

A CULTIVATED IMAGINATION:  
AN INVESTIGATION OF  
GOYA'S LOS CAPRICHOS

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## ABSTRACT

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Many consider Goya's Los Caprichos a fantastic product of the artist's imagination. In fact, it is the work of a finely focused and calculating man who was as responsive to the world without as he was to the inspiration within.

This paper provides us with a context for these prints in terms of their style and content and catalogues their various sources in the intellectual, social, artistic and literary world of Goya's time. It traces their evolution from an early beginning in the preparatory drawings to the final execution in the aquatinted prints, thus proving that Los Caprichos was not a "spontaneous" work but one carefully planned to achieve its desired impact: a powerful indictment against man's folly.

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## PART 1: A FORMAL CONTEXT

### 1.0 Introduction

On February 6th, 1799, an advertisement appeared in the 'Diario de Madrid' announcing the sale of Los Caprichos, a collection of eighty prints in etching and aquatint by the artist Francisco José de Goya Y Lucientes. Response to the work was varied: some were shocked by the bold references to human vice and folly and the thinly disguised allusions to corrupted political and religious figures. Others, like Mariano José Larra, dismissed the artist as a mere fantasist: in describing a rickety carriage with a scrawny horse and an equally scrawny driver, he noted that "when the coach moved it was a miracle, and when it stopped, a capricho by Goya."<sup>1</sup> Intellectuals both in Madrid and abroad, many of them close friends of the artist, lavished the highest praise upon the artist and his work, seeing in the series a biting but realistic depiction of the crippling social, political and religious malaise that gripped late eighteenth-century Spain. They credited Los Caprichos as being a reiteration of their own doctrines which warned of the degradation and disintegration of societies that refused to adhere to the principles of the Enlightenment. Their enthusiasm, however, was not shared by those of Spain's official order and Goya, fearing reprisal from the Holy Office, withdrew the series from the

market soon after their appearance. In 1803, he presented the plates along with the two hundred and forty remaining editions to his King, Carlos IV. In an accompanying letter to the Minister Don Miguel Cayetano Soler, he wrote:

. . . the collection of my Caprices consists of eighty plates etched by my own hand with aqua-forte . . . They were on sale to the public for only two days, at an ounce of gold per copy. Twenty-seven copies were sold. Five to six thousand impressions can be taken from each plate. They are most in demand among foreigners, and for fear that they should fall into their hands after my death, I wish to offer them to the King, my master, for his Calcografía.<sup>2</sup>

The presentation of the prints and plates was a seemingly bold gesture on Goya's part since it ensured the safekeeping of a work whose corrupted characters and institutions were the very citizens and official orders over which the King presided. Despite this sleight-of-hand however, it was quite probable that the king never saw the prints.

1.1 Spain and the Enlightenment

The degree of urgency present in the themes of Los Caprichos -- witchcraft, superstition, false learning, greed, poor education--mirrored the extent to which Spain's decline had progressed. Eleanor Sayres in her catalogue of Goya's print works, The Changing Image, describes the situation:

. . . the church was supported by the state and . . . there were richly endowed monastic foundations or parish livings; laziness, greed, ignorance, and a wide spectrum of offenses against morality were noted. Men saw poverty, widespread, and without remedy, as the cause of the frightening degree of

brigandage and the great prevalence of prostitution. They blamed this poverty on governments that failed to promote agriculture or to educate the poor and teach them useful trades. The dead weight of outworn traditions was universally deplored. So, too, were hypocrisy, pride, and an obstinate refusal to open one's eyes and ears to the truth.<sup>3</sup>

In an effort to combat these ills, Spain's intellectual elite rallied behind the ideas of the Enlightenment with its favouring of more equitable laws, better distribution of land, constitutional rights and an education system that stressed the quality of the individual. Leading ilustrados or writers of the day submitted their articles to such liberal publications as 'El Censor'--a journal that began under the guidance of Luis Canuclo and survived publicly only under the enlightened reign of Carlos III--or 'Discursus' in which they delivered scorching attacks against false learning, forced marriage, duels, torture, injustice, ignorance, superstition, defective education and the parasitism of a swollen hereditary aristocracy--in short, all the ills described by Goya in his Caprichos.

Pamphlets of this nature were banned by Spanish law beginning in 1785 (in the conservative political climate that characterized Spain after the French Revolution) and as a result were circulated secretly in manuscript form at tertulias or intellectual gatherings. There they must have inspired a hope for change intoxicatingly plausible after events in France and America. In this rich atmosphere of

political and social study, Los Caprichos took on the guise of an illustrated essay. Writing of some drawings of the Four Temperaments done by Goya at the same time he was working on the Caprichos, Pierre Gassier noted this image of the pictorial essayist:

. . . such animal symbolism . . . stemmed from his reading or what was reported to him of the conversations at which he was present in the tertulias he frequented. It must be born in mind that these notions, and all the ideas being discussed around him, whether political, philosophical, economic or religious, could not but be imperfectly assimilated by a man who was completely deaf<sup>4</sup> and whose genius was essentially visual: he translated them into images, based as often as not on disparate elements which he recast as the fancy took him in a new pattern of his own devising.<sup>5</sup>

Unlike his literary companions, however, such as Jovellanos, Valdez, Caldalso and Moratin, Goya rarely, if ever, adopted the didactic pose taken up by the authors of the political pamphlets. The desire to be reformed and the moral itinerary necessary to effect change had to come not from the artist but from the viewer himself.

As well as refraining from offering any kind of solution to the problems depicted, Goya made it difficult to determine just what those problems were. The true meaning of a print was often obscured either by cryptic rendering or by so exaggerating the characters and their circumstances that they were barely recognizable as in No. 50, Los Chinchillas. The terse, sarcastic captions that accompanied each print could

confuse a reader further with their ambiguous tone and enigmatic riddles as in No. 13, Estan Calientes (It's hot) which is levelled not at the temperature of the food but at the physical passion of the monks depicted or No. 55, Hasta La Muerte (Til Death) directed at the vanity of an old woman and the false flattery of her friends.

### 1.2 Commentaries

Edith Helman, an historian who has contributed a great deal to furthering our knowledge of Goya's literary contemporaries and their works, has pointed out that Goya intended to compose and publish an official commentary on the etchings. For many years, it was thought that a manuscript now housed in the Prado was just such a document especially in light of the fact that its former owner, Eduardo Carderera, wrote at the top: "Explanation of Goya's Caprichos written in his hand."<sup>6</sup> Helman, however, has concluded that while the substance of the commentary seemingly reflects Goya's views, more likely it was written by the playwright Moratin, a very close friend of the artist, and she has cited the similarities between the literary style of the Prado manuscript and Moratin's plays as proof.

Goya was not alone in his desire to shed light on the true meaning behind the prints. Many owners of the Caprichos elected to jot down supposed identities of the characters in their margins while others took up the task of writing full-blown commentaries, such as the anonymous author whose 1808 work was published in 1877 by Paul Lefort. Although he

6

sometimes identified public figures erroneously, relying more on gossip than fact, he clearly recognized Goya's attacks on more general themes--fanaticism, ignorance, superstition and the clergy.

Another set was hand-coloured by its owner who "had no difficulty in recognizing noble men, administrators of law or military men . . . . And he was well aware that the plates did not depict goblins and spirits but the abbés of Spain, a priest, and a number of monks."<sup>7</sup> In No. 56, Subir y bajar (Ups and Downs) (plate 1), he coloured the character who is ~~believed~~ believed to be Godoy without trousers. This point suggests a possible friendship with Goya that may have given him access to Goya's preliminary sketches as the figure is obviously naked in the preparatory red chalk drawing even though this detail is not so clear in the final print. The set appears to have been coloured before it was bound (1799) and later, in 1809, it was amended according to the editorial comments from the aforementioned Prado manuscript which was in Goya's possession at the time.<sup>8</sup>

Yet another manuscript, now in the Boston Museum, is that of Juan Antonio Llorente, Secretary-General of the Madrid Holy Office, who attempted to effect reformation of the institution from within. He was aided in his commentary by three friends of the artist who he named as being Estanislao de Lago, Bernardo de Iriarte and Leandro Fernández de Moratin. Llorente was most impressed by the satires on "prostitution, on illicit love and on the unhallowed behaviour



*Subir y bajar*

Plate 1. Subir y bajar. Etching with Aquatint. Reprinted from Goya: His Complete Etchings, Aquatints and Lithographs, by Enrique Lafuente Ferrari.

of people who had entered the church.<sup>9</sup>

A manuscript belonging to Adelardo Lopez de Ayala first published in 1887 often provides explanations that echo those of the Prado. Some are almost identical. This is especially true of the Caprichos which satirize personal follies and vices. However, in those where the object of the attack is in the area of political and religious abuses, there is a marked difference. In No. 56, Subir y bajar already cited, the Lopez de Ayala identifies not only the figure of Godoy (The Prince of Peace) but also 'Lust', seen hoisting Godoy into the air and depicted in his traditional guise of satyr. (Godoy's popularity at court was viewed as dependent upon the nature of his favour with the Queen.) The commentary reads: "Prince of Peace. Lust raises him up by his legs; his head is being filled with smoke and wind, and he discharges flashes of lightning against his rivals."<sup>10</sup> The Prado manuscript is not nearly so explicit: to its author the print deals with the fickle attitude of Fortune toward those who court her. "Fortune deals harshly with those who court her. She rewards with smoke the effort of climbing and punishes him who has risen by casting him down."<sup>11</sup> It may be that the Lopez de Ayala manuscript represents an amended Prado text.

