. 114.

⁶ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofía* (1633), p. 1^r. Unless noted otherwise, all further citations come from this edition.

This chapter shows how the investigative approach and the treatment of knowledge in Nieremberg's Castilian miscellanies both contribute to his overall rhetoric of discernment. The book of nature provides 'noticia' for the intellect, but it also induces 'admiratio'. This combination is important to notice, because Nieremberg uses it to show how the 'noticia' in his books is not an end in itself, but is intended to create an impact on the lives of people. This aspect of his natural philosophy reveals the decidedly Jesuit character of his approach: he instructs readers to contemplate nature in order to decipher the virtues represented in it, but he then urges them to apply this knowledge to the self. While these texts both describe and illustrate the operations of the natural world, they share a common purpose with the other works we are studying, the intention to 'help souls' in the process of discerning the virtuous path to eternal salvation.

Nieremberg's *filosofía natural*

Nieremberg's natural history must be understood in the context of his role at the Jesuit college in Madrid. The course he taught was part of the wider program of *estudios reales*, which Olivares had arranged in order to educate the nobility and assist his program of reform in the capital.⁷ The *Prolusión* was delivered during the inaugural events of the *estudios* on 19 February 1629.⁸ Nieremberg uses this text, divided into twenty-one brief sections, to explain his approach and the range of topics he aims to cover in his course, *historia animalium*. Hence the introduction and the first three

⁷ See Elliott, *Spain and Its World, 1500-1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 180-81; *Imperial Spain*, pp. 341-42.

⁸ Martínez de la Escalera, 'Felipe IV fundador de los estudios reales', pp. 182-84. See also Juan Antonio Martínez Comeche: 'La fundación de los Reales Estudios en la *Isagoge* de Lope: ¿testimonio o recreación literaria?', *Criticón*, 51 (1991), 65-74. Nieremberg was originally listed as the professor of 'Historia animalium, plantarum, etc.', which he indicates in the *Prolusión* (later sources list him as the professor of both Natural Philosophy and Sacred Scripture); Simón Díaz, *Historia del Colegio Imperial*, I, 97, 121-23.

sections present the foundation and historical basis for his study. He first points to its relevance to the biblical accounts of creation, and then goes on to show how many philosophers and theologians, such as Aristotle, Pliny, Galen, Augustine, Hugo of Saint Victor, and Bonaventure, included the study of animals in their own writings. Several of his sources come from the literary tradition of the hexaemeron, which was established in the Patristic period and represents a natural philosophy based on the exegesis of the six days of creation in Genesis.⁹

Nieremberg uses the *Prolusión* to portray the history of animals as a serious academic discipline in its own right. In section 1 he presents ‘la dignidad de la filosofía, ò doctrina natural’, while in the next few sections he shows how it relates to other disciplines, such as philosophy, theology, and medicine (§II), and includes astrology (§IV), botany (§VI), and mineralogy (§X). From section 11, where he first shows how the behavior of certain animals represents the cardinal virtues – Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice – he establishes a link between them and other virtues in the field of moral philosophy. Thus, section 12 bears the title: ‘Otras virtudes morales de que se halla exemplo en los animales, religion, penite[n]cia, castidad, estudiosidad[,] observancia, eutrapielia, mansedumbre’.¹⁰ This shift in focus from the intellectual aspect

⁹ These authors are cited in the *Prolusión*, but Nieremberg refers to them more extensively in both *Curiosa filosofía* and *Ocultia filosofía*. His sources include the *Historia animalium* and *De partibus animalium* of Aristotle (384-322 BC), the *Naturalis historia* of Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD), the *Natura animalium* of Galen (c.130-c.200 AD), the *Hexaemeron* of St Basil (330-79), the *In hexaemeron explicatio apologetica* of St Gregory of Nyssa (335-84), the *Hexaemeron* of St Ambrose (c.340-97), the *De doctrina Christiana*, *De generis ad litteram*, and Books XI-XIII of the *Confessions* of St Augustine (354-430), the *Canon* of Avicenna (980-1037), the *De bestiis et aliis rebus libri quatuor* of Hugo of Saint Victor (1096-1141), the *De animalibus libri XXVI* of Albert the Great (c.1206-80), and the *Illuminationes ecclesiae in hexaemeron* of St Bonaventure (1217-74). According to José Lara Garrido, Basil’s text served as a model for the genre of hexaemeral literature in the medieval period; see ‘La creación del mundo en la poesía barroca: de la tradición neoplatónica a la ortodoxia contrarreformista’, in *Estudios sobre literatura y arte dedicados al profesor Emilio Orozco Díaz*, ed. by Nicolás Marín and Agustín de la Granja, 3 vols (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1979), II, 241-62 (pp. 246-47).

¹⁰ Nieremberg, *Prolusión a la doctrina y historia natural* [1629], in *Curiosa filosofía* (Madrid, Imprenta del Reyno, 1634), p. 236^f. Unless indicated otherwise, all further citations from the *Prolusión* and the *Curiosa filosofía* come from this edition.

of the material as philosophical and theological thought to the sphere of moral and ethical conduct is important to note, as it is the first indication of how Nieremberg will guide readers to discern their own practice of virtue, and it is not unlike the link he establishes between ‘noticia’ and the ‘remedio de costumbres’ in the *Práctica del catecismo romano*.¹¹ The final sections of the *Prolusión* present the traits of various animals in relation to the liberal arts (§XIX), agriculture (§XX), and architecture (§XXI).

Nieremberg clearly follows a well-established tradition in reading the ‘book of nature’, a Christian approach to understanding natural phenomena as an imperfect reflection of the divine Creator which is most often associated with the thought of St Augustine (354-430):

Alius, ut inueniat Deum, librum legit. Est quidam magnus liber ipsa species creaturæ: superiorem et inferiorem contuere, attende, lege. Non deus, unde eum cognosceres, de atramento litteras fecit: ante oculos tuos posuit haec ipsa quæ fecit. Quid quæris maiorem uocem? Clamat ad te caelum et terra: Deus me fecit.¹²

As noted, Luis de Granada had preceded Nieremberg in publishing the *Símbolo*, but it was written mainly as a catechetical text, and its subject-matter was therefore intended to illustrate the tenets of the faith, as the title indicates.¹³ But Nieremberg goes beyond the scope of the hexaemeral tradition and the reach of a catechism, as in the subtitle of both the *Curiosa filosofía* and *Ocultá filosofía* he claims to offer some new philosophical understandings of the natural world: *Contienen historias muy notables. Averiguanse secretos, y problemas de la naturaleza, con filosofía nueva*. While it is

¹¹ See above, Chapter 2.

¹² St Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo* 68.6, in *Sancti aurelii Augustini in Matthaeum*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, 41A, ed. by P. Verbraken and others (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), p. 443.

¹³ See the editor’s introduction; Granada, *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe*, pp. 11-90.

possible to identify the principal sources of thought in these texts, it is this new approach of the author, his *filosofía nueva*, that merits our attention.

The subjects in *Curiosa filosofía* range from changes in nature since the time of creation to the role of the imagination of parents in the conception of infants. It also examines the existence of monsters, and includes studies on magnetism and the stars.¹⁴

The text is divided into the following six books:

Libro Primero	De la curiosa filosofía, y cuestiones naturales. Tratado de la mudança de la naturaleza
Libro Segundo	De las maravillas de la imaginación, y sus causas
Libro Tercero	De la animación, y especificación de los monstros
Libro Quarto	De la verdad de los monstros fabulosos
Libro Quinto	De la filosofía de la piedra imán
Libro Sexto	De la vida de las estrellas, y filosofía de los cielos

The *Ocultia filosofía* covers similar ground but is divided into two longer books. The first is a treatise on the attraction and repulsion of things, while the second is a treatise on the artistry of the natural world:

Libro Primero	De la filosofía oculta de la simpatía, y antipatía, y efectos extraordinarios de la naturaleza
Libro Segundo	Del artificio de la naturaleza, y noticia del mundo

The Neo-Platonic influence on Nieremberg can be detected from the title of Book I, since it presents a vision of nature in terms of concord and discord ('simpatía' and

¹⁴ These were commonplace questions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but have roots in antiquity. The idea that the imagination of the mother or father during conception could become imprinted on the foetus can be traced back to Hippocrates, Avicenna, and Galen, and was repeated in the Golden Age; see Elena del Río Parra, *Una era de monstruos: representaciones de lo deforme en el Siglo de Oro español* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2003), pp. 45-50. Juan Huarte de San Juan attributes the idea to Aristotle, but only to reject it; see his *Examen de ingenios* [1575], ed. by Guillermo Serés (Madrid: Cátedra, 1989), pp. 652-55.

‘antipatía’): the overall harmony of the world is viewed through the relational network of agreement and opposition between all created things.¹⁵ Yet while it is possible to situate Nieremberg within this current of thought, and while he draws on an established tradition of catechetical natural philosophies, his new approach and the diverse subject-matter he treats raise three important questions. The first two concern the readership Nieremberg intended to reach and the didactic function of his texts, while the third concerns the mode of interpretation he employs in them. A clearer understanding of how and why he wrote two popular Spanish-language miscellanies will allow us better to identify how he develops the notion of discernment in them.

The Miscellanies: ‘*parte de conocimiento, y admiración*’

Nieremberg’s intention to reach a wide audience is stated in the subtitle of both works: *Obra muy útil, no solo para curiosos, sino para doctos escrivarios, filósofos, y médicos*. He reiterates this point in the introduction of *Curiosa filosofía* by expressing his desire to please two types of readers: ‘la satisfacion que a los curiosos y eruditos podre dar’. According to Covarrubias, ‘curioso’ can imply a more leisured reader (‘holgazán’).¹⁶ The aim of attracting this group of readers can also be noted in his description of each text as a *tesoro de maravillas*; they promise to cause wonder and surprise in the more casual reader by uncovering treasures of the natural world.

¹⁵ For more on the Neo-Platonic influence in Nieremberg’s natural science, see Didier’s chapter ‘El gran teatro del mundo’, in *Vida y pensamiento*, pp. 442-91. Lara Garrido offers a brief summary of it in ‘La creación del mundo’, II, 242-45.

¹⁶ Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofía*, p. 4^v. Covarrubias distinguishes the ‘curious’ person as one who carefully examines something (‘el que trata alguna cosa con particular cuydado y diligencia’), but also as one who prefers leisure over work: ‘los curiosos son muy de ordinario holgaçanes y preguntadores’, *Tesoro*, p. 388; s.v. Curioso. ‘Holgaçan’ is defined as ‘el que no quiere trabajar y se anda vagamundo y ocioso’, p. 694; s.v. Holgado. See also León Carlos Álvarez Santaló, ‘El honesto ocio y la honesta curiosidad satisfechos: la *Curiosa y oculta filosofía* de Juan Eusebio Nieremberg’, in *Ocio y vida cotidiana en el mundo hispánico en la edad moderna*, ed. by Francisco Núñez Roldán (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2007), pp. 137-68.

Covarrubias defines the experience of wonderment in a similar way: ‘admirar [...] es pasmarse y espantarse de algún efeto que vee extraordinario, cuya causa i[g]nora’.¹⁷ But since the books are also meant to be ‘muy útil’ to scholars of various types, Nieremberg considers them to be a valuable ‘tesoro’ of knowledge. They do not simply appeal to those who wish to be entertained by extraordinary phenomena, they contain something even the more learned reader such as the *escriturario*, *filósofo*, or *médico* can discover.

Nieremberg further indicates his desire to reach a wide readership by writing the texts in Spanish rather than Latin:

Mas los ruegos de muchos en algunos llegaban a importunidades; el gusto de los mas, el imperio de otros, y si no respeto, me reducieron a que permitiese comunicar, aunque fuesse en lengua vulgar aquestas questiones naturales, como las habia leido, para que a todos cupiesse parte de conocimiento, y admiracion de la naturaleza.¹⁸

Although he implies that writing in the vernacular is less erudite (‘aunque fuesse en lengua vulgar’), the choice of language considerably widens the scope of his readership in seventeenth-century Spain.¹⁹ It seems likely that he would have compiled both the *Curiosa filosofía* and the *Oculca filosofía* in his role as the teacher of natural philosophy at the Colegio in Madrid, but it is also apparent that he intended to reach a wider readership than his immediate students: ‘para que a todos cupiesse parte de conocimiento y admiración’. His texts have something for everyone, just as his catechism would be directed to all Christians, including priests. In fact, Nieremberg

¹⁷ *Tesoro*, p. 43; s.v. Admiración.

¹⁸ Nieremberg, *Curioso filosofía*, p. 4^v.

¹⁹ See Nalle, ‘Literacy and Culture in Early Modern Castile’, pp. 65-84; Antonio Viñao Frago, ‘Alfabetización, lectura y escritura en el Antiguo Régimen (siglos XVI-XVII)’, in *Leer y escribir en España: doscientos años de alfabetización*, ed. by Agustín Escolano (Madrid: Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruiperez, 1992), pp. 45-68.

appears eager to share his treasures with readers in the same way that Mateo Alemán introduces himself in *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599, 1604): ‘El deseo que tenía, curioso lector, de contarte mi vida me daba tanta priesa para engolfarte.’²⁰

Nieremberg’s reference to both the ‘conocimiento’ and ‘admiración’ gained in the reading process also relates to the second question, the function of his texts. In his own words, their didactic approach is twofold: all readers can gain knowledge from them, while at the same time experience a sense of wonder. His desire to reach both the intellect and the emotions of the readers suggests a rhetorical strategy aimed at engaging them so that they can fully discern the moral or spiritual teaching he intends to impart. Along with their intended readership, the dual function of these texts firmly situates them within the larger corpus of Golden-Age miscellanies and their particular attempt to teach and please different types of readers. Texts of this sort were introduced in Spain with the publication of works such as the *Silva de varia lección* of Pedro Mexía (1497-1551) in 1540, the *Jardín de flores curiosas* of Antonio de Torquemada (1507-69) in 1570, and the *Varia historia*, or *Miscelánea*, of Luis Zapata (1526-95) in 1595, which all sought to fascinate people with recondite information.²¹ St Augustine had commented in the *De civitate Dei* (c.413) on the existence of such books of ‘curiosioris historiae’, yet Mexía claims to be the first to write one in Castilian: ‘aunque esta manera de escrevir sea nueva en nuestra lengua castellana [...] creo que soy yo el primero que en ella

²⁰ Mateo Alemán, *Guzmán de Alfarache* [1599, 1604], ed. by José María Micó, 2 vols (Madrid: Cátedra, 2009), I, 125.

²¹ The attempt to instill a sense of wonder in the reader was one of the principal characteristics of miscellanies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: ‘se buscan materias que [...] interesen por su extrañeza, su carácter insólito o su fascinación permanente en la sociedad de la época’; Mercedes Alcalá Galán, ‘Las misceláneas españoles del siglo XVI y su entorno cultural’, *Cuadernos de filología hispánica*, 14 (1996), 11-19 (p. 12). Both *Curiosa filosofía* and *Oculto filosofía* can be considered part of the *miscelánea* genre of Golden-Age literature for the characteristics they share with the texts of Mexía and Torquemada; see also Lina Rodríguez Cacho, ‘La selección de lo curioso en “silvas” y “jardines”’: notas para la trayectoria del género’, *Criticón*, 58 (1993), 155-68; and Jonathan Bradbury, ‘The *Miscelánea* of the Spanish Golden Age: An Unstable Label’, *Modern Language Review*, 105 (2010), 1053-71.

[h]aya tomado esta invención'.²²

The emergence of textual miscellaneity represents two important cultural aspects of the sixteenth century. The first relates to the expansion of the printing press and the dissemination of books, the second to the growth of readership and the possibility of readers discovering for themselves the hidden secrets of the world: 'el libro es un nuevo artículo que [...] posee otra utilidad que no tuvo hasta entonces: democratiza de forma sutil el papel prestigioso del intelectual y pone al alcance de muchos [...] por lo menos un simulacro de erudición'; it is based in the 'deseo de acceder a todas las esferas de la vida en la medida de lo posible'.²³ For example, Mexía wants to make the information in his book accessible 'a los que no entienden los libros latinos, [...] porque yo, cierto, he procurado hablar de materias que no fuessen muy comunes ni anduviessen por el vulgo'.²⁴ Likewise, in the dedication of his *Jardín*, Torquemada stresses the never-ending ability of people to learn new things: 'por muy sabios y avisados que seamos, si bien miramos en ello, al tiempo que la vida se acaba, comenzamos a ver y a aprender novedades de que nos maravillamos'.²⁵ Nieremberg reflects this ongoing phenomenon in the seventeenth century by offering to tell some of the same 'historias notables' in the vernacular, such as his discourse on the virtues exhibited in the behavior of animals,

²² St Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, ed. by Bernhard Dombart, 2 vols (Leipzig: Teubneri, 1892), II, 135; Pedro Mexía, *Silva de varia lección* [1540], ed. by Antonio Castro, 2 vols (Madrid: Cátedra, 1989), I, 162.

²³ Alcalá Galán, pp. 15-16. There was also an interest in gaining knowledge about exotic plants and animals of the New World, which is most notable in Nieremberg's *Historia naturae, maxime pergrinae* [1635]; see *Tesoro*, p. 863; s.v. Peregrino; also Ledezma, 'Una legitimación imaginativa del Nuevo Mundo', p. 57; Rosa Pellicer, 'La "maravilla" de las Indias', *Edad de Oro*, 10 (1991), 141-54; Rodríguez Cacho, 'Del silencio y la curiosidad sobre América en las misceláneas', *Edad de Oro*, 10 (1991), 167-86.

²⁴ Mexía, I, 163-64. At the beginning of the 'Prohemio' to the *Silva Mexía* states: 'Habiendo gastado mucha parte de mi vida en leer y passar muchos libros, y así en varios estudios, parecióme que, si desto yo había alcanzado alguna erudición o noticia de cosas (que, cierto, es todo muy poco), tenía obligación a lo comunicar y hazer participantes dello a mis naturales y vezinos, escribiendo yo alguna cosa que fuesse común y pública a todos'; I, 161.

²⁵ Antonio de Torquemada, *Jardín de flores curiosas* [1570], ed. by Giovanni Allegra (Madrid: Castalia, 1982), p. 95.

which can also be found in Mexía's *Silva*.²⁶ Nieremberg, however, goes beyond the reach of his predecessors in much the same way as he goes beyond the scope of Granada's catechetical text by claiming to provide new information about the 'curiosa' and 'oculta' side of nature: 'recojo y examino sus mas extraordinarias obras, y no publicadas, ni reconocidas maravillas'.²⁷ The ability to surprise readers and engage their 'admiración' therefore emerges as a prominent aspect of the texts.

Literary tastes in the seventeenth century reflect a widespread interest in *admiratio* well beyond the domain of natural histories and miscellanies. At the close of the sixteenth century, for example, Alonso López, el Pinciano (1547-1627), held the view in *Philosophía antigua poética* (1596) that poetry ought to contain an element of *admiratio*: 'ha de ser admirable, porque los poemas que no traen admiración no mueven cosa alguna, y son como sueños fríos algunas veces'. According to Michael Woods, 'the pursuit of wonder' became a poetic objective, especially as poets attempted to capture the complexities of nature and to explore the relationship between poetry, natural philosophy, and science.²⁸ Gracián begins *El Criticón* by describing the emotional impact nature has on Andrenio when he emerges from the isolation of his cave: 'Una cosa puedo asegurarte: que con que imaginé muchas veces y de mil modos lo que habría aquí fuera, [...] jamás di en el modo, ni atiné con el orden, variedad y grandeza desta gran fábrica que vemos y admiramos.' Jesuits also wrote treatises on natural magic and witchcraft and, like Nieremberg, were interested in making connections between the occult properties of nature and their external manifestations.

²⁶ In Chapter 41 of Part II, Mexía describes how the instinct of animals leads them to discover the medicinal properties of plants and herbs, and Chapter 28 of Part III is a lesson on how particular birds and animals serve as examples of virtuous and moral conduct; *Silva*, I, 817-20 and II, 187-96.

²⁷ Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofía*, p. 4^v.

²⁸ Alonso López Pinciano, *Philosophía antigua poética* [1596], in *Obras completas*, ed. by José Rico Verdú, 2 vols (Madrid: Biblioteca Castro, 1998), I, 197; Michael J. Woods, *The Poet and the Natural World in the Age of Góngora* (Oxford: OUP, 1978), pp. 180-81.

Two prominent authors were Martín del Río (1551-1608), whose three part *Disquisitionum magicarum* was first published between 1599 and 1601; and Fernando Castrillo (1586-1667), whose *Magia natural, o ciencia de filosofía oculta* was completed by 1636.²⁹ Nieremberg's natural history can therefore be placed within the literary and cultural climate of his time, and it will be important to examine his particular approach to the relationship between knowledge and wonderment.

In addition to the readership and didactic function of the texts, the third question relates to the mode of interpretation Nieremberg uses to read the natural world. At times he views it through the eyes of a biblical exegete, in accordance with the subtitle of both *Curiosa filosofía* and *Oculto filosofía: Explicanse lugares dificultosos de la Escritura*.³⁰ But he also attempts to explain certain phenomena with the backing of observational proof. In this sense Nieremberg's natural philosophy stands at a crossroads. He upholds the traditional symbolic meaning of nature as an allegorical representation of the divine order, while attempting to reconcile his interpretation within the growing trend towards empiricism in the seventeenth century.

In many ways the early modern period is a time of transition in the history of ideas. Although some scholars have used Spain's firm adherence to Catholic doctrine and the role of the Inquisition to explain the stagnation of scientific discourse during the Counter-Reformation, contributing to what has come to be known as the *leyenda negra*, others have noted the significant intellectual activity of Spaniards in the sciences. For example, in 1561 all second-year students of astronomy at Salamanca were required to

²⁹ Gracián, *El Criticón*, pp. 70-71; also 'Martin Delrio', in Sommervogel, *BCJ*, II, 1898; 'Ferdinand Castrillo', in Sommervogel, *BCJ*, II, 8551; Woods, pp. 183-86.

³⁰ For more on Nieremberg's exegetical writing, see Didier, 'Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, exégeta barroco', in *La Biblia en el arte y en la literatura: V Simposio Bíblico Español*, ed. by Vicente Balaguer and others, 2 vols (Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 1999), pp. 333-44; also Juan Pimentel, 'Baroque Natures: Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, American Wonders, and Preterimperial Natural History', in *Science in the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, 1500-1800*, ed. by Daniela Bleichmar, Paula de Vos, Kristin Huffine, and Kevin Sheehan (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 93-111.

read Copernicus.³¹ Jesuits also sought to spread the Christian faith in Asia through the teaching of science. Pedro Gómez (1535-1600) translated his cosmological treatise *De Sphære* into Japanese by 1594, while his fellow missionaries in Beijing translated European works of mathematics and astronomy into Chinese.³²

What might seem to later ages an indiscriminate blend of fact and fiction in Nieremberg's philosophy is well seen in two examples, his treatment of the bird of paradise and his experiments with the theory of magnetism. The legendary bird, the manucode, which Nieremberg interchangeably refers to as the 'ave paradisiaca', 'ave apode', or 'manucodiata', was thought to be newly identified in the Moluccan Islands by Portuguese spice traders in the sixteenth century. Since it was commonly believed that this type of bird had no feet (hence 'apode'), natural philosophers upheld the notion that it sustained itself in constant flight.³³ Although Nieremberg does not claim ever to have seen it, like many of his contemporaries he comes to support the same conclusion: 'El ave manucodiata [...] criase en el ayre, y del rozio, y manà se sustenta, y [...] nunca se abate, ni a la tierra, ni a peña, ni a rama, sino como nube siempre anda suspensa: cosa en

³¹ For more on the question of religious propaganda and the climate of intellectual activities, such as the role of the Inquisition and the prohibition on Spanish students studying abroad during the reign of Philip II, see Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, pp. 224-31; Kamen, pp. 200-02, 204; and *Más allá de la leyenda negra*, ed. by Navarro Brotóns and William Eamon. See also Navarro's chapter, 'Tradition and Scientific Change in Early Modern Spain: The Role of the Jesuits', in *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters*, ed. by Mordechai Feingold (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 331-71; and Robbins, 'Introduction', in *Arts of Perception*, pp. 1-19.

³² For more on the scientific activity of the Jesuits in Asia, see Nicholas Standaert, *Handbook of Christianity in China* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Pedro Gómez, *The 'Compendia' compiled by Pedro Gómez for the Jesuit College of Japan [1593-1594]*, ed. by Satoru Obara and M. Antoni Üçerler, 3 vols (Tokyo: Ozorasha, 1997); and Florence Hsia, *Sojourners in a Strange Land. Jesuits and Their Scientific Missions in Late Imperial China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

³³ See *Autoridades*, II, 490; s.v. Manucodiata. See also Thomas Harrison's historical account of the bird, the legend surrounding it, and the confusion of its identity as the phoenix, or the Bird of the Sun, in 'Bird of Paradise: Phoenix Redivivus', *Isis*, 51 (1960), 173-80; the original name, 'Manuk dewata', or God's birds, later became 'Manucodiata', or the Manucode bird; p. 174. For more on early accounts of the bird in early modern Europe, see Domingo Ledezma, 'Una legitimación imaginativa del Nuevo Mundo: La *Historia naturæ, maxime peregrinæ* del jesuita Juan Eusebio Nieremberg', in *El saber de los Jesuitas, historias naturales y el Nuevo Mundo*, ed. by Luis Millones Figueroa and Domingo Ledezma (Madrid: Vervuert, 2005), pp. 53-83 (p. 72).

tiempos antiguos increíble, pero va de entera fee.³⁴

Aristotle, for one, stated that all birds must have feet, a view which Nieremberg rejects on the grounds of the new evidence in support of the traditional view. In section 13 of the *Prolusión* he goes on to describe the bird in terms of its religious significance, which he interprets in connection with sacred Scripture. For him, the bird represents the poverty preached by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount because it possesses nothing earthly and continually soars to the heavens (Matthew 5:7-27):

La pobreza Evangelica vemos esta[m]pada en la avecilla Apode,
q[ue] no tiene cosa de la tierra, [...] ni do[n]de ponga sus huevos;
tanta pobreza tiene, q[ue] es menest[e]r q[ue] la he[m]bra los ponga
sobre las espaldas del macho, que tiene para este proposito
acomodadas por la diligencia de la naturaleza apercebida. Y parece
que aun en estas aves se representa el dicho de Christo, que de los
pobres es el Reyno de los cielos; pues con ser tan pobres que tienen
nada en la tierra son señoras de lo alto, y como avezindadas entre los
Astros, se remo[n]tan allâ andando siempre levantadas a las nubes
donde nada les falta.

Nieremberg repeats the biblical interpretation of the bird in *Oculto filosofia* by similarly linking it to the Beatitudes: ‘parece se retrata la primera bienaventurança’.³⁵ But in *Curiosa filosofia* he attempts to verify his position by attributing it to the authority of anonymous explorers who are eye witnesses: ‘los Españoles testigos de vista’.³⁶ He then goes on to discount the position of the famous sixteenth-century Flemish natural philosopher Carolus Clusius (1526-1609), who had previously supported the same claim as Nieremberg, but later changed his mind in favor of the Aristotelian position. Eager to

³⁴ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 226^r.

³⁵ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, pp. 237^v-238^r; *Oculto filosofia*, p. 189^r.

³⁶ Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofia*, p. 35^v.

uphold the religious significance of the bird, Nieremberg is still impelled to support this stance with the observational proof of ‘el testimonio cierto’; he even includes an expanded description of the bird with three illustrations of it in the *Historia naturæ* (figures 1-3, Appendix III).³⁷

Nieremberg’s interpretation of the manucode is a clear indication of how writers in the seventeenth century continued to read nature for its allegorical meaning, while at the same time seeking to treat it in a more scientific manner. This passage and others like it resemble what one would expect to find in a medieval bestiary. The bird is viewed for its supposed religious significance in much the same way that the legendary phoenix was traditionally described as a symbol of Christian resurrection, as can be seen in T. H. White’s translation of the twelfth-century *Book of Beasts*: ‘This bird, without anybody to explain things to it, without even the power of reason, goes through the very facts of the resurrection – and that, in spite of the fact that birds exist for the good of men, not men for birds. Let it be an example to us.’³⁸ The bird of paradise serves a similar exemplary function: to teach Christians how to embrace evangelical poverty.

Contemporaries of Nieremberg employed similar methods of interpreting nature. In 1658 the Dominican Fray Andrés Ferrer de Valdecebro (1620-80) wrote the two part

³⁷ Clusius included this question in the appendix of his *Exoticorum libri decem* (1609); see Brian Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 251; also Nieremberg, *Historia naturæ*, pp. 210-13. The illustrations for this edition were made by the engraver Christoffel Jegher (1578/1590-1652). For more on Nieremberg’s treatment of the bird in *Historia naturæ*, see Ledezma, ‘Una legitimación imaginativa del Nuevo Mundo’, pp. 71-72.

³⁸ *The Book of Beasts: Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*, ed. by T. H. White (Phoenix Mill: Alan Sutton, 1992), p. 127. Regarding the Phoenix, Nieremberg states that if it had existed in the past, this was no longer possible to prove, although he does attest to the existence of the ‘Semenda’ bird, also thought to set itself on fire; *Curiosa filosofía*, pp. 6^r-12^r. In another example, Nieremberg’s description of the American ‘Cocuyo’ bird (the ‘Ercinee’, or the Bohemian Jay) and its phosphorescent wings, ‘tiene quatro estrellas muy reluzientes; dos en los ojos, dos debaxo de las alas, [...] que a su claridad hilan, texen, cosen, pinta[n], baylan los Indios, [...] y en las manos, alumbrandose con ellos, como con hachas, y lanternas, los Españoles leen cartas a su luz’, can be traced directly to the bestiary tradition: ‘Their feathers shine so brightly in the darkness that, however densely the night may be overcast, their wings shed a phosphorescence’; Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 228^v; *The Book of Beasts*, p. 130.

Gobierno general, moral, y político which, not unlike Nieremberg's *Prolusión*, explains how people ought to learn from the traits of animals in order to lead moral and virtuous lives.³⁹ Each part also contains a 'tabla de sermones' so that, as with Nieremberg's catechism, the examples in them could be used for preaching. While in both volumes Ferrer de Valdecebro presents himself as the first author to write a treatise of this kind ('dixe [...] que habia sido el primer Inventor yo deste linage de Gobierno Politico, y Moral, lo repito a[h]ora'), like Nieremberg, he draws from the pre-established literary tradition of the bestiary and its moral teaching.⁴⁰ In 1675 the Jesuit Francisco Garau (1604-1701) wrote a similar collection of treatises entitled *El sabio instruido de la naturaleza en quarenta máximas políticas y morales ilustradas con todo género de erudición sacra y humana* (the second and third parts followed in 1680 and 1700). As with the Dominican's two part *Gobierno general*, they contain an 'índice de materias predicables'.⁴¹

But at other times Nieremberg moves away from allegorical interpretation and attempts to offer a more empirically-based reading of his subject-matter. This can be seen in his treatment of magnetism in Book v of *Curiosa filosofía*, 'De la filosofía nueva de la piedra Iman', where he supports his theory with his own experimental proof:

La virtud pues de la piedra Iman esta en unirse, y conformar a si todo lo que frisa con su naturaleza poniendolo en su debida y natural disposicion como si fuera una misma cosa consigo. Y si para esto fuera menester arrojar de si al hierro lo haze. Algun tiempo no quise

³⁹ Fray Andrés Ferrer de Valdecebro, *Gobierno general, moral, y político. Hallado en las fieras, y animales sylvestres. Sacado de sus naturales virtudes, y propiedades. Con particular tabla para sermones varios de tiempo, y de Santos* [1658] (Barcelona: Casa de Cormellas, 1696); and *Gobierno general, moral, y político. Hallado en las aves mas generosas, y nobles. Sacado de sus naturales virtudes, y propiedades. Con quatro tablas diferentes, es la una para sermones varios de tiempo, y de Santos* [1668] (Barcelona: Casa de Cormellas, 1696).

⁴⁰ Ferrer de Valdecebro, *Gobierno general* [...]. *Hallado en la aves*, p. ¶7^v.

⁴¹ See 'François Garau', in Sommervogel, *BCJ*, III, 1194-98.

creer esta filosofía, hasta que la experimente andando gran trecho
tras un hierro con una piedra en la mano, y el hierro huyendo della.
[...] La experiencia confirma esta verdad.⁴²

This is a first-hand observation, unlike the unnamed eye-witnesses he cites in writing of the bird of paradise. He also includes an appendix to his section on magnets in which he both reiterates the source of his own ideas and recognizes the recent publication of a similar work by the Italian Jesuit Niccolò Cabeo (1586-1650).⁴³ According to Víctor Navarro, Nieremberg's treatment of magnetism is considered to be the first of its kind in Spain: 'Aquí el jesuita expone con detalle las ideas y experiencias de William Gilbert, autor, como es sabido, del primer tratado sistemático de esta materia, a quien cita explícitamente y elogia.'⁴⁴ The English natural philosopher William Gilbert (1544-1603), whose famous *De magnete* had been published in 1600, proved that magnets were capable of both attracting and repelling ferrous matter according to certain laws, and as a result helped to establish the modern science of magnetism.⁴⁵ Nieremberg was well read in the subject and aware of this new theory, but also gathered his own empirical data.

Navarro comes to a similar conclusion regarding Nieremberg's knowledge of astronomy: 'se muestra relativamente bien informado de los nuevos conocimientos

⁴² Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofía*, pp. 127^v-128^f.

