

Fig.57 The Chinchillas (*Los Chinchillas*)

phases the absolute dependency of the nobles on her by entrapping them in heraldic clothing – an allusion to their ancestries – and propping or reclining them in a stage-like exterior setting. One will note that the ass-eared nurse figure, whom some writers (e.g., an anonymous French writer quoted in Glendinning [1977:66], and Sayre, in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:122–23n.4) – presumably on the evidence of her tight-fitting blindfold – have identified as an allegory of Ignorance, feeds the nobles from a cauldron very much like the one in *That of the Nurse*. The nobles, their eyes shut, are as blind as their feeder; presumably Goya had in mind that only the ignorant would tend for the ignorant. The ignorance of the Chinchillas infects even their sense of hearing, which is obstructed by padlocks over the ears. This way, nothing from the exterior world can trouble them – the outside is “exorbitant”: in its en-

tirety it is something that must not be permitted to pollute the self-containment the Chinchillas enjoy. A further impediment to any contact with this exterior are their rigid vestures. Kernan associates such a dress code with satire's reduction of the vital to the mechanical: '[i]n action, the mechanical takes such forms as wearing stiff, ornate clothing which makes free movement difficult' (1965:56). Free movement is apparently of no concern to Goya's Chinchillas; they are happy to just hang around and let someone else feed them. Food and sex for the sake of primogeniture – conveyed in the peaks that project from their crotches – are all they require.

'The piece is obviously an attack on hereditary aristocracy,' writes Williams (1976:42). Few would dispute this claim, especially since the title of the etching is derived from a character in a play by Cañizares that mocked the nobility<sup>4</sup>. But what Goya literature has apparently not picked up on is that women, as nannies and nurses, again emerge in the etching as instrumental in the deposition of the aristocracy to the level of dependent men-children. Women, in Goya's view, are the ones most responsible for the continuation of lineages, they are the ones who fuel the sons-of-fathers and thereby sustain an outmoded social rank structure; therefore, *Los Chinchillas* attacks hereditary aristocracy as an archaic form of hierarchical organisation that has become even more abominable because it is maintained by women. To be sure, Goya shows that the loyalty of women to the system stems from ignorance, but this does not remove much from his satirical zeal.

In sum, then, both *That of the Nurse* and *The Chinchillas* encyst maternity in the tumourous social formation that Goya mocks. For Goya, women are the ones responsible for nurturing, and if they do a bad job of it (as, on the evidence of his etchings, he believes they do) the result can only be men-children who are freaks – freaks, that is, within his own moral system<sup>5</sup>. Their freakishness arises in their fail-

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<sup>4</sup> On the link between Goya's etching and Cañizares' play, see Helman's 1955b article, 'Los "Chinchillas" de Goya', and Sayre in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:119-22.

<sup>5</sup> Inept nurturing or bad upbringing, which only a mother and her nurse(s) could be held

ure to escape the feminine enclave – a failure Goya attributes to the overprotective pampering of aristocratic mothers and nannies. True to his satirical goal, Goya extends the parameters of his morality into the sphere of his audience through ridicule (of his satirical target), hoping that his viewers will also exclude such freaks from their moral systems. Satire, as I pointed out in Part One, aims to persuade. Through representation, Goya places what, for him, exceeds the patronage of the Symbolic (a bad upbringing and the individuals she produces or enslaves), and leaves it up to the viewer to displace it, and so squeeze it out of signification, and hence out of the Symbolic. There is no evident ambivalence here: Goya's denigration of the nobility lobbies for an untempered removal of this idle class from society.

From the viewpoint of my psychoanalytic model, we can say that Goya's degradation of the nobles takes them from what should be a social order Symbolic to the core, since it depends on hereditary succession – hence on what Lacan calls the Name-of-the-Father<sup>6</sup> – and drops them into an environment dominated by the maternal, therefore *a*Symbolic to the core. It is the presence of a female nurturing

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responsible for since they were the ones charged with the task of raising children, had been viewed since medieval times as a fundamental cause of perversity in people. As Zemon Davis suggests:

The female sex was thought to be the disorderly one *par excellence* in early modern Europe . . . (an imperfect animal, without faith, law, fear, constancy). Female disorderliness was first seen in the Garden of Eden, where Eve had been the first to yield to the serpent's temptation and incite Adam to disobey the Lord. To be sure, the men of the lower orders were also believed to be especially prone to riot and seditious unrest. But the defects of the males were thought to stem not so much from nature as from nurture: the ignorance with which they were reared, the brutish quality of life in the peasant's hut or artisan's shop, and their poverty, which led to envy.

With the women the disorderliness was founded in physiology. (in Babcock, 1978:146).

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<sup>6</sup> According to Lacan, the Name-of-the-Father, which he derives from Freud's concept, in *Totem and Taboo* (1990c:202–17), of an original mythic father killed by his sons to destroy his form of social organisation, based on the "patriarchal horde", in which the father jealously hoards all the females in his group for his own pleasure and procreation, has since 'the dawn of history' been 'identified . . . with the figure of the law' (1977:67). In Lacan's thinking the subject is obliged to continue identifying with this paternal figure and the law it represents: 'I am condemned to reproduce [the mistakes of my father] because I am obliged to pick up again the discourse he bequeathed to me, not simply because I am his son, but because one can't stop the chain of discourse, and it is precisely my duty to transmit it in its aberrant form to someone else' (1988b:89). It is vital to note here that Lacan sees this reproduction of the Name-of-the-Father as "aberrant".

principle in this place of genealogy that corrupts it. What should be a system that proudly flaunts the product of primogeniture (and so celebrates the father) hereby devalues to a process supported by women (celebratory, so to speak, of the mother). This associates lineage with the domain of abjection, of the abject(ed) maternal, and implies that those who promulgate such lineages are really men-children who have never broken away from the mother. This is not to say that hereditary succession should be viewed in this way *a priori* but that I interpret this particular etching, on the basis of *That of the Nurse*, as useful in illustrating how the importation of the maternal into a realm supposedly the supreme precinct of men imposes a principle of corruption meant to devalue the worth of hereditary nobility in the viewer's eyes.