Each subsequent age in history has sought after a definite view of the Caprichos. In many cases, this view has been coloured by certain preferences or trends in art criticism. The Romantics tended toward a preoccupation with Goya rather than with his work and saw in the artist both a

precursor and a champion of their beliefs in the power of the imagination. More conservative nineteenth-century critics tried to reverse his popularity with the Romantics (indeed Ruskin burned his copy of the etchings) but the Impressionists and Decadents restored it. The Expressionists and Surrealists found in Goya's evocative line an echo of their own notions of aesthetics while the psycho-philosophical critics of the 1920's and 30's called attention to what they saw as the true wedding of art and personality. Nigel Glendinnings book Goya and His Critics provides excellent coverage of this critical history.

### 1.3 The Preparatory Drawings

Within the last fifty years, art historians have approached Goya's work with a more academic, albeit archaeological, presence of mind. In their study of diaries, journals, newspapers and the literature of the day, they have provided us with a perspective on the artist's work that allows more accurate interpretations. This new approach has tended to discredit an earlier theory on Goya's working methods that considered Los Caprichos a collection of spontaneous prints by a socially-conscious conjurer. To support this view was to overlook the sheer volume and importance of the preparatory drawings and proofs that revealed the extent to which Goya reworked and sharpened the compositions over a period of almost four years.

The preparatory drawings belong to three main groups: those done at Sanlucar and Madrid, those made in preparation

for a series of etchings to be called Suenos and finally those made for the Caprichos plates.

The Sanlucar drawings, numbering over 100, date from the summer of 1796 and were begun at the country estate of the Duchess of Alba, El Capricho. They were finished in Madrid. The earliest of these fill both sides of a notebook (or album) of Netherlandish paper and are in brown and grey wash. Devoted to a celebration of womankind, they are elegant, delightful and charming although a shade schematic and decorative. Note, for example, the depiction of the dress of the girl in plate 2.

The drawings begun at Sanlucar and finished in Madrid are on separate sheets of Netherlandish paper, larger than that of the first notebook, and done in grey wash heightened with touches of brown and black. For the first time, Goya numbered the pages and titled the drawings. About half-way through this series, however, he introduced a significant change in tone such that "the censure of human stupidity and sin, which in the earlier part of the book was only hinted at in the narrow, predatory eyes of a prostitute, had now become the principal component of most of the drawings."<sup>11</sup> The elongated, elegant style of the earlier Sanlucar drawings was replaced by a broader, somewhat discordant one (plates 3 & 4) and there were references to evil and its power to transform men and women into animals and witches. Landscapes were reduced to suggestive geometric shapes. In the titles and commentaries following, linguistic meanings



Plate 2.. Drawing. Reprinted from Drawings from the Padró,  
introduction by André Malraux.



Plate 3. Drawing. Reprinted from Drawings from the Prado.



*Caricatura alegre.*

Plate 4. Caricatura Alegre (Merry Caricature), drawing. Reprinted from Drawings from the Prado.

were juxtaposed with the visual ones above, either in playful combination or in ironic opposition.

Goya's first real attempt at grouping a number of drawings around a single theme with the intention of producing an etched series occur in the Sueno drawings done in 1797.

(Most of these are preserved in the Prado.) There are twenty-eight numbered Suenos and about six which belong to this group because of shared medium and style. Most were done on stout Netherlandish paper (H C WEND & ZONEN watermark) in pen and sépia. Occasionally, a grey or sanguine wash was added and many show signs of having been rolled through a press. They were inscribed in black chalk and corrections were made in pen and brown ink. Eleven of the titles were begun with the word sueno (dream), echoing words used to describe the Madrid drawings such as brujas (witches), mascaras (masquerades) and caricaturas (caricatures). These words never appear in the final Caprichos despite the fact that they are often based on the compositions of the Madrid and Sueno collections. Nevertheless, there was a tacit link between the Madrid and Sueno drawings and the final prints.

Goya declared his intention for the series from the outset. The title of the first plate read:

Universal Language. Drawn and engraved by Francisco de Goya in 1797. The Author dreaming. His only intention is to banish harmful common beliefs and to perpetuate with this work of caprichos the sound testimony of truth.

The toxic night atmosphere of this print (see plate 11) with its bevy of symbolic creatures--bats, owls, a lynx--set the tone for the ensuing ten dreams which showed scenes of witchcraft against deeply chiaroscuroed backgrounds. They were probably drawn from Moratin's notes on The Account of the Auto-da-Fé which he was working on at the same time.<sup>12</sup> The next ten compositions showed the illusions of love and the remaining ones, various subjects ranging from donkeys to monks to smugglers.

Goya never printed the Sueno series but, instead continued to make preparatory sketches for a larger body of work. He did one hundred and thirteen studies for the eighty plates of Los Caprichos, utilizing designs and subjects worked out for the Suenos and sometimes those of the Sanlucar-Madrid albums. Most of the caprichos, however, were of novel design. They were untitled and done in red chalk and sanguine wash on a thin paper of Spanish manufacture (from the factory of Joaquin Gisbert at Alcoy) whose surface, much more resistant than the absorbent Netherlandish paper, held a harder line that was somewhat analagous to that printed by a copper plate. The red chalk transferred more readily to the plate than the moistened inks of the Sueno papers and allowed Goya to concentrate on an image as it would appear printed. Had he decided against transfer (the method he had used in the Velasquez series) and instead drawn directly onto the plate, he would have had either to translate his compositions in the reverse or to render the

image in the same manner as the drawing and accept the final print in reverse.

These three groups of drawings prove that Goya did not 'stumble' upon the Caprichos but rather that they evolved: slowly at first in the Sanlucar-Madrid Albums, then through the Suenos drawings and finally with a certainty of execution in the preparatory drawings for the caprichos. If one looks at No. 17, Bien tirada esta (They must fit tightly), for example, one sees that it had its beginnings in the Sanlucar notebook (plate 5). There, it shows a young girl bashfully turning her head from the viewer while she adjusts her stocking. In the preparatory drawing for the capricho, however, the act is not caught surreptitiously but openly supervised by an old woman--the procuress or Spanish Celestina (plate 6)--thereby introducing a sinister element. In the final print, (plate 7) there is very little compositional change. Goya has merely translated the wash and line carefully calculated in the drawing to the aquatint and etch of the final print.

#### 1.4 Goya's Printing Method

Tomas Harris, the artist and critic, has brought a very specialized knowledge to Goya's prints and has described Goya's method of printing in the following way:

