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THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ETCHINGS

OF FRANCISCO GOYA

LOS CAPRICHOS AND

LOS DESASTRES DE LA GUERRA



BY

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4TH YEAR FINE ART

PAINTING



## INTRODUCTION

The main theme of this essay is to discuss two sets of etchings by Francisco Goya, *Los Caprichos* and *The Disasters of War*. I intend to give an outline of the background to the works and to discuss certain important plates in each series. The discussion will be a general one. There will be a comparison of the *Caprichos* and the *Disasters* because there are similar themes that run throughout both series. I will also compare the *Caprichos* and the *Disasters* with Goya's other etchings, notably the *Disparates*. Also briefly mentioned will be Goya's paintings, especially the "Black Paintings" which, although not essential to the theme of the essay, are nonetheless important because many of the themes depicted in the paintings are similar and sometimes even identical in style and content to those shown in the *Caprichos* and *The Disasters of War*. I also intend to discuss the relevance of Goya's work today, and why it has a certain timelessness about it, and why, after over one hundred years, we can still look at Goya's etchings and find that they still mean something today and that the same problems are still with us.

The essay is divided into three chapters. In chapter one there are two sections. The first section is a brief outline of Goya's life from his rise as a court painter to his exile in France until he died. The other concerns the political background in Spain at the time the etchings were executed. The time span dealt with is from approximately 1766 until approximately 1808 and the invasion of Spain by the French and the subsequent war of independence. This introduction to Bourbon Spain is



particularly relevant because it tries to show the contradictions prevalent at the time. It shows how the pueblo and the nobility lived and the vast differences between them. In addition to this, there was the Inquisition of the "Black Spain" and its effect on the populace.

It is important to look at the ilustrados with their imported French styles and the resultant reaction against this amongst the people. That Goya was working as a court painter and mixed with the leading ilustrados at first and that he then produced etchings such as Los Caprichos and The Disasters of War that slated the very people he counted among his friends is the perfect example of the contradictions of Bourbon Spain at the time. Simply, the Spanish people were torn between Reason and Unreason, Enlightenment and Tradition.

It is also important to understand the reliance of Spain on France until it was impossible to separate the two. The royal reforms were French in origin. The monarchy was French. The new Spain was French in style and government. Royal absolutism was almost total. The French therefore were hated and this finally led to the mass public rebellion when France invaded Spain. The historical events are important. As Spain faced the crises of these years, likewise Goya faced personal crises. The birth of Spain as a new country and of Goya as a new artist are inseparably linked.

Chapter Two begins with an introduction to the Caprichos. The second part of this chapter deals with the Caprichos themselves and looks at the more important plates of the series, and there is a discussion on these.



Chapter Three begins with an introduction to the Disasters of War. Then there follows a discussion on the Disasters themselves, with a close look at the important plates of the series. Also looked at here are the Disparates or Follies which were a series of etchings that came after the Caprichos and were an extension of these, and at the same time were a kind of prequel to the Disasters of War.

Finally, following this is the conclusion which will discuss Goya's relevance today. I intend to discuss contemporary artists and ask whether these artists have the same lasting effect as Goya while working in a similar field.



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CHAPTER ONE

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## A BRIEF OUTLINE OF GOYA'S LIFE

Francisco Goya y Lucientes was born at Fuentedetodos in Aragon on March 31, 1746. There are no detailed records of his youth; all that is known is that from the age of 13 he applied himself to drawing at Saragossa under the direction of Jose Luzan and that, still very young, he went to Rome, where he continued his studies.

The first works that helped to get Goya recognised were the cartoons he executed for the tapestry workshop. He decorated one of the cupolas of the Church Nuestra Senora del Pilar in Saragossa and the chapel of San Antonio de la Florida in Madrid. These were done in fresco. It is said that he painted portraits with great ease and often in one sitting; the best being those of his friends. Goya's favourite paintings were those he kept at home for his own private use. He painted many canvasses which depicted the customs of the lower classes in Madrid, and various other themes.

Goya's ascent was fairly rapid after he obtained his first Madrilene commission for a set of tapestry cartoons in 1775. By 1780 he was elected to the Academy of San Fernando and by 1786 he was named court painter. In the year of Charles IV's coronation in 1789, Goya was elevated to the post of pintor de camara to the king and was then in a position to pick and choose his commissions.



A great change overcame Goya after his nearly fatal illness of 1792-93, which left him permanently deaf. His work became more serious after this time, no doubt due to his close brush with death. Even his cheerier works have a sense of doom and foreboding about them, and this finally erupts in the Caprichos which were published in 1799. In 1808, the populace rose against the French and the aristocracy, and Spain was thrown into turmoil. This heroic and horrifying war of liberation plunged Spain into six years of bloody struggle. The travail of the Spanish people began - that travail which Goya was to make universal in his Disasters of War.

In 1814, Goya created probably his most famous work: the Execution of Madrilenos on the Third of May. It was painted to celebrate the return of the Spanish Bourbons after the fall of Napoleon. Now an old and infirm man and under the atrocious repressions of the reinstated Bourbon regime, Goya painted his greatest works. We know virtually nothing of the commissions that brought us such works as The Young Ones (Les Jeunes) or The Old Ones (Les Vieilles) or of the largest canvas The Session of the Royal Company of the Philippines. The Black Paintings, executed between 1820 and 1823, were done on the walls of his farmhouse, Quinta del Sordo, and were a very private affair. For these, Goya reverted to fresco instead of canvas and this, more than anything, leads us to believe that he intended no one to see them and that he never intended to exhibit them.

In 1824, Goya voluntarily exiled himself in France, possibly due to the oppressive and politically dangerous atmosphere of Spain. Except for a quick visit to Madrid in 1826, he spent his remaining years at Bordeaux where, on 16 April 1828, aged 84, he died.



## GOYA AND THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND IN SPAIN

On 10 March 1766, the Marquis of Esquilache, Minister to Charles III who had installed new street lamps in Spain's capital, re-enacted an old law forbidding men in Madrid to wear the common broad-brimmed slouch hat and long cape. He alleged that these clothes helped thieves and robbers hide themselves. This was an assault on the traditions of the pueblo and they burst into revolt on Palm Sunday. Crowds raced through the streets, attacking the houses of ministers and smashing the new street lights. Over twenty towns and cities in the provinces imitated these actions. The king was forced to surrender. The order was revoked and Esquilache was forced into exile.

Esquilache was Italian and had been brought to Spain to help with its modernization along with Grimaldi. Grimaldi engineered the Family Compact with Bourbon France which resulted in the loss of Florida in the Seven Years War. At the peace, there was an influx of American silver and this intensified an already severe inflation. The new street lamps required new taxes. Esquilache initiated free trade in grain in perfect time for the disastrous harvest of 1766.

The breakdown in order was the most serious internal crisis that the Spanish Bourbons had to face before the French Revolution. The Count of Aranda was called in to placate the situation. Helped by a good harvest, he rode the tide and within a year was able to revoke the concessions of 1766. The question now was, who had whipped up the plebs? Clearly, of course, it was the enemies of the regency. A royal commission discovered the 'conspirators' in the Company of Jesus, and so in April 1767, the Jesuits were expelled from Spain.



Seventeen years later, Aranda was playing an altogether different role. As Ambassador to France he delivered a thunderous rebuke to the French Government, demanding apologies for and official action against a Paris publisher, Charles Joseph Panckouke. Panckouke had decided to bring out the "Encyclopedie Methodique" which, in the first volume of 1783, carried an essay on Spain by Nicholas Massan de Mervilliers. He described the Spanish as ignorant, superstitious and slothful. He said that they had a bigoted clergy, a futile government, economic incapacity and a cruel and tyrannical Inquisition.

The Inquisition seized 1681 copies of the new book in Madrid alone and locked them away in its archives. The response of the official Spanish Enlightenment was different. The Minister Floridablanca had a census taken in 1786 to prove that the population of Spain had risen by one and a half million while the numbers of clergy had dropped. Many authors moved to defend the reforms of Charles III. The officially sponsored Juan Pablo Forner penned an impassioned defence of Catholicism. The argument focused on the historic character of Spain itself, that 'autentico ser' the authentic essence of Spain. This was to plague so many Spaniards in later years.

The Massan controversy outlined the two Spains of the traditional and the radical and after the French Revolution of a few years later these differences were to become more marked.

The century of "lights" (luces) was marked by the interaction of the Spanish monarchy with the pulses of European growth. At the start of the century under Philip V (1706-46) progress was almost non-existent.



In 1724, the population of Spain was seven millions lower than it had been in the 16th century. By the time of Ferdinand VI (1746-59) it had increased to over eight millions. Under Charles III (1759-88) the population grew steadily and by 1868 it had topped nine millions. By the time of the Napoleonic Invasion, the population was approaching twelve millions.

Growth in industry, commerce and agriculture followed a similar pattern. Spanish rural life was riddled with serious problems: the low level of productivity and primitiveness; it was crippled by a communications system that was dependent on the mule. From the 1730s, however, there was an extension of cultivation and the introduction of new crops which helped to improve things somewhat. Between 1760 and 1775, there appears to have been an agricultural price revolution and this led people to think about the vast lands that belonged to the clergy and the nobility. The monarchy pressed for modernization as hard as it could. It began settlement and education schemes, fostered economic societies, and gave prizes for innovation. As a result, the livestock population increased fourfold and production rose. However, alongside these came land-hunger and frustration. The state failed to modernize its revenues and this threatened it with bankruptcy, drove it to attack clerical wealth and exploit its granary and loan services to the peasants.

There were contradictions in industry and commerce also. The state sponsored industries only achieved little success. However, by 1778, colonial trade had been opened for all Spaniards. After this, Spanish exports multiplied tenfold. Catalonia began to rebuild its economy with the help of the wine and brandy trade to the Americas. New life found its way to the maritime centres of Barcelona, Valencia,



Seville and Bilbao. Internally growth shifted into the provinces and away from the traditional central areas of Spain. The centre as a result stagnated and declined. Barcelona had now a population that would soon rival that of Madrid. With all the improvement schemes and reforms, archaic Spanish "traditions" were probed and the major impact of this enlightened monarchy was on "tradition", on ideology and on notions of the autentico ser of Spain.

In 1797, Spain had a population of ten millions. However, there were still four hundred thousand "aristocrats", one hundred and seventy thousand clergy, two thousand monasteries, one thousand convents and eighty-five thousand monks and nuns. The Church was hardening into privilege and aristocracy. Its stranglehold on wealth was greatly resented. There were still one hundred and fifty thousand officially recognized beggars and society was racked by land hunger. Popular Spain was rooted in the one million, eight hundred thousand rural proletarians and peasants. Of the working people, the largest groups were the two hundred and eight thousand servants and the three hundred thousand artisans. In the middle sectors were twenty-five thousand traders and the one hundred and ten thousand military and bureaucratic personnel.

In such an under-developed country, there had to be a final point beyond which royal form could not go. The crown never really gained a strong grip on local authority, the real source of effective government. However, the accession of Charles III's successor coincided with the French Revolution. Panic ensued and royal reform ceased and this reactivated the dormant forces of tradition once again. The reforms



had probably gone as far as they could for anything more would have been too radical for traditional Spain. As the French Revolution spilled across Europe and overtook Spain, the autentico ser became very important among the liberal classes. As the crisis deepened, the confrontation between "enlightenment" and "tradition" became volatile and when Napoleon took control of Spain in 1808, the country was plunged into a war of independence that was the first of the modern civil wars.

The early years of the Bourbon monarchy were French. The aims were efficiency and uniformity. The fueros or regional privileges which had existed for many years were eliminated. Only the Basque lands and Navarre, which had taken the winning side in the War of the Spanish Succession, were permitted to keep theirs. Ministries replaced the conciliar system of government and the ruling of the provinces came directly from the French. Royal absolutism was virtually total. "Only one power retained a measure of autonomy: the Church with its Holy Office of the Inquisition, to many the very embodiment of Spanish identity, that purist, monolithic, hermetic, militant, military and at the popular level often deeply superstitious Catholic Spain of the Counter-Reformation." (1).

The Inquisition watched over the condition of civil order and the processes of civil government and protected it from any threat. During the 18th century, as the Cult of Reason found its way even to Spain, the Inquisition became less fierce and authors like Voltaire and Rousseau found their Spanish readers. However, the workings of the Index irritated many people. By the end of the century, the power of the Inquisition grew once more in response to the French Revolution and those enlightened Spaniards were filled with hatred of the Holy Office.



In the late 1770s, the Inquisition began to become powerful again. Even though its power was limited, it could still ruin the career of university lecturer, lesser bureaucrat or publisher. Pablo de Olavide was a radical royal bureaucrat who figured in Spanish legend as the first afrancesado. In 1778, he was tried by the Inquisition and was punished. The same happened to Aranda, Floridablanca and Jovellanos. Goya's friends, Bernardo and Tomas de Triarte, suffered also.

