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Baroque Subjectivity and the Modern Fractured Self

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In his seminal text *Culture of the Baroque: Analysis of a Historical Structure*, José Antonio Maravall develops his now renowned thesis in which the Baroque culture operated under the strictures of “*dirigismo*” (58) (guided control). The concept is of crucial importance because of the implications of its omnipresence—if an entire culture is “guided,” then it has elaborated a system whose aim is to produce and contain the discrete subjectivities therein. The possibility of any space of resistance, if not foreclosed, is at the very least clipped because of the totalizing nature of the forces involved. Such forces are invariably of economic and political nature. To be sure, the culture in question during the Baroque period involves largely that of the court. As William Egginton *et al* have noted, those falling outside the sphere of the court would seem to still exist in a pre-modern or late medieval space in which human beings are not *subjected* to the processes of subjectivization in the modern sense here at stake. It is precisely to the subject of the court, the subject competing for power, that Baltasar Gracián addresses his counsel in his *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia*. This essay will argue that it is through a process of a subject in circulation within the halls of power that this power is accrued. In addition, the implications of this dynamic as well as some of the results stemming from it and manifesting themselves in our contemporary moment will be interrogated.

A contemplation of Baroque subjectivity, in order to be suited to the subject matter, might invariably make recourse to a multiplicity of paradigms. Baroque and Neo-baroque aesthetics are notorious for their capacity to fold material from various sources into their expressions. It is in this spirit of the Baroque that this essay will proceed, but with a mindfulness, of course, toward avoiding monstrosity. We will begin by invoking some of the tools of psychoanalysis. A psychoanalytic approach to the formation of the subject involves the ego’s ability to distinguish itself

from the world around it. In *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, Sigmund Freud elaborates a system in which, by means of a process of identification, the external world is taken into the ego—a process by which the exterior world becomes an integral part of the interior world. Freud's emphasis is often on how subjectivity is relied upon to establish "reality." For example, the boy who represses his incestuous desire of his mother adjusts to the "reality principle" in order, presumably, to occupy a role in the world like that of his father. It is through the ego that internal drives (id) and social reality (the constraints determined by the super-ego) are mediated. In this capacity of mediation, the ego thus becomes the principal site of simultaneously the expression and constitution of the subject. The "reality" of the social order in turn is constituted by other subjects, typically those who hold more power. But it is also their desires and how they are made manifest in the world. The trick then is to implicate oneself in this desire. One must learn the mechanisms by which desire operates if one is going to try to affect the desire of others. In effect, this process is about how one gains access or control to that which guides others.

In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," Freud arrives via psycho-analytic theory and observation at a crucial and rather Hegelian notion in which mastery for the child of any sort involves, at least symbolically, enslaving another. (We will recall that the central dynamic of the Master-Slave dialectic is one described as summarily conflictive, in which each party seeks the recognition of the other, and ultimately leading, it is believed, to an overcoming on the part of the oppressed in the march toward the end of history). The *fort-da* game shows Freud how the child effects the disappearance and return of his mother by making a toy disappear (*fort*) and then having it return by his pulling on a string (*da*). The similarity to Hegelian thinking is striking. The child (in Hegelian terms, we might relate him to the role of the Slave) at first is in a *passive* role in which he was overpowered by the experience of his mother's departure. He addresses this so that he might overcome by assuming an *active* role in which he acts upon his reality in order to transform it by creating the symbolic disappearance and return of his mother in the figure of the toy. In this way, he gains control over that which once produced anxiety in him, namely, the absence of his mother.

Lacan develops Freud's notions of subjectivity formation in his concept of the mirror stage. In short, the infant identifies with his image as an ideal. This "gestalt"—the image of the unified whole that the child generates—is a product owing its emergence to the fact that the child's psychological development does not correspond to his somatic development. An ideal, or a "fictional direction" (76), is established that, no matter how successful any dialectical synthesis between body and image, will always be a discordant approach. We never are who we think we are. This inner fiction

compensates for the inadequacy of the body as revealed by the exterior environment. Again, the Hegelian tradition seems present in that what for Hegel was the desire to be recognized by another—the desire for desire, as Alexandre Kojève might put it—is here refigured by Lacan as a knowledge of self being mediated by another’s desire. This is of utmost importance. Indeed, for Kojève, this desire is not only the reason for man’s social disposition, it is the affirmation that “human reality is a social reality” (6). For Kojève, “society is human only as a set of Desires mutually desiring one another as Desires” (6).

This brief overview of a few key psychoanalytic and dialectic concepts forms the point of departure for my analysis of Baltasar Gracián’s *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia*. More specifically, what is at stake is whether or not the modern subject is indeed capable of assuming itself to be unified, and if not, what the import of this state of permanent and irreconcilable fragmentation is. In short, I will interrogate whether or not the Lacanian “fictional direction” can ever be transcended as well as the implications of such a notion. As we have seen, the sources of the subject’s fragmentation originate for the infant in a dissonance between *soma* and *nous*, between body and mind, or, more specifically, the image of the body that exists in the mind. In the Western tradition, this split can be traced to Descartes’s *Meditation on First Philosophy*, in Meditation VI, where he posits the “real distinction between mind and body” (51). William Egginton’s “Of Baroque Holes and Baroque Folds” offers an engaged critique of this Cartesian dualism and its positing of two distinct substances (thought and extension). These substances are presented as a development or integration of a preceding Baroque theatricality in which the reality of the spectator and that of the spectacle are irrevocably at odds. In other words, the Cartesian mind/body duality is the consequence of a previous relation of interiority and exteriority in which the two are separated, but can communicate through “holes.” The soul is the house, an interior substance of thought; the exterior world, an extended substance that can be glimpsed through “windows.” Egginton contrasts this understanding of the world with the Deleuzian notion of the fold in which interiority and exteriority, rather than being disparate, are, in Spinozist terms, manifestations of one unified substance. (For Spinoza, thought and extension are two modes of the same substance, in contrast to Descartes, for whom thought and extension are two distinct substances). Rather than an interiority looking out at an exteriority, a question of perspective, or “points of view,” is invoked in which notions of exteriority are produced based on one’s position respective to them. (It goes without saying that the same holds for the opposite). The world is both at once internal and external: “the façade and sacristy are now situated as part of the same building” (64–65).

