

**Anonymous Sovereignty vs. Zombie Sovereignty:  
On the Gaping Ontopolitical Difference Between  
Early-Modern and Post-Modern Medialogies<sup>1</sup>**

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No ser todo columbino. Altérnense la calidez de la serpiente con la candidez de la paloma . . . no quiera ser uno tan hombre de bien, que ocasione al otro serlo de mal. Sea uno mixto de paloma y de serpiente; no monstruo, sino prodigio. (284)

(Do not be too much of a dove. Alternate the cunning of the serpent with the candor of the dove . . . none need be so good as to allow others to be so evil. Combine in yourself the dove and the serpent, not as a monster but as a prodigy.)  
—Baltasar Gracián,  
*The Art of Worldly Wisdom* (1647)

If you have something that you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place.  
—Eric Schmidt,  
CEO of Google from 2001 to 2011

## Being a Private Person versus Being Deprived of Personhood

We have (almost) ceased being people, and we have (almost) transformed into monstrous beings, that is, into beings who show, who reveal, and who are what you see.<sup>2</sup> Between Baltasar Gracián's aphorism cited above and the warning-threat from Eric Schmidt, there is not only a difference of four hundred years, but also disparate ways of representing, gaining access, and relating to reality. Each poses two radically different forms of conceiving the subject and the political structures that make the subject possible—in other words, two distinct medialogies. Instead of progress, it would seem that we were witnessing a retreat and the repositioning of our ethical tuning forks to a time *before* Machiavelli's theoretical-political revolution and the immanent revolution accomplished by the printing press. In truth, however, this can be nothing but a troubling shift during an even-more-troubling time *after*. We have left a time during which the subject was glorified as a person (i.e. as a mask, as an artifice, as an individual), that is, as a private subject that emerges as such from a realm of privacy, and have entered a time when privacy is increasingly eliminated, leading not only to the disappearance of the person as an ethical ideal (i.e. the disappearance of the mask as the foundation and safeguard of the subject), but also to its most extreme condemnation. If Eric Schmidt, Digital Inquisitor, warns us, "If you have something that you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place," then Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, only amplifies this sincerity when in a bout of digital authoritarianism confesses that privacy is a social norm that should be abandoned, that it is no longer valid, that it is outdated and, consequently, not an essential component of being human.<sup>3</sup>

In this article, I will explore in brief the differences between these two conceptions of the subject—the active early-modern subject and the passive contemporary subject—while also participating in the discussion initiated in David Castillo and William Egginton's (C&E) remarkable *Medialogies: Reading Reality in the Age of Inflationary Media*, offering both points of agreement and disagreement. My agreement with their study concerns the importance of defining an early-modern medialogy associated with the printing press, artistic perspective in painting and architecture, or the theater of the masses; and a (post)modern medialogy beginning with the invention of the telegraph and culminating in the digital revolution. From the outset, this comparison, compelling in the problems that it reveals, awards *Medialogies* a distinguished position in Hispanic critical studies. My agreement extends also to the text's opening when the authors assert:

In politics this medialogy permitted an organization of sovereignty, the

nation state, which transcended the bonds of family and locality. In the second inflationary age, that ideal model of sovereignty is itself losing its coherence, as states fracture and fall to ethnic groups or bend to the will of multinational corporations. (2)

My disagreement, however, concerns the analysis that ensues from their diagnosis. Far from presenting these two medialogies as similar or parallel, I will instead defend the existence of a radical ontopolitical difference between them that will allow exploration of the distinct varieties of subjects and conceptions of sovereignty to which this difference gives rise. Furthermore, this analysis will allow me to explain something that C&E omit: the republican revolutions that materialized between the first and second medialogy, as well as the crisis of republic we seemed unavoidably headed for once we were seized by the second medialogy. The fundamental difference between these two medialogies falls by the wayside if we do not keep in mind an epistemological and ethical rupture of astronomical consequences. During the first medialogy, the medium and the artifice (inseparable elements), once they become known, are active instruments in the production of a particular immanence that established the subject as a radically new and autonomous entity. However, in the second medialogy the artifice transforms into artificial intelligence, becoming a platform of passivity and the production of virtual transcendence where artifice as an instrument of action disappears. In this second age, the medium attempts to hide its artificial nature by mimicking human instinct, i.e., the Mac operating system that, according to its creators, does not require a user manual, and is passed off as a mere reflection of reality.

