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LA POÈTICA DE LA IL·LUSTRACIÓ: RAÓ & CÀNON

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CÀNON LITERARI

La significació que aporta la forma literària en Luzán i Capmany

(The meaning of literary form in Luzán and Capmany)

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Beneath the title of my speech –“meaning of the literary form”– lies a question I deem of necessary consideration when analyzing a text on literary theory, as far as we want to know the roots it stems from. This is particularly true when dealing with rhetorical and poetic treatises of classical tradition, such as those of the 18th century, because these texts are especially dedicated to identify the forms that best credit the quality of a literary work. In this way, it is logical to ask ourselves what makes these forms a key point in achieving literary excellence.

I have chosen two texts to discuss my hypothesis: Luzan's *La poética*, and Antoni de Capmany's *Filosofía de la elocuencia*. They are two truly different texts not only because they belong to two different fields –poetics and rhetoric–, but mainly due to their different goals, which make them ponder on different literary texts: poetics copes specifically with the art of literary creation, which includes fiction, whereas eloquence deals with the art of discourse which can include –and often does so– reference material, therefore I'm not going to compare them. I have chosen these texts for the following reasons: Luzan's, because *La poética* is the most complete and influential Spanish theoretical text of the 18th century. On the other hand, *Filosofía de la elocuencia* –which I will refer to through its 1777 first edition– because the forty years span between the two books allow us to observe some relevant changes in its rhetorical views and also because Capmany's text achieved an enormous spread and influenced many future rhetorical treatises in our culture.

To sum up, the texts analyzed do not assume any information inherent to literature itself and consequently grant form –identified with *elocutio*– a solely complementary function: that of providing a more pleasant or more emotive reception of the thinking implicit or explicit in the speech. Accordingly, when judging the value of a text –nor its elegance or enthusiasm in which it has been transmitted– the criteria needed are the same we would apply to a referential text: the truth or deception it conveys, the moral value of its ideas of the benefit it renders both for individuals and society itself.