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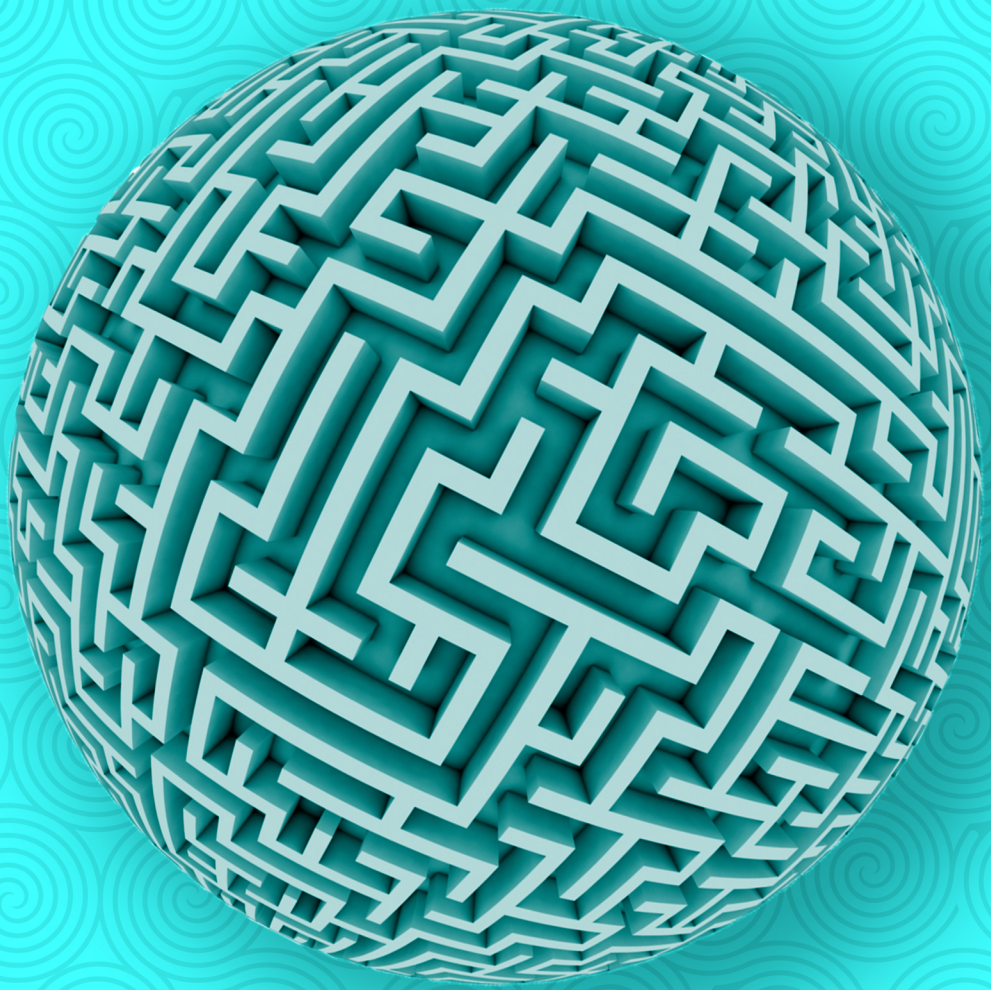

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Social Cognition and Patronage in *La próspera fortuna de don Álvaro de Luna*

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In recent years, cognitive theory has exercised a growing influence on the analysis of embodiment and subjectivity. This discipline has many different branches, including the study of mirror neuron functions. Although there is considerable disagreement about the exact relation between the mirror neuron network and human cognition, most neuroscientists agree that the network does play a role in Theory of Mind (ToM) and Machiavellian Intelligence (MI), two cognitive processes that concern projecting the thoughts and feelings of others.[1] In my book *Knowing Subjects* (2013), one chapter delineates the connections between courtier manuals and the use of ToM and MI. More recently, I expanded this area of study to explore the representation of cognitive projections in *La adversa fortuna de don Alvaro de Luna*. In that essay, I proposed that Don Alvaro's fall was intimately connected to failures on the part of both the favorite and his ruler to make proper use of the social intelligence activities allied with the mirror neuron system ("Mirror" 30-31). The connection between social success or failure and cognitive activity is equally significant in the first half of the Mira de Amescua's duology, *La próspera fortuna de don Alvaro de Luna*. In this essay, I use the figure of Ruy López D'Avalos as the point of departure in order to continue the analysis of how early modern Spanish *privanza* dramas inscribe cognitive interaction among kings, *privados* and *hechuras*.