My analysis will focus largely on questioning and complementing C&E's reading of the Baroque as an essentially regulated and pessimistic culture, as well as their, in my view, moralizing and post-enlightened interpretation of many of its basic ethical and epistemic concepts (for example, the artifice).<sup>4</sup> The "minor strategy," in which both authors defend dissidence as being intrinsic to the Baroque, is merely an asterisk to their principal conception of a controlled baroque culture when, in my view, it was in fact the primary strategy of the time. The early-modern medialogy, rooted in the printing press and perspective in picture and architecture, produced unrestricted immanence and anonymous subjectivities that pervasively confronted any and all instruments of social control. In fact, my reading of early-modern medialogy points out the way in which the very same medialogy that facilitates the emergence of authoritarian sovereignties and pre-state frameworks, also gives rise to the mass emergence of a culture capable of sending authoritarian sovereignty into crisis. This occurs through the creation of a new type of subject, a predecessor of the citizen, who explores what I refer to as "anonymous sovereignty." This new type of

subject, who instead of being of the state, is radically parastate, i.e., a mystic, a *pícaro* or rogue hero, or a Gracianesque courtier, is connected in part to the theoretical-political and ethical revolution that, from Machiavelli to Grotius via Francisco de Vitoria, grants the human being the inalienable right to defend his own life, defining him as a subject readied for equality with respect to any other, including the monarch, regardless of lineage or social designation.

This revolution of the subject, unthinkable without the first medialogy, beyond allowing the subject to know the frame that alienates him (C&E 55), reveals that all frameworks are an instrument that should be used to actively politicize reality, including the remotest aspects of everyday life. It is for this reason that in order to highlight the difference between this parastate subject—the basis for “anonymous sovereignty”—and the corporate subject characteristic of our days who exhibits what I call “zombie sovereignty,” we must analyze the ontopolitical dimension that these two medialogies activate, making possible one type of subject or another.

### **The Prohibition of Anonymity (and Its Autonomous, Uncontrollable Emergence During the First Medialogy)**

The subject created by the first medialogy, far from being a controlled entity, is a parastate subject that we can define as an anonymous sovereign. The political power inscribed inside anonymity bears a disruptive force that devastated the hegemonic structures of early-modern Europe and prompted efforts to impede its virulent aggression. It was in 1559 when Pope Paul IV first prohibited anonymity—the publication of anonymous books—with his *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. In this same year, Phillip II of Spain declared that the country’s borders be closed, prohibiting study in most foreign universities, as well as all importation of foreign books, in an attempt to control the uncontrollable. In reality, the interminable production of immanence through the anonymous reading of books, which were in many cases also anonymous, provided each subject with a sovereignty that, in its anonymity, virulence, omnipresence, and uncontrollability, was even greater than that of royalty. The fictional paradigm of this first medialogy is the *pícaro*, a reservoir in which a number of socio-economic, religious, and ethnic anxieties were established. The picaresque, in this sense, cannot be understood as the moralized or moralizing genre of the period, as some critics have defended by not including the picaresque in its/their epistemic context.<sup>5</sup>

A prime example of the *pícaro*’s paradigmatic value with respect to the practical theorization of anonymous sovereignty can be found in the work of Baltasar Gracián. Gracián chooses the attributes of the *pícaro* (ingenuity, anon-

ymous sovereignty, control over one's fate, and the importance of chance as an instrument of distinction and survival) as worthy characteristics for becoming an ideal person and member of the royal court. It is no coincidence, then, that his inspiration came from *Guzmán de Alfarache*, the first picaresque novel.<sup>6</sup> By changing princely mirrors into mirrors for any individual, Gracián would desecrate the *raison d'état* (reason of the state) that allowed a monarch to operate as a Machiavellian, in secret and under the guise of falsely-deemed common interests. In its place, he offered a *raison d'état* tailored to meet an individual's needs. In his warning to the reader of *The Hero*, he asserts: "Aquí tendrás una no política ni aun económica, sino una razón de estado de ti mismo, una brújula de marear la excelencia, un arte de ser ínclito con pocas reglas de discreción" (7) (Here you'll have not a political or even economic reason of state, but rather one of your very own, a compass to bewilder the excellency, an art for being illustrious with few discretionary rules).<sup>7</sup> Gracián's warning is an example of how life itself becomes a sovereign space compelling the subject to defend its preservation above any other directive; this is the motive that would compel a *pícaro* like Estebanillo González, for example, to become a war deserter. Thus, rather than exposing an unethical or selfish attitude, the defense of one's own interests is an example of ethics par excellence. As proposed by the "minimalist and post-skeptic ethics" of Hugo Grotius (Tuck), derived from Francisco de Vitoria and other treatise writers who dissected the category of sovereignty, the defense of one's own life is consonant with the refusal to attack another. This is because the other, independent of social background and physical condition, always possesses as part of his anonymous sovereignty the capacity to kill and to respond to aggression. For this reason, the *pícaro*'s nomadic atomism cannot be understood as an example of social isolation, but instead as the search for new social pacts preserved outside of the authoritarian model (patriarchal and monarchical) based on blood relations.

