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1

The Intellectual Impact of International Rivalry

Since at least the sixteenth century, Spanish governance enkindled the scorn of many foreign commentators. In the middle decades of the eighteenth, Montesquieu faulted Spain's 'internal vice of bad government'. John Campbell concurred, contending that its plight was attributable to 'nothing but errors in government'.¹ Extending this indictment to culture, Nicolas Masson de Morvillier's infamous entry in the *Encyclopédie Méthodique* answered, in unflattering terms, the question 'Que doit-on à l'Espagne? Et depuis deux siècles, depuis quatre, depuis six, qu'a-t'elle fait pour l'Europe?' These negative assessments help to explain the Inquisition's censure of *The Spirit of the Laws* in 1756 and the *Encyclopédie* in 1759. In spite of the prohibition, Masson's unfavourable characterization was read by and incited furious respondents, the most notable of whom was Juan Pablo Forner. In his *Oración Apologética*, Forner conceded that Spain had 'produced neither a Descartes nor a Newton'. But, he added, it had nurtured 'wise legislators and excellent practical philosophers, who had preferred the ineffable pleasure of working for the benefit of humanity to the lazy task of constructing imaginary worlds in the solitude and silence of a study'.² No less effective was José de Cadalso's ridicule of the 'rapid style of certain French pens, agitated by superficial, flippant, and hardly impartial fantasies. How few Spanish books Montesquieu has read! What limited knowledge he has of our literature!'³

Yet Forner's and Cadalso's impassioned defence was not shared universally by their compatriots. Lamenting the backwardness of the university curriculum, Pablo de Olavide noted that, 'to our detriment, not even a ray of light has entered ... whereas the cultured nations occupy themselves with the practical sciences, determining the shape of the earth or discovering new luminous objects in the sky to improve navigation, our time is wasted ... in answering frivolous scholastic questions'.⁴ Subsequent commentators would extend Olavide's pessimism to encompass additional facets of culture, 'the great backwardness in which all of Spain's arts and sciences, which flourish in other nations, are found'.⁵ Knowledge of the world beyond the Pyrenees was considered indispensable to the advancement of commerce. Travel,

which facilitated ‘knowing men in their own countries, their customs and their whims’, was required. ‘Without visiting many countries, seeing their cities and meeting their inhabitants’, one observer remarked, it would be impossible to ‘distinguish between a polished and an uncivilized nation’ and thus enrich Spain with ‘*las luces*’ acquired abroad.⁶ Industry also would benefit from such foreign contact, Madrid’s Economic Society argued, as learning from foreign models would permit Spain to train the ‘necessary artisans so that we will not require recourse to foreign goods’.⁷

Critical admiration for foreign ideas and practices is a phenomenon, which sheds intense light on the intellectual milieu from which the Bourbon reform ideology emerged. Geopolitical rivalry had cultural and intellectual repercussions. Reformers depended on ideas, as well as fleets, militias, and tax receipts, to pursue their ends while political writers contributed to heightening interstate rivalry through intellectual production. The chapter first analyses the reception of foreign ideas in Spain, particularly the phenomenon of emulation. It examines the process by which foreign ideas were fashioned into models, deployed in political debate, and manipulated in practice. Using the image of Britain as a case study, this chapter offers a panorama of Spanish engagement with foreign ideas, the process of selecting the useful and discarding the inapplicable. The chapter then explores Spanish reactions to the histories of Spanish America written by foreign writers. The primary focus of the second part of the chapter is the Duke of Almodóvar’s translation of the Abbé Raynal’s *Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Établissements et du Commerce des Européens dans les Deux Indes* (1770), which bore only slight resemblance to the original in ideology, content, and structure. His five-volume work, which appeared as the *Historia Política de los Establecimientos Ultramarinos de las Naciones Europeas* [Political History of European Overseas Settlements], was published in Madrid between 1784 and 1790. It is the most distinguished Iberian contribution to the genre of the enlightened narrative.⁸ It provides an appropriate lens through which to observe the critical reception and use of foreign ideas in Bourbon Spain. The chapter demonstrates that the enlightenment in Spain drew inspiration from foreign ideas and practices in an active and critical, not passive and derivative, way. These ideas were viewed as instruments in the revitalization of Spain and its Atlantic colonies, an aspiration which inevitably led to clashes with competitor imperial states.

The dynamics of emulation in eighteenth-century Europe

Imperial rivalry had major cultural repercussions, including emulation by one state of another’s successful practices. The late eighteenth century witnessed a spike in intellectual exchanges and transnational borrowing of practices, a phenomenon due as much to the exigencies of international competition as to cosmopolitanism. Everything, from literary devices to the

mechanics of sugar mills, was eligible to be siphoned, borrowed, or adapted. A 'spirit of ambitious emulation' was rampant across eighteenth-century Europe.⁹ Far from an anachronistic framework imposed by modern scholars, contemporaries were keenly aware of emulation's role in the diffusion of foreign ideas, practices, and institutions as well as its link to inter-state rivalry. Portugal's future enlightened despotic minister, the Marquis of Pombal, observed that 'all European nations have improved themselves through reciprocal imitation', adding that 'each one carefully keeps watch over the actions taken by the others [and] they take advantage of the utility of foreign inventions'.¹⁰ Emulation was a strategy by which a state could modernize its administrative, fiscal, and military structures in order to compete with its rivals.

It was a paradox of inter-state conflict that each nation sought to emulate the most successful practices of its rivals and to adapt them to local conditions. By critically copying its rivals, each state sought to surpass the competition and to dominate international affairs. Although the emulation of successful practices of other states was urged, failed or misguided policies also served as an albatross, symbols of potential actions whose replication would prove deleterious to the pursuit of geopolitical greatness. Political writers, therefore, dissected, analysed, and either lauded or repudiated, the ideas, institutions, reforms, and character of rival empires.¹¹

Emulation was contrasted with, and seen as the positive counterpart of, jealousy or envy throughout Europe in the eighteenth century. It was considered to be the competitive pursuit of national excellence. Both emulation and envy were instances of rivalry, but were of 'divergent moral quality: one fair and constructive, the other unfair and malevolent'.¹² Emulation, in contrast to jealousy and envy, was considered a 'generous, ennobling passion, productive of integrity and virtuous ambition'.¹³

Emulation and envy often were used as synonyms. Edward Gibbon deployed the composite term 'jealous emulation' to encompass its multiple meanings whereas Adam Ferguson depicted emulation as an 'unhappy disposition rarely unmixed with jealousy and envy'.¹⁴ It was Adam Smith, however, who defined emulation's relation to statecraft. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, published in 1759, the same year as Charles III's accession to the Spanish throne, Smith contrasted emulation's constructive character with the pernicious effects of jealousy or envy: 'the love of our own nation often disposes us to view, with the most malignant jealousy and envy, the prosperity and aggrandisement of any neighboring nation'. Smith argued that a nation should endeavour to 'promote, instead of obstruct, the excellence of its neighbours. These are all proper objects of national emulation, not of national prejudice or envy'.¹⁵ As one recent scholar has demonstrated powerfully, emulation could be a 'vehicle for *grandeza*, a quest for national pre-eminence'. It became a 'patriotic duty, motivated by the love of country and serving national honour'.¹⁶

Emulation was not, of course, an exclusively anglophone concept. In France, the Parisian *Société Libre d'Émulation*, founded in 1776, promoted inventions applicable to agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, justifying its *concours* on the grounds that emulation was a worthy objective. The word 'emulation' appears frequently, with positive connotations, for example, in the writings of Helvétius and Mirabeau.¹⁷

In Spain, some political writers disagreed that emulation was a path to national regeneration. 'Every nation', Juan Sempere y Guarinos contended, 'esteems itself above the others, and believes that its land, practices and customs are better than those of the rest of the universe'.¹⁸ He maintained that Spanish writers furnished adequate resources, making recourse to foreign writers superfluous. Sempere y Guarinos argued that 'it is not necessary to turn to Montesquieu, Hume, Melon or any other foreign writer, whose ideas are suspicious for not having been careful always to unite the demands of religion with those of politics'.¹⁹

Although they were influential, critics of emulation's benefits, like Sempere, remained in the minority. Most embraced it as salutary or, at least, inevitable. Forner described fierce competition as a 'kind of furore, each nation wanting to raise and enlarge its literary merit over and above the other contestants'.²⁰ A high-ranking official reached a similar conclusion concerning the political utility of emulation, arguing that nations whose commerce flourished 'emulate that which is most advantageous'.²¹ An influential political economist urged the creation of learned academies modelled on English and French precedents. These institutions would, he asserted, 'enable [Spain] better to imitate the curious inventions of others, and also to make useful discoveries ourselves, of such things that are serviceable to a foreign and home trade'.²² Campomanes concurred, pleading that 'by means of their academies, the empire of the arts has been appropriated, and the rest of the Europe merely copies their inventions'. With the establishment of academies, this minister declared, Spain could 'reach the same level and, within a few years, overcome its backwardness and regain the time that it has lost'.²³