If, as in Baroque theater, a fundamental separation of space and viewer is assumed in that viewer's relation to space, then it would hold, in keeping with the subsequent Cartesian model, that all subjects assume a separation from their exterior. Upon this separation rests also the notion of a self separated from the self. For Egginton, the self uses the estrangement of the world as a surface upon which he can paint his *persona*. By masking oneself, one can, if successfully masked, enlist the loyalties and support of others. It is in this deceit that one produces the illusion of the *caudal*, or access to economic resources, that attracts the attention and services of those around him. This "dissociation" continues to get refigured in Egginton's treatment of passages from Gracián's *Criticón*. Rather than invoke the dualities, and the attending holes, of Cartesian substances, or rely merely on the univocity and attending folds of Deleuzian substance, Egginton explores a third space in which the reality of the world is based on a fundamental lie (an "originary lack," in Derridean terms), but yet at the same time this lie is "folded" into our own existence. Now, as he argues through Gracián, the *persona* that one creates is seen as an art, or artifice, that combats this fundamental lack of reality. It is not merely a question of fighting fire with fire: the lie and the artifice are not the same thing. The artifice is produced and employed as a means of completing nature, man's nature, into whom the deceit is folded. (The artifice also completes nature outside of man; by cultivating nature, man cultivates himself. Culture's fundamental link to nature is thus established). Everything thus continues in its struggle and play of appearances but with a recognition (by some, at least) of the real and mutual implication of this deceit.

The deceit of modernity is managed in certain specific ways in Gracián's writings. One of the most important of these ways involves the proper handling excess. *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* is in many respects an anti-Baroque *tractatus* precisely because of its injunction to avoid the flourishes of excess. As González Echeverría reminds us: "The Baroque does not suffer from an anxiety of influence so much as from an anxiety of confluence and affluence, an excess in which the new is merely one more oddity" (164). Gracián's text from the beginning however is often at pains to eschew both such confluence as well as affluence, or at least the appearance of it. In Aphorism 9, he advises the reader to "Desmentir los achaques de su nación" (105) (Avoid the defects of your country [5])¹—invoking in the idea of a nation a veritable multiplicity. But in the event that this injunction still isn't clear for the reader, he adds: "Ai también achaques de la prosapia, del estado, del empleo y de la edad, que coinciden todos en un sugeto y con la atención no se previenen, hazen un monstruo intolerable" (105) (Other defects are caused by one's lineage, condition, occupation, and by the times. If all these defects come together in one person, and no care is taken to foresee and correct them, they produce an intolerable monster [5]).

It is no small thing that such sentiment occurs so early in his treatment of the ways of the world. And it is not just a question of avoiding failings or failures (*achaques*); one must guard against their coincidence in one subject (“que coinciden todos en un sugeto”). This dynamic, which, as we have seen in González Echeverría is a touchstone of the Baroque, is here critiqued in order to be avoided. The word “monstro” occurs repeatedly throughout many of the opening passages, the mindfulness of the appearance of monstrosity is hardly subtle. “Fue, y es hermana de Gigantes la Fama; anda siempre por extremos, o monstros, o prodigios, de abominación, de aplauso” (106) (Fame is—has always been—the sister of giants. It always goes to extremes: monsters or prodigies, abomination or applause [6]). And elsewhere, in Aphorism 16, he writes that “Monstruosa violencia fue siempre un buen entendimiento casado con una mala voluntad” (110) (When understanding marries bad intention, it isn’t wedlock but monstrous rape [10]). The confluence of elements is again evident. Excess leads to monstrosity; withholding or reserve, in turn, leads to power.

The relation of excess to power is one to be negotiated with subtlety. For Gracián, in Baroque culture, one wants to give the appearance of excess without exhaustively displaying excess. Such a notion of excess is specific both to time and culture. For example it is surely an inversion of what Marcel Mauss describes in *The Gift*, in particular in his discussion of *potlach*, a process employed by northwestern Native American tribes in which greater amounts of giving increase both obligation and respect toward the giver. The gift as described here is at odds with a mechanism based on something like *caudal*. The cycle of giving in *potlach* could oftentimes end in glorious destructions of wealth. Notions of excess for these pre-modern tribes increased obligation, without increasing or diminishing desire. In this very specific sense, they were completely unlike the excess that Gracián repeatedly cautions against. As we will see below, excess has continued to (d)evolve into a difference of instantiation in our contemporary culture.

As has been stated, Gracián consistently warns against all kinds of excess. Aphorism 19 states “No entrar con sobrada expectación” (Arouse no exaggerated expectations when you start something) in order to signal the pitfalls of hope: “La esperanza es gran falsificadora de la verdad” (112) (Hope is a great falsifier of truth). Hope produces an excess of expectation, in contrast to *caudal*, which produces an illusion of the possibility of an excess of resources, but in itself does not attach a hope to it, only power. Such distinction is necessary so that one may manipulate, rather than be manipulated. And the way to do so is to keep the imagination in check: “Templar la imaginación,” (115) (*Keep your imagination under control*) advises Gracián in Aphorism 24. “Todo lo demasiado es vicioso, y mucho más en el trato. Con esta cuerda templança se conserva mejor el agrado con todos, y la estimación, porque no se roza la preciosíssima decencia” (121)

(All excess is a vice, especially in your dealings with others. With this judicious moderation you will stay in the good graces of others and keep their esteem; and propriety, which is precious, will not be worn away [19]). Above all, when you are dealing with others, exercise reserve. Again, Gracián notes that all excess is still a failing; excess in the passions weakens sound judgment: “Son las pasiones los humores del ánimo, y qualquier exceso en ellas causa indisposición de cordura” (131) (The passions are the humors of the mind, and the least excess sickens our judgement [29–30]). Here we find an emerging strain of how one’s own actions act in turn upon the self. By engaging in “excess of the passions,” the subject compromises his own acuity of mind, his own sound judgment (*cordura*). This dynamic is elsewhere echoed in the injunction against exaggeration. Aphorism 41 states:

Nunca exagerar. Gran asunto de la atención, no hablar por superlativos, ya por no exponerse a ofender la verdad, ya por no desdorar su cordura. Son las exageraciones prodigalidades de la estimación, y dan indicio de la cortedad del conocimiento y del gusto. . . . El encarecer es ramo de mentir, y piérdese en ello el crédito de buen gusto, que es grande, ye el de entendido, que es mayor. (125–26)