⁴³ See Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofía*, pp. 172^v-173^f. Niccolò Cabeo published the *Philosophia magnetica* in 1629; see 'Niccolò Cabeo', in *DHCH*, I, 589. The Italian Jesuit Leonardo Garzoni (1500-92) wrote a treatise on magnetism, which, although unpublished, circulated in manuscript form and was cited by Cabeo and other natural philosophers, such as Giambattista della Porta (1535-1615); 'Léonard Garzoni', in Sommervogel, *BCJ*, III, 1249.

⁴⁴ Navarro Brotóns, 'El cultivo de la física en España en los siglos de la revolución científica (XVI-XVII)', in *Curso de la física hasta el siglo XIX*, ed. by Carlos Sánchez del Río (Madrid: Real Academia de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales, 1983), p. 321.

⁴⁵ For more information, see 'William Gilbert', in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 60 vols (Oxford: OUP, 2004), XXII, 195-202.

astronómicos realizados hasta la fecha en que compuso su libro'.⁴⁶ Like many contemporary Jesuit scholars, Nieremberg upholds the ideas proposed by Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), whose model of the universe contained selected elements from both the Ptolemaic and Copernican systems.⁴⁷ It is because of his more empirical mode of reading nature that Nieremberg has been noted by scholars for his contributions to the birth of modern science in Spain.⁴⁸ In his *Pseudodoxia epidemica*, or *Enquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors* (1646), the English philosopher Thomas Browne (1605-82) mentions some of the implausible claims in Nieremberg's works, yet he also notes that they contain some well-ascertained conclusions.⁴⁹

While it is not the aim of this chapter to identify Nieremberg's place in the history of science, it is important to note that as a prominent writer of the seventeenth century he was well known for his natural philosophy both in Spain and the rest of Europe. Although it represents the blend of fact and fable typical of early modern thought, his treatment of natural knowledge ought also to be seen in another context: his membership of the Jesuit Order. The idea of an educational mission was developed soon after the foundation of the Society in 1540, and as a new apostolic venture it came to be part of the Order's greater program of saving souls. While this focus is succinctly

⁴⁶ Navarro Brotóns, 'El cultivo de la física', p. 321.

⁴⁷ Nieremberg himself claims to uphold Brahe's theory: 'Otra dicha he tenido de encontrarme [...] cerca de la Filosofía nueva del cielo. En esta ya confieso que debo la principal parte a Ticho Brahe, *Curiosa filosofía* (1630), p. 215^v. See also Chapter 27 of Book VI in *Curiosa filosofía* [ed. 1634], pp. 195^f-196^v. For a succinct explanation of Brahe's position and the Jesuits' approval of it, including that of Athanasius Kircher, see 'Tycho Brahe', in *DHCJ*, I, p. 521.

⁴⁸ For more on Nieremberg's contribution to the fields of paleontology, physics, and modern science in Spain, see Antonio Perejón, 'Aproximación a la historia de la paleontología española', *Enseñanza de las ciencias de la tierra*, 9 (2001), 127-43; Navarro Brotóns, 'El cultivo de la física', pp. 311-25; José López Piñero and Víctor Navarro, 'Juan Eusebio Nieremberg y Otín', in *Diccionario Histórico de la Ciencia Moderna en España*, ed. by José López Piñero, and others, 2 vols (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 1983), II, 110-11. Juan Caramuel (1606-82), a scholar who was member of the Cistercian Order, used several of Nieremberg's ideas to support his own philosophical claims; see Julián Velarde Lombraña, *Juan Caramuel, vida y obra* (Oviedo: Pentalfa, 1989), pp. 90-97.

⁴⁹ See Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia epidemica* [1646], ed. by Robin Robbins, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), II, 683-84.

stated as an aspect of the Jesuits' spiritual outlook in the 'Principio y fundamento' of the *Ejercicios espirituales* ('El hombre es criado para alabar, hazer reverencia y servir a Dios nuestro Señor y, mediante esto, salvar su ánima' [§23]), the desire to save souls was also translated into the ministries Jesuits would undertake, and it came to be articulated in the *Constituciones* of the Society as its main apostolic purpose: 'El fin desta Compañia no es solamente atender a la salvación y perfección de las ánimas propias con la gracia divina, mas con la mesma intensamente procurar de ayudar a la salvación y perfección de las de los próximos' [§3].⁵⁰

One way to accomplish this goal was through the spread of knowledge. Rivka Feldhay has explained how education as a ministry of the Society brought with it the idea that knowledge could serve as a 'bridge to salvation'.⁵¹ By 1599 the Order had produced a definitive version of its educational program in the *Ratio Studiorum*, which included the study of natural philosophy.⁵² With the same goal of helping souls, the aim of the pedagogical program was to lead people to a knowledge and love of God the Creator: 'Cum ex primariis Societatis nostræ ministeriis unum sit, omnes disciplinas instituto nostro congruentes ita proximis tradere, ut inde ad Conditoris ac Redemptoris nostri cognitionem atque amorem excitentur' [§7]. All parts of the curriculum were to form the structure of the bridge. And while in his miscellanies Nieremberg writes of both the 'conocimiento' and the 'admiración' gained by readers of all sorts, his didactic approach to both teach and please is enhanced by a third motive, more explicitly related

⁵⁰ See also 'Fórmula del Instituto', which serves as the introduction to the *Constituciones*; it lists the initial ministries of the Society, and their aim to save souls; Ignatius Loyola, *Obras de San Ignacio*, pp. 455-60.

⁵¹ Rivka Feldhay, 'Knowledge and Salvation in Jesuit Culture', *Science in Context*, 1 (1987), 195-213 (p. 200).

⁵² See [§207], [§231], and [§502] in *The Ratio Studiorum. The Official Plan for Jesuit Education* [1599], ed. by Claude Paur (St Louis: IJS, 2005), pp. 99, 106, 208. Further citations from the *Ratio Studiorum* will be listed by the section number in square brackets. For more on Jesuit education, natural philosophy, and the *Ratio Studiorum*, see O'Malley, 'How the First Jesuits Became Involved in Education', pp. 56-74.

to the educational mission of the Society: to uncover the biblical message of salvation as it is imprinted in the created world. In this respect, the conceptual language Nieremberg employs in these texts is significant. For example, while he identifies the properties of some things according to the latest experiments, his principal aim is to show the ‘ingenio’ of these things, such as ‘el ingenio de la piedra Iman’, and how they reveal the intelligible mark of their divine design.⁵³

The treatment of wit emerged as a prominent aspect of thought in seventeenth-century Spain, and it is therefore no surprise that it should appear in Nieremberg’s philosophy. ‘Ingenio’ is the part of the intellect which allows it to understand something that is subtle and often deceptive: ‘lo que por razón y discurso se puede alcançar en todo género de ciencias, diciplinas, artes liberales y mecánicas, sutilezas, invenciones y engaños’. The ‘ingenio’ of things, however, also speaks of the excellence of their artistry, ‘las mismas máquinas inventadas con primor llamamos ingenios, como el ingenio del agua’.⁵⁴

But what does the *ingenio* of the magnet or water have to do with discerning the nature of Christian salvation? Edward Riley explains that to speak of the ‘admiración’ born of things represents the critical spirit of scientific inquiry that had begun in the sixteenth century, and he goes on to explain how later writers such as Nieremberg developed what he calls the style of ‘ingeniosidad conceptuosa’, which had the aim of cultivating a heightened sense of wonder.⁵⁵ According to Woods, ‘Wit creates and appreciates artifice: the intellect’s function is to discover truth.’⁵⁶ Thus Nieremberg’s

⁵³ Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofía*, p. 127^r.

⁵⁴ *Tesoro*, p. 737; s.v. Ingenio. ‘Primor’ signifies ‘la excelencia en el arte’, p. 882; s.v. Primo.

⁵⁵ Edward Riley, ‘Aspectos del concepto de *admiratio* en la teoría literaria del Siglo de Oro’, in *Studia Philologica: Homenaje a Dámaso Alonso*, 3 vols (Madrid: Gredos, 1963), III, 173-83 (p. 177).

⁵⁶ Woods, p. 194.

aim is to discern the truth of nature's artistry, even when things seem to be void of meaning. Wit not only allows the intellect to see truth beyond the 'engaño' of appearances, it uncovers a sacred truth concerning salvation. In order to understand how discernment works in Nieremberg's natural philosophy, I will now show how his epistemology relates to *admiratio*, the use of *ingenio*, and the search for divine truth.

Knowledge of the Natural World: 'cabal conocimiento'

As the gain of knowledge is the central focus of Nieremberg's natural philosophy, he introduces it in the *Prolusión* in order to honor the presence of both the king and the court. The college has been transformed into a new 'casa de Minerva' under the royal patronage, and since the discourse was delivered in front of such a distinguished audience, he takes the opportunity to present his subject prominently:

A la grandeza desta Corte, la dignidad destes Estudios y nueva casa de Minerva, si alguna parte de erudicion y miembro de Filosofia desseaba, es principalmente este cuerpo y sustancia del conocimiento de la naturaleza, y mas principalmente de la animada, por donde darè principio a lo restante de la doctrina y historia natural.

But he also speaks of his subject as the source of wisdom, a wisdom not limited to the subject-matter of his discipline, nor to the greater field of natural history, but one which encompasses a knowledge even greater than that of the entire curriculum: 'Cuerpo, digo, que es de Filosofia, porque en el se encierra todo, [...] a cabal con su todo. De tal manera es miembro de Filosofia que la abarca toda, y rodea toda erudicion.'⁵⁷ In his own view, the study of animals encapsulates all learning and erudition. Yet why is he

⁵⁷ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 21^f [219^f].

so eager to invest his discipline with such importance? Is he simply attempting to win the favor of his listeners by impressing them with the benefits they could receive from his lectures?

Following Augustinian tradition, Nieremberg defines natural history as not only the first philosophy, but also the first theology and the first book of sacred Scripture: ‘Aqui es donde hablò Dios a muchos de los antiguos, y revelò la grandeza de su divinidad, [...] la primera Theologia, y la primera Escritura sagrada, no escrita por mano humana, sino por los dedos de la omnipotencia Divina.’ He then goes on to name Saints Basil, Ambrose, and Isidore, along with various kings, such as Solomon and Alexander the Great, for their ‘santa’ and ‘real’ contributions to the discipline.⁵⁸ The *Prolusión* is a type of panegyric for the study of animals, worthy not only of the attention of the Church and the Crown, but of the entire court: ‘pues en ella hazen Cortes, y se encuentran todas las ciencias, que sea en la Corte’. The rhetorical language is not lost on the reader, as in the space of two pages he repeats the words ‘Corte’, ‘Cortes’, and ‘Cortesianos’ nine times.⁵⁹ The subject is thus portrayed as being of the utmost importance, an essential part of the curriculum for the nobility.

But Nieremberg also wants to articulate the pre-eminent role that knowledge has in the lives of Christians, and show that an inadequate knowledge of the history of animals caused the fall of the human race. Basing his claim on the second creation narrative in Genesis (2:4b-3:24), he describes how God placed all the animals before the eyes of Adam, who was charged with the responsibility to study and name them:

No le mandò que co[n]templasse los saraos de las estrellas en esse salon del firmamento, ni las danças de los Planetas, ni las mudanças

⁵⁸ See Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, pp. 220^r-221^v; also *Ocultia filosofia*, pp. 114^v-115^v.

⁵⁹ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, pp. 222^{r-v}.

de la Luna, y demas luzes del mundo, solo los animales, y las mas minimas avezillas se las recogio, y puso antes los ojos, y quiso que las tuviesse tan conocidas que supiesse su nombre, y las llamasse con el.⁶⁰

Since Eve was not yet created and did not participate in this lesson, she did not understand her fateful encounter with the serpent, who enticed her to eat the forbidden fruit. Her ignorance led to her deception and brought about the fall:

De suerte que el primer maestro desta Filosofia fue Dios, el primer discipulo, el primer hombre; y ella la primera [filosofia] del mundo, y la que fue como unica en aquel dichoso estado de inocencia y gracia. De no saberla se ocasiono la ruina de nuestro linaje, porque sin noticia Eva de las naturalezas de los animales, se dexò engañar de la serpiente.⁶¹

Eve was deceived because she did not know that by its ‘naturaleza’ the serpent could not speak or reason: ‘No sabia que los brutos no hablaban, que carecian razon de consejo, y assi no se assombrò de su razonamiento, [...] que no informada ella no estrañò su lenguaje.’⁶² Hence Nieremberg implies that his academic discipline is privileged because it offers an insight into the right order of things. While his audience would already be familiar with the biblical narrative, his aim is to guide readers to a more complete, or perfect knowledge, which he terms ‘cabal conocimiento’. This type of ‘noticia’ is more than a study of animals and the natural world: it is intended to offer a fuller picture of God’s creation and the human presence in it, both before and after the

⁶⁰ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 241^v.

⁶¹ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 21^v [219^v].

⁶² Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 220^f. According to Covarrubias, ‘estrañar’ signifies the recognition of something extraordinary, foreign, or unknown: ‘lo que es extraordinario, [...] es el que no es nuestro’; *Tesoro*, pp. 568-69; s.v. Estraño.

fall.⁶³

The idea of knowledge in Nieremberg must be understood according to his exegesis of the biblical narrative, because it forms the underlying principle of his natural philosophy and sets the meaning of ‘noticia’ in the wider context of Christian salvation. Adam and Eve were created in a state of grace, but they were not born with knowledge: ‘No es poca excelencia desta doctrina, que en el estado dichoso de inocencia se hubiesse de enseñar, y que aquellos hombres Santos se habian de ocupar en ella [la historia natural]; porque aunque nacieran con gracia, no nacieran con esta ciencia.’ Although Adam had studied and named the beasts before the creation of Eve, he did not share this knowledge with her: ‘Aquí se vera la importancia desta Filosofia [...], y no haberse apressurado Adan a enseñarla a su muger le costò tan caro.’⁶⁴

Science and learning are therefore more than an intellectual exercise. If the *Ratio Studiorum* asserts that the aim of Jesuit education is to lead people to a knowledge and love of the Creator, it also states that the final goal of natural philosophy is to lead students ‘ad perfectam cognitionem’: it disposes the intellect for the study of theology and cultivates the desire to know the Creator [§207]. Nieremberg’s idea of ‘cabal conocimiento’ relates to this principle and to the wider purpose of the Jesuits’ educational mission. He may write of his discipline as a source of knowledge, but its intellectual aspect does not exclude the affective dimension of faith and the spiritual life. Whether he illustrates the significance of a biblical passage as he sees it manifested in the behavior of animals, or whether he explains the results of his experiments with physical objects, it is in this union of the pursuit of knowledge, on the one hand, and

⁶³ According to Covarrubias, ‘cabal’ means the whole of something, or perfection: ‘la cosa que está cumplida, sin que le falte, [...] que es lo último en perfección de la cosa’; *Tesoro*, p. 249; s.v. Cabal.

⁶⁴ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofía*, pp. 118^{r-v}.

progress in the spiritual life, on the other hand, that it is possible to identify elements of Nieremberg's spiritual tradition, namely that of discernment, in his natural history.

A rhetoric centered on discernment can be seen in the prominent role *admiratio* has in three related aspects of these texts. The first concerns the way in which Nieremberg at times focuses on the seemingly insignificant or distorted details of creation. According to him, God placed even the smallest creatures before Adam ('las mas minimas avezillas [...] puso ante los ojos'), and although all the beasts were to be studied and named, Nieremberg captures this detail of the smallest birds in order to create a greater sense of wonderment. It is to the contrast of elements both small and large, part and whole, even deformed and harmonious, that he turns the eye, teaching people how and what to see.

The second concerns the meditative approach to reading the 'book of nature', because while Nieremberg attempts to induce the *admiratio* of readers with the special details of created things, he then leads them to ponder the significance of such things in terms of an imaginative contemplation: 'no con menor maravilla es parte de la Filosofia la consideracio[n] de la naturaleza animada'.⁶⁵ The 'consideración' is an intellectual operation, but I will show how it also relates to and bears a spiritual significance. Nieremberg aims to provide readers with 'noticia' about the natural world, but his method of viewing it is reminiscent of the visual contemplation which Loyola applies to a scene of sacred Scripture in the *Ejercicios espirituales*.

The third aspect concerns the moral message of Nieremberg's natural philosophy and what this implies for readers. If his history of animals inspires *admiratio* and portrays the magnificence of God, this ought to have an effect on people, in such a way

⁶⁵ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 21^r [219^r].

that as they learn to assimilate virtue and reject vice, they may ultimately discern the will of God imprinted on the pages of creation.

Reading the Book of Nature: *vileza and deformidad*

A first step in this process of discernment can be identified in Nieremberg's treatment of how the seemingly insignificant aspects of creation, beings that by their nature are ordinary ('vulgar') or deformed ('monstruoso'), could represent the grandeur of God. Yet this aspect of Nieremberg's philosophy is important to note. As a part of his rhetorical discourse intended to trigger the 'admiración' of the imaginative onlooker, he turns to these creatures in order to train the eye of the reader to see wonder where it otherwise might not be expected. In the *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe* Granada takes 'hormigas', 'abejas', and 'gusanos' as examples which can produce the same effect, something which by then had become a commonplace in natural philosophies: 'a San Agustín más admirable parece el artificio del Criador en estas cosas pequeñas que en las grandes'.⁶⁶ Nieremberg repeats the *topos* – 'no es menos admirable Dios en un mosquito'. But he passes beyond this to explain how all things, whether they appear to or not, contribute to the greater harmony of God's design: 'Esta filosofía es mas elegante y sutil, y de mucho mayor admiracion considerar el encaje y artificio de todas las naturalezas, porque contemplar cada una de por si sin la harmonia que haze con otras, cosa es mas grossera y tosca.'⁶⁷

This particular focus on the seemingly insignificant beings can be noted in the *Prolusión*:

⁶⁶ Granada, *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe*, pp. 335, 343.

⁶⁷ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofía*, pp. 123^v, 171^v.

Anaxagoras con la vista de una estrella se contentò por premio de su vida; dixo que se daba por pagado de haber nacido, por solo mirar al Sol. No habia menester mirar tan alto, por mas contento se podria dar con la vista de un animalejo, una abeja, un gusanillo, un mosquito, en los quales conociera mas ingenio del artifice, pues en el mesmo artificio hallara ingenio.⁶⁸

Readers are directed to notice grandeur not in something ‘tan alto’, or spectacular, such as the sun, but to see it in something as ordinary or lowly as bugs and other tiny ‘animalejos’ (§12 of the *Prolusión* treats ‘los mas viles animalejos que se anidan en el suelo de nuestras casas’). As with the magnet, even the smallest creatures reveal something of the ‘ingenio’ of their artistry, and hence their ‘artífice’, the Creator, and while Nieremberg guides readers to notice the relationship between *artífice*, *artificio*, and *ingenio*, he also applies the dialectic of *ser* and *parecer* to it: wit signals the need to distinguish the appearance of something from its true nature.⁶⁹ The ant and the much grander objects of the sun and the moon are held in contrast, but they share in creating the same effect of ‘admiración’ in the onlooker:

La hormiga[,] pequeño animal, pero de gran admiracion, sin co[m]puto, sin calendario, sin epacta, sin cuenta alguna de la Luna, conoce sus mudanzas, y nos la muestra: cuyo descanso, o trabajo son señal del interlunio, o plenilunio. [...] La conjuncion destes Reyes de la naturaleza, Sol y Luna, la manifiesta un animalejo, bien vulgar, y cuya vileza no obsta a su admiracion, antes juzgo q[ue] la ayuda.⁷⁰

Creating an antithesis between the ‘pequeño animal’ and the ‘gran admiracion’ at the

⁶⁸ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 229^r.

⁶⁹ See Robbins, *The Challenges of Uncertainty*; or the introduction to his *Arts of Perception*, pp. 1-19.

⁷⁰ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, pp. 223^v-224^r.

beginning of the passage, Nieremberg turns the sense of wonder upside down. The passage ends with the same contrast between something ‘bien vulgar’ and the ‘admiración’ it causes; not only does the ‘vileza’ of the ant not impede the sense of marvel, it contributes to it: ‘antes juzgo que la ayuda’.⁷¹ The ant’s lack of special instruments, emphasized by the fourfold repetition of ‘sin computo’, ‘sin calendario’, ‘sin epacta’, ‘sin cuenta’ reinforces a sense of its instructive knowledge as in some way superior to the human, which depends on them, but also its accessibility as an object of contemplation for people who would not have had such instruments. The greatest sense of wonder can be found where it is least expected: ‘que cosa mas maravillosa, q[ue] do[n]de menos se espera, hallar lo q[ue] es mas de admirar’.⁷²

If at first Nieremberg’s natural philosophy does not seem to differ from that of Granada, his approach reflects more closely the aesthetics of his own time, especially in his treatment of the *ser* and *parecer* of things. The hand of the Creator may be discerned in the artistry of creation, but the appearance of things does not always grant the viewer this knowledge. The study of creation requires ‘ingenio’, but also points to the ‘ingenio’ of the Creator. Nieremberg applies this exercise to the contrasts in nature by focusing on creatures often considered to be disgusting, such as bugs and worms, which he nevertheless casts in the light of God’s greater design and accords an even greater capacity to provoke wonder, once they have been properly considered.

The prominence with which Nieremberg considers wit can be noted in the attention that is given to looking beyond the surface appearance of things, which he calls the outer shell, or ‘corteza’:

⁷¹ *Tesoro*, p. 1008; s.v. Vileza.

⁷² Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 224^r.

Si toda la co[n]templacion de la naturaleza es apacible, y gustosa aun con su primera vista, y considerada, solo por la corteça (porque no se que matizes la iluminan, que nos admira con solo un borron de su Autor, que en ella divisamos) mucho mas amena y agradable será quando se penetran sus secretos, y se entra en lo hondo de sus misterios. A[h]ora tomaremos mas de proposito esta empresa, violaremos su mas guardado retiro, llegaremos a lo arduo, a lo dificultoso, a lo innacesible della, a su mayor sacramento.⁷³

He writes conventionally enough of the ability to recognize the work of the divine Author in the visual display of nature ('que en ella divisamos'), but goes on to say that although it is pleasing ('gustosa'), this is only the 'primera vista', or a sketch ('solo un borron'). 'Corteza' is the hard covering or surface of an object whose 'essence' lies beneath it: 'lo que no es esencial ni sustancial, sino tan solamente material'.⁷⁴ The word therefore seems to capture the focal point of his natural philosophy. Just as a piece of fruit cannot be known by its rind alone but by its flesh, nature cannot be understood by its outer covering, its appearance. The image of the 'corteza' has similar function in his treatise *De la hermosura de Dios y su amabilidad* (1641). But rather than provide readers with recondite information, Nieremberg now illustrates the natural world for the sole purpose of uncovering its spiritual significance, which can be seen in the following description of the pomegranate:

Assi como una granada, que està cubierta con su corteza, que encierra todo lo interior, tiene sus divisiones de casillas y varios apartados, divididos con su pielezilla, en que encaxan muchos granos: a este modo contiene a toda la naturaleza el Espiritu de Dios. Y de la manera que un grano de la granada, que està

⁷³ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofia*, p. 1^o.

⁷⁴ *Tesoro*, p. 364; s.v. Corteza.

cercado de su corteza, no pudiera ver, aunque tuviese ojos, lo que está fuera, ni a quien la tiene en la mano: assi tambien ninguno deste mundo puede ver al que le tiene en su mano, que es Dios.⁷⁵

Beyond the outer covering lie the individual seeds, but these too are covered by a ‘pielecilla’. Meaning, it is implied, resides under various layers. In this case, he also draws a parallel between the seeds of the pomegranate and the readers, who must learn to see themselves as in the hands of the unseen God in the same way in which the seeds of the fruit contain something of the divine, and while they contemplate how God’s grace touches nature at its core, they must also apply this knowledge to themselves.

Nieremberg also writes in *Obras y días: manual de señores y príncipes* of ‘corteza’, but in terms of the *ser* and *parecer* of acts of virtue, as he teaches his readers that to be virtuous requires more than simply appearing to be so: ‘Va mucho de parecer a ser [...]: pues para que la execucion de nuestras obras y vidas, toque en lo dentro de la Virtud, y no se quede en lo obscuro de su sombra, deseando opinion y honor, y en lo lustroso de su corteza y cascara procurando mas remedarla que tenerla.’ Interestingly, Covarrubias compares ‘corteza’ with the letters or words of a parable or a document bearing a spiritual significance; the real meaning of the parable, the ‘sentido espiritual’, lies beyond them.⁷⁶ Góngora famously used the same image to respond to the criticism brought against the *culterano* style of his poetry: ‘eso mismo hallará V.m. en mis *Soledades*, si tiene capacidad para quitar la corteza y descubrir lo misterioso que encubren’. In order to extract meaning from the verses and hence recognize the *ingenio*

⁷⁵ Nieremberg, *De la hermosura de Dios* (1641), p. 139. Nieremberg is quoting from ‘Teophilo Antiocheno’; a marginal note lists the source as Book I of *Apologia ad Autolyicum* (c.169-83) of Theophilus of Antioch (d. 183-85).

⁷⁶ Nieremberg, *Obras y días* [1629], p. 4^f. ‘Por translación [...] corteza [...] será entender una parábola por sólo lo que suena, o otra escritura de sentido espiritual por sólo la letra’; *Tesoro*, p. 364; s.v. Corteza.

of the poet, readers must apply their own *ingenio*:

Da causa a que, vacilando el entendimiento en fuerza del discurso,
trabajándole (pues crece con cualquier acto de valor) alcance lo que
así en la lectura superficial de sus versos no pudo entender; luego
hase de confesar que tiene utilidad avivar el ingenio, y eso nació en
la obscuridad del poeta.⁷⁷

For Nieremberg, however, wit points to the sacred mystery, or the ‘sacramento’, encoded within things. The ‘ingenio’ of natural phenomena cannot be understood apart from this religious context: ‘antes adelantarè su grandeza con la invencion, y novedad de no advertidos sacramentos naturales’.⁷⁸ While he does not mean that things such as a magnet represent the liturgical manifestation of divine grace, which is how he would have narrowly defined a Sacrament to his students, the expression nonetheless underlines his natural philosophy’s sense of the sacred mystery inherent in all creation. The appearance of natural beings represents only the letters and verses of a poem, just as material items and gestures represent the physical accidents of a Sacrament, whereas their true meaning lies in their essence or substance. Nieremberg judges the visual display of physical accidents pleasing, yet the display is meaningless (‘cosa es mas grossera y tosca’), unless it leads the mind to probe beneath the surface and discern the divine essence of creation.

⁷⁷ Luis de Góngora, ‘Carta de don Luis de Góngora en respuesta de la que le escribieron’ [1613 or 1614], in *Obras completas*, ed. by Juan Millé y Giménez and Isabel Millé y Giménez (Madrid: Aguilar, 1943), p. 796. Interestingly, in *Curiosa filosofía* Nieremberg cites a passage from Góngora’s first *Soledad* [1.379-88], praising him for his knowledge of the magnet and its properties, and claiming that lack of proper knowledge had led others to a false interpretation of the poet’s words. Nieremberg quotes the following verses: ‘Nautica industria investigò tal piedra, | Que qual abraça yedra | Escollo, el metal, ella fulminante. | De que Marte se viste, y lisonjera | Solicita el que mas brilla diamante | En la nocturna capa de la Esfera. | Estrella a nuestro Polo mas vezina, | Y con virtud no poca | Distante la revoca | Elevada la inclina’, pp. 166^{r-v}; see also Woods, pp. 186-87; and Luis de Góngora, *Soledades* [1613], ed. by John Beverley (Madrid: Cátedra, 1979), pp. 91-92.

⁷⁸ Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofía*, p. 118^r.

Nieremberg also directs his readers' attention to things that are odd, or deformed. Nowhere are the cultural tastes of the seventeenth century more evident in Nieremberg's natural philosophy than in his treatment of 'monstruos'. A monster is defined as an abnormal being because its constitution breaks with the natural order. Nieremberg claims that deformities of this kind are a result of problems in the reproductive and birthing processes: 'defecto del semen, copula ilegitema, luxuria, angustia de la matriz o vientre, o la imaginacion o fantasia de los padres'. Here such defects preach a moral message regarding the sins of fornication and lust. But some monstrosities ought to be considered as marks of beauty on the face of creation: 'Es tan hermosa la naturaleza, y tan cabal en sus obras, que au[n] no le falta deformidad en algunas, un lunar suele causar mas gracia. Los monstruos son parte de su hermosura, y lo que debe[n] ser de su noticia, y ansi tratarè dellos no sin razon y coyuntura.'⁷⁹

Nieremberg sets out to prove how these beings contribute to the harmony of the created order in Book IV of *Curiosa filosofía*, 'De la verdad de los monstruos fabulosos', which examines the existence of such beings as sirens, centaurs, and pygmies. In order to prove the existence of this latter race, he refers to the case of Bonamí (1597-1614), a famous dwarf who resided in the Royal Court, and argues that despite their physical flaw, these beings help to illustrate the perfection of nature:

La deformidad de sus cuerpecillos parece creyble, y perteneciente al ornato del mundo, que con algunas haze campear su perfeccion colmandola ellas con su variedad. Y no menos es para admirar la

⁷⁹ Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofía*, pp. 75^r, 77^v. The sixteenth-century midwife and author Jacob Rueff of Zurich also points to sin as the cause of human deformities in his *De conceptu et generatione hominis* (Zurich: Christopher Froschauer, 1554); as noted by Río Parra, p. 37. The 'lunar' as a beauty-mark had become a proverbial commonplace in the Golden Age. For example, Fray Luis de León uses it to describe the writing style of Teresa of Ávila: 'Que aunque en algunas partes de lo que escribe, antes que acabe la razón que comienza, la mezcla con otras razones, [...] y hace tan buena gracia la mezcla, que ese mismo vicio le acarrea hermosura y es el lunar del refrán'; 'Carta-prólogo' [1587], in St Teresa of Ávila, *Libro de la vida* [1588], ed. by M^a de los Hitos Hurtado (Madrid: Algaba, 2007), p. 44.

sobra de los gigantes, que la cortedad de los Pygmeos. Entre demasia, y me[n]gua se divisara mejor la hermosura, y proporcion de lo que es cabal: al arte de la pintura muchas vezes sus sombras la encomiendan. Haber hombres pequeños toca al atavio de la naturaleza humana; que a vezes un lunar causa hermosura, y un descuydado aseo. El haber nacion dellos, toca al adorno del mundo.⁸⁰

Enanos of this kind represent a seventeenth-century fascination with deformity. Bonamí is but a single example, but one only has to recall the place of such beings in the highest echelons of society and how they were frequently depicted in art and literature.⁸¹

Covarrubias lists several examples of ‘enanos’, but only to denigrate them: ‘porque naturaleza quiso hazer de ellos un juguete de burlas [...], en fin, tienen dicha con los príncipes estos monstruos, como todos los demás que crían por curiosidad y para su recreación; siendo en realidad de verdad cosa asquerosa’.⁸² Nieremberg, on the other hand, defines a deformed subject as an ‘ornato’, ‘atavío’, or ‘adorno’ of creation. More importantly, onlookers are instructed to consider extreme items, both large and small, in order to discern the overall perfection of the world: ‘Entre demasia, y mengua se divisara mejor la hermosura, y proporcion de lo que es cabal.’⁸³ Here it is worth noting Nieremberg’s repeated use of the verb ‘divisar’, which underscores the ability to recognize, or discern, something difficult to identify, or to see something from afar:

⁸⁰ Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofía*, pp. 107^v-108^f. In Book XVI, 8, of the *De civitate Dei*, Augustine remarks on the beauty of pygmies and other monstrosities; *De civitate Dei*, II, 136.

⁸¹ For more on Bonamí and other *enanos* in art and literature (e.g. Velázquez, Pantoja de la Cruz, Lope de Vega, Góngora, Calderón de la Barca) see ‘Razas necesarias: pigmeos y gigantes’, in Río Parra, pp. 75-86; and Joaquín de Entrambasaguas, ‘Los enanos de Góngora’, in *Estudios y ensayos sobre Góngora y el Barroco* (Madrid: Editorial Nacional, 1975), pp. 175-86. In his critical edition of *Don Quijote*, Diego Clemencín cites Nieremberg’s passage on Bonamí, Cervantes, *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* [1605, 1616], 8 vols (Madrid: Impresor de Cámara, 1833-39), II (1833), 171-73.

⁸² *Tesoro*, p. 511; s.v. Enano.

⁸³ While ‘demasia’ refers to the excess (‘supérfluo’) size of the giants, ‘mengua’ refers to a lack: ‘lo que falta de alguna cosa para estar entera y caval’. *Tesoro*, pp. 450 and 799; s.v. Demasia, Mengua.

‘echar de ver alguna cosa de lexos, con la señal que muestra particular’.⁸⁴ Nieremberg’s reference to the effects of shadows in chiaroscuro painting (‘muchas vezes sus sombras la encomiendan’) also emphasizes the visual aspect of his approach, since he is instructing readers how to look carefully at nature.