Crown ministers and colonial officials remained keenly aware of the mutual influence exerted by states upon one another. The most chauvinistic claimed that the 'discovery and progress achieved by our nation in the New World awakened the emulation and covetous ambition of the other European powers' and provoked continuous wars.²⁴ 'Emulation, or better put, jealousy', Almodóvar wrote, 'has produced malignant detractors against the name of Spain'.²⁵

Yet if national envy produced belligerence, it also could factor in the establishment and maintenance of peace. 'Our great distrust of war' and 'great hopes for peace' hinged, the normally bellicose general Alejandro O'Reilly told his friend Antonio Bucareli, the viceroy of New Spain, on 'our preparations. The great effect that they already have had in Paris and London is widely observed and everywhere it is said that never has such

vigour been witnessed'.²⁶ The prevalence of foreign observation triggered a fear that policy missteps would be spotted and exploited by rival, and perpetually vigilant, nations. In the wake of the Túpac Amaru and *Comunero* uprisings, disillusioned commentators in the Americas fretted that the 'French watching this lamentable drama from their more comfortable position, will win the benefits of commerce, the most useful dominion, to which, it is observed, the Dutch and Danes also aspire, being themselves only poorly established in those places'.²⁷ This amalgam of chauvinism and cosmopolitanism, of national self-interest, and keen awareness of the practices of competitors, infused the Caroline reform ideology.

The failures and successes of rival nations were employed as evidence in Spanish political debates, often to urge a departure from current policy. This tendency may be detected in two of the period's most prominent political analysts: Bernardo Ward argued that 'by following the plans [of foreign nations] and imitating their models, I am certain that Spain will become the most powerful monarchy in Europe'. Jovellanos similarly conceded that 'our industry is not particularly inventive, and in its present state, the best we can achieve will be done by imitating and approximating foreign practice'.²⁸

Explicit borrowing, nevertheless, remained rare even in the heyday of ideological imports and the integration of non-Spanish ideas usually acknowledged, perhaps hid behind, peninsular precedents. The acceptance of an idea of foreign origin often hinged on its congruence with one promulgated by a Spanish political writer. In his effort to introduce his readers to seventeenth-century English political economy, for example, Campomanes reassured his audience of its applicability by praising Uztáriz as 'the first Spaniard to use political calculus', derived from William Petty, in order to 'show others how to recognize the loss or gain of our balance of trade and the means by which they can be made to incline to Spain's favour'.²⁹

It must be emphasized, however, that Spanish writers did not merely copy and servilely imitate, but rather engaged actively in criticizing, adapting, as well as rejecting, foreign ideas.³⁰ Following Mengs's theory of emulation, Campomanes contended that imitation and adaptation were potentially creative acts. He insisted that certain 'arts and professions originated in a new combination of [existing] objects, and this is what is called invention'.³¹ These 'new combinations' and 'inventions', based on the successful practices of other European states, would prove vital to Spain's capacity to compete with its geopolitical rivals. In this sense, the union of cosmopolitanism and patriotism defines emulation in late eighteenth-century Spain.³² Campomanes encapsulated the prevailing attitude when he stated that 'only ignorance of the progress and transmigration of the arts' can cause or produce 'ideas so contrary to the public good and the true interests of the native land [*patrial*]'.³³ Ideas and concepts developed abroad, he and others argued, must be allowed to flood Spain and then be employed, where appropriate, in the service of national enlightenment.

The most direct source of foreign ideas in Spain was published books. While the latest currents of European ideas circulated among the intellectual elite, the fetish for foreign books always was dwarfed by the magnificent quantity of Spanish ones. The rampant republication of older Spanish works in the eighteenth century recounts only part of the story: the majority (51 per cent) of these re-issued books contained religious themes whereas non-religious works of history, political economy, and geography composed a paltry 21 per cent of the total, lagging behind the 36 per cent dealing with religious themes.³⁴ Where translations from modern European languages existed, a whopping 65 per cent came from French, 23 per cent from Italian, roughly 7 per cent from English, almost 4 per cent from Portuguese, and 1 per cent from German.³⁵ Among these translations, works of political economy and technical manuals were prominent, though the persistent paucity of books 'which teach the mechanic arts' was bemoaned as 'one of the principal causes of the backwardness of our factories'.³⁶ Whereas in the decade of the 1750s there were a mere nine translations of works of political economy from all languages, the 1770s witnessed 35, and the 1780s 49.³⁷ This upward shift was catalysed in part by the activities of the Economic Societies, which compiled and sought to disseminate works of political economy, and by the rise and growing sophistication of periodicals, which carried abundant news of foreign technological innovations.³⁸

Percentages did not always reflect proportional influence: the impact of German ideas, in spite of the numerical paucity of translations, was considerable. The *Nuevas Poblaciones*, for example, the internal colonization scheme for the barren Sierra Morena region, discussed in Chapter 2, not only was modelled on Prussian and Russian precedents, but a Bavarian colonel recruited the 6,000 German and Flemish settlers. Moreover, Frederick the Great's economic initiatives often were cited in support of analogous Spanish *proyectos*, such as the formation of a monopoly company for the Philippines. The Prussian king, one advocate argued, 'knowing that by commerce alone he can make himself as powerful as he desires, ignored the great difficulties and inconveniences which oppose his object and formed a company for the East Indies'.³⁹

Influential ideas and practices were transmitted not only through print, but also flowed from the observation of the experiences of other European states. Most were recorded by travellers, merchants, ambassadors, and administrators on the borderlands of empire, as well as ministers in Madrid. Often no correlation existed between the pervasiveness of a foreign culture in published literature and its impact in the domain of policy. For instance, Campomanes admired the Danish West Indies whose privileged company had been disbanded by royal decree due to its dismal economic performance. 'Commerce is their principal object', he gushed, 'and since [the end of monopoly] their Danish traffic in America has flourished'. 'This example',

Campomanes continued, 'so near to our own colonies is new proof of the necessity of stopping the spirit of pernicious regulation which has been ruinous to the nation'.⁴⁰

Not all foreign practices, however, were deemed appropriate models for emulation. Some were models to be avoided. Campomanes's admiration for Danish practice, for example, contrasted with his disparagement of the 'causes of decadence' afflicting the Portuguese empire. He noted that Portugal had raised taxes by 4 per cent after the 1755 Lisbon earthquake in order to finance that city's reconstruction and that public credit subsequently 'deteriorated terribly there'. The broader cause of Portugal's predicament, however, he asserted, was its 'oppression of the liberty of commerce' through the formation of trading companies for the north of Brazil, predicting that 'spirit of privileged trade and the restrictions placed on commerce will hasten the downfall of that nation'. Portugal's experience, Campomanes admonished, 'should alert Spain to avoid such ideas concerning this mode of commerce'.⁴¹ Trade, he contended, 'must neither be conducted by companies, nor at ports which enjoy exclusive privilege'.⁴² Through critical assessment of the policies of rival nations, Spain could learn from precedent, avoid their competitors' calamities, and surpass them by virtue of superior practices.

The rapid economic progress of nations considered inferior to Spain also was cited to demonstrate the assured success of a new, foreign-inspired course of action. The Russians, 'a stupid and brute people', in one commentator's opinion, recently had 'distinguished themselves' in the sciences, arms, as well as the mechanical and liberal arts. This was a 'sudden and prodigious' shift which was attributable solely to the 'wise government' of Peter the Great.⁴³ Campillo stressed that other European colonies benefited from 'good government, to which is owed the great industry shown by their inhabitants ... and rather than using some of their methods, which are neither adaptable nor applicable to our circumstances, we can nevertheless borrow the principal spirit of their system'.⁴⁴ Foreign examples also were invoked to convey frustration and confusion when reforms yielded few of their intended benefits. 'We observe some nations without essential materials are nonetheless masters of manufactures', one high-ranking official remarked, 'while others, possessing everything, lack manufactures ... without ports and great stretches of coast, some have the most flourishing merchant marine; whereas others, who possess the most secure ports and are ideally situated, lack skilled sailors'.⁴⁵