(*Never exaggerate.* It isn’t wise to use superlatives. They offend the truth and cast doubt on your judgment. By exaggerating, you squander your praise and reveal a lack of knowledge and taste. . . . To overvalue something is a form of lying. It can ruin your reputation for good taste, and—even worse—for wisdom. [23–24])

Again, what is interesting here is that “you lose . . . good sense by it.” It is a way of saying that the excess itself subjectivizes, produces a particular type of subject, now bereft of his *buen gusto*. It is thus cautioned against. But, we must note, that it is only cautioned against insofar as it is not useful. One must expend whatever is necessary, as Gracián shows in Aphorism 58:

Saberse atemperar. No se ha de mostrar igualmente entendido con todos, ni se han de emplear más fuerças de las que son menester. No aya desperdicios, ni de saber, ni de valer. No echa a la presa el buen cetrero más rapiña de la que ha menester para darle caça. No esté siempre de ostentación, que al otro día no admirará. Siempre ha de aver novedad con que luzir, que quien cada día descubre más, mantiene siempre la expectación y nunca llegan a descubrirle los términos de su gran caudal. (134)

(Adapt to those around you. Don't show the same intelligence with everyone, and don't put more effort into things than they require. Don't waste your knowledge or merit. The good falconer uses only the birds he needs. Don't show off everyday, or you'll stop surprising people. There must always be some novelty left over. The person who displays a little more of it each day keeps up expectations, and no one ever discovers the limits of his talent. [32–33])

Here, the appearance of the “gran caudal”—one’s capacity, one’s resources—is marked by restraint. If one displays too much today, then there will be nothing supposed to be available to show on another occasion (“*al otro día*”). Still elsewhere, Gracián writes: “Dé luz el que la alcanza, y solicítela el que la mendiga: aquél con detención, éste con atención; no sea más que dar pie. Es urgente esta sutileza quando toca en utilidad del que despierta. Conviene mostrar gusto, y passar a más quando no vastare” (140) (Let the person who has light give it to others, and let those who lack it ask for it, the former with prudence, and the latter with discretion, merely dropping a hint. This delicacy is especially necessary when the person giving advice is something at stake. It is best to show good taste and to be more explicit [38–39]). One should dole out as little as possible, giving subtly, and restraining, always restraining wherever possible in order to produce desire.

Caudal: implicit in its conception is a gap between reality and appearance. John Beverley’s “Gracián o la sobrevaloración de la literatura (Barroco y postmodernidad)” depicts in no uncertain terms the implications of such a development. Beverley begins his discussion by observing a contemporary literature already divested of a totalizing idea of literature. The implicit critique is one in which the idea, if not the dream, of Goethe’s *Weltliteratur*, a universal literature that is at the same time a literary expression producing itself in a summarily national sphere, has finally reached its end. Beverley equates the printed word in its colonialist function with “la viruela y el sistema de encomiendas” (17) (smallpox and the encomienda system). This critique forms the base of his argument: literature in itself has represented and played a crucial role in the ideological hegemony within Hispanic culture ever since the sixteenth century and indeed continues to do so throughout the entire world of Western letters and cultures. Beverley qualifies it “una sobrevaloración” (an overestimation) and explains the phenomenon in paradoxical terms like the contrary dynamic that exists between the fact that literature is a colonial institution and the formation of nations and nationalities that completely depends upon this exogenous instrument. Such a preoccupation is very mindful of the formative power of the letter; literature in itself is a form that subjectivizes and, in doing so, bears with it an ideology: the ideology of *la letra*. The

letter in itself is a colonizing force with which one has to participate in order to be considered a member of the class that generates ideas and governs. (But, naturally, in being such a participant, one thus becomes compromised). The literature is “aparato de alienación y dominación” (18) (apparatus of alienation and domination); the colonial and the peninsular worlds become mutually implicated.

By interrogating the moment of the Baroque in which Gracián locates the seat of power in the artifice, Beverley depicts how the “sobrevaloración” of literature was constructed. In noting “la extrema artificialidad” (19) (the extreme artificiality) of Gracián’s writing, Beverley puts into relief how the complexity of Gracián’s writing hides itself behind the “forma aforística” (aphoristic form) of the surface. Yet at the same time Beverley observes that this literature was also a form of cultural decadence. He situates this decadence in the phenomenon of the separation between the word and its referent (the signified and the signifier in Saussurian terms). Such a divorce or rupture also signals the lack of correspondence between power and its referent. According to Beverley, the very representation of power became converted into power. The “carácter arbitrario” (21) (arbitrary character) of linguistic signification causes the “objetos” (such as “abstracción, atributo, relación”) to be manipulated according to their own logic and not that of the actual physical world. It is in this unmooring where all ideation of the political locates itself. Beverley cites A.A. Parker, for whom the concepts behind Gracián’s approach reveal how “una correspondencia ‘artificial’ (más bien que natural u objetiva) . . . es el rasgo determinante de cualquier tipo de Ingenio” (22) (an artificial correspondence [more so than natural or objective] is the characteristic of any type of *Ingenio*). Politics requires art. And the correspondences, the conceptual relations between “objetos,” are *artificial*. In other words, by being artifices, they admit that they are produced by art. The artifice also denotes the arbitrary quality between correspondences; and it is precisely within this arbitrariness that the exploitation of power is found. The one who can best manipulate and control ambiguity maintains power. The Cartesian logic that occasions the separation between signifier and signified here leads to another rupture: the fissure “entre la fundación ideológica del imperio español . . . y el curso real seguido por sus dirigentes” (22) (between the ideological foundation of the Spanish empire . . . and the actual course followed by their leaders), according to David Hildner. This separation implicates *la razón*, but *la razón* that has to “ganar batallas prácticas” (22) (win practical battles) as its *raison d’être*. And, in such a fashion, reason undermines itself. By directing itself toward one, and only one, purpose—that of winning—reason loses its referent. In other words, the goal of reason has ceased being reason itself. As we have said, the one who best manipulates the artifice wins. And this ideology (because it is an ideology in itself) eventually becomes as valued as

the “doctrina del derecho divino” (22) (doctrine of divine right). The appearance begins to occupy a role of importance without precedent.