In *Mind Reading: An Investigation into How We Learn to Love and Lie*, Sanjida O'Connell describes Theory of Mind (ToM) or Mind Reading (MR) as a universal cognitive activity, "thinking about what is going on in [another's] head" (6). This form of Mind Reading is completely different from the occult activity known as mental telepathy; MR entails the study of how humans conceptualize the thoughts and rationales behind other people's actions and use those insights to negotiate social relationships. Neuroscientists have long sought to specify the cognitive activity that requires human brains to be so much larger than those of our nearest primate cousins. The benefit has to be substantial because of the vastly

increased need for calories to support this leap in cerebral size; ToM has emerged as a leading explanatory contender (Byrne and Whiten 2-10).

Cognitive scholars have proposed two separate processes for human ToM or MR. One model, known as Theory Theory, is abstract, positing mind reading as a capacity that requires development of a set of theories concerning predictable patterns of human thought and reaction, often based on projections about how members of different demographic groups think and behave (Gopnick). The most prominent alternative, Simulation Theory, views the mind reading process as a form of imaginative identification, whereby we "place ourselves in others' shoes" in order to project what an individual might think or how they might react (Gordon). Advocates of Simulation Theory assert that humans "represent" the mental states of others in an "offline" simulation, and anticipate the reactions of others based on our own reactions. In recent years, cognitivists have begun to assert that a fully functional ToM involves the use of *both* types of projections (Nichols and Stich 212–13). There is an emerging consensus that the repertoire of mind-reading activities is situation-dependent; that is to say, the utility of Simulation Theory or Theory Theory is not absolute but depends on the circumstances in which one mind seeks to understand and influence another (Carruthers and Smith 4-5; Heal 75–83). It is also worth noting that Theory Theory projections are easier and thus more common; once an adult has developed a stable repertoire of cognitive models for the social subgroups most often encountered, this approach can even become reflexive rather than deliberate. Simulation Theory can be more accurate because it entails placing oneself in the situation of a specific and unique individual, but that form of projection also requires more effort. Knowing when to use each mode is important in terms of cognitive efficiency. Using the paradigms of Theory Theory and Simulation Theory to analyze the mental practices of early modern Spanish literary characters makes it possible to offer more detailed explanations concerning the success or failure of social cognition efforts. In *Knowing Subjects*, I was able to demonstrate that for *pícaros*, courtiers, and courting couples alike, characters who were adept at determining which form of ToM to use in difficult cognitive situations were more likely to achieve their goals. Here, I will subject the SI of *privado* play characters to that same scrutiny. *Privanza* plays stage the most complex political

moments, when the locus of power is in transition and social cognition skills are of the utmost importance. in the first half of Mira's duology, the imminent termination of Ruy López's period as tutor and quasi regent for the soon to be crowned Juan II poses a cognitive challenge for the entire court structure.

The ability to deploy ToM effectively is a necessary precursor to a wide variety of human social interactions—both positive and not—including projecting and empathizing as well as lying and cheating. Shirley Strum uses the term Social Intelligence to characterize interactions where ToM is used to foster cooperation, mutual benefit and altruistic goals (74). When ToM is used for deceptive, manipulative or harmful purposes, it is known as Machiavellian Intelligence (MI). The mirroring function of ToM transforms into MI as people (and primates) in hierarchical social units seek to understand and shape rivals' mental processes in order ascend over them on the social ladder (Byrne and Whiten 208, 211). Social cognition—which encompasses ToM in all of its variants, SI, and MI—is an indispensable skill that allows political actors to navigate complex interlocking system of friendship, patronage and power.

