Gongora's "Soledades" as a Problem of Language and Meaning in Seventeenth Century Spain.

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Góngora’s “Soledades” as a problem of language and meaning in seventeenth century Spain

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The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1989

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Góngora's "Soledades"
as a Problem of Language and Meaning
in Seventeenth-Century Spain

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Doctor of Philosophy

in
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Table of Contents

Introduction ...................................... 1

Chapter 1
Toward a Historical Context of Epistemological Change .................................... 10

Chapter 2
Góngora's Critics: An Indictment of Obscurity ............................................ 35

Chapter 3
Góngora and his Apologists: Denial and Defense of Obscurity ....................... 99

Chapter 4
In Search of Structure: "Soledad primera" ........................................ 132

Chapter 5
Further Searching: "Soledad segunda" .................................................. 174

Conclusion ........................................... 208

List of Works Cited ........................................ 214

Vita .................................................. 223
Abstract

The exploration of the epistemological assumptions necessary for the interpretation of Luis de Góngora's "Soledades" is an area of critical attention that has gone virtually neglected since his 1927 "rehabilitation." This study offers an approach to understanding the long, difficult poem and the bitter critical reaction against it in the context of the seventeenth-century shift of predominant epistemologies discussed by Michel Foucault in The Order of Things. An approach that focuses on how the world is known is most appropriate to a study of the "Soledades" for several reasons, one being that those writers who attacked the poem did so on the basis of its resistance to understanding. Another justification is that the poem's narrative is the story of a protagonist who interprets the strange world in which he is shipwrecked. A third reason is that in Góngora's "Carta" in defense of the work he places unusual emphasis on the process of interpretation. An epistemological focus is also appropriate since questioning the very basis of one's knowledge of the world is, I believe, precisely what the "Soledades" required of their seventeenth-century readers.

The dissertation is an attempt to substantiate that belief. The first chapter discusses the Golden Age change in epistemological assumptions, laying the basis for my analysis. Chapters Two and Three examine the writings of participants—both attackers and defenders—in the vicious
critical polemic that erupted when the poem appeared, exploring the role of the writers' epistemological assumptions as a foundation for their disagreement. The final chapters are a dual reading, both of the "Soledades" (which is its protagonist's "reading" of the world), and of a hypothetical reader's attempts to interpret the poem by imposing on it an ordering structure. The reading reveals how the poem tightly controls the reader's hermeneutic activity, and also forces the reader to be aware of his/her responsibility for the construing of meaning, a posture alien to predominant assumptions about meaning and knowing the world in the seventeenth century.
Introduction

Since the 1927 rehabilitation of Luis de Góngora as a poet to be considered worthy of critical attention, criticism of his work, particularly of the "Soledades," has undergone an evolution, as have the theory and practice of criticism itself. Attempts to understand the long, enigmatic poem have employed various approaches. Miguel Artigas, whose work actually predates Góngora's much publicized "resurrection," wrote what is still considered to be the definitive biography of the Cordovan poet. Dámaso Alonso's contributions to the study of the "Soledades" were monumental and focused on language. Among them are an edition of the poem that served for decades as the edition most scholars used, a prose version that helps to make decipherment of the poem less difficult, and exhaustive analyses of the poet's language and style. Antonio Vilanova's historical investigations established Góngora's debt to various literary traditions. The emphasis on language of most early studies allowed E. M. Wilson to write in 1965 that the plot of the "Soledades" "is merely a convenient peg on which Góngora could hang his superb descriptions, elaborated by all the arts of metaphor and hyperbole, and interspersed with beautiful lyrics" (xv).

All critics, fortunately, did not assume (as Wilson appears to have done) that Dámaso Alonso had exhausted all the possibilities and that there was nothing left to
understand about the poem. Other studies were oriented more toward seeking meaning in the poem beyond the alleged superficiality of its brilliant poetic language. R. O. Jones proposed a Neoplatonic "preconception" as one of the bases for the "Soledades" ("Neoplatonism" 15), a theme developed by Robin Louis McAllister in an allegorical reading. Jones and John R. Beverley, located the poem in a historical context of social and economic systems. Alexander A. Parker's study of the Gongora's other major poem, the "Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea," established an intellectual dimension to Gongora's work by redefining him as a poet of conceptos. Maurice Molho closely analyzed Gongora's use of the concept in terms of structure. Andrée Collard discussed the storm of critical debate that accompanied the poem's appearance in 1613.1

The search for understanding of the "Soledades" and their context is, of course, also the purpose of this study, and it is the process of understanding itself that will be used as a point of departure. I believe that the "falta de una reflexión epistemológica suficiente" in modern Gongoran criticism, noted by Mauricio Molho in 1969 (22), has continued to be the general rule. I also consider that a regard for (or awareness of) epistemological differences between the present and seventeenth-century Spain can result in a different basis for understanding. The aims of this dissertation are to demonstrate that an awareness of ordinarily invisible
epistemological assumptions becomes necessary in the process of interpreting the "Soledades," and to signal their importance in the interpretation of the hostile polemic that surrounded the poem are aims of this dissertation.

The appearance of Gongora's "Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea" and "Soledades" in the early seventeenth century evoked strong emotional reactions among his contemporaries, which ranged from enthusiastic proclamation of Gongora as the Spanish "Homer" to personal attacks labelling him heretic and Jew. The resulting literary war involved most of the major writers of the epoch. Principal among Gongora's attackers were Lope de Vega and Francisco de Quevedo. Emilio Orozco Díaz has clearly shown that some of the vitriol in the heated polemic that revolved around Gongora's work resulted from personal rivalry, and was not always directly connected with the poetic works themselves (Lope y Gongora). Andrée Collard's documentation of the controversy in her 1967 study, Nueva Poesía, considers "la atmósfera de intereses político-sociales, de religión y de pensamiento en que ese proceso transcurrió" (53), and she demonstrates that its roots lay deeper than mere personality differences. Collard finds hostility toward Gongora's innovations that were defiant of the authority of national poetic traditions, conflict over stylistic clarity and obscurity, and horror at the absence of a docent moral utility in his poems. She delineates two fronts of attack.
in the "guerra civil": "Contra lo defectuoso de la sustancia poética y contra los excesos de su poesía, su oscuridad y confusión" (84). In other words, she classifies the objections to the poems according to the categories of content and form. Indeed, the dispute could be described as one over whether Gongora's poetic language embodied a content or not and whether it accurately transmitted (or not) that which it did embody. Beneath such a conflict lie fundamental assumptions as to the separability of thought and language, the existence and knowability of truth that is perceived to lie beyond both thought and language, and the ability of language to represent adequately thought which is seen as separate from it. These epistemological assumptions and how they figure into both Gongora's "Soledades" and the polemic that surrounded them are the topics of the present investigation.

In order, however, for a modern reader to approach the epistemological assumptions that underlie literary works of another epoch, he or she must be aware that understanding in itself is a function of epistemology. Modern versions of understanding carry with them their own presuppositions of which one must attempt to be aware. In contemporary discourse, for example, "to understand" something often means in practice "to stand over" it in the sense of "to control" or "to possess knowledge of" it. For the modern interpreter to understand Gongora in the etymological sense
of "standing under" Góngora, it would be necessary to leave behind the body of intellectual assumptions, or "episteme,"² of his or her own society in order to stand upon the discursive ground that underlies Góngora's work; in other words, it would require the interpreter to share the poet's intellectual assumptions. Of course, such an attempt could never succeed completely. Timothy Reiss explains in The Discourse of Modernism that:

One cannot escape . . . the objective fact that one is oneself inserted in a particular episteme: that fact must needs be fully accepted before there can be the slightest hope of deflecting a condition which is after all our life situation.

(47-48)

Thus, one can analyze other intellectual systems only in terms of one's own epistemological priorities; one cannot recapture it as it was. It is possible, however, to identify dissimilarities in intellectual assumptions by striving to recognize and remain cognizant of the underlying thought structures that one ordinarily assumes to be natural.

The systematic exploration of such epistemological variation holds much promise for Góngora studies. To demonstrate the affinities and differences between Góngora's epistemology and that of modern interpreters will help in avoiding the temptation to attribute to Góngora and his contemporaries intentions that are historically
inaccurate. Moreover, to seek evidence of epistemological differences between Góngora and his critics can significantly expand contemporary understanding of that debate by going beyond the partial, historical explanations that are generally offered. For example, rather than being seen as separate phenomena, the underlying causes of contention cited by Collard—the differing attitudes toward authority, the disagreement over style, and dissension as to the role of art in the propagation of morality—could all be interpreted as manifestations of a conflict between different ways of knowing and ordering the universe.

A reading of Góngora's works and of the critical works of his opponents and defenders that seeks to uncover epistemological assumptions and differences is appropriate since questioning the very basis of one's knowledge of the world is, I believe, precisely what Góngora required of the seventeenth-century readers of his "Soledades." He called them to leave behind the security of received authority (in language and poetic tradition) and join him in what Juan de Jáuregui termed "la misma nada" (Discurso 134) to construct meaning out of the stuff of their imaginations. This self-conscious construction of meaning was what some of his most virulent critics rejected. They attacked Góngora because his poetic language violated their understanding of the universe as something to be seen and not constructed.

In order to delineate the epistemological differences that separate Góngora's "Soledades" from the predominant
epistemology of his epoch, it is necessary to describe those intellectual systems in terms of broad tendencies. An episteme cannot be precisely defined for two reasons, the first being that it is by necessity the construct of an alien who can only operate from within his or her own epistemological structuring system, paraphrasing in a parallel discourse. The second reason is that, as an intellectual construct, an episteme cannot accurately represent the diversity and fluctuation of the intellectual assumptions of a society of individuals. Nevertheless, differences between epistemologies are demonstrable, and, as Reiss observes, defining those differences is what matters, not the seeking after "some impossible comprehension of a past structure of thought 'in its own terms'" (48).

The task of the first chapter will be to discuss the shift that took place in Spain near the beginning of the seventeenth century. The many explanations that have been offered for the phenomenon vary greatly, but the focus of my study will be an approach that treats the change as an epistemological one. Michel Foucault's discussion of two predominant epistemological systems that preceded and followed the shift is fundamental to the chapter. Other authors are cited in order to tailor Foucault's theory to the needs of this investigation.

The two chapters that follow examine selected writings from the debate over the "Soledades," demonstrating
evidence of some of the epistemological assumptions of their authors. Passages that can be interpreted as indicative of the writers’ attitudes about language and knowledge are analyzed and compared. Góngora’s attackers, whose principal theme is the charge that the poem is obscure, are treated in Chapter Two; his defenders, who either deny the charge or offer explanations justifying it, are the subject of the third chapter. Góngora’s own defense, his "Carta en respuesta," in which he offers some explanation of his poetic project, is also included in Chapter Three.

Chapters Four and Five are a reading of the first and second "Soledades" as a process of understanding. Not only do I examine the protagonist as he interprets the world into which he has been cast by a shipwreck; I also posit (and interpret the hermeneutic efforts of) a reader as he or she attempts to construct an interpretation of the events of the poem’s narrative. Limited to understanding only what he/she is allowed to "see" by the poem, this hypothetical reader makes visible the restrictions that the poem can be interpreted to impose on readers who approach it with certain epistemological assumptions. The reading of the two "texts"--the poem and the reader’s interpretive effort--demonstrates how the "Soledades" resist an interpretation based on assumptions held by Góngora’s major critics. In a brief Conclusion, I discuss those restrictions and their relation to a transitional period of history.
Notes

1 This list of criticism is, of course, not meant to be exhaustive, nor are the descriptions of the works mentioned adequate assessments of their contents. I have merely chosen the ones I consider to be more important in determining the course of twentieth-century Gongora studies, and have signalled what I believe to be their major contributions.

2 The term "episteme," Michel Foucault's theoretical construct embodying the epistemological system or structure of a culture in a defined time period, will be explained in the second chapter. I do not wish to adopt it (for the reasons I discuss on pages 6-7 and 19-20, however, and I use it here only to explain its signification in the quotation from Timothy Reiss that follows.

3 In using the word "partial," I do not mean to suggest that any theory can ever wholly explain any phenomenon, only that a more broadly inclusive theory may be constructed.
Chapter 1

Toward a Historical Context of Epistemological Change

The seventeenth century in Europe was a time of great changes that transcended and transformed broad categories of human experience. Changes in political, social, and religious institutions, economic systems, science, philosophy and the arts, among others, are generally described in terms of a shift from a "Renaissance" period to a "Baroque" era of history. On the one hand, no theory has been successful in accounting for these changes as a monolithic phenomenon issuing from a single cause. At the same time, the many explanations that have attempted to deal with various changes in isolation from one another have also fallen short. The idea of a single cause is too broad for efficient analysis and management of information and denies the mutual influences of multiple causes, as does the practice of examining changes in particular categories of experience as isolated events, a project too narrow in scope. Elizabeth Eisenstein's sweeping claims for the invention and dissemination of print as the cause of much change across Europe can serve as an example of the first error. For the second, Stephen Gilman's explanation of the "Ideology of the Baroque in Spain," while persuasively written, attributes the change in literature to a shift in spirituality from Neoplatonic mysticism to
Stoic asceticism that he sees resulting from the Council of Trent. He does not take into account the influence of other great changes in the economic and political situation in Spain that did not result from the Council of Trent. While causes of the changes may be myriad and the complexity of their interaction may may lie beyond the scope of analysis, description is always possible. Michel Foucault pioneered the description in epistemological terms of the seventeenth-century shift that is often associated with the beginning of the Baroque period. Rather than seeking historical causes for the change, Foucault searched for what he called "the mute ground upon which it is possible for entities to be juxtaposed" (xvii). The term "episteme" is Foucault's label for this ground which provides the intellectual "inner law" of the universe (xx) and manifests itself in the culture as the "natural" order. The episteme furnishes, according to Foucault:

a definition of the segments by which the resemblances and differences can be shown, the types of variation by which those segments can be affected, and lastly, the threshold above which there is a difference and below which there is a similitude. (xx)

Foucault's description of the episteme is synchronic; therefore his historical account is marked by epistemic discontinuities that separate one epoch's organizing structure from that of another. His early seventeenth-
century placement of the shift of thought structures from what he calls the "Renaissance" episteme to the "Classical" episteme coincides with and provides the context for the appearance of Góngora's "Polifemo" and "Soledades" and the resulting furor.²

The Renaissance episteme Foucault describes embodies the principle of similarity or resemblance as the foundation of knowledge. Resemblance is based on a variety of fundamental similitudes by which all things could be shown to resemble each other, either by contiguity, reflection or repetition (or a combination of these), or by the free play between sympathy (a quality that draws things together) and antipathy (which maintains their separateness). This universal, unifying oneness precludes modern ideas of meaning as something fixed. In order to produce meaning, one would need to do one of two things: either to define the ground for order by establishing experientially or empirically all possible resemblances between things, a goal Foucault calls "the unattainable end of an endless journey" (30), or one would need to posit such a ground. Meaning was thus guaranteed by positing the principle of resemblance itself: everything was a sign resembling something else, pointing away from itself toward another thing that was a sign and which in turn resembled yet another entity. God was the ultimate resembled thing that served as the fixed end point which all other things signalled. Yet every sign was complete in that it
resembled every other thing. Resemblance signaled a unity; there was no "other." All was one in the sense that there was ultimately only one meaning to be discovered, resemblance itself.

According to Foucault, the sign in the Renaissance episteme was ternary in nature; that is, sign and referent were joined by the perception of their actually resembling each other. It had not yet become binary; the signifier was not seen to be the indicator of a referent to which it was arbitrarily and properly attached. The Renaissance sign signified only because it resembled. Knowledge depended on one's ability to recognize those similitudes that were presumed to preexist as marks left by God as his signature when he created the world. These divine signatures were more than mere signs, however; they were essences. According to Croilus, in addition "to the shadow and image of God that they bear," things contain an "internal virtue, which has been given to them by heaven as a natural dowry" (qtd. in Foucault, 26). The magical, as it were, divine signatures were to be interpreted by the means of divinatio.

The other path to knowledge was eruditio, a reading of the transcribed knowledge contained in sacred scriptures and in the writing of the ancients. For the sixteenth century, according to Foucault, written language itself embodied a signature:

In its original form, when it was given to men by
God himself, language was an absolutely certain and transparent sign for things, because it resembled them. The names of things were lodged in the things they designated . . . (36) Language and things were intimately interwoven; God had written what Foucault calls the "primal Text" (41) and had hidden it in the world, but it was a text that could be interpreted if its signatures were discovered. All discourse written by humans was secondary, language trapped in the space between the primal Text and interpretation (41), merely a commentary that promised to reveal the meaning that lay hidden in the primal Text. Thus, the commentaries written on ancient texts and sacred scriptures were an effort to interpret those writings, texts which were in themselves commentaries.

One notices the visual images Foucault employs in describing the Renaissance epistemology: the hidden nature of essences, the visibility of signs, the transparency of language as sign. Knowledge of the world ultimately was not dependent on vision; it pre-existed as the unseen essence of things. The task of interpretation was not to know the thing but to make visible the hidden resemblances so that that resemblance (not the thing) might be known. Understanding the world was the equivalent of seeing in that sense, but the vision was achieved only by disregarding (not looking at) the concealing qualities of things. The object of seeing, then, was to see essence,
the true nature of the thing, not its appearance.

After the shift to the Classical episteme that Foucault describes, signification was based on the principle of representation rather than that of resemblance. Although still the ultimate basis for juxtaposition, similitude was no longer conceived as situated in the world, but rather in the faculty of understanding where the imagination continued to group elements in terms of similarity. The new epistemological structure allowed for the selection and privileging of a single element in the group as a fixed point of departure for a qualitative comparison of order. One element was perceived as the simplest and set up as the norm against which to compare the other elements of the group. What were now important were identities and differences.

Foucault explains that in the Classical system:

The activity of the mind . . . no longer consist[s] in drawing things together, in setting out on a quest for everything that might reveal some sort of kinship, attraction, or secretly shared nature within them, but, on the contrary, in discriminating, (55)

in imposing on cognition the primary task of seeking difference. The differences between things that were previously disregarded became visible in the newer way of looking at the world.

Since knowledge was now something which lay in the
imagination rather than in the world, signs were also intellectual in nature. Foucault notes that in the previous episteme, signs were things that resembled other things; now they were ideas of things (word images of ideas) that represented (made present again) ideas of other things (psychological images of things in the world) (63). Before, both the sign and its referent retained their meaning because they shared the same meaning. Now, since only one idea could be entertained at any one time, the signifying idea replaced the signified idea in "representing" it, but was itself void of content, having no function other than that of representation. The idea of the word, transparent, was subsumed to the concept of the thing, and the concept of the thing was seen to be subsumed by the thing itself. All representations were interconnected in an endless network, each one taking its being from its function as a sign for something else. This interminable chain is reminiscent of that of the resemblant episteme, but it is different in that, in the earlier system, all signs pointed to one central, posited truth that put an end to the process. With the later episteme, the chain is not visible because of the perception of representations (signifiers) as the things they represent. In addition, since the signifier existed (as a signifier) only because of its representational function, signification was assumed to be always already in place. For that reason, no signification could be generated by a
conscious act (65-66). There could be

*no meaning exterior or anterior to the sign; no implicit presence of a previous discourse that must be reconstituted in order to reveal the autochthonous meaning of things. Nor, on the other hand, any act constitutive of signification or any genesis interior to consciousness. This is because there is no intermediary element, no opacity intervening between the sign and its content. . . . [A]ny analysis of signs is at the same time, and without need for further inquiry, the decipherment of what they are trying to say.*

(66)

In other words, the sign not only was understood as being the equivalent of the thing, but was also treated as if it were the thing.³

As a result, knowledge and language became identical. Foucault points out that language was no longer understood as rooted in the world but rather as a transparent representation of thought, which was considered to exist independently of language. Syntax, as a logical ordering system, lay in thought, not in language; language was merely an expression of that order. In effect, language ceased to exist as an entity and was held to be purely a function: it only represented. In the earlier episteme, metalinguistic examination of language had consisted of commentary, exegesis, and erudition, based ultimately on
the "primal Text" inscribed and hidden in Creation. Since there was no longer a primal Text to be discovered, these forms gave way to criticism or analysis of the discourse of representation. Foucault explains that:

one no longer attempts to uncover the great enigmatic statement that lies hidden beneath [the signs of discourse]; one asks how it functions: what representations it designates, what elements it cuts out and removes, how it analyses and composes, what play of substitutions enables it to accomplish its role of representation.

(79-80)

Language was questioned as to whether it expressed truly or falsely what it purported to represent and whether it was transparent or opaque in its representation. Foucault lists four ways in which criticism was manifested: (1) as a critique of words for adequacy, often resulting in a call to augment the vocabulary of language used for a designated task; (2) as an analysis of syntax and composition in terms of their representative values; (3) as an examination of figures and tropes to determine their relations with their representative content; and (4) as a critique to define the relation of language with what it represented (80-81).

Since language was important only in its capacity as a vehicle for the representation of knowledge, it was only in that functional capacity that it could be the object of analysis.
Again the visual metaphor is important in Foucault's explanation of his "Classical" episteme, which differs from the earlier one in that things are here visible, and thus knowable, in their appearance. No longer is the foreknowledge of an unseeable, essential truth necessary for knowledge; one knows what one sees. The act of representation itself, that which makes a signifier a signifier, is now the unseen (disregarded) element. What is known intellectually but not seen operatively is the fact that the signifier is not the equivalent, is not an adequate representative, of its signified referent. Knowing as seeing is taken to be a receptive activity, and the task of interpretation consists in removing any obstacles that might obstruct one's vision of the world as it can be seen.

One could say that for Foucault, the seventeenth century witnessed the emergence of a mode of knowing that was intellectual, but was not consciously so. The ability to know things in the world was considered an unquestionable, natural human capacity, requiring no effort nor tools. Language served as an instrument for consciously representing that independently existing knowledge to others, and, in its written mode, offered the possibility of storing represented knowledge outside the mind.

Foucault does not attempt, however, to account for the causes of the shift, nor does he describe the transition as
anything more than a discontinuity between two predominant, static epistemologies. His "episteme" is problematic in that it claims to represent a recovered (he subtitles his book "An Archaeology of the Human Sciences") positive structure that defines the thinking of an age. Although Foucault denies that he intended his construct to be understood as a picture of an apparently uniform, static epistemological structure, that is what it becomes in practice. 4

While in basic agreement with the time frame and general description of the two epistemologies, Timothy Reiss focuses on what he terms "classes of discourse." Foucault's "episteme" is a purely theoretical structure that orders thought and knowledge in society. In a move toward the empirical that reflects the shift described by Foucault in which discourse and knowledge became transparently intertwined, Reiss examines discourse as the material, and thus more accessible, manifestation of the episteme. He also adds a diachronic dimension to the theory by documenting a transitional period of discursive tension between what Foucault described as discontinuous epistememes, showing how one class of discourse emerged from the other. Reiss speaks of "a passage from what one might call a discursive exchange within the world to the expression of knowledge as a reasoning practice upon the world" (30). The class of discourse characterized by exchange within the world, must be located within because,
ontologically speaking, there is no outside space, no "other," no external privileged vantage point from which utterances can be made. Everything takes place within part of a whole which can be known only partially. The elements of Renaissance discourse (to quote Reiss), may . . . be available to a continuous interpretation, but they cannot be grasped as a whole from within and thereby known in the same sense as they may be by a discourse based on a practice of difference and alterity. (32)

Reiss sees a new kind of discourse eventually emerging in the sixteenth century that allows one to stand outside the world to view it and speak of it in a language apart from it. A new and different sort of partial knowledge emerges through alterity and perspective, a view created by opposing oneself to the world but limited by one's being apart from the whole. It is a knowledge that cannot only see, separate, seize, possess, and use, but can also be represented in a language that is taken to be a neutral, transparent mediator between the world and the mind. Reiss labels this class of discourse "analytico-referential," explaining that it is a discursive order . . . achieved on the premise that the 'syntactic' order of semiotic systems (particularly language) is coincident both with the logical ordering of 'reason' and with the structural organization of a world given as
exterior to both these orders. (31)

This perception of the "logical identity" of world and mind with discourse permits one to operate on the premise that concepts can adequately "represent objects in the world" and that words can adequately "represent those concepts" (31). In such an epistemology, however, the enunciator is unself-conscious, not aware that the mind, by manipulating language, is imposing order on the world. Reiss notes that an "awareness within discourse of the individual's 'enunciative responsibility' is an indication that the analytico-referential discourse is as yet but emergent, and still far from dominance" (34). It is precisely such an awareness that Góngora's "Soledades" demand of their readers, and in the seventeenth century, that awareness was especially disturbing to those who assumed that meaning lies on the other side of language.

The idea of a time of tension during the transition between periods of two different dominant epistemes or classes of discourse is the principal subject of Richard Waswo's Language and Meaning in the Renaissance. He begins by describing a second discontinuity in the history of epistemology, a shift from referential to relational semantics. Waswo does not see a clear epochal connection with this second discontinuity; indeed, he believes that the transition is still struggling to take place (22). He maintains, however, that attempts to make the same change occurred in the earlier transitional period, but were
thwarted by the inability of Renaissance theorists to escape from referential terminology. Waswo's focus on semantics in the three epistemologies differs from Reiss and Foucault. While Foucault treats invisible ordering structures, and Reiss examines visible representations of ordering structures, Waswo is interested in the structuring phenomenon of interpretation on the part of a receiver/perceiver of language, and in Renaissance theorists' awareness of meaning as that kind of constitutive activity.

Waswo employs the distinction between signification and meaning which he says came into being with the second shift he describes. In using the term "referential," he includes both Foucauldian epistememes, for in both the resemblant and the representational systems words refer to something other than language for their meaning: either to things in the world or to concepts in the imagination. For Waswo, this shift changes "nothing at the level of semantic theory, where words are still presumed to mean by referring to whatever lies over the dualistic divide" (35). In "relational," non-referential semantics, most clearly articulated by Saussure in the early twentieth century, language shifts from being a thing with an outside referent to being an activity in which words derive their meaning from their use value in relation with other words. Waswo defines meaning as:

the act of construing the multiple relations of
the linguistic units that compose the utterance
or text in terms of the multiple relations that
utterance or text may be perceived to have with
others— that is, in the context in which the
interpreter both finds and places it. (15)

Language can thus no longer be seen as the outward form of

a content independent of it (21), as a transparent mediator
between world and reason; it now is an activity in which
its interpreters construct that world. The result is,
according to Waswo, a new vision of ourselves and of the
world and a redefinition of knowledge and truth, not as
being found somewhere "beyond or above or beneath language,
but as being made by the semantic activity of language"
(21).

The designation of the interpreter as the active,
self-conscious creator of meaning eliminates the
possibility of a single method or a single result of
interpretation. Language, long seen as capable of
accurately representing a reality that had an independent
existence, no longer possesses the certainty that it
enjoyed in that respect. As Waswo points out, it is not
that the speakers or interpreters lose control but rather
gain more control of the world (14). Meaning and order, no
longer seen as determined by an authority beyond the world
or beyond language, is instead socially determined by
ordinary users of the language. When the multiplicity of
possible meanings becomes evident, it often results,
according to Waswo, in "considerable hostility and fear" (14). And when there is a "deliberate and public violation of a linguistic taboo," it is perceived as "a direct assault not on issues or policies, or even individuals, but on the whole system of order in the society, the entire form of its life" (26-27). The Góngoran polemic in Golden Age Spain that resulted in charges of heresy, accusations of racial impurity, and intimations of homosexuality—each of which was believed to be detrimental to the perceived "system of order" and the "form of life" of society—was anchored in controversy over polysemy and the failure (or refusal) of his poetic language to adequately represent to the understanding the imaginative concepts of the world.

The difference between relational semantics and both of the referential epistemologies can also be demonstrated by a continuation of the visual metaphor of knowing that Foucault applied. In his first episteme, knowing is equated with "seeing through" appearances to discover the underlying hidden resemblances. For the Renaissance interpreter, things are not what they seem to be at first sight; they are only signs that point to the truth that lies elsewhere. In the second structure, knowing is equated with a receptive seeing. Things are what they are on a material level, and as such they can be perceived. It is not necessary to interpret further what one sees; one must merely perceive correctly. With relational semantics, knowing is seeing in the sense of an active visualization.
Things are what they are seen to be, what they are construed (interpreted) to be by the observer. Although interpretation is common to both the Renaissance system and relational semantics, the two epistemologies are fundamentally different. The referential knower perceives him/herself as discovering meaning. The relational interpreter, on the other hand, is self-aware that he/she is constructing meaning. This point of difference will be important to keep in mind in the analysis of critical writings in the chapter that follows.

So far, the focus of this chapter has been epistemological changes in the seventeenth century. Now I would like to address Arnold Hauser's discussion of one of the artistic manifestations of that shift. Hauser describes the mannerist style of art, placing it in the transitional period between the Renaissance classical style and the Baroque style of painting, and he is careful to point out that all three of these styles coexisted for a while (19). Hauser offers an epistemological basis for the differences in style that can be accounted for by Foucault's description, but he concentrates on the phenomenon of Mannerism.