The *pícaro*'s use of anonymity and the value placed on artifice and wit in the nearly thirty picaresque novels published between 1599 and 1644 flies directly in the face of this patriarchal-monarchical and transcendent regime.<sup>8</sup> With good reason, wit emerges in the Baroque as a democratic and egalitarian category challenging lineage and defining a new basis for social stratification. In this sense, it is useful to note the warning offered up by the *pícaro* in the *Varia fortuna del soldado Píndaro* (Píndaro the Soldier), a novel by Céspedes y Meneses. When in the presence of a person of higher rank, he advises that one conceal one's superior wit since such envy is one of the strongest, even more so than that of inherited wealth, due to its innate quality:

Digo que es ilustre advertencia moderar el ingenio cuando se conoce superior al del príncipe, porque mientras es más la potencia deste, más si-

ente el rendimiento, que aun tiene por ofensa . . . y como no ay criatura que no tenga su natural estimación, al fin, como formada de unos mismos elementos . . . ; siéntense más los celos de ingenio y discurso que los de la muger, pues la fortuna iguala a los humanos en los bienes exteriores más no en los naturales, porque los tales son de su dominio. (68)

(I say that it is prudent caution to measure one's wit when knowing oneself superior to the prince, because the greater his power, the more he feels its success, which he takes as an affront . . . and as there is no creature that has not its natural pride, all, in the end, being made of the same elements . . . ; greater suffering is jealousy of wit and discourse than that of the woman, as fate equalizes all humans in exterior wealth but not in that of the interior because those are one's own possessions).

One of the first steps in this counter-sovereign attack is found in Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, which, while demonstrating the difference between subject and monarch, advises: "Procura ser usufructuario de tu vida, que, usando bien de ella, salvarte puedes en tu estado . . . Que, aunque es trabajo tener amo, es mayor tener mozo" (102) (Manage to be the usufruct of your life so that, by using it well, you can save yourself from your condition . . . That, although it is work having a master, it is even greater work having a servant). The underlying distinction in this move from a system of owning one's life to a system of usufruct initiates an entire revolution through which the radical and essential usufruct of one's life defies the ownership of life bestowed upon the monarch as an earthly transcendent entity.

The *pícaro's* a-legality, always positioned in an indistinct space between this new principle of legality and a territory bordering illegality, will face this system of ownership time and time again until challenging it, picaresquely, radically transforming reality while still remaining unnoticed. One such example is when the *pícaro* Marcos de Obregón voids in practical fashion the 1609 Expulsion Edicts against the Moriscos by returning two Moriscos to their place of origin in Valencia. The *pícaro* is, in this sense, a "statue of liberty." In fact, López de Úbeda in his picaresque novel *La pícaro Justina* advises the reader that by paying attention to the life "de esta mujer, o (por mejor decir) de esta estatua de libertad que he fabricado, echarás de ver que la libertad que una vez echa en el alma raíces, por instantes crece con la ayuda del tiempo y fuerza de la ociosidad" (890) (of this woman, or (better yet) of this statue of liberty that I have created, you will see that liberty, once it takes root in the soul, grows in spurts with the help of time and the power of leisure). Ultimately, the *pícaro* alters social order and parodies its most anachronistic structures, like when the *pícaro* Teresa de Manzanares brings two slaves into

the court and passes them off as maidens, causing the noblest of the infatuated knights to lose their minds and their money, and laying bare the outdatedness of privilege through blood relations.