A growing body of cognitive-oriented literary studies indicates that, long before researchers labeled this phenomenon, texts written during moments of significant social transition often foregrounded ToM (Zunshine 10; Leverage and Mancing; Simerka, *Knowing* 5-14). In applying these cognitive concepts to the study of early modern *privanza* drama, I am interested in highlighting specific types of social intelligence behaviors, both positive and harmful, that are depicted as playing a key role in political friendships. Cognitive neuroscience emphasizes the importance of social cognition for survival during periods of environmental change; anthropologists refer to such factors as droughts and ice ages (Byrne and Whiten 18). However, this model can also be used to explore the early 17th-century court as a source of equally drastic social dislocations. The re-emergence of *privados* during the reigns of Felipe II and IV elicited an increase in concerns about the convergence of friendship and politics, and about the cognitive behaviors that govern public and private forms of intimacy. Hispanists are just beginning to delineate the ways in which early modern Spanish texts represent ToM and the cognitive aspects of that cultural milieu. [2]In Mira de Amescua's depiction of *privanza*, characters who

occupy the highest levels of the hierarchy employ all types of social cognition, to forge, maintain—and undermine—intimate friendships.

Since classical antiquity, handbooks written for newly ascended monarchs and their advisor have been entitled *speculae*; such works based their precepts on historical examples of successful and virtuous predecessors whom rulers and ministers of later ages were encouraged to emulate or mirror. The metaphor of the mirror also circulated widely in idealized depictions of aristocratic male friendship from Ancient Greece through the Early Modern era. Recent studies of such discourses have demystified the paradigm of mirror friendship within the early modern aristocracy, offering instead the model of "homosociality" as a less benign force, one that serves to secure and perpetuate patriarchal power (Sedgwick 1-3; Simerka, "Mirror" 126). To further demystify the idealized view of aristocratic intimacy, Juan Pablo Gil-Oslé has proposed the term "imperfect friendship" to conceptualize a transitional phase between the traditional model of mirror friendship and the modern bourgeois notion of honest interpersonal commerce (169). The more transactional relationships require a strong set of social cognition skills, including ToM and MI, that would have been deemed superfluous in a relationship grounded in true mirror intimacy. The friendships on display in *La próspera fortuna de don Alvaro de Luna* range across this entire continuum and each is shown to be linked to specific forms of mentalizing.

An obstacle to the mirror relationship arises when there is a significant age discrepancy between a ruler and his minister. James Boyden notes that in cases where the advisor enters the life of an adolescent future King as a tutor or page, a sort of equality is possible during those early years, because a teen could be easily impressed by the sophistication and prowess of a young man who serves him (33). However, as awestruck youth matures into a sitting monarch, he becomes aware of his own "power and prerogatives" and it is inevitable that the original friendships would be recalibrated (Boyden 33). This generational dynamic is foregrounded in *La próspera fortuna de don Alvaro de Luna,* where Mira de Amescua stages the concurrent fall of Ruy López de Avalos and rise of Alvaro de Luna. As the play opens, Ruy López has been serving Juan for nearly a decade under the auspices of the regent Fernando de Antequera, as tutor and parental substitute for the orphaned *infante*. In the first scene, he is concerned that these long-standing bonds may be weakening as the youth reaches young

adulthood even as his own health is in decline. He is eager to arrange an outing in compensation for the recent absence caused by an illness, "que sale alegre el día, y si le agrada /salir al campo agora /al Rey, nuestro señor, pienso que es hora /de verle; que ha tres días /que no le vi por las dolencias mías" (I.18-22). The danger of losing influence in old age is reinforced when Ruy receives a letter from the Marques de Villena, "El que solía / tener tan gran estado, /y agora, con sus libros, retirado, /contempla las estrellas" (I. 24-27). Villena's marginalization serves as evidence to support Ruy's fear that monarchs are prone to discarding elderly ministers. Villena's solitary retreat also serves as a reminder that the bulwark of supporters that a *privado* constructs will crumble when his status wanes, as lower tier allies seek a more secure sponsor. The ToM that this passage implies, concerning the limits of loyalty at court, reinforces Gil-Osle's model of pragmatic aristocratic friendship.