Gracián upholds the same principle in his praise of ‘imporción’ and ‘disonancia’ in *Agudeza y arte de ingenio*: ‘porque de los opuestos suele ser émula la perfección [...]. La más agradable y artificiosa es cuando dicen entre sí contrariedad los extremos de la desproporción’. Onlookers, however, must be able to make these connections: ‘Nace el hombre tan desnudo de noticias en el alma, como en el cuerpo de plumas, pero su industria y su trabajo le desquitan con ventajas.’⁸⁵ The sharpening of the ‘ingenio’ in Gracián represents the capacity of wit not only to view but also to enjoy the harmony that exists between deformed and opposing objects. For Nieremberg, the appearance of creation may at first appear ‘apacible’ and ‘gustosa’, but is in fact ‘grossera’ and ‘tosca’ without an appreciation of the ‘ingenio’, and ultimately the ‘sacramento’, of things. The attention Nieremberg gives to ‘ingenio’ and ‘artificio’ shares the same aesthetic as Gracián’s, but its purpose is to deepen the reading of nature: ‘porque mil mentiras pasan por verdades, pero advierto que esto mismo no quita que muchas verdades puedan parecer mentira’.⁸⁶ This aspect of Nieremberg’s approach represents a first step in discernment. He has instructed readers what to look for in nature; now, in the next step, he will tell them how to contemplate its religious significance.

⁸⁴ *Tesoro*, p. 479; s.v. Divisar. *Autoridades* equates ‘divisar’ with the ability to perceive, differentiate, or distinguish, and traces its roots to the Latin *discernere*, II, 318-19; s.v. Divisar.

⁸⁵ Baltasar Gracián, ‘Discurso I’ and ‘Discurso V’, in *Agudeza y arte de ingenio*, I, 17, 55, 64.

⁸⁶ Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofía*, p. 115^v.

Contemplating the Book of Nature: *la consideración*

For Nieremberg, ‘admiración’ acts as a spur to inquiring into the cause of things. As we have seen, it can be defined as an experience of wonderment which does not go beyond emotional response of surprise, ‘cuya causa ignora’, but this initial reaction should also result in the subject’s desire to scrutinize the cause of wonderment: ‘y de aquí resulta inquirir, escudriñar y discurrir cerca de lo que se le ofrece, hasta quietarse con el conocimiento de la verdad’.⁸⁷ As noted above, Eve’s sin was due in part to her lack of knowledge; had she possessed the appropriate ‘noticia’, she would have been enabled better to understand her encounter with the snake: ‘de que no informada ella, [...] [no] se admirò de la grandeza de Dios, donde divisara mas su potencia, sabiduria, y bondad’.⁸⁸ The act of knowing in Nieremberg’s epistemological framework requires subjects to observe the world carefully (‘divisar’), to look beyond the appearance of the ‘corteza’ – something Eve was unable to do. Creation reveals the Creator, but only through the right reading of the ‘cifras’: ‘Porque Dios que quiso retratarsenos co[n] aquella su magestad y purpura, nos dio una copia suya en la naturaleza, prendandonos en ella su grandeza, y abreviando como en cifra su incomprehensibilidad.’⁸⁹

In order to explain what he means, Nieremberg uses the textual image of a poem or hymn: ‘Assi imagino yo al mundo ser un Panegyrico de Dios, con mil laberintos de sus excelencias, trabandose unas naturalezas con otras, publicando por todas partes sus grandezas, [...] de todas maneras hazen su [h]armonia, y forman y componen algun Hymno Divino.’⁹⁰ On one level, this view of the world reveals the Neo-Platonic

⁸⁷ *Tesoro*, p. 43; s.v. Admiración; see above, p. 91, n. 17.

⁸⁸ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 220^f.

⁸⁹ Nieremberg, *Curiosa filosofia*, p. 2^v.

⁹⁰ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofia*, pp. 124^v-125^f.

influence on Nieremberg's philosophy. It is based on the premise that creation represents an imperfect and ephemeral reflection of a superior reality. For example, in *Oculto filosofía* he says: 'todo es aspirar a lo alto, [...] la tierra se disimula en exaltaciones para volar a las nubes [y] el agua se desentraña en vapores, por verse allí sublimada'.⁹¹ Such a vision of the world is also evident in Nieremberg's reference to Plotinus (204/5-70), the father of Neo-Platonic thought: 'Plotino llamó al mundo Poesía de Dios. Yo añado, que este Poema es como un laberinto, que por todas partes se lee, y haze sentido, y dicta a su Autor.'⁹²

The analogy of the world as a poetic labyrinth emphasizes the need for the careful reading of things: it is easy to go astray in a maze, just as it is easy to misread the appearance of things and their 'corteza'. According to Alicia Oïffer-Bomsel, this type of reading requires a rigorous study of the internal relationships, the harmonious composition, and the overall order of natural beings: 'L'acte de la connaissance se manifeste par la recherche, à travers la variété des choses [...]. La connaissance consiste alors à déceler le système de ressemblances qui rend les choses proches les unes des autres, et aussi leurs différences.'⁹³ But it also calls for a more reflective, or meditative, approach, which Jeremy Robbins identifies in terms of Nieremberg's spiritual tradition: 'Jesuit meditative practices encouraged the spectator or reader towards an intense scrutiny and emphatic consideration of the subject-matter depicted.'⁹⁴ Nieremberg accepts the idea that the human intellect cannot fully comprehend the

⁹¹ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofía*, pp. 214^{r-v} [224^{r-v}]. See Ledezma, 'Una legitimación imaginativa del Nuevo Mundo', p. 60; also Pimentel, pp. 99-100.

⁹² Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofía*, p. 124^r.

⁹³ Alicia Oïffer-Bomsel, 'Vision de la nature et de l'homme dans la *Curiosa y oculto filosofía* du jésuite Juan Eusebio Nieremberg', in *L'Identité culturelle dans le monde luso-hispanophone*, ed. by Nicole Fourtané and Michèle Giraud (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 2006), pp. 383-96 (pp. 388-89).

⁹⁴ Robbins, *The Challenges of Uncertainty*, p. 89.

divine, but he proposes that it can be trained not only to read, but contemplate, the signs of divinity in creation. Both epistemological activities are required.

To read the ‘book of nature’ in Nieremberg is to study it in a meditative, or contemplative, manner, as his use of the verb ‘considerar’ and its semantic variations show. The earliest philosophers studied nature as a ‘consideración’ (‘esmeraron pues en ella sus ingenios [...] la consideracion [...] de la naturaleza’), which is also how Nieremberg defines his own approach: it is a ‘consideracion de la naturaleza animada’.⁹⁵ In both cases, ‘considerar’ can be interpreted as a general act of cognition. But in Nieremberg’s texts it also signifies a prayerful, or spiritual, operation like that of a mediation or contemplation, such as in *Vida divina, y camino real* (1633), where he uses it in order to persuade people to control their passions: ‘Consideremos también, que ni en el infierno, ni el Purgatorio, se ha de quemar otra leña, sino la que amontonare la voluntad propia’, or in *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno*, where he similarly urges people to reflect upon the brevity of temporal life: ‘Hagamos a[g]ora esta consideracion, q[ue] es todo el tiempo desta vida breve para ganar la eterna, y no perdamos tiempo, principalmente pues no le tenemos.’⁹⁶

Covarrubias, for example, defines ‘contemplación’ in terms of pondering divine things: ‘considerar con mucha diligencia y levantamiento de espíritu las cosas altas y escondidas que enteramente no se pueden perceber con los sentidos, como son las cosas celestiales y divinas’. Likewise, the more common significance of a ‘meditación’ also gives a spiritual dimension to the same act of cognition: ‘se toma por considerar y discurrir intelectualmente sobre algun misterio de nuestra Santa Fe, ù sobre materia

⁹⁵ Nieremberg, *Prolusion*, pp. 220^v-221^r.

⁹⁶ Nieremberg, *Vida divina, y camino real para la perfección* [1633] (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1635) p. 30^r; Nieremberg, *De la diferencia* [1640], p. 71 (the emphasis in italics is mine).

moral, para aprovechamiento y fruto espiritual'.⁹⁷

To speak of a 'consideración' in a spiritual context was not original to Nieremberg. In the *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe* Luis de Granada uses a similar semantic construction to reflect the processing of knowledge: 'Por las cuales y por todo lo demás que hasta aquí habemos dicho, se podrá entender el fruto que se saca de la *consideración* de las criaturas, así para el conocimiento como para el amor y reverencia del Criador.' As a cognitive act, it bears spiritual fruit. A year later, in 1584, San Juan de la Cruz (1542-91) noted its spiritual meaning in the *Cántico espiritual*: 'porque «*considerar*» es mirar muy particularmente, con atención y estimación de aquello que se mira' [XXII, 2]). Similarly, the court preacher Fray Alonso de Cabrera (1549-98) prepared his sermons not as lessons, but as 'Consideraciones' intended to bear spiritual fruit.⁹⁸

But in the semantics of Nieremberg's own spiritual tradition 'consideración' holds a prominent place. Not only does it appear with frequency in the *Ejercicios espirituales*, it is the most cited intellectual operation in the 'contemplaciones' proposed by Loyola. According to José García de Castro, 'la consideración es el eje de los grandes ejercicios del manual ignaciano'. 'Considerar' appears forty-seven times in the text, far more than any other expression of similar meaning ('contemplar' appears twenty-eight times; 'orar', twenty-three times; 'reflectir', thirteen times; 'meditar', eight times; 'examinar', seven times).⁹⁹ In the exercise regarding the kind of humility one ought to choose, Loyola instructs: 'antes de entrar en las elecciones, [...] aprovecha

⁹⁷ *Tesoro*, p. 352; s.v. Contemplar; *Autoridades*, II, 530; s.v. Meditar.

⁹⁸ Granada, *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe*, p. 139; San Juan de la Cruz, *Cántico espiritual y poesía completa*, ed. by Paola Elia and María Jesús Mancho (Barcelona: Crítica, 2002), pp. 139-40; Alonso de Cabrera, 'Sermones del P. Fr. Alonso de Cabrera' [1601], in *Predicadores de los siglos XVI y XVII*, ed. by Miguel Mir (Madrid: Bailly-Baillière e Hijos, 1906).

⁹⁹ See 'Consideración', in *DEI*, I, 410-13 (p. 412). For more on the Ignatian uses of 'consideración' and 'considerar', see these terms in *Concordancia Ignaciana*, pp. 224-27.

mucho *considerar* y advertir en las siguientes tres maneras de humildad, y en ellas *considerando* a ratos por todo el día' [§164]. At times, the word relates directly to the act of either meditating or contemplating, as in his description of spiritually advanced people who desire to purify their souls: 'porque los perfectos, por la assidua contemplación y ylluminación del entendimiento *consideran, meditan y contemplan* más ser Dios nuestro Señor en cada criatura según su propia essencia, presencia y potencia' [§39]. Here it is closely related to the thought process of the intellect ('ylluminacion del entendimiento'). At other times, however, it is used to give direction to a contemplation, and brings into question the affective response of the practitioner, such as with the 'Contemplación para alcançar amor'; here retreatants imagine themselves in the presence of God ('ver cómo estoy delante de Dios' [§232]), but then must reflect how this contemplation has an impact on their lives: 'Y con esto reflectir en mí mismo, *considerando* con mucha razón y justicia lo que yo debo de mi parte offrescer y dar a la su divina maiestad' [§234].

In the *Ejercicios espirituales* the terms 'considerar', 'meditar', and 'contemplar' are not synonymous, but they are inherently connected. Loyola speaks of a 'meditación' as a way to engage the three powers of the soul: 'primer ejercicio es meditación con las tres potencias' ('memoria', 'entendimiento', and 'voluntad') [§45]. It forms the basis of mental prayer in the Exercises, which he uses to open the retreatant to a direct experience of God.¹⁰⁰ In turn, the 'contemplación' is best defined not as mental, but as affective, prayer: 'La oración de contemplación es el prototipo de la oración afectiva, y por eso es conocido como "oración del corazón", para distinguirla de los otros modos [vocal o mental] de oración.'¹⁰¹ For example, the aim of contemplating the Incarnation

¹⁰⁰ *DEI*, 'Meditación', II, 1211.

¹⁰¹ *DEI*, 'Contemplación', I, 445.

of Christ in the Second Week is to kindle greater love for the Lord: ‘demandar lo que quiero; será aquí demandar conocimiento interno del Señor, que por mí se ha hecho hombre, para que más le ame y le siga’ [§104]. But the ‘consideración’ appears as a cognitive act between the ‘meditación’ and the ‘contemplación’. It bridges the two and indicates how retreatants are to give special attention to the different dynamics of prayer. According to García de Castro, the ‘consideración’ in the Exercises ‘implica una profundización en algunos de sus aspectos’.¹⁰² Before making an ‘elección’, Loyola instructs: ‘para venir y llegar a este fin, debe mucho *considerar* y rumiar por los ejercicios y modos de elegir’ [§189].

That Nieremberg refers to his method of study as a ‘consideración’ is significant because it underscores the role of the visual imagination in his texts and their spiritual orientation. He sets the scene for readers by placing the subject-matter of his course before their eyes, just as God did for Adam: ‘esto cumpliré agora, recogiendo en esta Filosofía a todas las Artes, poniendolas delante de los ojos’.¹⁰³ While his aim is to provide knowledge, his higher aim is to lead people to discern its spiritual fruit. As García de Castro explains, ‘Es durante la consideración donde se realiza lo nuclear del ejercicio de la oración y donde se espera que ahí acontezcan las mociones que más tarde habrá que discernir para “buscar y hallar” la voluntad de Dios.’¹⁰⁴ In this sense, the ‘consideración’ plays a fundamental role in Loyola’s schema of spiritual progress, and although Nieremberg’s natural philosophy is not intended to be a manual of spiritual exercises, it nevertheless should not be understood without a view to the spiritual progress of the readers and the search for divine meaning in their lives. Just as the

¹⁰² *DEI*, ‘Consideración’, I, 412.

¹⁰³ Nieremberg, *Prolusión*, p. 222^r.

¹⁰⁴ *DEI*, ‘Consideración’, I, 413.

Spiritual Exercises point retreatants to see the will of God, the students of natural history must ‘divisar’ the imprint of the divine in nature. But as they learn how to read creation and view it in terms of a contemplation, it remains to be seen how Nieremberg guides people to assimilate this knowledge and discern God’s will for themselves.

Applying the Lessons of Nature: ‘*Deus me fecit*’

If Nieremberg instructs readers to look for and to discover the divine in the artistry of natural phenomena, he must also say something about the impact this ought to have on people. The lessons he imparts bear a moral message, and therefore involve the proper execution of the will. This can already be seen in the various passages he dedicates to virtue and vice, which he introduces in the *Prolosión*. The history of animals is an important discipline because it portrays the virtues people are meant to imitate. In *Oculto filosofía* he also reminds readers of the moral purpose of his texts: ‘Vengo pues al otro fin de la naturaleza, que es la enseñanza, e instruccion de nuestro animo; en ella nos difinio Dios toda la Filosofia Moral: ella es como en otra parte probamos, un libro de virtudes, y vicios, un sentenciario prudentissimo.’ Hence his treatment of animals is also a type of treatise on human morality, the consequences of good or bad behavior, and the need to amend the latter: ‘por las imagenes que vemos en ellos de virtudes, ò vicios, censuremos nuestras acciones semejantes, con aprobacion de las buenas, enmienda de las malas’.¹⁰⁵ The lessons lead readers to make choices regarding their own behavior.

The link between natural philosophy and moral philosophy had been well established, and it is no surprise that it should find prominent expression in the Jesuit

¹⁰⁵ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofía*, pp. 179^f, 182^f.

curriculum. Gracián also dedicates a passage to it in Part II of *El Criticón*, as Andrenio and Critilo view the books of natural philosophy in the ‘museo del Discreto’: ‘

Fueron registrando todos estos nichos de paso, lo que basta para no ignorar, así como la indagadora Natural Filosofía, levantando mil testimonios a la naturaleza. Servían de estantes a sus curiosos tratados los cuatro elementos, y en cada uno los libros que tratan de sus pobladores, como de las aves, peces, brutos, plantas, flores, piedras preciosas, minerales [...], y en que conocieron era la Moral Filosofía.

In the novel Gracián signals the link between natural and moral philosophies to speak of virtue in the political realm, and here Andrenio and Critilo are told by their guide: ‘aquí es donde habéis de hallar la sabiduría más importante, la que enseña a saber vivir’.¹⁰⁶

Nieremberg, however, uses the same link as a bridge to theology. Not only does it provide a moral lesson, it leads to a spiritual message about how to assimilate the lessons nature has to teach and, through them, to love and serve the Creator.

At the end of *Oculto filosofía* he states this final goal: ‘Basta desta fruta curiosa. Basta de lo arcano, y admirable de la naturaleza. A mejores platos combido a mi Lector. [...] Guste tambien de la gracia, que es mas dulce, de mas provecho su sustento, de mas suavidad su sabor.’ He uses the metaphor of taste to underscore the progression from natural to moral philosophy, and ultimately to theology:

Passe de la Filosofía Natural a la Moral, de aqui a la divina. El admirar la naturaleza ha de ser para reverenciar su artifice, para co[m]poner uno a si mismo, para reformar su coraçon, para aspirar al Cielo, apre[n]diendo esto de la misma naturaleza, que en todas sus obras afecta lo superior; en todas anhela algo celeste.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Gracián, *El Criticón*, pp. 365-67.

¹⁰⁷ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofía*, pp. 213^{r-v} [223^{r-v}].

Here, wonderment at nature is to lead the reader to greater reverence of the Creator, but beyond this, to the proper ordering of one's life. In other words, the will is not to be oriented towards the self, but towards God: 'aspirar al Cielo'.

As special guests in the banquet of Nieremberg's natural philosophy, readers are invited both to enjoy and to benefit from his lessons, and this invitation gives meaning to the protagonism of the human subject.¹⁰⁸ Nieremberg similarly underscores this protagonism as one might expect to find it in the texts of Calderón and Gracián, where spectators and readers learn to navigate the world through the analogy of the theater or the great public plaza: 'Para este gran teatro nacimos. No entramos en la plaza deste mundo para espectáculo mayor, ni [h]ay cosa mayor q[ue] ver sino a Dios, [...] el tesoro de las perfecciones, la maravilla de milagros, el milagro de maravillas.'¹⁰⁹ The subject enters the plaza of the performance to observe it and to see how all natural beings, including humans, reflect their higher destiny in the heavens. But the human subject is not portrayed by Nieremberg as a puppet, and can be seen to have an active role in the play wherein one proceeds by embracing virtue and rejecting vice. While the spectators may first be passive observers, in the end they should be drawn into and caught up in the drama of creation: 'que por todas partes se vee, y lee, *Deus me fecit*'. Here Nieremberg recalls the Augustinian notion that the 'book of nature' not only points to the existence of the Creator, it affirms the place of the Creature in the grand scheme of Creation.¹¹⁰

Nieremberg stresses this point through his treatment of 'ingenio', which he applied first to the artistry to be perceived in things, and then to the 'wit' of the Creator

¹⁰⁸ Covarrubias defines 'combidar' as a special invitation given to honor someone, such to partake in a meal: 'Qualquier ofrecimiento que hazemos se llama combidar, [...]. Combidar para honras o acompañamientos, rogalles se hallen presentes. [...] Finalmente, combidar es llevar a comer consigo alguno a sus amigos'; *Tesoro*, p. 341; s.v. Combidar.

¹⁰⁹ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofía*, p. 111^v.

¹¹⁰ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofía*, p. 124^r; see above, p. 88, n. 12.

in making them. However, he now applies it to the human protagonist, who, he recalls, is created in the likeness and image of God:

[Dios] quiso resumir al mundo, y hazer estatua suya mas pequeña; pero en que mejor se viesse, y mucho mas viva, que fue el hombre, recogiendo en el todas las perfecciones criadas, [...] colocando otro mu[n]do dentro del mu[n]do; obra de mas artificio è ingenio, que en breve encierra mucho, ò por mejor dezir todo.¹¹¹

This aspect of Nieremberg's teaching marks a clear progression in his thought, which moves from the 'ingenio' of things to that of the Creator, and then to that of the person made in the divine image. The explicit move from natural philosophy to moral philosophy and to theological reflection takes readers from learning about creation to the careful consideration of their own actions and beliefs, and ultimately leads them to ponder the state of their spiritual lives. In this process, by which curious readers learn to observe nature with an intense gaze and to contemplate the significance of both its lights and shadows, they also come to identify God's will for them in the lessons it teaches.

Conclusion

Both *Curiosa* and *Oculto filosofia* fit well into the genre of miscellany literature that took shape in Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because they offer recondite information to curious and erudite readers alike, and in this way both teach and please a diverse readership. Throughout these miscellanies Nieremberg aims to teach how plants, animals, minerals, and the planets constitute the alphabet of a divine message encoded within creation. Readers are instructed not only to discover this knowledge, but to assimilate it so that what is at first mere observation becomes,

¹¹¹ Nieremberg, *Oculto filosofia*, pp. 147^{r-v}.

through contemplation, a key to understanding the divine will and a prompt to order one's life accordingly.

So, as Nieremberg teaches his readers how to look at the world with a discerning eye and encourages them to decipher its meaning, he ultimately turns the focus of the subject-matter to the human soul and its celestial destiny. These texts contribute to the overall rhetoric of discernment in Nieremberg's popular works because their principal aim is to show readers how to discern their true nature as God's creatures. He develops this rhetoric through some of the key components of Golden Age culture, such as the dialectic of *ser* and *parecer*, relationship between *artífice* and *artificio*, and the cultivation of *admiratio*. In turn, the discerning eye is trained to look beyond the appearances of things or to notice the odd or seemingly insignificant aspects of nature in order to uncover the sacramental meaning of nature. This knowledge, however, is not intended for the sole purpose of intellectual gain, but to produce spiritual fruit. In the apostolic tradition of the Jesuit Order, Nieremberg attempts to 'save souls' by having readers contemplate nature in such a way that they personally assimilate the lessons it teaches. And it is in the characteristically Ignatian and Jesuit approach of Nieremberg's natural history that we can see the elements of the 'filosofía nueva' he developed out of the tradition he had received.

Chapter Four

The Spiritual Exercise of Reading

*Coronaba todas estas mansiones eternas uno,
ya no camarín, sino sacario, inmortal centro
del espíritu, donde presidía el arte de las artes,
la que enseña la divina policía, y estaba re-
partiendo estrellas en libros santos, tratados
devotos, obras ascéticas y espirituales.*

– Gracián¹

Introduction

Between 1660 and 1665, Juan de Valdés Leal (1622-90) painted a series of portraits of St Ignatius Loyola for the Casa Profesa of the Jesuits in Seville. Some years later another painting by him was added to the series, *San Ignacio y San Francisco de Borja contemplan la Eucaristía* (or the *Alegoría de la Eucaristía*, c.1676), which was most likely commissioned in commemoration of Borgia's canonization in 1671 (figure 1, Appendix IV).² In this allegorical work, Ignatius and Francis Borgia point to an image of the Christ child, whom they lift on a candelabra in the form of the letters 'IHS', the abbreviation of his name from the Latinized Greek: *Ihesus*. The young Christ elevates the consecrated host with one arm and embraces the cross with the other, and is surrounded in the upper half of the painting by members of the celestial court: God the Father, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary, and several cherubs. He is held by the two

¹ Gracián, *El Criticón*, p. 370.

² Alfonso Rodríguez G. de Ceballos, 'El pintor Valdés Leal y la Compañía de Jesús', *AHSI*, 35 (1966), 242-49.

Jesuits above the temporal world, represented in the figure of a sphere in the lower half of the painting. The scene glorifies the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is portrayed reigning triumphant over the earth. But it also exalts the saints and the apostolic work of the Society of Jesus, which had adopted the same configuration of Christ's name for the monogram of the Order.³ The brass letters even appear to be inflamed, and therefore evoke the words Loyola supposedly spoke to the missionaries as he sent them to go forth and set the world on fire with apostolic zeal: 'ite inflammate omnia'.⁴

The detail of two books in the foreground of the painting merits further comment. The book on the left near Loyola is a copy of his *Ejercicios espirituales* (1548), while the book on the right, below Borgia, is Nieremberg's ascetical treatise *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* (1640).⁵ The inclusion of the *Ejercicios* is easily explained, as it represents the spiritual doctrine of the Order Loyola had founded. But why include Nieremberg's treatise? What does it have to do with the greater work of the Society, or with Borgia, who had died almost twenty-five years before Nieremberg was born?

Published in the centennial year of the Society's foundation, the treatise's main purpose is to dissuade readers from ensnarement in the trappings of the temporal world. Not unlike Loyola's method of the Spiritual Exercises, it portrays the realm of eternal life in heaven as the true end, or goal, of the human journey.⁶ Nieremberg's principal

³ See 'IHS', in *DHCH*, II, 1992-93.

⁴ See Nieremberg's biography of Loyola, *Vida del patriarca san Ignacio de Loyola* [1631], p. 147^v. A version of the widely used phrase can be seen, for example, under the figure of St Ignatius in the frontispiece engraving of Juan Baptista Escardó's *Rhetorica Christiana* [1647].

⁵ See Duncan Theobald Kinkead, *Juan de Valdés Leal (1622-1690): His Life and Works* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978), p. 445; Enrique Valdivieso, *Juan de Valdés Leal* (Seville: Ediciones Guadalquivir, 1988), p. 117. See also Fernando Gil, 'Introducción', in *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno [...] traducido en lengua Guaraní* (Loreto, Paraguay: Doctrinas, 1705; repr. Buenos Aires: Instituto Bonaerense de Numismática y Antigüedades, 2010), pp. xxv-lviii (p. xxxix).

⁶ According to Valdivieso, Nieremberg's book 'alude a la idea jesuítica de que lo temporal, que es el mundo, ha de estar condicionada a la consecución de lo eterno, lo que unido a la práctica de las normas de piedad y penitencia que recomiendan los Ejercicios Espirituales, constituye un puente eficaz para conseguir el tránsito de la temporalidad de la tierra a la eternidad del cielo'; p. 117.

technique for helping his readers see things aright is the graphic depiction of human death and the afterlife. But, as the title suggests, he also urges them to discern the ephemeral nature of the temporal life in comparison to life everlasting. He depicts an image of earthly life in dark and ominous tones, since he sees its temptations as an obstacle on the path to salvation. Reflecting this aspect of the treatise, Valdés Leal has separated the two planes by the conventional device of theophanic clouds and light, which illuminate the created world through the glory of the Sacrament and show the Eucharist as bridging the chasm between heaven and earth.⁷

The content of the treatise also relates to Borgia, who was commonly celebrated for his conversion to the ascetical life and his subsequent rejection of worldly riches and secular honors – hence the crowned skull in his left hand.⁸ Nieremberg’s treatment of vanity seems to have been known to the painter, who in 1660 had already included the treatise among the collection of books with a human skull on top of it in the *Alegoría de la vanidad* (figure 2, Appendix IV).⁹ Borgia became a prominent figure in the Society and was known to favor ascetical practices. Seeming to capture this aspect of his legacy, Valdés Leal has draped the treatise in the *Alegoría de la Eucaristía* with the penitential instrument of the discipline. Just to the left of the book lies the red hat of a cardinal, the ecclesial honor Loyola consistently urged the former Grandee of Spain not to accept.

⁷ According to Kinkead, ‘While it is clear that both saints hold the monogram, it is just as obvious that there is no attempt to plant the symbol upon the earth [...]. Thus, the temporal, the earth, is being distinguished from the eternal, symbolised here by the monogram and the Heavenly presence’; p. 445.

⁸ The iconography of Borgia often shows him holding a crowned skull (for example, in Alonso Cano’s 1624 portrait), in reference to the story of his conversion in 1538 after viewing the corpse of the Empress Isabel, wife of Charles V. See above, Chapter 1 (p. 26, n. 65); also Dalmases, *Francis Borgia*, pp. 86-90. I will further address the account of Borgia’s conversion in Nieremberg’s treatise (see below, pp. 146-47).

⁹ Valdés Leal painted a companion piece to this work, the *Alegoría de la salvación*, which was also known as *La conversión de un Jesuita*, or *La conversión de Mañara*. For more on the inclusion of the treatise and other books in the *Alegoría de la vanidad*, see Elizabeth Du Gué Trapier, *Valdés Leal: Spanish Baroque Painter* (New York: Hispanic Society of America, 1960), pp. 30-33; Kinkead, *Juan de Valdés Leal*, pp. 155, 199; Folke Nordström, ‘The Crown of Life and the Crowns of Vanity: Two Companion Pieces by Valdés Leal’, in *Ideas and Form: Studies in the History of Art* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1959), pp. 127-37 (pp. 135-37); *Spanish Still Life from Velázquez to Goya*, ed. by William Jordan and Peter Cherry (London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 116.

But in the wider context of the painting and its portrayal of the Eucharist, the treatise also relates to the institutional character of the Jesuit Order and the identity it came to have in the seventeenth century. In part, the scene reflects aspects of the drama that was played out in the Counter-Reformation, and illustrates the Catholic emphasis on the efficacy of the Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, while it also highlights the place of prominence the Jesuits had on that stage. The presence of the treatise therefore reminds viewers of the importance Jesuits gave to writing, printing, and the dissemination of Catholic sources, especially in the first century of their existence.¹⁰ The appearance of the two texts as equal in significance nevertheless raises the question of just how well Nieremberg's treatise relates to the Ignatian method. According to Fernando Gil, 'La colocación del libro de Nieremberg junto a los *Ejercicios espirituales* de San Ignacio [...] le daba una cierta cualidad de fundacional.'¹¹ Valdés Leal shows how each text is meant to support and inspire the saints in their role of leading the Society, but he also seems to show how the Ignatian spiritual tradition had passed from one century to the next.

As one of the Society's most prolific writers in Spain during the seventeenth century, Nieremberg came to be a household name.¹² The inclusion of the *Eusebio* in Valdés Leal's *Alegoría de la Eucaristía* is significant not only because it places Nieremberg within the cultural history of the Jesuit Order, but also because it brings together three principal factors which define him as a writer: the foundational charism of

¹⁰ See Betrán, 'El bonete y la pluma', pp. 23-75; Fernando Bouza, 'Contrarreforma y tipografía. ¿Nada más que rosarios en sus manos?', *Cuadernos de historia moderna*, 16 (1995), 73-87; Federico Palomo, 'De algunas cosas que sucedieron estando en misión: espiritualidad jesuita y escritura misionera en la península Ibérica (siglos XVI y XVII)', in *A Companhia de Jesus na Península Ibérica nos séculos XVI y XVII: espiritualidade e cultura* (Porto: Universidade do Porto, 2004), pp. 119-50; F. Palomo, 'Limosnas impresas: Escritos e imágenes en las prácticas misioneras de interior en la península Ibérica (siglos XVI-XVII)', *Manuscripts*, 25 (2007), 239-65.

¹¹ Gil, pp. xxxix-xl.

¹² See above, Chapter 2 (p. 44, nn. 4-5); see also Iparraguirre, 'Un escritor ascético olvidado: El Padre Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (1595-1658)', pp. 427-31.

the Society and its spiritual doctrine, the institutional character the Order came to have, and the literary tastes of the Spanish Golden Age, most notably the treatment of *desengaño*. In this chapter I aim to show how, through a didactic program of shocking imagery and exhortations, Nieremberg attempts to persuade his readers to discern the true end of the human journey. As part of his overall rhetoric of discernment, the treatise is an example of how Jesuits such as Nieremberg preached their message by adapting it to the cultural aesthetics they deemed helpful, while it also illustrates the relationship that emerged between art, literature, and Jesuit spiritual tradition.

The *Eusebio*

De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno became a best-seller of ascetical literature, and probably represents Nieremberg's most significant contribution to the Society's aim of helping souls. It was printed in as many as seventy-five editions in Spanish alone, and translated into several European languages throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Beyond Europe it was printed in Arabic, as well as Guaraní and other indigenous American languages, and was used as a catechetical tool in the mission territories both at home and abroad. The treatise has a rich printing history: the Antwerp edition of 1684 contains several engraved illustrations, which were reproduced in the Reductions of Paraguay in 1705, and today survive as some of the few remnants of Guaraní art.¹³

¹³ See above, p. 3, n. 5; also Iparraguirre, pp. 433-34; Palau y Dulcet, xi, 48-50. For more on the translation of the treatise in the American missions, see José Toribio Medina, *Historia y bibliografía de la imprenta en el antiguo Virreinato del Río de la Plata* [1892], reprint series (Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1965), p. 10; Guillermo Furlong, *Historia y bibliografía de las primeras imprentas rioplatenses, 1700-1850*, 4 vols (Buenos Aires: Editorial Guaranía, 1953), I, 320. The manuscripts of these translations are listed in the bibliographies of their respective translators, see 'Ignace Chomé', in Sommervogel, *BCJ*, II, 1155-56; and 'Jean Gummingsach', III, 1950-51. The treatise was translated into English by Henry Vaughan in 1653 and Vivian Molyneux in 1672, although the preacher Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) is thought to have taken passages from it for his *Contemplations of the State of Man in this Life and the Next*, published posthumously in 1684; see Herbert Thurston, 'A Curious Literary Imposture', in *The Month*, 54 (1885), 1-

Like so many writers of the early modern period, Nieremberg develops the commonplace idea that life on earth represents only a passing moment compared with eternity. Such a vision of the world reflects the influence Neo-Platonism continued to have on writers in the seventeenth century, and is one aspect of *De la diferencia* which Didier stresses: ‘Los visibles objetos son la sombra proyectada en las tinieblas del mundo sensible por las ideas que solas son reales. Del mismo modo, dice el tratado *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno*, el tiempo es una imagen depauperada y malograda de la Eternidad.’¹⁴ According to this perspective, Nieremberg consistently illustrates the material world and the things in it as base, or even corrupt: ‘la vileza de lo temporal’, or ‘la baxeza de las cosas te[m]porales’, referring to these things as ‘caducas’, ‘viles’, ‘perecederas’, ‘sucias’, and ‘groseras’. Temporal human existence is also portrayed in neo-Stoical terms as a difficult journey to the grave, or even as a criminal sentence: ‘Peregrinacion es la vida, [...] no es como el de los peregrinos voluntario, sino necessario, como los condenados à la horca [...] Pues si desde el mismo punto que sale el hombre del vientre de su madre camina como condenado a la muerte.’ Life is described as an arduous struggle (‘la vida es guerra’), or a state of suffering one must endure; here he includes the Christian notion that earthly existence involves passing through a vale of tears: ‘en esta miserable vida [...] andando peregrina en este valle de lagrimas’.¹⁵

But this negative portrayal of temporal human life is not, I believe, to be interpreted as Nieremberg’s fundamental view of the world; rather it is a sustained rhetorical device in the treatise, intended to serve the purpose of spiritual discernment

14; see also the editor’s introduction in Nieremberg, *The Difference Between Temporal and Eternal*, trans. by Vivian Molyneux and ed. by Matthew Russell (Dublin: James Duffy, 1884), pp. viii-xii.