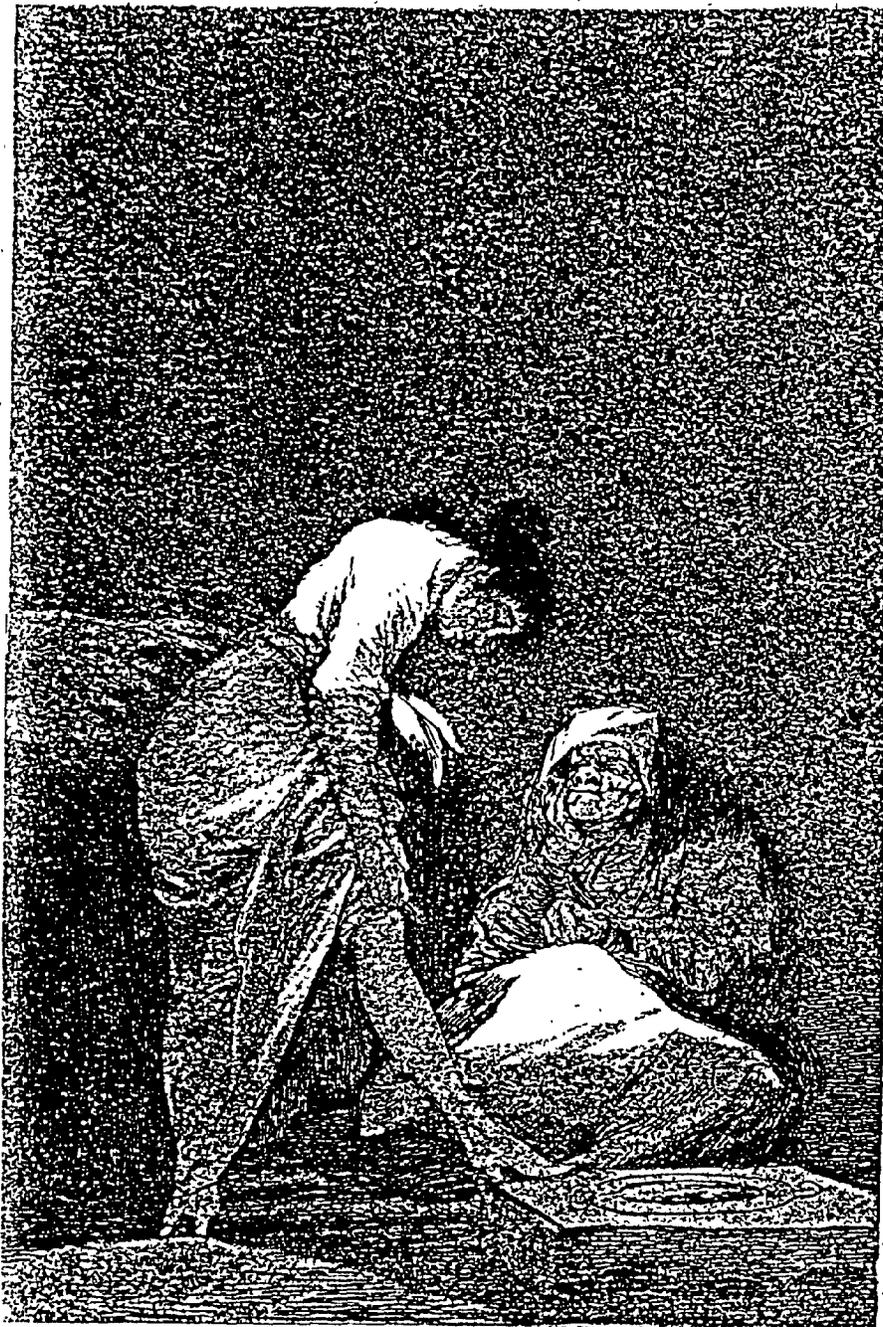
... the copper plate was first etched and, on removal from the acid bath, one or more proofs were taken from the freshly bitten plate. These working proofs were sometimes retouched by Goya with pen, pencil or charcoal to guide him in the additions he intended to make



Plate 5. "Young Woman Pulling up her Stocking," drawing.  
Reprinted from The Changing Image by Eleanor Sayres.



Plate 6. Bien tirada esta, drawing. Reprinted from  
The Drawings of Goya by Pierre Gassier.



*Bien tirada está*

Plate 7. *Bien tirada está*. Etching with aquatint. Reprinted from Goya: His Complete Etchings, Aquatints and Lithographs.

to the plate. For small corrections and additions and to give greater contrast to certain passages he would normally use the dry-point and burin. Having completed his drawing on copper, Goya then applied the comparatively new technique of aquatint.<sup>13</sup> just as he would apply wash to the preparatory drawings. The aquatinting was sometimes burnished to produce highlights and half-tones . . . Generally speaking artists do not take proofs of aquatint plates before the process of biting is complete, since this involves removing the resin ground; but in certain cases Goya did do so and then regrained and rebit the plate in order to darken certain areas. Proofs of some of the Caprichos show that in some plates of mixed techniques, Goya took proofs before and in the course of burnishing the aquatint.<sup>14</sup>

Goya first incorporated aquatint into his work in the etchings after Velasquez that were offered for sale to the public in July of 1778. Because Goya used aquatint so extensively in the Caprichos and because the Velasquez etchings represent his first known use of the method, it is worth spending a little time on the prints and on Goya's possible source for the procedure.

#### 1.5 The Velasquez Etchings

The first group of Velasquez etchings to be completed numbered nine and included Kings Filipe III and IV, Queens Marguarita de Austria and Isabel de Bourbon, Don Gaspar de Guzman, Count Olivares, Menippus, Aesop and two seated dwarves. Six months after their appearance 'Don Balthasar Carlos on Horseback' and 'A False Bacchus Crowning Some Drunkards' were added to the collection. Six additional etchings with aquatint are undated but stylistically appear to have been done around the same time and intended to form

a second group. They include 'Infante Don Fernando', 'Barbarroxa', 'Las Meninas', 'Don Juan' and 'Ochoa'.

The series of etchings after Velasquez may have been inspired by the writings of Antonio Ponz Piquer who in 1773 published his first volume of letters describing every facet of Spanish culture and life, entitled Travels Through Spain. Ponz was indeed surprised to discover that no one had attempted to reproduce the works of the Royal Collection at a time when prints of this nature were so popular with collectors throughout Europe. He wrote:

Europe knows very vaguely that there are wonderful works in Madrid and particularly in the royal palaces and in the Escorial; but few people have any idea of what they are because they have scarcely seen one miserable print of any of them . . . What is there, good or mediocre in France and Italy, and in a thousand other places, which has not been made known to the world through prints, to the honor of those who possess the originals and with no small profit to those who publish the reproductions . . . Formerly this lack was less to be wondered at because of the scarcity of engravers here . . . but now that we have a sufficient number of professionals who could set about the accomplishing of this project, it is disgraceful not to see them applying themselves to this.<sup>15</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that Goya knew of this plea and produced the series in response to it as Anton Mengs, the devout follower of the neo-classical style who was instrumental to Goya's career in his approval of his work, was familiar with Ponz's reputation as an art historian. In fact, Mengs was invited, in his capacity of First Court

Painter, to write a letter for the "Travels" introducing the principle paintings in the Royal Collection. To quote from this introduction:

What knowledge and truth of clare obscure [light and shade] do we not find in Velasquez! How well he understood the effect which the air has when interposed between the objects, to make appear distant the one from the other! And what study for any professor who would wish to consider the paintings of that author existing in the said hall (executed at three different times;) and the manner which shows the way held by him to arrive at such excellence in the imitation of nature.<sup>16</sup>

It seems unusual that Goya did not choose to employ aquatint in the earliest etchings after Velasquez since it so closely approximated the very atmospheric truth that Mengs had singled out. If one compares two working proofs pulled before and after the aquatinting had been applied with the actual painting (plates 8, 9, and 10 respectively) one sees to what extent the aquatint helped suggest a certain 'painterly' quality. That Goya should be more interested in this aspect of Velasquez's work than any other is further suggested in his disinterest in mere 'photographic' copying for the benefit of those who had never seen the Royal Collection: one can see his rejection of the painter's values of light and shade in False Bacchus and the way in which he left out certain details incidental to the composition such as the landscape in Balthasar Carlos. Clearly, those who had to study reproductions, for lack of the real

thing had to do so through the eyes of another artist.

#### 1.6 Goya's Source for the Process of Aquatinting

While it is impossible to pinpoint Goya's source for the process of aquatint, a little is known of its earliest uses and development that makes it possible to narrow down the field of speculation.

Jean-Baptiste Le Prince (1734-1781) is generally credited with having discovered the process. Although his earliest existing prints with aquatint date from 1768 (*Suite d'Habillements de Diverse Nations et Suite de Coiffurs dessinées d'après Nature*),<sup>17</sup> he claims to have discovered the process and kept it a secret to his death in 1781. In 1782, the Académie of France purchased his recipe from his niece and circulated it among their members. In 1791, it was made available to the general public in France. Despite Le Prince's alleged secrecy, however, a French engraver by the name of Jean-Claude Richard de Saint-Nor used the process in prints dating from 1766 and claims to have learnt of it from the printseller De La Fosse. This puts him two years in advance of Le Prince. Furthermore, another Frenchman by the name of P.G. Floding (1741 - 1791) used the process in 1762 in his prints after Boucher, placing his 'discovery' of the method a full year before Le Prince's return to Paris after a five year stay in Russia.

A.M. Hind, an English art historian, puts the origin of aquatint in the mid-seventeenth century, over one hundred years before P.G. Floding. He cites the works of



Plate 8. Infante Don Fernando. Working proof: Etching with burnishing and roulette. Reprinted from The Changing Image.



*Un Infante de España -  
 Pinxer le D<sup>e</sup> Diego Velazquez de et tamano naturel en el  
 R<sup>e</sup> Palacio de Madrid de su hijo de la Infanta de Portugal  
 Juan de Braganza en el año 1634.*

Plate. 9. Infante Don Fernando. Working proof with aquatint added. Reprinted from The Changing Image.