La próspera fortuna de don Alvaro de Luna foregrounds ToM as crucial for governing the relationships of patronage and friendship not only between *privado* and monarch but also within the network of lesser *hechuras*, a favorite selects to help carry out his policies. During the reign of King Juan II, the networks of patronage and rivalry were both complex and fluid, encompassing factions that represented: family members who governed Portugal, Aragon and Navarre; the hereditary aristocracy of grandees who held ceremonial palace offices; and the *letrado* [jurist] class of educated second-tier noblemen who formulated and carried out policy.[3] The very first scenes of the drama highlight the need for advanced ToM skills, as Ruy López must evaluate a warning he receives from Villena that one of his two most prominent *hechuras*, Herrera or García, is about to betray him (García Sánchez, "Teatralización" 7). He shares the astrological prophecy with the secretaries; each affirms his own fealty vociferously and condemns the other. Ruy López then reassures them that both men have passed the test he has just posed to them, "Basta, hijos, que señales /vencen virtud y prudencia, /que esa honrosa competencia /os da a los dos por leales" (I.63-66). His ToM guided him to test the two men openly and transparently, and to label the conversation a "competition." This approach could backfire; such a test might not seem "honorosa" to García and Herrera and might also inspire the *hechuras* to initiate their own ToM process concerning the loyalties of both mentor and peer. Thus, the play indicates from the very beginning that Ruy López may not have the cognitive talent necessary to

manage his own household, let along the complexities that will arise when his role in the regency ends.

The play follows a consistent plot pattern in which each scene presents a rotating cast of pairs or groups who must use ToM to evaluate their current status and project future trajectories of influence and loyalty. In their first encounter of the play, the advisor and the ascending monarch deploy ToM carefully as they test the affective bond and power structure that will determine their roles in the future. Juan II uses ToM quite skillfully to establish both his current regard for the *valido* but also his impending ascension to far greater autonomy and authority. He grants the advisor the honor of visiting him in his own home, and then eschews a traditional marker of reverence as insists "Cubríos" (I.127). Juan then confirms his enduring esteem for the regent his dying father had chosen,

> Mi padre, cuando murió,
> por ser tú el mejor vasallo
> que en todos mis reinos halló
> mi niñez te encomendó.
> Como a hijo me has crïado,
> y pues que mi padre has sido
> y mi ayo, este apellido
> justamente te ha cuadrado. (I.91-98)

But Juan follows up this flattering avowal of respect with a carefully phrased demand that Ruy López intercede on his behalf with governing council,

> […] suplilde,
> Ruy López, para que yo
> estos reinos administre.
> Hoy a los grandes y al reino
> esta petición humilde
> les proponed, Condestable,
> si en algo queréis servirme,
> pues a vuestra casa, amigo,
> sólo a este negocio vine. (I.146-54)

Juan characterizes his intention to take over the reins of governance prior to his official majority as a humble request. But he also makes clear, through carefully chosen adverbs like "en algo" and "sólo," that his continued favor depends on Ruy's active support of this goal. Carl Wise has pointed out that in these early scenes, Mira de Amescua goes against the chronicle tradition of depicting Juan as weak, ineffective and completely dependent on his advisors (114). The more favorable representation that Juan receives in this play is grounded not only in the decisive actions Wise signals, but also in Juan's ability to use ToM in a manner that is both effective and ethical. This opening scene sets the tone for the first half of the duology, as Mira de Amescua portrays a new ruler who is cognitively effective: competent but not Machiavellian.