¹⁴ Didier, *Vida y pensamiento*, p. 172. On Nieremberg’s Neo-Platonism, see above, Chapter 1 (pp. 34-38).

¹⁵ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* [1640], pp. 2, 54, 87-88, 258, 439. Unless otherwise indicated, all citations will come from this edition, the *editio princeps*.

which both visually and aurally engages readers in a process of reordering earthly life according to its true end. The full title of the treatise (*De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno. Crisol de desengaños con la memoria de la eternidad, postrimerías humanas y principales misterios divinos*) is significant, because it already introduces readers to the exercise of discernment. It proposes the dissimilarity between two realms of human existence – the temporal and the eternal – and signals that something is not self-evident. This exercise is then portrayed through the metaphor of a ‘crisol de desengaños’, which suggests that discernment consists in sorting through and purifying the constituent elements of temporal life, a process which requires a conscious realization of not one, but multiple *desengaños*.¹⁶

Robbins agrees with many critics that *desengaño* reflects the growing sense of insecurity in seventeenth-century Spain that the things of temporal life were deceptive in their appearance and thus had to be constantly re-evaluated: ‘It always implies a moral stance of detachment and distance, not necessarily a desire to withdraw from the world, but rather a desire to view it in the correct perspective.’¹⁷ Like so many writers and artists of the century, Nieremberg’s treatment of *desengaño* also reflects the attention that was given to the difference between *ser* and *parecer*, especially as he compares the temporal world to the eternal. Didier too describes *desengaño* as a profound reaction to the instability of earthly life: ‘en la casi universal confusión creada por el engaño en la existencia temporal [...] todo el mundo se siente decepcionado o descontento.’¹⁸ Such an attitude speaks of a pronounced sense of psychological disillusionment that came to be part of the Spanish mentality.

¹⁶ *Tesoro*, p. 458; s.v. Desengañar. The listing includes: ‘hablar claro, porque no conciban una cosa por otra. Desengañarse, caer en la cuenta de que era engaño lo que tenía por cierto’. Also *Tesoro*, p. 371; and *Autoridades*, I, 661; s.v. Crisol.

¹⁷ Robbins, *The Challenges of Uncertainty*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁸ Didier, *Vida y pensamiento*, p. 341.

Scholars such as José Antonio Maravall note that the particular historical circumstances of war and famine helped to contribute to a culture of pessimism in Spain and characterize the first half of the century as a time of ongoing crisis:

Es cierto que en ella se difunde un pesimismo inspirado por las calamidades que durante varias décadas se van a suceder. Piénsese en lo que significa, respecto a España, la aparición de las cuatro grandes pestes, cuyas pérdidas por algunos historiadores han sido calculadas en tan elevados porcentajes: sobre una cuarta parte de la población. Y con la peste forman cortejo, en esa España de la primera mitad del XVII, el hambre y la miseria.¹⁹

The fragility of human life and the notion of temporal existence as a struggle became all the more relevant, especially as writers began to address the social and political instability of the century. For example, Carlos Eire recalls how Spain ‘was a dying empire and a culture very much aware of its own oddness and decline’.²⁰ Nieremberg, in fact, was acutely aware of the toll that war and division had taken on the nation, with the crown’s loss of Portugal and the revolt of Catalonia in 1640, the same year he published the treatise. Just two years later he would directly address these problems in *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* (1642), which I will discuss in greater detail in the next chapter.

Just as it signals the prominent treatment that will be given to *desengaño*, the title of *De la diferencia* also calls to mind the elements of Christian eschatology: Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. Thus readers must discern not only the true meaning and

¹⁹ José Antonio Maravall, *La cultura del barroco* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1990), p. 309.

²⁰ Carlos Eire, *From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art and Craft of Dying in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 530. For more on the social, economic, and political problems in Spain during the first half of the century, and on what has come to known as the ‘myth of decline’, see Chapters 8 (‘Splendor and Misery’) and 9 (‘Revival and Disaster’) in Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, pp. 285-360; Chapters 4 (‘The Crisis of Government 1598-1660’) and 5 (‘Spain’s People in an Age of Crisis’) in Kamen, *Spain, 1469-1714*, pp. 208-75.

the celestial end of human existence, but also the way to avoid condemnation and to reach salvation, which the *postrimerías* imply. According to Robbins, ‘Desengaño becomes a key religious concept because it expresses a state of mind – a fusion of the traditional *contemptus mundi* of Christian asceticism and the emphasis on the correct attitude towards earthly possessions [...] deemed essential to Christian salvation.’²¹ The image of the *crisol de desengaños* is thus a metaphorical version of an alchemist’s crucible: all the elements of life are to be mixed in it and to be transformed into either a precious metal or rusty sediment. The former is valuable and worthy of praise; the latter is to be cleaned away and cast off. As a holder of the Chair of Sacred Scripture at the Colegio Imperial, Nieremberg must have been familiar with the biblical version of the image: ‘et sedebit conflans et emundans argentum et purgabit [...] et colabis eos quasi aurum et quasi argentum et erunt Domino offerentes sacrificia in iustitia’ (Malachi 3:3; see also I Peter 1:6-7). As the crucible puts metals to the test and separates what is precious from what is dross, so Nieremberg adopts a hopeful tone: he wants to refine the state of the soul and save it from damnation.

While concern for the state of the human soul is a common theme in Nieremberg’s popular works, as seen above in the *Práctica del catecismo romano* and the *Curiosa y oculta filosofía*, Guibert recalls how it represents a particular focus of Jesuit authors in the seventeenth century, who continued to develop their corporate mission of helping souls: ‘Henceforth Jesuits were to give strong emphasis to “the one thing necessary”, [...] eternal salvation, the fulfilling of God’s will, submission to His sovereign dominion and outstanding and perfect service according to the level of the souls being addressed.’²² Alonso Rodríguez wrote his *Ejercicio de perfección y virtudes*

²¹ Robbins, *Arts of Perception*, p. 62.

²² Guibert, *The Jesuits*, p. 534.

cristianas in 1609 in order to remind his brother Jesuits how their lives ought to reflect this goal:

Para lo cual principalmente enderezo yo este libro, poniendo delante de los ojos [...] las cosas más sustanciales, prácticas y ordinarias, en que conforme a nuestra profesión e instituto nos habemos de ejercitar, para que nos sirvan de espejo en que cada día nos miremos, huyendo de lo malo e imperfecto que condena, y ataviando y adornando nuestras almas con lo bueno y perfecto que aconseja, para que así sean ellas muy agradables a los ojos de la divina Majestad.²³

The aim of pleasing God ought not be confined to pious reflection, but has to do with the things of daily life ('cosas [...] prácticas y ordinarias'), including the making of specific decisions about how to use them. Guibert further notes that 'Jesuits were also ever to stress the difference between what is end and what is simply means, between what is essential and what is accessory'.²⁴ Nieremberg's 'crisol' is a good example of this emphasis: 'Assi son las cosas desta vida escondidas al sentido, las cuales aunque tocamos, no las conocemos y confundimos la estimacion dellas, haziendo por las temporales lo que solo debieramos hazer por las eternas.' Readers must learn to differentiate the temporal from the eternal and evaluate it appropriately, and having done so, apply what they have learned and make important decisions regarding their own lives: 'Poniendonos Dios delante esta diferencia de bienes y males, y dexandonos libertad para escoger la suerte que quisieramos, es gran locura, [...] por gustar de bienes

²³ Alonso Rodríguez, 'A los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús', in *Ejercicio de perfección y virtudes cristianas* [1609], ed. by Rodrigo Molina (Madrid: Testimonio, 2010), p. 11. For more on the popularity of this work within and outside the Society of Jesus, see Donnelly, 'Alonso Rodríguez' *Ejercicio*: A Neglected Classic', pp. 16-19.

²⁴ Guibert, p. 534, where the author refers specifically to *De la diferencia* as a key example of these types of treatises.

tan breves, padecer males tan largos, que no tendrán fin'.²⁵ Here, recognizing the freedom and the potential of the human will, Nieremberg is anxious to teach his readers how best to use it.

De la diferencia pertains to the Jesuits' 'ministry of the word', to the extent that it will be seen to share some of the major themes and purposes of the Spiritual Exercises. Yet Nieremberg did not write a manual for spiritual discernment, but produced instead a work of narrative prose, with scarcely a mention of Loyola and no explicit reference to either the saint's manual or his method. Nevertheless, his approach to discernment can be identified in three aspects of the treatise. The first is the particular emphasis he gives to knowledge, or 'noticia', which not only establishes the rhetorical base of his teaching, but reflects his spiritual outlook and the apostolic principles that impelled him to write the *Crisol de desengaños*. The second is the prominence that is given to the language and imagery of death, which drives the rhetoric of the treatise. The third is the way in which he uses this imagery in guiding readers to gain a fuller understanding of the created order. This final point becomes apparent in both the wider theological perspective of the treatise and the meditative function that is given to several of its passages, which, as I will show, are modeled on the spiritual itinerary of discerning God's will in the Ignatian Exercises.

Proper 'noticia'

The opening line of *De la diferencia* clearly states Nieremberg's objective as that of focusing the attention of readers on the proper goal of the temporal life. As his purpose is to conceptualize the material and perishable world solely in the grander scheme of eternity, human attitudes to all created things and possessions must be considered

²⁵ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, pp. 3, 64.

against this larger perspective: ‘Para el uso de las cosas ha de preceder su estima, y a su estimacion, su noticia, la qual es tan corta en este mundo, que no sale fuera del a considerar lo celestial y eterno, para que fuimos criados.’²⁶ The proper knowledge of things (‘noticia’) leads to the proper assessment of their value (‘su estima’), which then leads to the proper use or possession of them (‘el uso’). Only then can they be appropriately understood and handled.

According to Nieremberg, the lack of ‘noticia’ is a widespread problem (‘la qual es tan corta en este mundo’): he expresses a similar tone of dismay in the *Práctica del catecismo romano* concerning the deficiency of doctrinal knowledge in all sectors of society. Such an introduction to the treatise is important to note for two reasons. First, the acquiring of ‘noticia’ about the ephemeral nature of the world indicates an initial step in the process of discernment, because it leads to the knowledge of salvation, or God’s will for humanity. ‘Noticia’, as we have seen, also emerges as a prominent component of his natural philosophy, since it leads readers to recognize both the moral implications and the divine message embedded within the created world. *De la diferencia* serves a similar purpose, since it seeks to address what the author considers to be a faulty understanding of ‘las cosas’. The catechism had been written to teach all sorts of people, even the uneducated and the illiterate, while the miscellanies had been written for curious and erudite readers seeking recondite information. But the treatise was written to help readers who might be seeking spiritual progress. In other words, knowledge of this world has an explicitly spiritual perspective, because all that pertains to it must stand in comparison to that which is of eternal value, to ‘lo celestial y eterno, para que fuimos criados’.

Second, Nieremberg introduces the treatise in much the same way that Loyola

²⁶ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, p. 1.

introduces the Spiritual Exercises. Placed at the beginning of the manual, the ‘Principio y fundamento’ instructs practitioners to cultivate the appropriate disposition out of which they will view created things as the means to eternal salvation. Consequently, the created world is subordinated to this aim and its true purpose is to assist in fulfilling it:

El hombre es criado para alabar, hazer reverencia y servir a Dios nuestro Señor y, mediante esto, salvar su ánima; y las otras cosas sobre la haz de la tierra son criadas para el hombre, y para que le ayuden en la prosecución del fin para que es criado. De donde se sigue, que el hombre tanto ha de usar dellas, quanto le ayudan para su fin, y tanto debe quitarse dellas, quanto para ello le impiden. Por lo qual es menester hazernos indiferentes a todas las cosas criadas, en todo lo que es concedido a la libertad de nuestro albedrío. [§23]

The ‘Principio y fundamento’ serves as a springboard into the Four Weeks of the Exercises, as it sets the proper framework and approach for making the prayers and meditations. Accordingly, Loyola urges practitioners to free themselves of any affective disorder or attachment to created things. An inner attitude of indifference towards these ‘cosas’ is essential to the method, because it grants retreatants the freedom needed in order to discover the will of God in their lives. It can be recalled how Loyola describes the Exercises as ‘todo modo de preparar y disponer el ánima, para quitar de sí todas las affecciones desordenadas y, después de quitadas, para buscar y hallar la voluntad divina en la disposición de su vida’ [§1]. To be ‘indiferente’ is to cultivate an inner disposition by which one is able to discern the correct use of the material things and to lead one’s life according to its proper aim.²⁷

²⁷ According to Pierre Emonet, the disposition of indifference toward created things is essential for discerning the will of God in the Exercises: ‘Ignacio dice lo que ha comprendido de las relaciones entre Dios, el hombre y el conjunto de la creación [...]. Sabe que el hombre puede perderse en la espesura de las cosas y que el uso que hace de las criaturas puede constituir un obstáculo para el cumplimiento de la

It is no coincidence that Nieremberg's introduction is similar to the 'Principio y fundamento', and it needs to be seen as expressing a significant element of his spiritual outlook. Following Loyola's approach, he begins the treatise with a paraphrased version of the 'Principio y fundamento' in which he states the need for readers to let go of inordinate attachments to the things of the world:

Despierten, y abran los mortales los ojos, y conozcan la diferencia que [h]ay en todo lo temporal y eterno, para que den a cada cosa su estimacion debida, despreciando todo lo que el tiempo acaba, y estimen todo lo que la eternidad conserva, à la qual deben buscar en el tiempo desta vida, y por las mismas cosas temporales grangear las eternas, lo qual no podrán conseguir sin el conocimiento de unas y de otras; porque puesta la mira en lo eterno como de mas estima; conserven lo temporal, aunque por si no tenga alguna, y de lo que es caduco y perecedero hagan consistente y duradero.²⁸

Nieremberg uses the verb *granjear* to show the right relationship between the temporal and the eternal: 'y por las mismas cosas temporales grangear las eternas'. By doing so, he helps readers to see that the temporal order is not rejected, but should be embraced in ways that lead to a divine end.²⁹ Readers are invited to cast their eyes heavenward so that they can see the value of the things of the world: 'puesta la mira en lo eterno, [...] conserven lo temporal'. According to Zepeda-Henríquez, Nieremberg shows appreciation for the world, as long as people view it in the proper perspective: 'habla de lo temporal para apreciarlo como medio de Salvación, para alabarlo si se ordena a su

voluntad divina'; See 'Indiferencia', *DEI*, II, 1015-21 (p. 1016). For more on the Ignatian *Principio y fundamento*, see *DEI*, II, 1490-97; s.v. Principio y fundamento.

²⁸ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, p. 3. For more on the 'Principio y fundamento' in Nieremberg's works, see above, Chapter 1 (p. 32, n. 79).

²⁹ This verb signifies: 'adquirir y lograr alguna cosa por medio de otra', or 'metaphoricamente vale ganar, adquirir o lograr el afecto, voluntad o benevolencia de otro'; *Autoridades*, II, 74; s.v. Grangear.

fin.’³⁰

The ‘Principio y fundamento’ would become a cornerstone of the Ignatian spiritual tradition and, as Guibert has noted, many Jesuit authors developed its central ideas. But in order to help people see the true value of things and their place in the scheme of salvation, Nieremberg also encourages readers to view the world with an attitude of disdain and contempt: ‘despreciando todo lo que en el tiempo acaba’. It is here where critics have, mistakenly, come to conclude that Nieremberg engages an outright rejection of the world. Didier recalls how Loyola’s method encourages people to embrace the world rather than flee it: ‘El que hace los Ejercicios Espirituales quedando fiel a su espíritu vuelve al mundo para abrasarlo con el fuego de la palabra divina, sirviéndose de las criaturas en la medida en que ellas puedan ayudar a las almas a glorificar a su Creador.’ Nieremberg’s tone seems quite different from that of Ignatius, especially as he uses a language of scorn in reference to anything earthly and perishable: ‘Subamos con la consideracion allà, y desde aquel lugar eminentissimo despreciamos todo este mundo mudable.’³¹

According to Didier, it is the Neo-Platonist rather than the Ignatian influence on Nieremberg’s work which has distorted the latter: ‘Il vénère saint Ignace de Loyola au-delà de toute mesure, et cependant, il ne saisit ni la grandeur ni l’originalité des enseignements ignatiens. Ses œuvres défigurent quelques thèmes des *Exercices Spirituels* en les infléchissant dans la direction du néoplatonisme chrétien’.³² As we have seen, Neo-Platonic thought continued to influence both secular and religious writers of seventeenth-century Spain, including Nieremberg, but it is my contention that

³⁰ Zepeda-Henríquez, ‘Prólogo’, p. xvi.

³¹ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, p. 271.

³² Didier, ‘Denys l’Aréopagite dans l’œuvre de Juan Eusebio Nieremberg S.J.’, pp. 137-38. For more on Didier’s view of the ‘Principio y fundamento’ in Nieremberg, see *Vida y pensamiento*, pp. 138-46.

the Ignatian character of Nieremberg's work has been overlooked, and that his approach in *De la diferencia* needs to be interpreted as a rhetorical technique intended to provoke the exercise of discernment for the same purposes as the Exercises define it: 'buscar y hallar la voluntad divina'.

Nieremberg both laments the widespread lack of proper 'noticia' regarding the true meaning of 'las cosas' and points to the human tendency to misread their value. His rhetorical approach is intended to challenge and break what Loyola deems the 'affectiones desordenadas' that people mistakenly have towards these things. For this reason he describes the world in negative terms not as an end in itself but as a means to helping readers grasp its rightful place in the scheme of salvation. The most prominent aspect of Nieremberg's rhetoric is his focus on death, to which I now turn. As a persuasive tool to his teaching, the language and imagery of death give expression to the key elements of his spiritual outlook, such as the 'Principio y fundamento'. Because it is a topic to which many writers and artists of the Golden Age gave considerable attention, it provides a further example of how Nieremberg develops the central ideas of his spiritual tradition according to the cultural and literary tastes of seventeenth-century Spain, especially the *vanitas* tradition.

Contemptus Mundi

Nieremberg writes of human mortality throughout the treatise, but its most vivid, even provocative, treatment comes in Book II: 'Del fin de la vida temporal', which allows him to develop a sense of 'desprecio' for the temporal life: 'assi la vida por haberse de acabar, fuesse de qualquier manera que fuesse, se haze muy desestimable'. In order to illustrate what he means, he goes on to describe the process of death and gives much attention to the phases of bodily decomposition. Perhaps the most prevalent image he

uses for this is that of the ‘gusano’:

Considerese uno despues de ocho dias muerto; [¿] como estará, y quan horrendo espectaculo apareciera, si le abriessen la sepultura? En que se diferenciaria de un perro muerto lleno de gusanos en medio de un muladar. Mira pues a quien regalas, a un cuerpo que puede ser que dentro de quatro dias sea comido de gusanos asquerosos.³³

Nieremberg’s language is visual – ‘considerese’ – as befits an Ignatian contemplation. The object to be contemplated, however, is not a scene from the life of Christ, but oneself, and not as alive, but dead and decaying in the grave. His rhetoric is aimed at giving as powerful an impression as possible of the dissolution of the physical self. It is equated to the putrefying corpse of an irrational animal, to drive home the point that without the soul it is in no way superior, while the remains of the dog are not hidden away in a tomb but exposed for all to see in a place no one would wish to approach. The adjectives – ‘muerto’, ‘horrendo’, ‘lleno’ and ‘comido de gusanos’ – reinforce the tone, as do the repeated ‘gusanos asquerosos’.

The worm became a literary commonplace in the early modern period. Some authors use it to create a sense of marvel; for example, in the *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe* Fray Luis de Granada describes the silkworm in order to exemplify the beauty of creation: ‘Porque comenzando por el gusano que hila seda, ¿no es cosa de grande admiración que un gusanillo tan pequeño hile una hilaza tan sutil y tan prima, que todas las artes y ingenios humanos nunca hasta hoy la hayan podido imitar?’ Teresa of Ávila writes of the silkworm in its cocoon to describe the state of her spiritual life and the merits of contemplation: ‘Entonces comienza a vivir y vase sustentando en esto y en buenas meditaciones’. But like others, Teresa also uses it to emphasize an attitude of

³³ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, pp. 82, 91.

spiritual humility: ‘¡Bendito seáis, Señor mío, que así hacéis de pecina, tan sucia como yo, agua tan clara que sea para vuestra mesa! ¡Seáis alabado, oh regalo de los ángeles, que así queréis levantar un gusano tan vil!’³⁴ In Nieremberg’s passage, the ‘gusano’ clearly represents the dissolution of material things. Images of this kind verge on the macabre and grotesque, especially for modern readers unused to them and, with over fifty references to ‘gusanos’ in the treatise as a whole, the chilling despair and realism of its perspective is impossible to avoid. But Nieremberg uses them not so much to denigrate life in the here and now as to capture the attention of his readers and to shock them out of complacency; he hopes to correct their customary view of temporal things.

The treatise is given a decidedly Jesuit mark when Nieremberg relates the conversion narrative of Francis Borgia, who when confronted with the reality of human mortality rejected the titles and vanities of the world for a more ascetic life in the Society.

No causò menor efecto en el coraçon del Bienaventurado Francisco de Borja [...] la vista de la Emperatriz doña Isabel, muger de Carlos Quinto, cuyo cuerpo difunto llevò para enterrar a Granada. Hizo para entregarla destapar la caja de plomo en que iba, y tenía tan feo y abominable rostro, que puso horror a los presentes, sin atreverse a jurar ninguno, que aquella era la Emperatriz. Fue tan vehemente el hedor que echaba de si, que se retiraron los demas, por no poder sufrir. [¿] Quién no ve aqui la vanidad del mundo?³⁵

The implication is that if someone as privileged as Borgia could abandon his position of wealth and power, so too could people of lesser means sacrifice their own desires to

³⁴ Granada, *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe*, p. 352; Teresa de Ávila, *Castillo interior o Las moradas* [1577], ed. by José Vicente Rodríguez (Madrid: San Pablo, 2007), p. 119 [v,ii,ii]; *Libro de la vida* [1588], ed. by Otger Steggink (Madrid: Castalia, 1986), p. 261. Nieremberg uses both the positive (‘admiración’) and negative (‘vileza’) images of the ‘gusano’ in his natural philosophy in order to portray vice and virtue; see [§xx] of the *Prolusión* [1629], in *Curiosa filosofía* (1634), p. 245^v, *Oculto filosofía* (1633), p. 179^f.

³⁵ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, p. 92; see also ‘Generales: Borja, Francisco’, in *DHCH*, II, 1605-06. In 1644 Nieremberg also published the *Vida del santo padre, y gran siervo de Dios el B. Francisco de Borja*.

accumulate such things. The impression of ‘horror’ and ‘hedor’ which the sight of the corpse of an empress reveals creates the desired impact that the image of death should have on readers, to make them reject the vanities of the world and live a more virtuous life. While it relates to an exemplary early Jesuit and the wife of a monarch, its primary function is to teach readers of the futility of earthly riches and titles and urge them to ponder how even things such as these cannot hide from the onset of death. Elsewhere, in Book III, Nieremberg asks: ‘La magestad y ostentacion de titulos y honras, [¿] es por ventura para servir a Dios? [...] Pues si reparamos en la verdad de los titulos que se toman, veremos ser toda vanidad.’³⁶ Nieremberg focuses on human mortality, the event of death, and all the processes surrounding it, as the most effective means of persuading his readers to put their trust in heavenly, not earthly, treasure.

Texts of this sort relate to the literature of *ars moriendi*, a genre which flourished in the early modern period, in works such as the *De praeparatione ad mortem* (1534) of Erasmus (1466-1536). These works instructed readers how best to prepare for a good Christian death and the hope of salvation beyond it. While the first examples were printed in Spain as early as 1480, their production would continue steadily through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁷ Luis de Granada, for example, cautions the readers of his famous *Guía de pecadores* (1567) to consider how death comes without a moment’s notice: ‘Día vendrá (y no sabes cuándo, si hoy, si mañana) en el cual tú mismo, que estás a[h]ora leyendo esta escriptura sano y bueno de todos tus miembros y sentidos, [...] te has de ver en una cama, con una vela en la mano, esperando el golpe de

³⁶ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, pp. 197, 206-07.

³⁷ Works like the *Preparatione a la morte* of Bartolomeo de Maraschi (c.1464-71), which was translated and published in Seville as the *Arte de bien morir muy copiosa y devota para todo fiel cristiano* by Rodrigo Fernández de Santaella around 1508, were well received in Spain. For a summary of the fascination with death in early modern Spain, see Eire’s epilogue, ‘In Death as in Life: From the Daily Rounds of Hell to the Vestibule of Heaven’, in *From Madrid to Purgatory*, pp. 511-34. See also Martínez Gil, pp. 63-64.

la muerte.³⁸

As noted in Chapter 1, the roots of the Jesuit spiritual tradition can be found in the *devotio moderna* and the literature that its founders produced, especially the *Contemptus mundi*, which Nieremberg had translated into Spanish.³⁹ Since the temporal life offers Christians so many opportunities to deviate from the path to salvation, they are advised in these works to embrace the things of the world with restraint. Jesuits wrote many works in the tradition of the *ars moriendi*, and Nieremberg's own *Partida a la eternidad, y preparación para la muerte* (1643), which was one of the most frequently published in Spain and exported to Latin America, instructs readers not only how best to dispose themselves for the final moments of this life, but how this preparation should take place over the course of their entire life: 'Es tan grande obra morir bien, que se debe aprender toda la vida: por lo qual quando insta su execucion, no es tiempo de descuydar un punto.'⁴⁰

More widely, writers both religious and secular developed a pedagogy around the theme of death in which they emphasize greater detachment from the world. For example, the way in which Nieremberg describes the temporal phase of human existence in *De la diferencia* not so much as a state of being alive but as a state of dying – 'de manera, que sacando todo en limpio no vives sino este momento, y en esse mismo te està muriendo' – echoes the sentiment expressed by Quevedo in his 'Sueño de la

³⁸ Fray Luis de Granada, *Guía de pecadores* [1567], ed. by Matías Martínez Burgos (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1966), p. 19.

³⁹ See above, Chapter 1 (p. 2, n. 4).

⁴⁰ Pedro Rueda Ramírez, 'Las artes de buena muerte en el comercio de libros con América: aproximación a la circulación de la literatura devota en el Siglo de Oro', in *Discurso religioso y Contrarreforma*, ed. by Eliseo Serrano, Antonio Luis Cortés, and José Luis Betrán (Zaragoza: Instituto Fernando el Católico, 2005), pp. 141-59 (pp. 150, 152); Nieremberg, *Partida a la eternidad, y preparación para la muerte* (1643), p. 1. For more on the literature of preparing a good death and the works of Jesuits, see Martínez Gil, *Muerte y sociedad en la España de los Austrias*, pp. 64-65. According to Eire, this literary tradition 'reached its apogee in the seventeenth century, especially in the writings of Juan Eusebio Nierenberg [sic]'; see note 17, pp. 515-16.

Muerte’: ‘No la conoceys, y soys vosotros mismos vuestra muerte, tiene la cara de cada uno de vosotros, [...] y lo que llamays morir, es acabar de morir, y lo que llamays nacer es empear a morir, y lo que llamays vivir es morir viviendo.’⁴¹ Similarly, in Part III of the *Criticón*, Critilo and Andrenio are given a rude awakening as they continue their pilgrimage of life into the region of Vejecia where they come face to face with the stark reality of death: ‘Porque allí vieron y conocieron todos aquellos pasajeros que habían echado menos, aunque muy desfigurados, tendidos por aquellos suelos.’⁴²

For the Catholic mentality of seventeenth-century Spain the aesthetic of the *vanitas*, the portrayal of death in connection to the vanities of the world, came to be a particularly effective strategy for the cultivation of *desengaño*, as it was intended to help readers distinguish between the *ser* and *parecer* of ephemeral things and to create a heightened awareness of their corruptibility. According to Pedro Rueda Ramírez, the *vanitas* represents a ‘pedagogy of fright’ intended to dissuade readers from the dangers of worldly delights.⁴³ Nieremberg’s emphasis on the ‘horror’, ‘hedor’, and ‘gusanos asquerosos’ certainly reflects this perspective, and it is even more evident when he turns his attention to the torments of Hell in Book IV; for example, Chapter 9 illustrates the ‘Penas de lo condenados por el lugar terrible en que estan’.

On the other hand, Eire stresses how Spaniards held the view that death and all its effects was a normal part of life, not ‘something unto itself, or something “other”, but a point on a continuum’.⁴⁴ In fact, the emphasis placed on death and decay expresses what Eire considers a ‘paradoxical complexity’: ‘The early modern Spanish mentality certainly did not exclude gloominess or fatalism but it also engendered a certain aplomb

⁴¹ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, p. 57; Quevedo, *Sueños y discursos* (Barcelona: Esteban Libreros, 1627; repr. Madrid: Confederación Española de Gremios, 1980), p. 87.

⁴² Gracián, *El Criticón*, p. 747.

⁴³ Rueda Ramírez, 151.

⁴⁴ Eire, p. 525.

and a healthy measure of optimism. To die well [...] could also be to live well.⁴⁵ The same can be said of Nieremberg's treatise, and it is in this aspect where we may identify the process of spiritual discernment which his emphasis on mortality encourages. The macabre depictions are meant to shock readers into awareness of the inevitability of death, but they are also intended to point beyond it, to the promise and hope in the next life which can be attained by following God's commandments in this life. In the following sections I aim to show how the imagery of the *vanitas* of *De la diferencia* reflects the spiritual itinerary in which Nieremberg encourages readers to discover and to embrace the will of God.

Didactic Iconography: *ser* and *parecer*

While Nieremberg focuses on the *postrimerías* as a means of gaining the attention of his readers and persuading them to readjust their priorities, he uses all sorts of techniques to engage them. According to Robbins, early modern writers and artists 'sought above all to incite a reaction on the level of both the senses and the mind, and they employed a variety of means to do this, including the use of complex imagery, difficult syntax, shocking and violent subject matters, and striking juxtapositions.'⁴⁶ For example, Granada's *Guía de pecadores* contains a graphic passage which describes how the condemned soul experiences the pains of Hell through each of the five senses: 'los ojos deshonestos y carnales serán atormentados con la visión horrible [...]; los oídos con la confusión de las voces y gemidos [...]; las narices con el hedor [...]; el gusto con rabiosísima hambre y sed; el tacto [...] con frío y fuego.'⁴⁷ Of these techniques, perhaps

⁴⁵ Eire, p. 533.

⁴⁶ Robbins, *The Challenges of Uncertainty*, pp. 14-15; also Emilio Orozco, *Manierismo y barroco* (Salamanca: Anaya, 1970), p. 74.

⁴⁷ Granada, *Guía de pecadores*, p. 49.

the most prevalent in Nieremberg's treatise is the appeal to the imagination of readers through the senses, such as smell. For example, he relates how a treasure chest is found and opened, only to reveal that its contents are not the gold and silver its discoverers had hoped to find, but the rot and stench of death which represent the true nature of ephemeral things: 'y hallando alli un cofre, ò escritorio, le abrieron, esperando hallar mucho dinero en èl, del qual salio un aire tan hediondo y corrompido, que contaminò toda aquella Region'. He also evokes the sense of hearing in the series of imperatives in the opening lines of the treatise cited earlier ('Despierten, y abran los mortales los ojos, y conozcan la diferencia que [h]ay en todo lo temporal y lo eterno').⁴⁸

However, Nieremberg most consistently engages the imagination of his readers through *vanitas* imagery, as it allows him to engage readers in a process of viewing and henceforth reflecting on the difference between the *ser* and *parecer* of things.⁴⁹ Moreover, it provides a medium through which he guides his readers in a greater process of understanding and assimilating the lessons contained in the treatise. In conformity with the Tridentine decree on religious images, artists intended not only to shock, but to create a reaction which would inspire onlookers to imitate the message represented on their canvasses.⁵⁰ The teaching that Nieremberg imparts through his deliberately visual imagery shows a remarkable resemblance to the didactic role the Council envisaged for religious images. In some cases, individual paintings were grouped together in iconographic schemes to inspire viewers to follow a complete

⁴⁸ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, pp. 3, 226. Here it can be recalled how the Jesuit Pedro de Calatayud instructed missionaries to use this and other texts of Nieremberg for public readings; see above, Chapter 2 (p. 44, n. 5).

⁴⁹ For more on the representation of the physical world and the interpretation of it in the Spanish Golden Age, see Robert Pring-Mill 'Some Techniques of Representation in the *Sueños* and the *Criticón*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 45 (1968), 270-84.