POOR COPY  
 COPIE DE QUALITEE INFERIEURE



Plate 10. Infante Don Fernando by Velasquez. Reprinted  
The Changing Image.

Jan van de Velde, a gold-smith and map engraver working in Haarlem. Hind found traces of aquatint in his Portraits of Oliver Cromwell (c. 1653, the year the title Protector Republicae was conferred upon him) and Queen Christina of Sweden (1650).<sup>18</sup> Aquatint also shows up in William Sherwin's Catherine of Braganza (c. 1669) where a roughly etched grain exists in the borders of the print.

Despite its early origins, however, aquatinting did not achieve any real popularity until the eighteenth century.

In England, aquatint enjoyed its first employment in the etchings of Peter Perez Burdett of Liverpool (Etching from a Design of Mr. Mortimer, 1771, Boys Blowing the Bladder and The Fable of the Fox and the Stork). A manuscript in his own hand states that he sold the recipe to the Honorable Charles Greville who then gave it to Paul Sandby, an English engraver of Italian and Indian views. Eleanor Sayres suggests that Greville purchased the secret from Le Prince but Sandby described the process as the laying of resin dissolved in wine on a plate.<sup>19</sup> Since Le Prince is not known to have ever achieved an aquatint in this manner, it is more likely that Hind is correct in assigning Burdett as Sandby's source.

In Vienna, the process appears in the work of Gerhard Janssen, a glass painter by trade, between 1718 and 1722. This is a solitary out-cropping, however, and not until 1775, in prints by Giovanni David (1743-1790) does it appear in this part of Europe.

We know of no direct contact between Goya and the French,

English and Italian users of the process although in 1775, David published a set of satirical costume prints that Eleanor Sayres describes as being not dissimilar in point of view and technique to Goya's caprichos.<sup>20</sup> Goya may have met David in Italy during his stay there or on his return to Spain but it would mean that David would have been working on the costume prints as early as 1771. But even though Goya had no direct contact with other European engravers, there were those in Spain who did. P. de Machy lived in Madrid from 1787-1791 and was the son of a French Academician. Both father and son were familiar with the process of aquatinting and a print by the younger Machy, Diversión Española (1790), is credited with being the first aquatint done in Spain. There was at the same time a government program which allowed Spanish pensionades (artists) to study in Paris for a period up to six years. One such pensionado, Salvador Carmona (1734-1820) was appointed Engraver to the King while in France and upon his return to Spain did a great deal to revive the industry of engraving in his own country. Goya either learned of the process from French publication, dating the prints sometime after 1782, or from one of the Spanish pensionados, dating the prints anytime after 1762.

## PART II: SHAPING THE IDEA

### 2.0 Introduction

As one looks through Los Caprichos, it becomes clear that they are a depiction of what Goya thought as opposed to what he saw. In this way, they are the visual equivalents to the banned literary journals circulated at the tertulias. If one looks at the advertisement that was run in the Diario de Madrid in 1799, one sees evidence that Goya was intent on declaring this cerebral preference from the start. The prints are a collection of "imaginary subjects", "invented", "not real", "chosen" from "universals". (See appendix I for the complete text of the advertisement.)

This predilection for ideas started half way through the Madrid album of drawings where Goya changed his emphasis from a celebration of the female form to a study of human vice and folly. He continued this theme in the Suenos--"his [Goya's] one intention is to banish harmful beliefs commonly held, and with this work of caprichos to perpetuate the solid testimony of truth." The monsters and strange creatures that followed were not part of a scientific study on the practices of witchcraft. They were visual metaphors for sin and evil.

It has been noted that a few of Goya's contemporaries referred to him as a "philosopher painter", a term that would at first glance seem to suggest that they too recognized this

notion of a painter of ideas. In the 1830's, Bartholomé José Gallardo used the term in some lines in his journal El Criticon<sup>21</sup> although he probably meant not that Goya painted ideas but that he "spent time in careful preparation and study before embarking on a work of art, employing his head as well as his hands."<sup>22</sup> Cean Bermudez, the Spanish art historian of Goya's time, also called Goya a "philosopher artist". However, as an idolizer of Mengs and the neo-classical principles very much in vogue during the period, he too probably meant the term in the aforementioned sense especially since he most admired work that was the product of an intellectual and rational person who spent years in training and patient study. 'A Discourse on the Philosophy of the Arts and Sciences in General and Literature in Particular' published in 1820 offers the following definition:

In painting and sculpture, if the artist only knows how to copy the models he has studied, he will never become anything more than a mere copyist, or if you like, a mere painter or sculptor; but if, when he has studied nature herself patiently and learnt from her what is truly beautiful and why, he shows that his compositions are not just the projects of chance or servile imitation, but of reflection and a reasoned conviction that they must be as they are because of the nature of the event or object they depict, then he will be a philosopher painter, or a philosopher sculptor.<sup>23</sup>

Here again, the notion that a sober period of study must precede the execution of a work of art to save it from becoming an exercise in copying is stressed.

## 2.1 Goya's Aesthetic Position

In one of the few extant documents written in Goya's hand, Goya managed to acknowledge the traditional definition of 'philosopher painter' while at the same time refuting the idea that time and care ensured a good work of art. In a letter to the Minister of State dated October 14, 1792 (see Appendix II) regarding the revision of the teaching programme at the San Fernando Academy, he wrote:

. . . Even the artist who has achieved more than most is hard put to it to explain how he reaches that deep understanding and appreciation of things, which is necessary for great art. Even he can give very few rules, and is unable to say why his least careful work may possibly be more successful than the one on which he laboured longest.<sup>24</sup>

The letter is also of interest since it sheds light on Goya's views on aesthetics. Goya believed first in the artist and then in an academy's ability to encourage and support that artist. He felt strongly that an artist should be allowed to develop of his own free will, not be moulded in the favoured style of the day. He viewed Geometry and Perspective as being restrictive if they existed in a course of study for the sole purpose of "overcoming the difficulties of drawing." As for painting, there were no rules. The proposal, while sincere, was in part a rebellion against the art education--formal and Mengsian--that Goya had received. His reverence of nature, however, was very much in keeping with neo-classical values, as one sees in the following:

. . . The imitation of Divine Nature is truly a deep and impenetrable mystery! Without it there is nothing good in painting (whose whole aim is Nature's exact imitation), nor in any of the other branches of learning.

. . . However great the artist who copies her [Nature], will not the work cry out when put beside Nature herself, that the one is the work of God, and the other of the feeble hands of man? Will the person who tries to forget reality and improve on it, without seeking out what is best in Nature herself, be able to avoid a reprehensible monotony in his style of painting when he bases it on plaster casts?

Six years later, Goya's views on art and Nature had changed considerably. In the advertisement for the Caprichos he no longer saw himself in the mainstream of art ("The Author has not followed the precedents of any other artists") and rather than work in Nature's image, he now announced:

. . . he who departs entirely from Nature will surely merit high esteem, since he has to put before the eyes of the public forms and poses which have existed only previously in the darkness and confusion of an irrational mind, or one which is beset by uncontrolled passion.

To stray from Nature was to cease to merely catalogue her characteristics and it could earn one a promotion from "servile copyist" to "inventor". But Los Caprichos were not done to rival Divine Nature but to show how man had abused his divine gifts. They were meant to force man to consider how far he had strayed from grace.

## 2.2 The Self Portraits

In both the Suenos and the Caprichos, Goya chose to open the series with a self-portrait. In doing so, he called upon a traditional literary device where the dreams of an author could be used to "indict with impunity various evils that had found indulgence or official protection in his society."<sup>25</sup> This was particularly true in the case of the Sueno portrait, a more literal transposition of the device. The dreaming artist may also have been inspired by Horace's Ara Poetica which was translated into Spanish in 1787 by Goya's friend Thomas de Yriarte. The opening lines of this poem run:

If through caprice a painter were to unite  
To a human shape  
The neck of a horse, and distribute  
Limbs of various other beasts, which he would adorn  
With different feathers, so that  
The monster whose face  
Copied the beauty of a woman,  
Ended as an enormous and ugly fish;  
On seeing such a form,  
Could you refrain from laughing, O Pisos?  
Well, friends, believe that to this painting  
In all manners are similar  
The compositions  
Whose unsubstantial ideas resemble  
The dreams of delirious sick men.<sup>26</sup>

Although the work 'capricho' had no counterpart in Horace's Latin, Yriarte explained in his notes that this word expressed the extravagant whim of the artist to draw these figures. In the Sueno drawing (plate 11), the artist is seen sleeping at his desk or table while bats and owls surround him and a lynx lies at his feet. A quarter of the plate is filled with a white globe of light that threatens to push the night creatures.

back into darkness. On the side of the table is written "Universal Language. Drawn and engraved by Francisco de Goya in 1797." The drawings that follow are illustrations of the artist's dreams.