This heightened awareness of foreign practices was not exclusive to the metropolitan ministerial elite. It was a widespread phenomenon, pervasive even among the royal governors and Creole intellectuals of the imperial periphery. In attempting to extricate the empire from political-fiscal peril, colonial officials and civic-minded Creoles frequently drew inspiration from the practices of foreign states. In his 1804 inaugural oration at the newly

founded university in Santiago, the Chilean jurist Juan Egaña heaped praise on the 'brilliant models which wise and generous Europe furnishes' and lambasted the Creole literary establishment which remained 'plunged in mediocrity while that of Russia today compete with those of Paris and London'.⁴⁶ Trinidad's governor, following Campomanes, employed the example of the Danish colonies to contend that Spanish trade policy required radical reform: 'without men [i.e. population], without money, without credit, without manufacturing, without commerce', Denmark's colonies flourished due to the existence of free ports 'for the entry of provisions and useful necessities', and to the freedom of commerce which they enjoyed.⁴⁷ Caracas's captain-general invoked foreign practices to urge the expansion of its agricultural sector, which, he claimed, constituted the foundation of prosperity. 'Foreign nations', he claimed, 'contend for wealth by means of emulation [*emulación*] or lose it through envy'. For this reason, he reported:

the Swedes, who live in a sterile country, have developed many happy remedies to correct the defects of the northern climate; and Denmark has followed their example; for the same reason, Germany teaches rural and political economy at its universities, to the great advantage of its youth; similarly, the King of Sardinia sends the children of the most distinguished families to learn this noble art in the interior of Germany; likewise, Naples encourages its labourers to take care of, and to examine, the natural resources of its dominions; Florence established an Academy of Agriculture composed of first-rank Tuscan nobility; England, too, commenced the epoch of its greatness when it founded its commerce on the solid basis of agriculture; France has replicated this experience to which it must be added that even China's prosperity is built on its natural resources.⁴⁸

This inventory of successful foreign practices draws attention not only to the cosmopolitan proclivities of certain administrators, but also highlights the manner in which foreign examples were utilized to urge concrete policy shifts in the national interest. Beyond a merely superficial vogue of enlightened ideas, a pan-European outlook informed policymaking in the pursuit of security and state prosperity.

'Una Verdadera Universidad de Política': the function of Great Britain in Bourbon political thought

Diplomatic alliances, geographic proximity, and cultural exchange ensured robust French influence in Spain. The successive 'Family Compacts' between the two nations indubitably facilitated the sanctioned entry across the Pyrenees of French ideas and fashions. As Almodóvar noted in 1785,

'the same family sits on both thrones in perpetual alliance, sharing an extensive border, the same religion and almost identical interests'.⁴⁹ Yet the preoccupation of Crown officials and political writers with colonial economy and agricultural improvement produced a deep, if often overlooked, fascination with Britain. Spain's recovery lay in following the recommendations of 'a variety of authors, both our own and foreigners, and even of our enemies'.⁵⁰ In late eighteenth century, there was no greater threat to Spain's Atlantic empire than England, which aspired, many Spaniards believed, to be 'master of universal commerce in both hemispheres'.⁵¹

The impact of this particular geopolitical rivalry in the political thought of the Bourbon reform period deserves closer examination. Efforts to draw connections between English and Spanish ideas are stymied by the pervasive assumption that foreign influence was confined to French and Neapolitan incursions. Misconceptions abound due to a tendency to conflate the ubiquity of French ideas and robust diplomatic alliance with influence on the ideas that undergirded policy.⁵² Most accounts of Spanish reform thus minimize English influence in Spanish intellectual life and policy.⁵³

War with England, whether hot or cold, was the most constant factor in Spanish foreign affairs between 1713 and 1808.⁵⁴ During the War of Spanish Succession, England captured Gibraltar (1704) and came away with the *Asiento*, the exclusive right to import slaves into Spanish dominions, in the negotiations which culminated in the Peace of Utrecht. War broke out again in the 1740s and Anglo-Spanish rivalry reached a fevered pitch during the Seven Years' War when the British captured both Havana and Manila in 1762. An uneasy *détente* and intermittent bellicosity between the two Atlantic Powers dominated the subsequent three decades. The key moments were the conflict which led to Madrid's cession of the Falklands to Britain, Spanish interference in favour of England's recalcitrant North American colonists from 1779–83, the diplomatic crisis over the Nootka Sound in the Pacific Northwest in 1790, and the broken truce of 1796 which engendered more than a decade of unremitting war with devastating consequences for Spain's ultramarine empire. Interspersed between these watershed events were lower intensity conflicts over Gibraltar, British settlements on the Mosquito Coast as well as at Darien in Central America, and ubiquitous contraband activity, usually launched from British Caribbean islands or the estuaries of the Río de la Plata.⁵⁵ Since the demands of geopolitical competition spurred Bourbon reform, it is logical that Britain, Spain's chief adversary, would impact profoundly ideas about political and economic reform.

The phenomenon of eighteenth-century Anglomania in other national contexts is well established. In France, England functioned as a 'catalyst in the formation' of nationalism. Anglophilia often served as a guise for an 'appraisal, unstated and thus uncensurable' of French society whereas Anglophobia was part of an effort to 'reawaken a sense of patriotism and

pride'. The transmission of eighteenth-century British economic and historical writing in Germany displays how foreign ideas complemented, and were assimilated into, national debates.⁵⁶ An examination of British ideas in Bourbon Spain similarly sheds light on the proclivities and prejudices of its political writers and helps to identify the exogenous inspiration which infused the reform programme.

The recognition of this Anglo-Spanish cultural link has broader implications: first, it dispels the entrenched but erroneous notion that Spanish political thinkers were impervious to foreign penetration; second, it establishes the centrality of foreign sources and images in reform ideology, suggesting that England's potential utility as a national development model worthy of emulation captured the imagination of the policymaking elite;⁵⁷ and third, it contributes to the debate over to which geographical unit 'Enlightenment' belongs.⁵⁸ Assessing the Bourbon reformers from the perspective of rivals, admirers, emulators, and critics of Britain hints at a new interpretation of Iberian reform ideology, one obsessed with restoring the crumbling edifice of state power through a comprehensive transformation of society inspired by foreign models. While Britain may have been an inveterate geopolitical foe, Spanish political writers found many of its political writers' policies worthy of engagement.

Many references to England were frivolous or outright absurd: the *Consulado* of Santander, for example, boasted that its factory 'made excellent beer, as good as the best of England'.⁵⁹ In a moment of frustration with the Curia's tactics, Spain's ambassador in Rome asserted that 'the Pope had an English heart'.⁶⁰ The references to England treated in this section, however, had serious policy consequences and influenced six fundamental themes: industrial growth, colonial commerce, ultramarine governance, naval capacity, agricultural development, and the perceived link between patriotism and economic development.

As early as 1722, Philip V's minister, Melchor de Macanaz, had argued that the best way to promote industry was to arrange for English artisans to come to Spain, 'since they are the best in Europe. Entrusting factories to their care, within a brief amount of time we will not envy the English in this skill'.⁶¹ With regard to colonial commerce, Campillo implored Spain to emulate England's method of 'giving to its vassals all manner of assistance to enrich themselves, the most secure path and measure to enrich the Treasury and the State'. Campillo considered liberty to be the 'soul of commerce, without which [nothing] can flourish or survive', that which 'enlivened agriculture, the arts, manufacture and industry'.⁶² Campillo's verdict would be reiterated later in the century. The 'conditions of total liberty', one observer noted, permitted England's colonies to make 'great and rapid progress'.⁶³ Colonial governance received comparable approbation for British America was 'watched by all of Europe, a true theatre, in which outstanding achievements are performed'.⁶⁴ Pablo de Olavide's agrarian reform proposals explicitly

endorsed Spain's imitation of the historical trajectory of English agriculture as a guarantor of prosperity:

England, that powerful and populated kingdom, was before in the same situation in which Spain finds itself today. It was devoted to the same erroneous principles and was poor, depopulated and miserable. Then a ray of light penetrated its government and transformed its legislation. Since then, it has protected agriculture and encouraged the utilisation of fallow lands. And, by changing this aspect of its legislation, it became populated and wealthy. This system is followed today by all nations that pursue the well-being of their people ... If we desire to increase our population and wealth, we should do what they have done and follow in England's footsteps by protecting and encouraging agriculture.⁶⁵

In naval affairs, Antonio de Ulloa praised England's diligent, aggressive nurturing of its marine: '[England] always attends to its navy, dedicating to it a firm determination, [an attitude] which has long been sustained ... far from having waited for other nations to invent useful things for its use, it has hurried to make the most ingenious discoveries, to its great benefit'.⁶⁶ Ulloa also praised the conversion of Britain's non-strategic colonies from military to civil administration. 'If we should imitate this style of government', he argued, the cost of colonial administration could be 'reduced to a less burdensome figure'.⁶⁷