⁵⁰ Concilium Tridentinum, 'Sessio xxv: De invocatione, veneratione et reliquiis sanctorum, et de sacris imaginibus', II, 775 (see Appendix II). For more on the use of sacred images and their didactic purposes in Jesuit circles, see Arellano, pp. 28-32.

itinerary of spiritual progress. One example of this can be seen in the famous *vanitas* paintings of Valdés Leal, the *Jeroglíficos de nuestras postrimerías* (1672), which depict the ephemeral nature of human achievements in a similar manner to Nieremberg's treatise. They had been commissioned for the church of the Hermandad de la Santa Caridad in Seville by its president Miguel de Mañara, who himself had undergone a conversion to the ascetical life, and their imagery represents the first phase of the greater spiritual itinerary implied in the complete set of paintings in the church. A clearer understanding of how this decorative scheme works will therefore help us to identify the similar function such imagery has in Nieremberg's treatise.⁵¹

In the first *Jeroglífico*, *In Ictu Oculi* (figure 3, Appendix IV), the moment of death is portrayed as the figure of a skeleton enters the scene with a shroud, a scythe, and a coffin. With one foot planted on top of a globe and the other on a pile of earthly treasures, both secular and religious – books, jewels, weapons, a crown, and a mitre – the skeleton reaches out to extinguish the light and life of all that is perishable, to indicate that all temporal treasures and honors will fade into the oblivion of the surrounding darkness. The second painting, *Finis Gloriam Mundi* (figure 4, Appendix IV), depicts a scene of human death and bodily decomposition. Three open coffins expose the rotting remains of ecclesiastical and temporal rulers, whose fine clothing and symbols of office lose all sense of value and worth with the onset of decay. As the title of the second portrait implies, all worldly glory ends in putrefaction, a theme which becomes shockingly clear as 'gusanos asquerosos' crawl over the human remains.⁵²

⁵¹ For more on Mañara, see Jonathan Brown, *Images and Ideas in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 130-32. Here we recall that Valdés Leal knew Nieremberg's celebrated work and had previously included it in two of his paintings, the *Alegoría de la vanidad* and the *Alegoría de la Eucaristía* (see above, pp. 129-32).

⁵² For a full description of these paintings, see: Brown, *Images and Ideas*, pp. 128-46; Brown, 'Hieroglyphs of Death and Salvation', pp. 265-77; also Guichot y Sierra, *Los famosos jeroglíficos de la muerte de Juan de Valdés Leal*, pp. 34-36.

These dark and macabre images, however, are not the end of the story, as the title of the first portrait implies. ‘In ictu oculi’ is a Pauline reference to Christ’s redemption of the human body and soul, and signals a more profound hope in the resurrection: ‘Ecce mysterium vobis dico omnes quidem resurgemus sed non omnibus inmutabimur in momento in ictu oculi’ (I Corinthians 15:51-52). According to Colin Thompson, ‘the eye which looks at the painting is meant to ponder the moment when “in ictu oculi” the soul enters eternal reality’, that is, Heaven, Purgatory, or Hell.⁵³ While the particular message of hope in the resurrection is not at once obvious, it becomes clear as the *Jeroglificos* are viewed in the context of the other paintings around them. Jonathan Brown, for example, has explained their relevance as part of a wider didactic program in the overall decorative scheme of the church for which they were commissioned.

The *Jeroglificos*, still hanging in their original location, are placed at the west end near the entrance to the church, in the darker space overshadowed by a balcony directly above. But they form only part of a larger iconographical program, alongside several other paintings in the open and well-lit nave which depict six of the seven corporal works of mercy in Mathew 25. Painted by Murillo, these images are lighter in tone, and lead viewers to a special depiction of the seventh corporal work of mercy at the east end of the church above the main altar, the burial of the dead – more specifically, the *Entierro de Cristo*. Designed by Bernardo Simón de Pineda and sculpted by Pedro Roldán, it portrays the burial of Christ’s body, but as a prelude to his victory over death in the resurrection. The altarpiece points specifically to the work of mercy adopted by the Brotherhood as its charitable service to society, the burial of paupers. It derives its

⁵³ Colin Thompson, ‘Text as Image: The Depiction of Textual Objects in Spanish Golden-Age Painting’, in *Antes y después del Quijote*, ed. by Ana de Miguel Canuto (Valencia: Generalitat de Cultura, 2005), pp. 231-40 (p. 233).

meaning from the fact that Christ was given a place of burial by a stranger, Joseph of Arimathea, and is a practical illustration of the teaching of Christ: ‘Amen dico vobis quamdiu fecistis uni de his fratribus meis minimis mihi fecistis’ (Matthew 25:40).

The *Entierro de Cristo* depicts a redemptive death which opens the door to eternity and brings about salvation. In contrast to the morbidity of the *Jeroglificos*, it suggests that a good Christian death leads to a newer and richer life, part of God’s redemptive plan for all of creation. The difference between a good and bad death is most prominently represented in the *Jeroglificos*, in the image of the wounded hand of Christ in *Finis Gloriam Mundi*, which reaches out from a heavenly light into the darkness of the scene and dangles the scale of judgment above the corpses:

On the left side the seven deadly sins are represented by animal symbols; on the right, prayer books and penitential instruments (a scourge and hair shirt among them) suggest that prayer and repentance offset sin. The meaning is explicitly conveyed by the mottoes inscribed on each plate: nothing more (*NI MAS*) is needed for damnation than sin, and nothing less (*NI MENOS*) for salvation than prayer and penance.⁵⁴

Macabre as it is, viewers of the scene enter into a process of discernment as they are invited to make an assessment of their own practice of vice and virtue, consider what their eternal destiny might be, and order their lives so that the balance will tip in favor of a heavenly reward.

The iconographical scheme of the church is revealed as viewers move from the dark entrance space through the open and brighter nave, and view the even brighter message of salvation through the redemptive death of Christ above the altar. In the spirit of the Tridentine decree, the members of the Brotherhood were to be inspired by

⁵⁴ Brown, *Images and Ideas*, pp. 138, 141.

the message contained in the whole program of images, as they connected their particular vocation with the depictions of the corporal works of mercy in the nave and of the burial of Christ at the focal point above the altar. As a first step, the visual rhetoric of the *Jeroglificos* is intended to persuade viewers to make a correct assessment of their lives and to purge them of disordered attachments. The depictions of charitable deeds relate to life in the world and illustrate what it means to prepare for a good death, but like Nieremberg's treatise, they invite onlookers to recognize the true 'noticia' and 'estimación' of worldly objects. Mañara, who served as the president of the Hermandad, wrote in his *Discurso de la verdad* (1671): 'Decía el Santo Apóstol San Pedro, que no era otra cosa este mundo, sino una casa de humo, adonde ciegos los ojos de la razon, no vèn la verdad de las cosas.'⁵⁵ Whereas the accumulation of honors and titles might once have seemed to the onlookers to be of value, their true worth is now displayed amidst the decomposing bodies. In terms of *ser* and *parecer*, the *vanitas* portrayal of death presents the 'paradoxical complexity' that Christian life is not about despair in a 'valle de lágrimas', but about hope in how a temporal life of virtue will be judged worthy of eternal salvation.

A Spiritual Itinerary

Beyond the emphasis that it gives to *vanitas* imagery, *De la diferencia* consists of a similar program in which Nieremberg moves readers along a spiritual itinerary from disdain of the earthly to hope of the eternal. Titles, possessions, and privileges clearly fade into the same darkness depicted on Valdés Leal's canvas: 'no es eternidad esta vida

⁵⁵ Miguel de Mañara, *Discurso de la verdad* [1671] (Seville: Luis Bexinez y Castilla, 1778; repr. Madrid: Extramuros, 2007), pp. 38-39. The reference to the Apostle Peter recalls the *vanitas* image in his epistle: 'quia omnis caro ut faenum et omnis gloria eius tamquam flos faeni exaruit faenum et flos decidit verbum autem Domini manet in aeternum hoc est autem verbum quod evangelizatum est in vos' (1 Peter 1:24-25); see also Isaiah 40.

que gozas, y presto se ha de acabar: no es eterna la salud con que a[h]ora estàs, no son eternos tus entretenimientos, no son eternas tus possessions; no son eternos tus tesoros'. Nieremberg consistently denigrates the temporal domain in contrast to the eternal: 'no serà todo mas que carbonos, respeto de un cuerpo glorioso, el qual todo serà mas transpare[n]te, claro y resplandecie[n]te, q[ue] si fuera esmaltado de diama[n]tes', but he invites his readers to ponder something more and, as with the decorative program to which the *Jeroglíficos* pertain, there is an implied optimism in the darker tones of the treatise, as these too come to represent the first phase of a greater process in which readers may come to view the temporal world with new eyes.

While Nieremberg attempts to break people's belief in the lasting value of material things, like the *Jeroglíficos* he invites them to ponder the importance of 'santas obras' in Christian life: 'y assi miraremos lo que hazemos, [...] obraremos virtudes'. Human mortality ought therefore to serve as a reminder of the fundamental Christian duty to practice charity: 'Avergoncemonos [...] con la memoria destas tan notables condiciones de la muerte, aconsejandonos a obrar bien.' In a subsequent passage based on a series of antitheses, he urges readers to consider the true nature of their actions in the world as they prepare for the Last Judgment: '¡O que grande confusion seria, q[ue] se cuente por delito lo q[ue] pensabas ser servicio! [...] como se avergonçara el pecador de verse delante del Señor de todo desnudo de buenas obras y enlodado con tantos males abominables y horrendos'. The insistence on performing good works persists throughout the treatise and, just as with Valdés Leal, their function is to outweigh the negative effects of sin in the scales of judgment: 'en passando desta vida no has de tener otro padrino, ni amparo, sino el de tus santas obras'.⁵⁶

The passage from *desengaño* concerning worldly treasures to the embrace of

⁵⁶ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, pp. 108, 118, 120, 123-24.

Christian charity also marks a transition in Nieremberg's perspective on the temporal world, because it is no longer a place of exile but a place where God's grace is both present and attainable: 'por la corriente y raudal de aquel rio que salia de Dios la multitud de sus beneficios, los quales son un destello è influxo de la bondad divina, que se comunica y derrama en sus criaturas, con tantos beneficios que las haze'.⁵⁷ Here we begin to see how, rather than an end in itself, Nieremberg's rhetoric of *desprecio* is a technique for discerning the many benefits of divine grace in the temporal world, especially as readers are encouraged to reflect on the state of their own lives once their eyes have been opened to the truths of eternity: 'Miremonos en este espejo, y reformemos nuestra vida.'⁵⁸ In breaking their attachment to perishable things, Nieremberg instructs his readers to embrace the world in a new way. As they progress through the treatise they come to see the temporal world through a different lens and may be guided to express gratitude for all it offers, including the clothes they wear and the food they eat: 'Mira, pues, quanto sea el amor q[ue] te tuvo tu Criador, pues obrò tales obras por ti [...], obrando por ti en todas las criaturas, haziendo crecer el trigo que te ha de sustentar, criando la lana que te ha de vestir [...], en todas las cosas està obrando por ti.'⁵⁹ Here the created world plays its divinely ordained part in sustaining human life, although it does so not as an end in itself, but as a gift of the Creator.

As Nieremberg's perspective on the created order becomes more nuanced, the treatise juxtaposes the negative and the affirmative. He writes of human existence as a criminal sentence only to be endured in a 'peregrinación a la horca', but he also testifies to the greatness of life: 'de un bien tan grande como el vivir'. If in one chapter he depicts earthly life as plagued with sin and weakness ('segun son nuestros excessos y

⁵⁷ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, p. 127.

⁵⁸ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, p. 436.

⁵⁹ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, p. 472.

desordenes’), in another he speaks of the manifestation of God’s mercy: ‘en esta vida, donde està el campo de la misericordia abierto’.⁶⁰ And where he offers readers a negative account of the temporal domain (‘assombro es, quan grande monstruo es la vida humana’), he recognizes the ways in which it may reflect the divine and affirms the purpose of a Christian life lived well in it: ‘Dios te criò a su imagen, para q[ue] essa misma imagen la perficionasses, haziendola mas semeja[n]te cada dia à tu Criador.’⁶¹

As Iparraguirre has suggested, the treatise turns the attention of its readers toward their eternal destiny, but this perspective allows them to view human existence in a positive manner: ‘De tanto moverse en este ambiente sobrenatural, [Nieremberg] va insensiblemente impregnándose de él y asimilando su fuerza y su virtud, y creándose un extraordinario *optimismo espiritual*.’⁶² First he deconstructs the temporal world in the shadowy tones of its own dissolution, then he builds it up according to a newer and brighter perspective: ‘Parece un absurdo considerar el ‘desprecio’ como flor de la esperanza. Y, sin embargo, es así. Se trata de un desprecio de lo que impide la auténtica esperanza.’⁶³ In Capánaga’s understanding, the tainted images of the treatise reveal how created things point to the divine Creator when they are embraced as means to this end: ‘aunque saquen a relucir las tachas de las cosas temporales, siempre ven en ellas un resplandor y un eco de los pensamientos divinos. [...] Así ha de entenderse esta *nihilidad* de las cosas temporales, las cuales no están vacías de todo ser y bien.’⁶⁴ In other words, the negative vision is the necessary preparation for the created order to be welcomed as divine gift, not selfish possession.

⁶⁰ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, pp. 113-16.

⁶¹ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, pp. 84, 398.

⁶² Iparraguirre, ‘Un escritor ascético olvidado’, p. 441.

⁶³ Iparraguirre, ‘Un escritor ascético olvidado’, p. 444; see also Didier, *Vida y pensamiento*, p. 131.

⁶⁴ Capánaga, p. 532.

This change in perspective reflects a rhetorical strategy intended to bring about spiritual discernment. As readers view the temporal world in a new light, they begin to understand the purpose for which God created it and make appropriate decisions based on what they have learned ('reformemos nuestra vida'). It is at this point where Nieremberg most clearly follows the itinerary Loyola intended for practitioners of his Spiritual Exercises. The 'Principio y fundamento' describes the proper disposition of 'indiferencia' with which retreatants must embrace all that is worldly (its 'noticia' and 'estimación' in Nierembergian terms), so that they begin the contemplations of the First Week by viewing themselves in complete humility: 'la composición será ver con la vista ymaginativa y considerar mi ánima ser encarcerada en este cuerpo corruptible, y todo el compósito en este valle como desterrado' [§47]. In a subsequent passage, Loyola repeats the importance of self-knowledge in creating this sense of lowliness: 'mirar qué cosa es todo lo criado en comparación de Dios: pues yo solo ¿qué puedo ser?; mirar toda mi corrupción y fealdad corpórea; mirarme como una llaga y postema, de donde [h]an salido tantos pecados y tantas maldades y ponzoña tan turpíssima' [§58].

The process of discerning God's will commences in the Spiritual Exercises as retreatants begin to differentiate between the temporal and eternal domains ('todo lo criado en comparación de Dios'), and is made all the more effective as they imaginatively consider their own humble place in the grander scheme of eternity. Once these contemplations have been made, the Second Week, which is based on the episodes from Christ's life and ministry, invites retreatants to consider how they themselves will help in building up the Kingdom of God. In Nierembergian terms, these contemplations focus on the works of charity, or 'santas obras', that retreatants ought to embrace. For example, Loyola introduces the Week by asking practitioners to imagine how a temporal king calls for volunteers from among his subjects to join him in spreading Christianity throughout the world. As the contemplation continues, it is then Christ the eternal king

who calls people to labor with him and endure the suffering this involves: ‘por tanto, quien quisiere venir conmigo [h]a de trabajar conmigo, porque siguiéndome en la pena, también me siga en la gloria’ [§95].

The whole method culminates in the optimism of Week Four, with the ‘Contemplación para alcanzar amor’ (the ‘Contemplatio’) [§230]. Beyond the initial expressions of self-deprecation, humility, and contempt for the world, Loyola now directs retreatants to experience the more consoling contemplation on attaining divine love, which is most recognizable in the ‘beneficios’ and ‘dones’ they have received: ‘traer a la memoria los beneficios rescibidos de creación, redemptión y dones particulares; ponderando con mucho afecto cuánto ha hecho Dios nuestro Señor por mí, y cuánto me ha dado de lo que tiene’ [§234]. The aim is for retreatants to discover their unique relationship with the Lord and to sense themselves as participants in God’s plan of redemption for the world: ‘mirar cómo Dios habita en las criaturas: en los elementos dando ser [...] y así en mí dándome ser, [...] asimismo haziendo templo de mí, seyendo criado a la similitud y ymagen de su divina majestad’ [§235].

This is but a succinct description of the much greater process of intense spiritual discernment Loyola designed in the Exercises, yet the basic paradigm it represents – indifference, humility, service, attaining divine love – is present in Nieremberg’s treatise: proper knowledge of the self and the world, the humility this engenders, the good works which follow from recognizing God’s beneficence. Gil comes to a similar conclusion:

A grandes rasgos, podríamos decir que la *Diferencia* es una gran paráfrasis de los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio de Loyola. Nieremberg elige los grandes temas de la experiencia de los ejercicios y los vuelca en una prosa del gusto de su época. La trama va desde el *Principio y Fundamento*, pasando por la *meditación del*

infierno, para concluir con la *Contemplación para alcanzar amor*.⁶⁵

Although Nieremberg develops the *vanitas* aesthetic to a high degree in it, the treatise ultimately guides readers to embrace the world as a means to a divine end, and should thus be seen as a seventeenth-century adaptation of the Ignatian method, giving expression to key elements of the spiritual itinerary designed by Loyola, but according to the dominant artistic and literary tastes of the time. As an individual exercise, the ‘Contemplatio’ represents the culmination of the Ignatian method in which retreatants recite the prayer of the *Suscipe* and place their will in the hands of God: ‘Tomad Señor, y recibid toda mi libertad, mi memoria, mi entendimiento y toda mi voluntad’ [§234]. Nieremberg’s treatise contributes to the overall rhetoric of discernment in his writing, as it too encourages readers to view the world and the divine ‘beneficios’ it contains in such a way that they come to recognize God’s will for them.

In theological terms, then, the idea in the treatise that God’s grace is operative and attainable in this world makes it possible to view temporal existence not so much as a place of exile, but as a springboard to the eternal and divine. As noted previously, the spiritual outlook of Nieremberg’s miscellanies of natural philosophy offers a much more positive interpretation of the created order by revealing how it is charged with divine meaning (see above, Chapter 3). The same outlook is present in his ascetical treatises, although by directing readers to discern the same core message of accepting the will of God, they approach it from different theological perspective. This can be seen most clearly in the companion piece to *De la diferencia, De la hermosura de Dios y su amabilidad*, published one year later, and which needs to be read alongside it. Here Nieremberg focuses on the beauty of creation, on the perfection of things, even on the

⁶⁵ Gil, p. xxxviii

marvels of cities – a stark difference from his treatment of the created order as ‘corruptible’ or a ‘valle de lágrimas’. Although he continues to insist on the priority of the eternal over the temporal, he draws attention to God’s presence in creation: ‘[¿] Quien no queda atonito, como siendo Dios tan grande, y estando tan admirablemente en todas las cosas, y tan inmenso, y tan infinito, que es mayor que todo el mundo?’⁶⁶

As can be seen in the following passage, Nieremberg expresses his ideas in *De la hermosura* with the same dialectical pattern of comparing the temporal and the eternal domains, but builds on the principle that if the created order is beautiful, its Creator must be all the more so:

Pie[n]sa atentamente quan gustoso y deleitable será aquel bien, que tiene por junto el gusto y sabor de todos los bienes, y no como le hemos experimentado en las cosas criadas, sino tan diferente, qua[n]ta diferencia [h]ay del Criador a la criatura. [¿] Porque si es buena la vida criada, quan buena será la vida criadora? [...] [¿] Si son muchos y grandes los deleites de las cosas deleitables, qual será y quan grande el deleite que está en quien hizo todo lo deleitable.⁶⁷

While in the earlier treatise he aims to break the attachment people have to ‘las cosas’, here they are portrayed as the hieroglyphs of divine majesty: ‘cosas criadas’ are now ‘cosas deleitables’, ‘la vida criada’ represents ‘lo deleitable’. The treatise, therefore, is rooted in the same spiritual principle as the ‘Contemplatio’ (‘considerar cómo Dios trabaja y labora por mi en todas las cosas criadas sobre la haz de la tierra’ [§236]). Early in Book I Nieremberg even includes a prayer which is clearly a paraphrased version of the *Suscipe* [§234]:

⁶⁶ Nieremberg, *De la hermosura de Dios y su amabilidad*, p. 250.

⁶⁷ Nieremberg, *De la hermosura*, p. 26; St Anselm is cited as the sources of this passage.

[i] O Dios sin igual! [i] O Señor, que todo sois grande, y que todo sois mas! dadme mas amor vuestro, dadme mas conocimiento vuestro; y pues siendo uno sois todas las cosas, dadme que ame a todas por vos solo, y que unicamente os ame, empleando todos mis afectos, ocupando todas mi potencias, poniendo todas mis fuerças en serviros, reverenciaros, y amaros.⁶⁸

Just as retreatants are invited to place their ‘memoria’, ‘entendimiento’, and ‘voluntad’ in the hands of God, so the readers of *De la hermosura* are encouraged to offer their ‘afectos’, ‘potencias’, and ‘fuerças’ in praise and service of the Lord.

As each treatise seeks to guide readers to a better understanding of Christian life, the negation of the created order in *De la diferencia* represents an ascetic counterpart to an apophatic spiritual theology based on the absolute transcendence of God. *De la hermosura*, on the other hand, presents a counter-balance, a cataphatic spiritual theology, which seeks to reveal the God who is immanent in all created things. Just as discernment was required to see through the lure of the earthly, so now it is needed to become aware of God’s presence in the world:

Este resplandor de Dios en las criaturas, no solo descubre su grandeza, sino su bondad y amor, el qual no es solo luz, sino llama; ni solo llama, sino incendio, [...] que estando en medio de la luz no veamos, y rodeados de llamas no nos abrasemos.

Much as in *Curiosa y oculta filosofía*, in *De la hermosura* Nieremberg writes of the created world in terms of grandeur, harmony, and perfection, which serve as an imperfect reflection of the perfect Creator. Whereas in *De la diferencia* he holds images of death before readers as if they were looking in a mirror to contemplate their own

⁶⁸ Nieremberg, *De la hermosura*, p. 25.

dissolution, in *De la hermosura* he teaches readers to see how the human body and the features of the face reflect the very opposite: order, composition, and, most notably, beauty:

[¿] Que proporcion en los elementos? [¿] que disposicion tan admirable de la naturaleza? [¿] que hermosura en todo el universo? [...] Mucho nos admiramos, [...] de la composicion de los cielos, del orden de los eleme[n]tos, de la multitud de los animales, de la variedad de los colores, [...] de la harmonia de los cuerpos, de la forma y gracia de los rostros de los hombres.⁶⁹

If in *De la diferencia* the ‘gusanos’ form the principal hieroglyphs of his message, the properties of proportion and harmony are the hermeneutical keys in *De la hermosura*. They form the lens through which the world is seen, as Nieremberg describes the composition of the heavens and the earth, and then passes to focus on the much smaller details of individual items, just as he does in his natural philosophy, where the smallness of ants and the deformities of dwarves and pygmies are intended to illustrate harmony and incite an experience of wonder in readers.⁷⁰ The overall effect is to suggest that the world is a sacred space, one that is host to a theatrical display of God’s power and grace.

Nieremberg’s ascetical treatises share the same aim of inspiring greater devotion in readers, but approach it from different perspectives. The rhetoric of discernment in *De la diferencia* is intended not simply to horrify its readers but to enable them to see that their true hope cannot be placed in things which are ephemeral. The rhetoric of discernment in *De la hermosura* is intended to help them to see the beauty of creation not as an end in itself, but as a reflection of the overall harmony and beauty of God. But

⁶⁹ Nieremberg, *De la hermosura*, pp. 116-18.

⁷⁰ See above, Chapter 3 (pp. 109-11, 115-17).

both instruct readers how to discern the will of God in the world they inhabit.

Meditative Reading

One aspect of *De la diferencia* which merits further attention is the function Nieremberg gives it for the purpose of meditative reading, as indicated by a special index of meditation. Placed in the front of the book, the meditations are grouped according to type and subject-matter in four distinct categories, the first three belonging to the conventional three ways of the mystical tradition: ‘Meditaciones de la via purgativa’, ‘Meditaciones de la via iluminativa’, and ‘Meditaciones para la via unitiva’. The fourth category is more general and incorporates diverse topics for spiritual consideration: ‘Meditaciones, y puntos diversos para todos estados, que segun particular necesidad, ò devocion de cada uno, se pueden meditar, y añadir à las dichas’. In total, twenty-eight meditations are listed, each with an indication of the chapter, book, and page numbers of the appropriate passages in the treatise. The fourth category, for example, includes the following meditations: ‘Medit[ación] del propio conocimiento’ (Book v, chap. 2, p. 409), ‘Medit[ación] de la vileza del hombre’ (Book III, chap. 8. p. 244), and ‘Medit[ación] de los gustos eternos’ (Book IV, chap. 4, p. 293).⁷¹

It is clear from the inclusion of this index that the treatise was initially designed for prayer and reflection in a similar manner to the Ignatian Exercises. In his Prelude to the index Nieremberg suggests that the purpose of these meditations is to offer readers

⁷¹ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia*, pp. ¶5^v-¶6^r. The Index directs the reader to the specific sections dealing with the subject-matter of the meditations. For example, the meditation ‘Del propio conocimiento’ corresponds to the title of Chapter 2 in Book v: ‘Por el propio conocimiento se puede conocer el uso de las cosas temporales y el poco caso que hemos de hazer de ellas’; p. ¶6^r. For a full list of the meditations, see also J. A. van Praag, ‘La primera edición de “De la Diferencia entre lo Temporal y Eterno”, del P. Juan Eusebio Nieremberg’, in *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 38 (1958), 429-34; it should be noted however, that van Praag lists the meditations in three groups instead of four, and has not included the ‘Meditaciones para la via unitiva’. Other works of Nieremberg which include indices of meditations are *De la hermosura de Dios* (1641) and *Prodigio del amor divino, y finezas de Dios con los hombres* (1641); see Nieremberg, *Obras christianas, espirituales, y philosophicas* (Madrid: Domingo Garcia y Morràs, 1651), II, 480^v.

the opportunity to amend their lives:

En este Libro se tratan los puntos mas sustanciales, que [h]ay para reformar la vida de un Christiano, los quales no solo se debian leer, sino meditar de espacio, con lo qual experimentaba un alma gran provecho; principalmente convendria, à los que quisiessen hazer una confession general, y reformar su vida, si por ocho, ò diez dias, se recogiessen, dando de mano à otras ocupaciones, para meditarlos mas de proposito, ocupandose este tiempo en santos exercicios de oracion, y leccion; y assi, para que con mas orden, y provecho lo puedan hazer, se señalan aqui los puntos mas importantes, que se podrian meditar, procediendo con el orden, que estan en las meditaciones siguientes.⁷²

While the treatise can be used in prayer or even during a retreat (‘en santos exercicios de oracion’), it can further serve as a guide for making life-changing decisions: ‘para reformar la vida de un Christiano’. In order to ‘reformar la vida’ or, in the words of Loyola, ‘quitar de sí todas las affecciones desordenadas’ [§1], the appropriate discernment will be necessary. One important element in this is the ‘Confesión general’ [§44], which Loyola had included in the *Ejercicios* not only for the purpose of sacramental confession, but as a tool for better self-knowledge and a clearer disposition in making decisions regarding the direction of one’s life.⁷³

Moreover, the specification of the time period for prayer and reflection, ‘si por ocho, ò diez dias, se recogiessen’, echoes the same practice adopted by the Society of Jesus for the annual making of the Spiritual Exercises. Nieremberg would have been aware of a decree promulgated by the Society in 1608 that required all Jesuits to make the Exercises for eight or ten days each year.⁷⁴ While the most recent edition of the

⁷² Nieremberg, ‘Advertencia de las meditaciones mas importantes de esta obra’, in *De la diferencia*, p. ¶15^v.

⁷³ See above, Chapter 2 (pp. 73-77).

⁷⁴ Guibert, p. 237; see above, Chapter 1 (p. 24).

treatise does not retain the special index, it is still found in editions printed in Lisbon (1665), Madrid (1762), and Barcelona (1766 and 1895).⁷⁵ Hence the book appeared well into the nineteenth century complete with its functional directory for prayer and thematic consultation. As a result, its great length could be easily navigated by reference to the subject-matter of specific passages.

One further note regarding the index is important. Modern commentaries on the Exercises do not consider them a faithful representation of the three traditional ways of achieving mystical union. Loyola himself makes only a passing reference to the first two and is silent about the third, so it may seem odd that Nieremberg designed his meditations with these in mind.⁷⁶ But by the seventeenth century Jesuits were viewing the Exercises as a form of spiritual mysticism, as is evident from Luis de la Palma's commentary, the *Camino espiritual* (1626), which fits the Ignatian method neatly into the schema of the three ways, and emerged as an authoritative voice on the Exercises during Nieremberg's time. It is therefore no surprise that Nieremberg should order his meditations in a similar manner, since what at first appears to the modern reader to be a non-Ignatian element, is likely to have been intentional on the part of the author.⁷⁷

That Nieremberg deems the treatise especially suitable for meditation merits

⁷⁵ *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* (Lisbon: Antonio Craesbeeck y Mello, 1665); *De la diferencia* [...] (Madrid: Manuel Martín, 1762); *De la diferencia* [...] (Barcelona: María Ángela Martí, 1766); *Diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* (Barcelona: Librería Religiosa, 1895). The editions with the 'Advertencia de meditaciones' also retain the 'Indice de cosas notables', a separate index of special terms and phrases at the back of the book. It includes terms such as 'pecado', 'beneficios que Dios haze' and 'desordenes humanas'. This index appears after p. 476 of the 1640 edition.

⁷⁶ In the tenth annotation, Loyola states: 'quando la persona se exercita en la vida ylluminativa, que corresponde a los ejercicios de la 2^a semana, y no tanto en la vida purgativa, que corresponde a los ejercicios de la 1^a semana' [§10]. According to Javier Melloni, the lack of reference to the 'via unitiva' is intentional: 'A nuestro entender, en el pudoroso silencio que guardará Ignacio a propósito de la *via* o *vida unitiva* está la clave del nuevo carisma. Silenciamiento que no significa ausencia del estado unitivo, sino una nueva comprensión del modo y de los medios para alcanzar la unión con Dios: a través de la escucha atenta a su Voluntad'; p. 36.

⁷⁷ See the editor's introduction to the *Camino espiritual*, in *Obras del Padre Luis de la Palma*, ed. by Francisco Rodríguez Molero (Madrid: BAC, 1967), pp. 333-70. For more on St Ignatius and mysticism, see above, Chapter 1 (p. 25, n. 62).

attention because, as can be seen in the particular passages noted in the index, it mirrors the process of discernment in the Exercises. He also intended the meditations to be made in a specific order: ‘que se podrian meditar, procediendo con el orden, que estan en las meditaciones siguientes’. For example, he begins the treatise with a passage similar to that of the ‘Principio y fundamento’, which is listed as the first of the ‘Meditaciones de la via purgativa’: ‘del fin último para que fue el hombre criado’. Several of the subsequent meditations reflect how readers may be guided to use the text in a manner similar to the way in which practitioners are led through the Exercises. The meditations on the ‘via purgativa’ correspond to the First Week, the ‘via iluminativa’, to the Second and Third Weeks, the ‘via unitiva’ to the Fourth:

Nieremberg:	Loyola:
<u>Meditaciones de la via purgativa</u>	<u>Primera Semana</u>
De la gravedad del pecado mortal	Meditación con las tres potencias sobre el pecado [§45]
Del juicio universal	Traer las tres potencias sobre el pecado de Adán y Eva [§51]
De las penas del infierno	Meditación del infierno [§65]
<u>Meditaciones de la via iluminativa</u>	<u>Segunda y Tercera Semanas</u>
De la Encarnación del Hijo de Dios	La Encarnación [§101]
De la Passion	Contemplación de toda la pasión [§208.f]
<u>Meditaciones para la via unitiva</u>	<u>Quarta Semana</u>
Del amor de Dios	Contemplación para alcanzar amor [§230]

Nieremberg’s meditations do not constitute an exact replica of the Ignatian method, but the way in which they encourage a meditative reading of the treatise bears a striking

resemblance to it. Of course, Nieremberg includes some elements of his own which reflect the particular tone and message of the treatise. For example, among ‘Meditaciones de la via purgativa’ he inserts the ‘Meditación de la eternidad’, which reiterates his insistent focus on the difference between temporal and eternal life and the need for the former to be lived as a means to salvation in the latter.

He includes a series of additional meditations, namely those of the fourth category, ‘Meditaciones, y puntos diversos para todos estados’, which also reflect components of the Exercises, but are listed as optional for readers, ‘segun particular necesidad, ò devocion de cada uno’. These include ‘De la vileza del hombre’, which can be seen to relate to the second preamble of the first Ignatian exercise on sin (‘ver con la vista ymaginativa y considerar mi ánima ser encarcerada en este cuerpo corruptible, y todo el compósito en este valle como desterrado, entre brutos animales’ [§47]); and ‘Del propio conocimiento’, which relates to various contemplations in the Ignatian method, such as stated in the ‘Contemplación para alcançar amor’: ‘pedir lo que quiero; será aquí, pedir cognoscimiento interno de tanto bien recibido, para que yo enteramente reconociendo, pueda en todo amar y servir a su divina majestad’ [§233].