This anonymous sovereignty, thematized with great success by the picaresque novel, relies on the first medialogy of the printing press and the widespread use of individual perspective. The considerable role that books played in the development of this type of subjectivity can be retraced by consulting the testimonies inscribed within the textualities of the period. In the prologue to Gracián's *El discreto*, and in the voice of a noble searching to legitimize his wit, as is the case of Juan Vicencio de Lastanosa, the Duchess of Aranda indignantly protests that "materias tan sublimes, dignas solo de Héroes, se vulgarizasen con la estampa y que cualquier plebeyo, por precio de un real, haya de malograr lo que no le tiene" (98) (subjects so sublime and worthy only of heroes would be vulgarized through their mass printing, and any commoner could for the price of a nickel ruin what is not his). The subversive power of this medialogy as an incubator and mass producer of anonymous sovereigns is clear if we read the denouement of one of the most influential satires by Trajano Boccalini, the model for seventeenth-century Spanish satirists. In the "ragguaglio" or satire LXXXVII of his *Ragguagli di Parnaso (News-sheet from Parnassus)*, Boccalini shows how Machiavelli, transformed into a book (that is, as pure immanence, generator of more immanence), is discovered in a library and subjected to a summary trial that ends with him being sentenced to burn at the stake. In his last defense, Machiavelli, the book, denounces the absurdity of condemning him for showing what genuinely occurs, and is even praised, in reality (the so-called Machiavellian (a)morality). He warns that a book like his "ha virtù di convertire in tanti Machiavelli quelli che vi attendono con l'occhiale Politico. Mercé che non così semplici sono le genti, come molti si danno a credere" (177) (has the virtue to convert into Machiavelli any and all who read it with a political lens. We give thanks to God that the people are not as simple as many believe).

### The Immanent Character of the First Medialogy

Boccalini's satire demonstrates how a medium (books) that is conceived *a priori* for a prince or monarch, as is the case of Machiavelli's treatises, can become an instrument in the creation of anonymous sovereigns, that is, individuals who incorporate Machiavellian ethics into their vital activities in the name of their own *raison d'état*, or the creation of "la política de cada uno, la razón especial de ser personas" (320) (the politics of each individual, the particular human *raison d'être*), as stated in Gracián's *El Criticón* (1651,



1653, 1657) concerning *El Galateo*, a manual for courtiers by Gabriel Dan-tisco. The immanent character of this first medialogy does not depend solely on the material and cognitive particularities of the book or on perspective (the ontopolitical difference between the type of subjects that they produce, for example, if we compare it with that produced by digital resources). Its im-manence is derived from the value placed on the artifice throughout the early modern period, especially during the Baroque, as an instrument to reform the subject's experience and discover reality. Artifice, then, is not a cipher for a pessimistic or decadent world in which there is no truth, as the most moraliz-ing and anachronistic theories on the Baroque uphold, but rather a device for discovery and adaptation to a new reality dictated by reality itself, possible and fluctuating, but measurable in its basic structures.

The importance of the artifice for subjugating experience in the name of anonymous sovereignty becomes evident if we consider two hegemonic baroque phenomena: the poetry of Luis de Góngora and the Byzantine baroque novel. These textualities, traditionally read as formalist or post-structuralist phenomena (Góngora) and, on occasions, providentialist (the Byzantine nov-el), exemplify what both Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze refer to as immanence. Immanence, according to the former, is the result of the depersonalization of experience. In other words, we access a zone of immanence (a zone of ethical reform) only when our experience is subjected to a stress test or a critique through which it becomes completely depersonalized and adapts to the immanent, transforming our subjectivity along with it. The poetry of Luis de Góngora is perhaps the greatest example of this. Instead of employing a direct technique of describing objects and everyday actions, Góngora's poetry offers paraphrases that adapt our perception to the logic—to the laws—of matter. For example, rather than describe cheese in the "The First Solitude," he describes the particularities, adventures, and challenges of the matter con-stituting the cheese as it transforms into something resembling wax inside the intestinal juices of a stomach only to change into a previous liquid state, like milk, or into a later state, like the white hand of a milkmaid. At first glance these paraphrases could seem arbitrary or gratuitous. This is not so, however, if we consider Gongorism in the context of contemporary phenomena like New Science, which challenged the Aristotelian categories through which man had interpreted reality and replaced them with the most precise descrip-tions possible of matter. Cheese, for Francis Bacon, would not be cheese, but instead its previous and subsequent states, its ability to become other things, or what is referred to as "formal causality." In order to carry out such a task and to realize his ideal of making man return "to particulars . . . and renounce their notions and begin to form an acquaintance with things," Bacon created "tables of discovery" that describe matter based on degrees of absence and presence of certain elements via a Conceptist logic very similar to that of



Góngora. In this sense, Góngora's language is an endeavor paralleling the artificial languages of the seventeenth century (Giordano Bruno or John Dee) that attempt, by way of artifice, to correct the interactions with matter that produce natural languages.