Goya may also have known of the idea of monstrous beings being produced by the sleep of reason through an anonymous madrigal which ran:

As in the dream of a delirious man  
Are imagined monsters of unsubstantial thought. 27

For the Capricho plate, Goya experimented with additional information (plate 12): he drew the table in more detail and showed a copper plate leaning against it. The background he filled with all manner of line, obscuring the animals and adding another portrait of himself. And he removed the symbolic arc of light from the earlier drawing, relying on the direction of the lines and the white of the paper to accomplish the same effect.

In the final print, Goya returned to the original composition (plate 11). Applying a soft aquatint to the entire background of the print, he unified it and removed it from any particular whereabouts. The night creatures now swarmed atop the aquatinted backdrop. And rather than bother with all the details of the table, he pushed the copper plate to the end of it and inscribed it simply, "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters." The tools of the artist's trade lay abandoned while an owl tried to tempt the artist to pick up his brush. There was an air of hopelessness and



28. *El ynkato solo es de dormir dulcemente  
 por la noche, y por la mañana se  
 levanta con el sol.*

Plate 11. Sueno, drawing. Reprinted from The Drawings of Goya.

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Plate 12. Capricho 43, preparatory drawing. Reprinted from The Drawings of Goya.

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COPIE DE QUALITEE INFERIEURE

resignation present that seemed to affect even the artist himself, thereby suggesting that he too was part of the parade of sinners, very much reminiscent of those of the Last Judgement, that were about to follow. The light of the Enlightenment that had found place in the earlier sketches had now deserted the print, leaving only the memory of its occupation.

The self-portrait that introduced the Capricho series was very much different than the 'Goya-in-name-only' we have just seen (plate 14). Here Goya rendered himself in profile and in the formal dress of a gentleman, suggesting an air of respectability and monumentality. We register the hat and fullness of his coat and hat before his face. His smile is sardonic; his gaze, piercing; and the air of authority, unquestionable. Yet there is also an air of sadness. Goya turns away from his work but his sidelong glance acknowledges its presence. Unlike the figure in No. 43, this man does not readily number himself among the sinners but this makes his account of human vice and folly all the more authentic.

### 2.3 The Change in Title

What had fittingly opened a small series of prints on the sleep of reason was no longer a sufficient frontispiece to a collection of eighty prints levelled at the vices of mankind. This change in frontispieces reflected that expansion as did the change in title for the new series. Goya had often described his Sueno project as being capricious; In Sueno 1, he called the body of work a set of "caprichos".

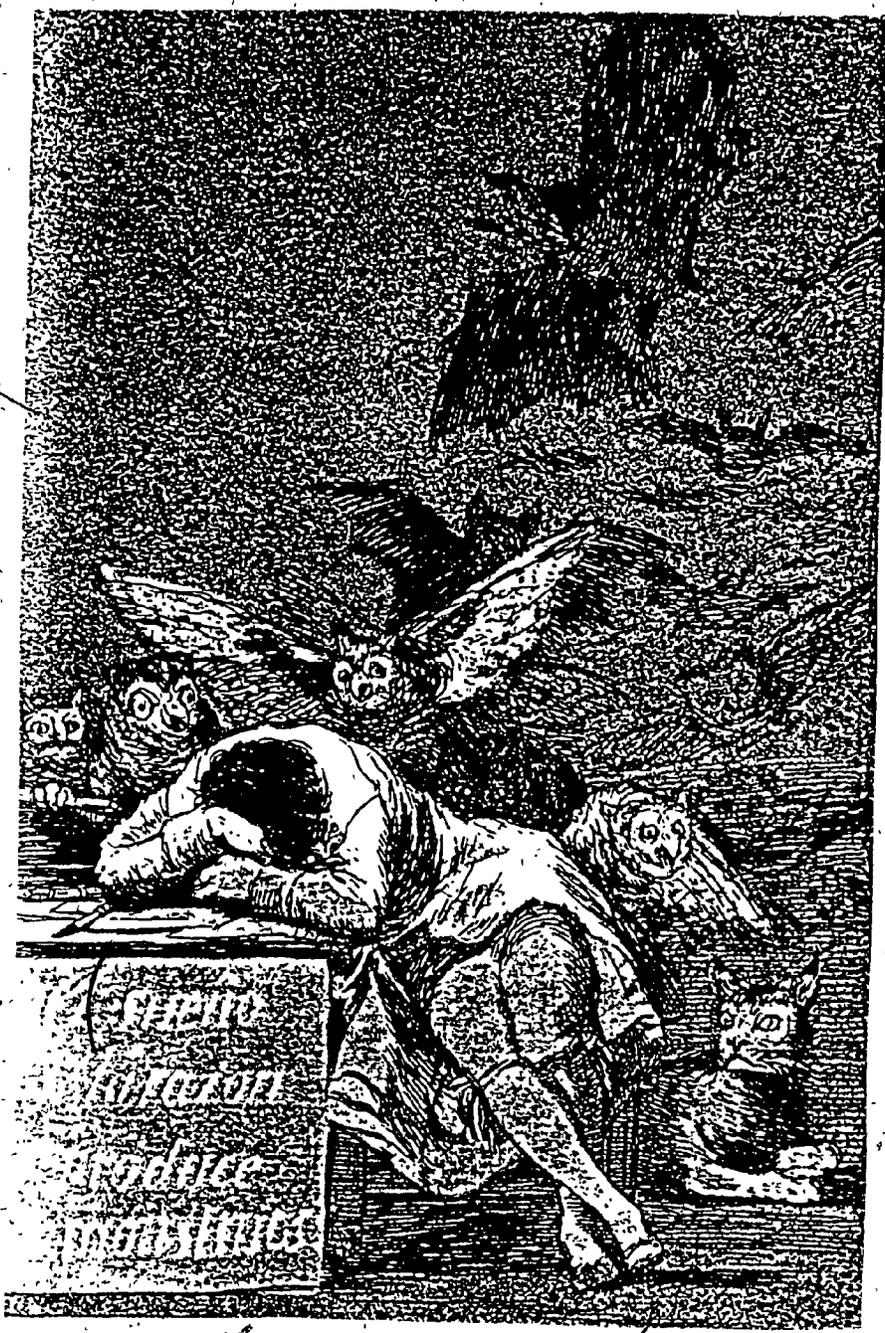


Plate 13. Capricho 43, Etching with aquatint. Reprinted from Goya: His Complete Etchings, Aquatints and Lithographs.

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*Fran.<sup>co</sup> Goya y Lucientes,  
Pintor*

Plate 14. Self-portrait, Etching with aquatint. Reprinted  
Goya: His Complete Etchings, Aquatints and  
Lithographs.

And in a letter to Yriarte which accompanied eleven pictures he presented to the Academy in 1794 (the year following his critical illness which left him deaf), he wrote that he was beginning two new works which would "make observations that are given no place in commissioned works where caprice and invention cannot be developed."<sup>28</sup> The word capricho was defined in Goya's time in the following manner: "In works of poetry, music and painting it is that which is done by the power of invention rather than by adherence to rules of art. It is also called fantasy."<sup>29</sup> This flaunting of the established view would have appealed to Goya but it does not explain Goya's use of the word in a moral sense. In Spanish, the word capricho can be traced to the root cabro meaning goat, an animal noted for its wanton and lively nature. In Italian, the word is derived from the same root and there is an expression, salvar capra e cavoli, meaning to have it both ways. In 1594, an English writer used the word in this way: "The inventive wits are termed in the tuscan tongue capricious for their resemblance they bear to a goat who takes no pleasure in the open and cosy plains but loves to caper along the hilltops."<sup>30</sup> In terms of the word's iconographic usage, the goat was seen as a "symbol of the damned in the Last Judgment." This interpretation is based upon a long passage in the Bible (Mathew 25: 31-36) which relates how Christ shall separate the believers from the unbelievers just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. In the Renaissance, the goat was usually

shown in order to distinguish the sinners from the righteous.<sup>31</sup>

We now know, through the research of Nigel Glendinning that analogues exist for Goya's use of the word capricho in Spanish tonadillas (folksongs) where the word often means picture with a moral point<sup>32</sup> and in popular fables and poetry of the day. He has also pointed out that captions from Goya's drawings are somewhat ironically taken from the catechism, thus reminding one of its presence, regardless of the way in which they are used.

#### 2.4 The Question of Division

The two self-portraits divide the Caprichos into two sections. The first forty-two prints concern themselves more with a cataloguing of the sins of society--prostitution, superstition, courtly love, etc.--while those following No. 43 are mainly the unworldly monsters springing from the sleep of reason. This organization suggests a comparison with the Garden of Earthly Delights by Hieronymus Bosch with its profound opposition of earthly pleasures and torments of hell. Francis Klingender has pointed out that Goya's contemporaries were part of a continuing tradition that recognized the moral intention behind Bosch's work. Both artists chose a "synthesis of reason and fantasy" where "the accent rested on the democratic, popular elements and the fantasy enforced the moral satire."<sup>33</sup>

This "synthesis of reason and fantasy" pervades the entire collection of prints and is reflected in the fact that the arrangement of caprichos is more rhapsodic than arbitrary.