Certain members of the clergy supported the Crown against the Jesuits (who ran the Inquisition) and these were nicknamed Jansenists. The battle between the Jesuits and Jansenists grew fierce in the universities. By the Concordat of 1753, the Crown assumed power over the Church, but there was still resistance. The Esquilache riots of 1766 gave the monarchy the opportunity to drive the Jesuits out. It was this conflict that paved the way for the Enlightenment to enter Spain. However, it was selective. No Spaniard, no matter how radical, seriously questioned the role of Catholicism. One of the first books to appear about this time was the epic "Teatro Critical" by Benito Feijoo, a Benedictine who exposed fallacies and superstitions by the light of scientific advances. It was extremely popular. This was a style to be copied, and by the 1780s, savage criticisms of Black Spain were rife in a new periodical press. The monarchy subsidised periodicals about medicine, science, economics and modern philosophy. Some universities went over to this new learning, but it was only a minority.

The Court of Charles III was peopled by ilustrados, those Spaniards that had been, as it were, reborn by the Enlightenment. By 1804, there were seventy-three of them. They recruited mainly from the



lesser nobility, the middle orders and the liberal clergy. The ilustrados were never in a majority. It is possible that their numbers never exceeded one per cent of the population. However, they were concentrated at the growth points and their ideology as a result became dominant. There was, of course, resistance, mainly from the Inquisition. In spite of this, the ilustrados built up strength among the peripheral bourgeoisie. In 1781, Luis Canuelo, a lawyer, started up a small paper called Censor. In it he scourged aristocrats, villians and the clergy. It was eventually repressed and Canuelo was brought before the Inquisition. But this celebrated the beginning of a new Spain and a new Spaniard.

The pueblo, however, saw the New Spaniard as a Frenchman. In the late 18th century, there was a widening abyss between the people and the elite. As the elite orders of Spanish society succumbed to imported styles and manners, there was a hardening resistance among the pueblo. The long tradition of the pueblo was not at all responsive to the ilustrados. The pueblos were certainly radical and anti-authoritarian. Their heroes were the smuggler, the bullfighter and the bandit. "The tradition of the 17th century picaro assumed new form in the cult of the majo and his maja, the plebian aristocrats in their distinctive style of dress, slouch hat, cape, their strict but anti-establishment moral code, their counter-culture, their anti-authoritarianism, xenophobia, their simplistic and ambivalent Church-and-King loyalty which mark a social rebelliousness."<sup>(2)</sup> The ilustrados failed to penetrate this world and most denounced it. However, there were some sectors of society that began to look with interest and copy the pueblo and his culture.



The nobility began to ape the styles of the majo and maja and talk their language. In Spain, the process was a visible reaction against the imported French styles of the ilustrado. From the 1780s on, the Inquisition became active again and there was a growing tension among the Spanish elite. The tension was between "Reason" and tradition. It was this tension that affected Goya and his work.

Goya was essentially a pueblo. He was not, however, a peasant. His father was an artisan. Goya was fascinated by the majos and street life and he enjoyed hunting and shooting, but he never participated fully in pueblo life. Up to his personal crisis in 1792, Goya treated his painting in a very off-hand way. He saw it as his job and nothing else. Goya in his youth was not a well-read man, but in 1812, after many years with the ilustrados, he had a large library. He was very ambitious. In a letter to a friend in the 1780s, he boasts "Martin boy, now I'm a King's Painter with 15,000 reales!" This shows us how much he thought of his painting as a job and nothing else. In the face of repeated failures, Goya worked his way into the court of Charles III and became very successful in the 1780s. Goya made friends with the leading ilustrados and as they were successful, so was Goya.

In the years 1792 and 1793, Goya became very ill and at around the same time, the ilustrados were plunged into crisis. In 1789, the Bastille fell and France was gripped by revolution. In 1791, Florida-blanca suspended the entire periodical press and tried to prevent the import of French publications. In 1792, the French monarchy was overthrown. In 1793, Spain went to war with France against republicanism and the ilustrados faded.



The French Revolution was a great shock and it disrupted the Spanish Enlightenment. It set in motion a process of separation in Spanish society which was to culminate in civil war. The war started a severe economic crisis. By 1795 many sectors of the population were expressing their disaffection, and peace was made. France forced Spain to join the war against Britain in 1796. This made it very difficult for Spain to keep out French influence and also it opened her to the power of the British. There were economic crises and the quality of the Spanish monarchy declined. In 1792 power passed to Manuel Godoy who in effect set up a semi dictatorship. All classes of society were dismayed. Godoy was a liberal and tried to continue reforms but he was restricted in this by the power of France and its changing rulers who were deeply suspicious of Spain. Every effective political force in Spain was driven into opposition.

In these circumstances a concern for the autentico ser of Spain became increasingly important amongst the literate classes. People began to yearn for a new constitution that would restrain unworthy monarchs and preserve the essence of Spanish tradition. The myth of Padilla, hero of the Comuneros revolt of 1521 grew in stature. Implicit in this myth was a revolutionary assertion of the sovereignty of the people. The battle of traditions grew more heated as Spain became caught between England and France. There was grave economic crisis. In 1798 Godoy withdrew and leading ilustrados came to power. There followed an attack on the Inquisition. In 1800 the power passed to the traditionalists. The ilustrados were ejected and many were imprisoned. In 1805 French troops moved into Spain for an attack on Portugal. Godoy turned to the liberals for help, but the Prince Ferdinand rebelled



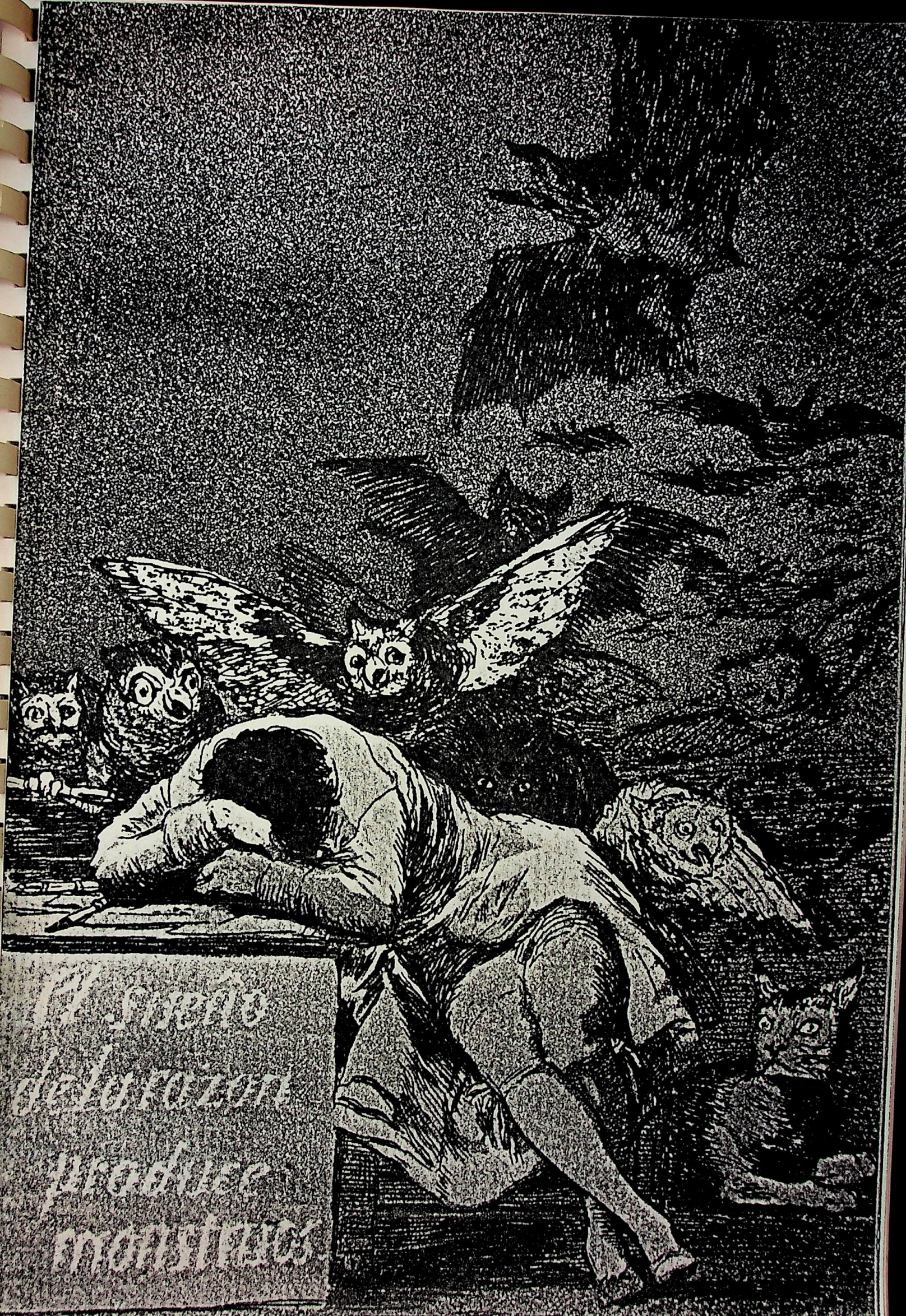
and mobilized the Madrid plebians in his cause. The Spanish royal family was divided and called to Napoleon for help. Napoleon threw out the royal family and brought in his brother Joseph with a new constitution. Massive insurrection followed which was first directed at the Godoy system and then in 1808 at the French. Such is the background in which Goya executed his two great series of etchings beginning with Los Caprichos of 1799.



CHAPTER TWO



Il Sireno  
de la razza  
produttore  
emotivissimo





## INTRODUCTION TO LOS CAPRICHOS

The series of etchings entitled Los Caprichos grew out of Goya's drawings and observations. There are eighty prints which are divided into two divisions and each section is introduced by a self portrait. The themes and ideas of the two sections are different but they overlap. A few days after the publication of this series, the prints were withdrawn and later Goya presented them to the King of Spain, presumably to save himself and his etchings from the Inquisitions. Originally the plates were grouped together under the name of Suenos or dream motifs. They were first published in 1799. Goya omitted several of the more aggressive plates and as a result broke the sequence. It is very possible that this was done to blunt the assault of the prints and hide their real meaning. Even so, the etchings were radical and inflammatory.

Los Caprichos depict the manners of society in Goya's Spain; the intrigues, lies, matchmaking and pandering, bribes and the affairs of immorality. Today, Sanchez Canton in his book has re-arranged the sequence of the prints in the hope of gaining the true original sequence(1). He has split the plates into five groups: errors in education, erotica, criticism of the ruling classes, witchcraft and hobgoblins.

The commentary that runs with the etchings is in Goya's own hand. Sometimes we are led to believe that Goya agreed with the official moral code or perhaps this is another attempt to hide his real intentions. It is possible that the captions were thought up by one of Goya's friends. Often the commentary has nothing to do with the prints in question and serve to heighten the ambiguity.



Los Caprichos are a brilliant technical achievement. They have the mastery of tone and texture of an inventive genius. Goya has a masterful control of light and shade, creating deep sombre backgrounds often in an "expressionist" style. The distortion of form shapes realism to visual satire and even caricature, finally making the prints more real and vigorous than they would be if they had been represented purely.

Nothing looms larger than prostitution and sexual-social intrigue. The etchings were rife with beautiful girls, grotesque hags, corrupt marriages, endless jockeying and fencing for social-sexual advancement. There are jeers at prostitution such as whores plucking the wings of bird-men and the chewing of bird-whores by greedy officialdom. The engravings run from direct statement to deeply cynical and bleak comment. Woman frequently figures in the collection as the vehicle of corruption and unreason, for example "Can no-one untie us?" shows a man and woman tied together and imprisoned by a huge bespectacled owl. Goya's comment on this print reads "either I am much mistaken or these two have been forced to marry against their will." This print has been read to be a bitter comment on the Duchess of Alba, but also it is a possible comment on the Church ruling on divorce.

Goya had a love affair with the Duchess of Alba that turned sour. The disillusionment and rage in which Goya found himself when the affair ended was possibly the stimulus for much of the sexual satire in the Caprichos. Two of the drawings for the Caprichos were done concerning her lies and inconstancy. They show her as a witch with an escort of hagridden bullfighters. The preparatory drawings for the Caprichos grew directly out of those inspired by the Alba affair. It was



the exploration of sexual hypocracies that led Goya to social satire. Goya depicts his society as hag-ridden, and the self portrait for the Caprichos shows Goya to be a stern and austere observer of dismal Spanish life.

The influence of Jovellanos (the leading light of the ilustrados) is very apparent with regard to the titles of the prints. Capricho number two takes its title from the first two lines of the satirical poem A. Arnesto by Jovellanos which was published in Censor. Jovellanos is very influential in the general depictions of social and political satire and especially in two attacks on the dead weight of the church, state and landowners on the backs of the Spanish people. One print is entitled "No hubo remedio" - nothing can be done about it. These words were used by Jovellanos to describe his dismissal at the hands of clerical reactionaries in 1798. Satires on the government and the establishment echo Jovellanos' description of corruption and irresponsibility in court.

Similarly, the paper Censor attacked the same subjects as Goya. However, in Censor there was always an underlying optimism, but Goya's prints radiate pessimism, a cynical detachment and a sense of despair. This was possibly caused by Goya's illness of 1792, his deafness as a result and the ending of his affair with the Duchess of Alba.

It is in the etchings of Los Caprichos that Goya's distinctive personality as a creative artist finally realizes itself. Goya - man of the 'pueblo' but also influenced by the ilustrados and their attitude to the 'pueblo'. The work acquires intensity because of this tension. That tension is finally given full rein in the Disasters of War, in reality the second instalment of the Caprichos.