Whereas in *That of the Nurse* and *The Chinchillas* Goya treats food as a substance without an apparent place of manufacture, which the nobility simply consumes, in *You who cannot* (*Tu que no puedes*) [Fig.58] he embodies such a place in the form of two working-class men who carry asses on their backs. Save for the detail of the spur on the leg of the foremost ass, Goya has carefully transcribed the asses from nature, thereby placing the nobles in an animal, rather than human, classificatory order. These ungulates represent nobles<sup>7</sup>, and this mounted arrangement implies that aristocrats use the lower classes as beasts of burden. The traditional relationship between men and asses is thus inverted, the beasts of burden becoming the burden itself, while the men become beasts. This choice of metaphor is anything but unpremeditated, for in Goya's day it was entrenched in a long-established tradition of inversion generally called the world-upside-down<sup>8</sup>. The world-upside-down offered

<sup>7</sup> One can identify them as nobles on the basis of such things as the spur around the one's leg (which, given the contrary functional footwear of the two men, seems more likely to have been extracted from the motif pool of the nobility than that of the peasantry), and the fact that the asses Goya portrays in *Los Caprichos* consistently represent members of the privileged classes (e.g., the ass who sits for his ancestral portrait in *Neither More nor Less* [Fig.59], the doctor in *Of what Illness will He Die?* [Fig.60] and, most prominently, the aristocrat in *Back to His Grandfather* [Fig.61]).

<sup>8</sup> Literature on the world-upside-down is fairly substantial. Among the most useful contributions are: Helen Grant, 'The World Upside Down' (1973:103-35); David Kunzle, 'The

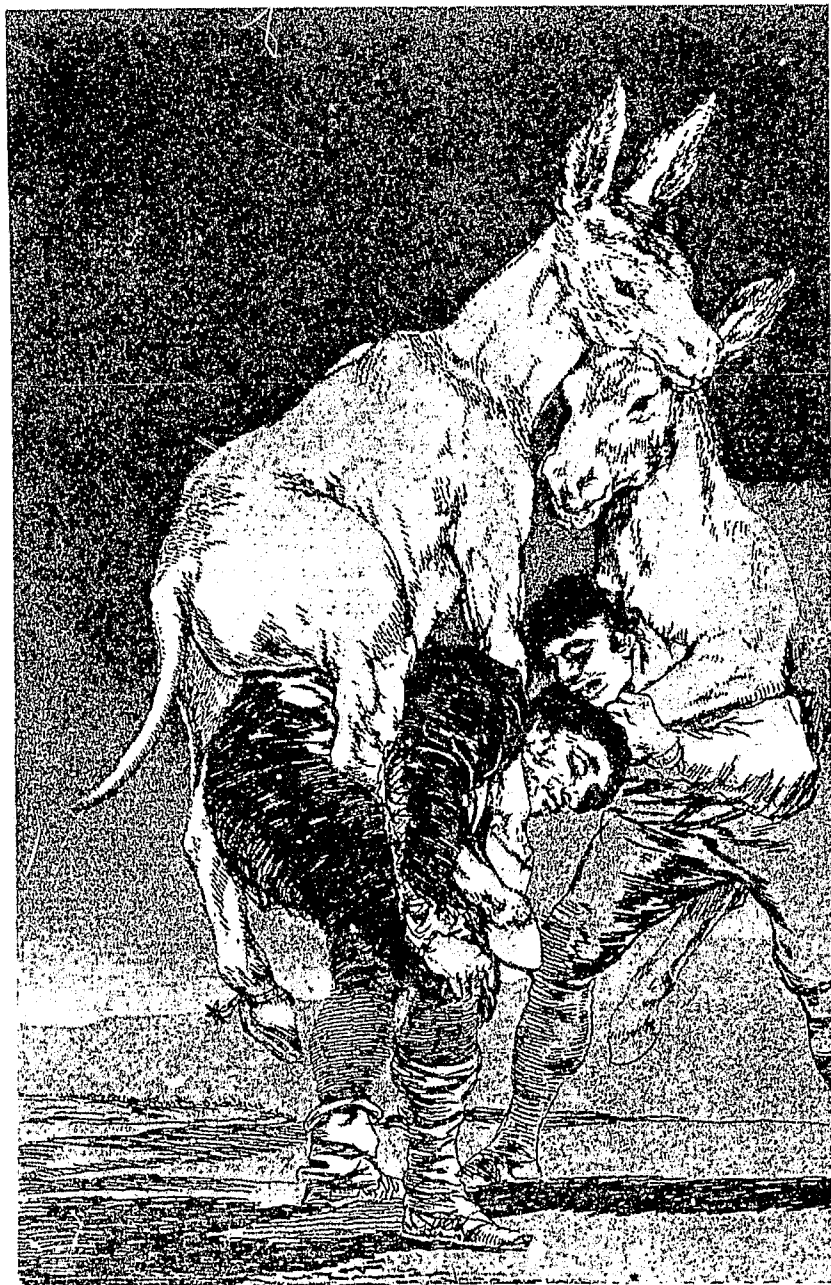


Fig.58 You Who cannot (*Tu que no puedes*)



Fig.59 Neither More nor Less (*Ni Mas ni Menos*)



Fig.60 Of what Illness will He Die? (*¿De qué mal morirá?*)



Fig.61 Back to His Grandfather  
(*Hasta Su Abuelo*)

a principle of reversal that, within Carnival traditions, aimed at destabilising existing societal structures; it permitted the world to be shaken apart and reformatted for a while. As Lorenzo de Márquez explains,

Without ever becoming disconnected from the Church, these celebrations consecrated an alternative and often opposed vision to that dictated by official life. The rigid order of medieval society, with its hierarchies, norms, and prohibitions, was suspended during Carnival, and in its place a new world was created, free and without barrier, centered on people and human relations. Over the centuries, Carnival created new forms of speech or transformed the original semantic value of words, even as it developed the dialectic of The World Turned Upside Down, with its continuous shifting from top to bottom, front to rear, inside to out. (In Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:LXXXIX)

Images that invert conventional relationships turn classificatory orders on their ear, metaphorically exposing the ugly fungus-ridden feet of contemporary society. The state of things is shown to be out of control, out of order, pushed to the *other* side of the boundaries that assert structure (in the dual sense of control and classification). That other side, in my methodology, is the unmentionable, the unacceptable, the anti-social, the corrupt and fallen, the edge of the sea, hell – the horrific space that, forbidden in itself, points the way back to order and social integrity. The image of an upside-down world degrades by rearranging the status quo so that the bottom of the social hierarchy migrates to the top, and vice versa. The purpose may be simply jocular or it may aim to instigate revival or revolution.