Ultimately, the syntactical confusion of Góngora's poetry, its synesthetic exaggeration, its apology for dissonance and its blend of high and low styles signal a radical reform of perception that attempts to position experience on an immanent plane, thus reforming reality by reforming the subject. The conception of the subject (and of the person) that underlies this type of reform (similar at its roots to Loyola's *Ejercicios espirituales* [Spiritual Exercises], albeit very different in its development) is one that involves a subject reaching its plenitude—its sovereignty—exclusively through constant recycling and change, which differs completely from the static and autotelic subject encouraged by the digital revolution of the second medialogy.

The baroque Byzantine novel, for its part, endorses an equally radical reform of experience by legitimizing curiosity as an object of knowledge that goes against one's existing beliefs and idea of reality. Texts from authors as varied as Cervantes, Lope de Vega, or Antonio de Eslava share this goal, bringing together the epistemological horizons of genres that favor a knowledge of the distinct and strange: for example, the chronicles of the Indies, miscellanea, or the Aristotelian *Problemata*. Their works, symptomatic of the essential virus of the first medialogy, substitute the miraculous for natural mysteries to be uncovered through inductive inquiries that directly challenge transcendent structures. Rutilio, one of the most picaresque, anonymously-sovereign, and polemical characters in *Persiles*, declares with regards to an episode involving witches in the north of Europe: "cómo esto pueda ser yo lo ignoro, y como cristiano que soy católico no lo creo, pero la experiencia me demuestra lo contrario" (53) (how this can be I do not know, and as a Christian I believe it is not Catholic, though experience shows me the contrary). In Lope de Vega's *El peregrino en su patria* (The Pilgrim in His Own Country), all religious endeavors facing the title character are supplanted by the epistemological task of questioning reality.<sup>9</sup> In one of the text's most *a priori* baroque moments, contra-reformist and conservative in tone, we witness a mass profanation of the transcendent. The novel's protagonist (the pilgrim) and companions (two Germans reconverted to Catholicism) ascend the sacred mountain leading to the monastery at Montserrat and walk by its various passageways and chapels. Rather than depictions of pious images that they must adapt to in accordance with a transcendent signifier determined ahead of time, the novel places a hermit in each passageway or chapel who communicates curiosities and mysteries of natural philosophy to the pilgrims, transforming a religious space into an enormous miscellanea. In this way, reality becomes an enormous immanent plane upon which the Baroque (its medialogy) represents various levels

of reality, previously conceived as diffusions incapable of intelligible unity, in the form of concepts, as indicated by Harbison. The most important concept of this medialogy, anonymous sovereignty, was fundamental to the development of the republican ideologies that have emerged since the eighteenth century and which are currently experiencing their greatest period of crisis.

### **The Vaporization of Transcendence and the Creation of the Echo Chamber: From the Phone Book to Facebook**

The year 1559, when anonymity was outlawed and the effort to control it was frustrated, is a crucial date for understanding the first medialogy and the danger that the immanent and proto-republican revolution (in terms of its creation of a consciousness of citizenship) represented for transcendental power. By the same token, 2009 is fundamental for visualizing the digital and progressive coup d'état, the perpetual martial law that companies like Google have imposed at the expense of our lives and our persons. It is in 2009 when these electronic platforms begin their frenetic race to transform every internet user into a collection of statistics that will reveal their every taste and ideological preference. The aim is to create what Eli Pariser calls a "filter bubble," that is, a personality sphere anchored in the past that cuts off all contact with contingency and creates static and pseudo-transcendent subjectivities, condemned to wander a limbo between the immanent and the transcendent, leading to the disappearance of the person. In this zombie sovereignty, representative of the second medialogy, subjects are conscious of their alienation (their loss of sovereignty, anonymity, free time, and even their work time), but they are incapable of reacting in order to recover it. The anonymous sovereignty that led to the republican citizen is consequently placed in a zombie state in which the subject, as if he were a sovereign zombie, maintains sufficient memories of the usurped anonymous sovereignty to realize that he is not capable of regaining it. In this new conception of sovereignty, privacy disappears and is replaced by an ideology of transparency and sincerity, a policy of anti-mediation that in fact hides the greatest mediation ever implemented.