Ruy responds with a brief affirmation that he supports Juan's ambition, "A estar, señor, en mi mano, /que siempre experiencias hice /de vuestra capacidad /no fuera hacerlos difícil" (I.155-58). However, when the minister whom Juan had just identified as the most powerful in the kingdom denies that his own influence suffices, we again glimpse the limits of Ruy's social cognition. The dangers inherent in a ruler singling out a favorite and sharing power are worth taking only if that designate is able to use his authority to carry out (impose) royal wishes. Worse yet, Ruy López immediately shifts to reminiscing, "¡Oh, qué bien, qué sabiamente, /ya severo, ya apacible, /hizo temerse y amarse /vuestro padre don Enrique!" He concludes an extended dirge with the melodramatic declaration, "Sus memorias me enternecen/y estas lágrimas me piden /como legítima deuda. /¡Llorad, ojos infelices!" (I.159-204). The clear implication that the deceased monarch is superior to the current heir, combined with the failure to adequately affirm Juan's readiness to rule, amount to a seismic failure of ToM. Neither Theory Theory nor Simulation Theory can explain why the *privado* would have thought that this elegy could make a positive impression. This cognitive deficiency is similar to what Simon Baron Cohen has termed mind blindness (2-3).

Ruy López is more astute in his ToM projection concerning the immediate bond that arises between Juan and the newly arrived young nobleman, Alvaro de Luna (García Sánchez, "Pérdida" 156). His he is able to use the personalized, Simulation Theory form of ToM, because this relationship parallels his own prior experience in becoming Enrique's *privado*

> Hablando está el Rey don Juan
> con don Álvaro de Luna,
> que a sus pies está sentado;
> privará con él, sin duda.
> La juventud de los dos
> sus nobles ánimos junta,
> que no siempre la razón
> contradice la Fortuna.
> Niño el Rey, Álvaro joven,
> que sobre el labio las puntas
> del vello de oro se muestran,
> aunque en la barba se encubran,
> claro está que han de tener
> amistad. Siempre son unas
> nuestras acciones humanas,
> aunque con la edad se ocultan.
> Lo mismo pasó por mí.
> Muchas veces fueron, muchas,
> las que yo estuve sentado
> entre las alfombras turcas
> de la cámara de Enrique
> a sus pies, que sus hechuras
> tiene cada rey, y quiere
> parecer a Dios, y gusta
> de hacer de nuevo los hombres
> a su imagen. (I. 463-88)

Unfortunately, this moment of complete cognitive clarity does not benefit him, because it reinforces his own powerlessness as a new regime emerges. The remainder of the play the stages the increasingly desperate attempts by the favorite to use ToM in order to preserve his diminishing influence and disintegrating network of supporters.

Ruy López appears weighed down rather than supported by the chains of affiliation he had so carefully forged. As indicated above, the titles and favors granted to the favorite minister have to be re-earned on a continual basis. When Juan learns that his representative has not succeeded in obtaining an early coronation date, his social cognition projects this

failure as purposeful—a reluctance to lose his current authority—rather than as a sincere attempt that failed due to waning power:

> ¿Quién duda
> que por mandarlo vos todo
> me ponéis tales excusas?
> Sois Gobernador del reino,
> y haráseos de mal, y es mucha
> esa ambición, Condestable,
> en una vejez caduca. (I. 562-68)

Because Mira de Amescua does not stage the meeting in which Ruy López presented the petition, spectators must weigh the evidence that emerges in the next act to assess the privado's honesty and Juan's cognitive skill.