Goya draws on the world-upside-down tradition, but not with the light-heartedness that Bakhtin, for example, associates with it. Carnival was all about temporary suspension of The Rules, about being King for a day; but Goya's etching ex-

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World Upside Down: The Iconography of a European Broadsheet Type', in Babcock, 1978; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe', in Babcock, 1978; Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1988:185–91; Lorenzo de Márquez, 'Carnival Traditions in Goya's Iconic Language' (in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:XC–XCII); Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World (1968:81–2); and Echavarría in Villanueva, 1985–86:614–18. E. R. Curtius, in his European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (1953:94–98), sketches a historical dimension for the topos of the world-upside-down, finding its origins in the 'stringing together of impossibilities' (95). Lastly, in relation to inversions involving asses and men, of importance to the discussion of ass images in *Los Caprichos*, see Sten Nilsson, 'The Ass Sequence in *Los Caprichos*' (1978).

presses a far bleaker outlook. According to many writers (e.g., Klingender, 1968:92; Heckes, 1985:81-2; Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:107-10; Sánchez and Gállego, 1995:57; Wilson-Bareau, 1996:29) this outlook is a political one aimed at censuring the oppression of the lower classes by the upper classes<sup>9</sup>. This political reading is supported by the etching, its cynical commentary (*Who will not say that these two gentlemen are mounts?*<sup>10</sup>), and by its title, which, as most writers have noted, is the first part of the Spanish proverb: *You who cannot, carry me on your back*<sup>11</sup>. According to Sayre (in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:107), a dictionary of Goya's time especially identified this saying with oppression of the "feeble". Goya's men are certainly feeble – or enfeebled by their economic exploitation – and they are certainly lower-class citizens, so the chances of the political reading being wildly out of the stable are not high. Goya compares the way men ride their mounts to the way the nobility rides the populace. Riding is a metaphor for political domination.

Now, unlike other world-upside-down images, which reverse known social and behavioural norms (Kunzle, 1978:41-2) (depicting, for example, beggars giving money to the rich, children instructing wise men, or men using scythes to slay Death<sup>12</sup>), Goya's etching shows *normal* relations as upside down. As Sayre puts it:

On one level the moral of Goya's print is that when men carry donkeys it is a state of things turned upside-down, as when a man tends the baby at home and his wife goes hunting. But there is a more profound moral: when productive men must spend their lives carrying on their back asses who eat, as they themselves cannot, and who spur them brutally, then society itself is upside down. (in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:108)

It seems society is permanently upside-down in Goya's eyes. The real inversion

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<sup>9</sup> Alcalá Flecha (1988:142-46) cites and quotes several sources to demonstrate that images of labourers carrying asses, as a comment on the idleness of the nobility, were popular in Goya's day. One should also bear in mind that world-upside-down prints, which often used this motif (see Grant, 1973, and Kunzle, 1978), were undoubtedly in circulation at this time.

<sup>10</sup> ¿Quién no dirá que estos dos caballeros son caballerías? (From López-Rey, 1970:199)

<sup>11</sup> Tu que no puedes, llévame a cuestras. (From Heckes, 1985:82)

<sup>12</sup> I derive these examples from Grant, 1973.

in the world is the one that has such idle mules emplaced, by legitimate, socially-sanctioned laws and privileges, above the labouring class. Yet, if the hallmark of inversive practices is that they upend known sociopolitical relations to renew and reconfigure social contacts between the classes, and are thus if not openly subversive, at least displacing and latently revolutionary, then Goya's print is little more than a statement of fact and has virtually no political thrust. It does not seek to agitate the working classes, to put a coal under them and get them to seize the seat of power. In fact, not only does Goya not incite mass action, he chooses to portray his labourers as incapable of action: they doze under the weight of their wearisome burdens. Ignorance and blind allegiance reduce them to mechanical types, content to be mounted, that is screwed (in the colloquial English meaning of this term: exploited and abused).

Only in the imagination of the viewer can this corrupt state of affairs be righted. The viewer can look at the nobles, see that they are asses – stupid, ignorant, sadistic, parasitic animals – and say No, I don't want that; I must fight to exclude that. Likewise, they can look at the peasants and exclude them, too. Neither fits the picture of a just world based on more equalised relationships, which seems to be the one Goya holds as an ideal. By rejecting both of these positions, and the individuals that fill them, the viewer would invert what s/he sees and install a new image of social relations. In other words, s/he would abject both nobles and peasants, since neither are acceptable, and reconfigure the scene in whichever way accords most with his or her outlook or desire<sup>13</sup>. No doubt Goya expected the viewer to perform

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<sup>13</sup> The viewer is expected to take the same action in regard to Capricho 63, *Look how grave!* (*¡Miren qué graves!*) [Fig.62], which is a more exaggerated repetition of *You who cannot*. Here the asses and humans of before have all transmogrified into grotesque hybrids: two peculiar mounts combining the characteristics of bears and donkeys, and two riders: one has a bird-like head with a powerful beak, and clawed feet somewhere between a dog's paws and a bird-of-prey's talons; the other is a deformed man with the elongated face and ears of a donkey. What was ignorant somnambulism in Capricho 42 here becomes sheer bestialisation as the working class is represented by mulish creatures that hang onto their riders as if to let go of them would mean instant death. Goya clearly does not want the viewer to sympathise with either of them, but to reject both, to clear the slate and allow for a renaissance.

such an inversion, even if only in his or her mind, because at least such a step would represent progress toward a more ideal, moral and upright civil body.