One is meant to be caught off guard and although three or four prints dealing with the same subject are grouped together, nothing prevented Goya from including one or more themes in a given print or placing themes from the first section in the second. Goya's attitude to his characters is subject to change too: at times he is bitterly satirical where elsewhere tender and sympathetic. In No. 34, for example, Las rinde el sueno (Sleep overcomes them) he comments with pity on the lot of women who must walk the streets yet in the next print, Le Descanona he bitterly portrays woman as an emasculator of men.

#### 2.5 Goya and Lavater

Although many have recognized familiar public figures in the prints, most of the characters are creations of Goya's imagination. In the second half of the series, they seem hardly recognizable as human beings. If one studies two drawings Goya reputedly made at a tertulia held at the home of the Marqués de Santa Cruz in Madrid in 1798 (plates 15 & 16), one will see that many of the Capricho heads have their origins in those of these drawings. The pen and sepia drawings suggest a striking resemblance between man and animals, birds, and rodents. Lopez-Rey feels confident that these drawings were done as a visual translation of the writings of Johann Kasper Lavater (1741-1801) which enjoyed widespread circulation among the intellectual elite of Europe. Even Voltaire, in response to the question "Can one change one's character?" had replied "Yes if one changes one's



Plate 15. Sixteen Caricature Heads. Pen and Sepia drawing. Reprinted from The Drawings of Goya.

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Plate 16. Group of Caricature Heads. Reprinted from The Drawings of Goya.

body...<sup>34</sup>

In his book Essays on Physiognomy, Lavater suggested a connection between facial characteristics and moral character. He even believed that his new science could become the "terror of vice":

Let the Genius of Physiognomy awake and exert its power, and we shall see those hypocritical tyrants, those grovelling misers, those epicures, those cheats who under the mask of Religion are its reproach, branded with deserved infamy.<sup>35</sup>

For Lavater, the moral life of man discovered "itself principally in the face--in the various changes and transitions, or what is called the play of the features."<sup>36</sup> Goya's tertulia drawings may have been made in response to Lavater's idea that the artist was a natural linguist since he could better illustrate the "infinite number of signs, of expression, of shades, which identified men of virtue and vice."<sup>37</sup> Lavater's partner for a time, Goethe, believed that man's garments and posturings were also of importance: "rank, condition, estate, dress, all concur to the modification of Man . . . Hence it is that a judgment may be formed of a man's character from his dress, his house, his furniture. Nature forms us, but we transform her work; and this very metamorphosis becomes a second nature."<sup>38</sup>

There was, according to Lopez-Rey, a fundamental difference however between the ideas of Lavater and Goya that proved to what extent Goya incorporated Lavater's beliefs into his work only in so far as they serviced his own ends.

Lavater's interest in the exterior features of man was the extent to which they mirrored a man's soul. Goya, on the other hand, was more interested in bringing before us "forms and attitudes expressive of man's wretchedness which no external observation could detect."<sup>39</sup> Thus, his illustration of Lavater suggests that he was more concerned with the symbolic potential of physiognomist's findings than their empirical significance.

#### 2.6 A Symbolic Approach

This leaning toward the symbolic is evident in a series of drawings Goya did of the Four Temperaments around the same time as he was preparing the Los Caprichos etchings. In them, each temperament is linked with a personality and then with an animal. The Sanguine Temperament manifests itself in the gallant and the ape; the Melancholy, in the woman and the serpent; the Phlegmatic, in the student and the frog; and the Choleric, in the constable and the cat. These symbols had long been prescribed by iconographic tradition and were mentioned by Lavater in his writings. This rendering of the temperaments can be found in the Caprichos: in No. 55, Hasta La Muerte (Til Death), the old woman trying to look young is an oblique reference to Saturn, or Time, whose attributes are the serpent and the scythe. And in Numbers 7 and 27, the petimetre (from the French 'petit-maitre) is the gallant or fop. A cat-like constable escorts a victim of the Inquisition in No. 24.

Goya also relied on animals to suggest a tacit

characteristic: donkeys and asses were used to denote stupidity; owls, deception; goats, the Damned and Satan; satyrs, lust; and cats, laziness. Animals appear, in fact, in over a quarter of the prints. Traditionally, authors used asses and donkeys to lash literary rivals. In the illustrated La Dunciade ou la guerre des sots (1776), Folly changed writers into asses with her wand. Interestingly enough, this French work was filled with the same elements of black magic as those found in the Caprichos and one can see owls, asses, exorcisms, fetuses and new born babies being offered for sacrifice.<sup>41</sup> Another work, Memorias de la Insigne Academia Asnal (Memoirs of the Noble Assinine Academy, 1792) was written by the so-called Dr. Ballesteros. This book was circulated around the time of Goya's convalescence. Parallels between it and the Caprichos exist: the Musical Ass of the Ballesteros manuscript can be linked to No. 38, Bravissimo, as can its Doctor's (No. 40), its Teachers (No. 37) and those tracing family trees (No. 39). There was also a play involving asses by Padro Isla called Fray Gerundio. The Inquisition tried to ban the text in 1760 and 1776 but a new edition was released in 1787.

## 2.7 Goya's Incorporation of Contemporary Plays into the Caprichos

Goya's borrowing from contemporary plays and literary works is yet another proof that Los Caprichos has a 'collected' intelligence woven with references from many sources that were in turn shaped to suit the artist's needs.

Again, it is Edith Helman who has contributed the most to our knowledge of Goya's cultural and intellectual contacts, namely, Nicholas and Leandro Moratin, Caldalso, Jovellanos, and Padra Isla. Because of her research, we now know that No. 50, Los Chinchillas, was inspired by a scene from a play by Canizares called II Domine Lucas in which those overly proud of their lineage were satirized.

In the Sueno drawing (plate 17), Goya experimented first with a more literal translation of the play: two men, one of whom is called Chinchilla in the play, are paralysed by a kind of carcan (iron collar) and spoon-fed by four women. The action takes place in an architecturally outlined setting and under the drawing Goya has written: "The sickness of reason. Nightmare . . . dreaming that I could not wake up nor free myself from the nobility."<sup>43</sup> In the print (plate 18), Goya stripped the background of its narrative and simplified the men's costumes (now their ears are clearly stopped with padlocks). He replaced the four women with the single figure of a blindfolded 'monster' with asses ears who maintains his two "Chinchillas" on a diet of ignorance. Helman wrote of the change:

. . . characters are no longer the humorous caricatures of the play, but dehumanized beings, fossilized relics of some distant period in the past, left permanently behind, isolated from the real world by their own useless, chimeric and absurd existence based on heraldry and patents of nobility.<sup>44</sup>

## 2.8 Lovers of Ugliness

Helman is also responsible for pointing out that Goya belonged to a group that centered itself around the playwright Moratin. They called themselves Acalofilos (lovers of ugliness) and steeped themselves in all the absurdities of the day in order to mock the foolishness of such customs, and at the same time to remind people, through exaggeration, of their existence. This mocking occurred mainly in the groups' writings and drawings where it aimed at showing Spain as a theatre of the absurd. Moratin, who believed ridicule was his last weapon, wrote in the style of Molière but in the Spanish idiom. His plots were simple and his dialogue sharp and brilliant.

## 2.9 The Prints on Witchcraft

The prints on witchcraft are a formidable collection. Originally, they were meant to comprise the main part of the Sueno series and coming right after the "sleep of reason", their monstrous congregation served as a powerful warning. In the Caprichos, they were allowed to keep their intense ordering, appearing only in the night-time air of the prints following No. 43. They serve as a kind of contrast to the society ills that plagued the first half of the series. They are not only a documentation of superstition and black magic but are the series' deepest metaphor for evil. The demons and witches of those nineteen prints, often presided over by the Devil himself, go beyond the sins of man: they preshadow the horrors of hell.



*La Enfermedad de la Varon*

Plate 17. Sueno, drawing. Reprinted from The Drawings of Goya.



*Los Chinchillas*

Plate 18. Los Chinchillas, etching with aquatint.  
Reprinted from Goya: His Complete Etchings,  
Aquatints and Lithographs.