## LOS CAPRICHOS

There is a distinctive difference between the prints in that they can be split into two sets. The later prints, while still dealing with the morals of Spanish society and still telling stories of love, pandering and immoral affairs, are different. The visual drama becomes more dream-like and from the background emerges a demonic world. Devilish and witchlike creatures, beasts the masters of man invade this world. In some ways the first part of the Caprichos could be said to deal with social conditions in the light of day while the second part is more concerned with the night, with witchcraft and the darkness of death.

Goya retained the traditional images of witches and demons. His prints are full of owls, cats, goats, bats, spindles and brooms. These were instantly recognisable to everybody as symbols of the dark forces of superstition. In the backgrounds are vast aquatint veils, misty and concealing. We suspect that behind the main action somewhere there are other events behind these foggy curtains. The lighting is as ever uncertain and serves to heighten the mystery and atmosphere of fear and cruelty.

Possibly the most famous Goya etching comes from this section. It is entitled "The Sleep of Reason brings forth Monsters" (1). The print shows Goya himself asleep at his desk. A swarm of monsters and demons flock about his head. One holds a stylus in its claws and is trying to hand it to the artist. The creatures are owl-like and bat-like







PLATE (2) Wait 'till You've Been Anointed.







*Si quebró el Cantaro.*



in appearance. Their eyes shine in the darkness. On the ground lies a cat-like creature with an evil look in its eye. When Reason sleeps, the creatures of the night and superstition are masters of the land. When the artist awakens he banishes these creatures by educating those who are ignorant with his works of art.

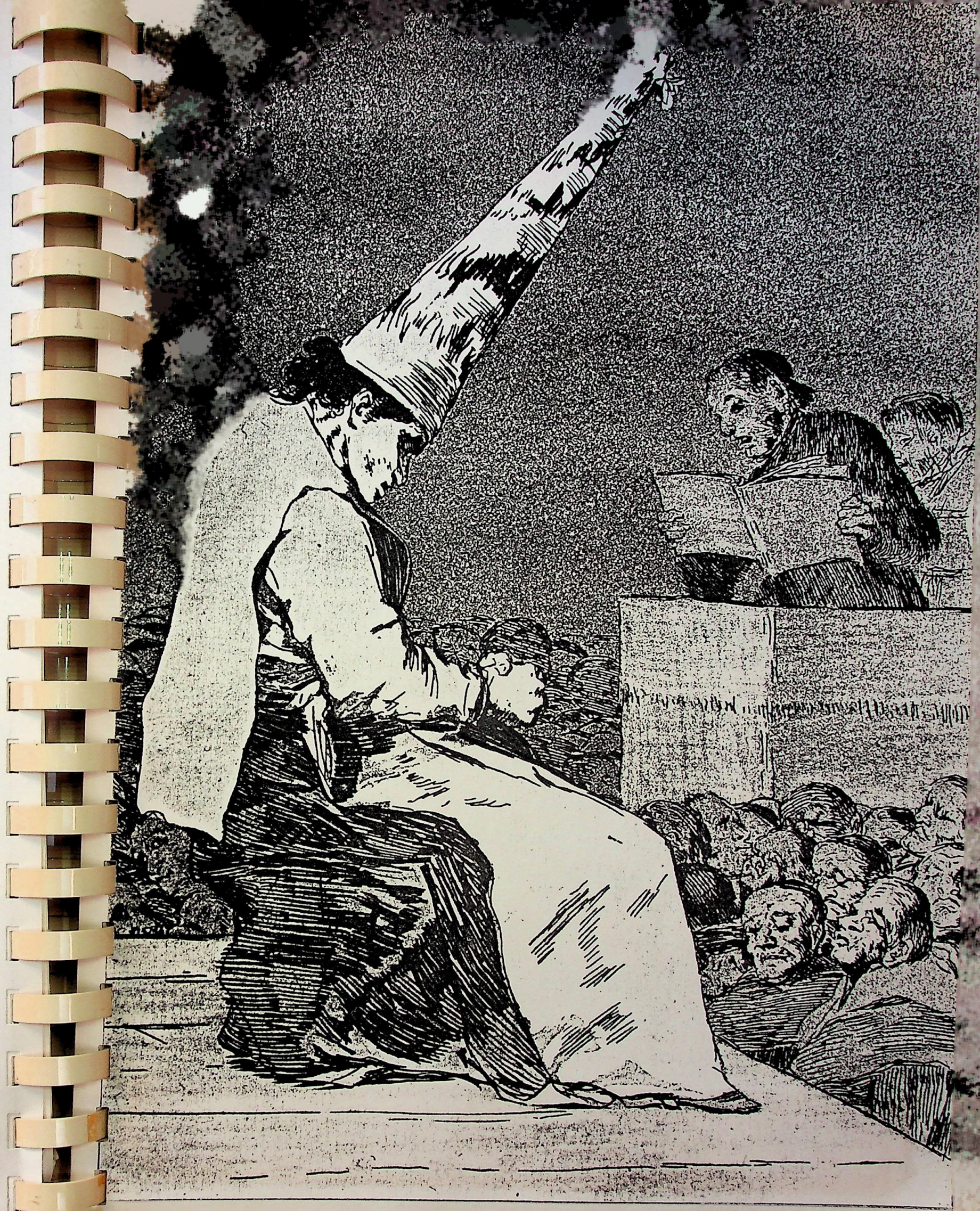
In Los Caprichos, Goya is creating a new concept of light and shade. The light rarely comes from a specific source, for example "Wait 'till you've been annointed" (Aguarde que te unten) (2). In this print, light and shade are presented to us as interlocking triangles. These patterns are deliberately chosen because of their strength to emphasise the action. Backgrounds are generally ambiguous, being detailed but often the area behind the main action has little or nothing to do with the main subject. Such is the case in "Hunting for Teeth" (A caza de dientes) (3). Here we find a woman extracting a tooth from a hanged man believing it to be a lucky charm. Her face is averted in terror as she puts her hand into the gaping mouth. We don't know on what the woman is standing. Is it a wall? Where does it come from? Is it part of a building? We do not see the gibbet from which the corpse hangs. The background is composed of irregular wisps of something that is akin to fog. The background as a whole implies a black madness, involved in this act of sacrilege.

In "But he broke the pitcher" (Si quebro el Cantaro) (4), the theme is an old one. A child having broken a pitcher is getting his bare backside spanked. Goya transforms an often humorous scene into a terrifying experience. Goya intensifies the bestiality of the scene by having the mother holding back the child's shirttail with her teeth like an animal. Goya presents us with a background that is barren and











desolate. There is nothing but a grey veil. The lines of washing take on a ghostlike quality, suspended in mid-air. The lighting is, as usual, ambiguous, neither indicative of a bright day or a cloudy day, or a night. This is a disjointed world where the actions of the people inhabiting it seem enigmatic.

One of the most celebrated prints is entitled "Los Chinchillas" (5). Spotlit are two male figures in costumes emblazoned with coats of arms. One lies on the ground clutching rosary beads in his right hand. The other sags, half leaning back, as if against a wall. He carries a sword by his side. They look useless and helpless. Heavy padlocks are clamped over their ears, their eyes are shut tight and their mouths gape open. In the background is a dark figure which looks menacing but is in fact servile, and stands for the people, for it has asses ears and ladles sustenance from a cauldron into the gaping mouths. The piece is an attack on hereditary aristocracy. The caption is derived from a character in a popular play by Canizares which mocked the obsession with nobility, blood and status.

The captions to Los Caprichos are essential. They don't clarify the picture but serve to deepen the ambiguity. They use quotations from satirical writings by the ilustrados, the opening phrases of proverbs, puns, catch-phrases and references to well-known events and popular beliefs.

In one print a victim of the Inquisition, in the conical hat of the guilty, is seated on a platform before the Inquisitors while in the background an official reads the sentence. This is captioned "Aquellos Polvos" (That dust) (6). It recalls the imprisonment inflicted on some citizens



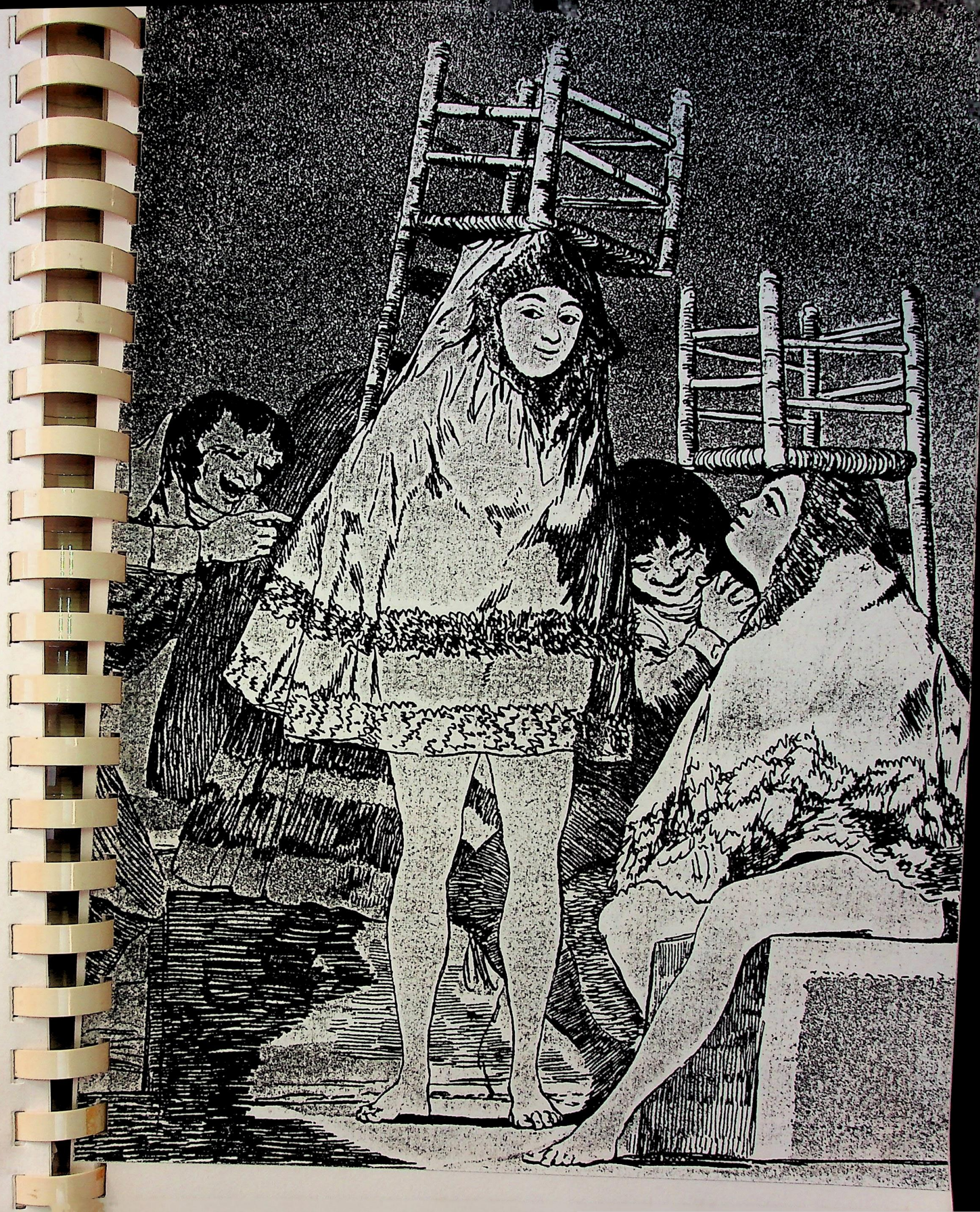








PLATE (8). Thou Who Canst Not, Lift Me On Thy Shoulders.







PLATE (9). See How Solemn They Are.



in 1784 for selling corpse-dust as a magic potion. Also the words are from a popular proverb that ran - "From that dust comes this dirt." In another two girls flaunt themselves scantily clad and carrying chairs on their heads, before grinning males. This is captioned "Ya tienen asiento" (7), a play on asiento which means seat and also judgement, and a further play on tener asiento - to be sitting pretty.

Two plates especially show ambivalence towards the "pueblo". One shows two pueblo humping spurred and gross burros on their backs. The caption runs "Tu que no puedes" the first phrase of the proverb "Thou who canst not, lift me on thy shoulders" (8). In "See how solemn they are" (9), two huge figures straddle two burros standing human-like on two feet. The riders are grotesque witches. One has man's feet, a beaked face and bird's claws. The other is a gross figure with asses ears and prayerful hands. Here Goya is telling us that the Church and State both ride the pueblo. They exploit and use him, playing on his fears and superstitions. The pueblo are here seen as bestial with devilish snouts and asses features. They are as brutalized and inhuman as the riders.

Goya returns again and again with disgust to the monks and priests. In "Tragala, Perro" (Swallow it, dog) (10), grotesque monks advance on a cowering man. The central figure is a monk armed with a giant syringe. Once again, we encounter a play on words - to syringe could also mean to plague or vex. The scene could refer to a popular tale concerning the rivalry between a monk and a soldier over the same woman, in which the clerics abused their spiritual power.







PLATE (11). What A Tailor Can Do!