Beverley emphasizes this dynamic in his brief treatment of Calderón’s *La vida es sueño*. It is not merely the example of Segismundo in the play that should be apprehended, but rather it is also “la práctica de la literatura misma en cuanto fundación para la clase dominante” (23) (the practice of literature itself as foundation for the ruling class). And this includes the changes in literary taste that are more and more often themselves separated from a referent:

Esto podría implicar, entre otras cosas, la transgresión de principios previos de decoro genérico o estilístico, o el gusto por la catachresis, la disonancia o lo grotesco, precisamente porque tales cosas demostraban un más intenso *artificio* estético-conceptual. (24)

(This could include, among other things, the transgression of previous principles of generic or stylistic decorum, or the love of catachresis, dissonance or the grotesque, precisely because such things demonstrated a stronger aesthetic and conceptual artifice.)

Such a phenomenon finds its full expression in Gongorine poetry where Beverley discerns in *Angélica y Medoro* the “extrema artificialidad y ‘exceso’ . . . en relación con el referente” (24) (The extreme artificiality and “excess” . . . in relation to the referent) in the embellished (*embellecida*) figure of the foot. It is this conceit that for Beverley is indication of “una nueva modalidad para la educación del poder político” (25) (a new means for the instruction of political power). It is here that the focus of power changes from one of “contenido” to one of “*ejercicio*”; or, perhaps better, from content to form. However, one should underscore the importance of the process implicit in this Gongorine exercise which requires all the complexity both of conceit and of language with the effect of “basar lo ideológico en lo estético” (25) (basing the ideological in the aesthetic) and not vice-versa. Ideology also has literature for its mode of delivery in the isolating element of writing and reading. The solitary individual is interpellated by the text, and upon becoming so, paradoxically denies his individuality in the process in which he believes himself to be producing it. For Beverley, it is “ingenio” that reconciles this tension between the individual and power; and he adds that for Benjamin “ingenio” is that which has “la capacidad de ejercer dictadura” (26) (the ability of exercising dictatorship).

As Francisco J. Sánchez has observed in “Symbolic Wealth and Theatricality,” *ingenio* is *caudal* precisely because it points toward a body of social knowledge. In other words it is “symbolic capital” (214). Malcolm K. Read goes perhaps one step further, omitting any qualifier whatsoever in

calling *ingenio* a “commodity” (106). Read’s essay, “Saving Appearances,” takes stock of the many dynamics of *ingenio*, but focuses primarily on it as it pertains to his larger argument concerning the nature of the artifice in Gracián’s writings. The same discursive complexity that Beverley notes—although, Beverley does note the deceptive simplicity of Gracián’s writing—is for Read observed in its function to distinguish class rank. Language is a tool that indicates *caudal* as well as one which only those in the know (*los discretos*) can discern. But as we have seen in Beverley’s argument, this use of language is occurring in a process in which language is losing its referential value. For Read, such an occurrence “foregrounds the material qualities of language” (102). Read invokes Benjaminian language by depicting a process in which words come to “glow with the aura of commodities” (102). We will recall that for Beverley language comes to lose its reason being driven as it is by the goal of winning. Read shades this argument a bit further by declaring that the driving force of wit is desire. This desire is at the heart of the subjectivity that Gracián articulates.

One of the principle means by which this desire is produced is through what Marxist critique understands as the circulation of the commodity. In the formation of Baroque subjectivity, this commodity is both language as well as the Baroque subject himself. This circulation is treated in Gracián’s *Oráculo* through his writings on sociability. Gracián is constantly insisting on the importance of being social. For example, in Aphorism 74, he states: “*No ser intratable*” (143) (*Don’t be unfriendly* [42]). The importance is one of the Baroque subject in circulation, moving from one sphere to another and never unnecessarily restricting another’s access to oneself precisely because it is through such circulation, such interaction in the world of other subjects, that the Baroque subject comes to accrue value. Aphorism 147 states “*No ser inaccesible*” (182) (*Don’t be inaccessible* [82]). One must be out in the world, dealing with others—preferably those of learning or even luck. Indeed, Gracián suggests one consort with the lucky, for example, in Aphorism 31: “*Conocer los afortunados, para la elección; y los desdichados, para la fuga*” (121–22) (*Know the fortunate in order to chose them, and the unfortunated in order to flee from them* [18]). But more importantly, he advises in Aphorism 11: “*Tratar con quien se pueda aprender. Sea el amigable trato escuela de erudición, y la conversación, enseñanza culta; un hazer de los amigos maestros, penetrando el útil del aprender con el gusto del conversar*” (106–7) (*Associate with those you can learn from. Let friendly relations be a school of erudition, and conversation, refined teaching. Make your friends your teachers and blend the usefulness of learning with the pleasure of conversation* [6]). In order to learn one’s way in the world that Gracián describes, one must continuously be putting oneself in a position in which he might learn more about that world. There is no self-made man for Gracián; men make themselves through others. “*Atajo*

para ser persona: saberse ladear” (161) (*A shortcut to becoming a true person: put the right people beside you* [60]), writes Gracián in Aphorism 108. To become great by society’s standards, one must interact effectively with others.

The concept of circulation as a process by which value accrues has been treated extensively in Marx’s writings. Early in *Capital: Volume I*, the circulation of commodities is explored in terms of its relation to commodities; the process depends on *exchange*. The repetition of acts of exchange is what circulation entails. The process culminates in the creation of surplus value. Surplus value is any value that exceeds whatever value went into the production of an object. Surplus value, it should be noted, in certain respects rather resembles *caudal*. But for our purposes at the moment, what matters is the *process* by which this value is created—namely, the process of circulation. In an extraordinarily thorough and concise passage from Marx’s *Grundrisse*, Marx details many defining elements of circulation. I quote the following passage from the *Grundrisse* mostly in its entirety because of both its richness as well as its suitability to our discussion:

To have *circulation*, what is essential is that exchange appear as a process, a fluid whole of purchases and sales. Its first presupposition is the circulation of commodities themselves, as a natural, many-sided circulation of those commodities. The precondition of commodity circulation is that they be produced as *exchange values*, not as *immediate use values*, but as mediated through exchange value. Appropriation through and by means of divestiture [*Entäußerung*] and alienation [*Veräußerung*] is the fundamental condition . . . Circulation is the movement in which the general alienation appears as general appropriation and general appropriation as general alienation. As much, then, as the whole of this movement appears as a social process, and as much as the individual moments of this movement arise from the conscious will and particular purposes of individuals, so much does the totality of the process appear as an objective interrelation, which arises spontaneously from nature; arising, it is true, from the mutual influence of conscious individuals on one another, but neither located in their consciousness, nor subsumed under them as a whole. Their own collisions with one another produce an *alien* social power standing above them, produce their mutual interaction as a process and power independent of them. Circulation, because a totality of the social process, is also the first form in which the social relation appears as something independent of the individuals, but not only as, say, in a coin or in exchange value, but extending to the whole of the social movement itself. The social relation of individuals to one another as a power over

the individuals which has become autonomous, whether conceived as a natural force, as chance or in whatever other form, is a necessary result of the fact that the point of departure is not the free social individual. (196–97)