Juan's suspicious application of ToM towards his minister initially appears to be unfounded. The second act opens with a scene where Ruy López's own *hechuras* García and Herrera indicate concern and ponder how to manage their position at court if their benefactor loses influence. Ruy López emphasizes that he is in a vulnerable state as García presses for assistance in procuring membership in a military order, "caballero /de hábito" (II. 680-81). García's ToM is very much in evidence as he uses a wide variety of approaches to plead his case, appealing to considerations that range from affection, to the equity of similar rewards for all secretaries, to the increase is his sponsor's own social standing. However, after agreeing to make the request, the following soliloquy reveals that he has mislead his secretary and elucidates a combination of genuine caring laced with MI behind his feigned acquiescence,

> […] recelo
> desengañar su ambición,
> porque le tengo afición
> y le daré desconsuelo
> iréle divirtiendo
> hasta que conozca ya
> que su descrédito está
> en lo que está pretendiendo. (II.705-12)

In this context, spectators may reconsider the assertion that Ruy López had just made, that he offers instead one of his own properties, because "Temo el pedir, y así quiero /darte un lugar" (II. 677-78). Spectators may use their own ToM to wonder if making a false claim of being unable to push through difficult requests is one of Ruy López's standard MI tactics in negotiations where he does not in fact support the end goal, perhaps even including the early coronation. As indicated previously, this MI tactic is risky because, although it averts unpleasant clashes when a disagreement arises, a minister's success depends upon the ability to procure and distribute benefits both for his benefactor and his supporters.

Over the course of the second act, Ruy López faces a series of confrontations in which he is forced to use ToM to calibrate his relationship with Juan and to evaluate the loyalty of his two secretaries, knowing that both misplaced trust and unfounded suspicion could produce outcomes that would undermine his already shaky position at court. His ToM fails him completely, as he projects incorrectly concerning what a ruler wants from a *valido* and what underlings desire from a superior. He seeks to pacify García by showing trust—in signing unread and even blank papers—while refusing to help him procure the title that had been granted to his rival. However, for García—as for most *hechuras*—the only meaningful proof of favor is an "ánimo franco" (II.793). We have seen that, when ToM is needed, he is apt to use Simulation Theory, putting himself in the shoes of other courtiers based on his prior relationship with Enrique. Perhaps, in his own case, demonstrations of royal trust were the most valued tokens of esteem. However, as the beneficiary of many titles and offices, Ruy López denies the significance of the very same boons that his sovereign had granted to him as proof of their intimate bond.

The minister continues to flail in his ToM efforts when he falsely accuses Herrera of having written a denunciation against García. He refuses to look at physical evidence that would exculpate the secretary he has decided to distrust. He disregards García's assertion that the handwriting in fact belongs to a highly trustworthy correspondent from whom he has a cache of letters, "fray Vicente Ferrer, /el santo que está en Valencia" (II.824-25). He does not offer reasons or evidence for the ToM that leads him to believe in García rather than Herrera. However, when he had previously blamed Herrera for a contretemps with his rival, the rationale indicates the use of Theory Theory, based on a generalized negative

opinion concerning the character of Andalusians, "Ya sé vuestra condició /soberbia y presuntüosa;/ también sois de Andalucía/ y tenéis por bizarría / no sufrir ninguna cosa/ los andaluces" (II.632-37). In these two scenes, Ruy López misapplies Simulation Theory in his effort to understand and satisfy García, and then makes another cognitive error in relying on the less difficult but also less accurate Theory Theory mode to judge Herrera.

Ruy López continues to deploy his ToM poorly as he strives to restore his bond with the young king. He attempts to be seen as a mirror friend, and as a prospective companion for evening adventures. He assures Juan, "no he perdido yo el brio /de galán y de soldado" but his efforts do not foster a new level of intimacy (II.1303-04). Rather, he instead reinforces the negative impression of an "ayo" who not only blocks the coronation for invalid reasons but also seeks to keep his pupil under a now tiresome surveillance (II.1311). Ruy López then ignores his own previous accurate reading of Luna's importance to the young sovereign, and attempts to *enforce* his authority over Juan's social activity as he blames and then punishes Luna for the night time sorties. There is no indication here of the favorite's cognitive state; his attack on Luna may have been a spontaneous reaction to Juan's condescension rather than cognitively mediated. However, this play shows repeatedly that, especially at moments when power is shifting, a successful *privado* can never allow an emotional response to overshadow careful cognitive readings of every situation.