The most savage attacks on clerics are those in which they are portrayed as creatures of the night and darkness. Closely connected with the attacks on the clergy are those scourging popular superstitions, notably in "What a tailor can do!" (11). Here we have a tree dressed up in a monk's habit before which the people cower while the sky is filled with witches and demons in flight.

Many of the plates of the *Caprichos* tell of the bitter experience of falling in love with beautiful young women. Goya presents them as deceitful temptresses of the flesh.

Goya is sceptical about more than just the sort of love that is bought and sold on the market. Marriage itself is often nothing more than an ecclesiastically sanctioned extension of venal love. Goya's important patron, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, the leading intellect of liberal Spain, provided the painter with his inspiration for the sketches dealing with marriage. For the caption of the scene "They say, 'I do'..." Goya has employed the first two lines of Jovellanos' "Epistola satirica a Armesto": "They say 'I do' and give their hand/To the first man who comes their way..." The print shows a young woman who wears a mask being led and being followed by wizened and horribly ugly old men (12).

Plate number 31 (13) in the series dwells on the seductive elegance of a young woman pulling on her stockings : "She prays for her" is the title. The cool cunning glance this beauty throws our way comes close to that of the Naked Maja. She has tucked up her long dress so she can prop her stockinged leg on the knee of the bawd who has prepared a footbath for her. A young servant girl is demurely combing her hair for her. The wizened face of the old hag reveals a life of experience in







the feminine arts of sensual enticement. Rosary in hand, she is busy praying. The commentary explains: "And it is well that she does: so that God may send her good fortune and keep her from harm and from barbers and bailiffs; and make her as clever and artful, as sharp-eyed as her blessed mother!"

Plate number 5 (14) is entitled "Birds of a feather". The cavalier and the beautiful young lady approach one another; she wears a floor-length black dress and a black veil cast over her head and eyes. The face is that of the Duchess of Alba. She throws the cavalier a daring glance, but the cavalier looks off to one side instead, as if he wanted to see what the audience thinks of all this. They talk together. The commentary is very detailed: "It has often been disputed whether men are worse than women, or whether the reverse be true. The vices of both come from bad upbringing. Wherever society will have its men perverse, the women will be likewise. The young lady pictured in this print is just as knowing as this young fop engaging her in conversation, and as regards the two old women, why, the one is just as vile as the other...."

Two etchings, "Love and death" and "Tantalus" (15 and 16) are part of Goya's landscape of death and despair. In "Love and death" the man has fallen in a duel; his woman weeps for him. His sword lies by his feet. The commentary reads: "Behold, a figure out of Calderon, who, because he could not laugh at his rival, dies in the arms of his beloved and loses her by his derring-do. It is inadvisable to draw one's sword too often." Ambiguity and paradox appear once more in "Tantalus."











This time the woman lies dead. Her stiff body is stretched across her man's knees. In despair he weeps for her, wringing his hands. The commentary states: "Were he a better lover and less of a bore, she would come to life again."

Goya fixes his gaze on both everyday events and the events of history. His etchings speak not only of the demons of sexuality, but also of the stupidity of blind faith, of the seductive arts of false priests, of the gluttony of monks, of the vanity and vacuity of the nobility, of the tyranny and cruelty of the Inquisition and of social injustice. Above all, he never stops speaking of the dignity of man and of the necessity to free mankind from the interior and exterior demons that plague his everyday life.

When Hogarth depicts the vices of the bourgeoisie and the nobility his tone is moralistic; but in Goya's etchings, though similar in tone, there is to be found no expectation of man's improvement. The world is rotten. There is nothing that will protect man from the temptations and the crimes of Hell. Nor are there any "Good Samaritans" to be found in the Caprichos. No one is good. Everybody is only happy to take what he can. The morals of the poor are no better than those of the rich.

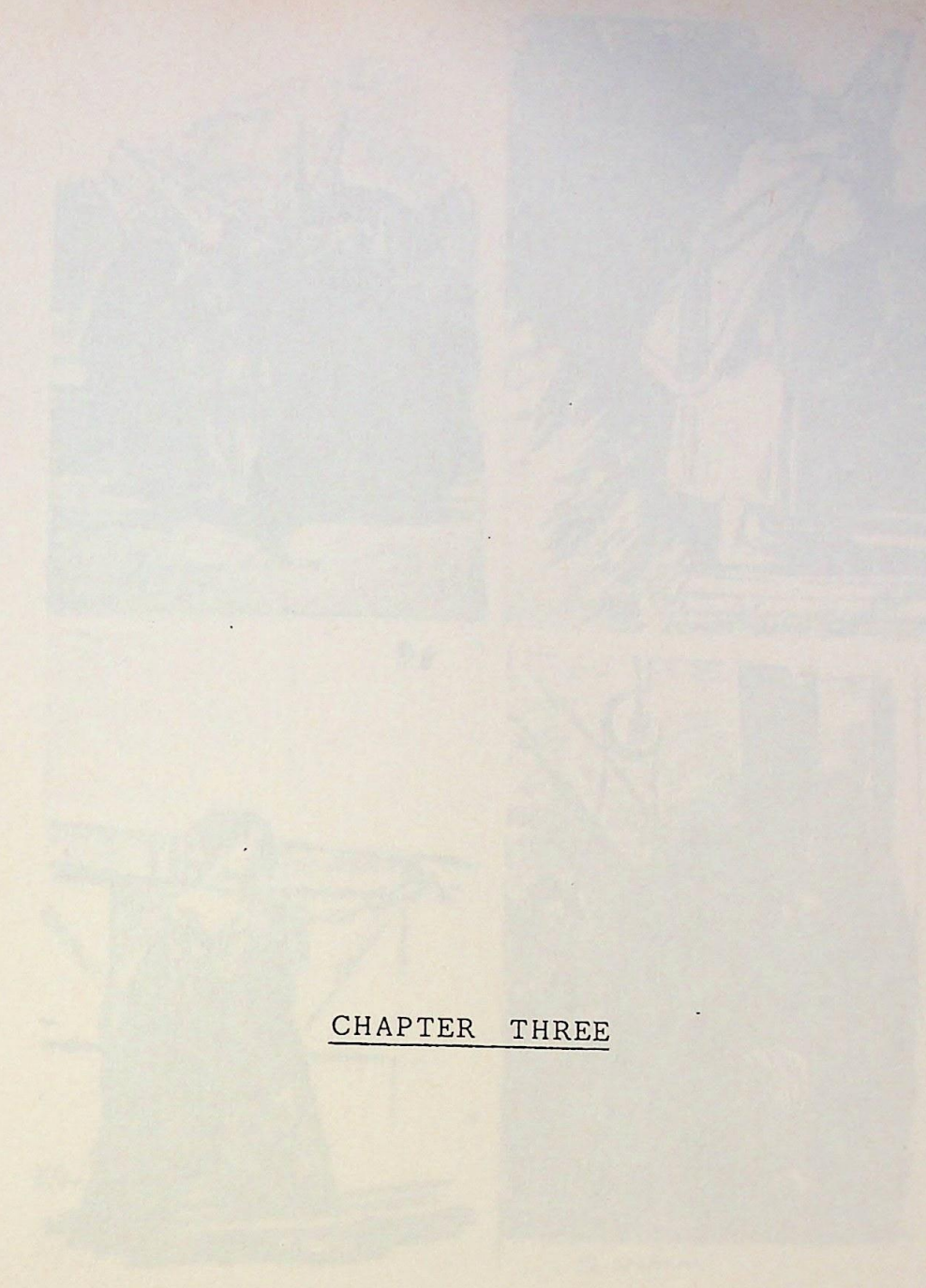
Goya's tone is didactic and moralizing also. The artist sets himself the task of illustrating the injustices, stupidities and cruelties of his age. His purpose is to eradicate evil by education. In the course of the plates, Goya changed from a man exasperated by human vices and evils to a man who has lost faith in human destiny.



Goya observed the world and the people in it with a sharply critical eye. There can be little doubt that specific persons - probably even Minister Godoy, the king and the royal family - were present in his mind's eye as he created these etchings. At the same time however, he moved beyond showing purely specific and individual happenings and persons and gave to the events he depicted the scope and character of the general and the universal.

Without Goya's commitment to the Enlightenment, his work would lose half its power. The major tension in him between "Reason" and the darker human forces is released in the Caprichos. Without this tension, there would be no Caprichos.



A faint, light blue background illustration of a person standing in a landscape, possibly a field or a garden, with some foliage and a distant structure. The illustration is centered on the right page of the notebook.

### CHAPTER THREE





58. (Above left) For being a Jew, drawing C88, n.d.  
 59. (Above right) For having been born elsewhere, drawing C85, n.d.  
 60. (Below left) For being a liberal? drawing C98, n.d.  
 61. (Below right) You agree? drawing C97, n.d.



## INTRODUCTION TO THE DISASTERS OF WAR

Around 1801, Goya returned to using the pen and brush, and produced a series of albums of drawings dealing with many of the subjects of Los Caprichos and the Disasters of War. The most informative is Album C, executed around 1820. The themes are deformity, women, love, marriage, violence and prisoners and satire on the religious orders. Many could reflect the Revolution of 1820. At number 85, there begins a series which deals with victims of the Inquisition. Goya suddenly explodes into rage. Their crimes are listed - "For being a Jew", "For speaking another language", "For being born elsewhere" (1-4). There are scenes of torture and chained prisoners. This is Goya's "Restoration - Revolution" period that falls between 1814 and 1823. The later albums are fiercer, freer and more direct. This could relate to his experiences of the war, but the anger stems directly from the Revolution and Restoration of 1820. It was in this state of anger that Goya completed the Disasters of War. It is possible to overemphasise the effect the war had on Goya and his work. He was actually painting "disasters" long before the war broke out.

In 1815, Goya began a new series of engravings as a blistering comment on the Restoration of Ferdinand VII. These etchings are peopled with more monsters and witches in the Caprichos style. This series is called the "Disparates". The Disparates are the most impenetrable of Goya's work. Goya gave titles to the proofs and the titles always included the word Disparate - folly or absurdity. The series was never finished.



They are crowded with memories and quotations from his earlier works, notably *Los Caprichos*. The *Disparates* and likewise the final plates of the *Disasters* anticipate the "Black Paintings" if only by their mood, which hovers uncertainly between terror and black comedy.

The "Black Paintings" almost certainly follow Goya's period of illness. In 1819 he became very seriously ill and came near to death. As he recovered in 1820, he began to cover the walls of his house with paintings. These he did in oils directly on to the plaster, filling up every available space between windows and doors.

These paintings are a nightmare. They are peopled with hideous faces and distorted figures and parodies of religious events and processions. The paintings are disturbing because they are not easy to understand and this sets up an uneasy feeling in us. One interpretation that seems plausible is that suggested by Pierre Gassier. One painting is distinct from the others in that it is not horrifying and also it is a portrait. This is Goya's testament to life after returning from the brink of death. The other works represent a horrific descent into Hell (1). It is the *Disparates* and the Black Paintings which create the atmosphere in which Goya finished the *Disasters of War*.

The *Disparates* and the Black Paintings are very much a continuation and fulfilment of the *Caprichos* of 1799. The last plates of the *Disasters* definitely are. "The perspective in which Goya conceived his series was the perspective not of the war but of the Restoration, in which the dialectic of reason and unreason of the original *Caprichos* had become unbearable. It is this which gives their full intolerable power to the *Disasters of War*." (2).