Other meditations more clearly reflect some of the cultural and intellectual influences of the century, such as the dialectic of *ser* and *parecer*, ‘Del engaño de las cosas’; the idea of *desengaño*, ‘De la vileza y vanidad de las cosas del mundo’; and the *vanitas* tradition, ‘De la muerte’. They show the ease with which Nieremberg reinterpreted the spiritual tradition of the Society according to the dominant literary and cultural expressions of his time. The treatise, therefore, was created with a definite functional purpose, and while its themes, images, language, and motives reflect different aspects of the wider seventeenth-century culture, they also relate back to the spiritual outlook of the Exercises. Each of them requires some form of discernment – the differentiation of worldly from heavenly values, coming to know the true meaning of

things, purging the self of disorder and sin, and making concrete decisions regarding the direction of one's life – and their presence in the treatise should be understood as a significant part of Nieremberg's overall aim of persuading readers to discern the will of God.

Conclusion

De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno well represents the ascetic side of narrative prose in seventeenth-century Spain. The images and themes in it encourage readers to seek solace and hope in the transcendence of everlasting life, not in the titles, possessions, honors, and things of the world. Nieremberg's disdain for the world and its vanities constitutes the dominant tones of a dark portrait. Yet as a spiritual alchemist Nieremberg designs his 'crisol de desengaños' to purify the soul. Everything goes into the crucible to be refined, differentiated, and discerned. Disdain does not lead to a rejection of the world but to a more reserved appreciation of its limitations, and this process creates hope. The treatise urges readers to understand eternity through the reality of 'cosas': 'y por las mismas cosas temporales granjear las eternas'. The macabre images are part of a rhetorical strategy, a didactic method, intended to induce spiritual discernment.

One hundred years from the date of the founding of the Society of Jesus, at a time when Jesuits were beginning to interpret afresh the nature and characteristics of their own identity, the treatise exemplifies the vibrant relationship which existed between Jesuit spirituality and the art and literature of seventeenth-century Spain. It emerges from the Ignatian tradition yet finds its expression in the aesthetics of *desengaño*, *ser* and *parecer*, and the *vanitas* tradition. Nieremberg uses the cultural elements he found helpful to express some of the most important components of his

spiritual tradition, and if the Exercises can be identified as the spiritual foundation of his most frequently published treatise, *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* has a strong claim to be considered Nieremberg's greatest contribution to the Jesuit goal of saving souls.

Chapter Five

Public Maladies and Prudent Reform

*El otro día nos espantó un librito
del Padre Eusebio que me remitió
el Padre La Naja de dictámenes
buenos y bien declarados [...]*

– Gracián¹

Introduction:

The treatment of ‘noticia’ is a common thread that runs throughout the popular works of Nieremberg because, as I hope to have shown in the previous three chapters, it both represents a particular concern of his and can be identified as the principal motive of his writing. These books provide readers with knowledge in the areas of Church doctrine, natural philosophy, and matters of the spiritual life; however he also gives them a broader, more meditative purpose which encourages both readers and listeners not simply to learn what is contained in them, but to reflect upon the greater meaning of the subject-matter and apply it to their lives. It is therefore important to recognize the rhetorical dimension Nieremberg develops around the acquisition of ‘noticia’, especially since he aims to help people discern the will of God in the world they inhabit.

While it is possible to identify the different audiences Nieremberg intended to reach with his books – undereducated Christians, curious readers, people seeking spiritual progress – in this chapter I aim to show how, with *Causa y remedio de los*

¹ Baltasar Gracián, ‘Carta a don Francisco Andrés de Uztarroz’ [10 de marzo de 1647], in *Obras completas*, ed. by Evaristo Correa Calderón (Madrid: Aguilar, 1944), pp. 935-36.

males públicos, he broadens the scope of his message and addresses the body politic of the Spanish nation. Published in 1642, in the aftermath of several political disasters and in the year before the fall of Olivares (1587-1645) as the *valido* of Philip IV, this short treatise was written as a plea for all Spaniards to address the national crisis by examining and amending the state of their lives. Although it belongs to a different genre from that of the catechism, the miscellanies, or his spiritual treatises, like them it establishes the principle that acquiring ‘noticia’ and then applying it to the circumstance in which society finds itself will lead to the desired outcome: in this case, the improved health of the nation.

Words of Counsel

In the first few years of the 1640s Nieremberg published an astonishing number of books in both Spanish and Latin; the Spanish works alone come to over twenty (see Appendix I). While some of these were revised versions of works previously published, most were new works of considerable length. 1640 was a significant year both for Nieremberg and for Spain. With the publication of *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* and the *Práctica del catecismo romano* Nieremberg achieved a certain celebrity status as a Jesuit ascetic.² His emergence as a figure of influence may have emboldened him to write *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* two years later, at such a vulnerable time in Spain’s history. With this treatise Nieremberg joined a chorus of other writers in addressing the downward spiral of decline in the middle of the seventeenth century. In fact, Nieremberg was so concerned with the state of things that a few months later he wrote another brief treatise, *Recuerdo para remedio de los tiempos presentes*, which was

² Pimentel, p. 97; Kamen, pp. 194-95; also Haliczzer, p. 11.

meant to underscore the urgency of his message.³

Causa y remedio de los males públicos relates to the works ‘on the rule of princes’ that can be traced back to the thirteenth century and to the *De Regno* of Thomas Aquinas, and beyond that to works of the Carolingian period which deal with issues of political and religious authority. According to Ronald Truman, works of this kind were also known as ‘mirrors of princes’ or ‘advice-books’ and ‘concerned themselves chiefly with the translating into practice of religious, moral and social principles and values’.⁴ They often portray ruling princes as the promoters of justice who, in contrast to the figure of a governing tyrant, are expected to exemplify virtue. A common feature of many of these works is an exposition of the Cardinal Virtues: Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude.⁵

Spanish intellectuals both in Spain and abroad produced a number of books of this kind during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, all with varying points of focus. For example, in the Low Countries Fadrique Furió Ceriol (1527-1592) wrote in *El concejo y consejeros del príncipe* (1559) that each prince ought to be seen as two persons: he is at once a human being consisting of body and soul, and a public person, a prince. Being a good and virtuous individual does not necessarily make him a ruler of the same kind, so that the education of princes must take this distinction into account.⁶ As will be seen, Nieremberg places special importance on the public persona of those holding government offices.

³ It is possible that this second treatise circulated in the form of a pamphlet, and was later printed in his collection of *Obras philosophicas* (1651). Nieremberg states that he wrote it only a few months after *Causa y remedio; Recuerdo para remedio de los tiempos presentes*, in *Obras philosophicas* [1651] (Madrid: Francisco de Robles, 1664), p. 181.

⁴ Ronald Truman, *Spanish Treatises on Government, Society and Religion in the Time of Philip II* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 7, 12.

⁵ For more on the ‘rules of princes’ tradition, see Truman, pp. 3-31.

⁶ For more on the writers of the Spanish Netherlands, see Truman, pp. 35-114.

Other writers focused not so much on rulers, but on society. In Spain, Jerónimo Castillo de Bobadilla (1546-1605) wrote his *Política para corregidores y señores de vasallos* (1597) in order to promote the notion that the ideal Christian life should not be seen as something separate from the world, as in the monastic model, but that people of means should seek the rewards of heaven through the practice and promotion of good deeds. Marco Antonio Camós y Requeséns (1543-1606) wrote the *Microcosmia y gobierno universal del hombre christiano* (1592) in response to the wish ‘that someone should write a work of Christian instruction relevant to the different orders of society, providing in particular a pattern of living for those involved in the world and its business’. While it sets out the duties of the king and his governors, one part of it is devoted to the ecclesiastical order and draws a parallel between the specifically Christian society and the ‘spiritual republic of the Church’; temporal matters ought to be put in order in a manner similar to that of a ‘spiritual commonwealth’, whose head is Christ.⁷ The greater body politic in Nieremberg’s treatise, as in those of Castillo de Bobadilla and Camós y Requeséns, is called upon to contribute to the betterment of society.

Jesuits wrote several works in this genre. Perhaps the most famous was the historian Juan de Mariana (1536-1624), whose *De rege regisque institutione* (1596) was written for the education of Philip III, and is now remembered for its polemical defense of tyrannicide.⁸ Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526-1611) and Juan de Torres (1547-1599) also wrote treatises for the education of the king; Ribadeneyra’s *Tratado de la religión y virtudes que debe tener el príncipe christiano* is a thorough attack on the controversial

⁷ Truman, pp. 164-66, 221-27.

⁸ See Truman, p. 316; ‘Juan de Mariana’, *DHCJ*, III, 2506-07. For more on the theme of tyrannicide and the Jesuits of early modern Europe, see Harro Höpfl’s chapter, ‘Tyrrancide, the Oath of Allegiance Controversy, and the Assassination of Henri IV’, in *Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State, c. 1540-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 314-38.

ideals of Machiavelli, with ‘el objeto de descubrir las fuentes de la verdadera política’.⁹ It first appeared in 1595, while Torres’s *Philosophia moral de príncipes* was published a year later.¹⁰ Ribadeneira had earlier written the *Tratado de la tribulación* (1589) in response to the embarrassing defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. He claims that the sins of the people had led God to punish the nation with such a crushing defeat and, as I will show, the work is a clear precursor of Nieremberg’s *Causa y remedio de los males públicos*.

As the political and economic fortune of Spain changed, writers of the seventeenth century increasingly began to treat the question of decline. According to Elliott, *arbitristas*, or ‘projectors’, proposed ‘projects’ of reform and wrote numerous treatises on the economy from 1598 to 1665. These works reflect the consciousness of psychological disillusionment, the *desengaño*, that had been growing since the end of the previous century, and which became more evident as a ‘collective awareness of disaster’ took hold of the nation.¹¹ Martín González de Cellorigo first spoke in his *Memorial de la política necesaria y útil restauración de España* (1600) of how Spain had become subject to a process of ‘declinación’. In the following decades *arbitristas* from all sectors of society – academics, clergymen, government officials, merchants – offered endless counsel to Olivares, who had established the Junta de Reформación in 1618 and was eager to enact a series of programs for reform in the 1620s.

⁹ Pedro de Ribadeneira, *Tratado de la religión y virtudes que debe tener el príncipe cristiano para gobernar sus estados, contra lo que Nicolás Maquiavelo y los políticos deste tiempo enseñan*, in *Obras escogidas*, ed. by Vicente de la Fuente, BAE, 60 (Madrid: Imprenta de los Sucesores de Hernando, 1919), p. 454. For more on Ribadeneira, see Bilinkoff, pp. 180-96; also Robert Bireley, ‘Pedro de Ribadeneira: Origins of the Tradition in Spain (1595)’, in *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 111-35.

¹⁰ For more on the works of Mariana, Torres, and Ribadeneira, see Truman, pp. 253-360; on the Jesuit *arbitristas*, see also Robbins, *Arts of Perception*, pp. 67-8.

¹¹ Elliott, *Spain and Its World*, pp. 244-45. For more on the relationship between *desengaño* and the *arbitristas*, see Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, pp. 299-300.

The advice offered to him can be divided into supernatural, naturalistic, and scientific approaches, of which the first two favor a moral interpretation of decline; either God was punishing the nation, as Ribadeneyra and others had claimed, or it had somehow become diseased and would follow a natural process of decay. Viewing matters in the light of sacred Scripture, Quevedo advises Philip IV in his *Política de Dios y gobierno de Cristo* (1617-26) to emulate Christ in all his actions, both personal and political: ‘La vida, la muerte, el gobierno, la severidad, la clemencia, la justicia, la atención de Cristo Nuestro Señor le refieren a Vuestra Majestad acciones tales, que imitar unas y dejar otras, no será elección, sino incapacidad y delito.’¹² Sancho de Moncada, whose *Restauración política de España* was published in 1619, and Pedro Fernández de Navarrete, whose *Conservación de monarquías* first appeared in 1626, spoke of decline in terms of a medical analogy, which Nieremberg himself used in 1642.¹³ The body politic was not just sick and weakened, it seemed to have a terminal illness. The third, or scientific, group tried to examine how mistaken policies could be improved or replaced, and based its findings not so much on an ideology or religious approach but on historical data and learned experience.

Like their fellow writers, Jesuit *arbitristas* addressed their ideas to all areas of society. Pedro de Guzmán had written his *Bienes del honesto trabajo y daños de la ociosidad* in 1614 for the purpose of rousing what he considered to be an indolent population during the reign of Philip III. Self-interest, corruption, and an unhealthy attitude of privilege in government circles and the wider society had spiraled out of control on the watch of his *valido*, the Duke of Lerma (1599-1618), and Spaniards

¹² Francisco de Quevedo, *Política de Dios y gobierno de Cristo: sacada de la sagrada escritura para acierto de rey y reino en sus acciones* [1617-26], ed. by Eduardo Ovejero y Maury (Madrid: Editorial Swan, 1986), p. xxii.

¹³ For more on the *arbitristas*, see Elliott’s chapter ‘Self Perception and Decline in Early Seventeenth-Century Spain’, in *Spain and its World*, pp. 241-61; also Kamen, pp. 251-56.

needed to be shaken out of complacency. Claudio Clemente (1594-1612), whose *Maquiavelismo degollado* first appeared in Latin in 1628 and in Spanish in 1637, continued to criticize politicians who used Machiavellian tactics. Alonso de Andrade wrote of the virtue soldiers must exhibit in *El buen soldado christiano, y sus obligaciones, [...] con una exhortación a los príncipes, para el buen sucesso de las armas* (1642), and both Gracián and Andrés Mendo (1608-1684) instruct readers on how to identify the ‘príncipe perfecto’; Gracián wrote a trilogy of related works, *El Héroe* (1637), *El Político don Fernando el Católico* (1640, 1646), and *El Discreto* (1646), while Mendo published his *Príncipe perfecto, y ministros ajustados* in 1657.

By 1628 Nieremberg had already published *Obras y días*, which, as the remainder of the title shows, was written with the aim of instructing the children of nobles in the Colegio Imperial on how to embrace virtue in all aspects of their lives, especially as eventual holders of public office: ‘*manual de señores y príncipes, en que se propone con su pureza y rigor la especulación y ejecución política, económica, y particular de todas las virtudes*’. Olivares had requested him to write it as part of his program of educational reform. The title comes from Hesiod’s (c.750-650 BC) *Works and Days* (*Erga kai Hēmerai*), which expounds the merits of labor for an idle peasantry. But Nieremberg makes it clear that it is now the privileged sectors of society which prefer leisure over good works and the practice of virtue and which need to take the lesson in the effort to prevent any further decline:

Si bien por ser mas apretada la obligacion de los nobles, de los Señores, y Principes, pues deben mas a la Virtud, pues la deben su nobleza; mas especialmente se encaminará a ellos su doctrina; a diferencia de Hesiodo, que con semejante titulo encaminò otro su libro a los rusticos quando sospechò, que la ociosidad de obrar era causa del descaecimiento y baxa de los tiempos de dorados en plateados, hasta venir a los de mas baxos y grosseros metales

llorando ya su quarto siglo, y estremeciendose del quinto, que aunque no vio, temio y aborrecio mas que la muerte.¹⁴

The work was republished and translated in subsequent years, and while the *editio princeps* had been dedicated to Olivares, a 1641 edition was also dedicated to the Crown Prince Baltasar Carlos (1629-1646) for his instruction as he prepared to inherit the throne.¹⁵ In 1643, just three years before the young heir's untimely death, Nieremberg also published *Corona virtuosa, y virtud coronada* in relation to the Prince's education: 'Mas yo, de las aguas claras de la divina Escritura, cuya leccion he professado en los Estudios Reales desta Corte, ofrezco a V. A. algunas gotas q[ue] he observado de los bienes de la virtud de un Principe.' Like *Obras y días*, this work expresses the painful awareness of decline ('descaecimiento y baxa'), and follows a moral interpretation of that decline by claiming that the sins of the people have brought about political and economic downfall: 'Como los pecados del pueblo son causa de las ruinas de los Reynos, pueden ta[m]bien las virtudes de un Principe ser el reparo de su Imperio.'¹⁶ This approach, however, is most fully explained in his advice-book, to which I now turn.

The 'dolencia' of National Decline

Although it is not a popular work of wide dissemination like some of his Spanish texts, *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* is of particular interest to this study because Nieremberg wrote it as a spiritual *arbitrista*, with the intention of addressing a diverse

¹⁴ Nieremberg, *Obras y días: manual de señores y príncipes* (1629), p. 4^r.

¹⁵ See Nieremberg's dedication, in *Obras y días: manual de señores y príncipes* [1629] (Madrid: María de Quiñones, 1641), pp. ¶2^r-¶5^v.

¹⁶ Nieremberg, *Corona virtuosa, y virtud coronada* (Madrid: Francisco Maroto, 1643), pp. 1-2.

citizenry and its governing leaders.¹⁷ It merits our attention for the way in which it reflects the social and political situation of the seventeenth century, but also for its spiritual context: it is about reading the will of God in the political and economic sphere. The loss of cohesion in the Spanish empire was a significant component of intellectual discourse in the capital city, where Nieremberg had come to be known as a prominent member of the Jesuit Order and had established himself as an erudite teacher and writer. In this chapter I aim to show what his contribution to that discourse was and how it relates to his overall message of discernment. The treatise contributes to our picture of him as a Jesuit writer of the Golden Age who not only attempted to help individual souls through the ministry of the word but used his influence to reach out to the ruling elite and provide them with an analysis of the national crisis so that they could effect the cure.

Nieremberg begins his treatise with a quotation from the first-century physician Aulus Cornelius Celsus, who stated that ‘no podra hallar el pensamiento cierto remedio de lo que no tiene entera noticia’. The implication is clear: the Spanish empire is suffering, but there must be sufficient ‘noticia’ regarding the ailment if a cure is to be found: ‘Mal se podran curar las enfermedades, que no descubren su fuente, ni se sabra aplicar remedio al achaque, cuyo principio se oculta.’¹⁸ Just as he had proposed in his natural philosophy, Nieremberg suggests that ‘noticia’ is not self-evident, and must be discovered – that is, the truth of the situation must first be discerned. He therefore seeks to understand it as fully as possible so as to identify the cause of the ailment that has taken hold of the nation. Once the ‘causa’ has been determined, then he can apply the ‘remedio’, the ‘reforma de vida’, a term fundamental to the spiritual and apostolic

¹⁷ Evaristo Correa Calderón includes *Causa y remedio de la males públicos* in his *Registro de arbitristas economistas y reformadores españoles (1500-1936): catálogo de impresos y manuscritos* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1981), p. 151.

¹⁸ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* (Madrid: María de Quiñones, 1642), p. 2.

approach of the Jesuit Order.

Causa y remedio de los males públicos specifically addresses the strains put on an over-stretched military, the defeats it has suffered, and the growing tension of regionalism in the Iberian Peninsula. The Dutch revolt of 1566 and the Thirty Years War (1618-48) had by then taken a devastating toll on national resources, but other events, such as the 1640 revolts in Portugal and Catalonia, contributed to a heightened sense of alarm as the empire faced losses both external and internal to the Peninsula. Elliott recalls how even before the revolts Olivares had dubbed the year the most unfortunate that the monarchy had ever experienced.¹⁹

Reflecting the plight of the nation, the Spanish provinces of the Society of Jesus suffered from the onset of plague and poverty, and after years of steady growth, they sharply declined in numbers in the 1640s. Widespread hunger and disease crippled many of their schools, by then the main apostolic work of the Order.²⁰ It is in this atmosphere of crisis that Nieremberg writes some of his most significant works, and it clearly had an impact on him: ‘Se deslizó la vida de Nieremberg en el momento preciso en que este pueblo conocía la crisis más grave de su historia.’²¹ According to Elliott: ‘By the winter of 1640, the Empire which had dominated the world scene for the best part of a century seemed at last, after many a false alarm, to be on the verge of collapse.’²²

Two initial references set the tone of the treatise. The first is found in both the subtitle and the dedication, to the Count-Duke himself, ‘al excelentissimo Señor don Gaspar de Guzman’, who had been the royal *valido* since 1621; the second appears in

¹⁹ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, pp. 341-49, (p. 347).

²⁰ Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, pp. 179, 193-94.

²¹ Didier, *Vida y pensamiento*, p. 113.

²² Elliott, *Spain and Its World*, p. 217.

the introduction, as Nieremberg recalls the recent death of the king's brother, the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand (1609-1641). By 1642 the names of both the Count-Duke and the Cardinal-Infante would not have evoked happy memories. The failed policies of Olivares had by now led to increasing calls for his removal, and although Nieremberg does not propose this, he is clear about the crisis that had come to overwhelm the increasingly impotent *valido*:

El desvelo que tiene V. Exc. por la felicidad destos Reinos, q[ue] espero ha de aumentar nuestro Señor, qua[n]to sus enemigos la envidia[n]; me ha dado conñado atrevimiento de lograr en sus manos estas co[n]sideraciones, que puede[n] servir al remedio mas eficaz de las alteraciones que se experimentan, conforme al estilo de la divina providencia, la qual por tiempo suele afligir un poco, à los que quiere ensalzar mucho. Bien sè que no eran necessarias à la vigila[n]cia de V. Ex. que ha prevenido, y encargado la atencion de lo que aqui apunto. Mas como no puede V. Ex. asistir à la execucion de todo, y la falta della puede ser de gran detrimento publico, me he movido à representarle à V. Ex. con este discurso de la causa, y remedio de los males publicos.²³

The treatise is dedicated to Olivares, who is *desvelado*, one who has either lost the dream he once had, or who has been kept awake by some sort of torment, and it is with 'conñado atrevimiento' that the Jesuit offers the Count-Duke his thoughts.²⁴

Nieremberg shows his respect for all that had been accomplished under his vigilant watch, and admits that his 'consideraciones' might not have been 'necessarias' in the past. He goes on to make a theological point, that God 'suele afligir un poco a los que quiere ensalzar', an early example of the significance of discernment, in that the

²³ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. ¶3^{r-v}.

²⁴ *Tesoro*, p. 465; s.v. Desvelar.

sufferings of the moment need to be seen as the manifestation of ‘divina providencia’, or God’s will, which may yet raise the *valido* up again.

Olivares had enlisted the Jesuits in his program of domestic reform by establishing the *estudios reales* in the Colegio Imperial de Madrid.²⁵ He supported them when the crown’s patronage of the program became a highly contentious matter for the universities of Salamanca and Alcalá de Henares, and for other religious orders, especially the Dominicans.²⁶ Nieremberg had already dedicated some of his works to Olivares (*Obras y días*) or to his sister (*De la hermosura de Dios y su amabilidad*), now he believes that the continued lack of appropriate attention to these matters will be the cause of great damage: ‘la falta della puede ser de gran detrimento publico’.

The mention of Ferdinand in the opening line of the dedication also underscores the sense of loss, especially in reference to the Spanish Netherlands, where he had served as Governor General from 1634 until his untimely death in 1641:

Con la ocasion de la temprana muerte del Señor Infante Cardenal, que esté en gloria, que ha sido de tanta perdida para esta Monarquia, lastimandome del estado publico, que alcança[n] estos tiempos, bien condolido de sus males, y del poco sucesso de los remedios, me ha servido de consuelo considerar, que no es por impossibilidad de la salud, sino por la desproporcio[n] de la cura, no rebeldia del humor, sino menos acierto de la medicina, que no proporciona el remedio con la dolencia: porque como dixo el discreto Emperador Basilio: *Aquel es excelentissimo Medico que a cada genero de enfermedad, sabe aplicar su acomodada cura.*²⁷

Under Ferdinand’s rule Spain lost control of the emblematic city of Breda in 1637,

²⁵ See above, Chapter 1 (p. 6, n. 12).

²⁶ See Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, pp. 368-69; *The Count-Duke of Olivares*, p. 188.

²⁷ Nieremberg, pp. 1-2. In addition to the losses sustained in Portugal, Catalonia, and Flanders, Nieremberg also speaks of others in Italy, see *Causa y remedio*, p. 59.

which it had held since its surrender by the Dutch in 1625. The city once represented Spain's military victories abroad, immortalized by Velázquez in *La rendición de Breda* (1634), but in just over a decade it had come to represent the lost glories of the past. The painting had been commissioned by the Olivares regime as part of its iconographic program to project an image of grandeur for the king and his dominion. The visual display of this and the other paintings commissioned for the Palacio del Buen Retiro was intended to proclaim the triumphs of an empire which was now facing severe losses on various fronts, and for many readers the names of both the Count-Duke and the Cardinal-Infante would be a reminder of that failure.²⁸

In light of these disasters ('lastimandome del estado publico'), Nieremberg deems the proposed solutions ineffective ('del poco sucesso de los remedios'), yet, in search of a cure for the ailing nation, he still adopts a hopeful tone: 'no es por imposibilidad de la salud [...] sino menos acierto de la medicina, que no proporciona el remedio con la dolencia'. That the national remedy must be proportionate to the pain being suffered can also be noted in the rhetorical 'poco', 'todo', and 'falta' in the first passage, and 'tanta', 'poco', 'desproporción', and 'proporciona', in the second, pointing to the task of discerning what will be required to effect the cure ('acierto').

In the initial 'aprobación' of the treatise the Jesuit Juan Martínez Ripalda praises Nieremberg as a much needed doctor for the sick nation: 'Este gran medico de los males publicos, que nos fatigan estos años, no solo consuela en ellos nuestra paciencia, sino cura tambien en la raiz su rigor: porque no solo acierta en la causa de nuestras dolencias, sino tambien assegura la salud en los remedios de ellas'. Thus Nieremberg is presented

²⁸ Elliott, *Spain and Its World*, pp. 175, 187. For a more detailed analysis of the iconographic program of the Salón de Retiros, see Chapter 8, 'Power and Propaganda in the Spain of Philip IV', pp. 162-88. For more on the art in the pleasure palace of the Buen Retiro, see Jonathan Brown and John H. Elliott, *A Palace for a King: The Buen Retiro and the Court of Philip IV* [1980] (London: Yale University Press, 2003).

as the one who will first diagnose the maladies and then prescribe a rigorous and effective treatment. On the one hand, Martínez Ripalda's words reflect an element of desperation, as if the situation had become so grave that the only measures which could be taken were palliative: 'Quiere Dios que estimemos al medico en la necesidad, au[n]que no nos traiga la salud.' But on the other, and seeming to identify the motive behind this and so many of Nieremberg's works, Martínez Ripalda then goes on to say that the treatise ought to be esteemed because it provides much needed 'noticia': 'asegura la salud en los remedios [...] enseñando nuestra ignorancia'.²⁹

Martínez Ripalda praises Nieremberg as an outstanding writer for his 'letras', 'estudios', and 'erudición', but also mentions the 'prudencia' and 'discreción' of his thought, which emphasizes the importance he gives to discerning the cause of the nation's problems. Prudence and discretion received much attention in seventeenth-century Spain: writers such as Gracián especially used them to show how people ought to model their behavior and engage the world around them, which is often confusing, if not contradictory. In this case, the terms give meaning to the way in which Nieremberg has viewed the situation of decline by pondering the cause of events and placing them in a spiritual context. As I will show, Nieremberg will define a healthy society as one which practices prudence and appropriately reads the signs of the times, but in a spiritual sense. A person is defined as 'prudente' for his or her ability to ponder and weigh the circumstances of reality. Here, Nieremberg continues to view temporal existence in the light of the celestial end for which it was created.³⁰

As we have seen, Nieremberg's spiritual outlook is closely connected to his

²⁹ Nieremberg, p. ¶1^v.

³⁰ Covarrubias defines 'discreto' as the one who knows how to reason, or discern: 'el hombre cuerdo y de buen seso, que sabe ponderar las cosas y dar a cada una en su lugar', while the 'prudente' is 'el hombre sabio y reportado, que pesa todas las cosas'; *Tesoro*, pp. 475-76, 885; s.v. Discernir, Discreto, and Prudencia.

treatment of ‘noticia’, such as the correct reading of the ‘cifras’ embedded in nature, or the proper understanding of created things as a means to a greater end, and ‘estimación’, which seeks to use knowledge to discern the will of God. In order to examine how discernment works in *Causa y remedio*, we need to address the nature of the particular ignorance of the people regarding the ‘causa’ and the proposed ‘remedio’ of Spain’s maladies as Nieremberg sees them.

The *Causa*

One of Nieremberg’s shorter works, the *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* consists of only fourteen chapters in ninety-nine pages. He dedicates the first ten chapters to the ‘causa de los males públicos’, leaving the final four to the ‘remedio’. It is not clear how he originally intended to deliver the message it contains. The ‘Suma de la Licencia’ refers to it as a ‘discurso’, and it may have been written as a sermon or an oration which was later disseminated in the form of a treatise.³¹ What becomes clear, however, is the prophetic tone Nieremberg uses. The maladies of Spain are not attributed to various causes, hence his mention of the singular ‘causa’ in the title. A singular cure will likewise correspond to the ailment, which is articulated quite simply as sin: ‘Pecados son la causa de nuestras calamidades.’³² Because of widespread and shameless sinful behavior, God is punishing Spain with a terrible ‘azote’, which is most evident in the country’s military embarrassments:

No me meto tampoco en si [h]ay en España mas pecados que en Francia, Olanda, y otras Provincias enemigas, ò estrangeras [...]
A[h]ora viene nuestra vez, a[h]ora nos castiga el Señor con la invasion del Frances, con la inobediencia del Catalan, con la

³¹ See ‘Suma de la Licencia, y Privilegio’, in Nieremberg, p. ¶1^r.

³² Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 4.

rebelion del Portugues. Esto es por a[h]ora nuestro azote.³³

The different political adversaries, both within and beyond the boundaries of Iberia, the constant threat of military conflict and the reality of political rebellion are identified as a religious phenomenon, a manifestation of God's desire to punish Spain through them. According to Nieremberg, viewing the crisis in religious and moral terms is crucial to proper diagnosis, and they establish the spiritual framework out of which he will speak.

By the middle of the seventeenth century not only was it held that Philip IV was the ruler of a great and vast empire, but it was also believed that such a position carried with it the implications of heavenly patronage. Such a mindset had been cultivated during the reign of Charles V, who had prepared Philip II to accept the duties of kingship as a divine mission.³⁴ The House of the Habsburgs was even compared to the House of David, the great king of the Israelites, whose royal descent gave rise to the coming of the Messiah in Christ. Hence Philip II and his successors were obliged to follow the advice of theologians and confessors in all matters which posed a problem of conscience, such as war, political and economic jurisdiction, and the interpretation of justice.³⁵ In 1619, for example, the Benedictine Juan de Salazar described in his *Política española* how Spaniards had become the new chosen people of God. The identification of Spain in such terms is important to note because it not only places the nation within a hermeneutic of divine election, but also its plight in a spiritual context for which the only cure can be achieved by religious measures, not secular ones. It is for this reason that Nieremberg will conclude that 'no [h]ay consejo de hombres que sea bastante para

³³ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 10.

³⁴ Elliott, *Spain and its World*, p. 147; *Imperial Spain*, pp. 249-51.

³⁵ Didier, *Vida y pensamiento*, p. 107. Elliott speaks of the 'powerful strain of messianic nationalism' that was developed by the Habsburgs of Castile; see *Spain and Its World*, p. 246.

aliviar lo que el consejo de Dios quiere afligir'.³⁶

Half a century earlier Ribadeneyra had advocated in his *Tratado de la tribulación* the theory that the sins of a king could result in the downfall of his kingdom: 'no es maravilla que peque el rey, que es la cabeza, y sea castigado el pueblo, que es el cuerpo que se rige por ella. Más es de maravillar que castigue Dios á muchos por el pecado de un solo hombre particular'. However, he explains the defeat of the Armada as the result of the sins committed throughout the country: 'No solamente castiga nuestro Señor á las personas particulares, y las aflige con várias penas por sus particulares culpas, [...] pero también azota y atribula las ciudades, provincias, y reinos enteros por los pecados que se cometen en ellos.'³⁷ He held that God punishes people with calamities of all sorts – natural disasters, political failures, and military setbacks – as a message for them to amend their behavior, but also to test and perfect them: 'El campo, para que dé fruto se cava y se ara; el trigo, para que se pueda comer después de cogido, se alimpia, muele, amasa, y cuece; el vino y el aceite se exprimen en el lagar; la lana y el lino pasan por infinitos tormentos, y el hombre con las tribulaciones se perficiona y afina.'³⁸

The disastrous events of the mid-seventeenth century in Spain led Philip IV and Olivares to a similar interpretation: they were being punished for the sins of the people, including those of the monarch.³⁹ While he does not single out the king, Nieremberg names the 'causa' of Spain's ills in a catalogue of sins which includes avarice, pride, ambition, adultery, other sexual scandals, and the lack of good deeds, all of them

³⁶ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 17. For more on Salazar, see José Fernández-Santamaría, 'Reason of State and Statecraft in Spain (1595-1640)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 41 (1980), 355-79 (p. 358).

³⁷ Ribadeneyra, *Tratado de la tribulación*, in *Obras escogidas*, pp. 411-13.

³⁸ Ribadeneyra, *Tratado de la tribulación*, p. 360.

³⁹ Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, p. 357; *The Count-Duke of Olivares*, pp. 586-87.

contrary to the virtues of religion, justice, chastity, and temperance.⁴⁰ These virtues, he insists, are essential pillars of a properly ordered society, ‘porque por la Religio[n] nos unimos con Dios, por la Justicia se conserva la policia, y el estado publico, y por la Castidad, y Templanza el particular, y toda buena economica’.⁴¹ Consequently, the adverse effects of sin are both social and individual, reflected in the ‘estado publico’ and ‘el particular’, both of which are preserved by the corresponding virtues. Sin has infected diverse aspects of society, and its effects can be felt everywhere.