We should underscore the fact that the individual in question, the one engaging in the process of circulation, “is not the free social individual.” It is irrelevant for our purposes here whether or not he thinks he is. What matters is that he is *guided*. This fundamental aspect of *dirigismo* as Maravall posits it in Baroque culture at large is what is at work here in the dynamic of social circulation as it appears in Gracián’s text. The Baroque subject is guided precisely by the dynamic that emerges from his own sociability. The social relation has “a power over individuals.” To be generous, it is not clear to what extent Gracián is fully aware of this. He seems mostly to think that what he is doing is teaching other upwardly mobile members of the court how to create the illusion of this power, which, of course as we know from Beverley, the illusion of power is the power itself.

The commodities in question for our purposes—those items that are in common, or share a common and exchangeable value—are, as we’ve noted, the Baroque subject and his language. Both of these enter into circulation in order to accrue value, a value that is constantly invoked by the notion of the *caudal*. But the *caudal*, it should be noted, is attained precisely by “appropriation”—that which is taken is precisely the authentic referent to language, the authentic grounding of the self. And in this movement, the Baroque subject becomes alienated. The “whole of the movement appears as a social process”: Marx is not only giving us the dynamic of capital in circulation, but also the mechanism of the very psychology by which Baroque subjectivity is articulated. The collisions of these discrete subjectivities in the social sphere, it cannot be overstated, “produce an *alien* social power standing above them, produce their mutual interaction as a process and power independent of them.” The Baroque subject is *guided* (*dirigido*) by precisely this force. This is the power that subjectivizes him; it is the power he seeks to control.

Walter Benjamin commences *The Arcades Project* by positing an investigation of “the new forms of behavior” (14) one observes at the onset of capitalist modernity. His discussion of course centers on both a different time and place (Paris, 1930s) than that of Gracián, but his comments are nonetheless germane precisely due to the similar phenomena emerging in the reality of Gracián’s era. If in Gracián the text directs itself to an upwardly mobile bourgeois subject, in Benjamin’s text the subject in question is the *flâneur*, also a bourgeois subject “who abandons himself to the experience of the marketplace” (14). The marketplace, site of capitalist circulation *par excellence*, is also the gathering site of all the new objects of modernity. It is

in these objects that Benjamin observes a certain movement. Such a movement, or mutability, Benjamin also notes in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* where he remarks how Baroque culture in general enjoyed a certain fascination with “how the object becomes something different” (184). For Benjamin, in *The Arcades Project*, modern objects are of the order of “phantasmagoria” (14)—a series of illusions or deceptive appearances, or a changing scene composed of many elements. In their mutation, objects become imbued with an “illumination” created by a process of “ideological transportation” (14).

As Read notes in “Saving Appearances,” language “is the most important body of signs, the indispensable dress of a Truth obliged to disguise itself in a world that despises the unadorned” (97). The link between Body and Word in Baroque order is irrefutable; and in this order all “(Bodily) appearances . . . are indispensable” (97). Where the pre-modern subject inhabited a space of correspondence between interiority and language, now the Baroque subject concerns itself only with exteriority and language. The appearance of the body in and of itself confirms or denies the word. The word for Gracián, however, is often understood as capable of revealing an interiority, but only, of course, for the discrete reader. Still, for all subjects the exteriority of language is what matters above all. As we’ve seen in this essay, the many injunctions against excess and Gracián’s fomentation of *caudal* provide a template for producing and sustaining an appropriate appearance that is capable, in turn, of entering into a cycle whereby, if the values Gracián prescribes are maintained, the subject can continue to accumulate power. The illusion of language, its phantasmagorical appearance, must be sustained, however. This iteration of succeeding illusions comes to be called reality. Echoes of Beverley’s critique are patent. To combat the hegemony of the illusion, Beverley prescribes a turn away from literature and toward the artifact of quotidian cultural expression. The problem with this proposal however is that all commodified reality, not merely that of language itself, has become imbued with the Benjaminian aura. Any solution deriving from it will necessarily produce the illusion that it already embeds. It goes without saying that all art, all artifice, thus become an aid to commodification, an aid to the cycles which generate the luster of appearance.

The commodity is inherently a distraction precisely because of its mindfulness of appearance. Language is no different. In Aphorism 181, Gracián advises, “*Sin mentir, no dezir todas las verdades*” (201) (*Don’t lie, but don’t tell the whole truth* [102]). In such a formulation it is understood that whatever is uttered will only have a partial purchase in reality. Language thus construed as a pleasurable “glitter of distractions” (18) is, as Benjamin has noted, ultimately alienating. Its luster, its sheen of the new, is led by fashion: “Fashion prescribes the ritual according to which the

commodity fetish demands to be worshipped” (18). What Marx referred to in his writings on circulation as “a process and power independent of” the subjects is here revealed in its capriciousness—that of fashion. Fashion, appearance, distraction: the *divertissements* of modern life work precisely in order to ensure the fissure of the subject, in order to alienate the self from the self by the very means with which the self produces itself.

In his introductory essay to *The Theater of Truth*, Egginton stipulates modernity’s fundamental problem of thought as being one in which discrete subjectivities “can only know the world through a veil of appearances” (2). A principle of *adequatio* is necessary in one’s regard toward the things languages represent in order for what one calls truth to emerge. The separation is assumed and unbridgeable; two strategies for engaging this separation arise in the Baroque articulation of this problem, but they do not pretend to resolve entirely the gap. As we’ve seen in this essay, appearances, of course, come to produce a reality, too—but this is not to say that they necessarily must have a referent in truth. To the degree that appearances represent their own reality, i.e., that of their appearance, they may be said to be true. But insofar as these appearances represent another discrete reality, the complexity of their representation is imbued with a falsity. Or, as Egginton, has put it, “the truth sought will always be corrupted by appearances” (2).