Mannerism is characterized by Hauser as a revolt against the classical vision of the universe, a synthesis of essences in balance and harmony that is complete in itself. The classical work of art is microcosmic in its completion:
The threads connecting it with external reality seem to have been broken; all those that run through its texture are connected with each other and form a self-contained unity complete in itself. Nothing in it points to anything outside it, and there is no indication of anything that is missing or needs to be added. (25)

The concepts of microcosmic resemblance, completion, and essences correspond to Foucault's resemblant episteme. The artist's disregard (not seeing) of elements that do not point to a unity is consistent with the metaphor of knowledge as vision. Furthermore, the principles according to which the Renaissance classical artist eliminated those elements that might be perceived to disrupt classical order depended on the artist's knowledge of ancient sources through *eruditio* or *traditio*. The commentaries of classical authorities defined the essential that had been discovered in the primal Text of the world and presented them as ideas that were understood as being universally valid.

The aim of the mannerist artist, according to Hauser, was to put into doubt the validity of things that were held to be objectively "natural" (29). For the mannerist, "the essence of things [is] unstable and inconstant and all is in a state of flux and perpetual change" (276). The mannerist poet takes it as his task to make evident that instability. One of the characteristics of mannerist
poetry is the use of multiple and difficult metaphors in order to detach language from things. The use of metaphors reflected

a sense of perpetual flux and transition, a sense of impermanence so strong that it is hardly possible to do more than establish the continually shifting relations between all things. Metaphorism, being directed, not to things themselves, but to the involved network of relations between them, is the only way of doing justice to the unstable, dynamic nature of a reality perpetually clothing itself in new forms.

(295)

According to Hauser, metaphorism is grounded in the philosophical concept of relationism in which all is seen as "comparable to and replaceable by everything else" (295). Again, this concept is reminiscent of Foucault's resemblant episteme. The difference, however, is that metaphorism is the principle of resemblance carried to its logical consequence in the absence of the central organizing principle. There is no center around which the world is ordered, nor firm ground upon which to construct a system of order. The ultimate guarantor of meaning, the ultimate resembled thing that puts an end to endless journeys through all things in search of meaning, is missing. God no longer serves that function for the mannerist. Thus
nothing is centred in itself and . . . there is no fixed centre anywhere. Everything can be partially explained by everything else, but nothing can ever be completely explained by anything. Everything is a cipher; but all the symbols in the secret code refer only to other symbols. (295)

In mannerist discourse language is liberated. Hauser explains:

As every description is replaceable by another, and the latter is not necessarily better or more accurate, the result is a feeling of being unfettered by the means of expression, a sense of the free and unhampered exchangeability of symbols, and finally of being on a slippery slope, guided by the affinities of words rather than of things. Such a condition virtually implies the end of the dominance of reason, linguistic logic, and all external disciplines to which the poet might be prepared to submit.

(295-296)

Unlike the analytico-referential discourse of the "representative" epistemology, which must become transparent by taking on the form of the concepts it represents, language for the mannerist is more than merely a representative function. While most of Hauser's assessment of mannerist art is applicable to the
"Soledades," his remark about "the end of the dominance of reason" is not. The "slippery slope" merely challenges the interpreter's assumptions about how things are known and necessitates a different kind of reason. Not only is the language of the "Soledades" freed from the bondage to the intellectual concept to which the representative epistemology condemns it; it also inverts that relationship. Concepts become patently dependent on words for their existence. In my reading of Góngora's "Soledades," it will be evident that this liberation of language was what Góngora accomplished. My discussion of the criticism of four of his adversaries will also show that the "slippery slope" of linguistic uncertainty Hauser describes was what received their most hostile criticism.

The above described theories of Foucault, Reiss, Waswo, and Hauser, provide a point of departure for entering upon the task of reading both Góngora and his critics. An idea of the unsettled epistemological situation in the first few decades of the seventeenth century in Europe provides a contextual perspective for examining the appearance of both Góngora's "Soledades" and the vicious reaction they provoked. It was an age in which many of his readers still looked to Greek and Roman authorities for explanation of how language was supposed to function although the older idea of language was based on an epistemology different from their own. The Spanish critics looked at language, not to question language
itself, but to question its user's competency; the function and adequacy of language in representing the imagined concepts of the world was unquestionable. Their writings focus on the use of the language: the adequacy of the words chosen, syntax, figures, and the nature of linguistic representation.

Into this literary world in which the newer epistemology was firmly but not yet fully established, came the poetry of Góngora. Góngora's poetic language is not the transparent function Reiss described as representing adequately and simultaneously both thought and the world. His cultismos by their strangeness call attention to themselves as words rather than invisibly pointing to a concept they represent. The syntactical distortions and imported grammatical constructions also serve to make Góngora's language opaque, causing the interpreter to pause and examine the structure of the utterance. The "metáforas de metáforas" that Lope de Vega attacked (qtd. in Collard 36) present further obstacles to arriving at a signified meaning, while Góngora's play with polysemy and ambiguity provides false clues for interpretation, thus increasing the opacity of his language. He simply did not use language to represent concepts clearly.

Góngora's use of language questioned the very nature of language itself, which implied two very serious consequences. First, since he used language for purposes other than those of representing concepts clearly to the
understanding, the role of interpretation became very important, thus putting into question knowledge as being universally valid. And second, because his use of language implied that language was incapable of adequately representing to the understanding what was taken to be an adequate concept of the world, then the conceptual basis for understanding of the world and consequently all knowledge were placed in doubt. The chapter that follows treats the reactions of some of his critics to that perceived threat.
Notes

1 José Antonio Maravall cites depopulation, inflation, "monetary confusion," the laws of "pureza de sangre" as social and economic problems of the time (10). Elias L. Rivers also mentions the decline of Spanish military power and social disintegration as other changes in the epoch.

2 The term "Classical" is used by Foucault, as it is in French literary history, to designate the period that followed the "Renaissance." It should not be confused with the Roman and Greek Classical periods.

3 Walter J. Ong traces the origin of the merger of thing and sign in written language to the change of a society from predominantly oral to literate. For him, as writing becomes interiorized, the written representation of the word is taken to be the word itself, that is, is taken to be a sign of not the word but the word's referent, and language, now materially visible, becomes invisible in cognition. Writing, which Ong calls "a particularly preemptive and imperialist activity that tends to assimilate other things to itself" (12), co-opts language.

4 Foucault explains:

   It was not my intention, on the basis of a particular type of knowledge or body of ideas, to draw up a picture of a period, or to reconstitute the spirit of a century. What I wished to do was to present, side by side, a definite number of elements: the knowledge of living beings, the
knowledge of the laws of language, and the
knowledge of economic facts, and to relate them
to the philosophical discourse that was
contemporary with them during a period extending
from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.
(x)
Chapter 2

Góngora's Critics: An Indictment of Obscurity

Differences in epistemological assumptions were, in large part, the basis for the attacks on Góngora's "Soledades." A reading of several of the more theoretical documents of the literary debate over the poem, the project of this chapter, establishes a foundation for demonstrating that thesis. By showing differences between the epistemological assumptions of the polemicists, and even, in some cases, inconsistencies within the writings of a single critic, my analysis portrays an unsettled and confused epoch of epistemological transition. Although the writings examined are primarily founded on the principle of representation described by Foucault, some of them will be shown to exhibit discursive remnants of the unitive, resemblance-based epistemology.

The most obvious source of evidence concerning basic assumptions occurs in statements about the nature of knowledge, meaning, and language. Although the four writers I have chosen to analyze--Lope de Vega, Francisco de Quevedo, Francisco Cascales, and Juan de Jáuregui--treat mainly language, their presuppositions about how language relates to knowledge and meaning permit one to infer their epistemological assumptions. The statements of these writers, whom I chose for their position as central figures

35
in the seventeenth-century controversy, display different degrees of analysis in approaching Góngora's poems, and I have arranged them according to the profundity of their analysis. Lope de Vega, the least theoretical of the four, also appears to be the writer who remains closest to the resemblant epistemology. While the criticism of Francisco de Quevedo reveals a more profound reflection on the problematic poems, it is slight in quantity. Neither Lope nor Quevedo wrote extensively of their theoretical ideas on poetry. Francisco Cascales and Juan de Jáuregui, however, authored general treatises on poetics in addition to their specific criticism of Góngora. Cascales' Tablas Poéticas and Jáuregui's Discurso poético lay out in an orderly fashion their authors' theoretical understanding of poetic language. Jáuregui's Antídoto contra la pestilente poesía de las "Soledades" is important both for the detailed analysis of the controversial poem it presents and for the reaction it provoked among Góngora's defenders.

Góngora's most notable opponent was Lope de Vega, who engaged him in an ongoing war that began with their early mutual sniping in the romanceros of the late 1580's (Orozco ch. 2) and ended with Lope's death in 1635, eight years after that of Góngora.1 Orozco Díaz convincingly attributes much of the rivalry to Lope's jealousy of the acceptance and prestige Góngora achieved in the genre of lyric poetry among significant courtiers. The writings I examine here, three letters, contain attacks of a personal
but they also offer significant literary criticism.

The "Carta de un amigo de don Luis de Góngora que le escribió acerca de sus 'Soledades'" is addressed directly to Góngora, and appeared at Court in 1615 while the "Soledades" were being circulated there in manuscript form by Andrés de Mendoza. Although written anonymously, the letter is generally attributed to Lope or to a member (or members) of his politico-poetical camp (Millé 1188, Orozco Díaz 172). The direct attacks on the poem are few; rather, the stricture is veiled as a friendly warning to Góngora that Mendoza was circulating "un cuaderno de versos desiguales y consonancias erráticas" at the Spanish Court, claiming that they were written by Góngora (198). Lope assumes the posture that Góngora, if indeed he had written the verses, could not have been serious and must have invented the "jerigonza" merely as a joke to confuse ("rematar el seso de") Mendoza.

The topic of language arises only briefly when Lope imputes to Góngora a converso background, reporting that "se cree que V. m. no ha participado de la gracia de Pentecostés" (169). The absence of the Pentecostal grace, the ability to speak in various languages in such a way that all could understand (Acts 2, 4-6), in addition to hinting that Góngora had not truly received the sacrament of Confirmation, suggests that he was indeed writing in various foreign languages. Not having received the gift, however, he wrote works that were not intelligible to his
readers. A further contention that Góngora has been struck by some "ramalazo de la desdicha de Babel" (169), a reference to the Genesis account of the confusion of tongues (11, 1-9), gains more importance when it is taken up by Góngora in his reply and is further elaborated by Lope in the second letter treated below.

The appeal to authority is also indirect. Lope condemns the poems for being neither useful, honorable nor delightful, but does not mention the source of those criteria. The accusation of "novedad" places Góngora in the camp of the "moderns" in the ancient vs. modern controversy discussed by Collard (53-56) and accuses him of violating traditional precepts without being specific.

Lope's second letter, "Respuesta a las cartas de don Luis de Góngora y de don Antonio de las Infantas," was a much longer and more considered piece, written in response to Góngora's defense of his poem and his poetics, and to an apology written by an ally of his. The letter purports Lope's defense of "un caballero soldado amigo" (238) who he claims wrote the first letter and who, now in Italy, cannot defend himself against his detractors. In the "Respuesta," Lope attacks more substantially, discussing language and censuring Góngora's conceptos. Here, again, Lope does not use preceptive classical references although he does mention a few exemplary authors.

The "Respuesta" offers more insight into Lope's ideas on language than does his first letter. The original
reference to a "ramalazo de la desdicha de Babel" had given Gongora occasion to defend his diction as Castillian and not a polyglot mixture. He explained that the biblical confusion of tongues had not been one in which a profusion of different languages had confounded the people, but rather it was within their own language that they were unable to understand the significance of words, "tomando piedra por agua y agua por piedra" ("Carta" 173). Neither the signifying language nor the signified object had changed, only the connection between them, the third element in the Renaissance ternary conception of the sign. Shifting from the historical cause of the confusion at Babel to the confusion claimed by certain of his readers, Gongora treats understanding as an act, maintaining that the problem lies in the ill will of those who cannot understand: "las malicias de las voluntades en su mismo lenguaje hallan confusión por parte del sujeto inficionado con ellas" (173).

Lope's reply is also concerned with understanding. He does not focus on the cause of Babel, but rather on the result, equating the problem between Gongora and his listeners or readers to the confusion of tongues in which "entendiendo los unos que decían una cosa, los segundos entendiesen otra" ("Respuesta" 241). Lope's use of the word "cosa" here certainly can not be interpreted to eliminate the possibility of conceptual signs; "thing" is a versatile word that can refer to thing, sign, or conceptual
referent, and Lope did not seem to be practicing the niceties of philosophical discourse. It is thus impossible at this point to determine much about Lope's understanding of signification. Had he offered an explanation of the breakdown of understanding at Babel, his vision of the sign would perhaps be clearer. One can only determine from this passage that, in the situation he describes, the signifier is universal, but there are two different signifieds that are understood, one by the speaker, the other by the interpreter.

Since the objective to be understood is the concepto, a mental image, it can be said that, for Lope, signification is located in the intellect and not in the world. Lope never gives a clear definition of the concepto, but by reading closely passages in this second letter, one can determine more about his perception of it. He appears to be using "concepto" here in the sense of the mental signifier of the signified thing-in-the-world, similarly to that described by Saussure in his model of the linguistic sign (66). In 1596, Alonso López Pinciano had defined the concepto as "una imagen que de la cosa el entendimiento forma dentro de sí" (qtd. in d'Ors 186), and Sebastián de Covarrubias, in 1611, explained it as "El discurso hecho en el entendimiento y después ejecutado, o con la lenguna [sic] o con la pluma" (345).2

This idea of the concepto as a pre-linguistic, intellectual image of things that exist beyond thought is
evidently held by Lope also. In attacking the erudition and knowledge of other languages of which Gongora had boasted in his "Carta en respuesta," Lope states that being able to write in a second language is extremely difficult, so difficult, he maintains, that "pocos o ninguno han escrito en lengua ajena conceptos propios que merezcan nombre de Poema, o trabajo de importancia" (242). Here it can be inferred that Lope holds the concepto to be something which exists prior to its expression in language, if he believes that it can be expressed in more than one tongue, or if its expression can be blocked by an inadequate command of the language. Later, in criticizing Italian poetry, Lope claims that the Italians are envious of the Spanish language

por la excelencia de haber hallado cómo decir en una redondilla un concepto, ya a veces más sin necesidad de otra para acabar de explicarle; y por haber adelantado tanto la perfección de los versos endecasílabos después que se usan en España, que casi cada uno construyéndole sin dependencia de otro hace sentido, y explica enteramente un concepto . . . . (244)

Lope's clause, "cómo decir en una redondilla un concepto," appears to agree with Covarrubias' description of the concepto as preexisting independently of language, as does the idea of the concepto as something that is to be explained by language.
In the next passages, Lope notes that Góngora claims to be imitating Latin grammatical structure, but that the writings of Virgil and Cicero (in real Latin) never caused similar confusion (244-245). For Lope, those acceptable Latin authors whose works could be considered obscure "escribieron tan misteriosos sus conceptos que se les puede perdonar la oscuridad y confusión" (245). Lope, then, recognizes two ways of achieving obscurity with conceptos, one acceptable and one unacceptable. He explains that in the intricate and problematic ("escabrosas") "Soledades" the "misterios" which Góngora obscures are so superficial that "entendiendo todos lo que quieren decir, ninguno entiende lo que dicen" (245). Góngora's conceptos are easily penetrable; what is difficult is arriving at them. At this point, one can say that Lope recognizes a separate existence between language and thought, and that he censures Góngora for his intricate language that obscures conceptos.

The third treatise to be examined is Lope's "Respuesta a un papel que escribió un señor de estos reinos en razón de la nueva poesía" published in 1621 but considered by Orozco Díaz to have been written in 1617 (295). While this piece is not addressed to Góngora as were the two previous letters, Góngora and his works are nevertheless the principal targets of censure, although Lope feigns admiration for his rival and disdain merely for those who imitated the "culterano" style.
Lope declares that the whole foundation of "el arte de hacer versos . . . es la filosofía, como consta de los antiguos" (137), and cites the authorities Tasso, Danielo, Vida and Horace, only one of whom is truly an "ancient", as being founded on Aristotelian aphorisms (138). Indeed, in this work he scarcely goes beyond an appeal to authority to show that Góngora's poetics are condemned by both classical and derivative Renaissance theorists. His denial that the moderns have a similar philosophical foundation indicates his refusal to recognize the existence of a valid theoretical intention on the part of the practitioners of the nueva poesía.

As in the letter treated above, here Lope distinguishes between two types of obscurity, only one of which is admissible, but there is no analytical explanation of the distinction, only the citation of classical condemnation or approval of the two forms. The unacceptable version is, of course, exemplified by Góngora's poetic language. Lope points to Góngora's project of "enriquecer el arte y aun la lengua con tales exornaciones y figuras, cuales nunca fueron imaginadas ni hasta su tiempo vistas" as the cause of the obscurity and locates the resulting difficulty in the reception of the attempt: "la dificultad está en el recibirlo" (138). This mention of the reader's role in interpretation is not followed through in an analytical fashion because Lope's analysis does not go beyond the naming and condemnation of
the vices that were censured by the ancients. Citing Aulus Gelius, Lope states that the most bothersome and culpable source of obscurity and ambiguity is the use of "new, unknown and previously unheard words" ("verba nova, incognita et inaudita") (138), but, again, he offers no examples or further explanation. He concedes, with Quintillian, that the limited use of neologisms is acceptable as long as it does not appear to be affectation (138). Other sources of confusion Lope cites are frequent syntactical transposition and the excessive use of figures and tropes, both of which are admitted by authorities, but only if they are used sparingly.

In a parenthetical insertion of just over two paragraphs, Lope identifies the acceptable type of obscurity as that dealing with certain types of thought: "En las materias graves y filosóficas confieso la breve escuridão de las sentencias" (138). He connects this obscurity with the Neoplatonic hermetic tradition's intentional concealment from the uninitiated of the powerful secrets of life and of creation. Lope cites a statement that Pico della Mirandola made to Hermolaus Barbarus: "We did not write for the vulgar, but for you and those like you" ("Vulgo non scripsimus, sed tibi et tuis similibus" (138; my translation). Lope adds that Pico spoke "admirablemente," thus indicating that this type of obscurity goes beyond being merely admissible; it is desirable.
Lope further illustrates the validity of this principle of concealment of inner mysteries of great value with two examples from antiquity; "Y acuérdate de los silenos de Alcibiades: Erant enim simulacra, por lo exterior fieræ y hórrida; pero con deidad intrinseca" (138). This reference is to a passage from Plato’s Symposium in which Alcibiades, in praising Socrates, compares him to statues of Silenus, which, "when their two halves are pulled open, they are found to contain images of gods" (219). Socrates is like the satyr statues, Alcibiades states, in that with lovers he outwardly feigns stupidity and ignorance. "Is this not like a Silenus?" Alcibiades asks, and he answers:

Exactly. It is an outward casing he wears, similarly to the sculptured Silenus. But if you opened his inside, you cannot imagine how full he is . . . of sobriety. . . . Whether anyone else has caught him in a serious moment and opened him, and seen the images inside, I know not; but I saw them one day, and thought them so divine and golden, so perfectly fair and wondrous . . . (223)

A third instance of comparison is even more appropriate to Lope’s intention in that it is concerned with discourse. Alcibiades continues:

For there is a point I omitted when I began—how his talk most of all resembles the Silenuses that
are made to open. If you chose to listen to Socrates' discourses you would feel them at first to be quite ridiculous; on the outside they are clothed with such absurd words and phrases—all, of course, the hide of a mocking satyr. . . . Anyone inexpert and thoughtless might laugh his speeches to scorn. But when these are opened, and you obtain a fresh view of them by getting inside, first of all you will discover that they are the only speeches which have any sense in them; and secondly, that none are so divine, so rich in images of virtue . . . . (239)

As to whether Lope was referring simply to the first passage quoted above, which would be sufficient to illustrate his intention, or whether he had in mind the whole of Alcibiades' reference to the Silenus statues, one cannot determine. The points to be taken are that there are hidden within things divine natures or virtues, and that it is acceptable to refer to them in a manner that maintains or reflects their concealment.

Lope follows the Platonic reference with a Heraclitean one that has different implications: "Y acuerdase de . . . donde Heráclito dijo que estaba escondida la verdad" (138). Heraclitus, who was given the epithet, "the obscure," by the Greeks on account of his difficult style (Kirk 183), held that the unity of things was hidden beneath the surface (192). Wilbur and Allen explain that,
For Heraclitus, the nature of the truth is not obvious; indeed, it can only be expressed in terms of metaphor, paradox, and riddle. . . .

The nature of truth is such that language cannot express it directly, but only by "giving a sign". Such would also undoubtedly be Heraclitus' explanation of the "dark" character of many of his own pronouncements. (65-66)

The reference to Heraclitus tells what ultimately underlies appearances: the truth that all things are one. With Heraclitus, however, the truth is hidden not so much deliberately, but because there can be no adequate linguistic expression of it, only a parallel discourse that hints at it. One may conclude, then, that for Lope obscurity is not only desirable in order to keep the truth hidden from those unworthy of it, but also acceptable because obscure references to truth are inevitable; discourse is incapable of anything more than insinuating truth.

Further evidence for Lope's hermetic leanings are abundant in his literary production. The use of astrological inclinations and influences in his comedias, the role of the virtues of precious stones and of plants as important clues to interpreting his plots and the actions of his characters, the references to magic, and the entire Arcadia (as Frederick A. DeArmas has shown) all attest to a great familiarity with the secret philosophy. Further,
Dámaso Alonso has drawn attention to the fact that the famous sonnet which first appeared in 1613 in *La dama bobo*, "La calidad elementar resiste," (and which Lope considered so important as to publish it in three different works and to explicate it twice) is based on Pico della Mirandola’s *Heptaplus* (*Poesia* 457-459). \(^5\) Lope admits as much in his explication, \(^6\) but whether his literary use of hermetic Neoplatonism can be taken to demonstrate a personal embrace of it is impossible to know for certain. \(^7\)

The following passage from Lope’s "Papel" would seem to indicate a hermetic (resemblant) approach to interpretation, but since it is employed ironically, it is difficult to ascertain how much of the statement can be taken as assertion:

> Platon dijo que todas las ciencias humanas y divinas se incluyeron en el poema de Homero; puede ser que aquí suceda lo mismo, y que de faltar Platones no se ha entendido el secreto deste divino estilo. (139-140)

If the first part is interpreted as sincere, Lope accepts Plato’s statement and is thus operating on the resemblant idea that discourse is a commentary parallel to, inseparable from, and inclusive of, the primal text of the universe. Taken as irony, the second half suggests that since no one is able to interpret Gongora’s style, he has written a discourse that is not a parallel discourse, but rather a monstrosity that points to nothing beyond itself.
It is "jerigonza" because it is meaningless, which is a theoretical impossibility.

Góngora has somehow defied the order of the universe. Lope maintains that Góngora and his followers, "con . . . transposiciones, cuatro preceptos y seis voces latinas ó frasis enfáticas, se hallan levantados adonde ellos mismos no se conocen, ni aun sé si se entienden" (138). They have succeeded in destroying the referential relationship that language has with the world and with thought.

The picture of Lope's ideas on language and his ideas about obscurity both in language and in the concept remains vague. While his view of language as subsequent to thought and his use of the word "concepto" would seem to indicate an intellectual dimension that exists only in the analytico-referential epistemology, the hermetical nature of his defense of conceptual obscurity points toward a resemblant understanding of the world. That Lope's ideas of knowledge and language would include characteristics of both epistemologies is not surprising in an era of epistemological transition. It is even more understandable if one accepts Dámaso Alonso's assessment that "La actividad filosófica de Lope era, pues, no nos engañemos, bien modesta: la de un simple resumidor" (Poesía 457). It seems only fair to Lope, however, to remember that analysis was not characteristic of the resemblant epistemology to which he, at least in part, belonged.

An author who was analytic in his limited body of
criticism of Góngora was Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas, one of the most prominent writers in seventeenth-century Spanish letters, and perhaps the most vitriolic. Although he, like Lope, directed many burlesque and satirical verses against Góngora, both personally and in condemnation of his poetry, they yield relatively little information about his epistemological assumptions. Quevedo's writing referential to Góngora's poetry is more often satirical hyperbole of Góngora's stylistic exaggerations than rational exposition of what he saw as defects. In the satire "Aguja de navegar cultas" that circulated in manuscript form before being published in 1631 (Martínez Arancón 75n2; Blecua 339n), appears the "Receta para hacer Soledades en un día," a catalogue of Góngora's cultismos. Quevedo's technique in the poem consists of the accumulation of Gongoran diction, almost without comment. In the sonnet "¿Qué captas nocturnal en tus canciones," however, Quevedo exaggerates the use of neologism in attacking Góngora personally:

\[
\begin{align*}
tu forastereidad es tan eximia, 
quie te ha de detractar el que te rumia, 
pues ructas viscerable cacochimia.
\text{Farmacophorolando como numia,} 
\text{si estomachabundancia das tan nimia,}
\text{metamorphoseando el Arcadumia.} \text{ (Artigas 374)}
\end{align*}
\]

As with Lope, there is no analytical exposition. The satire demonstrates that Quevedo has read Góngora closely, but his assumption in writing is that the Córdoban's
stylistic exaggeration is self-evidently ridiculous and necessitates no further commentary.

In the romance, "¡Poeta de oh qué lindico!," Quevedo does offer some criticism of Gongora's use of words, calling him "verdugo de los vocablos, / que a puras vueltas de cuerda / los hace que digan algo" (Martinez Arancón 93-94). There are clues to Quevedo's idea of the nature of language in the image of the verdugo and his instruments. The "verdugo," according to Covarrubias, was "El ministro de justicia que ejecuta las penas de muerte, mutilación de miembro, azotes, vergüenza, tormento" (1001). In addition, a military verdugo was called "maestro de altas obras, porque el arrocar y descabeçar y dar tratos de cuerda, se hace en alto porque todos lo vean" (1001-1002).

Two possible significations of "vueltas de cuerda" allow for two interpretations of the indictment. If "vueltas" signifies "repetitions," then the cuerda is a whip, and Gongora is accused of forcing the words to reveal things they do not wish to in the same way that a torturer forces his victim to divulge information. The complaint, then, is that Gongora uses words in such a way as to force them into signifying concepts that they do not ordinarily signify. (That Quevedo sees words as signifiers of concepts and not of things is made clear in his remarks on decorum that are discussed below.)

If, however, "vueltas" signifies "turns" or "loops," then the image is that of a hangman's noose, a complicated
knot turned round upon itself, much like Góngora's syntactical structures. The noose used by the poet (violent hyperbaton) does violence to words, forcing out significance by "ex-pression" ("exprimir"). However, since the executioner's function is to kill, the only possible "algo" that the poet can squeeze out is the "nada" of death. And if Góngora kills the meaning of words (separates them from their proper referent) by syntactical misplacement, then his language does not adopt the form that occurs on the level of thought. His use thus denies the principle of the analytical epistemology that language has no syntax of its own and receives its form from the syntax of the thought that it embodies.

Quevedo's most theoretical treatment of culterano poetry does not occur in his satire but in the letter in which he dedicates his edition of the poetic works of Fray Luis de León to the Conde-Duque de Olivares in 1631, four years after Góngora's death. One of only two statements of Quevedo's poetics (Blecua 8), the dedication begins with praise for Fray Luis' poetry as an example of clear and decorous writing. From that point of departure, Quevedo wastes no time in turning his attention to poetry that does not conform to classical stylistic prescriptions. He writes of Fray Luis' work:

Todo su estilo con majestad estudiada es decente a lo magnifico de la sentencia, que ni ambiciosa se descubre fuera del cuerpo de la oracion, ni
In the second of the two abuses of stylistic propriety he cites, the concept ("sentencia") is lost in confusing mannerisms and in the inundation of exotic words. If language is considered capable of preventing the transmission of the concept to the receiver's understanding—either by the use of figures or by the use of words that do not indicate a signification intelligible to the reader—then the concept is an entity that exists independently of language.

In Quevedo's view, however, language in discourse is not independent of the concept. In order for an author to achieve adequate representation of concepts, language must be made appropriate to the concept in the etymological sense of "belonging to" or "being the property of." Only through this co-option can language function transparently. Stylistic propriety, the variation of style for the purpose of conforming language to different kinds of concepts, is the necessary means of achieving clarity in representation. Quevedo continues, "La locución esclarecida hace tratables los retiramientos de las ideas, y da luz a lo escondido y ciego de los conceptos" (97). A return to the metaphor of vision for understanding is particularly helpful for interpreting this passage, since the words "esclarecida," "luz," "escondido," and "ciego" all relate to vision.
Discourse that is made transparent—that is, discourse which has been so informed by its conceptual referent that only the concept (and not the language) is "visible"—makes the gaps ("retiramientos") between concepts ("ideas") and their referents (things) not only visible but palpable. It also makes visible ("da luz a") what is hidden ("lo escondido") and what is unseeable ("lo ciego") in the concept, that is, the inadequacies of the concept to immediately and faithfully represent its referent. Any obscurity should lie in the concept itself and its referent in the world. There should be no space between language and concept if the language is transparent as it should be.¹³

Quevedo carefully validates his theorizing by placing it within the classical tradition:

Esto mandaron con imperio los que escribieron artes de poesía, y escribieron desta suerte los que tienen el imperio de los poemas. Y en todas lenguas aquellos solos merecieron aclamación universal, que dieron luz a lo oscuro, y facilidad a lo dificultoso . . . . (97-98)

Having gained more authority by this subsumptive act, he returns to his theoretical analysis, adding to his knowledge/vision metaphor by stating that "oscurecer lo claro, es borrar, y no escribir . . . ." (98). I take "lo claro" here to mean "the obvious" (that which is clearly seen), rather than "the transparent" (that which is seen
through clearly), because of the similar use of "lo oscuro" and "lo dificultoso" in the previous clause, quoted above. Obscuring one's "vision" of a concept that is by nature obvious is the equivalent of erasing, since the purpose of writing is to make concepts visible by putting them into language. The reference to "lo claro" indicates thoughts that are not obscure, namely those concepts which are perceived as adequately and immediately representing their referent in the world. To impede arriving at such a concept by using language that does not equally represent the concept is to erase what is already legibly written, the connection between concept and thing in the world.