The history of this shift from anonymous sovereignty to zombie sovereignty can be understood *a posteriori* beginning around 1830 with the invention of the telegraph, the starting point proposed by C&E for the second medialogy, and culminating during the last decade with the mass introduction of Facebook and platforms like Amazon. The electronic-digital call that the telegraph emits to the individual on a global level, now capable of summoning him at any moment, expands as technology advances. The hypothetical communication that a subject might receive from another by way of the tele-

graph becomes a potentially regular call with the arrival of the telephone, and transforms subsequently into a neurosis with email (it is no longer the case that the postman always rings twice, but is instead continuously standing at the door with an infinite and empty envelope). In this sense, the phone book as an instrument of civic control, where any subject is locatable not only through a number that anyone can dial, but also through a home address, is raised to its limit in Facebook by substituting a number for one's photo, an updated version of the phone book. The catalog of faces conceived by Mark Zuckerberg in 2005 operates by reducing the person to their face, not the mask that is the etymological root of the word *person*, by which normalizing an entire compendium of attitudes and behaviors that are diametrically opposed to the immanent logic of privacy.

This commercial-digital revolution is openly counter-immanent; instead of producing a depersonalization of experience that places the subject inside an immanent space, it encourages and imposes a hyper-personalization of experience that does away with the very notion of personhood and shuts off any prospect of change or the democratic construction of reality. The new view of democracy that emerges from this paradigm is a sort of *demo-corporate oligarcacy* wherein corporations are not only legal persons, but also become the voice of the subjects. For an example, we need not look any further back than the Executive Order 13769 signed by Donald Trump on January 27, prohibiting the entry of citizens from seven predominantly Muslim countries. The civic-digital consciousness of the majority of Facebook users (at least those making up my echo chamber) moved to action proposing the cancelation of Uber accounts, a company whose CEO had announced prior to the mentioned executive order that he was willing to cooperate with Trump as president. Likely in response to this exercise in civic consciousness (this act of will), only one day later Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks announced the hiring of 10,000 refugees, indirectly prompting a note of clarification from Uber similarly condemning the executive order and drawing public-digital applause on platforms like Facebook.

Zombie sovereignty is precisely this type of subject who, by exercising a new form of consumption as if it were a new form of democracy, implicitly recognizes that their voice can only be sovereign through corporations like Starbucks or Uber. They find themselves incapable of recovering their anonymous sovereignty as a result of being trapped in a labyrinth of digital addiction, covetously observed by corporations that position us inside the schizophrenia of having to simultaneously criticize and promote globalization. Zombie sovereignty is also that which while attempting to recover the illusion of an earlier autonomy (real or dreamt), creates spaces of escape, artificial retreats that make the crisis even more manifest. One such example, *Digital Detox*, whose motto is "Disconnect to Reconnect," offers a series of camps where all technology is forbidden. Paradoxically, this apology for

technological detoxification lies within an apology for a new way to eliminate privacy, resulting in communal meetings that reinforce the pseudo-communal ethics of our digital age and are limited to only a few days, as if they were an abbreviated version of the *Spiritual Exercises*.<sup>10</sup>

In the end, zombie sovereignty (a lack of agency with memory, a melancholic longing for the sovereignty that remembers what agency was and even knows how to trace it in the vestiges of the first medialogy still present in our days) does not stem merely from a micro-daily addiction to platforms like Facebook or the constant checking of email where perpetual expectation and interruption completely nullifies private time. This new type of sovereignty is settling over all of our society's meditational structures, which is why, as C&E argue, it is urgent that we "promote reality literacy" in order to recover our ability to "read reality and see the frames that bind us" (225). The paradox of this zombie sovereignty consists in the fact that, unlike anonymous sovereignty, it produces a subject who is officially sovereign in the public sphere but that in the private sphere is not recognized as such. Alternatively, the anonymous sovereignty of the first medialogy creates subjects who know themselves to be sovereign in their private lives and in the privilege of anonymity, but who officially—in public spaces—are subjects devoid of sovereignty.

### **Coda: Virtual Hope**

Pulling back the curtains on this apocalypse of the subject, when looking ahead we find that the accumulative process of massive depersonalization brought about by the digital revolution of recent years has caused—directly cultivating—roots that take us back to the first medialogy. These roots afford us moments of disconnection through the same platforms that depersonalize us during our search for a digital identity. The boom in television fiction conceived not only by HBO, but also Amazon or Netflix, reduces (or softens) the alienation precipitated by the seemingly not-artificial reality frequently available previously (the trend of reality shows, among others, their anti-fictional eagerness and their desire to hide themselves as frames to be more real than reality) and sends immanent signals to our brains derived from the mass production of contingencies typical of fiction.