Egginton names two strategies at work in the problem of truth and representation: the *major strategy* and the *minor strategy*. The *major strategy* assumes the appearances and the truth to which they point. These appearances can be, and in many of the cases Egginton works with are (such as those involving the theater), expressly fictitious. The “trick” of the Baroque *major strategy* is to conflate discrete political realities behind the one screen of appearances by not just enabling, but tacitly encouraging, spectators to import the fictitious “realities” into their understanding of reality itself. Again, the *major strategy* always claims another “reality” as its referent. The *minor strategy*, in its functioning, affirms the reality of the representations of the *major strategy*. Yet, two distinct levels (representation and reality) are not supposed. Rather, a conflation of these two levels produces a sense that only one reality is at stake—that projected by the appearance. For Egginton, the result is an awareness that “we are always . . . involved with mediation.”

Indeed, the medium is the message. In 1964, Marshall McLuhan argued in his famous essay entitled “The Medium Is the Message” that, whatever the medium, no essential purpose defines how it should be used; yet it (the medium) invariably produces cultural *effects*, i.e., how we think and behave. The media (here understood fully as the plural of medium) have become interwoven into the individual and daily communal life to such a degree that they are like extensions or prostheses of our intellectual existence. For

example, today mass media have become so indispensable that we could not think geopolitics without them. The media figure our knowledge of and to the world. Yet McLuhan specifically disengages content in his argument so that he might reveal the structures themselves that inhere. These structures invariably imbed a politics, often by way of a change in scale or pattern of human affairs. For example, television, structurally, as a medium, has largely produced effects of fragmentation due to its reliance on advertising revenue that informs the length and pace of programming. Print, in turn, by its form, gives you time to respond, to think. Or, another different example, a light bulb, seemingly neutral in terms of “content” has led to all sorts of advances in human productivity. By taking the medium so seriously, the *minor strategy* that Egginton discusses likewise exposes the politics contained in the structures themselves. As Egginton writes, “the minor strategy focuses on the concrete reality of mediation itself and hence produces a thought, an art, a literature, or a politics that does not deny the real, but focuses on how the media are themselves real even while they try to make us believe that their reality, the reality in which we live, is always somewhere else” (8).

In his chapter on Góngora’s Poetics, Egginton takes up the specific medium of poetic language. As he discusses it, the *major strategy* behind Baroque poetic utterance assumes a “simple, attainable, singularity” (60). In turn, the *minor strategy* troubles this simplicity, insisting on language’s complexity, and thus by analogy, reality’s. The distinction indicates a difference of politics—a politics of the *major strategy* is not merely simple, but easily manipulable; whereas a politics embedded in the *minor strategy*, by pointing up the inherent complexities of realities and the differences therein, works against leveling rhetorics of simplicity. It is for this reason that Egginton argues that Góngora’s poetry, which has been regarded as summarily non-political for its insistence on attending to the difficulties of language, is instead decidedly political for the very way it refers to the complexities of reality. Indeed, what has been qualified as “emptiness” in Góngora’s verse is political precisely for the way “it calls into question the hidden reality that underlies baroque political discourse” (60).

Egginton addresses the dynamic of political power or strength in Góngora’s poetry by recourse to a study by Mauricio Molho in which Góngora’s language is structurally, even logically (formally speaking) analyzed. For Molho, the schema “*A if not B*” is employed by Góngora in order to apprehend “the experiential world in all its plenitude” (61). (“A repeated barking, if not near / different, he heard a dog”). Egginton points out that for Molho,

Góngora’s poetic apprehension of the experiential world, the world as appearance or phenomenon, is that this experiential world is founded on

a conceptual hiatus, on the minimal difference determining a concept as a concept, and that this gap expresses itself poetically in the juxtaposition of terms that are simultaneously equated and opposed. (61)

It's curious how in this brief passage, in keeping with the terms Egginton posits, the "experiential world" and "the world as appearance or phenomenon" are so casually equated. This of course is consistent with one of the central assumptions of Egginton's thesis—namely, that human subjects only know the world through appearances. In spite of the many ways we've discussed in which appearances operate on the subject and attend his formation, there is something problematic about this claim. Isn't there, after all, a difference between the experiential world and the world of appearances? Egginton argues that we only experience appearances; but it seems to me that the gap of phenomenology can be contrasted by a continuum of ontology precisely by interrogating the notion of representation at stake here. If we can show that indeed the word *partakes* of its object, of the thing it is said to represent, rather than merely representing it, can we not then begin to construe a poetic language in which the difficulties of reality are highlighted not for the emptiness that undergirds them, but precisely for their fullness?

Egginton writes that "implicit in Góngora's poetics is the idea that reality, far from being separated from us by mediation, is indistinguishable from the very mediating opacity of the language that represents it" (61). But yet what is not apparently at stake for Egginton is the reality itself as here discussed beneath the rubric of the *minor strategy*. To be sure, elsewhere in his book, his intellectual sympathies would seem to suggest otherwise. In his chapter on Cervantes, he argues that "the minor strategy suggests that the promise of purity behind the veil of appearances is itself already corrupted by the very distinction that gave birth to it" (27). The fact that the appearance is "already corrupted" by the reality behind it, or in Sausurrian language, that the signifier is already corrupted by the signified, here suggests that the phenomena embed their opposites. This, it seems to me is another way of addressing the *A if not B* problem as viewed in Góngora's poetry. Recall that this formulation invokes or is founded on "a conceptual hiatus, on the minimal difference determining a concept as a concept, and that this gap expresses itself poetically in the juxtaposition of terms that are simultaneously equated and opposed." In a way it is precisely this *juxtaposition* that is in question in Egginton's chapter on Cervantes. Here, it would seem, *A* embeds, contains *B*. I am not talking about the eradication of distinction, of difference—the sublation, in Hegelian terms—but rather quite the opposite—the preservation of that difference but done so within the context of a continuity as seen elsewhere in Egginton's writings (cf. "Of Baroque Holes and Baroque Folds") where an interiority is seamlessly

attached to its exteriority. It may, in fact, be that the *minor strategy* seeks to alter reality precisely by the mechanism by which it takes the *major strategy* so seriously, yet not only by taking it seriously in a way that exposes the *major strategy's* designs upon reality, but by simultaneously laying a claim to that reality that is not itself “staged”—a reality, indeed, of which it partakes.