The prints I have examined in this chapter are unified by their insistence on depicting the nobility in degrading terms. And what emerges as the most singular of the nobility's failings is its parasitic idleness. In *That of the Nurse* this idleness is compared to mollycoddling that has reached abominable status, transforming an adult into a superstitious feeding and



Fig.62 Look how Grave! (*¡Miren qué Graves!*)

excreting child who has no identity outside his relationship to his nanny. In *Los Chinchillas* nobles are spoonfed by an ignorant nurse, while they lie around immobile in stiff garments. In *You Who cannot* aristocrats converted by their lazy parasitism into beasts ride on the backs of exhausted, broken commoners. In portraying the nobility thus Goya takes hereditary succession and pertinent social structures (e.g., the one that allows indolent nobles to oppress the labouring classes) to task, and displays for the viewer's judgement the aberrations that result from such formations of the *status*. In none of these works do I perceive any ambivalence: Goya wants these nobles and the spineless oppressed ousted and reformed. He uses iconographies and conventions (e.g., the world-upside-down) to emphasise the grotesqueness (abjectness) of noble idleness and oppression and thereby encourages the viewer to denounce such groups and, ultimately, banish them from society.

## Chapter Six

### The Clergy

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SATIRE CONSTANTLY ATTACKS THE clergy, time and again portraying them as corrupt individuals who hide behind their religious influence to exhort all manner of riches from their 'flock'. In Pollard's view,

Faced with the serious demands that religion imposes on man, the satirist delights to make much of the discrepancy between profession and practice. Affectation and hypocrisy are ready topics . . . when those who are guilty of such faults are committed by profession to a very different standard of behaviour. (1972:12)

When the clergy fall from grace, they become the most graceless human beings of all, precisely because they are meant to be standard-bearers, the ones who set the parameters for righteous and moral conduct. Few artists have depicted this fall with as volatile a mix of humour and contempt as Goya. *Los Caprichos* exhibit the clergy as indulgent gluttons barely contained within their sartorial and behavioural habits, as depraved venal beings who will do anything to maintain their rich and sumptuous lifestyle. At times Goya reduces them to goblins and diabolical monsters who make a mockery of religious precepts. In *What a Golden Beak!* (*¡Qué Pico de Oro!*) [Fig.63] ignorant monks feast on the words of a parrot; in *Devout Profession* (*Devota Profesión*) [Fig.64] clerical ceremonies are associated with the investiture of a witch; in *What a Tailor can do!* (*¡Lo qué puede un Sastre!*) [Fig.65] a monk's robe on a tree elicits the same reverence as the monk himself; in *Swallow it, Dog* [Fig.75] monks emerge as merciless in plaguing those who do not toe the line; in *No-One has seen Us* (*Nadie Nos ha visto*) [Fig.66] the clergy hide in a basement to indulge their love of that great emblem of vice, wine; and in *Gift to the Master* [Fig.47] monks join a congregation gathered to pay blind homage to a witch master holding a black Sabbath. In sum, Goya is not afraid to denigrate the clergy by affiliating them with the very domains - those of witches, demons, goblins - they are supposed to condemn and lead others to condemn. Nor is he afraid to exhibit the clergy indulging in pleasures



Fig. 63 What a Golden Beak! (*¡Qué Pico de Oro!*)



Fig. 64 Devout Profession (*Devota Profesión*)



Fig. 65 What a Tailor can do! (*¡Lo qué puede un Sastre!*)



Fig. 66 No-one has seen Us (*Nadie Nos ha visto*)

of the body, which is in truth his leitmotif in his degrading illustrations of their corrupt behaviour.

In Capricho 13, *They are Hot* (*Estan Calientes*) [Fig.68], for instance, he uses food as a potential object of excess that monks should not, by rights, overindulge in.

Three monks sit around a table, two with spoons in hand and mouths open to cool the hot food they have shovelled in, while a fourth monk, silhouetted against an archway, approaches with a large plate. Both he and the monk to the right of the image (who is not eating) laugh at the visible delight the hot food – presumably spice hot as much as stove hot – causes their companions.

T. Prado commentary on these less than model monks states: *They are in such a hurry to wolf down their food that they swallow it boiling. Even in the indulgence of pleasures temperance and moderation are necessary*<sup>1</sup>. The monks are diametrically opposed to the two virtues the commentary sets up as foils: they are overindulgent and excessive; more, as eating boiling food conveys, they are greedy and voracious<sup>2</sup>. It is no surprise that this image derives from a drawing titled *Dream of some men who were eating us up* [Fig. 67], which openly associates the clergy with cannibalism. The monk who in the etching brings a plate of food, in the



Fig.67 Dream of Some Men Who were eating Us up (*Sueño/De Unos Hombres que se Nos comian*)

<sup>1</sup> Tal prisa tienen de engullir que se las tragan hirbiendo. Hasta en el uso de los placeres son necesarias la templanza y la moderación. (From López-Rey, 1970:191)

<sup>2</sup> Many scholars (e.g., Sayre, 1974:77; Paulson, 1983:304; Askew, 1988:474; Schulz, 1996: 67) have even suggested that the monks are sexually aroused: the title *They are Hot* can mean that they are *in heat*.



Fig.68 They are Hot (*Estan Calientes*)

drawing brings a dish bearing a human head. López-Rey's comment on the drawing applies equally to the etching:

The clerics are seen abandoning themselves to a disorderly appetite, throwing off any pretense of brotherly love, sinking in fact to the level of cannibalism, and making a wilderness of the society with whose spiritual guidance they claim to be entrusted. (1970:92)

Goya enters the cold monastery of the monks like a spy camera on a cord and catches them in their immoderation. In representing them, placing them, he turns them into a spectacle. Sealed within their dark womb-like sanctuary, in which a vagrant light falls only on one monk, they are fully exposed to the viewer, who must take a good hard look at them, before passing the only possible judgement: these are gluttonous blights on society who deserve condemnation.

Here food is a marker of respectability and social responsibility. Monks who crave it as these do, whose sole existence seems to turn around their appetites, are unlikely to show either moderation in other aspects of their lives, or generosity toward others – a willingness to share. These are monks who will eat indiscriminately, caring nothing for those who produce the food – the labouring-class “us” I take Goya as referring to in his title for the cannibalistic drawing that prefigured the etching. Consumption of food is homologous to consumption of the labouring body, which slaves and slaves so that others might mindlessly overindulge. The clergy feed off others; they are parasites just like the nobility. Satire is here in the service of the operation to abject, and the monks should be abjected because they have debased their bodies to vehicles for devouring, and have ignored the dictates of their profession. It is chiefly because they, as members of a class sworn to champion the cause of religious restraint, have slipped into excessive, wanton, unconscionable conduct, that they cannot find a place in the artist's system except as instructive examples of what *not* to be.