Nieremberg takes care not to place blame on a particular individual or party, but holds everyone accountable:

El mozo pie[n]se q[ue] entre con su livia[n]dad, el Viejo co[n] su codicia, el Señor con su mucha licencia, el Magistrado con su poco zelo de justicia, y el Religioso con no muy estrecha observancia, unos con ambicion luciferina, otros con avaricia, otros con sensualidad bestial, otros y los mas con poco respeto a Dios, y à las cosas divinas.⁴²

While sinful behavior is related to the age and state of life or profession of each individual, their sins represent a collective lack of moral fortitude at all levels of society. On the one hand, he is willing to admit that governing officials have made mistakes – ‘no niego que en un gobierno humano [h]aya de [h]aber algunos [y]erros’ – and goes on to suggest that Spain has seen its fair share of unqualified or opportunistic individuals: ‘de mucho dolor es, que sean no pocos ministros inferiores, sumamente executivos contra la intencion del Rey’. But on the other he appears to deflect the issue away from them – ‘no atribuyamos à falta de disposición, no à descuydo de los ministros, no à

⁴⁰ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. 21-2, 25, 35, 62-3, where many of the sins mentioned by Nieremberg are found.

⁴¹ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 35.

⁴² Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. 32-3.

desacierto de los acuerdos’ – and attributes the ‘causa’ to the sins of all: ‘pero dessos mismos son causa de nuestras culpas. Porque por pecados del pueblo erraran los Magistrados.’ Widespread moral failure also explains the prevalence of crime, violence, homicide, and deceitful activity, and it is because of these and many other faults that the nation must recognize and accept the divine ‘azote’: ‘porq[ue] Dios mira el cuerpo de una Republica por junto, por la continuación que tiene en pecar, hasta el tiempo que tiene decretado sufrirla’. Nieremberg is convinced that no other interpretation of the crisis should be considered: ‘No [h]ay que buscar otra causa de q[ue] esten estos reinos afligidos.’⁴³

That Nieremberg labels sin as the sole ‘causa’ of Spain’s public maladies is significant, for it presents an inherently moralistic assessment of the country’s political, economic, and social ills. While there may be hints of administrative or bureaucratic ineptitude on the part of those in public office, there is no suggestion of inefficient military strategies, over-stretched troops, or even a lack of supplies. To the modern reader such an interpretation might seem excessively pious, but it expresses the mindset of the century and the central importance of religious beliefs. The crisis could be viewed both negatively and positively; its symptoms were manifestations of divine wrath, but they were also a message from heaven that was meant to be read and assimilated. The ‘remedio’ Nieremberg proposes therefore cannot be understood apart from his spiritual outlook and the emphasis he consistently places on understanding the cause of the sickness and discerning the will of God for its cure.

The *Remedio*

According to Nieremberg, the best cure for the nation lies in a general change of

⁴³ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. 5, 21, 33, 43, 47.

behavior and penitence for the sins committed: ‘otro [no] puede ser su remedio, sino la reformacio[n] de costu[m]bres, la enmienda, y penitencia nuestra’.⁴⁴ In fact, although various *arbitristas* have offered words of counsel, he will argue that the only real solution is an ascetical one. The final chapters are therefore dedicated to a spiritual project of personal and social reform in which the two dimensions of ‘enmienda’ and ‘penitencia’ will bear much weight. According to Covarrubias, ‘e[n]mienda’ is the reduction or correction of an error and implies a certain degree of punishment, ‘tomar e[n]mienda, castigar’.⁴⁵ In other words, it is intended to bring about moral regeneration. But in a spiritual context, the ‘enmienda’ is an ascetical exercise meant to foster a closer relationship with the divine. For example, in the Spiritual Exercises it signifies the way in which practitioners conform themselves to their divine end: ‘dar forma y modo de enmendar y reformar la propia vida y estado de cada uno dellos; es a saber, poniendo su creación, vida y estado para gloria y alabanza de Dios nuestro Señor y salvación de su propia ánima’ [§189]. While Nieremberg is not guiding the nation through the Spiritual Exercises, the notion that readers must conform to the will of God is not simply an exhortation to moral behavior but comes as a call to discern the cause of Spain’s ills and to apply the remedy.

It is from the perspective that God is punishing Spain through divine retribution for its sins that Nieremberg articulates his solution by appealing to sacred Scripture, which offers exemplary models for the restoration of the country:

Algunos propondre aqui, como exemplar de nuestro reparo, en que veremos como con la penite[n]cia [varias Republicas y Reinos] se libraron muchas vezes de grandes castigos del cielo, que ò les

⁴⁴ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 66.

⁴⁵ *Tesoro*, p. 507; s.v. Emienda. For the verbal form of the word, Covarrubias repeats this definition: ‘Emendar la vida [...]. Emienda, el castigo’, pp. 520-21; s.v. Emendar.

[h]abian de venir, ò les experimentaban. En tiempo de Josue, con ser tan bueno aquel Principe, desobligò ta[n]to el pueblo de Israel à Dios, que le quiso castigar severamente por los Cananeos. [...] mas porque hizieron penitencias, ofrecieron grandes sacrificios, clamaron al cielo, y lloraron sus pecados con tan sentidos gemidos, amargas y copiosas lagrimas, que [...] se templò luego el enojo Divino, y gozaron por mas de ciento y veinte años de gran felicidad.⁴⁶

In this example, the people of Israel find themselves under siege from the Canaanites, who appear as the agents of divine wrath; they are rescued from disaster only when they offer sacrifices, pray, show remorse, and beg the heavens for mercy for the sins they have committed. Just as the performance of penances becomes the cure by which the Israelites free themselves from such punishment, it is implied that the Spaniards must do likewise.

The comparison between the plight of the Spaniards and that of the Israelites is not accidental; Nieremberg's repeated references to the nation of Israel indicate how Spaniards of the seventeenth century continued to view themselves and their empire in terms of divine election.⁴⁷ They thought of themselves as a special race, which explains all they had been able to accomplish as a once powerful empire ('que las vitorias que ha tenido España, no tanto se deben à su valor, quanto al favor Divino'); indeed, the Catholic faith had come to reach its fullest potential in this land: 'donde està la Fe tan en su pu[n]to como es en España'.⁴⁸ That is the very reason why God is punishing them for their sins: 'ansi no serà maravilla, que nos sufriesse Dios nuestro Señor menos por ser su pueblo'. Not only is the king of Spain upheld as the great champion of the faith, but by

⁴⁶ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 67.

⁴⁷ See above, p. 187.

⁴⁸ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. 34-35, 44, 65.

association he is compared with the patriarchs of Israel, such as Joshua, who had led Israel into the Promised Land and enabled the nation to thrive. Nieremberg praises the faith of people and their monarch ('no se fie si [h]ay muchos buenos, y santos en España, como los [h]ay verdaderamente, por ventura mas que en otras partes, y que su Re[y] es tan Catolico'), and in the next sentence again identifies king and country with Joshua and his people ('santo era Josue, y Israel entonces estaba llena de buenos, y temerosos de Dios'). He also calls the prophet Samuel the 'Duque de Israel', a reference which would not be lost on readers, and reinforces the notion that it is the Conde-Duque himself who should implement the program of reform proposed in the treatise.⁴⁹

Nieremberg himself adopts the tone of a prophet whose message urges a nation to conversion. Some of his suggestions, such as wearing loose clothing in order to curtail lascivious behavior, are intended to prevent particular sins. He also faults people for simply presuming that they will be shown mercy for their sins ('pecar [...] con presuncion del perdon'), and for their pride and arrogance: 'Casi todos lo Politicos advierten, que à la soberbia de los Reinos acompaña su destruicion'.⁵⁰ However, he tends to speak of sin in general terms and, since the crisis is not individual but national, of an overall moral reform. Given the political scope of the problems, the 'remedio' pays special attention to the historical books of the Old Testament, which had been used to educate Charles V into becoming so successful a monarch: 'El [h]aber salido tan excelente Principe el Emperador Carlos Quinto, lo atribuyen algunos à la diligencia de su Maestro Adriano, que le declarò los libros de los Reyes.'⁵¹

⁴⁹ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. 31, 93.

⁵⁰ Regarding these types of sin, see Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. 64, 66.

⁵¹ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 12 (a marginal note lists the source as 'de Provident.rat.14. in sine'). Charles V was often upheld by the *arbitristas* as an exemplary king, as Quevedo states in the dedication of his *Política de Dios* to Philip IV: 'Dios [...] dispuso vuestro enseñamiento, derivándoos de padres y

In one example, Nieremberg draws from II Kings to portray how King Hezekiah of Judah reacts to the news of impending doom at the hand of his enemy, King Sennacherib of Assyria. Passages such as this also reveal the fundamentally ascetical character of the treatise:

Mayor fue el aprieto en q[ue] estuvo el Reino de Judea, quando Senacherib Emperador de Asiria, vino con un poderoso exercito ganando las mas fuertes plazas de aquel Reino. Hallose Jerusle[n] sin fuerzas, el Rey Ezequias sin ayuda, cercada su Corte de un exercito innumerable. Persuadiose ser por pecados aquel castigo, y que el remedio seria la penite[n]cia, que fue tal, que llegò el buen Rey à vestirse de cilicio. Hicieron lo mismo su mayordomo mayor, y otros ministros principales, hasta los Sacerdotes mas viejos. Orò el Rey con gran fervor en el Templo. El sucesso fue que no habiendo remedio en la tierra vino del cielo, embiando Dios un Angel, que en una noche matò ciento y ochenta y cinco mil co[m]batientes del exercito contrario. De modo q[ue] à la mañana se hallò Jerusalem libre, segura y rica con despojos, que deparo[n] los enemigos, recobrandose luego todas las fortalezas perdidas.⁵²

Hezekiah turns to the Lord in prayer and performs penances by wrapping a cilice, or sackcloth, around himself, an example which is followed by the head of his household, the secretary, and the senior priests.⁵³ In return, an angel slaughters the enemy, and frees the king and his kingdom from the great military threat. Though at first Jerusalem is described as ‘sin fuerzas’, ‘sin ayuda’, and ‘cercado’, through the practice of penances and divine intervention it becomes ‘libre’, ‘segura’, ‘rica’, and ‘con despojos’.

abuelos, de quien sois herencia gloriosa y en pocos años acreditado. Mucho tenéis que copiar en Carlos V, si os fatigaren guerras extranjerias y ambiciones de victorias’, Quevedo, *Política de Dios*, p. xxii.

⁵² Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 73. The biblical passage is cited in the margin as ‘4 Regum 18’ and ‘4 Regum 19’ (in modern biblical citation, II Kings 18:13-36 and all of chapter 19).

⁵³ Covarrubias defines the ‘cilicio’ as a sackcloth or hair-shirt (‘saco’), though it may also be the even sharper belt, or garter, with quills or barbs, which was worn under the clothes and next to the skin, wrapped around the waist or limbs; *Tesoro*, p. 419; s.v. Cilicio. See also *Autoridades*, I, 349; s.v. Cilicio.

Nieremberg's paraphrased version of the passage stresses the importance of ascetical practices, and while they are performed by those holding civic or religious offices, in the next passage, taken from the Book of Esther, the whole nation cries out to the Lord in supplication and performs penances, which include wearing the cilice, in addition to fasting, tearing the garments, sleeping in a pile of ashes or covering the head with them, and walking barefoot.⁵⁴

It is important to note the emphasis Nieremberg places on who exactly should perform the penances. In the first biblical example the governing leaders are the penitents and their response to a crisis comes to form a motif in the treatise, as seen in the following episode taken from the history of Bohemia:

No quiero passar en silencio lo que passo al santo Rey de los Boemios Vencislao. Entrando sus tierras con poderoso exercito Radislao, Principe de gran poder, haziendo gra[n]des daños en ellas, le saliò al encuentro: mas por evitar la morta[n]dad de la batalla, Vencislao fiado de Dios desafiò cuerpo à cuerpo à Radislao, para que en este combate se determinasse el legitimo Rey. Diolo por hecho todo Radislao, desprecia[n]do a su competidor: mas no tanto q[ue] no sali[e]sse muy armado de pu[n]ta en blanco al lugar del desafio. Al contrario hizo Vencislao, que solamente con su espada ordinaria salio al campo, y essa muy pequeña, pero cargado de un aspero cilicio. Armore luego con señal de la Cruz, que le fuesse señal de vitoria: porque se postrò luego Radislao à los pies de su Rey, y entonces co[m]petidor pidiendole perdon de su desvanecido atrevimiento echando de ver que mas pudo Ve[n]cislao con las armas de su penitencia, que Radislao con las de azero.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 74. Wearing the sackcloth or hair-shirt and covering the head with ashes were well-known ascetical practices in seventeenth-century Spain, both with biblical sources in the Old Testament. See also *Tesoro*, p. 919; s.v. Saco.

⁵⁵ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. 80-81. The following reference is included in the margin of the text: 'Ioan. Dubrauius li. 4. Histor. Boem.', the *Historia regni Bohemiae* (1552) by Jan Dubravius (1586-1653).

The passage clearly emphasizes the piety of the king and the power of the Cross, especially as it is shown to bring about military victory and legitimate his power. Thus in several examples, both biblical and non-biblical, it is the king or a governing official, the ‘*persona pública*’, who must humble himself and perform penances.

It is unlikely that Nieremberg intended to criticize the king, even indirectly, through comparison with such exemplary figures, especially since he was well connected to the court. Rather, it is the king who must exemplify the ‘*remedio*’ for his subjects: ‘*tan eficaz es, que quando es verdadera, suele bastar la penitencia de uno*’.⁵⁶ The biblical and historical scenarios therefore portray how public maladies are corrected principally by public persons and holders of offices – the king, his *valido* (‘*mayordomo mayor*’), government ministers (‘*otros ministros*’), and church officials (‘*hasta los Sacerdotes mas viejos*’) – because they set an example for the entire nation: they portray the biblical model of proceeding in human affairs by replacing worldly concerns with greater reliance on penitence and divine intervention.

For this reason, the sword of King Wenceslas is described as ‘*ordinaria*’ and ‘*muy pequeña*’, while the coarse ‘*cilicio*’ is portrayed as a protective weapon of greater magnitude. Not unlike the victory that was given to Constantine in a vision, ‘*in hoc signo vinces*’, that of Wenceslas takes place because he is armed with the ascetical garment and the Cross, which stand in stark contrast to the armor of his opponent (‘*que saliese muy armado de punta en blanco*’). Likewise, a subsequent passage describes how the king of the Ninevites is also given victory as he performs similar penances and prepares himself for battle by putting on sackcloth. In a further episode, King David and his soldiers are victorious as a result of wearing the ‘*cilicio*’ and performing

⁵⁶ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 76.

ascetical practices: ‘los ayunos eran muy frecuentes, ceñíanse con cilicios, y cubrían de ceniza sus cabezas, no juzgando que era cobardía mostrarse afligidos, y penitentes delante del Señor.’ The general population must ultimately accept responsibility for the crisis, as Nieremberg exhorts – ‘templemos pues nuestros gustos, quitemos nuestros vicios, reformemos nuestras costumbres, cumpla cada uno sus obligaciones’ – but the king and his ministers will have to lead the way to reform.⁵⁷

Even though guilt is generically spread across the ‘pueblo’, Nieremberg’s ‘remedio’ continues to point to the role public officials have in the betterment of the body politic: ‘Los Magistrados atiendan à la justicia, los Ministros purifiquen sus inte[n]ciones, unos y otros miren solo por el bien publico, y servicio de su Rey, que es el bien de su Reino, no a respectos particulares.’⁵⁸ So much importance is given to their example that Nieremberg proposes the formation of a ‘comision particular’ of governing officials who would publicly perform austere penances on behalf of the nation: ‘No quiero obligar à que todos se hechen [*sic*] un saco à cuestras, no que se carguen cilicios, no que se maceren con abstinencias, y ayunos, no que se desangren con disciplinas, ni que se martiricen con rigores, que esto no es de todos.’ Instead, the display of ascetical rigor is reserved for specially designated ministers from every province who would inspire the rest of the citizens to reform their lives and bring about an ‘enmienda de costumbres’ throughout the nation: ‘No [h]ay duda sino que seria de gran eficacia esta comision particular, y tal vez alguna visita general de un Reino se podia hazer con tales personas, circunstancias, avisos, y ordenes, que fuera universal remedio de todo.’⁵⁹

While his perspective is clearly that of a moralist, like many of his fellow *arbitristas*, and while his line of thought can be traced to the accounts of earlier

⁵⁷ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. 82-83, 86.

⁵⁸ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 83.

⁵⁹ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. 87-89.

disasters, such as Ribadeneira's explanation of the Armada's defeat in his *Tratado de la tribulación*, Nieremberg underlines the importance of his message in providing the much needed and too often ignored truth about the national crisis and the sins of the *pueblo*:

Maravilla es, que de ta[n]tos arbitrios que se ha[n] dado en estos Reinos, de tantas consultas que se han hecho, de tantas resoluciones que se han decretado, de ta[n]tos decretos que se han executado, y los mas se han desvanecido, ò no lucido mucho, que en lo que va todo de emendar costumbres, se [h]aya executado tan poco, y poco mas deliberado.⁶⁰

It is the lack of appropriate 'noticia' about the country's situation which Nieremberg here emphasizes: many remedies have been proposed and many laws passed, but to little effect, which suggests that the true cause of the nation's predicament is not properly understood. Although he proposes that people change their sinful ways ('lo que va todo de emendar costumbres'), this view has not even been discerned, much less executed.

Whereas in his popular works Nieremberg shows how knowledge leads to the proper understanding of things and ultimately points the way toward personal salvation, he now presents it as the way to save the nation. The context of *Causa y remedio* differs from that of the works we have seen, which focus more specifically on the state of the human soul. In this respect, it represents a broadening of the scope of his message as it attempts to provide 'noticia' for the soul of the body politic. While to the modern reader this type of discourse seems little more than a moral harangue, it must be understood in connection with the promotion of discernment we have identified in his popular texts.

Behind Nieremberg's insistence that the ascetical 'remedio' be undertaken by

⁶⁰ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 8 (see also p. 17).

governing officials lies his desire to remind the public that the eternal realm of life is more significant than the temporal. In this sense the treatise relates to his other works, such as *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno*, because it encourages readers to consider all things in life according to the divine plan of salvation, and the *Práctica del catecismo romano*, which uses both fictional and historical ‘exemplos’ to illustrate not only moral, but also divine, teachings. There we may recall how characters such as the haughty king and repentant monk in the catechetical tales amend their lives according to divine will.⁶¹ Equally, the spiritual perspective that dominates his political views relates to his two-part *Curiosa y oculta filosofía*, in which readers are urged to view the imprint of the divine in creation. In *Causa y remedio de los males públicos*, they are encouraged to recognize the manifestation of the divine will in the climate of political and economic hardship and, as in most of his popular works, are instructed to reform their lives accordingly. Beyond these broad similarities, however, I aim to show in the following section how the treatise contributes to Nieremberg’s overall rhetoric of discernment through examining the significance of two of its principal motives. The first is the author’s reference to prudence, which comes to form an important subtext in the treatise, and the second is his emphasis on the ascetical ‘enmienda’, which the Jesuits came to promote with increasing prominence in the seventeenth century.

Prudent Reform

In Chapter 12 Nieremberg specifies that only the prudent statesmen can put into practice the ascetical ‘remedio’ described in the last four chapters:

Quiero advertir aqui, que el humillarse a Dios, mostrarse afligidos,

⁶¹ See above, Chapter 2 (pp. 68-79).

y hazer demostraciones de penitencia en los aprietos publicos, no es falta de valor, [...] porque Gobernadores prudentissimos, y varones esforzadissimos, y Principes invictos lo han hecho. David fue uno de los Reyes mas prudentes, y valerosos del mundo, y que mas vezes vencio, pues su vida, y reinando, fue una continua vitoria.⁶²

The virtue of prudence is clearly given emphasis, since it is associated with superlatives describing rulers ('prudentissimos', 'eforzadissimos') who are undefeated. The reference to King David reiterates the notion of 'messianic nationalism' in which Spain represented the new chosen people, but that he was 'uno de los Reyes mas prudentes' is also a noteworthy characteristic, since he is portrayed victorious not only on the battlefield, but also in recognizing and overcoming the faults of his own life – 'pues su vida'.

The treatment of prudence came to take center stage in the discourse of the Spanish *arbitristas*. According to Jeremy Robbins, it was 'effectively synonymous with political and moral knowledge, enabling the individual to ascertain which course to take on the basis of deducing from the causes of past situations the effects which will follow any action', and even became the 'defining virtue of the Christian prince'.⁶³ Quevedo, for example, begins his *Política de Dios* in this way: 'Tiene Vuestra Majestad, de Dios, tantos y tan grandes reinos, que sólo de su boca y acciones, y de todos los que le imitaron, puede tomar modo de gobierno con acierto y prudencia.'⁶⁴ It emerged with particular prominence in Spain as writers attempted to qualify the ethical significance of deception (*engaño*). In his anti-Machiavellian treatise, *Idea de un príncipe político cristiano* or *Empresas políticas* (1640), Diego de Saavedra y Fajardo (1584-1648) tries

⁶² Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 84.

⁶³ Jeremy Robbins, *Arts of Perception*, pp. 97, 103.

⁶⁴ Quevedo, *Política de Dios*, p. xxi.

to synthesize Classical, Scholastic, Renaissance, and Catholic accounts of prudence within the troubled and confusing context of the mid-seventeenth century. However, one of the more nuanced treatments of prudence and deceit is found in the works of Gracián, ‘who places the deployment of deception at the heart of prudence in ways which transgress the carefully defined moral boundaries established by [...] the majority of moralists and political theorists’.⁶⁵ In the *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* (1647), the prudent man is the one who knows how to reason ‘al revés’:

Con algunos todo ha de ir al encontrado. El *Sí* es *No* y el *No* es *Sí*. El dezir mal de una cosa se tiene por estimación della, que el que la quiere para sí la desacredita para los otros. No todo alabar es dezir bien, que algunos, por no alabar los buenos, alaban también los malos; y para quien ninguno es malo, ninguno será bueno.⁶⁶

Nieremberg expresses a similar view in *Obras y días*: ‘Diversa cosa es engañar, o dexarse engañar: muchas vezes es de la Prudencia no mostrarse prudente, ni que sabe todo.’⁶⁷

While prudence in *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* does not receive the attention other *arbitristas* give it, the few occasions on which it is mentioned are worth noting. As we have seen in the ‘aprobación’ of the treatise, Martínez Ripalda praises Nieremberg for his ‘prudencia’. But in his opening lines Nieremberg states that not even the embrace of prudence can bring about the solution to Spain’s woes:

Poco aprovecharan a la defensa de un Reino el desvelo de sus Magistrados, las conducciones de gentes, las prevenciones de

⁶⁵ For more on Saavedra and Gracián, see Robbins, *Arts of Perception*, pp. 97-156 (p. 99).

⁶⁶ Gracián, ‘§250. ¿Quándo se ha de discurrir al revés?’, in *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* [1647], ed. by Emilio Blanco (Madrid: Cátedra, 1995), p. 237

⁶⁷ Nieremberg, *Obras y días* (1629), p. 44^r.

armadas, el numero de soldados, las copiosas contribuciones, los avisos oportunos, los consejos prudentes qua[n]do la causa de su daño es superior a la providencia humana.⁶⁸

Since the problems of the nation are of a religious nature, their ‘remedio’ is beyond the reach of even the best human reasoning.

On the one hand, the practice of prudence is a mere human convention, and therefore an insufficient remedy. Nieremberg goes on to observe that, as a virtue in the art of states-craft, alongside the sins of the people, the absence of prudence can be seen as one of the principal reasons for the failure of so many of the proposed solutions to the nation’s ills:

Pecados son nuestros el origen de nuestros males con que Dios quiere advertir a España, no acabarla, y su remedio no le ha de dar la prudencia politica, sino la enmienda reconocida. Assi como dizen los Medicos, que la agricultura sustenta à los cuerpos sanos, y la medicina sana à los enfermos. Assi tambien la prudencia sustenta las Republicas sanas, y à las enfermas ha de sanar la penitencia, y enmienda, de costumbres: no tenerla nosotros es la causa que se [h]ayan devanecido ta[n]tos medios, que se han tomado para reparar el estado publico, y conservar nuestro imperio, que si no es amparado del favor Divino poco sirven diligencias humanas.⁶⁹

Prudence works in a healthy society and helps to support it, but in a sick society, such as Spain, other remedies – in this case, divinely inspired moral reform – are needed. Hence prudence in a secular sense cannot cure a disease which is spiritual in origin.

Nieremberg adds that the lack of prudence has allowed the disease to grow and worsen:

⁶⁸ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, pp. ¶2^r, 3.

⁶⁹ Nieremberg, *Causa y remedio*, p. 4.

‘no tenerla nosotros es la causa que se hayan desvanecido tantos medios’, measures which would have helped to ‘reparar’ and ‘conservar’ the empire.

The importance Nieremberg attributed to prudence is evident in his treatment of it in *Obras y días*, where, like other authors, he identifies it as the queen of all virtues: ‘Para el perfecto ejercicio de las Virtudes, es necessaria perfecta Prudencia [...]. Es la laçada con que todas las demas se asen y prenden.’⁷⁰ Prudence not only guides understanding and knowledge, it is the best way to live one’s life: ‘La Maestra de todas las Virtudes Morales, como la que preside en el entendimiento, es la Prudencia; Arte de vida.’⁷¹ More importantly, however, Nieremberg also upholds prudence for the way in which it enables the exercise of discernment:

Tres Gracias que entre si esta[n] abraçadas, son necessarias para esta Virtud. La primera es, de consultar bien, y es la que halla muchos y varios medios, que proponer para que [h]aya en que escoger, y se puede elegir conveniente. La segu[n]da, un acertado juizio para determinar el medio mas importante. La tercera, mandar la execucion de lo que se ha resuelto.

According to this definition, the prudent person is the one who is able to think things through, make a decision, and execute it; in other words, in *Obras y días* he states that prudence enables good discernment: ‘para que [...] discierna bien aquello que pretende’. It grants people the ability to look back and recall past events in such a way that they can understand the present state of affairs:

Este es el beneficio de la Memoria, hazer que lo passado no sea passado, sino presente, en q[ue] se imita a la vida de Dios y su

⁷⁰ Nieremberg, *Obras y días* (1629), p. 10^f.

⁷¹ Nieremberg, *Obras y días* (1629), p. 40^f. Following Scholastic thought, Nieremberg mentions Aristotle, as well as St Basil and Aegidius Romanus.

eternidad, en que no [h]ay nada passado, ni futuro, sino toda su vida està junta indivisiblemente y presente [...], cuya imagen es el prudente, q[ue] ocupado en disponer, y adivinar lo que ha de suceder, y acordandose de lo sucedido, toda su vida vive junta, y tiene presente, o por lo menos cada parte della vive muchas vezes.⁷²

On the other hand, prudence is also a spiritual virtue because with it people can read the signs of the time in a religious context and draw the conclusion that a spiritual disease requires a spiritual remedy. In referring to the prudent statesmen in *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* Nieremberg hopes to have shown how only the most prudent of ministers have followed the path of moral reform he is suggesting. Although the virtue is at times limited to the human capacity for reasoning, here it forms part of his rhetoric of discerning God's will for the nation: 'el humillarse a Dios, mostrarse afligidos, y hazer demostraciones de penitencia en los aprietos publicos, no es falta de valor, [...] porque Gobernadores prudentissimos, y varones esforzadissimos, y Principes invictos lo han hecho.' If the statesmen want to be victorious, they must be willing to read the will of God as it is manifested in the political and economic decline of the empire.

Prudence is an essential virtue in Nieremberg's approach to the spiritual life, one which he attributes to the founder of his Order: '[San Ignacio] dezia tambien que la santidad, aunque por si era estimable, pero que sin prudencia estaba manca, que no podria hazerse fruto en otros, y que mas hazia gra[n] prudencia con mediana virtud, que mayor santidad con mediana virtud.'⁷³ In *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* he speaks of the prudent man as one who not only performs penances, but considers the

⁷² Nieremberg, *Obras y días* (1629), pp. 41^r-43^r. For more on the parts of Prudence in Scholastic thought, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [2a2æ q.48], vol 36, ed. by Thomas Gilby (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1974), pp. 53-60; for more on the role of the memory in the practice of prudence [2a2æ q.49 a.1], see pp. 61-64.

⁷³ Nieremberg, *Vida del patriarca san Ignacio de Loyola*, p. 27^r.

divinely oriented nature of temporal existence and orders his life accordingly:

Pero el prudente es el que considerando lo que le ha de suceder en breve, de salir despojado deste mundo, se previene para el otro, aprovechando el tiempo desta vida para hallarlo en la eternidad, y con obras santas de penitencia, caridad y limosna, traspasa sus tesoros à la region en que ha de habitar para siempre, ordenando bien aqui toda su vida.⁷⁴

The virtue of prudence is an important component of Nieremberg's spiritual outlook precisely because it enables the necessary discernment for progress in the spiritual life, and while it brings into question the future state of one's soul, it is meant to be applied to the practical matters of daily life. Nieremberg stresses this point in *Vida divina, camino real* (1633) as he links prudence to accepting the will of God: 'en ley de prudencia, [...] debemos hazer lo que gusta Dios, y estar conformes con todo lo que hiziere, aun solo para vivir, y passar esta vida temporal contentos'.⁷⁵ Through a proper reading of the signs of the time, people ought to embrace Nieremberg's ascetical remedy.

It is no surprise that Nieremberg's 'remedio' is both highly moralistic and ascetical, since he was known to have lived his own life in this way. He had completed the initial period of training in the Jesuit Order under Francisco Aguado, who, according to Didier, was known for his ascetic spirituality: 'Este hombre [...] supo inculcar a sus novicios, junto con una rigurosa aversión al mundo, el ardiente amor de la Cruz y de la ascesis cristiana'. For example, in his *Exhortaciones varias doctrinales* (1641) Aguado upholds the ascetical embrace of the cross and the mortification this implies as a way to

⁷⁴ Nieremberg, *De la diferencia* (1640), pp. 19-20.

⁷⁵ Nieremberg, *Vida divina, camino real* (1635), p. 37^v.

cure spiritual ills: ‘en la Cruz está la medicina, y arte de curar’.⁷⁶ Nieremberg’s cure for the ills of the Spanish nation, which portrays the ‘cilicio’ as a metaphorical weapon of great power, reflects a similar view; but should his recommendations be taken literally? In a sense, yes. We know that Nieremberg was reported by his hagiographers to have embraced ascetical practices to excess:

En tanto, su ascética se acrecentaba al par que su saber. El P. Alonso de Andrade nos habla de las rigurosas mortificaciones a que se sometía [...], escribiendo que ‘usó de asperísimos cilicios, de cardas, y cadenas aceradas, cruces con clavos, y sogas de cerdas, tejidas con púas, fajas y capotillos, y cilicios tan ásperos y pesados que le quebrantaron los huesos’.

While these practices were important to him, it should also be borne in mind that in post-Tridentine Spain the ascetical way of life was often upheld as a model of religious perfection, both in the Society and the wider Church.⁷⁷

But as a metaphorical weapon the cilice is part of Nieremberg’s rhetoric of discernment as he attempts to persuade readers to free themselves from sin. Lorenzo Scupoli (1530-1610) had expressed a similar view in his famous ascetical treatise, the *Combate spiritual* (1589), in which he advises the Christian soul to purge itself of disordered attachments:

Advierte pues hija, y oye con cuydado lo que quiero dezirte, [...] que segu[n] la diversidad de las ocassiones que se te ofrecerán, conviene que estès muy sobre aviso, teniendo siempre la voluntad libre y purgada, de todo afecto y amor que sea de Dios [...]:

⁷⁶ See Didier, *Vida y pensamiento*, p. 50-51. For more on Aguado, see above, Chapter 1 (p. 6, n. 14).

⁷⁷ Zepeda-Henríquez, ‘Estudio preliminar’, p. xv. For more on the prominence of asceticism both in Nieremberg’s life and the wider culture of seventeenth-century Spain, see above, Chapter 1 (pp. 7-8, 25-26).

porque si el entendimiento ha de discernir bien y derechamente, es necesario que mire, y considere el objeto que se les propone, antes que la voluntad se aficiona, porque entonces el entendimiento libre y claro, pueda hazer buena eleccion.⁷⁸

Rather than serving its own purpose, the ascetical life orients the soul and clears the mind in such a way that it can make decisions that reflect a desire to do God's will. Jesuits gave special attention to the 'enmienda' of sin through asceticism because of the similar function that is given to it in the *Ejercicios espirituales*. For example, Loyola's asceticism is apparent in his 'Addiciones', which he included in order for people to profit more fully from his method ('para mejor hazer los ejercicios y para mejor hallar lo que desea' [§§73-90]). In the second 'addicion' he instructs practitioners to imagine themselves as penitent sinners bound in chains before the Lord, 'trayendo en exemplo cómo los encarcerados y encadenados ya dignos de muerte parescen delante de su juez temporal' [§72]. In subsequent instructions he goes on to suggest the actual practice of penances, such as fasting, avoiding comfort, using the discipline, and wearing the cilice: 'castigar la carne, es a saber, dándole dolor sensible, el qual se da trayendo çiliçios o sogas o barras de hierro sobre las carnes, flagelándose, o llagándose, y otras maneras de asperezas' [§85].⁷⁹

Beyond its purgative effect, the 'enmienda' contributes to the way in which retreatants more readily dispose their souls for progress in the Exercises, and ultimately, in the spiritual life. This can be seen in the way St Ignatius speaks of ridding the soul of

⁷⁸ Lorenzo Scupoli, *Lucha, o combate spiritual del alma, con sus efetos desordenados. Compuesta en lengua italiana por un siervo de Dios, y traduzido en la castellana por Luys de Vera* [1589], in Bellarmine, *Declaración copiosa de la doctrina Christiana* [1641], p. 7^f. For more on the popularity of Scupoli's work, see Louis Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), pp. 6, 125.