It must also be the case that there are different kinds of appearances. Surely it is conceivable that not all reality confirms hegemony. If the medium is the message, then, if not by avoiding, then at least by being critically aware of the effects of certain media, perhaps we can articulate a map toward different subjectivities. Perhaps. One supposes it depends on the medium. A television can be turned off indefinitely. But can one avoid confronting the use of language itself? How we live certainly affects who we are and who we are capable of becoming. Thus the manner in which we conceive of our own lives is of crucial importance. It goes without saying that *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* is a book on how *to live* one's life, how *to be* in the world, or, how *to become* a person of repute in one's society. It is important to note that these verbs are all intransitive. They imply no goal, no *telos*. Yet there is a curious appropriation of conceit at work here in the counsel offered by Gracián *vis-à-vis* these intransitive states. “*To be*,” while incapable of usage as a transitive verb is nonetheless imbued with a sense of purpose. In contemporary life, it is hardly uncommon to ask children, students, and friends, “what do you want to be?” In such a seemingly innocuous maneuver, being is enlisted in the service of a *telos*. A life without object is suddenly given one. A transitivity is projected into the intransitivity of being or becoming. “What do you want to be?” comes to mean “what is the purpose of the actions you engage in your life?” or variation thereof. “Toward what goal are you progressing?”

The intransitivity of existence becomes infused with transitivity. For Freud, the modern subject must reckon the impulse of *thanatos*, the death drive, which posits death as the “goal” or purpose of life. The reckoning of this presence is one attended, naturally, by anxiety. In contemporary Marxist thought, consumerism, in general is often understood as a coping strategy for this displaced anxiety. Desire itself becomes a means of escaping death. The desire created by the mutable and glowing commodity of modernity is death's surrogate. In a capitalist order that ascertains and implements strategies that are able to appropriate the processes of desire, the desire is directed as we've seen from certain subjects toward others in an attempt to extract power. Specifically, this manufacturing of desire is prescribed in Machiavellian terms that do not hesitate to instrumentalize the other in one's effort to secure the illusion of access to more power, which, again, is tantamount to securing the power itself.

At the beginning of this essay our discussion of Kojève observed how the thinking of desire transforms the Hegelian dialectic precisely by showing how desire seeks the approval of the other—the desire of the other’s desire. This is the goal of modern intersubjective interaction. We can “be all that we can be,” in terms of Gracián’s text, by attaining the desire of others with power. This accomplishment, in turn, will increase the amount of power at our disposal by increasing the illusion of the access one has to resources, by increasing in short one’s *caudal*. In almost identical aphorisms—one appearing at the beginning of the *Oráculo*, the other appearing toward the end—Gracián directs his reader to the necessity of “*Hazer depender*” (103) (*Make people depend on you* [3]) in Aphorism 5. This counsel to create a feeling of dependence, which in a sense bookends or frames the entire text, is echoed in Aphorism 244: “*Saber obligar*” (235) (*Place others in your debt* [138]). The tactical creation of dependence or the installation of obligation within others is precisely the creation of desire. Gracián teaches his readers how to desire the other’s desire in order to produce the illusion of *caudal*.

In Aphorism 85, Gracián suggests that one of the ways by which one might augment the way he is esteemed in the world is, of course, as we’ve seen elsewhere, to reveal less of oneself: “*Escasez de aparenca se premian con logros de estimación*” (149) (To win true esteem, make yourself scarce [48]). One can’t help but wonder if our contemporary capitalistic moment has not transcended, if not altogether perverted, this notion. It would seem that in an era of “sexting”—the act of sending sexually explicit images or text via mobile phone—any injunction against would almost suggest an obliviousness to the times. (And nothing diminishes one’s *caudal* more than not seeming up to date). Indeed the immediate transmission of the sexual image or language is in itself designed to increase a desire that leads, not to deferred gratification, but to its opposite. In a total inversion of Gracián’s strategies, people today show themselves more, not less, in order to produce the illusion of esteem. And this phenomenon of course is not merely one related to sophomoric fumbling with sexuality. Professionals of any stripe must reveal the entirety of their accomplishments in order to secure work. This is what the *Curriculum Vitae* is. It is not a document of suggestive possibility, it is not a manifesto of working ideation. It is rather a list of completed work, of expended potential. Indeed our entire late capitalist culture is little more than a locus of unchecked self-promotion.

The contemporary experience of desire has changed. On another front, one could argue that a new sophistication has emerged that, curiously enough, often resembles that of the pre-modern for its *apparent* lack of subjective split. But it must be stressed that such a lack is merely apparent. The subject remains as divided as ever, only now he is capable of projecting a post-ironic attitude. This apparent sophistication manifests itself in proving oneself unsusceptible to the machinations of the creation of desire. When

one's ex-girlfriend tells one's current girlfriend, "hold on to him, he's a keeper," one quickly sees that there is little that can be more ineffective for the augmentation of the current girlfriend's desire for the boyfriend. The "modern" mechanism of desire—i.e., that stemming from Baroque thought and attitude—would seem to lack such sophistication specifically as it pertains to the regard of others. If the current, contemporary instantiation of the subject's relationship to desire bespeaks a sophistication *vis-à-vis* other subjects, the current production of desire would certainly seem capable of penetrating this sophistication in its application to the commodity. Rather than desiring others for the commodities they possess, which formerly would indicate *caudal*, late-capitalist subjects now desire the commodities themselves. Or if they desire another, it might often be as a means toward attaining these commodities, rather than merely desiring him for his potential (*potens, potentis*). One doesn't desire another because he has an iPhone. One desires the iPhone. The aura of the commodity shines on.

We'll recall from the beginning of our discussion that for Freud the *fort-da* game afforded the child a practice by which he might soothe the anxiety felt at the disappearance of the one he desired. We can now see how this dialectic is also about control of the image. It is not just about symbolic control—i.e., finding a mechanism by which to cope with the absence of the mother. Rather it is practice for controlling the symbolic sphere itself. When the child learns how to manipulate the symbol of the toy and finds gratification in it, a strategy emerges in which the child also learns the value of controlling the realm of the displaced. By practicing control within this realm, the child gains insight into how control over the symbolic might operate on subjectivity. Lacan's insight in his discussion of the mirror stage that the child recognizes he is a shattered subject is crucial for our purposes. If, as we've suggested in our reading of Freud, the child discerns the practice of controlling the symbolic order, then the child can also understand the import this might have in his relations with others. The child understands that other subjects are shattered and may proceed in the world accordingly.