## THE DISASTERS OF WAR

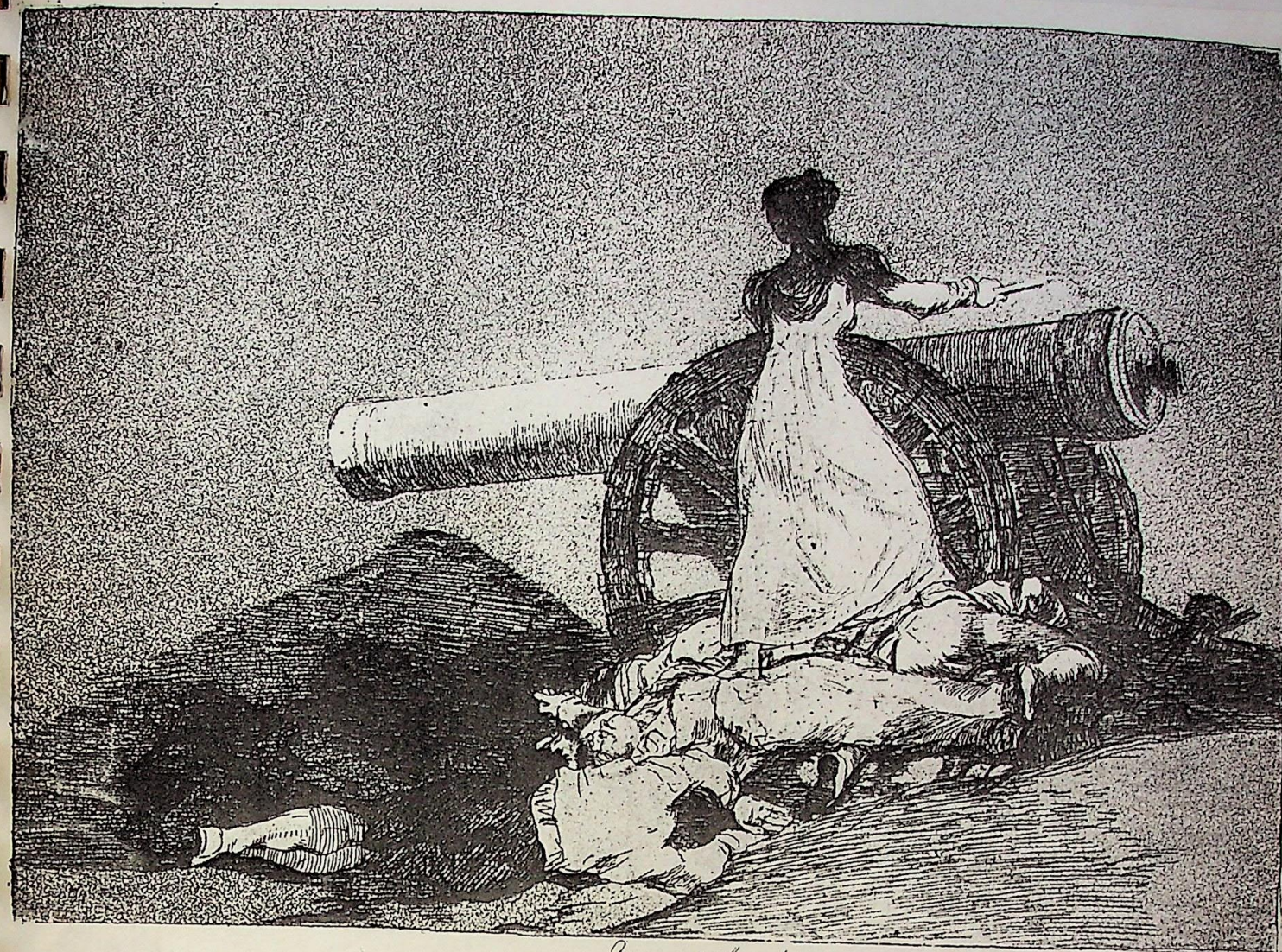
The Disasters of War were first published in 1863 by the Academy of San Fernando which invented the title. There are eighty published prints and they fall broadly into three groups : the horrors of war; famine; a different group in Capricho style with beasts and monsters to pillory the reactionary restoration of Ferdinand VII.

This was not the form which Goya intended the series to take. He completed a lavish volume and presented it to his friend Cean Bermudez. This carried two further plates of chained prisoners. The album carried the inscription - "Fatal consequences of the bloody war in Spain against Bonaparte and other striking caprichos (caprichos enfaticos) in 85 prints."

The engravings form three distinct groups. The late caprichos enfaticos form a distinctive group in subject, style and size and quality. Their size, uniformity, nature style and similarity to many drawings Goya made during the Restoration indicate that these were made possibly some time after the war. A second group is also uniform in size. Seventeen of these deal with the famine which occurred in Madrid between September 1811 and August 1812. Their quality varies but it is generally of a higher standard than the other war engravings. Also included are eighteen prints of "horrors of war."

There is a distinct change in these prints from the other Disasters. In prints outside their group, the people seem almost to be victims of natural disasters. However, in this section, there are four prints depicting Spaniards attacking French soldiers. They concentrate





*Que valor!*

7 *What courage!*





*No se convienen.*

on women in battle, for example, the heroic print of Agustina of Aragon by a cannon at the siege of Saragossa (5). There are nine executions, seven of which are by the French. These prints stress Spanish courage and French atrocity.

The third group varies considerably. The plates range in size greatly. Their quality seems inferior to the rest. It is possible that Goya was suffering from a shortage of materials due to the war (3). These prints are the only ones that are dated. Three are dated 1810 and are assumed to be the earliest.

Most of the scenes recorded in the Disasters probably had their beginnings in notations made on the spot. They give the feeling of spontaneity and impetuosity that is truthful. Unlike the *Caprichos*, the prints were not etched to awaken the beholder, but rather the Disasters were made because the artist had to purge himself of what he saw and what the Spanish people suffered. There is little thought here about their ultimate purpose. These prints were never intended to be published before Goya's death.

The basic message from the series is clear, the lunacy and uselessness of war. The earlier prints are mostly concerned with consequences and with the victims of war. The great majority of the earlier prints are of victims, heaps of dead, stripped dead, patched-up wounded, all the consequences of action that has taken place elsewhere and action which we do not witness. In the later prints there is a change. These are more concentrated and intense. We now see plates with references to the world of nightmare and madness. While some of the famine prints





28 Rabble

*Populacho.*





*Lo merecia.*

29 He deserved it

PLATE (8).

are often beautiful, the horrors are brutal and merciless. Spanish women are shown in action as well as suffering rape. Two titles are, the women "give courage" but also "Fight like wild beasts". The worst atrocities are performed by the French. Monks and priests are victims also and they are treated better here than they have ever been by Goya. In the later prints there appears an element of popular and patriotic heroism and pity.

To heighten our confusion, Goya arranges the prints in an ambiguous pattern. He begins with some later prints of the Spanish attacking the French, famine scenes and a stripping of the dead. Then Goya leads us on a tour of earlier prints of victims until we reach number 17 in his series which is "They do not agree" (6), a satire on officers in the field arguing in the midst of battle. This is followed by a rape and a procession of executions and corpses. The scenes have no coherent pattern after this and it is probable that they were arranged for artistic effect.

The final cluster of prints are the enfaticos. These are often enigmatic. Some of the plates satirise clerical reaction after 1814 as the rule of vampires, wolves, charlatans, sustained by the equally black superstition of the "pueblo". The parallel with the Caprichos in style and content is very close. The incorporation of the enfaticos tends to shift the series towards the Caprichos.

Several enfaticos were inserted into the original series deliberately to disrupt the pattern and confuse the viewer. A fallen horseman, for example, is used to break a sequence of heroic Spanish actions. Two of the best enfaticos depict Spanish atrocities against Spaniards. Both





PLATE (9).





*Enterrar y callar*

18 Bury them and keep quiet

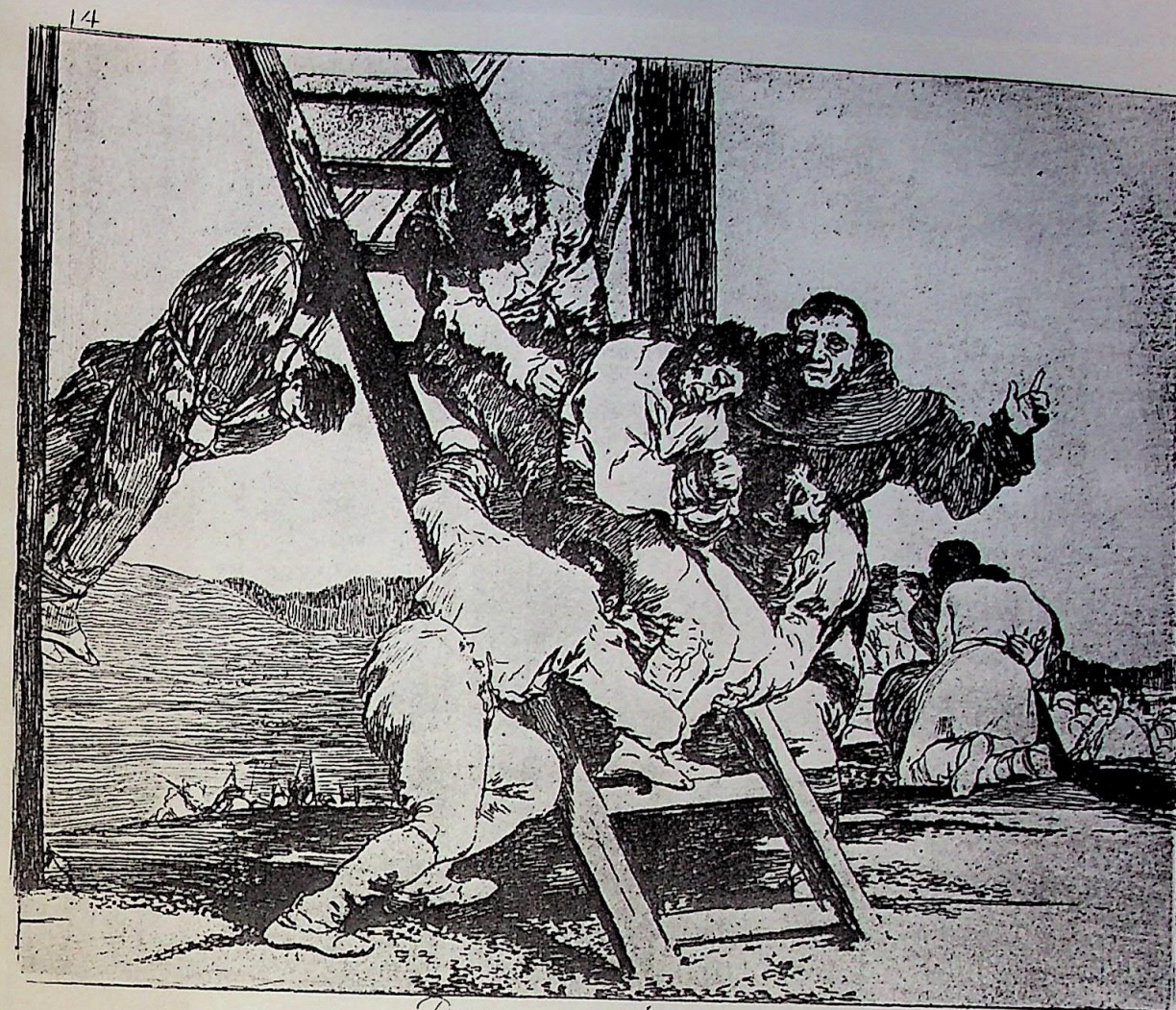
PLATE (10).

prints are similar - a crowd dragging a man through the streets in order to execute him. The victims are probably "afrancesados", some of the "enlightened" about to be killed by the "black populace". While one caption reads "Rabble" (7), the other is more direct reading "He deserved it" (8).

The final series is carefully composed using the enfaticos and inserting them between later and earlier prints. The series starts with the Spanish rebelling and attacking the French. In the first two prints men fight the French. In the next two women do likewise. Then we have a French soldier dying "It serves you right" is the title - and then we have the heroine of Saragossa. All of a sudden the sequence is broken by the enfatico of a fallen horseman. Following this are four rapes, a man dying, two executions and a stripping of the dead. "They do not agree" (6) breaks the sequence once more and then we are off again on a trip through rapes, corpses and killings. It is then that we are confronted with the Spanish pueblo killing their own people and then there are scenes of frenzied atrocities. There then is the enfatico of a woman and beast which leads us into the famine prints. From there the rest of the plates are mainly enfaticos. These deal more with the darker side of human nature. The prints are full of monsters and demons. The clergy are attacked once more. These lead us to the prints with "Truth" depicted as a young girl, who has died and may never rise again. (For the full list of all the plates in the series, see appendices.)

Most of the scenes recorded in the Disasters series probably had their origins in notations made on the spot. Many have a spontaneity that indicates a truthful testimony to the actions witnesses. Except for the last fifteen pages of the series, there are no references to beasts





*Duro es el pasc!*

14 The way is hard!





*Y no hai remedio.*

15 And it can't be helped

and the world of nightmare and madness. The action is reported as it happened just as news is reported today. Yet this is not reportage. We can compare "A Harvest of Death: Gettysburg July 1863"(79) a photograph by an anonymous war photographer to plate 18(10) of the Disasters "Bury them and keep quiet". The two remarkably similar. Both depict corpses strewn on a battlefield. Goya's print is as powerful and direct as the photograph. Just like the unknown person who made "A Harvest of Death", Goya is not looking for a nice arrangement of the action in his print, but the most highly charged view of things as they are. However Goya makes few judgements.

The captions for the most part are non-committal. For example print number 14 (11) "Hard is the way" (Duro es el paso!) is a scene of men being hanged. We are not told that these men deserve to die for their crimes. We are not even told what crimes they have committed, if any. Nor are we told that they are being unjustly executed. We must make up our own minds. We see that two men have already been hanged, and another is being dragged up a ladder to face the same fate. Goya has picked his vantage point to view this action with care, and we are forced to look with our own eyes and not his.

Now at this point Goya's technical virtuosity does not matter nor does it come into play. We do not think about it. The artist intends us to be totally preoccupied with what is occurring before our eyes. If we do analyse the print we find that Goya has arranged the diagonals so that the swinging men in the left background seem to be swaying sickeningly to and fro. The gibbet and scaffolding are deliberately removed so that the figures in the foreground get our undivided attention. Everything that is not essential is removed in order to make the print more powerful.