Part of the reason we may find these monks repulsive is because their eating could, in our imaginations, become so “disorderly” – to use López-Rey's well-chosen

term – that we feel prompted to vomit. ‘Food loathing,’ writes Kristeva, ‘is perhaps the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection.’ (1982:2) It stands to reason, then, that abjecting food is a response that comes quickly to the human subject when nutrition appears as something threatening, something closer to refuse than food. Kristeva lumps food together with wastes, suggesting that, when aberrant, food is congenerous with the category of displaced matter:

Loathing an item of food, a piece of filth, waste, or dung. The spasms and vomiting that protect me. The repugnance, the retching that thrusts me to the side and turns me away from defilement, sewage, and muck. (1982:2)

Kristeva associates the vomiting that food and sewage can induce with a defence mechanism: something that wards off a corruption too vulgar for the ego to assimilate positively. When we look at Goya’s monks our repulsion at their intemperance can translate into several forms of imagined action including (1) the physical option of nausea, where the mechanism of vomiting, whether put into effect or not, is a means of separating the food-loathing and monk-loathing from our bodies (psychological ejection of an undesirable object by means of physical or imagined ejection), and (2) mocking laughter, which in this etching is particularly apt since most of the monks are laughing, and there is a danger of feeling that they direct their laughter at us, which could cause us to cower and surrender to their laughter – such, after all, is the place to which the unseen labouring body is condemned by these gormandising clerics. To put them in the place of the mocked – which is where Goya would have wanted his viewers to place them – we must laugh at them, the more uproariously the better, till they are jeered into the abyss. For as we have learnt, laughter displaces abjection.

Another image that uses overindulgence to abject the clergy is *Little Goblins* (*Duendecitos*) [Fig.69]. Here, again, laughter plays a focal role.

In a bland basement-like interior characterised by a mouth-like sunlit window fitted with stout bars, three figures group to entertain themselves with the help of a little wine. All three figures are dwarfish, but beyond that cease to be altogether



Fig.69 Little Goblins (*Duendecitos*)

human: the one seated on the floor has large hands, large ears and a pinched face; the one standing to the right also has large hands, as well as the fat lips I earlier related to bloodsucking, and a conical head swathed in cloth; while the one in the centre – suitably so – has a right hand half the size of his body, and a face with a grinning mouth baring sharp little teeth and a nose and pair of eyes that might have been extracted from a dog.

Although their right to be called human is in doubt, there is consensus in the literature that all three figures are clergymen, despite the devices Goya uses to disguise their identity (e.g., the cone-shaped cowl).

The Prado commentary adopts a typically sarcastic tone towards these little goblins: *This now is another people. Cheerful, playful, obliging; a little sweet-toothed, fond of playing pranks; but very honest little men*<sup>3</sup>. They are, of course, not at all honest, and their sweet tooth, i.e., their fondness for extortion, is certainly more insatiable than the euphemistic adjective “little” suggests.

In her discussion of the etching, Sayre claims that, in eighteenth-century Spain, hobgoblins were considered in much the light that the Prado commentary paints them: as mischievous pranksters who caused a lot of bother but were otherwise harmless (Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:117)<sup>4</sup>. She also sketches an origin for Goya’s choice of goblins (*duendes*) as metaphors for the clergy:

By the end of the eighteenth century the term *duende* was often used to designate friars, perhaps in part owing to the editor of a widely read satirical review, *El duende de Madrid* (The Hobgoblin of Madrid), who included *Sueños* (Dreams) written by himself in which hobgoblins all too often wore the habits of friars. (117)

The commentary in the Biblioteca Nacional takes a terse view of goblins and clergymen: *The true goblins of this world are the priests and friars, who eat and drink at*

<sup>3</sup> Esta ya es otra gente. Alegres, juguetones, serviciales; un poco golosos, amigos de pegar chascos; pero muy hombrecitos de bien. (Adapted from Heckes, 1985:122n.201)

<sup>4</sup> Also see Alcalá Flecha, 1988:37–40. He discusses goblins as metaphorical of the clergy in relation to a work I do not look at here, *Hurry they are waking* [Fig.70], in which goblins at work in someone’s kitchen connote clerics busily covering all signs of their underground practices.

our cost. The Church or the clergy has a sharp tooth and a monstrous right hand, long and grasping; the discalced friar, as he is more prudish, covers his glass of wine: but the calced friar does not walk with mincing steps: he tosses back wine-laced soup and stamps his feet merrily<sup>5</sup>. For Goya, as the etching reveals, the clergy are goblins; the association is more than metaphorical: clerics are so abominable as to be unclassifiable in a human order. Their abominableness comes to the fore in their goblinisation and in the thematic of exorbitancy, which Goya manifests



Fig.70 Hurry, They are waking (*Despacha, que despiertan*)

in the giant hands and giant wine glasses these hands hold. '[I]t is [the] Gargantuan grip [of the hands],' writes López-Rey, 'which expresses the overwhelmingly voracious nature of the otherwise "good-natured little fellows"' (1970:142). Heckes, referring to Caro Baroja, claims that representing goblins with large hands was in keeping with commonly held beliefs (1985:98, and 122n.202). 'The wine glasses and the monstrous hand of the central *duende*,' he writes, 'refer to the self-indulgence and grasping greed of the priests and monks . . .' (98) Such excess is further emphasised by the bloated lips of the one cleric, the teeth of the central goblin, and the act of eating in which the left-hand cleric indulges. This is a carry-over of the concept

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Los verdaderos duendes de este mundo son los curas y frailes, que comen y beben a costa nuestra. La iglesia o el clero tiene el diente afilado y la mano derecha monstruosa y larga para agarrar; el fraile descalzo, como más gazmoño, tapa el vaso de vino: pero el calzado no se anda con melindres: echa sopas en vino y trisca alegremente. (Adapted from Heckes, 1985:122n.204)

of exploitation evident in *They are Hot*, which emerges in the Biblioteca Nacional commentary. Again, it is because they have departed from the limits of their profession to become extortionists and pleasure seekers who would sooner spend the day drinking in a basement than saying prayers or saving souls, that these clergymen have become objects of Goya's censure. They fall below the line of the morality he dons into a liminal, interstitial zone where they are converted into hybrid grotesques that need to be condemned. Their portrayal as creatures from a realm more sinister and deviant than the human leaves the viewer in no doubt that they are already, in the artist's eyes, monsters leeching their society; now the viewer must decide whether to endorse the artist's position or not. Endorsing, s/he must laugh along with Goya at the foolish spectacle he has made of these supposedly pious men, and so ridicule them into a place of banishment.