Even the English form of government was invoked favourably by reformers. Whereas Spain and France were 'compound' monarchies and 'disconnected pieces linked to one another without mutual adhesion', Almodóvar argued, in England 'nothing is divided and, therefore, one senses the immense power of royal authority' which 'helped to form a close union between the nobility and the people'.⁶⁸ Beyond specific institutions, Britain's public-spiritedness, which assisted in the 'triumph of its government', mesmerized Spaniards while simultaneously provoking self-pity because 'patriotism sparks in the hearts of our rivals a vigorous activity which is [still] unknown to us'.⁶⁹

These depictions and attitudes toward Britain reveal a fascination with its enviable prosperity, stable institutions, and national character. Yet Bourbon political writers moved beyond vague stereotypes. They delved deeper, fully engaging with texts of British political economy. Some scholars have questioned the extent of this interest. One scholar has argued that before 1760, with the notable exception of the 1753 Spanish translation of Joshua Gee's *The Trade and Navigation of Great Britain Considered* (1729), 'references to British authors were practically non-existent and of little significance'.⁷⁰ Translations from French to Spanish of the works of Herbert (1755), Mirabeau (1764), and Forbonnais (1765), among others, preceded those of Grenville (1770), Davenant (1779), Hume (1789), and Smith (1794).⁷¹

The absence of direct translations and relative paucity of English books, however, did not preclude the formative influence of English ideas.⁷² News concerning, and précis of English books was widespread in the 1760s, finding expression in publications like the *Diario Estrangero* (1763) and the *Estafeta de Londres* (1762).⁷³ English texts often were transmitted through a third language, most commonly French. Some routes of transmission proved more circuitous. The Neapolitan political economist Antonio Genovesi, for instance, exerted a tremendous influence on Spanish political economy: his *Lezioni di Comercio* was translated in 1784, becoming a leading textbook in the Spanish world over the next 30 years, first in Zaragoza in 1785 and in Chile by 1813. Genovesi drew inspiration from an earlier generation of English commercial writers, most notably Joshua Gee and John Cary, and arranged for an Italian translation of the latter's *Essay on the State of England* (1695), to which he added an extensive preface.⁷⁴ In this manner, Spain's exposure to English commercial writers occurred, rather circuitously, via the Spanish translation of a text of an Italian political economist.⁷⁵

The Bourbon reformers also engaged with, and disseminated widely, works of British political economy. Representative of the policy intelligentsia, Campomanes's primary goals included public happiness, national regeneration, and the enlargement of the state.⁷⁶ In order to realize these goals, Campomanes stressed the urgency of diffusing useful innovations, regardless of national origin. He contended that 'government is obligated to supply the public with advancements achieved in other places, so long as [Spanish] law can accommodate them, without distinction between indigenous and foreign. The accident of being born outside of Spain does not deprive them of the privileges which they deserve'.⁷⁷ Foreign political and economic ideas, Campomanes argued, had been neglected egregiously and he sought to attract the public's attention to meritorious institutions and practices of other nations.

Among these innovations, support for the advancement of economic knowledge was pre-eminent. 'Academic chairs for the teaching of the true rules of commerce have been established in Naples and Milan ... the reading of economic works is absolutely necessary in order to learn certain cardinal rules'.⁷⁸ He informed his readers of several of the 'excellent works published abroad, which recently have been translated', but reassured them that 'notes and reflections to accommodate them to our soil' would be appended.⁷⁹ He referred his audience to 'J. Child on the progress of the Spanish colonies in the Americas'.⁸⁰ Furthermore, among Campomanes's unpublished works was a translation of Davenant's 'On the Use of Political Arithmetic'.⁸¹ English political economy was, therefore, a key source for Campomanes's proposals concerning Spain's potential regeneration.

Campomanes often extolled the utility of seventeenth-century English political economy. As early as 1761, he lauded 'this most useful calculus to compare the strength of nations with respect to one another, drawing on the principles

of Petty and Davenant in England, which also were praised by our Uztáriz'.⁸² In his *Industria Popular* (1774), he argued that the English 'have been those who most accurately used this type of calculation, whose books should be consulted' and, subsequently, observed that 'the study of the English language is of great importance to understand the excellent writings and insights relative to the improvement of industry'.⁸³ Indeed, a perusal of the catalogue of Campomanes's library (as of 1778) reveals multiple works by English writers in French translation, including John Cary, Josiah Child, David Hume, Joshua Gee, Bernard Mandeville, Charles King, and Arthur Young.⁸⁴

Other Spanish observers in Bourbon Spain besides Campomanes hailed England as the first nation to 'think, meditate and calculate its interests upon solid and constant principles, the first to consider commerce as a science'.⁸⁵ Francisco Peñaranda y Casteñeda noted that 'this knowledge of economic science' permitted the enactment of 'wise economic measures' which underpinned British prosperity and were 'worthy of the attention and imitation' of Spain.⁸⁶ This attitude was articulated most fully in Nicolás Arriquibar's writings. He translated an excerpt of Davenant's *Discourse on the Publick Revenues* (1698), publishing it as the first part of his own *Recreación Política* (1779). In his introduction to the translation, Arriquibar noted that 'this Englishman teaches us the secret with which the British government has reached its high level of perfection, the origin of its power, and the methods which any country can follow in order to enjoy the same happiness [*felicidad*], which is the art of calculating'. Utilizing this method, Arriquibar asserted, England had become 'a true university of politics', for these techniques were purportedly employed by all inhabitants in the conduct of daily affairs. He added that 'every Englishman considers himself to be the Prime Minister insofar as he tries to further the interests of his nation'.⁸⁷ Arriquibar was not alone in his assessment: Britain realized, according to one advocate of commercial education, 'how much [knowledge of] commerce contributes to the training of great men of state [*grandes hombres de estado*] which are found in abundance in England'.⁸⁸ The writings of Arriquibar and Campomanes, therefore, indicate the ubiquity of British models, however vaguely referred to or imprecisely analysed, in Madrid's political circles.

Establishing the importance of these commercial writers to eighteenth-century Spanish debates, begs a further question: what, precisely, was useful about seventeenth-century 'political arithmetic'? What lessons did it offer eighteenth-century Iberian admirers? English commercial writers addressed three themes which reverberated in Arriquibar's and Campomanes's political writings: the causal relation linking population, industry, and national advancement; a conception of good governance which endowed statesmen with a robust responsibility in economic affairs; and divergent stances concerning the utility of overseas colonies with detailed prescriptions for remedying the pernicious consequences of certain modes of ultramarine dominion.

Seventeenth-century English political writers' views on links between population growth, commercial expansion, and state action proved useful to the Bourbon reformers. Thomas Mun equated good governance with the promotion of mercantile activities:

so many well-governed states highly countenance the [mercantile] profession and carefully cherish the action, not only with policy to increase it, but also with power to protect it from all forraign [sic] injuries: because they know it is a principal of Reason of State to maintain and defend that which both supports them and their estates.⁸⁹

Mun's justification of the state's central role in regulating and encouraging commerce while simultaneously protecting against 'foreign injury' coincided with the Madrid policy elite's attempts to revitalize peninsular and transoceanic trade.

Following Mun, subsequent English writers linked an industrious population with national upliftment. This conviction underpinned an interventionist effort to move all segments of the population into forms of employment which would contribute to overall national prosperity. John Cary, known in Spain through Genovesi's translation, contended that 'people are or may be the wealth of the nation, yet you must find employment for them, or else they are a burden to it, as the idle drone is maintained by the industry of the labourious bee'.⁹⁰

In Spain, the nobility's antiquated codes of conduct proved incompatible with the newfangled rhetoric of industry. As a consequence of a ubiquitous aristocratic ideal, which held manual labour in low esteem, commercial and moneymaking pursuits were disdained. 'Our political system', one commentator observed, 'scorns commerce as a vile profession ... the nobility deprecates the word "business."' ⁹¹ From 1759, the Crown campaigned to dignify commerce and manual labour by ennobling merchants and discouraging idleness. Further legislation illegalized begging and vagabondage.⁹² In its promotion of trade and industriousness, the impact of Mun and Cary on eighteenth-century Spanish reformers cannot be underestimated.

Another important link between English commercial writers and Spanish reformers involved the state's promotion of economic activity. An emphasis on the efficacious actions of individual ministers and policies saturates these writings, coalescing around a conviction that, in Petty's phrase, a 'small country and few people, may be equivalent in wealth and strength to a far greater people and territory'.⁹³ Davenant asserted that 'great statesmen have always taken care, not only to know the exact posture of their country, but likewise to understand perfectly the power or weakness of other people with whom they have wars or alliances; and the judgement formed from thence is political arithmetick'.⁹⁴ He praised the 'deep judgements of the ministers of state, Richelieu and Colbert, and not [that of] the merchants,

that France owes the prosperity their trade was lately in, and 'twas their wisdom, more than the industry of their merchants, that laid the foundations of it'.⁹⁵ The state's primary responsibility, in his view, was the pursuit of national, political, and economic prestige. It cannot remain 'unarmed, sit still and suffer another country to enlarge its dominions' for this would demonstrate a 'mean courage; than which nothing is more odious to the multitude, who love valour in a prince, tho' it be unsuccessful'. The sovereign who 'would shine, and attract the love of their subjects' must be strenuously active when 'the rest of the world is in motion', eschewing the condition of a 'passive looker on'. Such a prince 'must make a figure, and have a share in all affairs abroad, or [he] can hardly give content at home'.⁹⁶ The refashioned Caroline monarchy drew on these and similar ideas as it reinserted itself into geopolitical conflicts after 1759.