The remainder of the dedication consists primarily of citations of Greek and Latin writers of treatises on poetics and rhetoric pertinent to Quevedo's condemnation of stylistic obscurity. The passage examined above, however, is sufficient to establish that his fundamental assumptions about language were more thoroughly reasoned than Lope's and that they are clearly identifiable with the analytico-referential epistemology. His statements on stylistic propriety reveal a vision of the linguistic sign as binary, and his idea of the concepto is that of the conceptual element of the sign. He locates his criticism of culterano poets not in the obscure concept but in the severance or attenuation of the link between word and concept within the sign. Although his writing is not an analytical exposition of poetic theory, it presents the fruits of clear and
consistent analysis.

The humanist author, Francisco Cascales, offers both an attack on Góngora’s poetry and a systematic account of poetic theory. The censure occurs in his Cartas filológicas (published in 1634, but written earlier), a collection of thirty letters on various topics organized into three “décadas.” The last three letters of the first decade are of interest to this study as they deal directly with Góngora’s "Polifemo" and "Soledades." The Tablas poéticas, written in 1604 and published in 1617, are the first Spanish treatment of poetics that fuses "plena y conscientemente" Aristotelian theoretical and Horatian practical precepts (Brancaforte x). I will begin by examining Cascales’ attack on the poems, and will later employ the Tablas poéticas to interpret his understanding of the nature of language.

Written not to Góngora but to the humanist poet Luis Tribaldos de Toledo, the "Epístola VIII" is entitled "Sobre la obscuridad del ‘Polifemo’ y ‘Soledades’ de Don Luis de Góngora." Cascales begins with an anecdote suggesting that Góngora, on whom he lavishes praise, is merely toying with his fellow poets and is solely interested in demonstrating his poetic prowess (177). After establishing that obscurity is "absolutely vicious" by citing Cicero and Quintilian (179), Cascales asks:

¿Qué otra cosa nos dan el Polifemo y Soledades y otros poemas semejantes, sino palabras
The wording of the question reveals an assumption of natural laws underlying language and its use. Just as the English term "upside down" assumes a prior correct position, so does the word "trastornadas." Cascales' definition of "catachresis"—"una abusión de la propia significación del nombre" (Tablas poéticas 106-107)—refers to a signification that is proper to a word, implying that words have, as a property, a given signification. It also states that catachresis is an act that violates that aprioristic situation. Further, he describes Gongora's metaphors as "licenciosas," thus labelling them as disregarding some unspecified rule or precept. Lastly, he indicates that Gongora's tropes are not "legítimos," that is, not allowed by law.

This preoccupation with legality points to an unnamed and unquestionable power outside of language as author of the laws by which meaning—the fixed relation between word as signifier and its signification—was guaranteed. It appears, however, that the reference is no more than a remnant of the metadiscourse of the resemblant epistemology since Cascales, like Quevedo, places the blame for Gongora's obscurity strictly on the level of language: "Y
el mal es, que de sola la colocación de palabras y abusión de figuras nace y procede el caos de esta poesía" (181). For Cascales, it is Góngora’s syntactical innovation and highly figured language that, by causing opacity between word and concept, disrupt the natural order of things and result in chaos. He elaborates his claim, explaining that:

el velo que entenebrece los conceptos de esta fábula es sola la frasis. ¡Harta desdicha, que nos tengan amarrados al banco de la obscuridad solas palabras! Y éasas, no por ser antiguas, no por ser inauditas, no por ser ficticias, no por ser nuevas o peregrinas, sino por dos causas: la una por la confusa colocación de partes, la otra por las continuas y atrevidas metáforas, que cada una es viciosa si es atrevida, y juntas mucho más. (192-193)

It is interesting to note that Cascales does not find fault with Góngora here for his vocabulary. Indeed, as Dámaso Alonso has demonstrated, the cultismos that Góngora employed were not words as foreign to the Spanish literary tradition as were claimed at the time. The two sources of obscurity that he cites are syntactical distortion and the frequency and difficulty of metaphors. His comparison of Góngora’s poetic discourse to a veil that obscures concepts is a version of the same vision/knowledge metaphor commented on previously.

Cascales comments on the obscurity of culterano.
poetry, saying that it moves "como el lobo, que da unos pasos adelante y otros atrás, para que, así confusos, no se eche de ver el camino que lleva" (188). The wolf simile here is unusual in that the animal has valid, practical reason for hiding his tracks. Generally, Góngora’s obscurity is considered either the unintended by-product of his project of enriching the language, or, as Cascales charged, it is seen as part of a trick that Góngora is playing on his fellow poets.

Like Quevedo and Lope, Cascales finds obscurity acceptable in those cases in which it results from the reader’s ignorance and is not the fault of the author, "habiéndolo dicho dilúcida y claramente como debe" (181). His list begins with obscurity that has as its source "alguna doctrina exquisita" (190), the recondite philosophical concepto accepted by both Lope and Quevedo. Legitimate examples of secret knowledge include "los secretos de naturaleza, . . . las fábulas, . . . las historias, . . . las propiedades de plantas, animales y piedras, . . . [y] los usos y ritos de varias naciones" (181), but these are only permitted if used infrequently (190). For Cascales, then, an acceptably difficult concept is one that requires further interpretation of its referent as a sign—secrets of nature, virtues of plants, stones, and animals, exquisite doctrine—or that requires a prior knowledge—history, mythological fables. Another case of allowable obscurity occurs "cuando alguna palabra ignorada
de los hombres semidoces escurrece la oración" (190), which again points to a lack of required prior knowledge. Deliberate obscurantism is permitted "cuando queremos con ella disimular algún concepto deshonesto y torpe, porque no ofenda las orejas castas" (190-191), and also in the case of satire, when, in order to make "los viciosos tragar la reprehensión como pildora, [los poetas] la doren primero con la perfrasis intricada, y fingiendo nuevos nombres, para que quede disimulada la persona de quien hablan satíricamente" (191). All other uses are vicious and should be abhorred "como a furia del infierno" and avoided "como a peste de la poética elocución" (191).

"Epístola IX," a defense of Góngora by Francisco del Villar, and Cascales’ reply in "Epístola X" reveal little new about Cascales’ basic assumptions in regard to language. Cascales does offer there a medical explanation for Góngora’s style by proposing that, "En fin, todo esto es un humor grueso que se le ha subido a la cabeza al autor de este ateísmo y a sus sectarios, que, como humor, se ha de evaporar y resolver poco a poco en nada" (219). The reference to atheism quoted above is repeated with a description of Góngora’s poetic activity as "Volviendo a su primero caos las cosas; haciendo que ni los pensamientos se entiendan, ni las palabras se conozcan con la confusión y desorden" (220).

The charge of atheism, along with that of returning things to the chaos in which they existed before God
created order by naming them, is linked directly to the
general phraseology discussed above. These, together with
references to the secrets of nature, the properties of
plants, stones, and animals, appear to indicate an
epistemology based on similitude with God as the author of
meaning. Cascales’ view of the task of language as
transmitting independently existing thought nonetheless
definitely belongs to the second epistemology. The apparent
contradiction may have its foundation in Cascales’ concept
of poetry as a divine activity:

Que hable el poeta como docto, consióntolo y
apruébolo; y es bien que, ya por la divinidad de
la poesía, ya porque los poetas son maestros de
la filosofía y censores de la vida humana, hablen
en sublime estilo y toquen cosas arcanas y
secretas. (182)

It seems that while his linguistic theory has made the
transition from the earlier epistemology, Cascales’
poetics, taken unexamined from Aristotle and Horace, has
not.

Evidence of just such epistemological difference can
be found in Cascales’ discussions of tropes and of style in
the Tablas poéticas. The trope, which Cascales defines as
"una transición de la cosa propia a la agena, con alguna
virtud y semejanza" (104), while admitting otherness, is
based on similitude. Although he may be thinking in
analyticoreferential terms of resemblance as the basis for
concepts imagined in the understanding, Cascales employs the language of the resemblant epistemology by speaking of similarity between things rather than between intellectual elements. In discussing the metaphor as one of the four kinds of tropes (along with metonymy, irony, and synecdoche), Cascales continues referring to things:

La metáfora es translación de una cosa semejante a otra. Este tropo es tan copioso, que se estiende a todas las cosas naturales, porque ningún propio y cierto vocablo ay que no se pueda en alguna manera sacar y traer a lugar ageno. . . . [Y] hay otras infinitas metáforas que, como aya similitud dellas a la cosa propia, ilustran y hermosean la oración. (106)

The property of the metaphor that allows for the connection of all things is what Foucault describes as the universal applicability of the principle of resemblance, and what Hauser attributed to the philosophical concept of relationism (295). The fact that the trope is founded on similitude, however, does not necessitate that the affinity occur between things in the world. Whether Cascales' terminology is a confusion due to the parallel between the peculiar metasemiotic nature of the trope and the underlying assumptions of the resemblant epistemology, or whether the coincidental vocabulary points to Cascales' presuppositions about the order of the cosmos is unclear.

A third possibility is that of imprecision due to his
not having reexamined the Aristotelian and Horatian poetic theories he synthesizes in the light of the more recent linguistic theory that he embraces. As Brancaforte demonstrates, Cascales takes that theory directly from Torquato Tasso’s *Discorsi dell’Arte Poetica* in discussing the origin of differences in style (232-233n11). The dialogic format of the *Tablas* has Castalio, the teacher, quoting Tasso to Pierio, his interlocutor, explaining that style does not proceed from words, as Dante proposed:

> Los conceptos son el fin y, por consecuencia, la forma de las palabras y de las vozes. La forma, pues no debe ser ordenada en favor y gracia de la materia, ni pender de las palabras, antes al revés. Las palabras deven pender de los conceptos y tomar ley dellos. (233)

For Tasso, as for Quevedo, language must become transparently subordinate to the concept, taking on its very form in order to represent it correctly, and indeed, the similarity between their statements on style suggests that Tasso may have been the source of Quevedo’s ideas.

The argument continues with mention of resemblance:

> Las imáges deven ser semejantes a la cosa imaginada y imitada. Las palabras son imáges e imitadoras de los conceptos (como dize Aristóteles), luego las palabras deven seguir a la naturaleza de los conceptos. (234)

It is clear from these sentences that Tasso’s model of
thought and language is not based on a resemblance thought
to exist in the world but in the images of the
entendimiento. He removes the need for inference by
describing his epistemology:

ay grandíssima diferencia entre las cosas,
conceptos y palabras. Cosas son aquellas que
están fuera de nuestros ánimos y que están en sí
mismas. Conceptos son las imágines de las cosas
que se forman en nuestra alma diversamente, según
es diversa la imaginación de los hombres. Las
palabras son imágines de las imágines; quiero
dezir, aquellas que por medio del oído
representan [al?] alma los conceptos sacados de
las cosas. (234-235)

Tasso's clear exposition leaves absolutely no doubt about
the nature and locus of language's referent. It is likely,
since Cascales does distinguish between thing and concept,
that his use of "cosa" as referent in the discussion of
tropes is no more than an example of the imprecise use of
terms.

A feature of knowledge that emerges in Tasso's
explanation is the idea that concepts are transmissible.
His definition of conceptos as being "diversely" formed,
"según es diversa la imaginación de los hombres" (234-235),
establishes that they are not universally uniform, but
rather are unique products of individual imaginations.
Such an idea presupposes—and assumes to be universal—the
transmissibility of the concept. That is to say, if the concept itself is not universal, but it can be interpreted with accuracy (provided that the language is made to conform to it), then the faculty of understanding (with necessary prior knowledge) is capable of interpreting all concepts. In addition, the understanding of both the conceiver and the receiver of the concept must needs be structurally identical, that is, they must operate on universal principles of order.

With this clarification, Cascales' view of the problem of obscurity can be described more precisely. There are three sites of obscurity: in the concept itself, in the language that transmits it, and in the ignorance of the receiver's faculty of understanding. Obscurity that occurs in the concept because some truths cannot be conceptualized is unavoidable if one is to allude to those truths. Also, that difficulty due to the reader's ignorance of some prior knowledge necessary for interpretation is not the fault of the writer and exempts him from blame. In language, deliberate obscurity is acceptable if the concept is one that should be concealed for legitimate moral (to protect chaste ears and eyes) or rhetorical reasons (to satirize someone indirectly). If, however, language, which should conform transparently to the concept it represents, instead impedes or prevents transmission of the concept because of the author's efforts to beautify it, then it is to be censured. In poetry and
rhetoric, some embellishment of the language is desirable in order to teach, delight, or move the listener or reader, but when the author’s stylistic devices cover rather than adorn the concept, they are damnable.

Tasso’s brief statement of the purpose of language—"la naturaleza no nos dio la habla para otra cosa sino para significar los conceptos del ánimo" (qtd. in Cascales, Tablas 233-234)—has important implications for this study. If language functions other than to transmit concepts, then the transmissibility of the concept is jeopardized. Under such conditions, accurate transmission becomes a conscious choice rather than a natural phenomenon, and the validity of the transmitted and interpreted concept is always in question. And since transmissibility serves as the basis for the communication of knowledge, the accuracy of knowledge itself is threatened. It is therefore understandable that Góngora’s intentional linguistic obscurity (if not opacity) in the name of poetry would provoke Cascales’ accusation, cited earlier, of Góngora as "Volviendo a su primer caos las cosas; haciendo que ni los pensamientos se entiendan, ni las palabras se conozcan con la confusión y desorden" (Cartas 220).

Disorder is the central concern of Juan de Jáuregui, an author who was even more vigorous and thorough in his condemnation of the "Soledades." In 1616 he published a detailed analysis of the first "Soledad," the Antídoto contra la pestilente poesía de las Soledades, aplicado a su
Although a somewhat hastily written, emotional reaction to the poem, the Antídoto served as a catalyst for further criticism. Miguel Artigas lists sixteen authors who responded with either attacks on the Antídoto or defenses of Góngora's style, or who wrote commentaries to explain the poem (232-233). A second text, the brief "Introducción" to a collection of his own poetic works published in 1618, contains a succinct, epistemological description of the roles of thought and language in poetry. In 1624, Jáuregui published the more extensive Discurso poético: Advierte el desorden y engaño de algunos escritores, which offers a more reasoned discussion of poetics than the Antídoto. Directed not specifically against Góngora, but in censure of those among "nuestros poetas" who practiced the nueva poesía, the Discurso exposes clearly the epistemological assumptions of its author.

Jáuregui begins the Antídoto with a brief introduction in which he identifies his purpose in writing as that of dissuading Góngora from further attempts at poetry. The remainder of the book consists of his attack on the poem and is divided into forty-three numbered sections. The organization of the parts is not clear; he begins with title, plot and setting, and then goes on to address vices, seemingly at random, giving examples of such things as puns, falsehoods, stylistic inconsistencies, accentuation problems, the use of unfamiliar words and unfamiliar
meanings for familiar words, and hyperbole. Throughout are scattered brief, general comments on the obscurity of the poem.

At the beginning of his analysis, Jáuregui establishes the absence of a readily discoverable, fixed meaning as his major objection to the poem. The title, he says, is deceptive, since the protagonist is not alone, but rather finds himself surrounded by "legiones de serranas i pastores" (86). The setting is unidentified, and the plot is indefinite and without order ("concierto"). The protagonist, a "mirón" who has neither name nor history, does not do anything that would further define him or the plot. Although Gongora situates the poem temporally in spring, his descriptions of the weather indicate both summer and winter. The elevated style of the dedicatory would lead one to expect a sublime action of heroic proportions, but it refers to an ordinary hunt, a mere entertainment. All of these objections are indictments of the uncertainty of interpretation due to misleading signs for unexpected or undefined referents.

Passing from the "mala disposición de esta obra en general" (92), Jáuregui examines particulars. In parts 10 through 15, he cites passages he considers to be totally false (93). In section 10 (93), citing Gongora's reference to the North Star as the one that shines most in the sky, Jáuregui points out that other stars and planets are brighter. Pedro Díaz de Ribas explains that the star not
only is brighter from the point of view of the mariners who look to it for direction, but also that it shines most in the sense that it is visible the whole year (qtd. in Gates 93n17). Jáuregui next cites (section 11, 94) Góngora’s image, "vaga Clicie del viento" (l. 371), which he interprets as referring to a ship. He sees falsehood in that sunflowers turn toward the sun but ships face away from the wind. Díaz de Ribas justifies the figure, pointing out that "Clicie" represents a sail rather than a ship (Gates 94n18). In a third passage quoted in section 12 (94), the ocean is pictured as being so great that even the sun cannot know it all. Jáuregui complains of the impossibility of the image, and Díaz de Ribas, agreeing with his assessment but not his condemnation, calls it hyperbole (Gates 94n19). These objections (as well as the three not described here) are examples of Jáuregui’s literal reading of figurative language. He seems to experience difficulty in defining limits between figured and transparent language.

The following excerpt from section 16 reveals a great deal about Jáuregui’s ideas on language, as well as his feeling of frustration over Góngora’s obscurity. In noting that "apenas ay periodo que nos descubra enteramente el intento de su autor" (95), he indicates that, for him, the concept is transmissible, as it was for Lope, Quevedo, and Cascales. That he also shares with Cascales the same view of the concept and the site of Góngora’s obscurity is
evident in the next sentence:

Aun si allí se trataran pensamientos exquisitos i sentencias profundas, sería tolerable que dellas resultase la obscuridad; pero que diciendo puras frioneras, i hablando de gallos i gallinas, i de pan i manzanas, con otras semejantes raterías, sea tanta la maraña i la dureça de el dezir, que la palabras solas de mi lenguaje castellano materno me confundan la inteligencia, ¡por Dios que es braba fuerça de escabrosidad i bronco estilo! (96-97)

An obscure concept--one whose referent needs further interpretation--is acceptable. When the concept refers to a trifling thing or is one whose referent is something simple and ordinary, then it is intolerable that its transmission should be hidden by the tangle of "palabras solas." Jáuregui agrees with Lope in claiming that, despite Góngora's language, his message can be interpreted:

No se entienda por esto que a pesar de Vm. no entendemos quanto quiso dezir, aunque no lo dize, si bien se encuentran partes donde por largo espacio no alcança la más profunda meditación a darles fondo" (97).

Jáuregui obviously inserted this sentence to protect himself from charges of being incapable of understanding the poetry, but it contradicts what he claimed earlier. If Góngora's meaning can always be understood, then it cannot
be true that few of the sentences in the "Soledades" reveal his intention, unless Jàuregui is exaggerating his charge (which is not unlikely). In the former case, one could conclude that Jàuregui considers Góngora’s language to be obscure but not opaque, since meaning can be finally discovered, and since language cannot simultaneously transmit and prevent transmission of the concept. He asserts that it impedes but does not prevent interpretation.  

Clues as to Jàuregui’s vision of the interpretive process emerge in his complaint that "se encuentran partes donde por largo espacio no alcança la más profunda meditación a darles fondo." Ordinarily this ground or context (although it must be provided by the interpreter) is not particularly noticed and is considered to be supplied by the clear language of the text. Góngora’s style is so obscure, however, that it necessitates the self-aware participation of the interpreter in construing meaning, indicated by the verb "dar." By providing the "missing" elements necessary for understanding the text, it is the interpreter and not the author who makes the connection between language and concept. This enhanced role for the interpreter is objectionable because it shifts the locus of truth from a location beyond or beneath the language of the text to the act of interpretation; signification occurs when word is connected with its conceptual referent. The shift in task from discovering
connections to constructing them jeopardizes the idea of knowledge as a stable and permanent body of truth and returns language to the immediacy of its oral, ephemeral origins.

Francisco Fernández de Córdoba’s quotation of this passage in his response to the Antídoto differs from the manuscript edited by Eunice Joiner Gates, substituting “hallarles fondo” for “darles fondo” (Examen 416). According to Gates, Fernández was reading an earlier version of the Antídoto, which Jáuregui subsequently revised (81). Jáuregui’s decision to change the word from “find” to “give” is significant to this study in justifying my interpretation that he was conscious of the self-aware process needed to interpret the poem.

Continuing to base his critique on the theme of inconstancy, Jáuregui next addresses stylistic unevenness, citing examples of a plebeian style that run counter to what he claims was Góngora’s intention of writing heroic and grandiloquent verse (97-101). Jáuregui sees further uncertainty in the more elegant passages where Góngora not only uses new words, or familiar words with new meaning, but repeats them so frequently as to become cloying. It is interesting to note that two of the words Jáuregui cites as being repeated to the point of irritation have an important connection with the theme of his attack. The word “señas,” of which he quotes nine instances, serves to delay closure since signs are intentional displacements. They serve to
increase the gap between signifier and signified by inserting an intermediate step between them. For example, if Góngora writes "Señas diera de su arrebatamiento" (1. 749), or "lisongear de agradecidas señas" (1. 77), he is pointing out the fact that these qualities—rapture and gratitude—can be seen only by interpreting actions that are visible. By not saying directly that the protagonist is grateful or ecstatic, the poet passes on to his reader the burden of interpretation. The other word, "errante," (of which he also cites nine occurrences) signals semantically the absence of fixity that Jàuregui finds so disturbing.

Not all of Jàuregui's criticism is rooted in objections to the indeterminacy of Góngora's language, but the principle motivation and emotional energy of his attack seem to flow from that source. In his treatment of Góngora's use of "el sí y el no," Jàuregui groups without distinction several different mannerisms that Góngora employs, those using "sí" and "no," "si . . . no," and "no . . . sino," which Dámaso Alonso classified (Lengua Poética). The condemnation in the Antidoto is founded on Góngora's frequent use of them rather than on any semantic objections. Although Jàuregui is vituperative in speaking of "maldita anfibología" (117), he censures Góngora's puns not for their polysemy, but for their impropriety in the elevated style he says Góngora is trying to achieve (119-120). Góngora's hyperboles are condemned because they
surpass "todos los límites de encarecimiento" (124), and not because they are indeterminate.

The attacks become more exaggerated and passionate, however, when Jáuregui treats the inscrutibility of the poem. He reiterates his main objections in section 33 with a general condemnation of the work:

Querer ahora señalar todos los lugares obscuros, broncos y escabrosos, sería no acabar jamás; i también lo sería referir las vozes equivocas i oraciones ambiguas de esta Poesía, porque toda ella de barra a barra está quaxada de esto; . . . . (124-125)

This he follows with an exaggerated attack on ambiguity:
"Casi no tiene Vm. frasis que no se pueda entender de catorce o quince maneras" (126). Explaining that only through much hard work can poetry appear to be simple and clear, as it should be, he accuses Gongora of having written without much effort. In the "Soledades," he says, no ay cuidado si la oración va recta or corcobada, si se entiende o dexa de entender, si las palabras son humildes o soberbias, vulgares o latinas, griegas o mahometanas. En fin, ¡maldita sea de Dios la ley a que Vm. se sujetó en el progresso de estas sus Soledades! (127)

No stronger indictment than this could be made of what Jáuregui saw as the maleficence of Gongora's poetics. The invective continues, however, as Jáuregui refers to the
"pestilencia detestable de los negros versos" (131).

Jáuregui approaches the end of the Antídoto by treating ambiguity:

De estos modos [ambiguos] tiene Vm. a millares.
Y aunque es verdad que en algunos dellos se conoce luego la significación, con todo eso, ya Vm. hace de su parte lo que puede para echarlos a perder; y eso basta por culpa . . . (133)

Here, once more, Jáuregui protests against language that does not allow for immediate, unself-conscious arrival at signification, and he accuses Góngora of deliberately attempting to prevent interpretation. He cites the "eternal" use of appositives by which "se obscurece o se ciega de el todo la elocución" (137), again suggesting opacity.

In the final section, Jáuregui returns to his original stated purpose of exhorting Góngora not to exercise further the art of poetry. He cautions:

Deviera Vm. . . . ponderar las muchas dificultades de lo heroico, la constancia que se requiere en continuar un estilo igual i magnífico, tenplando la grabedad y alteça con la dulçura y suabidad intelegible, i apoyando la elocución a ilustres sentencias i nobles i al firme tronco de la buena fábula o cuento, que es el alma de la Poesía. (139)

The necessary "firme tronco" that is missing from the
"Soledades" is a fixed referential ground to which one can attach signification. Jáuregui objects obliquely that Gongora's poetic language refuses to signify transparently and with certainty a static truth that lies beyond language.

Examination of Jáuregui's other writings shows that almost all of the objections to the "Soledades" in the Antídoto are based ultimately on the poem's frustration of his epistemological assumptions. In the "Introducción" to his Rimas, published two years after the Antídoto, Jáuregui describes a poem as being composed of three parts. The alma is the "asunto y bien dispuesto argumento" of the poem, the cuerpo consists of "las sentencias proporcionadas y conceitos explicadores del asunto," and the adorno is comprised of the words which "visten ese cuerpo con aire y bizarría" (4).

In epistemological terms, alma corresponds to a plot, seen as existing in the world outside of language and thought. The cuerpo is composed of two parts, the intellectual embodiment ("concepto") of the alma's argument, and the "sentencia." Jáuregui, unlike Quevedo, distinguishes between "concepto" and "sentencia." It is unclear what Jáuregui means by the term "sentencia." Cascales' second definition of the word, as a "dicho moral y agudo . . . de cosas universales, no limitadas del tiempo, lugar y personas . . ." (Tablas 86), is possible, as is the Latin "sententia" with its signification of a
period. A later reference in the Discurso poético (136) adds to the confusion, indicating that the "sentencia" is pre-linguistic and even pre-conceptual in nature, explaining it as "la materia y argumento mismo" which the concepts and thoughts embody. Adorno, is a quality of poetic language that separates it from ordinary discourse, and it may succeed to a greater or lesser degree. There are cases in which poets

acertaron con la buena sentencia, mas no se
acomodan a esplicarla en términos elocuentes, ni
distribuirla cabal y justa en los versos; antes
la desaliñan y abaten con voces humildes, o ya la
tuercen y desavían con frases violentas,
duramente amarradas al metro y consonancias. (5)

It can be inferred that adorno is a quality independent of the ordinary epistemological linguistic function of clear representation of thoughts.

Poems without alma are without "fundamento" and have only a body "disforme de pensamientos y sentencias vanas, sin propósito fijo ni trabazón y dependencia de partes" (5). What is necessary for good poetry and most difficult to achieve is an equilibrium among the three parts. The poet seeks to

ajustarse al buen asunto y señalado tema,
reforzándole siempre con pensamientos y
sentencias vivas; y sobre este fundamento sólido,
ir galanteando el adorno de argentadas frases,
Thus Jáuregui seems to recognize three functions of language—embodiment, transmission, and decoration of the concept—which also must be maintained in balance. Here too, as he was in the Antídoto, Jáuregui is concerned with the solidity of the foundations and the fixity of the purposes that, for him, must underlie good poetry.

The longer Discurso Poético, whose subtitle proclaims that it is written against "the disorder and delusion of some writers," continues the theme. In a much more orderly and less emotional manner than he used in the Antídoto, Jáuregui develops at length his arguments against the "culterano" style, dividing the book into six chapters: (1) "Las causas del desorden y su definición"; (2) "Los engañosos medios con que se yerra"; (3) "La molesta frecuencia de novedades"; (4) "El vicio de la desigualdad y sus engaños"; (5) "Los daños que resultan y por qué modos"; and (6) "La oscuridad y sus distinciones." I will proceed through the book in the order in which it is written, citing and analyzing those passages that are pertinent to this study.

Jáuregui's use of the word "disorder" in the title of the first chapter to describe the poetry of Gongora and his followers indicates a continued concern with what Jáuregui
perceives as the absence therein of a central organizing principle. He states as much in explaining his purpose in writing the Discurso to satisfy those who might wonder si este modo de escribir . . . es en alguna manera acertado, si esconde misterios de ingenio, si alguna utilidad o circunstancia oculta por donde merezca estimarse y ser admitido de los nuestros. O ya que nada merezca, desean saber en qué se funda, de qué causas procede y por qué le apetecen sus autores, pues no es creíble que sin ningún fin o interés --aunque sea engañoso-- nadie elija y abrace un error. (61)

His answer to the first part is emphatically negative, and he goes so far as to suggest that the effects of the style are "en extremo dañosos a nuestra lengua y patria" as it introduces verses of questionable "lineage" (62). The second part provides the object of the book, to demonstrate that there is nothing legitimate "en qué se funda."

In the first chapter as Jáuregui begins to clarify his definition of obscurity, approving it when it occurs in "conceptos sublimes y arcanos" (67) and condemning it when it is due to merely the "vacío de las palabras" (68). He establishes a difference in terminology, between the two types, calling the first "difficulty" and the second "obscurity." The third kind of obscurity that Cascales names, whose site lies in the ignorance of the reader, is considered by Jáuregui to be a characteristic of the
definition of poetry. Poetry, which is not for the vulgar, should be so difficult as to require "gran fuerza de ingenio, estudios copiosos, artificio y prudencia admirable" (68). Any failure to interpret a poem that is due to the reader's lack of preparation, exertion or capabilities is not to be considered the fault of the poet.