Strangely enough, there existed a kind of romantic interest in witches and prenatural beings in Goya's day. Madrid theatres were constantly offering plays on the subject and even Goya was commissioned to do a series of six paintings on witchcraft for the Duke and Duchess of Osuna (for their country estate, of course, with its more 'natural' setting). These Goya did late in 1797. At least two to the scenes depicted in the paintings can be traced to the plays of 17th century author Antonio de Zamora<sup>45</sup> and one, The Witches Sabbath, actually finds its way compositionally into the Caprichos (No. 47). Edith Helman has done some excellent coverage of the links between the plays of the younger Moratin and the Caprichos.<sup>46</sup>

Many of the scenes depicted are also based on what we know of traditional witchcraft practices. In No. 67, Aguarda que te unten (Wait Until You Have Been Anointed, plate 19), for example, two witches hold onto the hind legs of a goat and try to apply a salve while he attempts to leap into the air. According to practice, ointments were painted on the genitals or legs (where they were more quickly passed into the bloodstream). The recipients of these ointments then experienced a sense of flying or some other hallucination. In 1594, Reginald Scot wrote the following: the witches "stampe all these together, and then they rubbe all parts of their bodys exceedinglie, till they looke red, and be verie hot, so as the pores may be opened, and their flesh soluble and loose. The ioine herwithall either fat, or oil in steed



*Aguarda que te untan*

Plate 19. Aguarda que te untan, Etching with aquatint. Reprinted from Goya: His Complete Etchings, Aquatints and Lithographs.

thereof, that the force of the ointment made the rather  
 ,pearse inwardly, and so be more effectually. .47

What separates Goya's Capricho from mere illustration of fact, however, is the satirical bite that changes the goat from simple guinea pig to ridiculous being. The caption beneath does not describe the anointing but the impatience of the goat to commence flying. The caption suggests that he considered himself already flying even before the magic salve has been applied.

In No. 59, Y aun no se van (And still they will not go, plate 20), the outcome of foolish superstition is depicted. A huge slab of rock threatens to crush the weak, naked beings who try to hold it up. We feel pity. But the title shows that Goya believed their torment to be self-induced: that despite the oppression of outmoded beliefs, man continued to labour under the weight. He need not have stood by them.

Goya's illustrations of witchcraft are but a backdrop for his real concern, the depiction of ignorance and superstition.

### 2.10 Tools of Illusion

Lavater, animal symbolism, witchcraft--all these areas had a common interest: their power to transform. But in the Caprichos there was another element that prefigured transformation, namely illusion. With masks and disguises, Goya was able to show how ugly society women tricked rich husbands into marrying them (No. 59), how men dressed as boogey men



*Y aun no se van!*

Plate. 20. Y aun no se van, etching with aquatint.  
Reprinted from Goya: His Complete Etchings,  
Aquatints and Lithographs

scared away the children of their lovers (No. 3), how painted prostitutes with comely legs distracted one from the truth, and how men and women, fashioning themselves in the image of convention, played the game of courtly love (Nos. 6, 7, and 27). And even if the disguise was thin, the subject could always rely on the desire of his companion to see only what he wished to see.

When Goya portrayed a doctor as an ass or a society lady as a hermaphrodite, it was not just to suggest that they were no better than their attribute suggested but that the public was untroubled by their disguise. While we should realize that a tree draped with a sheet was just that (plate 21), the praying girl at the specter's feet preferred to suspend her disbelief as if the cupping of her hands in prayer were as holy as the knowing why.

This illusionistic world was like a farce. It was described by André Malraux in these terms:

The capes and serenades, the hearses with yellow plumes that passed slowly across the ancient heraldic setting, the beggars like baroque saints, all belonged to it. The Queen pilfered the powder destined for the army fighting against Portugal so as not to see the resources of state squandered, resources which were lawfully earmarked for plays and operas. The story would have it that the late king tried to violate his wife's corpse in the midst of burning tapers and the monks at prayer. In the squares could be seen the auto sacramental of the Annunciation: St. Michael takes-off his black cloak to the Virgin, revealing a ruff and mauve-coloured pinions; she offers him chocolate which he refuses because God the Father has promised him paella for breakfast. The Holy Ghost enters



*Lo que puede un Sastre!*

Plâte 21. Lo que puede un Sastre. Etching. Reprinted from Goya: His Complete Etchings, Aquatints and Lithographs.

and all three celebrate their agreement  
in a most immodest fandango.<sup>48</sup>

Goya's first step in banishing harmful beliefs was in enlightening the believer.

### 2.11 Capricious Women

Goya's preoccupation with women, especially in the first half of the *Caprichos* was a continuation of his fascination with their ability to deceive. They are portrayed as silly young women whose brains are in their seats because chairs are on their heads (No. 26), as pretty society women who think the practice of courtly love love itself (Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 27), as prostitutes (Nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 28, 31, and 78) who fleece their men (Nos. 19, 20, and 21) and rob them of their masculinity (No. 35). Those left unsatisfied in arranged marriages (Nos. 2, 14) seek comfort in illicit love (Nos. 3, 74). Women are vain (No. 55) and silly enough to think love potions will change their amorous status (No. 12) or that the sacrifice of their babies to witches will put them in good standing with the Devil (No. 47). Goya's women are sometimes witches (Nos. 44, 60, 61, 65, 68, and 72) who can drive men to death (No. 10). But they are also to be pitied for their cruel fate (Nos. 22, 32, 34, 36, and 75). Nearly half the *Caprichos* include women.

According to Lopez-Rey, Goya "indulged in the gratifications afforded by eighteenth century society, which, in Spain as elsewhere, regarded love, particularly in its illicit forms, as a fashionable amenity."<sup>49</sup> We are all

familiar with the story of his love affair with the Duchess of Alba that soured sometime during his stay at Sanlucar, leaving him very embittered. It may be that the change in attitude toward women that took place in the Madrid Album of drawings was due partly to this unhappiness. Certainly, the Duchess of Alba never appears in a favourable light in the Caprichos. In No. 61, Volaverunt, she is shown flying dream-like and vacant-faced through the air on the backs of witches and in the print Sueno de la Mentira y la inconstancia (Dream of Lying and Inconstancy), never included in the Caprichos proper, her two heads are an unsavoury symbol of unfaithfulness. But to say that Goya's personal trials were the solitary force behind the proliferation of female characters would be to misunderstand the deeper, more universal outlook that pervades the series, namely a delineation of the ills of society that penetrated to the very heart of Spain and to the spirit of man. Women were a part of the equation that made prostitutes a metaphor for that sickness of the spirit and silly young maidens, metaphors for Folly.

Furthermore, Goya's approach to women was as synthetic as his approach to other sources. The procuress seen with almost every prostitute was the stock character 'Celestina' found in Spanish literature dating back to the late fifteenth century. She could be seen in real life all about the 'red light district of Madrid' but she could also be seen in the works of other artists. No. 31, Ruega por ella, acknowledged Rembrandt's Esther Preparing To Intercede with Ahasneras

(Goya borrowed several prints by the Dutch artist from Cean Bermúdez) but the image of the anile businesswoman living off the sale of a young woman's body had been popular with artists for a long time.

### PART III: CONCLUSION

Goya may not have 'invented' his capricious characters but his imagination had everything to do with their transformation from real or literary characters to metaphors for everyman. In the working of the plates, Goya employed a complete visual and intellectual vocabulary to create a work whose pages presented one of the strongest indictments against man's follies ever conceived. Los Caprichos is a most powerful and arresting work and to those versed in the intellectual, historical, literary and artistic elements of Goya's day, a rich and persuasive commentary on the eighteenth century. In fact, we can still say Ya es hora (The Time Has Come, plate 22).



*Ya es hora*

Plate 22. Ya es hora. Etching with aquatint. Reprinted from Goya: His Complete Etchings, Aquatints and Lithographs.

## APPENDIX I:

ADVERTISEMENT FOR LOS CAPRICHOS THAT APPEARED

IN THE 'DIARO DE MADRID' IN 1799.

A collection of prints of imaginary subjects, invented and etched by Don Francisco Goya. The author is convinced that it is as proper for painting to criticize human error and vice as for poetry and prose to do so, although criticism is usually taken to be exclusively the province of literature. He has selected from amongst the innumerable foibles and follies to be found in any civilized society, and from the common prejudices and deceitful practices which custom, ignorance or self-interest have hallowed, those subjects which he feels to be the most suitable material for satire, and which, at the same time, stimulate the artist's imagination.

Since most of the subjects depicted in this work are not real, it is not unreasonable to hope that connoisseurs will readily overlook their defects.

The author has not followed the precedents of any other artist, nor has he been able to copy Nature herself. It is very difficult to imitate Nature, and a successful imitation is worthy of admiration. He who departs entirely from Nature will surely merit high esteem, since he has to put before the eyes of the public forms and poses which have only existed previously in the darkness and confusion of an irrational mind, or one which is beset by uncontrolled passion.