The relation between colony and metropole was theorized by British commercial writers and picked up by Bourbon reformers. Josiah Child argued that if colonies were not 'kept to the rules of navigation' then the 'benefit of them would be wholly lost to the nation ... leaving us only the trouble of breeding men, and sending them abroad to cultivate the ground'.⁹⁷ Spanish political writers, preoccupied with the deleterious impact of smuggling, were guided by a similar principle. Davenant argued that colonies constituted a 'strength' so long as they remain 'under good discipline' and 'are strictly made to observe the fundamental laws' of the mother country. Under any other circumstances, however, colonies degenerated into 'members lopped off from the body politick, being indeed like offensive arms, wrested from a nation, to be turned against it'.⁹⁸ British trade practices with its colonies were lauded by Spanish commentators. Campomanes credited the Navigation Acts for the discrepancy between the Spanish and British Empires: 'by means of [the Navigation Acts] the English violate commercial treaties ... by ill fortune Spain was oppressed by wars in all parts of the world while England prepared the foundation for its mercantile revolution; it is possible to infer that [from this point] Spain's backward slide began, ignorant as it was of the true principles of commerce'.⁹⁹ Spain, Campomanes implied, might match Britain's ascendancy if its policies were underpinned by such 'true principles'.

Caroline political writers neither disparaged older Spanish economic doctrines nor viewed foreign and Spanish ideas as mutually exclusive. Instead they sought to republish and disseminate the most pertinent of their neglected peninsular predecessors. The widely circulated appendices to Campomanes's *Educación Popular* brought the commentaries of the *arbitristas*, including Martínez de Mata, Álvarez Osorio y Redin, and Navarrete to the attention of a broad range of audiences. Furthermore, Campomanes specifically recommended early eighteenth-century writer Gerónimo Uztáriz to his readers, whose work 'demanded to be re-read always for its excellent principles' of commerce.¹⁰⁰

As 'excellent' as these works may have been, however, the exigencies of state required new strategies. In the preface to his 1794 translation of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, José Alonso Ortíz praised the preceding generation of Spanish political economists, but added that it had never 'attempted to reduce the subject to a science, a general system' or to express its ideas 'in an abstract way'.¹⁰¹ Fourteen years earlier, Campomanes had reached a similar conclusion. The 'common defect' of those 'patriotic and well-intentioned writers', he noted in an unpublished essay, was the 'inexact' nature of their 'facts and figures' which, in turn, led them to faulty 'deductions and proposals'.¹⁰²

The admiration of Britain by Spanish political writers should not obscure the critical dimension of their treatment. Contrary to the commercial maxims which it espoused, one observer would mock the British government for not having 'calculated according to its science of political arithmetic' in its 'inhumanly bloody' and 'profligate' war against its North American colonists.¹⁰³ Hostile assessments of Britain's quintessential values percolated as well. Some commentators castigated the 'dominant character of the English, the love of liberty, its most violent passion'.¹⁰⁴ The future minister of the Indies, José de Gálvez, distanced himself from this 'violent passion': 'We do not aspire', he wrote, 'to entirely adapt the liberty and other maxims of the English, because we recognize of course the great differences between the two states'.¹⁰⁵ Such recognition of the contradictions and potential fallibility ensured that admiration for English models never became sycophantic.

Most political writers, in fact, did not estimate Britain to be superior to Spain. It is implicit, perhaps, in all Spanish analyses, that the gap between the prosperity and power of the two nations was not insuperable. In the wake of the British capture of Havana in 1762, one influential optimist compared the two empires, noting that Spain's superiority in geographical size, the fertility of its land, and the produce of its colonies should have precluded such a debacle had resources been exploited properly and allocated efficiently. Everything, he argued, suggested that Spain should be a 'great, happy and powerful' country. Britain's greater revenues, then, were attributable to 'the better disposition' of its 'arts, fishing industry, agriculture, navigation and commerce' whereas Spain, if it possessed any of such things, remained 'quite languid'. He rejected attributing the divergence of fortunes, as many of his contemporaries did, to a 'different genius, or character' dismissing the notion of the 'laborious and diligent' Englishman and the 'lazy and distracted' Spaniard. The difference lay in government policy. 'If Spain were governed in the same way that England is', he predicted, 'within a few years it would be the superior in power and wealth'.¹⁰⁶

This goal could be accomplished in myriad ways. One possibility was to deprive England of its illegal commerce with Spain's colonies. Grimaldi justified his rejection of an application from Asturian merchants for a privileged trading company with the Yucatán due to the prospective advantages which Spain would accrue in its rivalry with Britain if that trade were kept open to

all Spaniards: 'We know', Grimaldi wrote, that 'the English currently conduct this commerce almost exclusively ... it would be a great advantage to strip them of it, substituting our own in its place ... no opportunity to improve our shipping and diminish that of England's should be lost'.¹⁰⁷ Britain's threat to Spain and its empire, then, gave impetus to many Bourbon initiatives. The threat, however, was not solely military or commercial; rather, it also was intellectual and moral. Britain, along with other European competitor states, was considered hostile to Spain's national character and intent on the besmirchment of its national past.

Imperial rivalry and History in Bourbon Spain

The twin forces of international rivalry and emulation impacted Bourbon Spain's reevaluation of its own past. History furnished policymakers with prescriptive formulae as well as cautionary tales.¹⁰⁸ Policy and history were considered intimately linked in the minds of the Bourbon reformers. In the 1780s, a newly elected member of the Academy of History, founded in 1737, declared that since 'legislation is the soul which invigorates, makes robust and enlivens all types of government, national history should be formed from the law. When there are no laws, or those that existed have fallen into disuse, History will lack the most dignified object of its narrative'.¹⁰⁹ The study of History, therefore, was considered essential for governance. As a leading member of the Council of the Indies noted, 'the study and meditation of universal history not only satisfies our curiosity and entertains us, but rather is a factor in the formation of prudent judgment in the concerns of government'.¹¹⁰ Campomanes echoed this sentiment in a letter to Jovellanos, grumbling that his fellow ministers 'do not know our History and they do not understand ecclesiastical affairs. How, then, are they ever going to counsel our sovereign about legislation?'¹¹¹ These sentiments determined that debates concerning the historiography of empire attracted the attention of figures at the highest echelons of Spanish government.

Piqued by unfavourable depictions by foreigners, Spanish reformers gazed at the past as often as they peered across borders as they sought to revitalize their Atlantic empire. The reception, translation, and dissemination of works of History, including Almodóvar's *Historia*, in Bourbon Spain were not passive processes. International rivalry provoked patriotic indignation, which, in turn, engendered a genre of counter-historical narrative which endeavoured to reprove and contest the unflattering images of Spain promulgated by foreign writers. In addition, Spanish historians gleaned practices of rival states which could be used either to vindicate existing policy or to provide support for a policy shift. Almodóvar's *Historia* sought to defend Spanish policy from foreign indictment neither by direct confrontation of the charges levied against it by purveyors of the Black Legend nor through effusive praise for Spain's conduct in its Atlantic dominions.¹¹² Instead, he negatively depicted

Spain's rival empires in the New World, especially that of Britain. Almodóvar's purpose, however, was not solely to deflect attention away from the ubiquitous Black Legend, but rather to prod Spain to renovate its empire through the critical emulation of its rivals.

Many historical epochs captured the political imagination of the reforming elite. Neoclassicism flourished, as it did elsewhere in Europe. The Iberian-born Roman Emperor Trajan, in particular, enjoyed renewed popularity. According to a leading periodical, Trajan was the 'most perfect prince ever recorded in history; no kingdom was ever so happy, nor as glorious ... he was a great man of state and a great captain, the man most fit to uplift human nature, pushing it toward the divine'.¹¹³ Charles III remained obsessed not only with the antiquities unearthed at Herculaneum during his Neapolitan reign, but with the figure of Trajan himself. In the *Salon de Columnas* at the Royal Palace in Madrid, he had himself represented by a full-length statue garbed as a Roman General. The pose and costume of the figure repeat the design of Felipe de Castro's statue of Trajan on the palace façade.¹¹⁴ Several years later, the monarch commissioned Mengs to paint the fresco 'Apotheosis of Trajan', which graced the ceiling of his private dining room. The composition of this work focuses on the figure of Glory, represented by a nymph clothed in white, surrounded by iconographical representations of the virtues of a Prince: liberality, firmness, fortune, economy, the military arts, and abundance. The figures of Public Happiness, Charity, and Love of Glory predictably occupy key positions.¹¹⁵ Yet the Caroline era's historically conscious statesmen were not content with classical allusions. They were more interested in the less distant Iberian past.