A rapid succession of ToM errors plays a key role in the "adversa fortuna" that Ruy López suffers. It is not a random turn of the wheel of fortune, nor the predestined disgrace of all Icarus figures, but rather these numerous lapses in social cognition that bring about his fall. When García avenges his perceived mistreatment by reporting an act of treason, Juan's newly negative ToM makes him more prone to believe the accusation. Furthermore, the minister's incorrect projection concerning trust and signatures on blank pages provides García with the evidence needed to seal his patron's fate. Mira de Amescua gives Ruy López a scene chewing monologue, which includes the moment of *anagnorisis* that Aristotelian-based criticism foregrounds

> ¡Ah, Fortuna! ¿De qué sirve
> que en estos siglos pasados
> me dieses honra y riquezas,

> si de un golpe me has quitado
> el honor a la vejez,
> cuando suelen los ancianos
> tener ya su honor seguro. (II.1482-88)

However, in this play, and in *privanza* drama as a genre, the royal favorite often gives the wheel a nudge—or even a decisive push—with his inability to sustain the successful cognitive performance that enabled him to accumulate power in the first place. And, like other "próspera fortuna" dramas that depict a concurrent fall of one advisor and the rise of another, this play juxtaposes the ToM and MI failures of the discarded figure with the superior abilities of the rising star. In this genre, fortune favors *industria*.

One highly effective form of MI is the ability to induce others, both superiors and followers, to create a shared cognitive frame for evaluating potential adversaries. Ruy López's extended soliloquy includes a passage where he reveals an understanding of how to shape social perceptions. This passage validates the supposition that he, like all other favorites, did engage in MI to win and keep Enrique's favor. In an imaginary dialogue with Juan, the disgraced minister he offers metacognitive guidance on how to use ToM to evaluate the accusations against him, "«Rey mío, mirad que engaños /padece el hombre y la envidia /a veces suele causarlos»" (II.1525-27). Even though Juan and Luna overhear this speech, and express empathy, it is too late to undo the damage wrought (García Sánchez, "Escenificación" 156).

Aristotelian models of tragedy posit that spectators will experience empathy or pity at the plight of the misguided hero and his irrevocable fall from grace. Mira de Amescua certainly guides his audience towards that response. Luna even instructs his ruler and his offstage listeners to pity his predecessor, "Lástima da el escucharlo" (II.1549). A metacognitive reading of the play's dénouement reveals that our empathy is directed, at least in part, towards his pathetic misuse of social intelligence. The final lines of the second act are truly pitiful. Ruy López's ToM once again fails him as he sends away his faithful secretary Herrera and cries out not once or twice but three times for the man who just betrayed him, "¡Ah, García, /hijo" (II.1554, 1568-69, 1576-77). The audience cannot help but pity this cognitive blunder, knowing that the former "son" and current Judas figure will not answer his patron's plaintive summons.

Act III opens after Juan's coronation, with Ruy López exiled to home arrest. When García finally visits his patron, the banished favorite seeks desperately for evidence of continued loyalty. Even though the traitor utters the most banal of consoling platitudes, a ToM that is predisposed to hear affection will translate clichés as devotion, "lo que me quiere este mozo" (III. 1819). At that very moment, the Alcalde arrives to reveal the truth about García's *lack* of love. Ruy López once again falters in his use of ToM to understand his *hechura's* betrayal. He poses the questions "García, ¿en qué te he ofendido? /¿Qué mal te he hecho, García?" from the perspective that he is completely blameless (III.1982-84). However, he concludes with the deprecatory, "¡Oh, villano!", reminding the audience that the regard and favor granted to this particular son is always marked by a certain amount of disdain. Ruy López's ToM fails to perceive that a *hechura* whose treatment is more like that of a stepchild will not see himself as a true family member. He uses the Theory Theory model to confirm negative stereotypes for this social group; it is possible that his Simulation Theory capacity is simply not adequate to imagining the thoughts and feelings of a person who experiences caste -based marginalization. Ultimately, he attributes the betrayal and resulting loss of status and wealth to fate rather than his own prejudice and cognitive failure, "si Dios las da y Dios las quita" (III. 2006). This moment of submission conforms to the norms of early modern Christianized Aristotelian plotting, which has long been a focus of scholarship on the play. A typical example of this approach is Carl Wise's assertion that, "Mira de Amescua frames the political institution of *privanza* within late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century theological debates over the nature of free will" (109). However, even though the play augments the recognition scene, as Ruy López reconciles with Herrera and gives voice to a further *anagnorisis* concerning the relative loyalty of his two secretaries, a cognitive analysis reveals that his character reading is still incomplete. He continues to attribute García's defection solely to his low birth status and also faults his lack of respect for Herrera's superior status, "Ya conozco que pequé, /no contra el rey, contra ti, /pues a un villano cruël /quise más" (III. 2051-54). However, Ruy Lópz fails to acknowledge that the noble characters in the play are also guilty of MI; he himself was guilty of misleading García (and perhaps the future King) and MI plots by the Aragonese royal family pose an imminent danger of the