The second chapter, a discussion of various means by which these poets err, is a list of ways in which the transmission of concepts is impeded. The first error Jáuregui treats is the poets' loathing ("aborrecimiento") of common words (71). While admitting that poetic language should ordinarily "huir las dicciones humildes y usar las más apartadas de la plebe," (71), and that sometimes imported Latin words allow for "greater expression and efficacy" (75), Jáuregui accuses the new poets of abusing those principles. Differing from Cascales, Jáuregui sees as a cause of obscurity words "del todo ignoradas en nuestra lengua y traídas en abundancia de las ajenas" (71). The use of alien words should not only be limited as to frequency, but the borrowed words should be among the better known in their original language. Further, the intended meaning ("inteligencia") of a clause should not depend completely on understanding the foreign word (or neologism), so that one might be able to determine its significance by its context (76). Words whose significance is obscure because of their origin cannot transmit intelligence to an interpreter.
Metasemiotic abuses constitute another error. Jáuregui accuses the "culterano" poets of going beyond desirable boldness in figured language to the point of rashness:

Todo lo desbaratan, pervierten y destruyen; no dejan verbo o nombre en su propio sentido, sino remotos cuanto es posible; siempre los fuerzan a que sirvan donde nunca pensaron, del todo repugnando al oficio que los ocupan. (78)

The idea of a meaning proper to a word recalls the analytico-referential principle of a fixed and transparent connection in the sign between word and concept. Not only do the poets impede signification by comparing concepts whose connection is obscure and remote in itself, they pile figure on figure so that "aun las mismas metáforas metáforizan" (79). He explains that the poets "No juzgan suficiente un disfraz en la voz y oración, sino la revisten con muchos y queda surmergido el concepto en la corpulencia exterior" (79). This twofold (or more) displacement of signifying word from signified concept obscures by making laborious the process of interpretation.

The remainder of the errors result from the poets' abuse of the characteristic elements of heroic style to avoid direct and straightforward sentences. They porfían en trasponer las palabras y marañar las frases de tal manera, que aniquilando toda gramática, derogando toda ley del idioma,
atormentan con su dureza al más sufrido leyente, y con ambigüedad de oraciones, revolución de cláusulas y longitud de períodos, esconden la inteligencia al ingenio más pronto. (79-80)

The result of their misbegotten efforts is, expressed in terms of the metaphor of vision and knowledge, a hiding of the knowledge ("inteligencia") from the wit of the interpreter.

The new poets are not able, according to Jáuregui, to construct their poetic attempts on firm ground. He describes analogically the process of writing:

El efectuar un escrito es ajustar las voces de un instrumento, donde se le da a cada cuerda un temple firmísimo, torciendo aquí y allí la clavija hasta fijarla precisa en el punto de su entonación y no en otro, porque si allí no llegase o excediese, quedaría el instrumento destemplado y destruida la consonancia y la música. Los nuestros, pues, cuando escriben, no conociendo en su oído el punto fijo de la templanza siempre la pasan de punto, de que resulta el destemple y la destrucción de sus obras. (84)

The recurring emphasis on the lack of a foundation for esthetic principles and for meaning points to epistemological differences as a main source of Jáuregui’s criticism. The absence of a fixed point, necessary in the
"representative" epistemology for the construction or ordering of knowledge, is reflected not only in the metaphor, but throughout Jáuregui’s attacks.

The next two chapters offer relatively little of interest to this study. Chapter III treats the overuse of "novedades," which, although vices, may delight the reader when used skillfully and with moderation. The new poets, however, repeat them until they become bothersome and contribute to the poem’s obscurity, "embarazando" the work (89). The overuse of any figure is reprehensible as well; Jáuregui offers the following catalogue of frequent offenses of the poets he criticizes:

La común retórica dice corales o claveles a los labios, estrellas a los ojos, flores a las estrellas; quita a las cosas sus nombres y dales otros distantes por traslación; dice roble y abeto en vez de nave; pasa los límites de toda verdad con las hipérboles; aplica a una piedra sentimiento y palabras; trueca y remueve el orden de la oración; oculta con rodeos lo que sencillamente pudiera exprimir; altera la medida de las dicciones, usa las de otra lengua, revoca las de la antigüedad y alguna vez las inventa. (92-93)

Each of the cited transgressions serves to make language visible, calling the reader’s attention to it. The three functions of language that were inferred from Jáuregui’s
"Introducción" are not balanced. The embodiment and transmission of concepts have been sacrificed in the name of decoration. The fourth chapter treats unevenness of style and Jáuregui discusses the mixture of sublime and humble discourse. Although he makes no claims here that the fluctuation impedes interpretation, stylistic inconsistency is yet another example of disorder.

Jáuregui begins the fifth chapter by repeating his charge that the abuses of the language by the new poets are serious threats to it (109). He accuses them of squeezing the language with too much violence, as did Quevedo later in calling Gongora "verdugo de los vocablos" (discussed above). The undesirable results of such torture are that: "En vez de sacar del idioma el licor que buenamente puede exprimirse, le hacen verter heces y amargura como a la naranja; no ha de ser tanto el aprieto" (110). These violators constitute a heretical sect against "the poetic religion and its strict laws," and corrupt the youth, having them believe that poetry is no more than "un exterior fantástico, aunque carezca de alma y cuerpo" (114).

Jáuregui’s view of the separability of language and thought underlies his perception of danger, which extends beyond language and patria to the realm of truth and knowledge. He quotes Lucian’s dialogue in which Licino reproaches his interlocutor:

Cometes ... un vicio no como quiera, sino el
mayor y es que no preparas primero las sentencias para adornarlas después con las palabras sino al contrario, porque en el punto que hallaste una palabra peregrina o que engañado la juzgas por selecta, o esa tal palabra procuras después acomodar la sentencia y te parece gran pérdida no insertarla en algún lugar, no obstante que no venga a propósito y sea del todo impertinente a lo que se trata. (115-116)

If thought is formed before its embodiment in language, then to begin with words and to base concepts on them is to upset the assumed order of things and to concede to language a more important epistemological role. Poets who do so "vienen a ser, por esta flaqueza, siervos y esclavos de la locución que los desavía y los arrastra por donde quiere, habiendo de ser dueños y señores para servirse della con magisterio" (116). Language writes discourse, as it were; and instead of being subject to concepts which represent a truth to be found outside of it, language rejects its function of representing that truth and constitutes its own rival truth. Jáuregui continues:

El último material en la ejecución de labores poéticas deben ser las palabras, así dice el italiano que las ha de hallar prontas el escritor sotto la penna (debajo de la pluma), no acordándose dellas hasta tomarla en la mano. Los poetas que decimos, en vez de tenerlas debajo de
The authority of truth is usurped; language, which should be subordinated to concepts that imitate that truth, now determines it. The implications of this revolution in epistemology are clearly serious.

Words, Jáuregui later explains, are nothing without the things they declare, and in support of the claim, he cites classical writers. Cicero asked, "¿Cuál vanidad más furiosa . . . que el sonido vacío de las palabras, aunque sean las mejores y más adornadas, si no contienen sentencia ni ciencia?" (121). Aureus Gelius devoted an entire chapter to the condemnation of "esta vanidad" (121). Horace also wrote on the subject: "El principio y fuente del recto escribir . . . es el saber. Sabidas y prevenidas las cosas, después no hace resistencia al decirlas y exponerlas al estilo de las palabras" (121). Intellection is definitely seen to precede language and to exist independently of it. Jáuregui goes on to explain that, on the other hand, words are necessary vehicles for the transferral of knowledge, "aunque la sentencia y concepto es lo poderoso y primero" (22).

The sixth chapter, "La oscuridad y sus distinciones," defines poetic obscurity and discusses it in great detail. Jáuregui reaffirms that obscurity is not "el no dejarse
entender de todos" and adds that "a la poesía ilustre no pertenece tanto la claridad como la perspicuidad" (125). He distinguishes between the two: "Que se manifieste el sentido, no tan inmediato y palpable, sino con ciertos resplandores no penetrables a vulgar vista: a esto llamo perspicuo y a lo otro claro" (125). Language which is claro is that which transparently, with immediate obviousness, transmits its signification. Perspicuous language is the acceptable way of slowing the process of interpretation through "las gallardías de su estilo, del brío y alteza de sus figuración y tropos, de sus conceptos grandes y palabras más nobles" (126-127).

Again, Jáuregui makes it clear that unacceptable obscurity does not lie in the ignorance of the interpreter, but he does delimit an interpretive community for whom the text would be appropriate. He writes:

Así que, para entender ilustres versos supongo, a lo menos, los buenos juicios y alentados ingenios cortesanos de suficiente noticia y buen gusto, y sobre todo inclinados al arte; porque si carecen desta inclinación, o la poesía les enfada como vemos en muchos, aunque sean muy doctos y sabios, son impropios oyentes, cuanto los aficionados son digno teatro, aunque no lleguen a eruditos y doctos. (126)

For Jáuregui, the writing and interpreting of sublime poetry is an elitist activity, not for the untrained or
unwilling ear, and some difficulty is expected. The more learning one has, the greater one’s ability to understand: “los más doctos y prácticos en la facultad penetran al íntimo conocimiento de lo compuesto, complaciéndose más que todos en lo superior de sus méritos” (128).

The community of interpreters should not be so narrow, however, that it does not incorporate a “numeroso auditorio” (133). Jáuregui turns his attention to modern writings which exclude from understanding even the most erudite and skillful poets. Of these poems he says, “No basta decir son oscuros, aun no merece su habla, en muchos lugares nombre de oscuridad sino de la misma nada” (134).

This is a total lack of interpretable signification, he claims, that baffles even the offending authors themselves, and he accuses them of having been aware of it at the time of composition: “Ellos mismos, al tiempo de la ejecución, vieron muchas veces que era nada lo que decían (no me nieguen esta verdad), ni se les concertaba sentencia dentro del estilo fantástico” (134). Instead of applying their words to a good end, “las derramaron al aire sin consignarlas a algún sentido” (134), violating the principle of the primacy and independence of the signified thought. As another explanation, he offers the possibility that “el furor del lenguaje los forzó a decir despropósitos que no pensaban, y por no alterar las dicciones los consintieron” (134). The result is that “las sentencias y cosas que se dicen desvarían, [que] es lo mismo o peor que
This result, in which a sign points to something that is not its proper referent, is more culpable than when a referent is merely not understood because not only does it not convey truth, but it transmits untruth instead.

Jauregui definitively addresses the distinction between obscurity and difficulty that he raised in the first chapter:

la una consiste en las palabras, esto es en el orden y modo de la locución, y en el estilo del lenguaje solo; la otra en las sentencias, esto es, en la materia y argumento mismo, y en los conceptos y pensamientos dél. (136).

Difficulty is acceptable for Jauregui in part because of the exclusivist, aristocratic view he holds of poetry; "la grandeza de las materias trae consigo el no ser vulgares y manifiestas, sino escondidas y difíciles" (136). Obscurity, on the other hand, is "eternally abominable" since it thwarts "el único fin para que las palabras fueron inventadas," (136), the transparent or perspicuous representation of concepts.

Representation requires that language perform the dual epistemological function of embodiment and transmission of concepts. Language (frasis) is condemnable "si niega a la inteligencia el concepto que abraza," refusing to transmit that which it has embodied, or "si . . . emplea [el
concepto] en desacuerdos que después de entendidos son también vaguedades," failing to accurately embody that which it transmits (137). Those concepts which, because of their difficulty, can not be embodied by language--"ciencias ocultas y materias en sí difíciles, naturales o filosóficas"--are not to be condemned for their obscurity since they "traen abrazada consigo la oscuridad" (138). The difficulty lies embedded in the concept itself, and language is capable of clearly and accurately transmitting the concept. Conceptual obscurity is intrinsic, and thus acceptable, an attribute of the concept and not a fault of bad artifice.

Of all the criticism examined in this chapter, the Discurso poético provides the clearest enunciation of the epistemological basis of objections. Lope de Vega, his own epistemological stance appearing somewhat ill-defined in terms of Foucault's description, does not develop his criticism of Gongora in ways that readily lend themselves to theoretical analysis. Francisco de Quevedo's discussion of the roles of the concept and of language as the basis of stylistic variation affords insight into his own assumptions, as does his description of acceptable obscurity. The Tablas poéticas of Francisco Cascales gives a clear description of the roles of thought and language in the structure of knowledge and truth with its quotation from Tasso, and Cascales' "Carta" develops its charge of obscurity on that basis. It is Jáuregui's Discurso,
however, that discusses at greater length and with more profundity how the new poetry violates the predominant understanding of the universe and how threatening it is to the structure of society.

Jáuregui's reading of the "Soledades" in the Antídoto is constructed on the differences between his own epistemological assumptions and those aspects of the poem that challenge those assumptions. He is concerned with Góngora's violation of his understanding of the nature of the sign, of language, and ultimately of knowledge of the world. In treating transgressions against these assumptions, he pens the most passionate passages of the work. His assessment of the "Soledades" as uncertain because of obscurity, however, contrasts with that of Góngora and his defenders who admitted uncertainty but denied that it lay in the poem.
Notes

1 In his reading of the sonnet Lope composed upon Góngora's death, C. Christopher Soufas finds "Lope's attitudes [toward Góngora] essentially unchanged in the wake of Góngora's death" (26).

2 There is no evidence to support an understanding of *concepto* in the sense of the literary "conceit" in Lope. Collard's discussion of the evolution of the term "concepto" considers it "en sus dos sentidos: en el de pensamiento profundo o agudo y en el de un modo peculiar de metáfora" (24). A passage she quotes from Garcilaso, however, uses *concepto* in describing a wound to the tongue, "en aquella que declara / los concetos del alma, fui herido" (25), showing the clear relationship between the mental concept of the thing in the world and language that expresses it. Collard is correct in stating that "Para Lope, los *conceptos* no son figuras retóricas" used for aesthetic purposes, but she errs in her belief that they are for him and Jáuregui associated with a moral purpose (32).

Miguel d'Ors and Antonio García Berrio also discuss the evolution of the term. García Berrio, who traces the idea back to the Greeks and examines a broad spectrum of documents, notes that, although the word "concepto" was being used at the time in Spain to refer to the "tecnecismo poético," Góngora's commentators do not employ it in that sense (394). D'Ors formulates the following three "datos
fundamentales":


2) El concepto es una concepción en el sentido etimológico de la palabra: consiste en conectar mentalmente realidades distintas.

3) Cuanto más alejadas estén éstas, más llamará la atención su conexión en el concepto. Se considera muy aguda la relación fundada en una correspondencia imperceptible a primera vista, que exige reflexión detenida. (187-188)

Góngora's conceptos that are criticized by the authors examined in this chapter are concepts of things in the world that are self-consciously constructed (or "misapplied") in order to bring to light certain aspects of the images for which they are substituted, but they are fundamentally intellectual images of things in the world. To describe a concepto as primarily a comparison between two images is to disregard the epistemological function of the concepto, of which the authors of the works examined here were evidently aware.

3 In discussing secrecy in the hermetic tradition, Paolo Rossi cites the following exhortation from Bono of Farrara:
But I ask and adjure all men of understanding in these matters into whose hands this precious, new-found pearl may fall that they pass it on to those whose energies are employed at full stretch by this question, who are hungry for art and accomplishment in the principles of natural science, but that they should conceal it from fools and children since they are unworthy. (28)

See also Elizabeth Eisenstein, 76-77, and Edgar Wind's *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance.*

4 In his sixteenth-century commentary on the adage, "Sileni Alcibiadis," Erasmus noted that the images "seem to have become proverbial among the learned, . . . used either with reference to a thing which in appearance (at first blush, as they say) seems ridiculous and contemptible, but on closer and deeper examination proves to be admirable, or else with reference to a person whose looks and dress do not correspond at all to what he conceals in his soul" (269).

5 Alonso further claims that Lope wrote the poem as an example of conceptual obscurity in reaction to the attention that Gongora was achieving with what Lope viewed as the linguistic obscurity of the "Soledades" (*Poesía* 456).

6 In his commentary on the sonnet, published in *La Circe con otras Rimas y prosas* in 1624, Lope again distinguishes between types of obscurity, locating the
desirable kind on the level of thought and the unacceptable kind in language:

Si estuviera la dificultad en la lengua (como ahora se usa), confieso que se quejaran con causa; pero estando en la sentencia, no sé por qué razón no ha de tener verdad lo que no alcanzan. Para el ingenio de vuestra merced . . . excusada fuera esta exposición; pero para el desengaño de los que se apasionan de los términos nuevos de decir, aunque sean bárbaros, y no reparan en el alma de los concetos, no será fuera de propósito. (Obras 1311).

Francisco Rico's treatment of Lope in El pequeño mundo del hombre, James E. Holloway's article, "Lope's Neoplatonism: La dama bobo," and De Armas' article argue strongly for such an assumption. However, one must keep in mind Barbara Hermnstein Smith's admonition that "No matter how closely the statements in . . . a composition resemble statements the poet himself as a historical creature might have truly and truthfully uttered, they remain fictive statements in the poem" (10). Alban K. Forcione, in disoussing Cervantes' Novelas ejemplares, rejects the idea of Lope as one who would "look for truth beneath the surface," stating that he was "a man of radically different disposition [from Cervantes] and a man whose spiritual formation was the product of very different historical circumstances, [who] was temperamentally unprepared to
look" (9).

8 I am indebted to Professor Oscar Rivera-Rodas for the reading of "vueltas de cuerda" as repeated lashes of a whip.

9 Refer to page 17 for a discussion of syntactical coincidence between language and thought in Foucault's "Classical" episteme.

10 Quevedo's enthusiasm for Fray Luis' poetry, in spite of the latter's Jewish heritage, belies the notion that Quevedo's attacks on Gongora, while quite often racial in character, were based merely on antisemitic attitudes.

11 Blecua identifies the other as Quevedo's prologue to his edition of Francisco de la Torre's poetry (8n4).

12 Cascales gives two definitions of the sentencia, the first and less common of which, is "el concepto del Animo" (86). This seems to be the signification Quevedo is employing.

13 If Quevedo is speaking here of the concepto (conceit), which doesn't seem likely, then any obscurity should lie in the concepto as the unobvious connection in the space between its intentionally paired elements. Clear, appropriate language should make evident the structure of the concepto, enabling the reader to discover the hidden connection.

14 Alonso states that

lo único que hizo Gongora fue popularizar,

difundir, una serie de vocablos, de los cuales la
mayor parte eran ya usados en literatura y habían conseguido entrada en los vocabularios de la época, y sólo los menos—en realidad una minoría reducida—podían ser considerados como raros, aunque aun éstos estaban implícitos en la conciencia gramatical de fines del siglo XVI.

(Lengua 45).

15 Those he lists are Francisco de Amaya, Francisco Fernández de Córdoba, el abad de Rute, "un curioso," el alférez Estrada, Angulo y Pulgar, Díaz de Rivas, Diego de Pisa y Ventimilla, Andrés de Mendoza, Martín Vázquez Siruela, Antonio Calderón, Alonso Cavanillas, N. de Cuenca, Andrés de Cuesta, along with the well-known commentaries of Pellicer, Salcedo Coronel, and Salazar y Mardones.

16 The entire clause reads:

Nautica industria investigò tal piedra,
Que cual abraça iedra
Escollo, el metal ella fulminante
De que Marte se viste, i lisongera
Solicita el que más brilla diamante
En la nocturna capa de la esphera,
Estrella a nuestro polo más vecina: . . . (11. 379-385)

This citation is taken from the "Chacón" edition of Alfonso Callejo and Maria Teresa Pajares, as are all other quotations from the "Soledades" unless otherwise indicated.

17 Lines 405-409:
Al padre de las aguas Oceàno
(De cuya monarchia
El Sol, que cada dia
Nace en sus ondas, i en sus ondas muere,
Los términos saber todos no quiere) . . . .

18 In the following section, Jáuregui states that "en muchas partes de esta Soledad me he visto atormentado el entendimiento, i aun no sé si las acabo de rastrear" (97), which seems to contradict his claim of being able to interpret completely Góngora's signification. In his vituperative style, he exaggerates obscurity by treating it as opacity.

19 Jáuregui quotes this line as "Señas diera de su atrevimiento" (107).

20 One could, of course, interpret this violation of decorum as a deliberate undermining of fixed affective associations. See Paul Julian Smith's PMLA article, "Barthes, Góngora, and Non-Sense" for similar examples.

21 Stanley Fish defines interpretive communities as being "made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions" (Fish 182).

22 For a treatment of aesthetic hermetism see Angelina Costa Palacios' discussion of Carrillo de Sotomayor's Libro de Erudición Poética (37-56).
Chapter 3

Góngora and His Apologists: Denial and Defense of Obscurity

While Góngora and his defenders generally admitted the existence of a degree of obscurity in his writing, they viewed it as a positive rather than a negative attribute. Their explanations and treatments of the source of obscurity varied little from those of their adversaries, but they consistently referred to difficulty as a justified poetic end. Even though granting that the obscurity was an obstacle to interpretation, they found means to account for it in terms compatible with current thinking about language. The aim of their project was to prove that the poetic obscurity was epistemologically legitimate, just as the goal of Góngora’s critics had been to demonstrate its illegitimacy. A primary means of making Góngora’s difficulty acceptable was to advance poetic discourse as an exceptional linguistic case, denying the possibility of obscurity in a discourse whose representative function was different from that of ordinary language.

Paul Julian Smith treats the topic of linguistic excess, the means by which the new poetic language was accomplished, establishing it solidly within the classical rhetorical tradition. He explains that because of Spanish anxiety about inferiority to other European cultures in the
area of letters, there was an effort to elevate through the use of ornamentation what was generally considered to be a complete but impoverished poetic diction. Of course, such an effort "assumes the possibility of a natural or neutral language untainted by the ravages of figuration" (Writing 14). Smith traces a trajectory through Golden Age lyric poetry from Garcilaso de la Vega, in whose plain language the reality represented by the poet's voice is perceived to be transparently present, to Gongora, whose profusion of "ornamental" language culminates in "culterano" poetry. The elevated poetic language that raised Spanish poetry to new heights was achieved by what Smith calls a "rhetoric of excess," in compensation for what was seen as a lack. The addition of an ornamental function to language, which had been perceived as primarily a transparent vehicle of meaning, had the result of making that language visible. Expressed in terms of the vision/knowledge metaphor, the highly embellished language, by coming between the interpreter and the material that was to be transmitted, obscured one's view of its referential "content."

The critics who defended and praised Gongora and his poetry generally by-passed the question of how language represents, concentrating on proving that Gongora's language ultimately does represent. Their tactics ranged from denial of the existence of any obscurity on the linguistic level in the works, to explanation of the origin of the obscurity, to the metaphorical assertion that the
negative obscurity is really a positive splendor. Others were comentaristas who saw it as their role to facilitate the interpretation of the difficult passages. Of Góngora's many defenders, I have chosen to analyze four whose writings treat the uncertainty of the poetry from a positive point of view. Francisco Fernández de Córdoba, Abad de Rute, wrote, at Góngora's request, a "Parecer acerca de las Soledades" in which he condemned the obscurity of the poem, but in 1617, he defended the poet against Jáuregui with his Examen del Antídoto. Pedro Díaz de Ribas was both defender and commentator, writing Discursos apologéticos por el estilo del 'Poliphemo' y 'Soledades' and Anotaciones y defensas a la Primera Soledad de Don Luis de Góngora. José García de Salcedo Coronel, perhaps the best known seventeenth-century comentarista, discusses the interpreter's role and gives practical reasons for some obscurity in the introduction to his 1636 edition of the "Soledades." Martín Vázquez Siruela's "Discurso sobre el estilo de don Luis de Góngora" alters the metaphorical vocabulary of the debate, renaming the kind of obscurity that occurs in Góngora's work as "esplendor." Each of the four critics endeavors to legitimate the sublime style.

A convert to the doctrine of "nueva poesía" whom Collard calls a "fervente gongorista" (35), Francisco Fernández de Córdoba, the Abbot of Rute, wrote one of the earlier documents of the polemic. His "Parecer acerca de
las 'Soledades' a instancias de su autor," written in 1614 (Orozco 152), effusively praises Góngora's poetry, but criticizes its obscurity. Following the lead of Pedro de Valencia, who first voiced disapproval of the poem's difficulty, and whose "Carta" Fernández de Córdoba mentions having read (40), the Abad considers all deliberately cultivated obscurity to be vicious (30). The obscurity that results from the elevated style is not excusable here because that style is inappropriate to subject matter that is not "grave, trágico, heroico, o otro semejante" (38). Neither is it the justifiable case of religious mysteries or prophecy that should be hidden from the multitudes (35). Fernández states that it would be "menos mal" if the obscurity resulted from brevity, but in the "Soledades" its source is the
demásía de tropos, y esquemas, paréntesis, oposiciones; contraposiciones, interposiciones, sinedocques, metáforas, y otras figuras artificiosas, y bizarras cada una de por sí, y a trechos, y lugares convenientes; más no para amontonadas. (32)

This excess of figures and tropes not only excludes the vulgar from the "deleite" and "aprovecho" that the poem should give but also frustrates the "doctos." The erudite already know what is to be discovered and thus gain nothing from it (34). As for delight, he tells Góngora that they "le entenderán gastar el tiempo, y sus juicios en adivinar,
que quiso decir Vm: . . . reduciendo a trabajo lo que
había de ser meramente gusto, y matándose por entenderlo o
no entenderlo" (36). Fernández describes his own
frustration in a passage to be echoed later by Jáuregui:

No por amor de Dios, que a la verdad es terrible
cosa, que en mi lengua materna haya yo de andar
como en un Aristóteles, o en un Perseo, o en otro
autor difícil griego, o latino, juntando partes,
construyendo y adivinando, qué quiso decir en
aquello, o en esotro. (37)

Other echoes from the Abad’s criticism appear in that of
Góngora’s attackers, and it is understandable that they
would quote this categorical condemnation so well-
substantiated with citations of the writings of classical
and contemporary theorists.

It was Juan de Jáuregui’s vicious continuation of this
criticism that provoked Fernández to write his Examen del
Antídoto o Apología por las Soledades de Don Luis de
Góngora contra el autor de el Antídoto in 1617. During the
three years that had elapsed since he wrote the “Parecer,”
Fernández had revised his opinion of the poem’s obscurity.
Now, he sees obscurity as the inevitable and acceptable
result of the characteristics of the high poetic style,
which before he had claimed was inappropriate to the
subject matter. He explains that he made the change
“valiéndome de la autoridad de los doctos que aprueban el
Poema de las Soledades y del exemplo de los que usaron
stilo no para el vulgo" (427), and he lists at length those "doctos" (419-420). Fernández now justifies the style generically, granting that although it is not dramatic, epic, or heroic, nor bucolic, piscatorial or cynegetic, that "porque introduce a todos los referidos es necesario confesar que es Poëma, que los admite y abraza a todos: quál sea este, es sin duda el Melico o Lyrico" (424).

As for his prior objection that the poem did not provide delight, but rather frustration and hard work to the learned, Fernández again bows to the opinion of those who approve the poems, now claiming that the universal delight a poem must give does not have to be "Universalíssimo" (418). Since the exclusion of the vulgar from understanding poetry further elevates the poem by consecrating it as a thing intended for only some, he advises Jáuregui that "nuestro Poeta cuando por levantar el estilo y realzar la lengua quiera no darse a comer a todos, y por conseguir este fin salga con algunos celajes obscuros la bellíssima pintura de su Poema" (421). He maintains that the poem "no peca en la obscuridad" (418), and in cautioning Jáuregui that he can not condemn Góngora for his obscurity, the Abad effectively equates obscurity and magniloquence:

Pero advierta V. m. de camino que si nos vende por obscuro las Soledades, le vende por grande y magestuoso, y si niega que lo es, le vende por inteligible y claro; es cosa la que mandare, que
si lo primero, le dará lo que le toca de justicia; y si lo segundo, derrará de culparle de obscuro. (431)

Thus, Fernández de Córdoba embraces (as Jaurégui would do to a lesser degree in his *Discurso poético*) a poetics in which difficulty of interpretation is acceptable for two reasons: the achievement of the sublime style and the exclusion of the vulgar. The degree of uncertainty caused by the language is relative to the degree of learning of the interpreter, but is ultimately resolvable. He effectively rejects the application of the metaphor of obscurity, claiming that the poem can be understood.

A compatriot of Góngora and Fernández, Pedro Díaz de Ribas, composed the *Discurtos apologéticos* in 1618 for inclusion in López de Vicuña’s aborted second volume of his edition of Góngora’s poetry which was to have been published in 1624 (Gates 30). Probably written as a reply to Jaurégui’s *Antídoto*, the *Discurtos* were answered in 1624 by Jaurégui’s *Discurso poético* (Gates 27). The book is structured around eleven objections that critics had voiced to Góngora’s “culterano” style; after listing them, Díaz de Ribas refutes each one, quoting copiously from classical rhetoricians. The first four objections he considers to relate more to the new poetic style:

1. Las muchas voces peregrinas que introduce.
2. Los tropos frequentíssimos.
3. Las muchas transposiciones.
4. La obscuridad de estylo que resulta de todo eso. (34)

The rest are objections that he dismisses as simply lacking validity:

5. La dureça de algunas metáforas.

6. La desigualdad de el estylo en algunas partes.

7. El uso de palabras humildes entretexidas con las sublimes.

8. La repetición frecuente de unas mismas voces y frasis.

9. Algunas hypérboles y exageraciones grandes.

10. La longitud de algunos periodos.

11. La redundancia o copia demasiada en el decir. (34-35)

The objection of most interest to this study is, of course, the fourth, but since it is a result of the previous three, they bear treatment as well.