Numerous historical episodes resonated in the contemporary politics.¹¹⁶ The Visigothic period, as shall be discussed fully in Chapter 2, was highly esteemed by the regalists because of the existence of a national Church independent of Rome. The *Reconquista* often was extolled before the ill-fated siege of Algiers in 1776.¹¹⁷ The epoch of Isabel and Ferdinand, *Los Reyes Católicos*, was praised by commentators lamenting Spain's departed prosperity and industriousness. 'There were many rich and populous cities where the arts and commerce flourished', Danvila y Villarrasa marvelled, 'laziness was loathed and work highly-esteemed as the companion of virtue; industriousness was common to the entire people'.¹¹⁸ The unified Iberian Peninsula under Philip II was eulogized before the 1762 invasion of Portugal.¹¹⁹ While the potential list of these uses of the past were myriad and the political impact of each was formidable, all of them looked toward an imagined time past when the machinery of state and society presumably had functioned more effectively.¹²⁰

The period which captured the imagination of the Bourbon reformers, however, was the Spanish conquest of the New World and the subsequent establishment of its American empire. For Spaniards, as one eminent historian has noted, the 'discovery and possession of the Indies was further, and

conclusive, evidence that they were the chosen race'.¹²¹ But Spain's colonization had been pilloried by rival claimants to the imperial mantle. The Dutch depiction of Spanish brutality during their revolt against the Habsburg yoke in the late sixteenth century was taken up by the English and French in the subsequent two centuries, giving rise to the ubiquitous Black Legend. Spain was regarded suspiciously by European observers as an aspirant to universal monarchy, a barbarous destroyer of America's indigenous peoples, and, to borrow Gibbon's characterization, a nation marked by 'gloomy pride, rapacious avarice and unrelenting cruelty'.¹²² European depictions of Spain invariably made use of such deeply entrenched attitudes concerning its rapacious conduct in the New World.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the seismic shifts in international relations and the ubiquity of the Black Legend had done little to perturb Spain's triumphal judgment of the conquest and colonization of America. Foreigners, a leading minister for ultramarine affairs complained, 'possessed by emulation and jealousy of our achievements and great aptitude, have endeavoured to tarnish the glories and triumphs of Spain, and, toward this depraved end, have concocted histories based in inaccurate perceptions, in no way justified, and for the most part false'.¹²³ Spanish officials at all echelons of government went on the offensive: one administrator stationed in New Granada asserted that English atrocities were responsible for a 'greater number of European victims of their caprice and passions, we would certainly find, than the number of native people' who suffered as a result of Spanish imperialism.¹²⁴ In fact, one prominent apologist asserted, of all of the European powers, only Spain had adopted a 'voluminous code of laws whose every sentence and every word breathe an admirable humanity and grants Indians full protection'.¹²⁵

Responding to foreign vituperation was a major activity undertaken by Bourbon historians. William Robertson's *History of America* (1777) and Raynal's *Histoire* attracted the lion's share of the attention. Almodóvar's work, which will be examined at length, formed part of a broader, coordinated effort which sought to vindicate Spain's colonial past and to contest foreign polemics, thus 'confounding a certain class of [foreign] writers who have dedicated themselves to defaming an illustrious and honourable nation'.¹²⁶ The protracted debate over the introduction into Spain of Robertson's *History* and Raynal's *Histoire* signals History's elevated place in the genesis of Bourbon reform ideology. Foreign intellectual currents neither were received passively nor dismissed as impertinent to statecraft, but rather provoked spirited reactions and critiques which, in turn, produced syncretic ideas with which policymakers sought to galvanize the reform of the state.

The Spanish translation of Robertson's *History* ultimately was rejected in the late 1770s after a protracted debate.¹²⁷ Before Almodóvar undertook his translation of Raynal, another Spanish historian received a royal commission to write a history of the New World, which would respond, in a comprehensive

and newfangled way, to foreign derision of Spanish colonialism. Juan Bautista Muñoz (1745–99), Royal Cosmographer of the Indies, lobbied Charles III to write such a history, claiming that its absence had been ‘greatly prejudicial to the honor and to the interests of the nation’. Foreign writers, he fulminated, with Robertson’s and Raynal’s accounts foremost in his mind, ‘unjustly indict the conduct of Spain, deprecate the merit of our discoveries, and obscure the glory of our heroes’. Such a history, which Muñoz volunteered to pen, would correct the record, demonstrating ‘the righteous conduct and good intentions’ of the Spanish Crown. He would thus ‘dissipate the clouds which shroud the truth with ignorance and accusation’ and vindicate ‘the benevolence of [Spanish] government’ in the Americas.¹²⁸

The royal permission solicited by Muñoz was granted in 1779 and his *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* was published 11 years later. In the introduction to the first and only completed volume, Muñoz argued that Spain had encountered in the New World a ‘field of glory worthy of its elevated thoughts’ and, in spite of obstacles, the ‘genius along with the ardour of religious belief ensured the happy attainment of its most arduous enterprises’. Spain, far from destroying the New World’s wealth, persevered heroically in the worst of conditions, until America’s ‘steadily increasing wealth sparked the emulation, competition, industry, commerce, and interest of all of Europe’. Muñoz’s bleak account of the pre-*Conquista* New World served to accentuate his claim for Spain’s status as the indispensable conduit of European culture, without which the Americas would have remained mired in barbarism.¹²⁹

The first volume of Muñoz’s *Historia* was presented and approved by the Royal Academy of History for publication in 1791. In the final general session to approve it, however, normally a formality, his work was attacked bitterly. His detractors argued that Muñoz’s *Historia* was not merely a ‘modest individual effort’, but rather represented a ‘special responsibility’ given by the late Charles III, who had died in 1788. ‘Announced to both the nation and the rest of Europe’ for many years, it must, therefore, be treated as ‘work of the nation’ and judged by a higher standard. The most damaging criticism was that Muñoz’s work added ‘nothing substantial to what has been written by previous historians of the Indies’, both foreign and Spanish. Muñoz’s history had ‘omitted to include many reflections’, thus lacking the ‘philosophy proper to the century’ and ‘required of a History so long anticipated’.¹³⁰

Almodóvar headed the Academy’s commission which approved Muñoz’s work and, subsequently, defended him against rearguard attack: ‘[our committee] has gained much [from reading his work] and we expect the same of the good judgment of the Academy’.¹³¹ Almodóvar’s opinion was not to be taken lightly: not only was he in line to assume the top post at the Royal Academy, but his five-volume translation of Raynal’s history had appeared several years before the appearance of Muñoz’s *Historia*. An unfavourable judgment of Spain’s colonization of the New World also lay near the heart of Raynal’s narrative, the harshness of which Almodóvar contested.

Yet Almodóvar's project differed from previous efforts, including that of Muñoz, which pursued strategies of either debunking the Black Legend or defending Spanish conduct and motives in the New World. Almodóvar shifted the focus away from Spain. He instead analysed the imperial trajectories of England, France, Portugal, and Holland, focusing on both efficacious practices as well as failed policies. Combining a cosmopolitan outlook with a ferocious patriotism, Almodóvar's *Historia*, which he published under the pseudonym (and anagram) Eduardo Malo de Luque, strongly insinuated along what lines the Spanish empire should reform in order to compete with rival imperial states.

Pedro Francisco Jiménez de Góngora y Luján (1727–96), later elevated to title of the Duke of Almodóvar, was director of the Royal Academy of History from 1791 until his death in 1796. Almodóvar was long accustomed to such public power, which followed naturally from his career service as an ambassador to the courts of various European states. Almodóvar's diplomatic career began in 1759 as an envoy to Russia, with a special commission to discover the full extent of Russian designs on the Pacific Coast of North America.¹³² He remained in St. Petersburg until 1765 when he was named ambassador to Portugal during the age of Pombal. His tenure in Lisbon culminated with the Treaty of San Ildefonso (1778), which ended the numerous squabbles and skirmishes which had plagued Luso-Spanish relations since the Seven Years' War.¹³³ In 1778, he became ambassador to Britain, though Anglo-Spanish belligerence circumscribed his diplomatic efficacy. These biographical details are important because Almodóvar's 35-year diplomatic career is highly relevant to the interpretation of his *Historia* offered in this book. Containing imperial rivalry and negotiating overseas disputes were key duties in Russia, Portugal, and England. From his diplomatic posts, he corresponded extensively with, and knew intimately, the Madrid-based architects of Bourbon imperial reform.