From the psychoanalytic viewpoint, the viewer has good reason to abject the goblins through laughter, for as supernatural beings, *boogeymen*, whose existence focuses on eating, they have the potential to invoke – from the depths of the unconscious – not only childhood terrors from the days when a distorted face could still induce fear through its unfamiliarity, but the fear of being consumed (and the mouth of the central *duende* looks pretty vicious) that Karl Abraham (1925, 1973) and Melanie Klein (1969) associate with the oral-sadistic phase of development<sup>6</sup>. To prevent a recurrence of such infantile fears – given, of course, that the prohibitory power of repression does not at once pulverise its emergence till only a shiver of uncanniness remains to reflect its passing – the viewing subject must laugh back,

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<sup>6</sup> Klein's conception of these fears (see 1969:179–209, *passim*) is not easily deployed because one really buys into an entire system of fantasies, introjections and projections when one turns to her for assistance, and I am not in agreement with many of her claims in this regard. Her separation of oral fears for the girl (who fears being eaten by her mother's breast) and boy (who fears being eaten by his father's penis) I find problematic. I do not buy the idea of a consuming penis at all, even when placed fantasmatically within the mother's body, since I associate oral-sadistic fears with a developmental phase that predates the castration and Oedipus complexes, and therefore can only be associated with the mother. To my mind, then, both boy and girl can have only one object they want to eat and one they fear being eaten by: the same object, the mother.

must become what the Blooms call the 'aggressive whipper' (1979:129), the one who exerts mastery, the one who consumes, and so secures release from the threat of the repressed (the subject's own object). For, as the Blooms remind us, 'satiric laughter may become a source of both catharsis and redemption for satirist and reader alike' (129). If we now examine the Prado commentary again – *This now is another people. Cheerful, playful, obliging; a little sweet-toothed, fond of playing pranks; but very honest little men* – it seems that satiric laughter was precisely what the commentator, whether Goya or not, had in mind. The commentary has less the tone of an annotation to the image than of a jeering, sarcastic and, above all, *belittling* attack on the goblins: it attempts to guide the viewer toward the correct response – not to fear, but to laugh. And if we laugh, we, of course, humiliate the "little men" and so maintain them, and the corrupt clergy they represent, in the object position of the unwilling fool.

Before leaving this etching, I want to dwell a moment on the hand of the central goblin, which has connotations useful to a reading of the print in terms of abjection. In his brief reference to the Capricho in *Saturn*, André Malraux writes: "The enormous hand of the *Goblins* . . . [is] well known to psychoanalysts" (1957:53). Precisely what Malraux meant by this is unclear since he cites no source for his observation; but psychoanalysis can help us understand the unsettling nature of those giant goblin hands<sup>7</sup>.

(De)formity is frequently the basis for society's acts of exclusion; after all, what could be more "from the mother" than the body itself? When the body bears the marks of an object mother and ventures forth into a society constructed around fictions of a classical body which has no place for orifices, never mind (de)formities, then it is no surprise that a clash occurs. The things that exaggerate the ideal con-

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<sup>7</sup> I would suspect that Malraux assesses the giant hands in relation to the gigantic in general, which Freud briefly associates with dreams that revert to the scale relations of childhood – those relations that turn parents into giants (see Freud, 1991a:91, 533–34). This is not, however, the angle I investigate in the text.

tours of the body are no different from those that interrupt it, such as excrement, sweat, blood from a wound; they are abject: blights on the 'natural order of things', Kristeva writes that food becomes polluting when it is the site of a controversy over borders, for example, 'between nature and culture' (1982:75). This is equally true of parts of the body that pollute; an injury, for example, is not polluting in itself, but it is an offence to the image of a healthy body, and secretions like pus, which dramatise the temporary infection of the body, speak of a leakage that, starting merely as a loss of interior matter, seems destined to end in the putrefaction of death. Such signs of mortality need to be covered by bandages or plasters. (De)formities are subject to the same cover-up: an eye patch would seem more tolerable than the open display of a badly damaged eye, for instance.

These aspects of the body upset the balance struck by symbolism within a carefully-regulated social formation, questioning the separation between nature and culture. Within a rigorously-ordered society things that call attention to the human body's debt to or pact with nature undermine the ideals of culture and expose to debate, if not outright ridicule, such precious Bastilles of human thought as philosophy and metaphysics, with their emphasis on the mind and the soul, which are supposed to lie beyond nature's reach. The individual body is an ongoing commentary on the collective body, for in the way society treats individual bodies we can see the efforts it makes to shape itself to its aspirations and ideals. Individuals who, through disease, accident or birth, bear the symptoms or traces of disfigurement on their bodies are like blisters that, unless lanced, will misshape, afflict and corrode the perfection of the civil body. There is a literature, probably still dominated by Norbert Elias's classic studies *The History of Manners* and *State Formation and Civilization* (collected as *The Civilizing Process*, 1995), devoted to studying the marginalisation of the body in western culture – the process of civilisation tending away from the biological body toward codes of behaviour. Janet Wolff summarises this neatly in *Feminine Sentences* (1990:122–26) and indicates, from her specifically feminist

viewpoint, how challenges to this process (e.g., the female grotesque/carnavalesque) can function as interventions against patriarchy (128-29). Things that destabilise the "civilising process" are challenges by definition, but most, regrettably, prove unequal to the task of intervention (as Wolff agrees [129]). People in general are too well trained, too loyal to the Symbolic, to find progress in orcs and dwarves.