To counter the first objection, Díaz de Ribas proposes that if the critics read classical and Italian poets they will see the debt that they owe to Góngora,

porque enriqueció nuestra lengua con los thesoros de la latina, madre suya, no sólo en las vozes, sino en la gracia del decir, en la composición de las diciones y en las demás virtudes, que era lo que a nuestra lengua le faltaba para su policia y artificio. (43-44)
Díaz maintains, as does Góngora in his "Carta," that, through the latter's efforts, the Spanish language has arrived at the "cumbre de su perfección" (44). Díaz lists only eight words that Góngora has introduced to the language and says that he can not be sure that those have not been used by other Spanish writers as well (44). The alien words, however, were imported for the legitimate and laudable purpose of enriching the language.

The shifting of the expected order of thought and language constitute the second and third objections respectively. Díaz excuses Góngora's copious use of tropes as necessary to differentiate poetry from oratory, of which the trope is the principal ornament. Hyperbaton, which occurs when the ordinary "contextura" of the words is disrupted, is not violent, but as natural in Spanish as it is in Latin (48). The problem of obscurity arises with the conjunction and exuberance of the previous three qualities.

Like those who criticized Góngora's obscurity, Díaz de Ribas distinguishes between two types of obscurity: "una nace de las historias, de los pensamientos delgados, de el estylo sublime; otra, de la contextura amphibológica de las dicciones" (49). The latter is, as it was with others, to be condemned. What is different about Díaz's distinction is where he places the limit between the acceptable and the unacceptable; he accepts much of what has been called obscurity by others as an inevitable by-product of proper poetic language. He discusses nine elements of the sublime
style that result in difficulty of interpretation, tending
to blur the difference between what opponents saw as
separate realms of thought and language.

As the first cause, Díaz lists the commonly cited
obscure topics of philosophy, "fábulas occultas" and
history which only the truly erudite can understand (49).
Any lack of understanding in such cases is not the fault of
the poem but of the interpreter's ignorance. Wit and
reading are also pre-requisites for the comprehension of
the second cause, Góngora's concepts, noted for their
"agudeça y novedad" (49-50). Both of these cases, obscure
referents and obscure concepts, are considered by Góngora's
critics to lie beyond language and are considered
acceptable.

The remaining causes lie on the linguistic level and
are direct results of the elevated style: "Pues también la
alteça que pretendió en el estilo con las vozes peregrinas,
con tropos, transposiciones, son (bien que virtudes
necessarias para este fin) causa de obscurecer la oraciòn"
(50). In addition to foreign words, tropes, and
transpositions mentioned here, Díaz lists the ornate "modo
de decir" in majestic speech that creates wonder with its
extreme learning and wit (50). The use of transpositions
to achieve elegant ("gallardo") and dignified ("grabe")
speech obscures the sentence, making difficult its
interpretation for the poet too "floxo" to understand it
(53).
The seventh cause of obscurity is the figure "circuićiôn o comphrensîôñ." According to Hermogenes, this periphrastic figure is the main component of the sublime style, and Díaz claims that it is also the main cause of obscurity in the "Soledades" since it occurs in almost all the sentences (54). In a marginal note, Díaz explains that "circuićiôn" causes obscurity by suspending the mind ("el ãثimo") unlike in the clear style (Gates 54n23). This suspension of the understanding's search for closure, a detour through a level of discourse displaced a step further from its referent, accords with Gongora's description of interpretive activity and both intensifies and calls attention to that process.

Gongora's use of some devices not employed frequently by other poets causes obscurity "por el nuevo modo de contextura" such as "ayuntos o aposiciones" (54), the "apositibos" condemned by Jàuregui in his Antídoto (137). For Díaz de Ribas, these appositives, which Gongora uses with great frequency, lend the poem "grace and elegance" and perform the same function as the epithet in heroic poetry "con los quales se exornan mucho los Poetas" (54). It is worth noting here (and throughout the Discursos) Díaz's displacement of "poem" by "poet"; he seems to equate work and author. Finally, although extraordinary devices based on the oblique cases result in obscurity, such as the use of the ablative absolute, they are appropriate to the elevated style and are thus acceptable (55).
In his conclusion to the section on obscurity, Díaz exonerates the poet (again as the displaced site of the alleged obscurity). The source of the obscurity lies in excess and in lack, the result of a "sobra de virtudes poéticas y falta o de lección o de ingenio o de atención en el lector" (55). Such obscurity is acceptable for Díaz since it is the proper domain of poetry. Censurable obscurity results from "contexto amphibológico" because ambiguity (he quotes Quintilian) "incertum intellectum facit" (56). Here, the blame for the failure to understand lies with the poet and not the reader (56). Thus Díaz maintains that the elevated poetic style, although difficult, can always be interpreted with certainty, given that the reader is properly prepared, capable and willing. When ambiguity does occur in Góngora's work, its intended signification ultimately may be determined; Díaz states it thus:

al fin puedese sacar con el estudio el entendimiento de su sentencia por la materia y por los antecedentes y consecuentes, como por esta razón se pueden tolerar otras muchas amphibologías semejantes en excelentes Poetas.

(56)

Díaz, then, denies the existence of any unresolvable uncertainty in Góngora's controversial poems. After dismissing the remaining objections as invalid, Díaz claims that the "Soledades" contain no flaws, only genuine poetic
virtues and some excesses due to the "alteza de el ingenio verdaderamente poético" (66).

In his Anotaciones y defensas a la Primera Soledad de Don Luis de Góngora, Díaz de Ribas addresses some of the specific objections to the "Soledades" that Jâueregui had elaborated in his Antídoto. Although I have not been able to examine the entire work, the selections quoted by Gates in the footnotes to her edition of the Antídoto, are sufficient to demonstrate a level of uncertainty acceptable to Díaz. In answer to Jâueregui's charge that the heroic style, which Góngora seeks to employ, requires the "firme tronco" of a plot or story as a foundation (139), Díaz replies paradoxically that the "firme tronco" of the "Soledades" consists of the "passos de un Peregrino en la Soledad" (Gates 86n4). The certain referent, the soul of the poem for Jâueregui ("Introducción" 4), is the uncertain peregrination of an unidentified wanderer in an unknown place. Díaz defends Góngora's lack of specificity in not naming the place or the protagonist as a means of creating suspense in the listener and heightening his or her desire to know the entire story, a device that delays the sure grasp of knowledge.

Further admission of uncertainty is made in Díaz's explanation of Góngora's use of the structure employing "si" and "no". In clarifying Jâueregui's misreading of "si" as "sí," he makes the point that the sense of the sentence is conditional, not oppositional. The "if" in the verse in
question, "Si Aurora no con rayos, Sol con flores" (250) leaves the reader suspended between the two possibilities by "poner dudosa la oración adjunta" (112n44). Díaz explains:

Y así cuando dice: si no Aurora con rayos, no dice con certidumbre que no es Aurora, sino dudando, por virtud de la condición si. Por donde hace este sentido: O es Aurora con rayos, o Sol con flores; o éste: Si no me concedéis que es Aurora con rayos, es Sol con flores. De modo que siempre va el Poeta [read "poem"] devaxo de duda. (112n44)

Díaz's approval of this type of deliberate and unresolvable ambiguity rests on its being part of the elevated style of poetry. Besides, although certainty is not possible, the language is not opaque; both epithets point to the same referent and neither is privileged as a superior representation or held to be true while the other is considered false.

Díaz de Ribas justifies Góngora's obscurity as a natural result of the elevated diction he employs. His distinction between acceptable and unacceptable types of obscurity seems to be reducible to one between obscurity and opacity. Poetic language that does not allow understanding to be completed is judged to have failed in its epistemological function of representation. Such language is strained beyond the point of comprehensibility
and transmission breaks down. No matter what preparation and intellectual capacity the interpreter brings to the text, he is no longer able to supply what is needed to "uncover" the elements necessary for closure that the poet is assumed to have written into the text. The limit which Díaz has consistently claimed to be relative to the interpreter's preparation and intellectual capacity is assumed to have a true fixed terminus. However, as for where to draw the limit beyond which language becomes so obscure as to be opaque, and who is to ultimately decide what lies beyond the pale of interpretibility and what is merely difficulty resulting from elevated diction, are the undeclared points of contention between Góngora's adversaries and defenders.

One who took on the role of interpreting the new language was José García de Salcedo Coronel, a poet whose style is associated by literary historians with that of Góngora, although he is better known for his commentaries of Góngora's poetry. It is the brief prologue to the reader of his edition of the "Soledades" that is of interest to this portion of the study. There, Salcedo declares his purpose as that of commentator or interpreter, offering help in the deciphering of the concepts to those who have run up against the obscurity of the poem's "sentencias" (225). He says that even those who blame the poet for that obscurity must admit that he did succeed in elevating Spanish poetry and enriching the language (225).
Salcedo's own opinion about obscurity is ambivalent:

No digo yo que es buena la oscuridad, ni la he seguido en mis escritos, pero en don Luis es venerable, por haber ilustrado nuestro idioma con frasis, con tropos y figuras no usadas antes de los castellanos poetas, hoy imitadas de tantos, bien que de pocos con felicidad. (226)

Obscurity that can be justified as functional, then, is considered praiseworthy.

Salcedo asserts that obscurity results from ambiguity, but he does not consider whether the ambiguity is ultimately resolvable or not, a point emphasized by Díaz de Ribas. The four figures he lists as the source of ambiguity are condemned by grammarians because they impede the perspicacity of the sentence. When used prudently ("cuerdamente"), however, the same figures can embellish and beautify, and that, according to Salcedo, is how Góngora employs them (226). Homonymy, the use of words with multiple significations, inevitably causes ambiguity. A second figure, amphibology, is a construction that admits more than one interpretation, not making clear, for example, which noun is subject and which one object of the verb, or which noun is being modified by an adjective. Ambiguity may also result from brachylogy, or excessive brevity, which requires the reader to supply the elements needed for interpretation that have been omitted.

Salcedo names anastrophe, or syntactical inversion, as
the obscuring figure employed most frequently by Góngora, but he justifies its use as stylistic imitation of confused, indecisive or intricately ornate subject matter. A poet, for example, "cuando quiere exprimir un ánimo perturbado, perturba el orden de las palabras" (230), and when Góngora describes

el adorno de las calles de una aldea, y cuán impedidas estaban con los árboles y flores, dice:

Admira cortesano
a pesar del estambre, y de la seda
el que tapiz frondoso
tejió de verdes hojas la arboleda:
y los que por las calles espaciosas fabrican arcos rosas,
oblicuos nuevos, pénisiles jardines
de tantos como violas jazmines.

Donde parece que los mismos versos con las trasposiciones de las voces, dicen lo entretejido de los árboles, y forman los arcos que refiere estaban fabricados de rosas. (230)

Salcedo Coronel has fully accepted the obscurity that occurs in the "Soledades," justifying it with a poetics of functional uncertainty. For him, the challenge that Góngora's language poses to interpretation is not one that questions basic assumptions; the difficulties can be understood as the natural result of a special poetic use of language.
Martín Vázquez Siruela also finds acceptable what had been called Góngora's obscurity, but he rejects the term "obscuridad," redefining it by an inversion of the light/darkness metaphor. In his "Discurso sobre el estilo de don Luis de Góngora y carácter legítimo de la poética," which he wrote to Salcedo Coronel after he had read the latter's commentary of the "Soledades" (before its publication in 1636), Vázquez Siruela describes language as having three forms or species: popular, oratorical, and poetic (390). Poetic language is farthest removed from the vulgar; oratory lies between them because, although it too is an elevated language, it must remain comprehensible to the people in order to function persuasively. The "intrínseco y natural idioma de la poesía" (388), having no need to be accessible to the public, should be ornate, and difficulty of interpretation should not be a consideration of the poet as he composes. Vázquez quotes Cicero to the effect that it is the necessary nature of poetry to possess two qualities: that the "materia del discurso" be hidden in the "contestura i el ornato de las palabras," and that the poem "merezca la aprobación de pocos" (389). This does not mean, however that the poem should be sealed, as Vázquez asserts by employing the metaphor of seeing and knowledge. Vázquez writes that Góngora has hung a veil "sobre sus escritos i que cada uno pudiera correr[lo] con el estudio i la diligencia" (392). It is the role of interpreters, such as Salcedo Coronel, to help in uncovering the concepts that
Góngora has hidden there.

As to how far removed from the popular language poetic discourse should be, Vázquez answers, citing a Ciceronian dialogue, "hasta parezer que habla en lengua extraña" (390). Vázquez compares poetic language to a distinct dialect (390), and then paraphrases Pindar’s claim of writing "[a]l vulgo como a gente de otra nación i lengua extraña . . ." (391). He presents poetry as different from ordinary language to the point of being a separate dialect with a distinct function. The purpose of the poetic level of discourse is still that of transmitting embodied concepts, but its second function of embellishment does not permit "transparent" communication of ideas.

Jauregui had charged that in the "nueva poesía" language usurped the primacy of thought, but Vázquez’s use of the term "conceptos" appears to demonstrate a belief that they are prior to language. He writes of Góngora as hiding his concepts (392). He also treats words ("voces") and concepts as separate in describing the task of the commentator:

diciendo de las vozes lo que basta para no ignorar su contextura i significaciOn, a lo que atiende mÁs es a los conceptos, sacándolos de su retiro i descifrando lo misterioso dellos con tanta claridad i elegancia, que ya Góngora para los doctos . . . es doctísimo, popular para los populares, i para nadie oculto. (393)
When he writes of how Góngora's poetry has influenced the Spanish language, his description of the process of conception recalls the writings of Quevedo and Cascales:

> ya las formas de su estilo están enbebidas en la lengua, i de unos en otros se an dilatado, sin sentir las concibe el entendimiento, i de allí pasan a la conversación i a la pluma, obrando con secreta causalidad, como la luz i el aire de que vivimos; . . . . (383)

For Cascales and Quevedo, it was the concepto that gave form to language and determined its style. Style was the embodiment of concepts. Góngora's concepts, according to Vázquez, were so absorbed ("enbebidas") into the language and so widely disseminated that they had ceased to be recognizable as self-consciously conceived images. Thus, without being aware of the act of conception, speakers or writers of the language, reconceived his concepts and expressed them orally or in writing. These passages indicate clearly that, for Vázquez, thought is independent of, prior to, and transmissible by, its expression in language.

Although the primacy of thought over language was not seen as inverted in the elevated discourse, a revolution did result as control over, and access to, meaning were wrested from ordinary users of the language and shifted to those who were privy to the "new" language. With the three levels of discourse identified by Vázquez came a
distribution of power. Those who could use and understand the elevated poetic discourse were themselves elevated, deriving power from their exclusive control over a sublanguage carved out of the mother tongue and set aside for themselves. Oratory, the purpose of which is to influence or exert power, participated in both the other levels, using the popular language to be able to communicate, and figures and tropes from the poetic in order to move the hearers. The frustration that both Fernández and Jáuregui expressed over the difficulty they experienced in interpreting poetry in their native language can be explained in terms of a sense of loss of power over their language.

Applying Waswo's observation that such a shift is actually "an expansion of controls" available to the interpreter (14) appears to contradict their expressed feelings of loss of power. The interpreter's control only increases, however, if he/she is aware of having control and is willing to exercise it. It is necessary to remember that the idea of the reader as construer of meaning was a radical departure from referential semantics; Jáuregui mentions it only as an undesirable result of Góngora's poetry (Antídoto 97). Meaning was referential, still considered to exist beyond, behind, or beneath the text.

The means of concealing the poem's meaning are the same in Vázquez Siruela's "Discurso" as those that appeared in the attacks of Góngora's critics,
senalando ellos mismos bien incautamente por causas desta su obscuridad la demasiada cultura de la oración, la osadía y frecuencia de las metáforas, las vozes esquisitas, las antíthesis, los hipérbatos, con las otras figuras i amenidades que a costa de su mucho desvelo con rara industria de la lengua griega i Romana trasladó a la nuestra. (388)

These "ornaments" of the language, however, are lights—"lumbres de la oración"—that illuminate it and make it "espléndida." The difficulty of understanding, or seeing, is thus not the result of darkness, but of an "abundancia de luz" (387), and "quien afirma que de aquí naze su obscuridad, forzado confiesa de camino que se enbaraza en la copia de luz y que la noche más está de su parte que en los objetos mismos. . . . (388). The blindness, formerly called obscurity, lies not in the poem, but in the interpreter whose vision is disrupted by so much light.

Vázquez distinguishes between esplendor and clarity, explaining that although they seem to be opposites they are not. He explains that Latin perspicuitas, Greek diaphaneia, the same as Spanish transparencia,

es una claridad de ningún fondo, como una tela de luz mui delgada i de raros hilos que admite los ojos i francamente los dexa pasar a los objetos que tras ella se esconden. Más esplendor es mucha luz condensada, que detiene la vista i aun
la haze volver atrás si no es muy valiente, i
quando lo es, abiendo de penetrar por fondo como
por un piélago de luz, llega más tarde a los
objetos. (388)

Covarrubias explains that in embroidery that shows relief,
the fondo is the lower level of needlework (604); thus with
clarity, there is no fondo while with esplendor the fondo
is like a "piélago." In addition to signifying "ocean,"
"piélago" is "por translación . . . un negocio dificultoso
de concluir, que no le halla pie el que entra en él"
(Covarrubias 870).

The image of the tapestry is in agreement with
Jáuregui’s concern over the lack of a fixed, readily
accessible reality beyond the language. The diaphanous
poem, like the sheer tapestry, allows the one who
approaches it to view its carefully fashioned design, while
also always allowing him/her to see the truth that lies
beyond it. The splendid style, on the other hand, not only
impedes the reader/viewer from seeing the underlying
reality, but also provides a fondo, a false bottom, as it
were, that misleads the interpreter. Both Jáuregui
(although with some vacillation) and Vázquez maintain that
the poem is ultimately comprehensible, that one may discern
what lies beyond after much work. Besides the terminology,
the difference between them is, of course, that Vázquez
finds the difficulty of interpretation not only acceptable
but commendable.
The four defenses examined above do not show significant epistemological differences from the four attacks in the previous chapter. The way one is thought to know the world in both cases is based on the intellectual concept as the image of the thing in the world. The ordinary function of language in communicating that knowledge from one person's understanding to that of another is also the same. The difference is that language, formerly seen to be purely a function, becomes an entity which is to be beautified and then, as a thing of great beauty, removed from the grasp of ordinary people. For both qualities (function and entity) to have been attributes of one language, however, the epistemologically defined role of language would have had to change; the accurate transmission of knowledge would have been compromised by a legitimate language that could both transmit truth and resist or even deny its transmission. That danger was avoided by language's division into distinct, parallel levels corresponding to the aspects of splendid entity and transparent function. The "nueva poesía" was new in that it appeared to be an addition to an existing system rather than a change in the order of things.

Of course, the one writer who could best explain and defend that poetry was Luis de Góngora. Góngora was the poet who claimed to be (and who was acclaimed to be by many) the one who had raised Spanish lyric to an
unsurpassed level of glory, the new Phoenix born from the ashes of Homer and Virgil (Vázquez 382). Like his chief opponents he wrote satirical and burlesque poems to attack them and defend his major works, and as in their case, his gibes reveal little about his poetics. In some décimas that Millé dates between 1614 and 1617, Góngora places the obscurity in the malice of the interpreter as he had also done in the "Carta" he wrote in his defense (173):

\[
\text{pues imputa oscuridad} \\
\text{a una opaca Soledad} \\
\text{quien luz no enciende en su casa.} \\
\text{Melindres son de lechuza,} \\
\text{que en lo umbroso poco vuele} \\
\text{quien en las tinieblas suele} \\
\text{no perdonar a una alcuza. ("Por la estafeta")}
\]

The critic—Millé indicates that Jáuregui was intended (1131-1132), while Orozco also points up references to Lope de Vega (217-218)—is compared to an owl, which is noted for its poor eyesight and its predilection for drinking lamp oil (Covarrubias 756). The "Soledades," then, are imputed to be opaque by those who not only do not see well but who greedily and imprudently drink up the means by which they might be able to see better. Góngora’s use of the metaphor of vision/understanding continues in the sonnet “De los que censuraron su ‘Polifemo.’” He writes that the critics of that poem, "A pesar del lucero de su frente, / le hacen oscuro.” It is obvious that they, and
not Polyphemus (the personified poem), are the source of the imputed obscurity. The Cyclops responds with "dos truenos . . . de su Occidente," "razones," according to the poet, that would offer his adversaries closure to their lack of understanding.

In the "Carta en respuesta a la que le escribieron," the only piece of theoretical writing in which Gongora discusses and defends his poetics, he does not define his use of the term "obscuridad," but his discussion gives an adequate picture of certain features of it he held to be true. In denying Lope's charge that his poetry was neither useful, noble ("honroso"), nor delightful, Gongora proposes that his poems are useful for educating students, because

si la obscuridad y estilo entrincado de Ovidio (que en lo de Ponto y en lo de Tristibus fue tan claro como se ve, y tan obscuro en las Transformaciones), da causa a que, vacilando el entendimiento en fuerza de discurso, trabajándole (pues crece con cualquier acto de valor), alcance lo que así en la lectura superficial de sus versos no pudo entender, luego hase de confesar que tiene utilidad avivar el ingenio, y eso nació de la obscuridad del poeta. (172)

Gongora's parallel use of "obscuridad" and "estilo entrincado" indicates that he considers obscurity to be distinct from the linguistic, material manifestation of the poem, and assumes that language is independent of its
referent. The attribution of the obscurity to the author rather than to the text, however, serves to blur the distinction between poet and poem, between thought and language. Just how language, the concepto, and the thing in the world are perceived by Góngora is not yet clear.

Much more insight into the philosophical basis for Góngora's poetics is revealed by his description of the hermeneutical process as "the understanding vacillating by virtue of discourse, working at it." The uncertain hesitation between alternative significations and the etymological "running about" of "discourse" result in the growth of understanding with each effort. The process ends when the understanding achieves what a superficial reading cannot, a fixed referential meaning. Góngora makes no mention here of the reader's understanding as constitutive of meaning; on the contrary, in the following sentence, he writes of the referent as something that exists beneath language and that is to be uncovered: "Eso mismo hallarás V. m. en mis Soledades, si tiene capacidad para quitar la corteza y descubrir lo misterioso que encubren" (172). The image (which predates but reminds one of Lope's reference to the Silenus statues of the Symposium) is reminiscent of the task of the resemblant epistemology's interpreter in discovering the secrets of the primal Text. At the same time, there is the insulting insinuation that Lope is not among those capable of understanding the poem.

As for the second criterion, "honrosa," Góngora writes
that he considers himself ennobled by the poetry in two ways. First he claims to have succeeded in the Spanish quest to elevate the Castilian language and thus to merit honor: "si entendida para los doctos, causarme ha autoridad, siendo lance forzoso venerar que nuestra lengua a costa de mi trabajo haya llegado a la perfección y alteza de la latina" (172). This heroic language, he repeats, "ha de ser diferente de la prosa y digno de personas capaces de entendelle" (172). Continuing the theme of the capable reader, Góngora returns to that of obscurity as he explains the second way in which the poem honors him:

Demás que honra me ha causado hacerme escuro a los ignorantes, que esa es la distinción de los hombres doctos, hablar de manera que a ellos les parezca griego; pues no se han de dar las piedras preciosas a animales de cerda. (172)

The language of the last clause, and the image of the bark that hides something mysterious, point to the Renaissance Neoplatonic tradition.

In discussing Lope's third criterion, the satisfaction or pleasure the poem must cause, Góngora reveals more of his epistemological ideas, describing the delight his poems give as intellectual rather than sensual. He explains that si deleitar el entendimiento es darle razones que le concluyan y se midan con su contento, descubriendo lo que está debajo de esos tropos, por fuerza el entendimiento ha de quedar
convencido, y convencido, satisfecho. (172).

Intellectual pleasure, then, results when the back-and-forth motion of the understanding is halted by the discovery of determining reasons. Covarrubias explains that "Concluyr a uno es convencerle y atarle con razones," and he also defines it as "Terminar, acabar, resumir, cerrar una cosa, ceñirla y definirla" (346). Gongora's placement of the entendimiento as the passive component, acted upon by determiners seen to be hidden beneath the language, demonstrates that he does not visualize the interpreter as construing meaning, but rather finding a meaning that already exists hidden within language.

Although Gongora does refer to the concepto of the predominant "representative" episteme, the language he uses comes closer to that of the earlier epoch. He continues:

demás que, como el fin de el entendimiento es hacer presa en verdades, que por eso no le satisface nada, si no es la primera verdad, conforme a aquella sentencia de san Agustín: Inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te, en tanto quedará más deleitado, cuanto, obligándole a la especulación por la obscuridad de la obra, fuera hallando debajo de las sombras de la obscuridad asimilaciones a su concepto.

(172-173)

Gongora's discourse is mainly that of Foucault's "resemblant" epistemology. The "running about"
("discurrir") of the understanding can truly be put to rest only by a "first truth," an ultimate guarantor of meaning. Without reaching that truth—which seems to be impossible during this life—only a lesser satisfaction is possible. Consequently, he explains, the nearer the imitation is to the first truth, the greater the pleasure of discovery. Góngora's mention of the intermediate conceptual image of that truth as the object of imitation indicates an acknowledgement that the truth lies ultimately outside of thought and language and can not be represented but merely imitated.\(^1\)

As I indicated in the second chapter, Góngora's reply to the charge that he had been struck by some "ramalazo de Babel" also gives evidence of a resemblant epistemology. Góngora replied that at Babel,

No los confundió Dios a ellos con darles lenguaje confuso, sino en el mismo suyo ellos se confundieron, tomando piedra por agua y agua por piedra; que esa fue la grandeza de la sabiduría del que confundió aquel soberbio intento. (173)

In Góngora's account, neither the language nor the world changed. Furthermore, language was not just "empty" words divorced from sense; it continued to signify something to its speakers. Otherwise, there would not have occurred the kind of confusion Góngora describes. Thus, what was different was the connection between signifier and signified, a connection that could be interpreted as the
third element in the Renaissance ternary conception of the sign. God, who had authored the signatures in the first place when he inscribed language in creation, did not erase them, but rather hid them, where they might be discovered by those capable of doing so.

In this letter, which is as much an attack as a defense, Gongora's discourse relies heavily on the language of the older episteme, describing meaning as something to be uncovered within language rather than something to be embodied and transmitted by language to the understanding of its interpreter. While he boasts of having raised Castilian poetic language to a level comparable to that of classical Latin, Gongora does not discuss the means of his accomplishment nor does he defend the obscurity that results from it. However, his descriptive model of hermeneutics as a restless process is reflected in his culterano poetry that requires the reader's understanding to probe and vacillate while "running about" and seeking the determiners that will close on a fixed meaning upon which it can rest. So, while he probably does not see his poems as requiring the reader to construct meaning, Gongora does recognize that they intensify the interpretive activity, making it a self-aware one in which certainty, as Jáuregui so vehemently noted, is difficult to establish.
Notes

1 R. O. Jones uses this passage to justify a search for hidden meaning:

Through his quotation from St. Augustine (from *Confessions*, I) Góngora more than hints that that theme is for him the ultimate truth of all. "Asimilaciones a su concepto" are (I see no alternative reading) to be interpreted as "asimilaciones [resemblances or approximations] al concepto de la primera verdad". Góngora seems to be claiming that the mind, puzzling over the multitudinous images, allusions and tropes of the *Soledades*, is led to an understanding of the source of all truth; which, in terms of seventeenth-century orthodoxy, one might suppose to be God. And yet God is nowhere mentioned in the poem; . . . ("Neoplatonism" 1-2)

He employs this interpretation as a point of departure for a Neoplatonic reading of the poem.

Beverley, citing ambiguity, sees a second possible antecedent for the word "su." In addition to referring to "la primera verdad," it would be syntactically logical to attribute the concept to the "entendimiento." Thus, "the ‘asimilaciones a su concepto’ which intelligence is to find in the exercise the figures require may also be, in one sense, ‘asimilaciones al concepto que el entendimiento tiene de sí mismo’" (16). He does not seem to make a point
about the significance of his second interpretation, other than that it is an example of Góngora’s ambiguity. Robin Louis McAllister, who constructs a Neoplatonic allegory of the "Soledades," translates "freely" the statement as: "compelled to contemplation by the obscurity of the style, the intellect proceeds to discover 'under the shadows of obscurity' equivalences to the intellect’s own innate idea of the "Truth" . . . (103).

2 Jones' and McAllister’s interpretations of the "Carta" as indicating a hidden, Neoplatonic, allegorical meaning may be interpreted to indicate that Góngora’s work was based on the Renaissance resemblant epistemology.
Chapter 4

In Search of Structure: "Soledad primera"

Martín Vázquez Siruela, in writing to a commentator of the "Soledades," distinguished two obstacles to the interpretation of poetry that are pertinent to this study: Las interpretaciones de los poetas no han de ser después de pasados muchos siglos . . . ; porque perdida o estragada la lengua que siempre está en crecientes i menguantes como la luna, i las costumbres del siglo en que escribieron alterada[s], lo que en su misma edad es dificultoso quedara inaccesible: abiéndose de pelear después con dos obscuridades, con la nativa del idioma Poético que lo acompañá desde la cuna, i con otra mayor inducida del tiempo. (392)

Such a statement assumes that the work is an unchanging verbal icon lying outside of time and beyond the language in which it is structured, an assumption shared by most interpretations of the "Soledades." Critics have generally sought to establish a definitive reading by uncovering the "true," "intended" signification, a "firme tronco" (to borrow Jauréguí's term) thought to lie beyond or beneath Góngora's ornate, contorted language. Such readings are valuable, but they should be recognized for what they are:
constructs founded on assumptions as to how the world is known and how that knowledge is communicated.