*¿Qué hai que hacer mas?*

33 What more can one do?





*Por qué?*

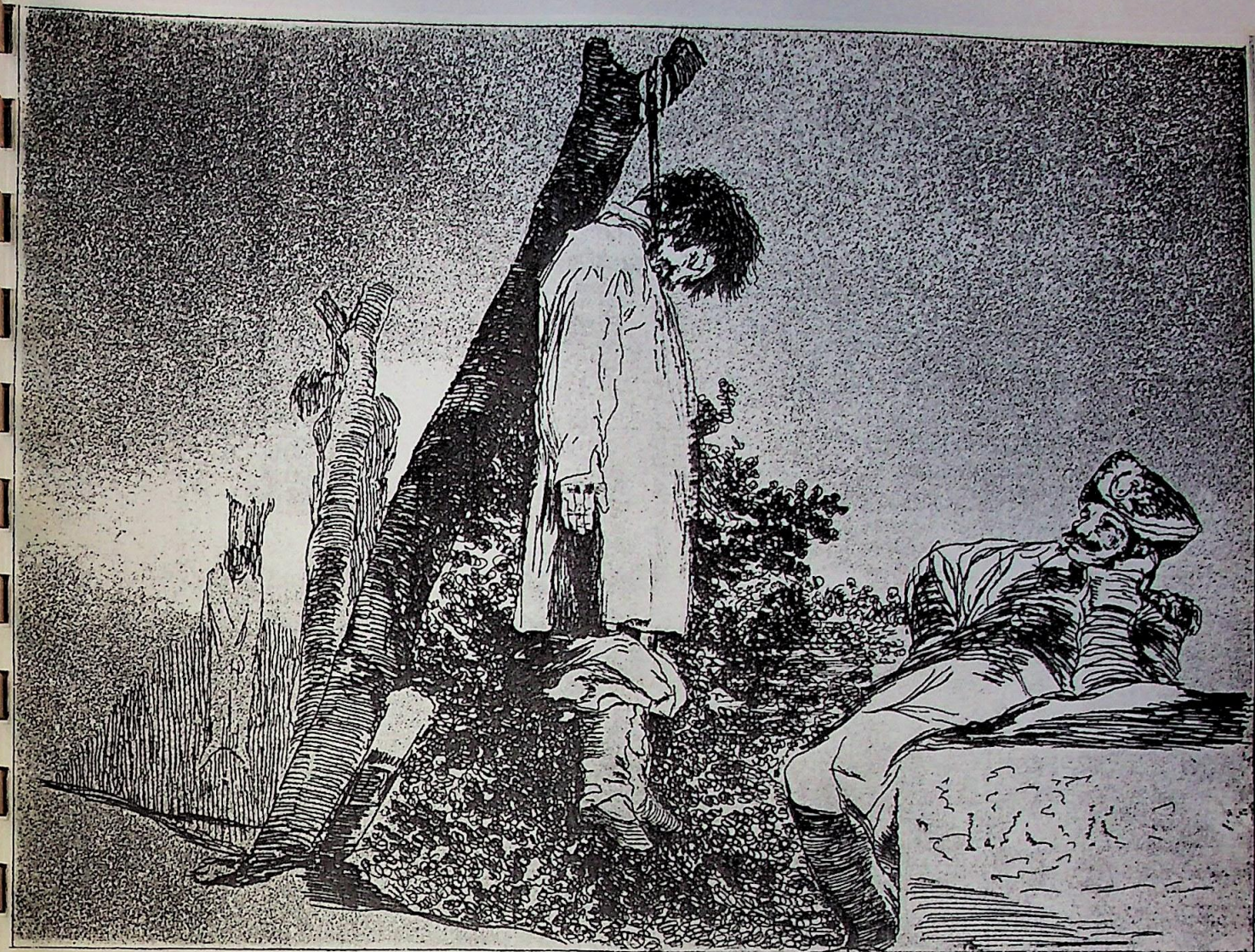
32 Why?

PLATE (14).

The plate number 15 (12) "And it can't be helped" (Y no hay remedio) we are shown an execution of a Spaniard by French soldiers. In the background the same scene is being repeated and we are left thinking that this is just one in a never-ending series of executions that stretch into infinity. The victim is tied blindfolded to a post while rifle barrels from the unseen executioners thrust into the picture from the right. On the ground lies a bloodied corpse. The protagonists are visible to us but we know they are human. However these humans are represented by the barrels of guns and we are shown a never-ending stream of mechanically executed murders. Our eyes are forced outside the picture frame and this gives us a feeling of vulnerability and defencelessness. There seems to be danger on all sides. Even were we to shift the print to the right to find the executioners the scene would always be more executions just around the corner. The scene is infinitely repeatable.

The plate 33 of the Disasters (13) Goya's handling of forms in a new manner becomes apparent. Each form is the equal of the others and each is charged with the same horror of the scene. The plate shows a Spanish partisan being chopped up by four French soldiers. It is entitled "what more can one do?" (Que hay que facer mas?). The left leg of the victim disappears from view and merges with the tree that is in the left upper background. The major configuration of the plate is a large V shape described by the tree, which extends to the victims crotch and then up his right leg to the bandolier worn by the French soldier on the right. Everything is important to this plate. No one thing is more important than the other. Even the two soldiers on the far left are just as important as the two soldiers and the victim in the foreground. Costumes and weapons are given importance also. The





*Campoco.*

36 Not [in this case] either





*Esto es peor.*

37 This is worse

PLATE (16).



*Barbaros!*

38 Barbarians!

PLATE (17).





*Grande hazaña! Con muertos!*

39 Great deeds—against the dead!

PLATE (18).

sword that is hewing into the naked man is not held up as is usual but is depicted as if at rest. However the scabbard worn by the soldier on the right comes into play with the bandoliers of the figures to create a lunging swing downwards into the man's body.

In his martyrdoms of the series Goya continues to remain impartial. He makes no judgements and we are left to judge for ourselves. No point is made. If there is a point, again, we must find it for ourselves. All things and occurrences are equal in value and have no way of revealing a higher purpose in either life or death. We are forced to take a personal position.

The plate 32 (14) "why?" (for que?) three French soldiers garrot a Spanish peasant. Here the tree trunk in the left corner becomes an active participant in the murder and is given the same importance as the soldier who shoves his foot between the victims shoulders. Because the soldier's leg is etched in the same style as the bark of the tree trunk the leg becomes like a branch of the tree. Both the leg and the tree are responsible for the death at least visually.

Throughout the series we are presented with mindless, purposeless murder and atrocity. We witness the impartial and heedless manner in which people go about the business of killing, burying or witnessing starvation. This matter-of-fact professional murder comes to a climax in plates 36-39 (15-18) inclusive. The soldier in the plate 36 (15) sits hand on chin looking up at his victim who is hanging lifeless from a tree. The soldier has a self-satisfied smile on his lips. He is admiring his handiwork as a professional carpenter would admire a well made table. The plate 38 (17) the title "Barbarians!" (Barbaros!) stands in direct contrast with the steady professional aim of the French

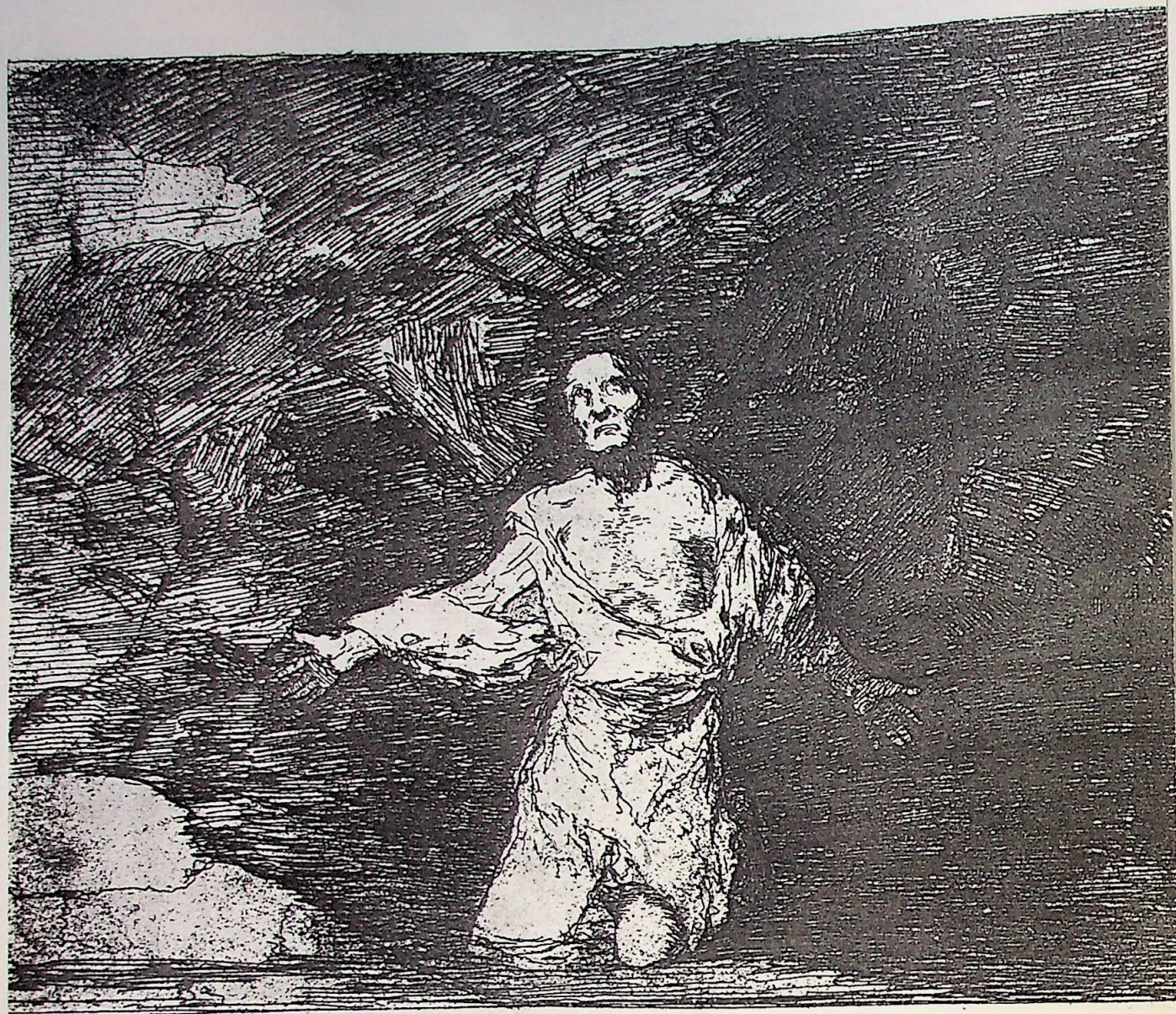




*No se puede mirar.*

26 One cannot look at this





*Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de acontecer.*

1 Sad presentiments of what must come to pass

marksmen about to execute a Spanish partisan.

The plates 37 and 39 (16+18) the body of man, which had for centuries been treated with the greatest reverence is rendered corrupt, repulsive and bereft of nobility. It bears no trace of the spirit that once inhabited it. The corpse in plate 38, deprived though it is of its arms the figure still retains a certain amount of dignity and eloquence. In plate 39 the human body is reduced to the state of carrion no different from the carrion of animals. Goya resorts to comparisons to put across his point. The figure on the left is strapped to a tree and is strongly reminiscent of traditional representations of Saint Sebastian. The figure has still grace and dignity. The trunk of the tree and the body gently sway and the head sags forward. The right hand figure however is dismembered and the pieces hang from the same tree. The truncated torso hangs upside down, the head is impaled and the arms tied together. This corpse is nothing more than what it appears to be - a dismembered body. The cadaver is shown like meat in a butchers shop.

"One can't look" (No se puede mirar) is the title of plate 26 (19), but one cannot help disobey Goya. We can't see the executioners. Their rifles are thrust into the picture from the right. The weapons bristle with bayonets, inhuman and mechanical. Our eyes follow these from grey to blackness. A group of huddled people cower before the guns. They die without heroism or dignity. One man kneels in useless prayer. A woman bathed in light throws her arms wide in futile entreaty. Another holds her children close to her chest. The print is strongly reminiscent of the painting "The 3rd of May 1808".