In Goya's etching, the deformed hands mark these goblins as aberrations, as rejects from the social system. Such is the power of grotesque caricature: it degrades simply by its excessiveness. Anything that is exorbitant will slide automatically in the receiver's gaze toward that "margin of mess", that "category of inverted beings" (Babcock, 1978:28) called the abject. Goya would not have been aware of abjection, but he would have understood just as well, if not better, than we do today how casting the aberrant in the form of an image can constitute a powerful act of ridicule. This act can only be temporary, for sure, and its result lacks the decisiveness satirical degradation would appear to strive for – the Symbolic cannot exist without the abject – but one should not overlook the fact that the aspiration is toward a more categorical separation between the corrupt and the immaculate, the abject and the Symbolic.

So far I have looked at images in which Goya degrades the clergy by associating them with a voracious appetite for food and drink. Now I turn to an image in which *sexual* appetite is the executor of their downfall, Capricho 74, *Don't shout, Stupid (No grites, Tonta)* [Fig.71].

Two figures in what appears to be clerical garb – the back figure wears conical headgear reminiscent of a bishop's mitre, while the front is cloaked in a monk's habit – caper along like the back and front sections of a single animal toward a young woman well illuminated as she crosses the foreground.

The woman's reaction to the abrupt appearance of the male figures is ambiguous. The backward thrust of her upper body and head, and her act of partially averting her face, suggest defensive body language; but a smile plays across her



Fig. 71 Don't shout, Stupid (*No grites, Tonta*)

features, lustre sparks in her eyes, and, most of all, her hands do not so much reach out to ward off the incoming intruders as to grope for the front man's crotch (cf. Askery, 1988:484). The phallic conical hat of the back figure leaves one in little doubt that both men are spoiling for a sexual encounter, and it would seem that the woman may be willing to meet their desires.

The Prado commentary offers a veiled note of clarification through the mists of sarcasm: *Poor Paquilla! who, going to look for the footman, encounters the goblin, but one must not be afraid: she knows that Martinico is in a good mood and will not harm her*<sup>8</sup>. "Martinico" is a colloquial Spanish term for goblin; using it as a proper name, Goya introduces a note of affection into the relationship between the woman and her attacker. This, coupled with the commentary's assurance that fear is not necessary, eliminates the possibility that a vile abduction such as that in *They carried Her off!* (*¡Qué se la llevaron!*) [Fig.72] is on the cards. Even the goblin's imperative that the woman refrain from shouting can be interpreted as a hurried reassurance against a natural defensive reflex – 'Don't shout, stupid; it's just me, Martinico'. "Stupid" becomes an affectionate put-down, much like "You silly little thing, you"<sup>9</sup>.

In short, Goya has a dual target in this print, the clergy and a woman of loose morals; but I would suspect that, given his now-familiar disapproval of corrupt clerics, his greatest scorn is directed at the "goblins". Not only should the clergy not, by order of their faith, be indulging in carnal escapades, but they are, after all, the prime engine behind the criminalisation of premarital and extramarital relations, and the enforcers of the ban on divorce – they, of all people, should not be hurling

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<sup>8</sup> Pobre Paquilla! que yendo a buscar al lacayo se encuentra con el duende, pero no hay que temer: se conoce que Martinico está de buen humor y no le hará mal. (From López-Rey, 1970:210)

<sup>9</sup> It is quite possible that the person whispering the words of the title is the woman. The "goblins" are, after all, entering *her* space; perhaps their entry is a little on the raucous side and the woman hisses to still them before they arouse other members of her household. She is probably an unmarried woman living in her father's house, and hardly wants the risk being discovered in the arms of a carnal priest.

themselves out of doorways at passing women. Closeted, secretive environments do not tally with a faith that expounds light at the expense of dark, and by putting them in such an environment, Goya displaces them into an alien place suitable for their alien desires and immoral conduct. I need not repeat here that this a degrading exercise that functions by spotlighting the discrepancy between expectations (the clergy as moral and upstanding) and reality (clerics as carnal goblins who resort to furtive



Fig.72 They carried Her off! (*¡Qué se la llevaron!*)

encounters with unresisting women to satisfy their passions), and so entices viewers to splice themselves into the artist's moral line.

The etching thus works, in my reading, chiefly with the operation to abject by portraying a situation in which unbecoming behaviour forms the abjection that society should not tolerate. The clerics willingly cross the threshold of the Symbolic (the doorway) into the closet of the abject – where there stands a woman whose equivocation between repulsion and attraction opens her to their downfallen desire – to immerse themselves in a prohibited place. For clerics, of course, prohibition is a far more rigorous system than it is for ordinary citizens, involving, certainly in some faiths (like Catholicism, which dominated Spain in Goya's day), celibacy. Here the lines are more clearly drawn and the male subject's sexual needs are denied; the female body is delimited by the faith as an other with which administrators of the faith cannot have intimate sexual relations, and therefore the limits of the male subject's body are more protected from the ruptures, attritions and dissolutions

that intimacy between two bodies involves. When such a subject overturns the ban on sexual contact, a psychosocial line thicker and harder than those drawn around ordinary citizens does not blur or fudge, but shatters and collapses with all the brittleness of glass, launching the subject like shrapnel from an explosion across the gulf of the out-of-bounds feminine. Fragmentation in this case is so severe not because the clerical subject's submergence in sensuality is qualitatively different to that of the ordinary citizen, but because the cleric has betrayed the unique and unbendable ethics and prohibitions of his occupation. The Symbolic codes and conventions of religion set the lines that the cleric must inhabit, and obedience to these rules of conduct laminates them with increasingly thick casings; disobedience causes them to drop like coils of ordure, proving to the observing moral intelligence, however we wish to define it at any given time (as artist, Pope, viewer, Other, etc.), that the disobedient have (r)jected the Faith, and have lost the identity it set for them. When that loss of identity results from abandonment to the pleasures to be found in intimacy with the opposite sex – especially representatives of this sex whose morals are in doubt – its collapse is still more atomising. The 'higher' you are, hierarchically speaking, the further and more complete is your fall. The clerics in Goya's etching fall into the realm of the abject – the place to which the codes of their Faith, at least where pleasure is concerned, consigns sex and women. We, as modern viewers, may struggle to blame the clerics for desiring that other side, and will rally against the association of women, point-blank, with the realm of excluded things – the place of sin, evil, uncivilised behaviour, and lascivious temptation. But for Goya, whose interest evidently lies solely in assessing whether or not the clerics model their activities on the laws, codes and requirements of their religious occupation, there is no room for flexibility. Appeals to morality can only have the required rhetorical ring, it would appear, if they are couched in the most exaggerated and flagrant terms. Thus we have clerics as lustful goblins and a woman who desires their attentions. Is there a place for either in an ideal Symbolic?