It is, of course, now a commonplace that whatever a poet intended has always been, and will remain, inaccessible, no matter how convincingly "logical" a case one may build for a particular interpretation. The most important thing for a critic is to be aware of the process of constructing a context for interpretation, a necessary process in all hermeneutic situations. The focus of the present study will be to persuade those who read it that the "Soledades" resist interpretation when they are approached with epistemological assumptions that regard them (and all discourse) as embodying a fixed, knowable, referential meaning. In reading the "Soledades," I will attempt not to divide the work into the separate categories of form (language) and content (subject matter). I wish to avoid looking beyond language to find either a hidden meaning that refers allegorically to a single truth (Foucault's principle of resemblance) or a referential level of meaning that is assumed to signify the concepts Góngora had of the world (Foucault's second episteme). Instead, this study proposes to examine how the "Soledades" tend to frustrate such a process, and to search for decentering mechanisms that prevent the reader from constructing a unifying central core of meaning.

In exposing my assumption that determiners, whose existence is already relative to an interpretive community,
are "different" in the "Soledades," I have presupposed a norm against which to measure them. Furthermore, the difference itself becomes a "firme tronco" for an interpreter who sees what he or she is seeking before even looking. This grounding occurs because any analysis—a project of an epistemology that accepts the premise that the world can be known and that a subject can be separated from that world—requires at least the semblance of a fixed ground to underlie the construction or to serve as a point of departure for entry into what is to be analyzed. One must dive from something into the ocean, even if it is merely a raft, or else all is ocean and there is no space outside it.

In order to execute my interpretive project, it will be necessary to heuristically posit a text, an "outside" of the text, and a reader who accepts that separation. The hypothetical reader will seek to interpret the text by attempting self-consciously to impose an ordering structure on it. He/she will also enter upon the project with the hypothesis that the poem's protagonist is an interpreter of the world. The reader's interpretive effort will become a second text, and it will be necessary to posit another "outside" and myself as interpreter in that "outside." From that position, I will be analyze both texts. (I do not know the ground upon which I will stand to posit those necessary elements, nor how I came to be on that ground, for the "out-of-which" is unknown and unknowable.)
Standing on my platform for analysis, I will construe a meaning that points up an anti-meaning.\(^3\) The passages I have selected allow me to do so without violating the norms of the interpretive community to which I belong and to which I am addressing this study. Paul Julian Smith has written, "The use of examples to develop an argument is a notoriously unfair method of critical analysis" (Writing 49). Although Smith’s principle is founded on a noble sense of fairness, it is also based on a presumption that one can make an argument without making reductions. Just as one must assume a ground for analysis, one must also perform reductions on the material to be analyzed in order to develop the hypothesis for which one is arguing.

In selecting the passages to be analyzed, I have attempted to choose specifically those with which I can best prove my thesis that the "Soledades" challenge the epistemological stance of their readers. In contrast with writing that ordinarily allows the reader to assume a framework by providing a site for the construction of meaning, the portions of text I have excerpted cause the interpreter to hesitate and "run about" (as Gongora put it in his "Carta") more than "normal," precisely by denying that ground. To demonstrate how it does so, I will begin my analysis by describing an interpreter’s progress through four lines of text.\(^4\)

Of course, since the undermining of the interpretive effort occurs more than "normal" throughout the poem, as
the documents of the polemic have adequately demonstrated, my selections meet other criteria as well. They are passages that treat the protagonist's experience of coming to know the world of the poem. The first three passages will be construed as models of the three epistemological systems I discussed in Chapter 1: the "Renaissance" referential model based on resemblance, the "Classical" referential model founded on representation, and a "modern" model based on relational semantics. Thus my purpose in this chapter (and the next) is twofold: in showing how the poem resists interpretation by my reader, I will at the same time (through the efforts of that reader) construe one. My construction of the poem as passages of fictional epistemological processes will serve as a foundation for speculation as to Góngora's beliefs about knowing the world.

The first passage, lines 42-89 from the first "Soledad," treats the shipwrecked protagonist's journey of discovery into the hinterland, a pilgrimage which he begins in the uncertainty of twilight. As I indicated above, I will analyze very closely the first four lines from the point of view of an imaginary interpreter.

No bien pues de su luz los orizontes,
Que hazian desigual, confusamente
Montes de agua, y pielagos de montes,
Desodorados los siente: . . . . (ll. 42-45)

The reader begins with the negative particle that denies
the assertion of what is to follow. The adverb "bien"
provokes the reader to expect and then search for a verb,
an adjective, or another adverb, in order to apply its
attribute, but it must be held aside until the end of line
45, when the reader arrives at the verb "siente."
Meanwhile, "pues" is another obstruction to the expected
syntactic flow, one that evokes relatively little semantic
input in its meaning of "well" or "then," although it might
signify "since." The position of the prepositional phrase
"de su luz" causes the reader to seek the noun it modifies,
since ordinarily that noun occurs before the adjectival
phrase. Also unclear is the antecedent of the possessive
adjective "su," unless it refers back to the sun, the
subject of the preceding clause (lines 38-41). The
reader's reaching the noun at the end of the line permits
him/her to make some tentative syntactical connections.
"Los horizontes" may serve as the subject or object of a
verb modified by "bien," and is probably the noun modified
by the prepositional phrase. A return glance at "su"
strengthens the reader's hypothesis that the sun is its
antecedent. The final comma signals with certainty another
break in syntactical flow.

What appears at first glance to be a complete
adjectival clause set off by commas raises other problems
as the reader attempts to make expected connections in line
43. "Los horizontes" may serve as the antecedent for "que"
and thus the subject for the plural verb, "hacfan," but
"desigual," being singular, must wait for a singular noun presumed to follow. The word "desigual" invokes a signification of unevenness, a declared inequality for which the differential nature of the relationship between things must be established. The next comma, since it does not close the clause, must signal another interruption. "Confusamente" causes one to seek a verb, and can modify, in addition to the as yet unknown verb, the reader’s process of seeking.

"Montes" could serve as the object of the verb "hacían" and the projection can be tentatively substantiated by the following prepositional phrase. "De agua," however, belies "montes" as "mountains" and evokes the assignment of a signification of "waves." The addition of the following coordinate noun clause, "piélagos de montes,"—a structural repetition, but semantic inversion of the previous one—causes one to return to the verb "hacían," of which they might be double direct objects. The idea of something "making mountains of water and oceans of mountains" leaves the reader with the semantic choice of whether that "making" should be in the sense of generation or in the sense of conversion; that is, whether "de" should be construed as "of" or as "out of." The answer depends on the subject, "horizontes," which, while they do create things in the sense of defining limits between them, do not generate waves or mountains. Therefore, one can apply the sense of "out of" to "de" in the two phrases. The idea of
mountains of water as waves then becomes less important (though no less valid) as a concept when the phrase is placed in juxtaposition with its inversion.

The participial adjective "Desdorados" modifies a masculine plural noun, either "horizontes" or both "montes" and "piélagos"; its signification of "ungilded" could apply to all three, as each is something that could be gilded by light. The participle can also compete with verbs for adverbial modifiers. The "los" which follows "desdorados," if an article, could signal yet another noun to vie for the participle's modification, but the verb that follows and ends the clause eliminates that possibility. "Los" must be a direct object pronoun, its referent something to be discovered. The third person, singular verb requires a subject other than "horizontes," which are also eliminated as a possibility since only animate objects may sense.

Having reached the colon that indicates the end of the clause, the reader may now attempt (if he/she has not already done so) to interpret the lines by imposing on them the order of a more commonly experienced syntax. "Desigual" can now be assigned to "luz" as the only singular noun ("agua" is singular, but is in a parallel construction with a plural noun, "montes"). "Horizontes" must become the topicalized direct object that permits the use of the pronoun "los." "Desdorados" is applied to the horizon to indicate that the sun has passed the line of setting. The subject is the peregrino from the preceding
verses, who does not sense well the horizons that make waves look like mountains and vice versa, since they are ungilded (because the sun has set) confusingly by the uneven (post sunset) light of the sun: "los horizontes no los siente bien, pues desdorados confusamente de su luz desigual, que hacían montes de agua y piélago de montes." The interpretation that the reader construes is one of the wanderer’s uncertainty resulting from his inability to see in the world the limits between things that define them, "the threshold above which there is a difference and below which there is a similitude" (Foucault xx). The sun, in crossing the boundary between day and night, delineated it brilliantly, and then in the twilight began erasing the threshold between knowing-by-seeing and not knowing.

The reading described above is that of an interpreter who is assumed to progress through the text from left-to-right and from top-to-bottom, and who waits until the end to construct a final product. Most readers would probably weave back and forth, making tentative constructions and modifying them as they went, having no qualms about looking ahead for clues that might serve as concluding "razones." For the remainder of this passage, I will eliminate much of the detail of the analysis, pointing out only those features that I believe most provoke the reader’s attention.

The period continues:

Quando entregado el misero estraniero
En lo que ya de el mar redimio fiero,
Entre espinas crepusculos pisando,
Riscos, que aun igualara mal bolando
Veloz intrepida ala,
Menos cansado, que confuso escala. (46-51)
The uncertainty continues in the term "miserable stranger" of line 46, where the relatively unimportant yet unresolved distinction between "wretched foreigner" and "foreign wretch" must be left unclear. Separated noun and adjective "mar ... fiero" further complicate a circumlocutory reference to the castaway's clothes as "that which he redeemed from the raging sea." In the periphrasis, there is no noun to relate figurally to the clothes; the displacement of meaning is to a mere pronoun of indeterminate gender ("lo") that offers no resemblance one might use in linking it to its referent.

The protagonist, "pisando crepusculos entre espinas," steps uncertainly between thorns. Briars that can be known in the day by the light that enables one to see them, and that sharply define themselves in the dark upon contact with the foot, are here made uncertainly knowable by twilight, a light between two lights (Covarrubias 369). The space between things, Foucault's threshold, is made tentatively knowable by an indefinite light that falls between two defining functions in the sense that it is composed partially of both but fully of neither. There is not enough light for the wanderer to rely with confidence
on his vision as a means to knowledge, but it is not dark enough to force him to turn to his other senses. The peregrino’s confusion in the vague light is greater than his fatigue as he scales the rocks, but he conquers them in spite of their height that would challenge swift and daring flying creatures.

In the following fragment, consisting of an ablative absolute—a somewhat rare structure discussed at length by Dámaso Alonso (Lengua 167-174)\(^7\)—with double appositives and parallel prepositional phrases, a degree of certainty is restored as a boundary is clearly delineated:

\[
\text{Vencida al fin la cumbre} \\
\text{De'l mar siempre sonante,} \\
\text{De la muda campana} \\
\text{Arbitro igual, é inexpugnable muro; . . . .} \\
\text{(52-55)}
\]

The rock’s summit is an impregnable wall between sea and plain, not even allowing sound from one side to cross to the other. (The linking of “campana” in juxtaposition with “mar” in parallel phrases is undermined to some degree by the preceding words related to sound—“sonante” and “muda”—that suggest “campana” instead.) More than just a wall, the ridge is also a judge that settles contention by drawing lines. As he passes from rocky seashore (itself an area in-between ocean and land) to the plain, the wanderer also crosses the limit between sound and silence, between day and night, adding the unseeable unknown to the unseen.
unknown. Beverley also notes the transition from ascent to descent (*Aspects* 34).

In the dark, uncertain night, however, the *peregrino* walks more surely, guided by a light that does not enable vision of the world, yet still aids him in interpreting it by providing orientation:

> Con pie ya mas seguro
> Declina al vacilante
> Breue esplendor de mal distinta lumbre,
> Farol de vna cauana,
> Que sobre el ferro está en aquel incierto
> Golfo de sombras anunciando el puerto. (56-61)

The wanderer has become a traveller with direction; he has a fixed destination indicated by a slight and wavering light that he interprets to be the lantern of some shepherd's hut. A metaphorical comparison of the light to a beacon anchored in the incertain gulf of darkness signaling a safe port can be construed in lines 60-61.

Jones interprets the passage as an allegorical fragment signifying a journey "from error to truth," but he ends that interpretation at this point. He explains that "in the darkness of his error or his confusion the wanderer sees the light of a port which, unlike himself, is firmly anchored" ("Poetic Unity" 193).

The interpreter's movement through the poem becomes travel as well. *Hyperbatón* is minimal both in frequency and in degree of displacement. The appositive "Farol de
una cabaña" is for explanatory purposes, not for amplification, and aids rather than hinders progress toward a goal. The reader as well has found direction and is no longer groping in the twilight, floundering as though shipwrecked in an ocean of unlimited and formless possibilities. Now he/she advances with confidence in darkness and on a solid ground toward an apparently fixed point. The interpreter has built a structure spanning the abyss, a wire tied at one end to the protagonist and at the other end to the light. On that wire can be hung whatever occurs between the "now" of interpretation and the future "then" of the reader's arrival, along with that of the protagonist, at their common goal. The light is assigned meaning (value), not just signification, by both the traveller and the reader.

The traveller proceeds inward and downward toward a light in the center of the darkness, a light seen by him to lie in the world and not in the intellect. His intellect compares the light metaphorically to a nautical lantern, recalling, and thus repeating, the previous action of the poem, the naufrago's drifting on the sea. This time, however, inside the "corteza," the defining limits of beach and ridge, he can see the "misterioso," the goal that he wishes to attain. The metaphor is merely a concept that resembles the first truth, the self-defining goal; it is the only thing that is visible in the darkness, and is thus the sole knowable thing.
The peregrino directs an apostrophe to the light, asking for closure to his interpretative act.

Rayos, les dize, ya que no de Leda
Tremulos hijos, sed de mi fortuna
Termino luminoso. (62-64)

The wanderer holds in mind and fears the alternate possibility that the light’s source is the false fire of St. Elmo, associated with Castor and Pollux (Bulfinch 130), rather than a lantern signaling shelter and human presence, just another resemblance and not the sought-for truth.

With the travellers's doubt, the language has become convoluted again with enjambement and the location of adjectival prepositional phrases before the nouns they modify. The potentially ambiguous words "sed" and "termino" (unaccented in the Chacón edition), with their two functions of noun and verb, are also, though briefly, impediments to interpretation.

As the narrative continues, the protagonist fears losing contact with his newly found direction:

Y recelando
De inuidiosa barbara arboleda
Interposicion, quando
De vientos no conjuracion alguna: . . . .

(64-67)

He does not trust the things that he does not see, even though he can feel and hear that there is no conspiracy between winds and woods to obstruct his vision. The
invisible world is perceived to be hostile, as can be inferred from the words "invidiosa," "bárbara," and "conjuración." The unseeable is known only through its potentiality to interfere with the attainment of his certain goal.

Seeking to avoid such an interruption, the traveller fixes intently on the light as he continues toward it:

Qual, haziendo el villano
La fragosa montaña facil llano,
Attento sigue aquella
(Aun a pesar de las tinieblas bella,
aun a pesar de las estrellas clara)
Piedra, indigna Thiara
(Si tradicion appocrifha no miente)
De animal tenebroso, cuya frente
Carro es brillante de nocturno día:
Tal diligente, el passo
El Iouen apressura,
Midiendo la espesura
Con igual pie, que el raso;
Fixò (a despecho de la niebla fria)
En el carbunclo, Norte de su aguja
O el Austro brame, ó la arboleda cruja. (68-83)

Neither the peregrino nor the reader succeeds in avoiding the obstacles. The word "qual" introduces a simile that is interrupted after line 69 and resumed eight lines later with "tal." Like the rustic who makes rough mountains into
easy flatlands through his familiarity with the terrain, the youth passes hurriedly through the thicket as if it were open country because of the guiding light. Both he and the reader, however, experience the interposed impediments. The walker must crash through the thicket while the reader must pass through parenthetical passages within the interpolated material. In line 70, the castaway begins attentively following but the reader must struggle past two interruptions to line 73 in order to find out what it is that he is pursuing. Confusion results when the word for the object followed is not the expected "luz" but rather "piedra." The interpolations that delayed the progress describe this stone (before it can be identified as such) as beautiful in spite of the darkness and bright despite the stars, indicating that it can be seen in the darkness and causing the reader to suspect a metaphorical displacement.

The adjective "indigna," which is not only separated a great distance from its noun ("frente") but also placed next to one it could conceivably modify ("tiara"), and an appositive ("carro es brillante de nocturno día"), offer further delays to certainty. The light, a stone, is now interpreted by the reader to be a crown for the unworthy brow of a nocturnal animal that transports it, but a parenthetical clause suggests that the last displacement may not be true. The uncertainty of the appositive's veracity is established by four words in the parenthetical
insertion that cause the reader to doubt: the conditional “si,” "tradición" that is not necessarily true, "apócrifa" of dubious origin, and, of course, "miente."

The reader arrives at line 77 and the progress of the peregrino resumes. In spite of the cold fog, the protagonist’s attention remains fixed on the stone/light, now identified as a ruby ("carbunclo"), which has the reputation of glowing in the darkness, and being astrologically related to both the sun and the Pleiades (Morales 274). Flecks of gold in the carbuncle (272, 274) (whose name signifies in Latin a small, glowing coal), which resemble the stars, the sun, the light that leads the shipwrecked youth, and even the false fire of St. Elmo, are all connected by resemblance. The word "Norte" in apposition to "carbunclo" adds the signification of the navigationally important North Star. "Norte" also can be opposed to "Austro," the south wind, in the following line that, were it conspiring with trees to obstruct the vision of the wanderer as he had feared (line 67), would be overcome by his determined fixation on his goal, no matter how much the wind howled or the woods crackled.

It is the peregrino, however, who crashes through the thicket and alerts the dog that guards the fire:

El can ia vigilante
Convoca despidiendo al caminante
Y la que desuiada
Luz poca parecio, tanta es vezina

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Que iaze en ella la robusta encina,
Mariposa en cenizas desatada. (84-89)

Though intending to send away the intruder, the dog's barking summons him, his masters, and the reader to a point of meeting. The function of "caminante" as direct object of both the verb "convoca" and the verbal "despidiendo," and the position of the word after its verbs, along with the signification of "convocar" as "to call together," all serve to narrow the interpreter's energies to the rapidly approaching goal. The adjectives "poca" and "tanta," anchored to the same noun, "luz," also imitate the action of converging on a point, narrowing instead of amplifying with multiple appositives and metaphorical replications.

As he arrives, the traveller realizes that his interpretation of the remote light as a lantern was not correct; he finds instead a great fire. In the fire lies burning the trunk of an oak, the "firme tronco" of meaning that both he and the reader had projected and have been seeking. The goal has been attained. It is not, however, the true fixed point the pilgrim was seeking; it is only another which resembles it. The following appositive makes that clear, evoking two images that belie any sense of security in his achievement: the blazing log resembles a butterfly with brilliant wings, a symbol of ephemerality, and also a moth that sought and found the light and now is being reduced to ashes, to nothing. The goal of certainty is undone.
The *peregrino*’s journey from nowhere has reached only a temporary stopping place. Looking back from whence he came, he can see only darkness. He did not acquire knowledge of the territory he traversed after crossing the threshold between day and night, seeing and not seeing. The resemblant epistemology only allows knowledge of one thing, the principle of resemblance itself. He saw only light, ordinarily the invisible vehicle of knowledge, as an entity rather than merely a function. The reader’s task to this point has also been frustrated. The “wire” stretched earlier from the position of the traveller to the glowing destination has gone slack and has been reeled in, leaving only one point, the fire that is dying, and no framework on which to structure a projected interpretation. The reader, as the wanderer has done with light, has seen and struggled with language and is aware of it as an entity that requires a tying together in the poem in order to function. It is not the unobtrusive vehicle of knowledge it ordinarily seems to be in Foucault’s “Classical” episteme.

The second passage, lines 182-211, can support an interpretation recalling the principle of representation as the basis for knowledge, described by Foucault and discussed in Chapter 1. After singing a song in the tradition of “mensoprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea” (94-135) and passing the night as the guest of goatherds, the protagonist sets out the next morning to continue his journey.
Agradecido pues el peregrino
Dexa el aluergue, i sale acompañado
De quien le lleua donde leuantado,
Distante pocos passos de'l camino,
Imperíoso mira la campañía
Vn escollo, apasible galeria,
Que festiuno theatro fue algun dia
de quantos pisan Faunos la montaña. (182-189)

There has been nothing done or said in the intervening
verses that would enable the reader to hypothesize a
purpose or possible destination for the peregrino’s
travels. The shepherd’s hut he leaves behind is
figuratively signified by the word “aluergue” in its
ordinary sense of a resting place for travellers. Padre
Guadix’s claim, however, that the word’s source is the
Arabic “varga,” indicating “choça o casa pajiza”
(Covarrubias 108), means that the link between signifier
and signified may be construed as both figurative and
literal.

In the parallel construction of line 183, two verbs--
the transitive “deja” and intransitive “sale”--indicate
dual aspects of a single action. In one motion the
protagonist leaves behind the rustic hovel, an impermanent
but relatively fixed structure of oak and straw, and sets
forth, guided this time by a goatherd. The destination is
mentioned with the use of the adverb “donde,” permitting
the reader to project an arrival. The journey there is
short; to make it so, the interpreter must revise the initial impression of a long one, generated upon encountering the adjective "distante," as it is followed immediately by the undercutting adverbial noun clause "pocos passos." The seemingly offhand mention of a road (line 185) promises a foundation for structure; roads direct motion and enable future projections. Structure is delayed, however, as the serrano leads the youth away from the road to another stopping place.

The destination is a second fixed point, not a temporary edifice this time, but hard, permanent, natural rock. This elevated point "watches" ("mira") the countryside; the words "galería" and "teatro" also indicate watching. It is upon this point that the wanderer, Jáuregui's "mirón" (Antidoto 87), will stand in order to view and know the land.

Llegó, i a vista tanta
Obedeciendo la dudosa planta,
Immobil se quedó sobre vn lentisco,
Verde balcon de'l agradable risco. (190-193)

The abrupt shift to the preterite, accentuated by its being a one-word clause, definitively completes the journey as the peregrino arrives. The preterite also reinforces the phrase "immobil se quedó" as a fixed state.

Although the youth stands still on firm ground, his own foundation is "dudosa." The fixed point from which to view has been achieved, and the protagonist, from that
vantage point "outside" (in this case above) the world, can know and appropriate space by seeing it as something distinct. The things that are differentiated become the ground that can support the projections necessary for constructing interpretations. The viewer, however, is fallible; he must be equal to the task. Possessing a ground serves no purpose if an observer is not capable of interpreting what he/she sees. The view that greets the castaway in his balcony awes him at first, making his own foundation "dudosa."

The reader is forced to share his confusion, unable to establish the dimensions of the "vista":

Si mucho poco mappa les despliega,
Mucho es mas lo que (nieblas desatando)
Confunde el Sol, i la distancia niega. (194-196)

The reader's interpretation of the scene's description, like that of the peregrino, begins on "dudosa planta" with the conditional "if." The juxtaposition of the mutually denying "mucho" and "poco" that follows further delays any semantic construction. The visible expanse opens, unfolding to the viewers as they project onto it anorganizing system, "re-presenting" it to the intellect as a map. That part of the prospect which cannot be seen, which cannot be reduced and appropriated, however, is greater that what is visible. Obstacles to the watcher's interpretation of the scene (and to the modern reader's interpretation of the poem) are distance (Vázquez Siruela's
"muchos siglos"), fog (Jáuregui's "obscuridad"), or excessive light that dissipates the fog (Vázquez's "esplendor"), all of which limit vision.

The watcher's reaction to the scene is one of astonishment:

Muda la admiracion habla callando,
Y ciega vn rio sigue, que luciente
De aquellos montes hijo,
Con torcido discurso, aunque prolijo,
Tiranniza los campos vtilmente:
Orladas sus orillas de frutales,
Quiere la Copia que su cuerno sea;
Si al animal armaron de Amalthea
Diaphanos cristales:
Enga<rn>zando edificios en su plata,
De muros se corona,
Rocas abraça, islas apprisiona
De la alta gruta, donde se desata,
Hasta los jaspes liquidos, adonde
Su orgullo pierde, i su memoria esconde.

The youth, signified metonymically by his "admiración," expresses his astonishment paradoxically by not speaking. His vision, and thus his knowledge, is blinded by the immensity of what presents itself, signified by the "vista tanta" of line 190, the "mucho" of lines 194 and 195. He is lost in the vast and indefinite prospect as he had been
before, first in the ocean, and then in the "golfo de sombras" (line 61). In the previous episode, he was led by a light that defined only itself in the darkness. This time he is sought out by a light that guides his vision to an identifiable object that he can use as a point of departure for knowledge of the surrounding country.

The sun's light, reflecting from the surface of a river, enables the castaway to see it. His vision can encompass the entirety of its twisted "discourse" that runs from its mountain origin to its dissolution in the sea (209-211). He can also distinguish the limits ("orillas") that give it form and direction. These boundaries are reduplicated ornamentally by lines of fruit trees which, ironically, owe their origin to the river's occasional "tyrannical" and fertilizing escape from its banks. The reader can project an allegorical resemblance to the poem itself, whose tortuous discourse tyrannizes "útilmente" the interpreter. Imitating the river, the poem escapes from its banks—rigid, traditional, stylistic limitations—and nourishes the language with ornamental (trans)plants from Latin and Italian that bear pleasurable fruit for the patient interpreter.

The image of plenty is reinforced by reference to the origin of the mythological cornucopia, a reference to which the erudite interpreter may apply two competing versions. One account explains that the animal of Amalthea was the goat that suckled Zeus and of whose horn he made the
cornucopia in gratitude to reward the nymph (Lemprière 36). The other version explains that it was a horn plucked by Heracles from the head of the river god Achelous who converted himself first into a snake and then into a bull in wrestling with Heracles for the hand of Deianira (Ovid 245-247). Strabo interprets the latter story as originating in the nature of the river Achelous:

It resembled a bull’s voice in the noise of the water; its winding and its reaches gave rise to the story about his forming of himself into a serpent and about his horns; the formation of islands at the mouth of the river requires no explanation. His conquest by Heracles lastly refers to the embankments by which Heracles confined the river to its bed and thus gained large tracts of land for cultivation, which are expressed by the horn of plenty. (W. Smith 9)

The resemblance between the river of the poem and Strabo’s description of the Achelous proposes the latter version as well. Two possibilities, either of which is applicable, neither of which is privileged, do not allow the reader to pin down a single referent.

In his edition of the "Soledades," Dámaso Alonso has retained a variant of the passage from an earlier version of the poem. It begins at line 202:

orladas sus orillas de frutales,

si de flores, tomadas, no, a la Aurora,
derecho corre mientras no provoca
los mismos altos el de sus cristales; (205)
huye un trecho de sí, y se alcanza luego;
desvías, y, buscando sus desvíos,
errores dulces, dulces desvaríos
hacen sus aguas con lascivo juego;
engazando edificios en su plata, (210)
de quintas coronado, se dilata
majestuosamente,
--en brazos dividido caudalosos
de islas, que paréntesis frondosos
al período son de su corriente-- . . . .
(202-215)
This rendering omits the mythological references to the cornucopia but describes in greater detail the progress of the river. The allegory of the interpretation of the poem is easier to construe here in the meandering of the stream's "discurso."11 The places where the river "huye un trecho de sí, y se alcanza luego" can be made to represent the separations that occur, like the discontinuity between the two parts of the simile already cited in lines 68 and 77. The interpreter, like the river, "desvías," follows the "sweet errors/wanderings" and compounds them. The river connects (strings together) buildings;12 the reader links together constructions (edificios) he/she has made. The river is crowned with farms, but the "quintas" that decorate the poem are like the contrapuntal fifths that
ornament and complicate plainsong ("canto llano")
(Covarrubias 892). The division of the river into branches
might be associated with the poem's structural
"plurimembraciones," analyzed thoroughly by Alonso, with
their parallel grammatical elements (Estudios 341-436).
The metaphor of the islands as leafy parenthetical
insertions in the sentence of the current needs no
explanation to connect it to an allegorical interpretation.
The period in both versions ends as the river reaches the
sea where the limits that define it dissipate; it ceases to
exist, losing its pride and hiding its memory.

In this passage, differentiation as the
epistemological basis for knowledge (Foucault's second
episteme) can be proposed. The peregrino singled out and
seized on one object, the river, establishing it as a point
of departure for ordering the view. He related the visible
surrounding country to that point--mountains, sea, fruit
trees, fences and farms--and then "re-presented" to the
entendimiento what he saw, employing a concepto of river as
written discourse. The concept of the "período" reflects,
as did that of the "mapa" in line 194, the viewer's
imposition of order on a world seen as "other."

In the passages analyzed so far, the naufragio has been
passing from point to point in the trajectory of his
journey. The fixed point in the first passage was elusive,
always approachable, but always "inalcanzable." The second
point was truly fixed, allowing him as a seeker of
knowledge to stand outside of the world and impose order on it, but not permitting him to approach the object of his knowledge. He has left both points behind, however, without linking them to each other or to what follows. It is as if he were still in the ocean drifting past buoys without relating them. The poem’s hypothetical interpreter experiences comparable success. A text may be woven by tying together lesser semantic elements, but no unifying design of greater proportions can be posited.