The modern Baroque subject moves in the world having assimilated precisely the structures that attend the understanding of the controlling symbolic order. Perhaps tellingly, there are other, even many patently self-serving, implications for the self in its dealings with others in Gracián's *Oráculo*. For example, Aphorism 149 counsels, without blushing: "*Saber declinar a otro los males*" (183) (*Let someone else take the hit* [84]). Knowing others is not only for accruing value in society. But, apparently, it also has the advantage of providing the possibility of ascribing one's own error or blame to another. Gracián states just this as the importance of "*tener en quien recaiga la censura de los desaciertos, y el castigo común de la murmuración*" (183) (*having someone else take the blame for failure and be the butt of gossip* [84]). Somebody needs to fall on the sword. But if that

somebody is oneself, then he won't be able to continue to accrue power in the world. There are those who dispose of a certain, shall we say, disposability, and such disposability of those with whom one has dealings speaks to a specific issue in modern subjectivity. Gracián's claims that not only are there those who can serve to take the blame for one's own failings, but, more importantly, that one should actively cultivate the presence of just such figures in one's life, bespeak the reification *par excellence* of other subjects.

Even more curiously, the importance of friends is related to a splitting, or if you will, a doubling, of the self. Aphorism 111: "*Tener amigos. Es el segundo ser*" (163) (*Have friends. They are a second being* [62]). This passage again serves to underscore the importance of involving oneself in the lives of others. But we also note a curious addition. "The second being" here is not entirely construed as another, independent being; rather, there is an implication of this other being as not simply a part of, but in a way, as another of the same self. Having friends is a way to expand one's capacities. Indeed, quite literally here, others would seem to be assimilated to the self. But such a process also indicates a mechanism by which the self is divided.

As we've learned from Marx, the process of circulation is alienating. Gracián's dictums that one circulates in certain social spheres result in an equally effective alienation for the modern Baroque subject. This alienation in fact seems rather highly developed as well as uncritically accepted. In another telling and baldly cynical aphorism (No. 150), Gracián writes that one should "*Saber vender sus cosas. No basta la intrínseca bondad dellas*" (183) (*Know how to sell your wares. Intrinsic quality isn't enough* [84]). Nothing could indicate the rift between subject and the world more clearly. The intrinsic value of things (*cosas*) is at this historical moment becoming less and less discernible by the modern Baroque subject. The purchase that word, deed, and subject have on the world is weakening. The split subject owes its condition to the machinations of *telos*, desire, and circulation. Maravall stressed of course that the Baroque subject began to be "loose, detached" (364). Egginton has noted in his essay on the emergence of the modern subject that in the Baroque moment "concepts such as Truth were fixed in relation to the social structure rather than to any metaphysical certainties" (160). We have seen how such detachment by the subject has been exploded in our contemporary moment. The impulse toward valuing appearance has been redirected toward an impulse that esteems the scandal. Gracián in his text speaks often and at length about the importance of avoiding scandal. Aphorism 97 states, for example, "*Conseguir y conservar la reputación*" (155) (*Make your reputation and keep it* [54]). That of course was his day. By contrast, today such concerns seem almost quaint. Eliot Spitzer is already making a huge political comeback after his forays into dens of ill repute. Tiger Woods's popularity seems hardly diminished in

spite of his marital transgressions. Apparently, all one has to do is publicly atone and all is forgiven. The cult of distraction that modernity so prizes certainly helps. Even if one weren't forgiven by the public, the next 24-hour news cycle would certainly do its part in relegating a scandal to oblivion. Distraction, the split television screen, the ticker at the bottom of it, email, cell phones, technology in general—in our own contemporary moment, we're barely hanging on to the illusions that we create. The modern subject is weakened accordingly.

Gracián in his day observed that “las medianías no son asunto del aplauso” (135) (Mediocrity never wins applause [34]). To say that mediocrity is never applauded today can only laughably be received. Even if it weren't the case, the television promptings of applause by studio audiences, or, better, the laugh tracks, have instituted the celebration of mediocrity on the popular level. Can people still discern that which is excellent? How we look at ourselves, what we create when we see ourselves, most certainly has everything to do with our aesthetic sensibility.

In *Force Fields*, Martin Jay takes up many of the questions of specularity, the mirror, and divided consciousness. Specularity refers to the reproduction of an object (or subject) by a mirror. Its complication lies in its infinity. Citing Gasché, Jay notes the following:

From the beginning, self-consciousness as constituted by self-reflection has been conceptualized in terms of this optic operation . . . Reflection is the structure and the process of an operation that, in addition to designating the action of a mirror reproducing an object, implies that mirror's mirroring itself, by which process the mirror is made to see itself. (106)

This speculation has its Greek referent in *theoria* itself. “Specio” means “to look or behold.” The look that we engage in when we view ourselves or the world is, if we are to trust its etymology, *theoretical*. This is a point of departure, however. By way of a brief interrogation of Gadamer and Hegel, Jay is able to arrive at “the dialectical unity of Subject and Object” that has its foundation in the “*speculum* of the Absolute Spirit” (107), thus positing an essential connection between the Subject and the Object. Within the eye of the Other, one beholds the infinite reflection of one's own eye. The critical problem of course is one which may lead to narcissism.

The “baroque vision” is cited for its propensity toward “obscurity, shadow, and the oscillation and formlessness” (108). Its askance ocularity leads to “a nonsublatable dialectic of imperfect specularity,” which, according to Jay produces via anamorphosis a “schizoid fracture between the eye and the look.” The obvious problem occasioned by this vision is its relation to anxiety and uncertainty. In a more unique and unguarded moment of the

Oráculo, Gracián tells his reader, in effect, to simply trust himself. Aphorism 50 advises “*Nunca perderse el respeto a sí mismo. Ni se roze consigo a solas. Sea su misma entereza norma propia de su rectitud, y deva más a la severidad de su dictamen que a todos los extrínsecos preceptos*” (130) (*Never lose your self-respect or grow too familiar with yourself. Let your own integrity keep you righteous. You should owe more to the severity of your own judgment than to all external precepts [28–29]*). What’s curious about this passage is how the emphasis has shifted so drastically from one which values the exterior world and the subjects and powers that comprise it. Instead, this mild aphorism centers itself on the interiority of the subject, telling him indeed to avoid submitting to the external with its extrinsic precepts. If the self can attain or remember (re-member) this wholeness, then perhaps a fractured self might someday stand a chance to live and be, intransitively, at peace in the world.

Notes

1. All translations with a page citation are from Christopher Maurer’s translation of *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* (*The Art of Worldly Wisdom: A Pocket Oracle*). All other translations were provided by Hispanic Issues.

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