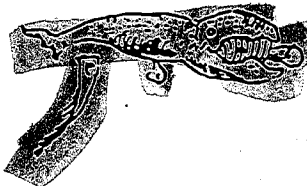


Literary style in the late seventeenth century became increasingly less rhetorical, as an interest in careful observation was encouraged by the growth of the natural sciences. In 1662, the Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge, usually called just The Royal Society, was founded under the patronage of Charles II, who had been restored to the throne in 1660. Its founder was John Evelyn, a sample of whose diary is given below. In the second passage, Thomas Sprat, Secretary of the Royal Society in 1667, discusses the prose style being developed for scientific papers.

John Evelyn's diary for 2 and 3 June 1658

2 An extraordinary storme of haile & raine, cold season as winter, wind northerly neere 6 moneths. 3 A large *Whale* taken, twixt my Land butting on *Thames & Greenwich*, which drew an infinite Concourse to see it, by water, horse, Coach on foote from *Lon'd*, & all parts: It appeared first below *Greenwich* at low-water, for at high water, it would have destroyed all *boats*: but lying now in shallow water, incompassd wth boates, after a long Conflict it was killed with the harping yrons, & struck in *head*, out of which spouted blood and water, by two tunnells like Smoake from a chimney: & after an horrid grone it ran quite on shore & died: The length was 58 foote: 16 in height, black skin'd like Coach-leather, very small eyes, greate taile, small finns & but 2: a piked (= *pointed*) snout, & a mouth so wide & divers men might have stood upright in it: No teeth at all, but sucked the slime onely as thro a grate made of y^t bone w^{ch} we call *Whale bone*: The throate yet so narrow, as woud not have admitted the least of fishes: The extreames of the *Cetaceous* bones hang downewards, from *upper jaw*, & was hairy towards the Ends, & bottome withinside: all of it prodigious, but in nothing more wonderfull then that an Animal of so greate a bulk, should be nourished onely by slime, thru those grates:



- a) The bones making y^e grate.
- b) The Tongue, c. *finn*: d *Eye*:
- e) one of y^e bones making the grate (a) f *Tunnells* thru which shutting y^e mouth, the water is forced upward, at least 30 foote, like a black thick mist. &c:

Thomas Sprat's *The History of The Royal Society* 1667

And, in few words, I dare say; that of all the Studies of men, nothing may be sooner obtain'd, than this vicious abundance of *Phrase*, this trick of *Metaphors*, this volubility of *Tongue*, which makes so great a noise in the World.

They have therefore been most rigorous in putting in execution, the only Remedy, that can be found for this *extravagance*: and that has been, a constant Resolution, to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style: to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver'd so many *things*, almost in an equal number of *words*. They have exacted from all their members, a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can: and preferring the language of Artizans, Countrymen, and Merchants, before that, of Wits, or Scholars.