realm. The play ends as a quasi-comedy, at the point where he has miraculously gained a new hold on power as a respected minister in service to Alfonso de Aragón. However, his inept use of ToM even among people he has known all their lives could lead spectators to project a difficult future in the brand-new realm (García Sánchez, "Escenificación" 158). Indeed, he dies in Valencia a few short years, in ignominious exile.

Numerous studies have linked the *privado* play fad of the 1620s with the scandals surrounding Rodrigo Calderón and the Count of Villamediana, and with the discourses that present powerful ministers and weak kings as an existential threat to the realm.[4] This essay seeks to add an additional dimension to those studies by highlighting the strong interest that early modern dramatists display in staging the intricate social cognition strategies deployed within those circles of influence. Calderón and Villamediana were not secure favorites, but rather occupied a node of power within a multilevel structure of patronage that linked multiple competing interest groups. In Mira de Amescua's treatment of court affiliations, social cognition skills are shown to be absolutely necessary and nonetheless insufficient for attaining and then keeping the position of *privado* and *hechura*. The fall of Ruy López de Avalos reveals that, although his ToM was adequate to maintain favor during the entire—albeit abbreviated—lifetime of Enrique III, it is impossible that any favorite will have the ToM skills needed to please an heir to the same degree. In addition, although the details of his betrayal as depicted here may not be historically accurate, they underline the larger truth that a *privado* is only as strong as the network he builds to defend his interests. The rivalry among the secretaries that Mira depicts, illustrates in miniature the need for ceaseless cognitive monitoring, on the part of *valido* and *hechura* alike, to balance the competing interests within the web of patronage. *La próspera fortuna de don Alvaro de Luna* occupies a marginal space within the *privado* canon, perhaps because it lacks the iconic tragic outcome of its better-known sequel. However, this play provides valuable insights concerning early modern perceptions of the cognitive dimensions of the court patronage system, offering an extended and illuminating portrayal of the contradictory currents of competition and cooperation, deception and devotion which monarchs, *privados*, and *hechura* networks navigated in order to guide the ship of state.

Notes

[1] Studies of the ToM, MI, and mirror neuron system began with Gallesese et al. This field is often studied in conjunction from a social neuroscience perspective, "Social neuroscience seeks to specify the neural, hormonal, cellular, and genetic mechanisms underlying social behavior, and in so doing to understand the associations and influences between social and biological levels of organization' (Caccioppo, et al. 675). This interdisciplinary field of study offers a non- deterministic approach to embodied cognition. For a more extended study of this phenomenon in relation to early modern culture, see *Knowing Subjects* chapter 1.

[2] See Mancing, Jaén and Simon, Simerka *Knowing*, "Mirror"; Schmitz, Barroso Castro.

[3] The primary studies of early modern privanza include: Elliott, Feros, MacCurdy and Round.

[4] See MacCurdy, 29-45, Weimer "Myth" 89 and "Homoerotics" 257-59, Wise 112, Garciá Sánchez "Teatralización" 18.

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