⁷⁹ We should, however, recall that Loyola advises against the excessive performance of ascetical penances, which he goes on to state in the 'addiciones': 'que el dolor sea sensible en las carnes, y que no entre en los huesos; de manera que dé dolor y no enfermedad' [§86]; see above, Chapter 1 (p. 26, n. 65).

‘affectiones desordenadas’ in the First Annotation:

Porque así como el pasear, caminar y correr son ejercicios corporales; por la misma manera, todo modo de preparar y disponer el ánima para quitar de sí todas las affectiones desordenadas y, después de quitadas, para buscar y hallar la voluntad divina en la disposición de su vida. [§1]

By comparing the Spiritual Exercises to the physical exercise of the body, Loyola speaks of the way in which the soul is purged of vices, which is necessary in preparing it to accept ‘la voluntad divina’. Loyola gives special attention to the ‘affectiones desordenadas’ because they represent those aspects of life which hinder the free discernment of God’s will: ‘se trata [...] de un apego o inclinación que orienta decisivamente la elección del ejercitante, pero engañándola respecto a la voluntad de Dios sobre él, pues se presenta a sus ojos como un bien y encubre lo que tiene de mal real’.⁸⁰

According to Guibert, it is important to recognize both the moral and spiritual aspects of Jesuit asceticism. The emphasis that was given to the correction of sin allowed Jesuits to focus on the ‘reformación de costumbres’ and led them to develop a pedagogy around the rejection of vice and the embrace of virtue:

Asceticism can mean the employment of methods toward a reformation of life and toward moral perfection, and also of a direct effort to root out faults and cultivate virtues. If the word asceticism is taken in this meaning, then asceticism does occupy a very large place in the spirituality of the Jesuits.

It was from this spiritual outlook that the first Jesuits developed their apostolic works in

⁸⁰ *DEI*, I, 91; s.v. Afección desordenada.

order to ‘help souls’, which included the pedagogical framework of their teaching: ‘The true aim of education was not learning for its own sake but the formation of character [...]. Upright lawyers, governors, bureaucrats, statesmen, bishops and pastors – and thus an ethically renewed society – would be the result.’⁸¹ Jesuits applied their spiritual principles to learning in order to cultivate in people an inner sense of the truth that would then translate into the way one lives and contributes to society. Nieremberg’s *Obras y días* is a prime example of this pedagogy, as each of its fifty chapters instructs readers on the benefits of particular virtues which, when practiced, will bring about the wider transformation of the nation.

The ‘enmienda’ should therefore not be seen solely for its moral purpose but as a reflection of the spiritual charism that fueled the apostolic efforts of the Society, as evident in the spiritual and catechetical literature its members produced:

In the limitless variety of books which make up the spiritual literature of the Society, the dominant part is not made up of the great works of doctrinal synthesis or of lofty speculation. Rather, it consists of a multitude of practical directories of every kind, along with books which teach how to acquire virtues and reform one’s life according to the example of Christ. These books were not always the most famous nor those most admired by thinkers and critics. But they were those which had the largest circulation and in which, consequently, the widest influence exerted on souls is recapitulated and made evident.

Like so many of these texts, Nieremberg’s promotes the ascetical ‘enmienda’ as the first of several steps in the process of discernment: ‘In order to find the will of God and to embrace it [...], the preliminary condition which cannot be evaded is the conquest of the

⁸¹ O’Malley, ‘Renaissance Humanism’, p. 474.

self.⁸²

As we have seen, Nieremberg often turns the attention of his readers to the cultivation of virtue, especially prudence. It forms the foundation of his natural philosophy, in which he provides readers with knowledge of the natural world; it shows how this knowledge reflects not just virtue but an overall moral philosophy – ‘un libro de virtudes, y vicios, un sentenciario prudentissimo’; and, finally, it portrays how creation reveals the spiritual knowledge of the divine and tells the story of salvation.⁸³ In several of his works – especially, but not exclusively, his spiritual treatises – it is not uncommon for Nieremberg to speak of the ‘reformación de costumbres’, as he encourages readers to listen more closely to the will of God. In *De la hermosura de Dios* the correction of sin allows penitents to dispose the soul and serve the Lord with greater freedom:

Hasta aqui murmurè de otros sin poner en mi los ojos; y siendo yo el mas miserable de todos, tenia a los otros por cuitados; basta lo que ha pecado hasta aqui mi lengua; ya determino emendarme. Vès aqui también, que quien esto hiziere ofrece a Dios su deseo y afecto.⁸⁴

While *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* is not a spiritual treatise like *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno* and *De la hermosura de Dios*, it places the political and economic decline of temporal affairs within the realm of God’s will. As always, the worldly existence of the creature pales in comparison to that of the divine. If the treatise is moralistic and ascetical in its tone, this approach is the key which opens the door to the mastery of the self, and hence to the reordering of one’s priorities, and

⁸² Guibert, *The Jesuits*, pp. 569-70, 578.

⁸³ See above, Chapter 3 (pp. 125-27).

⁸⁴ Nieremberg, *De la hermosura de Dios*, p. 264.

whereas other works promote the importance of individual salvation, here spiritual rigor contributes to the betterment of the nation. In this sense *Causa y remedio* ought to be interpreted in the context not only of Nieremberg's spiritual outlook, but also of the apostolic fervor that drove him: the two aspects of his writing which have allowed us to identify his rhetoric of discernment.

Conclusion

While in *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* Nieremberg contributes to the *arbitrista* discourse by addressing the urgent situation of Spain's decline in the early 1640s and thus treats matters of apparently secular concern – the political hegemony of the empire, the inability of the military to sustain victories, and the lack of loyalty of 'ministros inferiores' – his message for Spaniards is a religious one, as he echoes the cry of a prophet who urges his *pueblo* to repent of its sins. I hope to have demonstrated how he provides his readers with 'noticia' on an even larger scale than in the previous works I have studied, as he exposes the 'causa' of national ills and proposes their 'remedio'. Given the scope of his message, the intended audience differs from the one we have encountered in the preceding chapters, because he is now addressing the body politic at large and attempting to move it to appropriate action. In this sense, the treatise is different from his popular works in Spanish, in which 'noticia' and 'estimación' are meant to guide readers more specifically toward Christian salvation.

But I also hope to have demonstrated how his 'advice-book' not only relates to his other texts, but reflects the rhetoric of discernment that runs throughout his writing, whether catechetical, philosophical, or spiritual. The 'noticia' it imparts is no less spiritual than that of his other texts. They share in common the desire to reveal God's will through all the obstacles and temptations that can cloud the judgment, so that

readers can conform to it on a more personal level. *Causa y remedio de los males públicos* clearly illustrates the moralistic interpretation by which many Spaniards tried to understand the turmoil of the seventeenth century, but it also reflects some of the spiritual and apostolic ideals to which the Jesuits gave great importance, such as the ‘enmienda’, the ‘reformación de costumbres’, and the cultivation of virtue – especially that of prudence, which received so much attention in Golden Age Spain, not least among Jesuits. Once again, Nieremberg weaves these threads together as he encourages the leaders of the nation to discern the will of God.

Conclusion

*Y pues he prometido dar gusto,
que hasta a[h]ora nada menos he hecho,
quiero comenzar a darle con acabar aqui.*

– Nieremberg¹

Juan Eusebio Nieremberg was a well-known Spanish author of the seventeenth century for two principal reasons. The first is easily explained by the number of his works that were published both in Spain and throughout Europe, and eventually in the American missions. These texts represent a diverse subject-matter across several literary genres, and while he is most remembered as a Jesuit ascetic, especially for the wide dissemination of *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno*, the *Práctica del catecismo romano*, and his Castilian translation of the *Contemptus mundi*, his miscellanies of natural philosophy, ‘advice-books’ for princes and nobles, hagiographic Jesuit biographies, and treatises on the Immaculate Conception, also contribute to his fame. Many of these works went into several editions, and were translated into numerous languages.

The second can be explained in the audiences he attempted to reach through these texts. Some were designated for a limited readership, such as his Latin treatises on theological questions, but others had the specific aim of reaching as many people as possible, and were not limited to readers alone. The *Curiosa filosofía* and *Ocultas filosofías* were written for the dual purpose of teaching and entertaining readers with recondite information, and were intended for a diverse cross-section of people: *no solo*

¹ Nieremberg, *Prohusión a la doctrina y historia natural*, p. 247^v.

para curiosos, sino para doctos escrivarios, filósofos, y médicos. At least two of his works – each known as the *Eusebio* – were designed also to be used for the delivery of homilies or for public readings of a catechetical nature. While some of his works were written more specifically for princes or their ministers, the message they contain is not limited to these individuals, and at least one of these treatises, *Causa y remedio de los males públicos*, addresses the larger body politic on the social and religious problems facing Spain in the middle of the seventeenth century.

Reflecting the breadth of subject-matter and the reach of his works, scholars point to the influence Nieremberg had on the Spanish Golden Age – on the didactic function of devotional texts, the development of catechetical practices, and the use of rhetorical techniques in sacred oratory – and his name is often associated with scholarship on the types of books people read in the seventeenth century, the impact religious literature had on the popular imagination of Spaniards, the dialogue between science and religion in Counter-Reformation Spain, and the history of printing Catholic sources in Europe and the missions of Latin America. But he remains a forgotten author who merits greater attention of *siglodoristas*. Hugues Didier's *Vida y pensamiento* is an important contribution to our understanding of Nieremberg because it identifies him as an eclectic thinker and writer who was influenced by several currents of thought, most notably the strand of Neo-Platonism that religious writers of seventeenth-century Spain continued to cultivate. However, Nieremberg needs to be remembered not merely as a Neo-Platonist, but first and foremost as a Jesuit who, through his texts, sought to promote both the spiritual tradition and the apostolic goals of the Society of Jesus as part of its 'ministry of the word'.

As I hope to have shown in this thesis, Nieremberg consistently begins his popular Spanish works with the notion that it is the lack of proper 'noticia' that leads

Christians astray on the journey to salvation. Whether this ‘noticia’ concerns catechetical, philosophical, spiritual, or even social and political matters, his writings are intended to provide readers with a better knowledge of the world they inhabit and to discern God’s will for it and for themselves. Nieremberg guides readers to assimilate this ‘noticia’ in such a way that they order their lives accordingly. In order to move readers toward a better understanding of God’s will, Nieremberg therefore adopts the core message of his spiritual outlook in the Jesuit tradition – ‘buscar y hallar la voluntad divina’ –, applies it to his texts, and in doing so creates what I have called a *rhetoric of discernment*, with the purpose of leading readers to embrace ‘lo celestial y eterno, para que fuimos criados’.

Nieremberg’s rhetoric of discernment can be identified in three principal aspects of his texts. First, readers must consistently learn to differentiate and compare the two realms of human existence, the temporal and the eternal. This dialectic tension is found in the catechism, where its doctrinal stories teach people how to reject vice, embrace virtue, and ultimately lead a life worthy of salvation. A similar tension is present in the miscellanies of natural philosophy, as Nieremberg teaches people how to read the message of salvation as it is imprinted in the created order: plants, animals, bugs, even deformed beings, are compared and contrasted in such a way that readers are led to contemplate the more perfect reality of the divine Creator. It is also portrayed in his ascetical treatises, especially *De la diferencia*, in which Nieremberg consistently compares the ephemeral things of the temporal domain to life everlasting. Finally, this tension exists in his ‘advice-books’, which instruct readers to consider the temporal affairs of political, economic, and military decline within the context of Spain’s divine election as God’s chosen people. While Nieremberg writes about many aspects of the Christian journey – the catechetical foundation, the pursuit of knowledge, spiritual

growth, the sustenance of a healthy society – all phases of the journey are set within the context of eternity and the celestial destiny of humankind.

Second, Nieremberg applies the arts of persuasion to his texts as he urges readers to uncover the deeper meaning of the ‘noticia’ they contain and to continue discerning its significance. He uses the rhetorical ‘exemplo’ not simply to teach doctrine but to reach readers in such a way that they can connect its lesson to the stirrings of the ‘cosas internas’ of the soul. He applies ‘ingenio’ to the experience of wonderment (*admiratio*), to discover the true meaning of natural phenomena beyond the appearances of their ‘corteza’. The casting of material and temporal things in the dark tones of the *vanitas* aesthetic, with its emphasis on corruption and death, allows Nieremberg to create a dramatic impact on the imagination of readers and to move them toward spiritual conversion. He also takes the ascetical practices and their implements as metaphorical weapons of great magnitude both on the battlefield and in the public sphere, and likewise encourages all who form part of the body politic to reform their lives and engage in exemplary acts of penitence on behalf of the nation.

Thirdly, Nieremberg enhances the communicative function of each of these texts so that readers and listeners might more easily assimilate their teachings. We have seen, for example, how he gives doctrine a ‘voice’ in his catechism in order for it to be both read and heard in an appealing manner; he presents his lessons of natural philosophy as prayerful ‘consideraciones’, so that while readers think about the subject-matter in them, they can also reflect upon the spiritual significance they contain; he includes a meditative schema in his ascetical treatise to enable people to ponder their own spiritual journey in the light of its themes; and by dedicating his ‘advice-books’ to individuals of the governing elite, he also enters the sphere of public discourse, addresses the problems facing the nation, and delivers a message of spiritual reform to the entire population.

His texts therefore offer diverse kinds of ‘noticia’, but in every case readers are led to form a correct evaluation (‘estimación’) of it, and lead their lives according to its teachings.

While a rhetoric of discernment helps us to understand the aim of Nieremberg’s writing, we have also seen how this rhetoric is driven by the principle that all aspects of the temporal world – Christian life, the created order, material things, social and political happenings – must be seen as a means to a greater end: God’s will of salvation. It is in this sense that I have identified Nieremberg as a *Jesuit* author. His writing centers around the apostolic mission of the Society to ‘save souls’, and although this may seem to be the overall purpose of most devotional and religious books in early modern Spain, it is important to recognize how Nieremberg achieves his goal and nuances the rhetorical aspects of his message by including many of the same techniques that Ignatius Loyola used to enhance the process of discernment in the *Ejercicios espirituales*. It is not a coincidence, for example, that Nieremberg includes a lengthy section of ‘exemplos’ in his catechism not long after individual Jesuits had begun to use similar ‘exemplos’ for giving the Spiritual Exercises in Salamanca. We have also seen how characters in some of the catechetical examples experience spiritual conversion as they review their sins in ways which imitate the Ignatian method of instructing people to exercise the powers of the soul (*memoria, entendimiento, and voluntad*), feel remorse, and complete the ‘confesión general’ as they come to terms with the ‘cosas internas’ of their lives.

Likewise, we have also seen how the acquisition of knowledge serves a special purpose in the educational ministries of the Society. The study of natural philosophy points toward a higher aim, ‘ad perfectam cognitionem’, so that it may foster in its students greater love and reverence for the Creator. In Nierembergian terms, readers

learn about the created order not simply for intellectual stimulation, but to gain ‘cabal conocimiento’, a knowledge which leads them to live as they were created: in the image and likeness of God. In order to gain this type of knowledge, Nieremberg presents his lessons as ‘consideraciones’, or substantive contemplations, which allow readers to exercise the visual imagination in much the same way practitioners of the Exercises ‘consideran, meditan y contemplan más ser Dios nuestro Señor en cada criatura’.

The notion that material things, worldly possessions, and social honor may be embraced as the means to a greater end in eternal salvation once their ephemeral nature has been grasped and they are no longer the treasures of the soul is nowhere more clear in Nieremberg’s work than in his treatise *De la diferencia*. But just as this perspective reflects the core message of the ‘Principio y fundamento’ in the Exercises, it is possible to identify how a meditative reading of the treatise also reflects the fuller spiritual itinerary of the Ignatian method, which guides people from viewing the things of life in the proper perspective to cultivating the desire to build the Kingdom of God with ‘santas obras’, and from there to recognizing God’s beneficence in the world and embracing the experience of divine love. And finally, as an *arbitrista*, Nieremberg broadens his message and encourages Spaniards to view how the will of God is manifested in the temporal affairs of the nation. The military defeats, economic downturn, and political rebellion of the troubled nation come from the hand of God, who is punishing the people for their sins. The ‘enmienda’ of these sins and the reformation of life it brings about will therefore help restore the country to the thriving empire it once was. However, the governing leaders must first reach a correct spiritual diagnosis of their plight within the context of divine will, put the ascetical remedy into practice, and set an example for the rest of the citizens.

I have also identified Nieremberg as a *Golden Age* Jesuit because, while we can

establish the foundation of his spiritual outlook in the Ignatian Exercises and the apostolic goals of the Society, he also expresses the principles of his rhetoric in the literary and artistic conventions of the seventeenth century. It is in this sense that we can begin to relate Nieremberg's work to that of other Golden Age writers. While his catechetical 'exemplos' serve the purpose of teaching doctrine, they remind us of other authors, such as Luis de Granada, who had given doctrine a voice in a similar way, or even Cervantes, who sought to teach and please readers for different purposes, but with similar techniques. The emphasis Nieremberg places on the cultivation of 'ingenio' and the search for meaning beyond the 'corteza' of things also reminds us of the way in which Góngora intended readers to enjoy his poetry. Like Quevedo, Gracián, and Valdés Leal, Nieremberg also cultivates the perspective of *ser* and *parecer* in several of his works, as he teaches people to look beyond the appearance of *desengaño* for the true meaning and essence of things. For this, he finds the *vanitas* aesthetic and its emphasis on death an especially useful technique.

While the relationship that exists between literature, art, and spirituality in Golden Age Spain has been well studied, Nieremberg is surely one of its most prominent authors, and his work has been largely ignored. I have attempted to restore him to his rightful place in the period, to connect his work to the wider culture of his time, and to identify how the roots of his spiritual formation in the Society of Jesus are reflected in the volumes of books he wrote and the rhetoric of discernment which he develops from it. I hope to have shed light on how he, along with many other Spanish Jesuits we have encountered in this study – Astete, Ripalda, Acosta, Garau, Del Río, La Palma, Rodríguez, Ribadeneyra, Andrade, Gracián – contributed aspects of his spiritual tradition and apostolic zeal to the literary and artistic production of the Golden Age. In many ways, Nieremberg represents the encounter of two flourishing cultures, that of the

wider society and the Society of Jesus. I hope that a perspective such as this may open the door to further study of the literature Jesuits produced in this period, how they incorporated the particular charism of their religious institute into their works, and how they used the intellectual and cultural currents of their age to articulate their thought.

Appendix I

Bibliography of Works by Juan Eusebio Nieremberg¹

Spanish Titles

- Obras y días, manual de señores y príncipes* (Madrid, 1629)
- Prolusión a la doctrina y historia natural* (Madrid, 1629)
- De la afición, y amor de María, virgen sacratissima* (Madrid, 1630)
- De la afición, y amor de Jesús* (Madrid, 1630)
- Devoción a las animas del purgatorio*, in *De la afición, y amor de Jesús* (Madrid, 1630)
- Alimento de amor divino*, in *De la afición, y amor de Jesús* (Madrid, 1630)
- Codicia santa de gracia y merecimientos*, in *De la afición, y amor de Jesús* (Madrid, 1630)
- Curiosa filosofía, y tesoro de maravillas de la naturaleza* (Madrid, 1630)
- Vida del glorioso patriarca San Ignacio de Loyola* (Madrid, 1631)
- Oculto filosofía. De la simpatía y antipatía de las cosas, artificio de la naturaleza, y noticia natural del mundo. Y segunda parte de la Curiosa filosofía* (Madrid, 1633)
- Vida divina, y camino real para la perfección* (Madrid, 1633)
- Libro de la vida. Jesús crucificado* (Barcelona, 1634)
- Vida del venerable padre Pedro Canisio*, in *Vida divina* (Madrid, 1635)
- Vida de San Francisco Javier, apóstol de India*, in *Vida del glorioso patriarca* (Madrid, 1636)
- De la gravedad, males, castigos, y remedios del pecado venial*, in *Vida divina* (Madrid, 1636)
- Del aprecio y estima de la divina gracia* (Madrid, 1638)
- Compendio de la vida del venerable padre Martín Gutiérrez* (Jaén, 1639)
- De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno. Crisol de desengaños* (Madrid, 1640)
- Práctica del catecismo romano, y doctrina Christiana* (Madrid, 1640)
- Vida del dichoso y venerable padre Marcelo Francisco Mastrilli* (Madrid, 1640)
- Saetas de amor divino*, in *Vida divina* (Madrid, 1640)

¹ The longer titles of works have been shortened for this bibliography. I have consulted the following sources: Sommervogel, *BCJ*, v, 1725-66; Koch, II, 1295-26; and Palau y Dulcet, xi, 39-59. Other sources include: Simón Díaz, *Jesuitas de los siglos XVI-XVII*, pp. 233-52; and Didier, *Vida y pensamiento*, pp. 509-16. Most of Nieremberg's treatises were published separately, while some were appended to other works. I have tried to note them with the aim of avoiding unnecessary duplications. The 1651 publication of Nieremberg's *Obras* does not include any previously unpublished works. I do not concur with Palau y Dulcet (pp. 46 and 52) that Nieremberg wrote historical chronologies and anti-Machiavellian treatises under the pseudonym Claudio Clemente; see Didier, 'Un franc-comtois au service de l'Espagne: Claude Clément, S.J. (1594?-1642)', *AHSI*, 44 (1975), 254-64; and José Fernández Santamaría, *Razón de estado y política en el pensamiento español del barroco (1595-1640)* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1986), p. 38.

Centuria de dictámenes, in Obras y días (Madrid, 1641)

De la hermosura de Dios y su amabilidad (Madrid, 1641)

Ejercicio de afectuoso amor de Dios, in De la hermosura de Dios (Madrid, 1641)

Prodigio del amor divino, y finezas de Dios con los hombres (Madrid, 1641)

Causa y remedio de los males públicos (Madrid, 1642)

Consuelo de almas escrupulosas y su remedio (Madrid, 1642)

Tratado sobre el lugar de los Cantares, explicado de la perfección religiosa (Madrid, 1643)

Curiosa, y oculta filosofía. Primera, y segunda parte de las maravillas de la naturaleza (Madrid, 1643)

Partida a la eternidad, y preparación para la muerte (Zaragoza, 1643)

Ideas de virtud en algunos claros varones de la Compañía de Jesús [Varones ilustres de la Compañía de Jesús, vol. I] (Madrid, 1643)

Avisos espirituales para conformar su voluntad con la de Dios (Madrid, 1643)

De la devoción y patrocinio de San Miguel (Madrid, 1643)

Corona virtuosa, y virtud coronada [...] de un príncipe, juntamente con los heroicos exemplos de las virtudes de los Emperadores de la casa de Austria y reyes de España (Madrid, 1643)

Vida, y hechos de heroicas virtudes del emperador Roldopho Primero, in Corona virtuosa (Madrid, 1643)

Firmamento religioso en algunos claros varones de la Compañía de Jesús [Varones ilustres de la Compañía de Jesús, vol. II] (Madrid, 1644)

Vida del santo padre, y gran siervo de Dios el B. Francisco de Borja (Madrid, 1644)

Flores espirituales, in Vida divina (Barcelona, 1644)

Honor del gran patriarca San Ignacio de Loyola fundador de la Compañía de Jesús, [...] y las noticias de gran multitud de hijos del mismo San Ignacio [Varones ilustres de la Compañía de Jesús, vol. III] (Madrid, 1645)

Del zelo y sabiduría de San Ignacio en la fundación de la Compañía de Jesús, conforme a la sentencia de Santo Tomás, e idea de Platón, de la mejor república, in Honor del gran patriarca (Madrid, 1645)

Vidas exemplares, y venerables memorias de algunos claros varones de la Compañía de Jesús [Varones ilustres de la Compañía de Jesús, vol. IV] (Madrid, 1647)

Dictámenes del padre Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (Madrid, 1647)

De la constancia en la virtud (Madrid, 1647)

Epístolas del reverendo padre Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (Madrid, 1649)

Los quatro libros de la Imitación de Christo [Spanish translation] (Lisbon, 1649)

Devocionario del santissimo sacramento, y de Nuestra Señora, y de otros santos (Madrid, 1649)

Obras christianas, espirituales, y filosóficas, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1651)

Cielo estrellado de María (Madrid, 1655)

Rudimentos de la verdadera sabiduría, y perfección christiana (Madrid, 1657)

Latin Titles

- Sigalion, sive de sapientia mythica* (Madrid, 1629)
- De arte voluntatis* (Lyon, 1631)
- Historia panegyrica de tribus martyribus eiusdem Societatis in Uruguai, in De arte voluntatis* (Lyon, 1631)
- De adoratione in spiritu et veritate* (Antwerp, 1631)
- Historia naturæ, maxime peregrinæ* (Antwerp, 1635)
- Theopoliticus, sive brevis illucidatio et rationale divinorum operum* (Antwerp, 1641)
- De origine sacræ scripturæ* (Lyon, 1641)
- Stromata sacræ scripturæ* (Lyon, 1642)
- Doctrinæ asceticæ* (Lyon, 1643)
- Homiliæ catenatæ* (Lyon, 1646)
- De perpetuo obiecto festi Immaculate Conceptionis Virginis* (Valencia, 1653)
- Supplex libellus pro Immaculata B. Virginis* (Rome, 1655)
- Dissertationes epistolice de Immaculata Conceptionis Deipare* (Antwerp, 1655)
- Exceptiones Concilii Tridentini pro omnimoda puritate Deiparæ virginis expensæ* (Antwerp, 1655)
- Theoria compendiosa de solida veritate conceptæ Deiparæ absque labe originale* (Valencia, 1656)
- De nova moneta [...] pro gloria Immaculatæ Conceptionis* (Valencia, 1656)
- De sanctitate instituti festi certa, et necessaria ad cultum ecclesiasticum, singillatim in festo Immaculatæ Conceptionis precepto a Summis Pontificibus* (Valencia, 1657)
- Psalmi Salomonis e græco latine versi notisque illustrat* (Madrid 1657)
- Trophæa Mariana seu de victrice misericordia Deiparæ patrocinantis hominibus* (Antwerp, 1658)
- De virginitate sanctissimæ Dei matris, in Tropeæ Mariana* (Antwerp, 1658)
- Opera parthenica de super eximia et omnimoda puritate matris Dei* (Lyon, 1659)
- Sylva catechistica ex patribus et doctoribus* (Lyon, 1659)
- Sylloge axiomatum et institutionem spiritualium christianæ philosophiæ ex patribus et vetustis doctoribus* (Lyon, 1659)
- Ex variis selectisque concinatus opusculis* (Lyon, 1659)
- Gnomoglypha, in Sigalion, sive de sapientia mythica* (Lyon, 1659)
- Succus prudentiæ sacro-politiæ ex nonnullis Ioan Eus. Nierembergii operibus digestus* (Lyon, 1659)
- Hieromelissa bibliotheca* (Lyon, 1661)
- Omen honori Immaculatæ Conceptionis B. Virginis Mariæ* (Krakow, 1666)
- Sol et sol mysticus, sive idea doctoris christiani* (Olomouc, 1682)
- Candelabrum aureum septilustre* (Olomouc, 1699)

Appendix II

Cited Decrees from the Council of Trent

Sessio V, Decretum secundum, *Super lectione et predicatione*:

Archipresbyteri quoque, plebani et quicumque parochiales vel alias, curiam animarum habentes, ecclesias quocumque modo obtinent, per se vel alios idoneos, si legitime impediti fuerint, diebus saltem dominicis et festis solemnibus plebes sibi commissas pro sua et earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis, docendo ea, quae scire omnibus necessarium est ad salutem, annuntiandoque eis cum brevitate et facilitate sermonis vitia, quae eos declinare, et virtutes, quas sectari oporteat, ut poenam aeternam evadere et coelestem gloriam consequi valeant. (Concilium Tridentinum, II, 669)

Sessio XXII, caput VIII, *Doctrina et canones de sanctissimo missae sacrificio*:

Quamobrem [...], ne oves Christi esuriant, neve parvuli panem petant et non sit, qui frangat eis: mandat sancta synodus pastoribus et singulis curam animarum gerentibus, ut frequenter inter missarum celebrationem vel per se vel per alios, ex his, quae in missa leguntur, aliquid [lingua vernacula] exponant atque inter cetera sanctissimum huius sacrificii mysterium aliquod declarent, diebus praesertim dominicis et festis. (Concilium Tridentinum, II, 735)

Sessio XXII, canon I, *Decretum de reformatione*:

Nihil est, quod alios magis ad pietatem et Dei cultum assiduo instruat, quam eorum vita et exemplum, qui se divino ministerio dedicarunt. Cum enim a rebus saeculi in altiorem sublatis locum conspiciantur, in eos tamquam speculum reliqui oculos iniiciunt ex iisque sumunt, quod imitentur. (Concilium Tridentinum, II, 737)

Sessio XXIV, canon VII, *de reformatione*:

Ut fidelis populus ad suscipienda sacramenta maiore cum reverentia atque animi devotione accedat: praecipit sancta synodus episcopis omnibus, ut non solum, cum haec per se ipsos erunt populo administranda, prius illorum vim et usum pro suscipientium captu explicent, sed etiam idem a singulis parochis pie prudenterque, etiam lingua vernacula, si opus sit et commode fieri poterit, servari studeant, iuxta formam a sancta synodo in catechesi singulis sacramentis praescribendam, quam episcopi in vulgarem linguam fideliter verti atque a parochis omnibus populo exponi curabunt; necnon ut inter missarum solemniam aut divinorum celebrationem sacra eloquia et salutis monita eadem vernacula lingua singulis diebus festis vel solemnibus explanent, eademque in omnium cordibus (postpositis inutilibus quaestionibus) inserere, atque eos in lege Domini erudire studeant. (Concilium Tridentinum, II, 764)

Sessio XXV: *De invocatione, veneratione et reliquiis sanctorum, et de sacris imaginibus:*

Illud vero diligenter doceant episcopi, per historias mysteriorum nostrae redemptionis, picturis vel aliis similitudinibus expressas, erudiri et confirmari populum in articulis fidei commemorandis et assidue recolendis; tum vero ex omnibus sacris imaginibus magnum fructum percipi, non solum quia admonetur populus beneficiorum et munerum, quae a Christo sibi collata sunt, sed etiam, quia Dei per sanctos miracula et salutaria exempla oculis fidelium subiiciuntur, ut pro iis Deo gratias agant, ad sanctorumque imitationem vitam moresque suos componant, excitenturque ad adorandum ac diligendum Deum, et ad pietatem colendam. (Concilium Tridentinum, II, 775)

Sessio XXV, *Super indice librorum, catechismo, breviario et missali:*

[Synodus] praecipit, ut, quidquid ab illis praestitum est, sanctissimo Romano pontifici exhibeatur, ut eius iudicio atque auctoritate terminetur et evulgetur. Idemque de catechismo a patribus, quibus illud mandatum fuerat, et de missali et breviario fieri mandat. (Concilium Tridentinum, II, 797)

Appendix III

Bird of Paradise

Illustrations of the Ave Manucodiata or Ave Apode by engraver Christoffel Jegher (1578/1590-1652), in Juan Eusebio Nieremberg's *Historia naturæ* (Antwerp: Officina Plantiniana, 1635). Courtesy of Georgetown University Library.



Figure 1:
Ave Manucodiata (p. 210)



Figure 2:
Manucaiatata Altera (p. 211)



Figure 3:
Ave Paradisiaca, or Ave del Paraíso (p. 211)

Appendix IV

DE LA DIFERENCIA ENTRE LO TEMPORAL Y ETERNO



Figure 1. Nieremberg's treatise is located under Borgia, on the right.
Juan de Valdés Leal, *Alegoría de la Eucaristía* (c. 1671), Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville
<<http://ceres.mcu.es/pages/Visor?AMuseo=MBASE&Ninv=CE0190P&accion=4>> [accessed 28 Aug 2012]



Figure 2. Nieremberg's treatise is placed under the skull.
Juan de Valdés Leal, *Alegoría de vanidad* (1660), Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford
<<http://www.wadsworthshop.org/products/juan-de-valdes-leal-allegory-of-vanity>> [accessed 28 Aug 2012]

LOS JEROGLÍFICOS DE NUESTRAS POSTRIMERÍAS



Figure 3. Juan de Valdés Leal, *In Ictu Oculi* (1672)
Hospital de la Santa Caridad, Seville
<<http://www.wga.hu/art/v/valdes/1allegor.jpg>> [accessed 28 Aug 2012]



Figure 4. Juan de Valdés Leal, *Finis Gloriarum Mundi* (1672)
Hospital de la Santa Caridad, Seville
<<http://www.wga.hu/art/v/valdes/2allegor.jpg>> [accessed 28 August 2012]

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- . *Curiosa filosofía, y tesoro de maravillas de la naturaleza, examinadas en varias cuestiones naturales. Contienen historias muy notables. Averiguanse secretos, y problemas dela naturaleza, con filosofía nueva. Explicanse lugares dificultosos de Escritura. Obra muy útil, no solo para los curiosos, sino para doctos escriturarios, filósofos, y médicos* [1630] (Madrid: Imprenta del Reyno, 1634)
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- . *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno. Crisol de desengaños con la memoria de la eternidad, postrimerías humanas y principales misterios divinos* (Madrid: María de Quiñones, 1640)
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- . *Partida a la eternidad, y preparación para la muerte* (Zaragoza: Pedro Verges, 1643)
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