The imprint of these professional experiences and relationships are discernible in, and pertinent to, the arguments of his *Historia*.¹³⁴ In a 1767 letter to Spain's foreign minister, Almodóvar's preoccupation with British expansion is starkly revealed. He warned of the 'grave damage which would result from further English establishments' in the Americas. He proposed an alliance of mutual protection with Portugal on the condition that it closed its European and Brazilian ports to British shipping.¹³⁵ Almodóvar's suspicion of, and hostility towards, British ultramarine designs, which he claimed, in a 1779 epistle, emerged from a combination of 'dark and hidden maxims', 'ambition', and 'excessive pride', would become a significant subterranean anxiety of his *Historia* when it was published twenty years later.¹³⁶

Throughout his diplomatic career, Almodóvar balanced intellectual pursuits and public duty in three ways: first, his observations abroad inspired policy proposals for peninsular Spain. He took special interest, for example, in the improvement of land-based communication and drafted a 'Proyecto de

Establecimiento de Postas de Ruedas en España' which drew upon his stints in Russia and Poland¹³⁷; second, writing under a pseudonym, he introduced the public to French intellectual currents in his *Década Epistolar Sobre El Estado de Las Letras en Francia* (1781); third, he synthesized observations from his diplomatic career in his *Historia*.

Although the exact reasons for Almodóvar's decision to undertake a translation of Raynal (1713–96), whose work was banned in Spain, remain obscure, his remarks in the *Historia* provide certain clues: in the second volume, Almodóvar lamented that 'foreign writers have endeavoured to discredit Spain without having read or examined its long-verified and true histories'.¹³⁸ Almodóvar presented his project as part of the broader refutation of the Black Legend and the restoration of Spain's international reputation. 'Emulation, or better put, jealousy', he wrote, 'has produced malignant detractors against the name of Spain'.¹³⁹ But Almodóvar's project went beyond mere apology, the rejection of Raynal's indictment, and instead sought to show how a revived empire could enable Spain to further reverse its decline and, ultimately, outstrip its rivals.

Raynal unequivocally condemned the Spanish Monarchy for its complicity in the devastation of the New World. He pursued his indictment through three channels. First, Raynal denied that the unsavoury character of the original Spanish inhabitants mitigated the Crown's responsibility because proper regulation would have produced a benign outcome. 'Rigid laws and equitable administration, an easy subsistence, and useful labour soon infuse morals', Raynal argued, into the former 'scum of the nation'. Although he acknowledged the possibility of rehabilitation, Raynal lamented the 'bandits' whose 'alloy debased the first colonies'.¹⁴⁰ Second, Raynal maligned the 'regular and constant system of oppression [that] succeeded the tumults and storms of conquest', an epoch of unbridled rapacity unleashed by the conquest and unabated to this day. Third, he blamed Spanish national character, imbued with 'prejudice' and 'pride', for hastening the 'perversion of human reason'. He claimed that Creoles had inherited the 'barbarous luxury, shameful pleasures, romantic intrigues', and 'superstition' of peninsular Spaniards.

Raynal linked Spain's 'blind fanaticism' and 'absolute contempt for improvements and customs' with its 'visible decay' into 'inaction and barbarism'; this language partially accounts for the vigorous censorship which Raynal's *Histoire* suffered in the Spanish World. But Spain's actions in the New World, repeated to varying degrees of rapacity by subsequent European competitors, were detrimental not only to non-European peoples, according to Raynal (and his collaborator Diderot), but to Europeans as well, whose prospects for stability and freedom were diminished by the persistence of imperial rivalry.¹⁴¹ Raynal therefore implored all European governments to relinquish colonial monopoly and remove 'every obstacle ... that intercepts a direct communication' between the Americas and all European states.

For Raynal, the world historical purpose of commerce was to corrode relentlessly the fences of colonial fiefdoms.¹⁴²

In his response to Raynal's grand narrative, banned in Spain after 1779, Almodóvar did not disguise his partiality. 'I am both Catholic and Spanish', he declared, explaining his intention to purge the Abbé's work of its impieties and chauvinism. He insisted that he was not 'obliged to translate the original which guides us, but rather its general method, select its seed, and add pertinent information to update the work'.¹⁴³ In claiming that it was not a strict translation, Almodóvar accurately assessed his own work for Raynal's *Histoire* served merely as a point of departure for the Duke's vision of the Atlantic World. While the first two volumes of Almodóvar's *Historia* mirror Raynal's design, the Spaniard added a voluminous appendix, entitled 'The English Constitution and the Affairs of the English East India Company', a feature not found in Raynal's original work. Moreover, in Almodóvar's third volume, he appended a 68-page essay entitled 'The Political and Economic State of France'. Whereas both Almodóvar's fourth and Raynal's third volumes, respectively, examine Scandinavian, Prussian, and Russian colonial ventures, Almodóvar supplemented the Frenchman's account with 'Analytical Memoirs Relative to the History and Present State of Russia', drawn primarily from materials and recollections of his diplomatic stint in St. Petersburg.

In addition to the three crucial appendices, Almodóvar's *Historia* differs most starkly from Raynal's in its failure to discuss America. Whereas Raynal's final seven volumes exhaustively treat Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English colonial activity in the New World, Almodóvar remains conspicuously silent, concluding his work with a comparatively technical overview of Spanish settlements in Asia, including an extensive treatment of commercial prospects in the Philippines.¹⁴⁴ Almodóvar's strategy avoids directly disputing the judgment of Spanish colonialism purveyed by Raynal. Instead, he utilized contemporary reports of English atrocities in India to undermine the cultural chauvinism that he perceived permeated European accounts of the Spanish Conquest. While conceding the existence of 'some avaricious, cruel and misfortunate individuals' among the *Conquistadores*, he insisted that 'the times, the circumstances, the distances, and the scope [of the colonizing project]' served as mitigating factors, whereas the English commenced 'with the charitable motive of commerce, with the pretext of friendship, with the guise of a lamb', but subsequently 'transformed into a carnivorous wolf'.¹⁴⁵ Almodóvar, then, devotes scant attention to Spanish colonial practices and aimed to analyse, and extract useful lessons from, the conduct of rival European imperial powers. In this way, he declined to refute the specific charges of the Black Legend and, instead, analysed foreign practices in order either to vindicate certain Spanish practices or to urge policy shifts.

Almodóvar's narrative vindicated three Spanish imperial practices. First, he attacked the notion that a monarchical form of government caused Spain's seventeenth-century decline or impeded its economic recovery. As a corollary,

he sought to dispel the notion that Spanish decline was linked to something intrinsic about its national character. Second, he highlighted the idiosyncrasies, if not depravities, of English and French colonial establishments. Third, he offered an account of colonial commerce which, though drawing selectively on Raynal, favoured the expansion of privileged monopoly companies which the Abbé had eschewed.

Almodóvar instructed his readers to inspect the historical trajectories of Holland and Portugal, formerly ‘tiny crumbs of the great Spanish monarchy’. He argued that forms of government and the fortunes of empire had no causal relation: the Portuguese empire ‘flourished and degenerated under monarchical government’ whereas the Dutch Republic had undergone a similar transformation while its form of government remained constant. The underlying cause in both cases, Almodóvar contended, was the relative abundance, or absence, of ‘great men or great virtue’.¹⁴⁶ Employing Portugal repeatedly as a test case, Almodóvar repudiated the notion that Spain’s national character precluded the profitable colonization of distant territories. The primary problem encountered by Portugal in its eastward expansion lay, in Almodóvar’s view, in its ‘desire to be a conquering power, to govern extensive territory which no nation would have been capable of conserving without debilitating itself’.¹⁴⁷ These two examples indicate Almodóvar’s preference for monarchical institutions and his inclination to attribute geopolitical decline to the inexorable tendencies of imperial overstretch, rather than to the peculiarities of national character or intrinsically defective modes of government.