The public is not so ignorant of the Fine Arts that it needs to be told that the author has intended no satire of the personal defects of any specific individual in any of his compositions. Such particularized satire imposes undue limitations on an artist's talents, and also mistakes the way in which perfection is to be achieved through imitation in art.

Painting (like poetry) chooses from universals what is most opposite. It brings together in a single imaginary being, circumstances and characteristics which occur in nature in many different persons. With such an ingeniously arranged combination of properties the artist produces a faithful likeness, but also earns the title of inventor rather than that of servile copyist.<sup>45</sup>

## APPENDIX II:

## LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF STATE

Academies should not be restrictive. Their only purpose should be to help those who, of their own free will, seek to study in them. They should banish the pattern of compulsion and servility which is found in schools for children, get rid of mechanical precepts and monthly prizes, and also grants in aid, which make the art of painting, which is liberal and noble, into something mean, base and effeminate. There should be no fixed periods for studying Geometry or Perspective in order to overcome the difficulties of drawing. Those who have the talent and inclination will be forced to learn these things by drawing itself when the time is right. The more advanced in drawing students are, the easier it will be for them to acquire the skills they need for other branches of art, as the examples of outstanding draughtsmen show--they are too well known to need quoting. There are no rules for Painting, as I shall prove, supporting my case with facts. To make every one study in the same way and follow the same path compulsorily, seriously impedes the development of those young people who practise this difficult art: an art which is nearer to the divine than any other, since it is concerned with everything God created. Even the artist who has achieved more than most is hard put to it to explain how he reaches that deep understanding and appreciation of things, which is necessary for great art. Even he can give very few rules, and is unable to say why his least careful work may possibly be more successful than the one on which he laboured longest. The imitation of Divine Nature is truly a deep and impenetrable mystery! Without it there is nothing good in painting (whose whole aim is Nature's exact imitation), nor in any of the other branches of learning.

Annibale Caracci revived Painting from the decadent state into which it had fallen since the time of Raphael. His generous and liberal disposition brought him more pupils, and better ones, than any other teacher there has ever been. He allowed each one to follow his own bent, not forcing anyone to accept his personal style or method, and the only corrections he made were those that rendered the representation of nature more faithful. In consequence, Guido Reni, Guercino, Andrea Sacchi, Lanfranco, Albano and others, all had styles of their own.

I cannot omit a still clearer proof of my point. How many pupils have followed the most able teachers of our own times, despite the efforts they have made to inculcate their painstaking styles. What progress has resulted from their work? What has become of their methods? What have their writings achieved other than to encourage those who are not and never will be artists to praise their work excessively? Their writings give these people authority and confidence to criticize, even when they are in the presence of real experts in the Divine Science. And this science is one that even those with innate aptitude must labour hard to master.

I cannot say how painful it is for me to watch eloquent pens writing about art with very little restraint, as they tend to do when the persons concerned are not themselves artists, and obviously lack a thorough knowledge of the subject they are writing about. How can one not be shocked when one hears Greek statues praised above Nature herself by someone who knows nothing about either, by someone who does not realise that the smallest part of Nature is a source of awe and marvel to the cognoscenti? What statue or form of sculpture can there be that is not copied from Divine Nature? However great the artist who copies her, will not the work cry out when put beside Nature herself, that the one is the work of God, and the other of the feeble hands of man? Will the person who tries to forget reality and improve on it, without seeking out what is best in Nature herself, be able to avoid a reprehensible monotony in his style of painting when he bases it on plaster casts, as has happened in so many cases with which we are familiar?

I seem to have strayed from the main object I had in writing, but what could be more important, if a solution is to be found for the present decline in the arts, than to point out the dangers of being too much influenced by powers and knowledge that are proper to other branches of learning, although it is right to respect them. This has always been the case when there are men of real genius about. In the face of true values blind enthusiasts cease to dominate the arts and a generation of prudent art lovers arises. These appreciate, respect and encourage outstanding artists, giving them the kind of commissions in which they can use their abilities to the full, helping them as best they can to fulfil their promise. This is the true way to protect and foster the arts, for it is always by their works that great men become great. Finally, I know of no better ways to advance the arts, nor believe there could be more satisfactory alternatives, than by rewarding and protecting the outstanding; by holding the artist who teaches in high regard; and by allowing students of art to develop their own abilities in their own way, without forcing them to go in one particular direction, and without making them adopt a particular style of painting if it is against their inclination.

I have stated my views as Your Excellency requested. If my hand does not wield the pen as I would wish to convey my understanding of this question, I trust Your Excellency will forgive me. All my life my hand has endeavoured to put my theories on this subject into practice.

Madrid, 14 October 1792.<sup>39</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Quoted in Nigel Glendinning's Goya and His Critics, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p.59.
- <sup>2</sup> Quote in Enrique Lafuente Ferrai's Goya: His Complete Etchings, Aquatints, and Lithographs, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.), p. xii.
- <sup>3</sup> Eleanor Sayres. The Changing Image, (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1974), p. 54.
- <sup>4</sup> Goya lost his hearing during a severe illness in 1792.
- <sup>5</sup> Pierre Gassier. The Drawings of Goya, (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 489.
- <sup>6</sup> Quoted in Sayres. op. cit., p. 57.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 56.
- <sup>8</sup> cf. Sayres. op. cit., p. 56, footnote 13.
- <sup>9</sup> Both the Lopez de Ayala and Prado manuscript are quoted from Sayres, op. cit., p. 111.
- <sup>11</sup> Sayres. op. cit., p. 59.
- <sup>12</sup> Gassier. op. cit., p. 74.
- <sup>13</sup> A method of etching in tone which gives the effect similar in some respects to that of a wash drawing. Frequently combined with linear etchings, the transparent

tones are obtained by biting the plate with acid through a porous ground of granulated resin. Normally formed by shaking a fine dust of finely powdered resin onto a copper plate and subjecting the plate to heat thereby fixing the ground to it and producing a pitted plate. Coarseness and fineness can be regulated by the size and quantity of the grains and the depth of the bite by the time exposed to acid.

<sup>14</sup> Glendinning. op. cit., p. 225-226.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Sayres. op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> A.M. Hind. A History of Engraving and Etching, (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), p. 303.

<sup>18</sup> Hind. 'Notes on Soft-Ground Etching and Aquatint', Print Collectors' Quarterly, vol. 8, Dec. 1921, p. 400.

<sup>19</sup> Hind. A History of Engraving and Etching, p. 303.

<sup>20</sup> Sayres. op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>21</sup> Glendinning. op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>23</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>24</sup> All references to Goya's letter to the minister are quoted from Glendinning, op.cit., p. 45-46.

<sup>25</sup> Sayres. op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>26</sup> George Levitine. 'Literary Sources of Goya's Capricho No. 43', Art Bulletin, xxxvii, p. 56-59.

- 27 Quoted in Levitine, op. cit.
- 28 José Guidiol. Goya, (New York: The Hyperion Press, 1941), p. 29.
- 29 Sayres. op. cit., p. 60.
- 30 Oxford English Dictionary, p. 335.
- 31 George Ferguson. Signs and Symbols in Christian Art, (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 19.
- 32 cf. Nigel Glendinning. 'Goya y las tonadillas de su época' in Segismundo, iii, 1962, No.I., p. 105-20; and 'The Monk and the Soldier in Plate 58 of Goya's Caprichos'. Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, xxiv, 1961, p. 120-7.
- 33 From a book by Francis Klingender. Goya in the Democratic Tradition reprinted in part in Goya in Perspective, edited by Fred Licht, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1973), p. 40.
- 34 Quoted in José Lopez-Rey. 'Goya's Caprichos: Beauty, Reason and Caricature', reprinted in Licht, op. cit., p. 115.
- 35 Ibid., p. 117.
- 36 Loc. cit.
- 37 Ibid., p. 121.
- 38 Ibid., p. 123.
- 39 Ibid., p. 134

40 cf. Folke Nordstrom. Goya Sature and Melancholy,  
(Stockholm: Alunguist and Wiskell, 1962).

41 Ferrari. op. cit., p. 72.

42 cf. Edith Helman. Transmundo de Goya, Madrid 1963.

43 Quoted in Gassier. op cit., p. 102.

44 Quoted in Glendinning. op. cit., p. 204.

45 Folke Nordstrom. op. cit., p. 153.

46 cf. Edith Helman. 'The Younger Moratin and Goya:  
On Duendes and Brujas', Hispanic Review xxvii (Philadelphia  
1959, p. 103-122.

47 Quoted in Pennethorne Hughes. Witchcraft,  
(Hammondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 128.

48 André Malraux. Saturn: An Essay on Goya, (New York:  
Phaidon Publ. Inc., 1957), p.40.

49 Quoted in Glendinning, op. cit., p. 203.

50 Gassier. op. cit., p. 581.

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