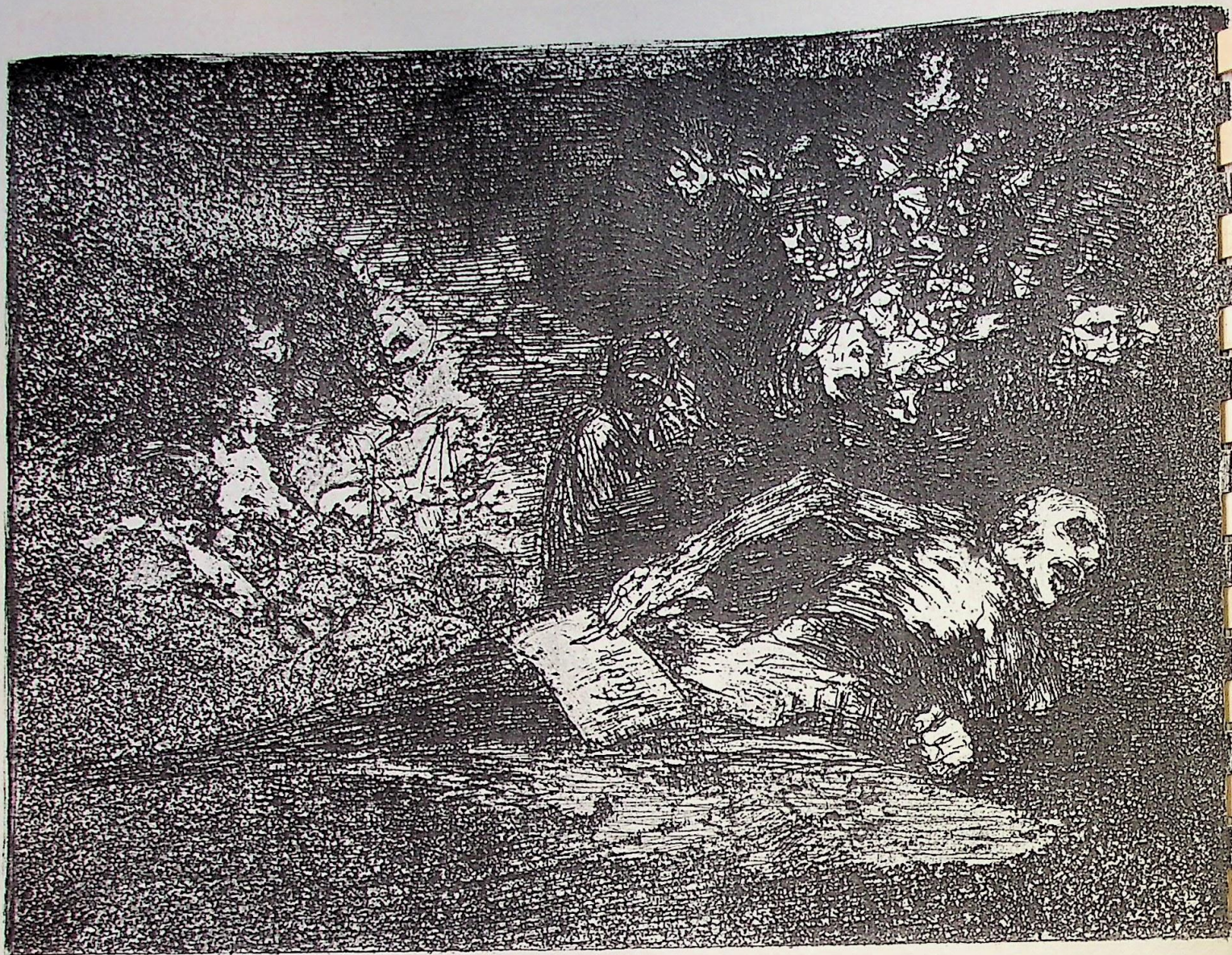




*Con razon ó sin ella.*

2 With or without reason





*Nada. Ello dirá.*

69 Nothing. We shall see.



*Contra el bien general.*

71 Against the common good





*Esto es lo peor!*

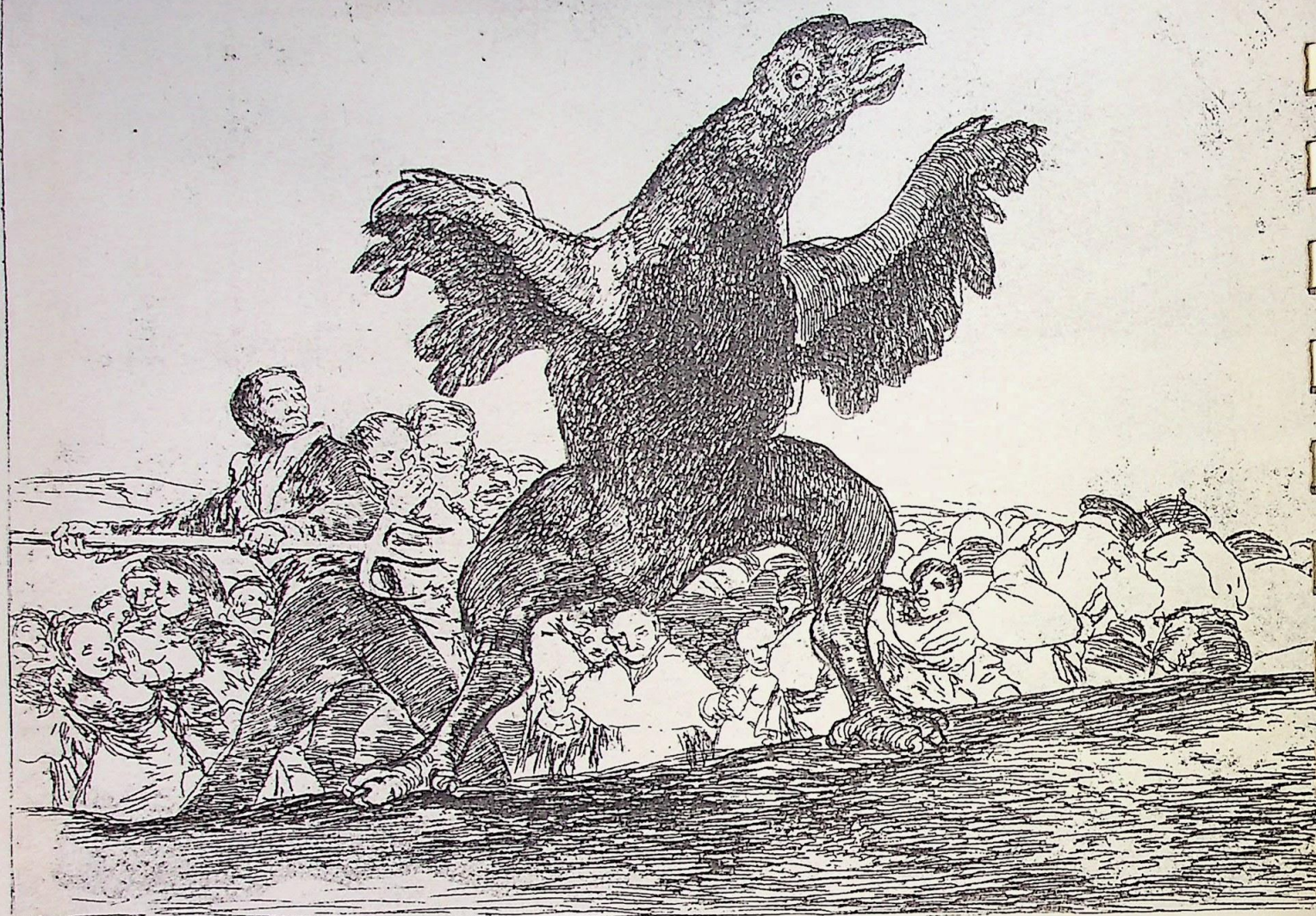
74 This is the [absolute] worst!



*Farándula de charlatanes.*

75 Troupe of charlatans





*El buitre carnívoro.*

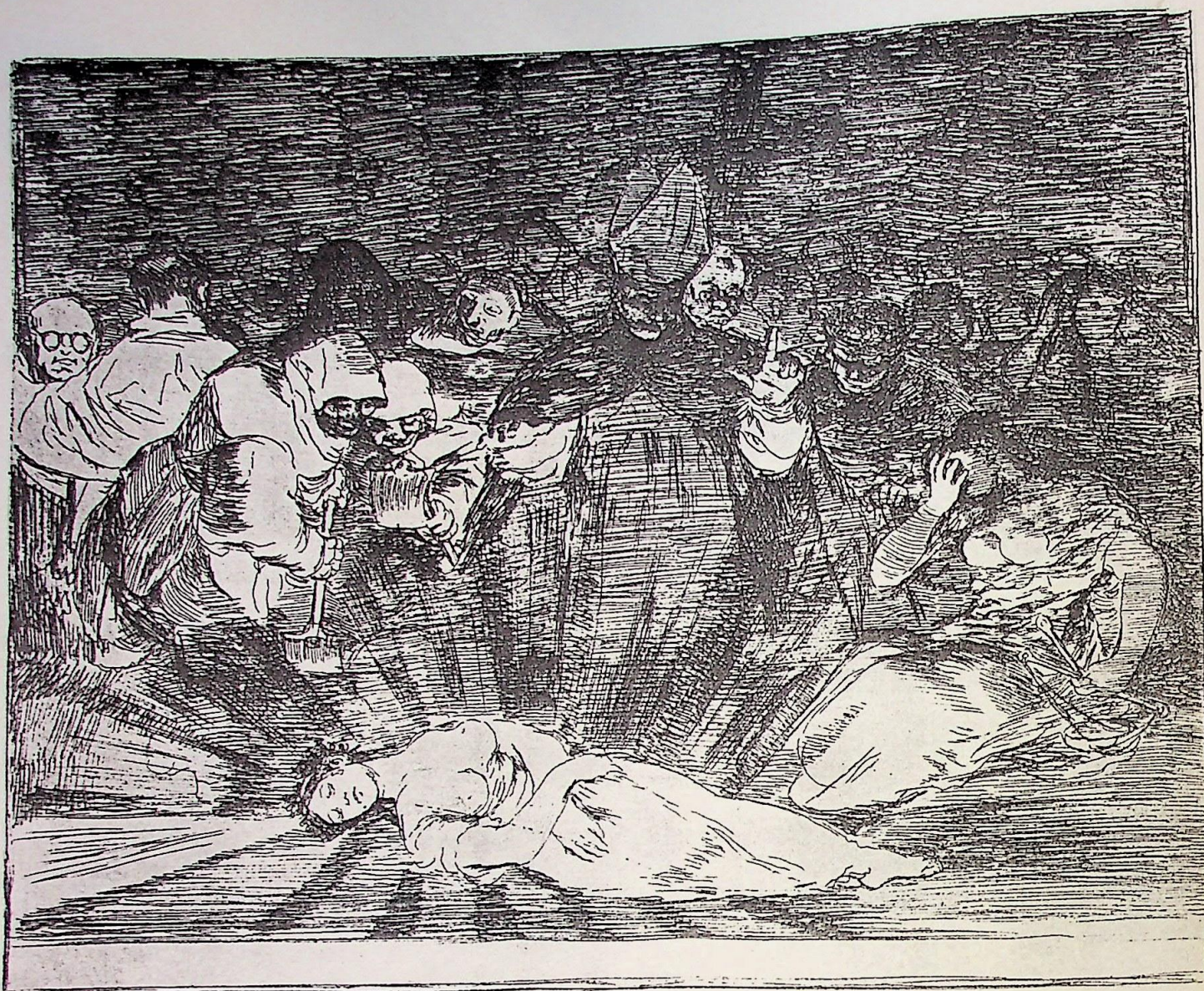
76 The carnivorous vulture



*Que se rompe la cuerda.*

77 Look, the rope is breaking!





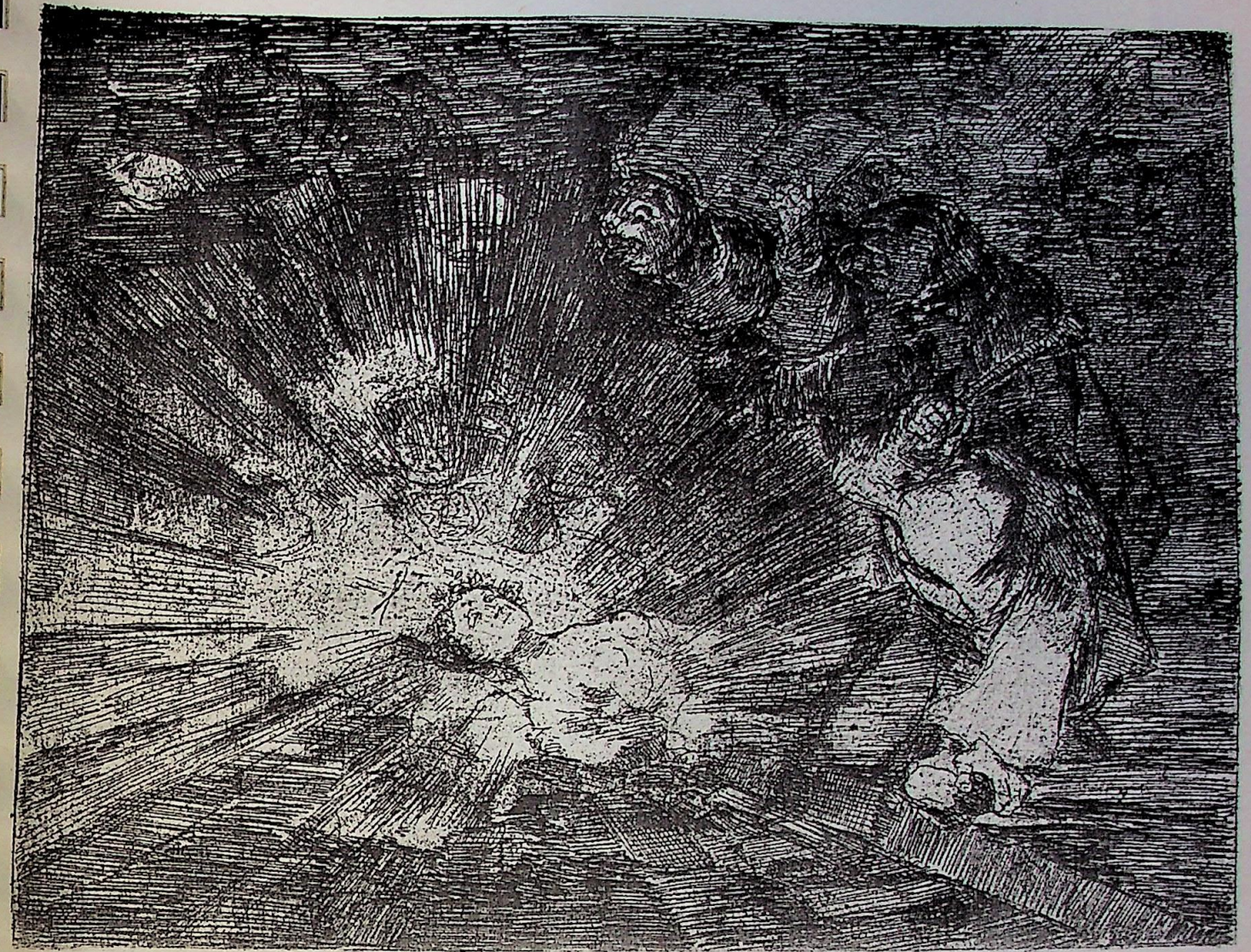
*Murio la Verdad.*

79 Truth has died

The woman with her arms outstretched echoes that of the central figure in the painting. Both echo plate 1 (20) of the Disasters, "Sad presentiments of what must come to pass" (*Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de acontecer*). The posture used as a central figure appears many times in Goya's work between the years 1808 to 1814. Again and again we are presented with the martyrdom of the pueblo. In plate 2 (21) "With or without reason" (*Con raxon o sin ella*) we see the French once again killing. A solid body of men thrusting forwards with rifles and bayonets pointing straight at the pueblo who defend themselves with makeshift spears. These are ordinary people defending their homes and families. There is something heroic about them but nevertheless they are not idealized. What Goya represents is basic plain killing.