The "lack" of order becomes a pattern as the poem continues. The subject changes when the serrano signals and describes the ruins of a castle. Perception shifts from the visual to the auditory, from the peregrino’s silent observation to his attentive listening to the sound of the goatherd’s utterance. The linking of the goatherd’s discourse with the previous passage that could serve as a basis for projecting a structure is interrupted by a group of rustics in pursuit of a wolf. The serrano leads the peregrino back to the road, effectively making parenthetical the view from the rock and the goatherd’s discourse. The road becomes the focus for the interpreter’s efforts, but the traveller is almost immediately detained by the sound of a musical instrument played by a serrana (237-240). The projection of future action is frustrated once more.

The process of interpretation is again exemplified as the peregrino pauses to observe the several montañesas
engaged in various activities.

Remora de sus pasos fue su oído,
Dulcemente impedido
De canoro instrumento, que pulsado
Era de vna serrana junto á un tronco,
Sobre vn arroyo de quearse ronco,
Mudo sus ondas, quando no enfrenado: . . . .

(237-242)

The point of departure for ordering what he sees is this time a sound instead of a light or an object signalled by light. A spatial relationship between nouns can be quickly established with the adjectival and prepositional elements appearing in the lines, allowing an imposition of order on sound, instrument, girl, tree, stream, and silence. Beside the stream is another woman who drinks from the stream (243-246), another putting flowers in her hair (247-250), one slapping slates togther rhythmically (251-253), and yet another dancing (254-258).

Although he begins from a single point and passes from noun to noun, there is no ordering, other than the sequence in which he observes them. There is no "re-presentation" in terms of a preexisting ordering system, like the map or the sentence in the previous scene. At first, the youth sees the serranas unconnectedly, one at a time, until they become so numerous as to be referred to as an "Inundacion hermosa" (264). The shift of perception from individuals to group is an imposition of order in terms of relation.
He groups them and then immediately begins putting forward and discarding theories to explain not the phenomenon but to justify his ordering of it. This procedure is precisely what the reader is doing, attempting to project a larger structure that can encompass and order all the sequentially encountered points. The peregrino attempts to connect ("re-present") what he sees (after imposing order on it) to the preexisting ordering system of myth.

El Sileno buscaua
De aquellas, que la sierra dio Bacchantes,
Ya que Nymphas las niega ser errantes
El hombro sin aljaua:
ó si de’l Termodonte
Emulo el arroiuelo, desatado
De aquel fragoso monte,
Esquadron de Amazonas desarmado
Tremola en sus riberas
Pacifcas banderas. (271-280)

The peregrino’s vantage point for observation is a hollow holm oak, into whose "concavo" he is "embebido" (267). He becomes one with the "tronco" that grounds his projections of order. The castaway does not know what the reader has been told (263-266), that the girls are members of a wedding party. With the youth’s later invitation to the ceremony (516-530), the reader can base the projection of future direction along the route that the party will take to the village. Additionally, the marriage, as an act of
joining together disparate elements, contributes to the reader's attempt to construct unity in the poem.

Before arriving at the scene of the wedding, however, the wanderer must traverse some distance in company with the revelers. The road to be travelled, in addition to the knowledge of the journey's goal, further orients the interpreter, but the road is hidden because of the large number of montañeses (512). A point along the way serves as a brief stopping place, a locus amoenus described as a "Centro apazible vn circulo espacioso / A mas caminos, que vna estrella raios" (573-574).

The point's status as goal and center and various references to light recall the perigrino's experience of the night before. In addition to the comparison of the crossroads with a star for its many rays, a fountain reflecting narcissi that surround a flint rock, gives off "centellas." Recurring also is the association of light and stone. Linking the two places further is the reference to the point as "meta" and "termino":

Este pues centro era
Meta vmbrosa al vaquero conuecino,
I delicioso termino al distante,
Donde, aun cansado mas que el caminante,
Concurria el camino. (580-584)

After resting, the band continues on its way and arrives at the village of the betrothed couple:

Al pueblo llegan con la luz, que el dia
Cedio al sacro Bolcan de errante fuego:
A la torre de luzes coronada,
Que el templo illustra, i à los aires vanos
Artificiosamente da exhalada
Luminosas de poluora saetas,
Purpureos no cometas. (645-651)

The sun’s light gives way to that of fireworks that crown the tower of the church. The "saetas luminosas" are compared with the "fuego errante" of a volcano and with comets, transient, unstable forms of light. Even if the word "saetas" refers to the shafts of sunlight cast through the tower’s small windows--also known as “saetas” from their military use as a place from which to launch arrows (Covarrubias 920)--that phenomenon too is transitory. For a second night, the peregrino has reached his goal only to have the fixed light he follows transform into something unstable.

The instability is reiterated as the celebration begins:

La gaita al baile solicita el gusto,
A la voz el psalterio;
Cruza el Trion mas fixo el Emispherio,
Y el tronco mayor dança en la ribera;
El Echo (voz ia entera)
No ai silencio à que prompto no responda,
Fanal es del arroyo cada honda,
Lux el reflexo, la agua vidriera. (669-676)
As in the scene of the previous night, there is a general convergence on a single point. This time the music of the pipes and psaltery, instead of the dog’s barking, call together voice and echo. A great tree (analogous to the "tronco"/"mariposa") dances at the edge of the water. Trion obeys the music of the celebration rather than that of the spheres, leaving its fixed place and moving across the firmament. Other lights reflect from the stream and are conceptualized as fanales in a repetition of the maritime navigational image. Instead of a single light, however, they appear in confusing proliferation as each dancing wave sends a guiding signal that also moves. The point of light is again illusory.

With the repetition of the previous night’s scene, the interpreter is furnished a foundation on which to erect a structure and project a future. Two points can be linked together because they can be construed to share seizable elements other than the passage of the wanderer. The completion of the day, a pattern known to be cyclical, also allows for the division of the narrative along temporal lines. The journey, by being measured against (and thus effectively reduced to) an outside standard, itself becomes knowable to the reader. Not only can another day be predicted to follow, but a day that will see the uniting action of a marriage.

The actions of the following day are the relatively predictable occurrences of a bucolic wedding—a description
of the bride, wedding songs, a feast, dancing by the women, athletic competition for the men,\textsuperscript{15} and the consummation of the marital union. The sites of the various events were all located within the greater space of the village and its immediate environs, incorporated into a stable, defined spatial structure. Time passes predictably and the day, the actions, and the space (and the "Soledad primera") converge to a point of closure.

Guided by the music of "otra çampoñã" (1078), the novios return to their house:

\begin{verbatim}
Los desposados à su casa bueluen;  
Que coronada luze  
De estrellas fijas, de Astros fugitiuos,  
Que en sonoroso humo se resueluen.  
Llegó todo el lugar, i despedido,  
Casta Venus, que el lecho ha preuenido  
De las plumas que baten mas stàues  
En su bolante carro blancas aus,  
Los nouios entra en dura no estacada:  
Que siendo Amor vna Deidad alada,  
Bien preuino la hija de la espuma  
A batallas de amor campo de pluma.  
\end{verbatim}

Space continues to converge as the couple approaches the marital union. Stars—both fixed ones and fleeting ones (fireworks)—form a "corona," enclosing the house and initially reinforcing the exclusion of outside space, but they disappear in sonorous smoke. The villagers who
accompany them are referred to as "todo el lugar," a transformation of entities into space, and they, along with all outside space, are left behind as the couple enters the house. Within the walls, Venus introduces the novios into a yet smaller space, the marriage bed, described as a soft "stockade" ("estacada"). The "tronco" image that has appeared in previous focal points reappears in disseminated form as the stakes that form the palisade. The final image of the bed as a "campo," a battlefield of love, designates a broader space.

The space has narrowed as a series of concentric circles, but the (thus far) central space must be expanded to make room for yet another one that is left for the reader to project. Also to be inserted in the final scene and into the final space is the "firme tronco" that the reader has come to associate with such spaces. This reading is not Freudian, but conceptual; the structure the reader has built invites him/her to continue to supply the razones that will complete his/her entendimiento.

Now that the interpreter has reached the end of the "Soledad primera" and the center that resembles the "primera verdad" of Creation, it is possible to return to the beginning of the poem and impose on it a larger, unifying structure. The structure is spatial, one of narrowing concentric circles, rather loose from the beginning, but tightening as the poem nears its end. The ultimate "outside," of course, is the sea from which the
Aufrago came and in which the reader first encountered him. (What lies beyond the ocean is also outside the interpreter's range of vision and knowledge.) The castaway leaves the sea and crosses the beach, an uncertain dividing line between water and land, and then a dividing ridge between shore and hinterland. His trajectory leads him and the reader past several intermediate points, which can be accounted for as false centers that resemble and point to the ultimate one, a resemblance that is generally expressed in terms of light images. The next circle is the space defined as the "pueblo" within which lie the circle of light, the house, the "lecho"/"estacada"/"campo," and, ultimately, the vagina of the bride. The two extremes are connected with the final reference to "espuma" which links Venus to the sea from which she originated.

It is most important to note that the limits that define the shrinking spaces are sometimes exclusive. The villagers, for example, remain outside the walls of the house of the newlyweds. Although the reader enters further, he/she is left only to imagine the ultimate scene. The instance of exclusion that is most important for the interpretation of the poem is that of the peregrino from the ultimate central point. He remains on the "outside," separated from the unifying center, as a pilgrim seeking something unknown to the reader. He continues that search in the "Soledad segunda."
Notes

1 John R. Beverley notes the division of traditional Góngorán criticism along the lines of form and content and cites a "need to integrate the methods and results of both camps" (Aspects x).

2 Robin Louis McAllister's reading of the "Soledades" is similar in that he also focuses on the difficulties of interpreting the poem, but he does so for a different reason. According to his thesis, the protagonist is a Neoplatonic pilgrim who seeks to discern an essential 'harmony' underlying appearances, who seeks to return to the 'essence' or origins underlying society and nature, and who manifests the contemplative raptures of divine inspiration. (25)

His pilgrim seeks an understanding of the world according to Foucault's Renaissance episteme. The present study, however, will examine the peregrino's interpretive process without determining beforehand what it is that he is seeking.

Similarly, McAllister's version of Góngora's projected reader is of the same epistemological bent as his pilgrim, seeking to discover Neoplatonic truth hidden in the poem by the author. McAllister asks:

What if the poet wants to exercise the reader's powers of judgment rather than of passive contemplation? Would he not deliberately

168
complicate the presentation of his subject in such a way that the language of the poem gives the illusion of choice and indeterminacy, a style that is on the borderline between "confusion" and "inspiration," demanding the intervention of the reader to discover a principle of clarity and intelligibility? (82-83)

He answers the question of why Gongora employs so much ambiguity:

the function of this intentional ambiguity is to make a demand on the reader's critical faculties to clarify and complete form and order in the verses. In so doing, the reader will be exercising that faculty, according to Platonic and Neoplatonic concepts of the soul, by means of which he is most human and through the exercise of which he most defines his human condition. (92)

McAllister sees Gongora, then, as leading the reader on a pilgrimage of intellectual growth in order that he/she may at last discover the truth ("la primera verdad") that lies hidden in the world.

3 In these paragraphs, I intentionally use the first person style of writing in order to make clear the self-awareness with which I am constructing my interpretation. I believe that too often, the avoidance of the first person gives the impression that the author confers on the
interpretation an air of anonymity that disguises his/her responsibility for it.

4 Mauricio Molho has similarly analyzed a selection of eleven lines (Semántica pt. I, ch. 2). He focuses on the process of constructing meaning rather than on the obstacles to that construction. McAllister also examines passages closely, employing "a process of reconstruction and ordering" (84), but by selecting words and phrases that enable him to "reconstruct" the passage in such a way that it reflects his initial interpretation. My description differs in that it attempts to represent the hypothetical reader's process of construing any meaning, not just one pre-selected by the critic.

5 Parenthetical references following quotations from the "Soledades" will indicate lines. In longer passages, I have also inserted line numbers after each five lines for the reader's convenience. The text employed is the edition of Alfonso Callejo and Maria Teresa Pajares, based on the Chacón edition. The Chacón manuscript was considered by the commentators Salcedo Coronel and Pellicer to be the most authoritative version of the poem (Beverley 10-11), and the Callejo and Pajares edition is the most faithful to it in orthography and graphic layout. Modernization of the orthography sometimes may result in the elimination of confusion resulting from homonyms whose spelling is now different, and the addition of accent marks removes initial hesitation between words in some cases. The Millé, Alonso,
and Beverley editions also change the punctuation of the Chacón manuscript, and break the extended *silva* form into segments, thus imposing their interpretation on the text.

6 Compare Alonso's prose version:

No bien siente nuestro desgraciado extranjero que la dorada luz desaparece del horizonte (de tal suerte que ya el crepúsculo finge a la vista, allá en la lejanía, sólo una desigual confusión de espacios de agua que parecen montes y de montes que semejan mares). . . . (Soledades 626-627)

7 Walter Pabst points out that the ablative construction in Spanish results in confusion by the elision of words: "De oraciones enteras sólo quedan dos o tres palabras en las que están contenidas las asociaciones necesarias para formar el pensamiento completo" (27).

8 According to Beverley, "The 'animal tenebroso' could be the tiger shining in the night . . . , the mystic stag whose antlers form a candelabra in the moonlight, or 'carro brillante de nocturno día' in a nocturnal inversion of the myth of Phaeton" (Aspects 20). Leo Spitzer relates the image to medieval legends of tigers and deer (155-157).

9 The "Llegó" of line 180 repeats more concisely the "Llegó pues el mancebo" of line 90 that marked the peregrino's arrival at the goatherds' fire.

10 Alonso asserts that Gongora wrote the newer version in response to criticism he received from Pedro de Valencia.
Beverley affirms that "The Soledades are not allegory in the sense of being a presentation of details which mechanically convert, point by point, into a second order of signification" (24). He does see, however, an allegorical element in the passage in "the ingenious equation of the course of the river with the figuration of a rhetorical period and the consequent isomorphism of the sentence and that which it describes [which] may stand by itself as a miniature of the poem" (25). McAllister refers to the passage as an example of "a self-referentiality in the poem through which it 'does' or enacts what it is describing, and vice versa" (98).

Alonso has retained the Chacón manuscript's word "engazando," which various editors (Millé, Beverley, and Callejo and Pajares) have modernized by inserting an r to make "engarzando." Covarrubias spells the verb "engazar" (520).

To the strange concept of the "tired road" can be applied Covarrubias' explanation of the etymology of "cansado" as the Latin word "quassatus," meaning "broken," or the Greek "campsos," meaning "curved," since "el encorbarse un hombre y doblarse es señal de estar quebrantado y cansado" (288).

R. O. Jones discusses the importance of music in the "Soledades" in relation to his theories of a Neoplatonic basis for the poem ("Neoplatonism and the
Soledades).

15 It is interesting to note that of the three events—wrestling, jumping and a footrace—the outcomes of two are undecidable. The distance of the long jump, from the "raya" of the starting line to the "huellas" the jumper leaves, is measured and expressed in terms of an outside standard, three dardos (995-998). The wrestlers, however, were equally matched directly with one another, and the runners arrived at their goal simultaneously.

16 The idea of the vagina as a space is more than just convenient for my interpretation. Although such a description of the female organ is a negative one, until recently it has been (if it is not still, unfortunately) the predominant image in Western culture. For an interesting discussion of female sexuality, see Luce Irigaray's "This Sex Which Is Not One."

17 L. J. Woodward discusses the recurring wall images in the two "Soledades," pointing out that they are probably important in the understanding of the poem, but he offers no all-encompassing structure of interpretation in which to insert them.
Chapter 5

"Soledad segunda"

The beginning of the second of the "Soledades" continues to maintain the appearance of unity the reader established at the end of the first part of the poem, but it also begins to dismantle that unity. The link between the opening and ending scenes of the first division of the poem, indicated by the image of Venus as "hija de la espuma," is carried over to the second part with a description of the shoreline.

ENTRASE el mar por vn arroio breue,
Que à recebille con sediento passo
De su roca natal se precipita:
I mucha sal no solo en poco vaso,
Mas su rúina bebe,
Y su fin (cristalina mariposa,
No alada, sino ondosa)
En el Farol de Thetis solicita. (1-8)

This beginning, with its seaside setting, returns the reader to the outside edge of the structure of concentric circles he/she had established at the end of the "Soledad primera."

On the other hand, the opening lines could also be interpreted as the sentence that follows the one at the end of the first "Soledad." The conjugal act, left pending
there, would be begun by the verb "Entrase" and continued allegorically as the sea/man enters through a small channel. The channel, also referred to as a "vaso," a word Covarrubias defines as "qualquier instrumento idôneo para recibir dentro de sí alguna cosa" (995), would, of course, be the vaginal space left to the reader's imagination before. The lesser body, the stream/woman, rushes with desire ("sed") to receive ("bebe") the sea/man, and in the same act falls from virginity to her "ruina" and ends the independent existence of her body as she herself is swallowed up by the sea. The description of the moth as "cristalina," a word associated in "Soledad primera" both with water and clear skin (243-246), may be used to further connect the stream and the woman.

Even as the reader continues with the action carried over from the final scene of the first part, echoes of other passages from throughout the "Soledad primera" tend to weaken the privileged link the reader has established between the present scene and that of the marriage bed. The stream that loses its identity in the sea is a repetition of the river the peregrino viewed from the high rock. The "Farol de Thetis" recalls the wanderer's metaphorical comparison of the distant light to a navigational "faro." The image of the stream as a moth that seeks its death in the flame also repeats that of the oak tree burning in the goatherds' fire. The neatly drawn circles of the unifying structure begin to erode as
resemblances compete for privilege.

Further contributing to the disintegration of order, the resemblance that links the opening of the two "Soledades" is one between uncertain boundaries. As in the beginning of the "Soledad primera," the limits between two separate dimensions are blurred. The stream and the sea become one as the smaller drinks the larger and is itself swallowed up. Other divisions disappear as well:

Muros desmantelando pues de arena
Centauro ya espumoso el Occéano,
Medio mar, medio ria,
Dos veces huella la campaña al dia,
Escalar pretendiendo el monte en vano,
De quien es dulce vena
El tarde ya torrente
Arrepentido, i aun retrocedente. (9-16)

Unstable walls of sand, the beach that divides sea from land, are torn down by the ocean. The water, half sea and half estuary, is compared to a centaur, half man and half horse. Further into the poem, the waters are described as "blancas ovas" and "espuma verde" (25), a misplacement of modifiers that signals the indistinguishable mingling of algae and foam. Twice daily the water mounts the land and attempts to gain the mountain, causing the stream that ordinarily flows down the mountain to seem to retreat. Each time, however, the sea's tidal surge is repulsed (17-26). The boundary between sea and land exists, but it is
unfixed. The back-and-forth motion of the waves and tides does not allow for any permanent division. Competing with the erasure of structure is its continuation in the allegory of the sexual act. The dismantling of walls suggests the breach of the hymen. The image of mixture ("Medio mar, medio ría"), the back and forth motion, and the foam can all be used to extend the metaphor. The allegory ends and the remnants of my hypothetical reader's structure dissipate.

The exclusion of the peregrino that had permitted the closure to be forged ends with his reappearance in the time between day and night, in this shifting, place between sea and land that itself disappears and reappears:

En la incierta ribera
(Guarnicion desigual & tanto espejo)
Descubrio la Alua & nuestro peregrino
Con todo el villanage vltramarino, (27-30).

Accompanying him are some of the wedding guests who, lumped together with him and other villagers and visitors as "todo el lugar," had been excluded from the contracting space of the narrative in the earlier "Soledad." With his return, the point that had been seized and made central to the circular structure becomes just another in a series of points that the peregrino had approached and passed by or through, sites linked only by the sequence of his passing. The structure, inadequate for containing the entire poem, collapses, and the interpreter is again located with the
castaway on the "incierta ribera" outside of understanding.

Viewed epistemologically, the pilgrim's quest (and that of the interpreter) seems to be one of attempting to leave behind the ground that lies outside of the world, the platform which separates the would-be knower from the world and creates subjects and objects. The search is, however, for more than just a way out; the pilgrim seeks to escape to something or some place. The spatial trajectory can be interpreted to indicate that the pilgrim is not merely seeking to flee the world, but to get "inside" it, to move from surface to interior, as it were. Neither he nor the interpreter have succeeded in knowing their objects, the world and the poem, either by acquisition through the imposition of structure, or by bridging the gap between the standpoint of the subject's existence and that of the object. From the uncertain ground of the beach, then, the narrative resumes, the pilgrim continues to search, and the hypothetical interpreter, trapped in an analytical process that only permits construction, continues to seek a foundation for erecting another structure.

On the bay, two pescadores are fishing from a boat, described as a "robre." One sings a plaintive song that further erases differences with its power "to solidify waves and liquify rocks" (41). The reference to the boat as an oak, together with similar equations of boats and trees in lines 32 ("pino") and 45 ("haya"), combines the idea of a fixed point with that of flux, and suggests
another structure. The "oak," formerly rooted firmly in the ground, now floats upon the surface, but it still provides a movable, though relatively stable, foundation from which to fish.

The "beech," a second boat that comes to transport the wedding guests back to their own shore, "improvisa de vna, i de otra plaia / Vinculo desatado, instable puente" (47-48). These two lines abound in signifiers of disconnectedness. First of all, the verb "improvis," with its Latin meaning of "not to see ahead," indicates a lack of plan or pattern. The points to be joined by the bridge (which is not a bridge) are themselves unstable examples of the "incierta ribera" described above. The boat that links the two points is a beech tree, normally an object fixed firmly to the ground but now completely mobile. Described as a vinculum, the connection is a tie that is untied, another denial of the permanence necessary to permit a construction. The bridge's instability repeats the denial.

Any and all meaning in this passage must originate self-consciously with the interpreter; the referents of the self-negating signifiers are obviously not knowable unless the reader supplies them. Although the providing of referents is the normal procedure for all interpretation, it is not ordinarily a self-aware process, and almost never is it as extreme as in this case. It was this kind of concept to which Jáuregui objected when he complained that only after "largo espacio" of "la más profunda meditación"
does one succeed in "darles fondo" (Antídoto 97).

The passage could also be construed as a model for the reader’s hermeneutic process. Not only does the poem refuse a definite spatial organization, it also will not support a temporal organization. "El único lazo," writes Molho, "entre los diversos episodios . . . , de imprevisible curso, es un errar" (79). The minimal order provided by the passage of days is merely sequential as well. Unable to see ahead in the narrative, the interpreter, like the boat, attempts to improvise a link between the present "inicierta ribera" and the beach from the beginning scene of the past "Soledad." The link is unstable, since those ties that can be made between present and past continually erase themselves. Nor can any lasting connections be projected from the present into the unforeseeable future. The interpreter is trapped in a synchronic dimension in an indefinite space.

Molho wrote that the "Soledades" "rehusa toda estructura formal aparente" (80). He develops the conceit of "selva"/"soledad"/"silva" that he constructs from the beginning four lines of the poem’s dedicatory verses. Molho describes the loose formal structure of the silva in conjunction with the poem’s title and the concept "woods," signified by both "selva" and "soledad" (39-63). The selva, he points out, quoting Pedro Mexía, is a place "donde están las plantas y árboles sin orden ni regla" (79). One might observe, however, that in a forest, one
can generally depend on the plants and trees to estar (in its etymological sense of "stand") in a fixed position. Even that expected stability is denied from the first in the "Soledades." The peregrino is washed onto the beach, clinging to a drifting pino (15). An encina, compared to a moth, lies disintegrating in flames of the goatherd's fire (88-89). A tronco dances to the sound of the bagpipe (672). Tree limbs, chopped down by the wedding guests and used to feign a forest, are converted from bower to "umbroso Coliseo" where athletic games will be played (958-959). Here in the second "Soledad," robles, havas and pinos are mobile seacraft. It is no wonder, then, that Jáuregui employed the image of a "firme tronco" to describe the "buena fábula o cuento" that he saw as lacking in the poem (Antídoto 139). The poem resists "re-presentation" even as the slightly structured image of uncharted forest.

The narrative continues as the youth, reversing the scene from the first "Solledad," crosses the border from land to sea, embarking with the fishermen in their "robre" (60). One further structure that might serve the interpreter as a model for meaning in the poem emerges in the fishing scene that follows.

Dando el huesped licencia para ello,
Recurren, no á las redes, que maiores
Mucho Oceàno, i pocas aguas preden,
Sino á las que ambiciosas menos penden,
Laberintho nudoso de marino
Dedalo, si de leño no, de lino
Fabrica escrupulosa, i aunque incierta,
Siempre murada, pero siempre abierta. (73-80)
The boat’s position on the water with no links to any stable thing or place is perhaps the least permanent space that the peregrino has occupied since coming ashore at the beginning of the first "Soledad." The tree/boat metaphor establishes the vessel as a ground, but only as a tentative one. The water’s surface offers nothing for orientation, nothing that can be singled out to which one can attach anything of permanence. The boat would be suspended in undifferentiated space were it not for the land that is visible in the distance, or the position of the sun, phenomena by which one may relatively orient oneself. In this case, the boat, as a ground for approaching an unknown, is closer to the object from which it is separated than ever before in the poem, in direct contact with the water’s surface, or outer edge. In addition, it is the boat alone that rests between the peregrino and the world to be explored, effectively separating them. Indeed, the intellectual ground that one “stands on” in order to approach an object is the boundary that defines one as subject by separating the “one” from the “other.” It is the means by which one achieves a stance “outside” of the world in order to know the world, the same means that allow me to approach the “Soledades” and enable the reader of this dissertation to interpret it.
From the unstable point of departure provided by the boat, the fishermen cast their net into the unknown, unseen depths. Manuel Serrano de Paz, a seventeenth-century commentator of the "Soledades," allegorized the passage, constructing it on the similarity of the act of fishing and "los deseos de saber y alcanzar la verdad" (qtd. in Alonso, "El Doctor" 714). He justifies the fishermen's choice of the smaller net over a larger (74-76) for the reasons that los argumentos primeros de toda sabiduría no son conceptos subidíssimos, que esos más ofuscan que enseñan a los principiantes, sino unos principios llanos y conocidos, que todos puedan aprehender y alcanzar para ir adestrando los ingenios . . . .

(714)

Serrano de Paz's thinking here reflects Gongora's description of the process of acquiring knowledge explained in the "Carta en respuesta." The idea of "ir adestrando los ingenios" echoes Gongora's assertion that his poem is useful in "avivar el ingenio," both claims relying on the belief that the entendimiento "crece con cualquier acto de valor" ("Carta" 172).

The net itself is an instrument for differentiating fish from the unseen underwater world they inhabit, an act it performs beyond the sight of its users. When it is hauled in to where its catch can be seen and known, the net's yield is already defined. Viewed as a model for interpreting the world, the red is like language, a
structure that has already defined objects as yet unseen by its users, so that they appear to already know the objects without consciously performing an operation of differentiation.

The net is called a labyrinth, which Covarrubias defines as "Qualquiera cosa que en sí es prolixa, intricada y de muchas entradas y salidas. . . ." (746). Its fabrication is described as "scrupulous." According to Covarrubias, a scruple can be "una duda que tenemos de alguna cosa, si es así o no es así. . . ." Such uncertainty "nos trae inquietos y desassossegados, hasta que nos satisfacemos y enteramos de lo que es . . . ." (542). Although "uncertain," the red is a structure that is, like a labyrinth but unlike it as well, always walled yet always open.

The act of fishing described in the second "Soledad" repeats a recurring combination of elements in the first, that of a space from which the wanderer is excluded and the presence of a "tronco." The net, which is linked on one end to the boat, penetrates the unknown space of the underwater world. The instrument of penetration, it is operated by the fishermen; the peregrino is a passive observer. The red can also be considered a "tronco" in the sense that it is a labyrinth "si de leño no, de lino." In the same way that a "vínculo desatado" remains a "vínculo," the marine labyrinth (a net of flax) remains a labyrinth (the Labyrinth of Dedalus, which was made of wood). So,
just as he did not fully reach the source of light in the
goatherds’ fire where a trunk lay burning, and as he was
similarly excluded from the consummation of the rustic
marriage, the pilgrim is not a party to the net’s entrance
into the sea. He continues outside of the penetrated
water. The peregrino remains a subject, a desterrado cut
off from a direct experience of the world.

In a plaint of “quexas graues” that he sings from the
fishing boat (lines 116-171), the youth gives a veiled
account of his history, explaining his exile and the end
his pilgrimage seeks. The regularity of the song of eight
strophes of seven lines each (rhyme scheme ABBCCAA,
syllabification 7-11-7-11-7-11-11) contrasts with the
erratic regularity of the silva form in which most of the
rest of the poem is written. The peregrino begins his
queja with an apostrophe to the sea, and then shifts to
address the last three strophes to the “enemiga amada”
whose disdain sent him wandering.

The fourth strophe describes the act for which he was
exiled and condemned to wander:

Audaz mi pensamiento
El Cenith escalo, plumas vestido,
Cuio buelo atreuido
Si no ha dado su nombre å tus espumas,
De sus vestidas plumas
Conseruaran el desvanecimiento
Los annales diaphanos del viento. (136-143)
This much quoted stanza, sometimes treated as if it were the voice of Gongora himself (Hauser 312; Beverley, Soledades 127n), is very much in the Petrarchan amorous tradition. The Icarian myth is employed to describe the youth's disastrous attempt to approach his beloved in his thoughts. The conventional "amada" is proud and scornful and is compared to the sun for her radiant beauty. The pilgrim's fate was worse than that of Icarus, however, in that he did not die in the attempt and must bear the shame of his failure for the remainder of his life. In addition, whereas Icarus at least gained a sea, the peregrino's failure gained him nothing, and that failure is recorded forever on the nonexistent pages of the "anales diáfanos del viento."