Almodóvar’s circuitous apology for Spain’s imperial legacy commenced with a superficially innocuous appraisal of its rivals, particularly Britain. As either an ‘enemy or ally’, he insisted, ‘Great Britain is the power with which our interests are most linked, by very close-knit political and mercantile relations’. Almodóvar postulated, however, that Britain never would ‘rule Europe or the rest of the world’, a judgment which probably reflected Britain’s humbled international stature after its 1783 capitulation in American Revolution. In an appendix to Volume II, Almodóvar lavished considerable attention on the English East India Company, which previously ‘had conducted itself well relative to other companies, better conserving the customs, discipline and vigor than those of other nations’. In Bengal, however, this laudable conduct degenerated and had ‘altered and corrupted all the sources of confidence and public happiness’. He did not refute the Black Legend, but rather tarnished England’s reputation for being ‘so reflexive, philosophical, generous, and such a good friend of liberty’. England, according to Almodóvar’s account, had ‘stained its glories’ by its recent reprehensible conduct in India and revealed its policy to be ‘cruel, haughty, avaricious, and unjust’.¹⁴⁸

Britain’s conduct in India, moreover, Almodóvar claimed, was unmitigated by the factors which produced Spain’s excesses in its sixteenth-century conquest of the Americas. ‘After the lessons and experiences of three centuries,

the advances in the sciences, the arts and politics', he chided, not to mention the 'bitter criticisms and absurd calumny levied against Spain', Britain still engaged in 'barbarism'. In this way, Almodóvar appropriated the language of the Black Legend, formerly exclusively used to denigrate Spanish colonialism, and imposed it on the British.¹⁴⁹ Unlike Raynal, who believed that parliamentary action could ameliorate the East India Company's conduct, Almodóvar refrained from speculation on this question, preferring to draw attention to Britain's egregious crimes in South Asia. In this way, a type of counter-emulation was urged, in which Britain's imperial excesses were impugned as conduct to be both derided and avoided.

Yet Almodóvar nourished a patriotic aim in his lengthy treatment of Britain's empire which went beyond disputing the Black Legend and casting aspersions. For him, as for Adam Smith, emulation was a path to national greatness. He identified mutuality and rivalry as key factors in the imperial policy of Britain and France who 'fear, contemplate, insult, bore and highly estimate one another'.¹⁵⁰ Referring to these Powers as 'masters of the century in which the spirit of moderation reigns, [along with] the good correspondence of humanity and philosophy', he called on other 'great nations', transparently Spain, to 'open their eyes' and 'follow the right methods'. In such a way, Almodóvar claimed, the Crown could sustain its 'legitimate and lofty independence and perhaps achieve parity' with its rivals.¹⁵¹ Through critical emulation, Spain could further bolster its geopolitical standing.

Almodóvar's *Historia* attracted the attention of the Spanish Enlightenment's leading figures. His approach to the translation and interpretation of Raynal's work earned both their approbation and dismay. Juan de Sempere y Guarinos summarized the positive evaluation: 'he endeavoured its correction, purging it of many defects, adding some useful parts, which both manifest the good judgment of the author and his skill in affairs of state'.¹⁵² Jovellanos, by contrast, censured the first volume of Almodóvar work in late 1783, just prior to its publication, noting that it was 'unblemished by errors and impieties', but the scrupulousness needed to achieve this result also led Almodóvar to excise many 'beautiful discourses' of Raynal's original and the 'integrity of the work was lost, something essential to "philosophical" history'.¹⁵³ Fidelity to Raynal's text, however, never appears to have been Almodóvar's aspiration. Almodóvar's cosmopolitan outlook was primarily instrumental, an enlightened narrative to vindicate certain Spanish colonial policies and to promote the reform of other practices.

Almodóvar's conception of international and colonial commerce did not strictly mimic Raynal's views. Certain passages of the *Historia* undoubtedly echo the *Histoire*: 'war and navigation have mixed the destinies of societies and peoples', Almodóvar declared, and 'commerce invites all nations to consider the others as part of a single society, whose members can participate in the goods of all the rest'.¹⁵⁴ Other pronouncements, however, suggest economic priorities in the colonial sphere distinct from Raynal's.

Though he overcame some of the most rigid tenets of mercantilism, Almodóvar maintained greater affinities with it than with Raynal's nascent liberalism.¹⁵⁵ For example, Almodóvar praised the 'fortunate tyrant' Cromwell for his 'famous Acts of Navigation [1651] by which the commerce and marine of England flourishes even today'. Privileged companies also were meritorious in Almodóvar's view, especially when their 'ancient relations and established credit made them indispensable'. He implored the reader, 'the man of healthy judgment', not to be seduced by the cries of "'commercial liberty" and "civil liberty"'. He warned that economic writers purveying such schemes promised advantages which often proved to be nothing but a 'chimera'.¹⁵⁶ Almodóvar instead advocated the expansion of privileged trade, specifically the creation of a monopoly company for the Philippines as the most effective mode of extracting resources and generating revenue.

Exploiting a political climate favourable to privileged trading companies, Almodóvar proposed the establishment of one for the Philippines which he described as the ideal mechanism to exploit the natural abundance of that archipelago.¹⁵⁷ He insisted that such a company be founded on 'true principles', subject to revaluation every 25 years to determine whether monopoly privilege should be extended, or should be superseded by a policy predicated on different principles.¹⁵⁸ In a probable allusion to the physiocratic ideas professed by Raynal, he contended that the 'most powerful' method to develop the Philippines would be the 'cultivation of its extensive lands', a goal best achieved, he maintained, through the formation of a privileged trading company.¹⁵⁹

Almodóvar's advocacy of a privileged company was not uncontroversial as a strategy for colonial development in general, as shall be developed in Chapter 3, and for the Philippines in particular. Some officials proposed abandoning distant outposts of empire altogether. Even the governor of the Philippines wrote to Charles IV urging that Spain attempt to exchange that far-flung archipelago with Britain for Gibraltar or Jamaica. The Philippines, in his view, were neither 'comparable in importance nor in usefulness to augment its power and commerce'. Considered together with Bengal, the governor predicted, Britain could create an Asian empire 'capable of recovering the decline which it feels in Europe', thus providing Spain with a freer hand in the Americas.¹⁶⁰

In spite of such weighty reservations, the Royal Philippine Company, which was empowered to conduct trade between Manila and the rest of Spain's empire, as well as exclusive right to import slaves into Venezuela, received a royal charter in March 1785. Like the scheme Almodóvar had envisaged, the company received a 25-year charter and a capitalization of eight million pesos, of which the Crown purchased one million, thus demonstrating its backing of, and confidence in, the venture.¹⁶¹

The trading company's history indicates the role played by Almodóvar in the critical emulation of rival imperial states. It also suggests the impact of geopolitics on the writing of History. Far from a banal process of passive reception, dull translation, and desultory dissemination, an analysis of

Almodóvar's five-volume version of Raynal's *Histoire* urges at least two conclusions. First, historical translation was a politically charged process of omission and replacement, a process in which emulation was a crucial force. Second, Almodóvar's *Historia* demonstrates the Spanish Enlightenment's critical engagement with, and intellectual appetite for, the political practices of other European states, especially the administration of their overseas possessions. This engagement both served to refute the Black Legend and to compare Spain's conduct favourably with the imperial experiences of rival imperial states. Almodóvar's *Historia* highlights the mechanisms through which European ideas, particularly historical tracts, were incorporated into Bourbon political discourse and applied to contemporary policy decisions confronting the Spanish Empire.¹⁶² The traces of critical emulation found in Almodóvar's work provide further evidence that the Spanish Enlightenment was not a derivative affair, a pale shadow of developments in France and Britain, but rather was characterized by intellectual cross-pollination, a cosmopolitanism tempered by patriotic duty and religious piety, and a conviction that History might furnish contemporaries with the insights required to propel Spain to recover its diminished geopolitical *grandeza*. Almodóvar's *Historia* suggests how innovative policy suggestions emanate from a historical text, which professes to operate faithfully within the confines of national and religious tradition. Grappling with these facets of this text, and the robust spirit of critical emulation with which it is imbued, may help to clarify the mechanisms by which ideas were transmitted between cultures, among rival states, and across intellectual boundaries in the long eighteenth century.

The preceding chapter thus sought to describe and analyse the various mechanisms by which Bourbon reformers encountered and processed non-Spanish ideas. It emphasized emulation's role in this process. The transmission and assimilation of foreign ideas occurred as much through traditional conduits, including published translations, as via first-hand observation of practices, institutions, and legislation. By the late eighteenth century, then, Spanish ideas neither were insulated from wider European trends nor isolated from intellectual currents from beyond the Pyrenees. Far from either static or passive, Spanish policy makers critically engaged with, and contributed forcefully to, broader European debates about state power, the value of empire, and its proper administration, political economy, and national character.

The chapter also attempted to clarify the relationship between geopolitical rivalry and historiography in Caroline Spain, arguing that mutual influence existed and was a fundamental component of the Bourbon ideology of governance. If imperial considerations permeated historiography and the latter, in turn, was employed as a tool in state affairs, it would be unsurprising if other intellectual fields were to infiltrate policymaking circles or, by the same token, were politics to stimulate intellectual activity. The next chapter therefore traces the interplay between legal thought, political economy, and policy in Bourbon Spain.

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