The whole series is a carefully composed exercise. It is a study of "reason" and "unreason". It begins with the explosion of the Spanish people against the French invaders and we are plunged into a nightmare of atrocities committed by both sides. We see the pueblo devastated by the superior French forces. Towards the end of the series we can't tell who is who anymore as uniforms gel together and people change into beasts and monsters. The ejection of the French is followed by the restoration of the Spanish monarchy which plunges Spain back once more into the Dark Ages. The people have been sold out once more. We are led finally to plate 69 (22) entitled "Nothing, that's what it says" (*Nada*). A half skeleton, half buried corpse scrawls the word "Nada" from the grave. The next plates deal with the restoration scathing the clergy and what Spain had become (23-27). then follow plates 79 and 80 (28+29) entitled "Truth has died" (*Murio la Verdad*) and "Will she live again?" (*Si resucitara*). In plate 79





*Si resucitará?*

80 *Will she live again?*



assorted members of the clergy jostle around the corpse of a skinny woman - "Truth" - ready to confine her to the ground. Similiar is plate 80. Truth is depicted as a light on the darkness of Spain. The clergy are suitably black and in deep shadow. These plates speak for themselves.

We can look at the "Disasters of War" without reading the captions and no one can fail to be effected by their powerful visual impact, but the captions are also essential, adding to the meaning and ambiguity of each print. The captions are not direct, involving play on words, ambiguity and direct reference to contemporary proverbs many of whose meanings we have lost. The captions serve to deepen the paradox and do little to clarify things. The play on words is continuous. In plate 2 (21) as French soldiers and Spanish peasants butcher each other we are presented with the title " Con razon o sin ella" meaning "with reason or without", "rightly or wrongly", "for something or for nothing". "Se approvechan" runs one caption. Again this has many meanings, "they take advantage", or "They're of use to each other" or even "they're learning". The scene is of the dead being stripped by the people. The caption to a rape is "They don't want to", "they won't" or even "they don't love". "That's tough" is the caption as a man is unceremoniously and brutally hanged. To the famine deaths Goya asks "what's the use of crying?". The captions are caustic, contradictory and prepare they way for the directness of "Nada".

The exploration of "Reason" and "Unreason" characterises Goya's finest works. He brought new meaning to the name "graphic art", painstakingly developing the medium and his style to express a



personal visual language. No one before or since has gone as far as Goya in direct representation of the effects of war which is to his credit considering the climate of Spain at the time the works were made, the "black" Spain, the Spain that was considered blind, bigoted and backward, the Spain of superstition and the Inquisition.





64 Nocturnal Encounter with a Madman, 1924





63 The Trench, 1920-23

## CONCLUSION

Goya's cycle of engravings, *Los Desastres de la Guerra*, appeared in 1808. Goya had many predecessors who depicted similar themes, but those of note came after him and must arguably have been influenced by him. Here I will discuss briefly three of these; Otto Dix, George Grosz and Max Beckmann.

Though methods of warfare had changed during the 120 years between Goya and Dix, its horrors were still very much the same. Goya depicted atrocities that extended over the whole country; Dix, on the other hand, concentrated on the battlefield: the landscape of trenches from Champagne to the Somme to Flanders. Entire compositions - such as "Dance of Death Anno 17" and "Nocturnal Encounter with a Madman" (1) - are not set in a place reduced to rubble; and he preferred to reproduce such scenes at night, which permitted an enhancement of light effects in black and white and was calculated to evoke more strongly a feeling of horror. During the war years from 1915 onward, Dix was compelled to devise new means of expression to do justice to his experiences at the front. His pencil sketches could only offer isolated fragments of an uncompleted whole picture. Thus Dix attempted with gouache to take the elements of the trench war and to set them all together to create an image of the total event. As a result of this, we are presented with vivid and horrific images of death and destruction at the front. Paintings such as "The trench" 1920-23 (2), "Triptych: War" 1929-32 (3), "Trench warfare" 1932 (4), and "Flanders" 1934-36 (5).

Goya likewise had to invent a new means of visual expression to show the events he witnessed.





128 Triptych: War, 1929-32







131 Trench Warfare, 1932





132 Flanders, 1934-36

Also closely linked here are George Grosz and Max Beckmann. Grosz and Otto Dix cultivated a social consciousness in Germany. Beckmann was a part of this but his penchant for caricature did not last long and he did not become a cartoonist or propagandist. Social criticism was practically a required course for an honest artist during the postwar years. George Grosz, Otto Dix and the other painters of the New Objectivity were, for a while, Beckmann's comrades-in-arms in the unpleasant but necessary activity of muckraking. Beckmann never quite managed the vitriolic treatment that Grosz dished out to the Ruling classes. To Beckmann, the arrogant and ruthless bankers, politicians, officers and robber barons always remained human. He even chose to paint them dancing which was probably the most harmless of their activities. And he gave them strongly individuated personalities. For example "Party in Paris" and "Dancing Bar in Baden-Baden" (6). Beckmann, like Goya, Grosz and Dix, also depicted horrors that could be as cruel and powerful. Beckmann also lived and fought through a war. His paintings are more difficult to understand as they are loaded with mythical references. The artist himself declined to comment on any political meanings contained in his work.

"The Night" (7) is surely one of the most gruesome pictures ever painted. Beckmann sees no purpose in the suffering he shows. There is no glory, no compensation, only cruelty and pain. This is one moment in one attic in Germany at the end of World War I. There is no past and no future. There is only the present.

"Bird's Hell" (8) is an allegory of Nazi Germany. It is a direct attack on the cruelty and conformity that the National Socialists brought to Germany when they came to power.





Dancing In Baden-Baden (Max Beckmann ). PLATE (6).





PLATE (7).

The Night (Max Beckmann).



Birds Hell (Max Beckmann).

PLATE (8).





PLATE (9).

The Mill (Max Beckmann).

"The Mill" (9) could represent the liberation of Holland in May 1945. Figures are crammed together in a cage while others suffer tied to the blades of a windmill. The blades become like a torture rack. The whole painting shows us a tyrannically imposed order and senseless slavery.

Each artist chose his own medium with care and each extracted everything from that particular medium formulating a precise visual language that would become the vehicle for the expression of his deepest fantasies and emotions.

Goya spent the most important part of this creative life working on the Caprichos and The Disasters of War. Many of his etchings could not be published at the time. Still he clung to this medium and with the stylus Goya found a spontaneous release for his fantasies. The medium allowed him to move with much more freedom. As a result, Goya was the first artist who portrayed the social and political conditions of his time without losing his artistic integrity.



## Appendices



## NOTES

### Chapter One

1. Gwyn A. Williams: "Goya and the Impossible Revolution"  
(Pantheon, 1976) P.22.

2. Ibid. P.27.

### Chapter Two

1. Sanchez Canton, F.J. Museo del Prado : Los Dibujos de Goya.  
2 volumes. Madrid, 1954.

### Chapter Three

1. Gwyn A. Williams: "Goya and the Impossible Revolution"  
(Pantheon, 1976) P.137.

2. Ibid. P.139.

3. Ibid. P.145.

4. Bruce Catton: Gettysburg The Final Fury  
Victor Gollancz, 1975. P.95.



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THE FINAL FORMS OF GOYA'S FATAL CONSEQUENCES

PLATE NUMBER	CAPTION	TYPE	SUBJECT
1.	Sad forebodings of what is to come	Enfatico	Frontispiece
2.	With reason or without (rightly or wrongly)	Late	Men attack the French
3.	The same	Early	The same
4.	The women give courage	Late	Women attack the French
5.	... and are like wild beasts	Late	The same
6.	It serves you right	Early	Dying French soldier
7.	What courage!	Late	Maid of Saragossa
8.	It always happens	Enfatico	Fallen horsemen
9.	They don't want to	Late	Rape
10.	Nor these either	Late	Rape
11.	Nor these	Early	Rape
12.	For this you were born	Early	Man dying on heaps of corpses
13.	Bitter presence	Early	Rape
14.	Hard is the way	Early	Hanging
15.	And nothing can be done	Early	French execution
16.	They make use	Early	Stripping the dead
17.	They do not agree	Early	Officers argue in battle
18.	Bury them and keep quiet	Early	Heap of dead
19.	There's no longer time	Early	Rape
20.	Treat them and then on again.	Early	Wounded



PLATE NUMBER	CAPTION	TYPE	SUBJECT
21.	It will be the same	Early	Carrying off corpses
22.	All this and more	Early	Heap of dead
23.	The same elsewhere	Early	Heap of dead
24.	They'll still be useful	Early	Wounded
25.	These too	Early	Wounded
26.	One can't look	Early	Execution
27.	Charity	Early	Burial
28.	Rabble	Enfatico	Spanish atrocities against Spanish
29.	He deserved it	Enfatico	Spanish atrocities against Spanish
30.	Ravages of war	Early	Raped women, corpses
31.	That's tough	Late	French execution
32.	Why?	Late	French execution
33.	What more can one do?	Late	French execution, castration
34.	For a knife	Late	Spanish execution
35.	No one can know why	Late	Spanish execution
36.	Nor in this	Late	French execution
37.	This is worse	Late	French execution, mutilated man impaled on tree
38.	Barbarians!	Late	French execution of a monk
39.	Great deeds! Against the dead!	Late	Mutilated bodies
40.	Make some use of it	Enfatico	Figure with beast



PLATE NUMBER	CAPTION	TYPE	SUBJECT
41.	They escape through the flames	Early	Flight
42.	Everything is topsy turvy	Enfatico	Monks in flight
43.	So is this	Late	Monks in flight
44.	I saw this	Early	Flight
45.	And this too	Enfatico	Flight
46.	This is bad	Late	French kill a monk
47.	This is how it happened	Late	Sack of a church
48.	A cruel shame	Late	Famine
49.	A woman's charity	Late	Famine
50.	Unhappy mother	Late	Famine
51.	Thanks to the millet	Late	Famine
52.	They do not arrive in time	Late	Famine
53.	He died without help	Late	Famine
54.	They cry in vain	Late	Famine
55.	The worst is to beg	Late	Famine
56.	To the cemetery	Late	Famine
57.	The sound and the sick	Late	Famine
58.	It's no use crying out	Late	Famine
59.	What use is one cup?	Late	Famine
60.	There's no one to help them	Late	Famine
61.	As if they are of another breed.	Late	Famine
62.	The beds of death	Enfatico	Bodies
63.	Dead bodies in a heap	Late	Famine
64.	Cartloads to the cemetery	Late	Famine



PLATE NUMBER	CAPTION	TYPE	SUBJECT
65.	What's this hubbub?	Enfatico	Unhappy people before an official
66.	Strange devotion!	Enfatico	Devotion of saints' relics
67.	This is no less so	Enfatico	Devotion of saints' relics
68.	What madness!	Enfatico	Squatting figure eating among relics, masks with shadowy figures
69.	Nothing, that's what it says	Late	Message from the grave
70.	They don't know the way	Enfatico	Blind people roped together walking through a landscape
71.	Against the general good	Enfatico	Clerical figure with claws and vampire-like ears filling a ledger
72.	The consequences	Enfatico	Vampire creatures suck a human body
73.	Feline pantomime	Enfatico	Cleric bows before cat and owl.
74.	This is the worst!	Enfatico	A wolf writes "Wretched humanity, the guilt is yours". People and a cleric bow before it.
75.	Troupe of charlatans	Enfatico	Grotesque creatures dressed as clerics
76.	The carnivorous vulture	Enfatico	People driving away a huge vulture.



PLATE NUMBER	CAPTION	TYPE	SUBJECT
77.	May the rope break	Enfatico	The pope on a tightrope
78.	He defends himself well	Enfatico	Horse attacked by dogs
79.	Truth has died	Enfatico	Female figure of truth buried by clerics
80.	Will she rise again?	Enfatico	Glowing truth confronts hostile clerics
81.	Cruel monster	Enfatico	Beast gorging or disgorging bodies
82.	This is the truth	Enfatico	Peasant and female figure glowing.



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