These signals, varying in intensity, are proof that the culture of wit and irony distinctive of *poiesis*, summed up by C&E in the catchphrase WWCD ("What Would Cervantes Do?"), are still present but concealed within our society. The great challenge for the Humanities (and for literary studies in particular) is to be capable of creating instruments of dealienation that make use of the contingent, epistemic, and ethical value that fiction holds in society as

a means for change. Fiction is, in this sense, a basic tool awaiting reactivation in order to reconquer privacy as the necessary breeding ground for the anonymous sovereignty dwelling inside every democratic subject. The value that literature, fiction in particular, acquires as a center for the vital exercising of thought in the apologies for literature outlined by such wide-ranging thinkers as Richard Rorty, Peter Sloterdijk, or Rudolph Gasché should be recovered, reconsidered, and refined.

To conclude, we are left wondering whether it is currently possible to mass-produce agency, anonymous sovereignty, and immanence in the same way as in the days of the printing press (an instrument of (un)control from authority, for dissemination and for the politicization of every sphere of reality during the first medialogy) given the cognitive and material specificity of digital media in this second medialogy. Though difficult to answer without reverting to pessimistic prophecies, this question can be reterritorialized through the rehabilitation of spaces belonging to the humanities that are presently not fully occupied. In this sense, the poetic theories (theories of immanence) conceived by Alonso López Pinciano, Luis Alonso Carvallo, or Juan de Caramuel during the moment of the first medialogy's radicalization should be rescued to examine the simultaneous, and subsequent, role attributed to *poiesis* (literature) as inseparable knowledge from both the practical sciences (due to its inductive logic and its privileging of the particular) and the exact sciences.<sup>11</sup> Just as Bruno Latour's stimulating sociology of knowledge has revealed, we have never been, we will never be, nor will anyone ever be, modern. Becoming aware of this truth and carrying out collaborative theoretical exercises like those of C&E are steps that render immanent this digital revolution during which we, formerly anonymous sovereigns, have become zombie sovereigns. One of the keys lies in following Gracián's advice: we must refuse to be monsters (beings who show, who reveal a simplicity that, through its artificiality, can pass for innate) and instead transform ourselves into prodigies.<sup>12</sup>

## Notes

1. Some of the ideas in this text make up part of a soon-to-be-published book in which I examine the Baroque as an essentially proto-republican culture.
2. It is no coincidence that according to its etymology, as C&E tell us, the word *monster* comes from Latin's *monstrum* as do the verbs *demonstrate* and *muster*, in the outdated sense of *to show* or *to reveal*.
3. See their declarations at the 2010 Crunchie Awards, available in various segments on

various web channels like YouTube.

4. My critique of the baroque theory underlying C&E's text centers on the version of the Baroque that they offer us, not infrequently mediated by historical stereotypes and a conception derived from particularities of the current medialogy. Their theory of the early-modern medialogy is based on an exaggeratedly scarce number of sources (repeated and very concise allusions to Gracián, Lope de Vega, Calderón, Cervantes, Covarrubias or Julián de Medrano) that are rarely cited or cited only in passing giving way to a slightly exoticized Baroque in terms of a controlled culture not participating in the epistemic framework of the time. In this sense, a detailed analysis of source texts is fundamental, such as the one carried out by Maravall that gave rise to this theory of the Baroque as a controlled culture echoed by C&E. It should also be said that Maravall's brilliant source analysis does not typically coincide with the pessimistic slogans that group them together. In other words, in C&E's text, statements from Stephen Colbert, or the plots from comics and shows like *True Blood* occupy quantitatively much more space than the citations that should demonstrate the arguments defended by the authors concerning the first medialogy. This disparity is the cause for my reservations regarding their theories of Mannerism/Baroque or the first medialogy, which seem to refuse any detailed analyses. Additionally, at times, for example in Chapter 2 "Occupy and Resist," the text seems to abandon all critical analysis and offers as truth, as simple facts, an entire series of symptoms that should be analyzed and that are a framework—a determined presentation of a state of things—that is automatically accepted as a subversive reality.
5. Due to space limitations, I cannot offer a review of the principal variations in the definition of the picaresque. Picaresque criticism is divided into two primary strains: the first, formalist in character and largely associated with Spanish philology, reads the picaresque anachronistically based on nineteenth-century realist aesthetics and on narratological categories derived from it (Rico, Sevilla Arroyo, Jauralde). This first strain has often been employed as a platform for censoring the picaresque as a baroque genre, in its divergence from *Lazarillo*, the proto-picaresque novel from 1554. This is demonstrated by Florencio Sevilla Arroyo, who, in a publication referred to as "the complete picaresque in one volume," justifies the publication for the purely historical value of the texts and refers to *Guzmán de Alfarache*, the most famous and influential picaresque novel, as "a digressive and unbearable lump." The second critical strain with respect to the picaresque novel, initiated by Maravall's seminal study from the perspective of the history of mentalities (1986), and of greater use in the French (Bataillon, Cavillac), American, and German Academies, studies the picaresque within its historical context, proposing that it be read for example as a discourse for social reform (Cruz, Maiorino). My conception of the picaresque, indebted to both of these strains, is related to the second, placing the picaresque novel in its theoretical-political context and underlining the importance of an exercise like Maravall's that considers the bulk of picaresque novels when elaborating a theory and not only three or four novels.
6. The *pícaro* gave rise to the fictional paradigm of the counter-hero that would run inex-