In discussing this strophe, which he calls an "Alegoría de la escritura como atrevimiento amoroso-intelectual," Beverley makes two interesting points. First, he notes that the Icarus myth was used during the period to illustrate the principle of noli altum sapere in regard to "los límites del conocimiento humano . . ." (Soledades 127n). It served as an injunction against seeking sublime knowledge. A second idea he puts forth is "el sentido de Icaro como arquetipo del intelectual, muy difundido en el siglo XVII: el que se atreve peligrosamente a revelar arcana naturae, los secretos de la naturaleza" (127n). Both of these points dealing with hidden, sublime knowledge indicate the resemblant episteme.
One must keep in mind, however, the danger of assuming that a song, sung by a literary character, is an utterance of its author that accurately expresses his personal thoughts and beliefs. The fact that one can write literature in a certain tradition does not mean that one subscribes completely to all the tenets that may be associated with it.

The scorned lover’s approach to his amada was effected through an intellectual medium; it was with his thoughts that he dared to draw near to the sun. It was necessary for him to leave the ground, both the physical earth of the metaphor and the intellectual foundation, in order to launch himself, in his thoughts, toward his object. The object, however, proved itself greater than the youth’s construct that allowed him to approach it, dismantled the device, and sent him crashing back to the physical (and his intellectual) ground.

The visualization of the peregrino’s thought as a flight toward a light that attracts but destroys provokes the reader to recall the image of the moth that seeks its own destruction in a flame. The image has appeared twice before in the poem: the burning oak of the goatherds’ fire (1: 88-89) and the stream that seeks oblivion in the “Farol de Thetis” (2: 6-8). The invited comparison of the pilgrim with a butterfly—Spanish does not distinguish between butterfly and moth, as is evident in the two passages cited—can be expanded by noting the resemblance between
the former's wandering and the latter's erratic pattern of flight from flower to flower.

The *peregrino*'s wandering is the topic of the following stanza that links his past to the present of the song:

```
Esta pues culpa mia
El timon alternar menos seguro,
Y el baculo mas duro
Vn lustro ha hecho á mi dudosa mano,
Solicitando en vano
Las alas sepultar de mi osadia
Donde el Sol nace, o donde muere el dia.
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(144-150)

In the verse, the youth's rejection is converted into guilt ("culpa") that for five years has caused the pilgrim to wander over sea and land. The image of the "dudosa mano" and the walking stick, suggesting the riddle of the Sphinx, hint that the youth has aged more than the "lustro" that his travels have lasted. The alternation between sea and land, the indecisive hand, the unsure rudder, and the staff that indicates wandering, individually and together, affirm that the pilgrim's progress, which has been followed by the interpreter for the preceding 1200 lines, is the continuation of a pattern harking back to the beginning of his exile.

The object of the *peregrino*'s wandering has not been merely negative; he has been seeking a goal, a way to rid
himself of "the wings" of his daring that carried him to his downfall. The naming of the places he seeks, "where the sun is born, or where the day dies" (150), does more than indicate the travel toward both east and west that Alonso adds in his prose version (Soledades 667). In addition to the fact that these are "lugares inalcanzables" for a post-Copernican reader, other meanings can be constructed. The birthplace of the sun, in an epistemology in which vision is knowledge, can be made the equivalent of the source of knowledge. Likewise, the point of the day's death marks the boundary between knowing and not knowing. The pilgrim seeks to lose the shameful reminders of his failure either by understanding through the enlightenment of knowledge, or by forgetting through the obscuring of memory. The phrase "en vano" can indicate that he has attempted both solutions unsuccessfully.

The peregrino's stated purpose in seeking this place, "Las alas sepultar de mi osadia," presents the reader with another dilemma of interpretation. In the sixth stanza, he mentions his wish that his guilt might die: "Muera (enemiga amada) / Muera mi culpa" (151-152). His guilt that he carries, the wings that enabled him to commit his now regretted act, are what he wishes to bury. Although his reference in the second strophe of the song to the sea's having saved him from death indicates that it is not the end of his own existence that he seeks (123-129), he speaks later in the song of his death:
Naufragio ya segundo,
O filos ponga de homicida hierro
Fin duro a mi destierro:
Tan generosa fe, no facil honda,
No poca tierra esconda:
Vrna suya el Occéano profundo,
I Obelisco los montes sean de'l mundo.

(158-164)

It appears that he sees his guilt and his existence as inseparable, that, understanding or forgetting having been found unattainable, no solution other than that of his own death can end his misery. The phrase, "Fin duro a mi destierro," used to refer to his death, points to that conclusion. The line also serves to equate existence and "destierro." The reader must conclude, then, that his/her interpretive dilemma may be resolved by envisioning pilgrim's existence as a dilemma. The youth is presented with two hard choices, he can continue wandering, which would perpetuate the misery of his existence, or he can stop suffering but only at the cost of ending his life as well. He chooses to live, and so he remains trapped "outside" of his desired world on the "tierra" that is his "destierro."

The lament, as an utterance, is taken by the reader to be a true account that conveys accurate information about the unknown past and inner present of the scorned lover. The knowledge gained is welcomed as an aid to the difficult
task of interpreting the present without knowing the past or being able to see into the present hidden interior of the protagonist. Although the information touches on these themes, as well as the future end of his searching, it offers little insight. The song's account of the cause for the wanderer's exile is wrapped in mystery, his goal is unreachable, and the view of his interior state merely reveals the same directionless uncertainty that has marked the poem's narrative until this point. Thus unsatisfied, the interpreter must continue to wander with the pilgrim, exiled from the poem that he or she sees as separate, seeking stability in the text in order to link it with the analytical ground on which he/she stands.

The episode that follows offers such a stable place, the island where the two fishermen live with their father and six sisters.

Iace en el mar, si no continuada  
Isla, mal de la tierra diviudada,  
Cuya forma tortuga es perezosa.  
Diganlo quántos siglos ha que nada  
Sin besar de la plaia espaciosa  
La arena de las ondas repetida. (190-195)

The island is compared to a slow-moving turtle that has swum for centuries without changing its position in relation to the land.\(^7\) It is a fixed point, both spatially and temporally, in a shifting sea.\(^8\)

Within this delimited space, signs of unity, harmony,
and stability are amassed. Three of the daughters are weaving snares: "engaños construyendo están de hilo" (219). There are nests in trees that the old man had woven for pigeons: "Texio en sus ramas inconstantes nidos" (269). Six ivy vines embrace six poplars, all surrounded by a circle of lilies (328-336). Natural harmony is epitomized in the music of birds perched in twining ivy, accompanied by a melodious stream (349-357). In a scene that echoes the chorus and marriage in the enclosed space of the village in the first "Soledad," two fishermen "weave" an amoebae song (546-611) and their plaint results in the promise of marriage and an embrace (645-647). Signs of fixedness are present in the trees that are rooted in the ground. The youth's wandering foot stumbles against that of a pine, its root (317-318). Poplars, although their branches are "inconstantes," serve as a site for birds' nests (269). An ash, although "caduco," provides a site in its hollow for the construction of a beehive (283-293). Trees that are not planted, the encina and fresno, provide a base for eating as table and dish, respectively (340-342, 347-348).

The youth praises the anciano and advises him not to leave the secure space of the island:

Pisad dichoso esta esmeralda bruta
En marmol engastada siempre vndoso, . . .

(367-368)

He speaks of the island in terms of stability and
permanence, employing the image of one stone set within another. Gaspar de Morales writes of the emerald:

Dizen los naturales, que no ay color mas apacible a la vista, que el de la Esmeralda, verbi gratia, si las yerbas en el campo con su verdor y frescura alegran, y regozijan, siendo perecederas, con quanta mas razon, lo que es natural, y durable regozijara, y agradara mas, que no lo perecedero: . . . . (229-230)

In addition to its physical permanence, the gem’s many virtues include one against destabilizing "passiones del corazon" (236). It was further claimed by Albertus Magnus that the emerald also "da buena memoria . . . y ahuyenta la tempestad" (Morales 232-233), two other virtues of permanence and stability. Marble, defined by Covarrubias as "genus lapidis durissimi et solidissimi" (790), is also known for its durability. The concept of the sea as wavy marble combines the ideas of the permanence of the striated stone and the eternal ("siempre") motion of the ocean. The island, itself conceived as a stone, is firmly grounded in the temporal permanence of another stone, the ocean.

The youth continues his discourse:

Pisad dichoso esta esmeralda truta
En marmol engastada siempre vndoso,
Iubilando la red en los que os restan
Felices años; i la humedecida,
O poco rato enjuta
Proxima arena de esa oppuesta playa,
La remota Cambaia
Sea de oi mas a vueстро leño ocioso; . . . .

(367-374)

He encourages the old man to retire his net, an instrument for probing the sea, and his boat, a mobile ground by means of which he may "desterrarse" from the stable ground of the island. He further emphasizes the island's constancy by contrasting it with the wave-washed impermanence of the sands of the mainland beach. The boat ("leño") and the net ("no leño"), mobile troncos, are to be put to rest.

Further into his discourse, the desterrado again counsels the old fisherman to remain within the confines of the small island:

De'l pobre aluergue & la barquilla pobre
Geometra prudente el orbe mida
Vuestra planta impedida
Si de purpureas conchas no histriádas,
De tragicas rúinas de alto robre,
Que (el tridente acusando de Neptuno)
Menos quizá dio astillas
Que exemplos de dolor á estas orillas.
(380-387)

Alonso's prose version unravels the first part of the passage thus:

Conténtese vuestra planta en medir, como prudente geómetra, la distancia entre el pobre albergue
The concept of the island as "orbe", combined with the appositive "geometer," etymologically signifying "earth measurer," effectively equates the island with the earth. The peregrino is asking the old fisherman to make the island his world. Measurement, an application of an external standard in order to determine quantity, creates knowledge about its object, thus helping the knower to possess it. The adjective "prudente," with its Latin etymological signification of "seeing ahead" (prövidens), contrasts with the "improvising" ("not seeing ahead") of the pilgrim in the poem (and with that of the interpreter). The youth, speaking from his contrary experience, advises him to remain within a world that he can see and know.

The impediments to the old man’s measuring, or knowing, would not be the striped, purple shells, but the splintered remains of a tall oak, a shipwreck that resulted from the storm-causing powers of Neptune’s trident. 10 Again here, images can be created that can serve as signs of stability. The oak tree has come to rest on the island and no longer roams the sea or suffers from storms, and the storm-resisting power of the emerald island counteracts the effects of the sea god’s staff.

The juxtaposition of "planta" ("foot") and "impedida"
(from Latin "impedire," whose particle "in-" signifies "without" and whose stem "pes, pedis" signifies "foot") is similar to the construction "vinculo desatado" of line 48. In this case, however, the agent for the participial action, the "robre," is a now-stable point, whereas in the earlier concept, there was no agent. Here, the act of impeding merely stops motion; it does not destabilize the underlying ground. The dissolution of the link in the image of the boat, on the other hand, removed the ground for establishing a structure.

The exiled wanderer exhorts the enisled denizen to remain within the limits of his knowable world, to cling to the "firme tronco" of his existence. The pilgrim himself, however, choses to continue on his journey, departing the following morning in a boat rowed by two other youths. They leave the island and approach the shore of the mainland. Before they arrive, there is another scene to be observed:

I de la firme tierra el heno blando
Con las palas segando,
En la cumbre modesta
De vna desigualdade'l Orizonte,
Que dexa de ser monte
Por ser culta floresta,
Antiguo descubrieron blanco muro;
Por sus piedras no menos,
Que por su edad magestuosa cano;
Marmol al fin tan por la Pario puro,
Que al peregrino sus oocltos senos
Negar pudiera en vano. (689-700)
The description of the view begins as the boat, though still offshore on the surface of the water, passes just above firm ground, its oars touching (figuratively "segando") the grasses that grow from the shallow bottom.

The reader shares with the pilgrim the process of coming to know the object of vision by revising (etymologically "seeing again") the interpretations as to what it is. The foundation of what is to be discovered is described as an irregularity ("desigualdad") of the horizon that "dexa de ser monte / Por ser culta floresta, . . . ." (693-694). In the two words that serve as versions of the irregularity, "monte" and "floresta," there are three significations because of the ambiguity of "monte," which can signify both "high ground" and "woods." As the viewers approach the irregularity, it is interpreted to be first a hill ("monte"), and then a wood ("floresta"), as a nearer view provides clarifying details. It then shifts from being a wild forest (again "monte") to a cultivated grove with the differentiation offered by the adjective "culta."

The use of the verb "ser" ("dexa de ser A por ser B") points up the fact that a knower must relate to his or her interpretation as truth, equating appearance and existence. It also can be interpreted to indicate that the "seeing" that is equated with knowing is an active visualization,
rather than a reception of the world as it is.

Atop the elevated point is a wall, a structure designed to exclude. Although the pilgrim is again outside an enclosure, this time his vision is able to penetrate to the interior ("senos") that the wall hides. Dámaso Alonso holds that the walls are of such fine Parian marble as to be actually transparent (Soledades 687). More plausible is the idea that the walls are figuratively penetrated by constructions of the peregrino's imagination. The conventional association of such whiteness with the skin of an "amada," and the coldness and hardness of marble paired with the disdain of an "amada enemiga," vaguely suggest an allegorical reference to the youth's past. Lending support to the traditional metaphor of woman as castle are the multiple significations of "seno" as "breast," "the hollow made between the clothes and the breasts," and "womb." What the pilgrim sees through the walls is not revealed to the reader.

The youth looks at the sun, mirrored faithfully in the silver spheres of the castle's capitals:

Quantas de'l Oceàno
El Sol trenças desata
Contaua en los raiados capiteles,
Que espejos (aunque esphericos) fièles
Bruñidos eran ovalos de plata. (701-705)

The sun reflected in orbs recalls the Petrarchan lyric conceit of the beloved's eyes as suns, continuing the
possible allegorical interpretation. The reader might construe that this scene is a repetition of the passage in the first "Soledad" in which the pilgrim views the rustic bride but sees his own "Sol, que á olvido le condena . . . ." (737). In viewing the castle, he again sees the one who rejected him.

Echoes of another scene occur as well, with the mention of the youth's reaction of admiration before a magnificent view.

La admiracion que al arte se le deue
Anchora de'l batel fue, perdonando
Poco á lo fuerte, i á lo bello nada
De'l edificio: quando
Ronca les salteò trompa sonante,
Al principio distante,
Vezina luego, pero siempre incierta. (706-712)

Before, confronted with the undifferentiated, vast prospect, the wayfarer's footing became uncertain although he was standing on a solid rock foundation (I, 190-211). This time, the sublime artifice of the construction steadies the unsure, moving ground of the boat.

The occupants of the boat are assaulted and robbed of their awestruck contemplation of the sight by the harsh sound of a horn. The earlier claim that the eyes of the peregrino had penetrated the walls is denied by the mystery the blast raises. The horn's sound is labelled "incierta," even though it can be heard and determined to be first
distant from, then near to, the point of reception. The uncertainty could be due to the horn’s pitch, which might be wavering because of the movement of the horse from whose back it is blown; the varying volume could indicate that the point of origin is in motion. Or the uncertainty could be that created in the mind of the hearers, unable to determine the purpose of the horn, whether it be a battle alarm or merely a hunting horn.

The latter uncertainty is resolved as the castle gate opens and a hunting party emerges:

Llaue de la alta puerta
El duro son, vencido el fosso breue,
Leuadiça ofrecio puente no leue
Tropa inquièta contra el aire armada. (713-716)

Two barriers are crossed, the wall with the opening of the gate, and a previously unmentioned moat with the lowering of a drawbridge. The unknown source of the sound that had been hidden in the castle’s interior of the castle becomes known when it is seen; the gap between mystery and knowledge is bridged.

Differently from the previously discussed scenes of observation, in this case knowing emerges voluntarily from within a hidden place. While it is true that in the fishing scene fish emerged from a hidden place, they were drawn out with a net. The hunting party is self-revealing, a mystery that removes its own "corteza" without an observer’s having to use any instrument or, for that
matter, exert any conscious willful effort in order to arrive at the "razón" that will complete his/her understanding. In that sense, the hunters are like spoken words, emerging unbidden from an interior that can only be penetrated by imaginative projections. To conclude the tentative extended metaphor of the woman and castle, the reader can assign to the castle's gate a correspondence to the mouth of the "amada." The armed, unquiet troop that emerges armed against the air, then, could be understood metaphorically as a repetition of the hostile words of disdain pronounced by the "enemiga" against the youth.

The hunt scene that follows invites further allegorical interpretation with its different types of birds of prey, victims, and patterns of killing. The peregrino continues in his role of "mirón" with the boat as his vantage point until, his vision "vencida," the rowers and hunters approach a miserable village. It is another place between sea and land where huts are built on the water's edge. Before the expected convergence, the poem abruptly ends.

Why Gongora ended his poem here is unknown. Jones wonders:

Might this be because the subject was getting out of hand? It may be that he reached the limit of what he could say within the closely disciplined form of pastoral he was attempting; more could only be said through an extended plot, for which
he had no great talent. ("Poetic Unity" 203)

Beverley notes similarly that "The Soledades seem in the end like a discourse which has emptied itself of any possibility of fresh poetic life" (Aspects 110).

It is also useless to speculate as to what would have happened next. Competing theories claim there were to be four "Soledades," but they differ as to the nature of the organization. The events have occurred in such an unpredictable manner that even certain knowledge of a greater design, such as those offered by a framework of four "Soledades," would offer nothing concrete upon which to project the completion of the poem.

The reader is left adrift with the pilgrim, eternally excluded from the world of the poem. Like the wanderer, he or she has in vain attempted to reach the place "Donde el Sol nace." Throughout the two "Soledades," the reader has been frustrated in attempts to construct an overarching structure that can neatly account for all the elements of the poem. In addition to the syntactical difficulties, demonstrated in the analysis of lines 42-45 of the first "Soledad," and the general difficulty and abundance of concepts, the reader has "discerned" a tendency in the poem to undermine the construction of meaning. The protagonist's seemingly directionless wandering through the events of the unpredictable narrative, the nebulous or ephemeral delimitation between spaces, and the metaphorical fluidity of objects normally conceived of as fixed, all
contribute to the constant tentativeness of the interpretive visualizations that must be formulated and then withdrawn.

The reader is forced to be a self-conscious subject, excluded from what he/she sees as the poem’s meaning, thwarted in efforts to impose an organization that will permit knowledge by appropriation. Beverley concludes that "The effect of Góngora's truncation of the Soledad segunda is to alienate the reader from the poem . . . ." (Aspects 112). I believe, however, that the reader has been alienated from the world of the poem from the beginning.
Notes

1 The reference to boats as wood is not original with Gongora. Covarrubias notes that "En lengua toscana leño suele significar el navío o galera, o otro cualquier vaso para navegar, por ser la materia de que consta y porque ordinariamente es pino; los latinos le dieron esta misma significación . . ." (761). He then quotes an example from Horace in which "pinus" serves to refer to a vessel.

2 Molho discusses the role of the adjective in maintaining the two ideas of "bridge" and "not bridge" in the concept (35-36).

3 His declaration does not stop him, however, from imposing a "representación" on the "Soledades" as an "espiral que gira sin fin sobre sí misma sin encontrar su fin" (80).

4 Antonio Vilanova demonstrates how the peregrino of the "Soledades" is in the tradition of the Renaissance lyric in his article "El peregrino de amor en las 'Soledades' de Gongora."

5 McAllister cites the stanza as evidence of Neoplatonic influence, noting that "The pilgrim does not use the word 'love,' however, to refer to the 'daring intention' that has led to his 'fall' . . ." (39).

6 Alonso did not claim that his prosification in any way was a translation of the "significación poética" of the "Soledades" (Soledades 548).

7 Juan Eduardo Cirlot notes interestingly,
An engraving in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* . . . depicts a woman holding a pair of outspread wings in one hand and a turtle in the other. The counterbalancing of one with the other would suggest that the turtle is the inversion of the wings; that is, that since the wings signify elevation of the spirit, the turtle would note the fixed element of alchemy although only in its negative aspect" (354).

The juxtaposition of the pilgrim’s Icarian wings and turtle-like, fixed island that occurs in the poem is somewhat similar. Although there is no reason to believe that Góngora practiced alchemy, it is possible that he was familiar with the widely disseminated *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, published in 1499 (Cirlot xxii).

McAllister interprets the island as an unstable place, “so indeterminate in form that at first it seems neither island nor peninsula, an island in perpetual motion, described as a turtle perpetually swimming, but never quite reaching the shore” (50).

Jones treats this scene in two articles, which he says “shows a fundamental harmony in the apparent anarchy of nature” ("Poetic" 202). See also “Neoplatonism and the Soledades,” p. 10. J. F. G. Gornall places this scene of “the ‘music’ of Nature” in contrast with “the music of the court” as a conceit connected with the theme of “menosprecio de corte, alabanza de aldea” (319).
The theme of "menosprecio de corte" and "alabanza de aldea" treated by many critics (among them Jones, Robert Jammes, and Beverley), may be supported by the image of the seashells used for purple dye that do not impede the progress of the old man. Noydens’ 1674 addition to Covarrubias’ definition of "púrpura" explains that the shellfish had powerful tongues with which they could penetrate other shells ("a vezes las de su mismo género") in order to extract and eat the inside. He adds, "Y así fueron geroglífico de los hombres maldicientes cuyas lenguas pican y traspassan qualquier fama, . . . ." (889).

The youth’s claim that the "púrpurás" would not bother the old man could be interpreted as indicating that away from the "corte," such phenomena do not occur. It is certainly consistent with his song of the first "Soledad," "Ô bienauenturado / Aluerge . . . ." (94-135).

Melody Joy Duran associates the falcons with the Icarus myth and the moth/butterfly images that occur in the poem, concluding that "Góngora shows that the rise and fall of the falcon’s flight parallels man’s inherently doomed atempt to imitate nature" and that he "perhaps suggests that man’s attempted disruption of nature reveals human mutability" (48). Beverley makes numerous references to the violence of the scene (Aspects).

Alonso notes that the poem ended originally at verse 840 of the "Soledad segunda." A later version added the hawking scene, extending the poem through line 936.
The final 43 lines were added, according to Pellicer, at the request of Antonio Chacón ("La Primitiva" 425).

13 Joseph Pellicer stated that there were to be four "Soledades" corresponding to four stages of life: youth, adolescence, virility and senility (qtd. in Vilanova 428).

Díaz de Ribas agreed with the figure of four parts, but classified them "por el lugar donde sucedieron." He describes them thus:

La Primera Soledad se intitula la Soledad de los campos, y las personas que se introducen son pastores; la segunda, la Soledad de las riberas; la tercera, la Soledad de las selbas; y la quarta, la Soledad del yermo. (Gates 86n4)

14 Antonio Vilanova does make such a projection, noting an increasing degree of "soledad" in the four divisions proposed by Díaz. He predicts that the third "Soledad" would be "habitada por algún leñador or fiera alimaña," and the fourth would be a "paisaje de est rilidad y de la nada, donde sólo puede morar algún pobre ermitaño" (430-431).
Conclusion

Understanding Góngora's "Soledades" in terms of appropriating knowledge is difficult but possible. Here, one might recall that Collard defined two targets of seventeenth-century criticism, with works written "Contra lo defectuoso de la sustancia poética y contra los excesos de su poesía, su oscuridad y confusión" (84). Since the present study has focused on hermeneutics, it would be appropriate to refer to the two problem areas as the product and process of interpretation. The aim of the hermeneutic process is ordinarily to arrive at a product, to understand or know the object being studied. The "Soledades" thwart, or at least retard, that project in various ways. One manner of making the process difficult is the use of stylistic "excesses" discussed so competently by Díaz de Ribas and Vázquez Siruela. Góngora's poetic language has been treated at great length as a major focus of post-1927 criticism.

This study's reading has encountered other ways in which the "Soledades" resist interpretation. The deployment of space in the narrative frustrates structural organization. Many fixed points and boundaries that are normally considered to be stable in the world and that ordinarily serve as a ground for the construction of an interpretation are presented in such a manner that the reader must construe them as existing in a state of

208
instability. They are not reliable anchors for the attachment of meaning, and that attachment is what must occur in order for “space” to become “place.” The definable places that do exist—seashores, the goatherds’ camp, a promontory, a road, a crossroad, a village, an island, a castle—are unconnected except for the trajectory of the *peregrino*’s wandering. There is no revisiting, no return even in memory or dialogue, that would allow one to weave a web of relationships between them.

A second way the poem frustrates understanding is by tightly controlling the hermeneutic process. For readers (like those of seventeenth-century Spain) in whose epistemology knowing or understanding is equated with seeing, the “Soledades” hinder interpretation by not allowing them to see. To be more specific, they are not allowed to assume that they are engaged in a receptive activity of perceiving (“dis-covering”) a pre-existing order. Most of the seeing readers are allowed to do is through a self-aware act of visualization that generates order. The narrator does not share his omniscience with the reader, who only once in the “Soledad primera” knows for a few lines something that the protagonist does not, that the group of *serranas* is en route to a wedding (263-266). At other times, the reader discovers the poem’s world as it is revealed to the pilgrim and is forced to share in his interpretive experience. The reader’s vision is limited to the narrative present both temporally and
spatially, thus not allowing him/her to construct a context. He/she is not provided knowledge of the pilgrim’s past, and has no basis for projecting a future. Nor is there, as Jaweurgui complained, any indication of place name or spatial orientation that would allow the reader to link the imagined space of the poem to his/her own world. Another limiting factor to the reader’s knowledge is the absence of dialogue that excludes the him/her from the peregrino’s interiority. Two songs, a brief apostrophe to the goatherds’ campfire, and a discourse of praise and advice to the old fisherman are the only signs of the protagonist’s thoughts.

Although a single thread of narrative (Jaweurgui’s “fábula”) can finally be constructed, the end product of the hermeneutic process is not knowledge in the sense to which one is accustomed in either of Foucault’s referential epistemes. The reader knows little more about the poem’s protagonist or narrative plot than when he/she began. (Of course, the fact that the poem is unfinished can be used, at least in part, as an explanation for that ignorance.) Knowledge, as it was generally understood in seventeenth-century Spain, is denied to those who seek it in the “Soledades.” The reader who enters the interpretive effort seeking resemblances that point to an ultimate truth (like McAllister’s Neoplatonic reader) discovers only failure to arrive at that truth. The interpreter who reads expecting to receive and possess a conceptual representation of an
ordered world presumed to exist "outside" of language is also frustrated, left with a picture that seems incomplete.

What, then, did Gongora believe about knowing the world? In this poem, his reader is required to become a subject, a self-aware construer of meaning, a role not known to contemporary thought. Does that indicate that he believed that the world was not knowable in predominantly accepted ways? In the interpretation of the "Soledades," the reader is alienated from the poem's world, trapped in an eternal, existential "here and now." Such a status departs radically from the Renaissance idea of the human as integrated into a meaningful whole in which there is no "other." It also opposes the post-Tridentine conception of the world as an engaño that effectively denies the reality of the "other" and makes the "one" subject to a truth lying beyond his/her present existence. Does that alienation indicate a belief on Gongora's part that self-consciousness doomed humans to pay the price of being "one" to the world's "other" either by suffering endlessly or by dying?

These questions could only be answered by Gongora, of course. It would be futile and misleading to project, on the basis of one poem, the whole of a person's epistemological assumptions. One can conclude, however, that in the "Soledades" Gongora was concerned with the problems of interpretation and knowledge of language and meaning, and that he required his readers to share his concern, by challenging their fundamental assumptions.
Notes

1 Interestingly, forms of the verb "ver" occur with much less frequency than in Góngora's sonnets and his "Polifemo." In the 3052 lines of Góngora's 218 sonnets, there are 66 instances of "ver" in various forms (Richards 176-177), a rate of approximately 2.2 occurrences per 100 lines. In the "Polifemo," "ver" appears 14 times in its 504 lines (Góngora, Fábula 123-125), a rate of 2.8 instances per 100 lines. In the "Soledades," however, with 16 appearances in 2107 lines (Fábula 123-125), the rate is .8 per 100 lines.

2 Góngora's "Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea," for example, which appeared at about the same time is radically different from the "Soledades." On the level of poetic language, the poems share many similarities, but the "fábula," as Jàuregui would call it, is a "firme tronco." There is a known story to which the poem refers, the place, Sicily, is defined, and the time is set within the mythological past. Spatial relations are stable and can be mapped. The characters have names and histories; they behave in predictable patterns, and everything is tied up neatly at the end. In its regular form of octava real, almost all of the stanzas end with a period, encompassing a definable block of the narrative. The narrator shares his omniscience with the reader, the reader sees and understands what happens. Only the language and concepts are difficult. So it would erroneous to assume that the
"Soledades" express Gongora's philosophy. The 1963-1966 dispute between R. O. Jones and C. Colin Smith, for example, began when Smith objected to Jones' Neoplatonic speculation about the "Polifemo" after Jones had studied principally the "Soledades" (Jones, "Neoplatonism," "Gongora"; Smith, "Approach").
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Major Field: Spanish

Title of Dissertation: "Gongora's 'Soledades' As a Problem of Language and Meaning in Seventeenth-Century Spain"

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