trically parallel in later centuries to the search for a republican solution during moments of imperial crisis or dissolution (Hasek's *The Good Soldier Svejk*, William Faulkner's *The Reivers*, Platonov's *Chevengur*, or Saul Bellow's *The Life of Augie March*).

7. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.
8. This also includes the picaresque rudiments found in the two *Lazarillo de Tormes* from 1554 and 1555.
9. This pilgrim is not far removed from the shipwrecked pilgrim who only nine years later would appear in Góngora's *The Solitudes*. Both Lope's and Góngora's pilgrims are examples of how a counter-reformist category—that of the pilgrim—is profaned and transformed into an instrument for investigating reality.
10. Even so, the difference with the *Spiritual Exercises* created during the first medialogy is also gaping: while the *Spiritual Exercises* create a structure for controlling the conscience, which also paradoxically fosters the emergence within the subject of an independent private dimension, *Digital Detox* promotes the liberation of a false conscience that is simultaneously the strict control of it to the extent that it eliminates all possibility of privacy.
11. Early modern poetic theories, primarily descriptive in nature, position *poiesis* between medicine and politics. The interesting thing about these texts is their recovery of *poiesis* as the new form par excellence of knowledge and social interaction. It is a form that would be radically inclusive as seen in the Christian poetics of Luis Alonso de Carvalho's *Apollo's Swan* where *poiesis* opposes the privileges of blood relations. *Poiesis* appears in these texts as a practical science whose epistemic and poetic value is defined as superior to that of other practical sciences. Additionally, aesthetic movements like the one inspired by Agustín Fernández Mayo and his *Nocilla Generation* in Spain have recently examined the relationship between literature and the exact sciences. The relationship between the humanities and the sciences is complex at the moment and, as Antonio de Torquemada would say, "they are filled with danger." A recent trend like "Digital Humanities," very useful as a complement to the humanities but not as its center, runs the risk of placing the humanities in a parasitical situation regarding the sciences. The objective should be to search for intersections and shared elements between all fields of knowledge that reveal the need to return to a more inclusive framework now lost inside modernity.
12. It is important to distinguish between the concepts of monster as they differ between the first and second medialogies. Here, my idea diverges from that of C&E. While modern monsters are reactions to the excesses of positivism and science, what we consider to be early modern monsters, a posteriori, are platforms for accessing the explorations of the yet unexplored. It is useful, nevertheless, to make a fundamental clarification concerning the Baroque meaning of monster. As can be seen in the epigraph opening this text, Gracián distinguishes between something negative (monster) and something positive (prodigy). During the Baroque, with its logic of contradiction and disillusionment, what is truly monstrous is not what we can identify a priori as monstrous, but rather its opposite, what seems to be proportional and beautiful. Just as Julio



Baena, an expert on baroque monstrosities and teratologies, demonstrates in a text like Góngora's *Polyphemus and Galatea*, the monster is not Polyphemus, but Galatea, "monstruo de rigor." Galatea, deity of capitalism, is a monster precisely because she shows what she is without a doubt: pure value, liquidity, a force that speculates with the entire production of Sicily delivered to her at the shore: an altar (*ara* in Spanish), writes Góngora, where the plowman hands over everything that he plows (also *ara* in Spanish) to this "deity without a temple," but with an altar (*ara*). Baena's various texts allow us to thoroughly study this mannerist/baroque idea that transforms what appears to be monstrous into something exemplary. See, for example, his book *Discordancias cervantinas* about the error, a category associated *a priori* with every monster, as a defining element in the ideal of the Cervantine text in relation to *Don Quixote*.

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