Fig.73 Blowers (*Soplones*)

In Capricho 48, *Blowers (Soplones)* [Fig.73], Goya again mocks the clergy for stepping out of the bounds of their calling, but this time for mingling with tale-telling witches.

Two men press their hands against their ears in what appears to be agony as a winged figure with the legs of a predatory cat swoops in to blow on them. The men are further menaced by two heads that peer from the right-hand edge of the print, the one horned but otherwise largely human, the other something like a wolf, but also vaguely rodent-like. In the lower left section of the print another head appears; the ponderous lids of its eyes are closed and the fat lips of its mouth lift in a somewhat repulsed sneer. The proximity of this head to the bared backsides of men who have dropped their breeches to the left of the print and now break wind in jets, explains the disgust on this figure's face.

Goya depicts farting in another Capricho, number 69, titled *Blow (Sopla)* [Fig.74], in which witches gather in the gloaming under the wings of a figure reminiscent of allegories of Saturn and Time. The main witch uses a child as a bellows: the action of opening and closing his legs blasts wind from his anus toward the fire burning in a mysteriously-situated ribbed receptacle. According to Sayre (in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:127-



Fig.74 Blow (*Sopla*)

28), the fire is symbolic of lust, and the act of blowing it into being is equivalent to stoking the passions. In his short essay, 'The Acquisition and Control of Fire', Freud likewise associates fire with sexual passion:

primitive man was bound to regard fire as something analogous to the passion of love – or, as we should say, as a symbol of the libido. The warmth that is radiated by fire calls up the same sensation that accompanies a state of sexual excitation, and the shape and movements of a flame suggest a phallus in activity. (1990e:232)

Blowing is a capability that the mouth and the anus share, and can be understood as a sexual activity to the extent that it is an emission that excites those organs or zones that, prior to genital organisation, in the early years of childhood, form the primary sources of libidinal pleasure. This capacity to take pleasure in the mouth and anus persists throughout a subject's life, although erotic contact with the latter organ is discouraged, if not by outright prohibition at least by the shameful attributions of consensual distaste. Farting, as a functional release of internal contents that cause discomfort when withheld, is both frowned upon and encouraged, depending on the company one happens to be keeping at any given time. Farting is the laughter of the anus, and since, except for a degree of aromatic assault, it is pretty much harmless, it is normally treated as a cause for laughter from the mouth. Context is essential here, for sometimes its discharge will be taken as extremely offensive, and it would seem that in Goya's etching, as much as we might find those blasting bottoms funny, their purpose is an obnoxious one, which we register in the disgusted reactions of the men who cover their ears and close their eyes – noses, too, presumably – to limit the amount of contact their senses have to endure with this filth of the anus and mouth. For the witches, these emissions from the orifices are evidently sources of pleasure, for they expel them with gusto. The flying witch, for example, keeps blasting the men on the ground even as they cower and shrink. In the gusts of wind one can thus see the efforts of the witches to impose their sexual appetites on the men who are at their mercy, to stoke their lusts into bright flame.

This reading, anachronistic as it is, may hold water, but there is more to the print than inflamed passion. Sayre posits a second meaning for blowing with reference to a print by Dürer 'engraved during the final years of the fifteenth century, [which] showed the devil using a bellows to infiltrate a slothful, academic doctor with vile ideas' (in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:127). The implication is that blasts of wind can communicate ideas, conceptions, information.

In English when we wish to describe betrayal or tale-telling we often use phrases like 'to rat on', 'to split on', 'to squeal on' and, of course, 'to blow on'. Spanish is the same – according to Cassell's Spanish Dictionary, *soplo* means to 'give a tip-off, give the game away, spill the beans' (1986:547). Thus, a *soplon* is someone who spills the beans on another, a tipper-offer, a squealer. The witches in the etching are giving the men on the ground tip-offs. If we can now identify the occupation of the men on the ground, the task of unpacking should be at an end. The front figure appears to wear a monk's habit, which makes it likely that the men receiving information from the witches are clerics. Now, according to Sánchez and Gállego:

the manuscript in the Biblioteca Nacional interprets the etching as an attack on spoken confession: "Spoken confession serves only to fill the ears of priests with filth, obscenity and dirt." It is possible, however, that the image also refers to corrupt informers, who denounced people to the Inquisition out of self interest. (1995:61)

In other words, the witches are providing the clerics with the 'low-down' on members of their congregations. It is telling that the manuscript in the Biblioteca Nacional associates such information with "filth, obscenity and dirt" – all of which I have categorised as abject in relation to the Symbolic order. What is so fascinating here is that clerics are going to dubious sources indeed (exactly who the squealing witches represent is unclear, but may be either other, more lowly, clerics or members of the population whom the monks employ as spies) to retrieve nothing but filth – material so vile it makes them close down their senses – in the name of the presumably redemptive purpose of correction. Which is the filth, Goya seems to ask, the information, or those who seek it? Clearly, by fraternising with collectors

of filth, the clerics become filthy themselves. They desert their moral predicates and descend into a place where they are even less mobile and active than the obscene creatures they consult with. They stop up their ears because what they hear is so offensive to them – as if we should fall for such an exhibition of apparent loathing – but they are the ones who have called upon others to dig for such dirt. And if they have asked for it, they desire it, and no manner of outward show can detract from how much they desire it. As López-Rey writes:

As [the monks] plug their ears, their tightly closed eyes and mouths together with the somewhat contracted noses make grimaces reminiscent of a glutton's nausea. Yet, glutted as their inquisitiveness is, they are incapable of moving away from the scurrilous feeders swarming about them. It is as if those searching for culprits in the shadows of their own notions had become prey to their toadying helpers. Goya in depicting this overflow of moral depravity, represented the inquisitors' lunatic evil as inextricably tangled with, and hence made crasser by, the malevolence of their all too obliging decoys. (1970:141–42)

López-Rey's comparison between gorging on information and a glutton's nausea is a strikingly apt description of the condition to which these monks submit themselves. They are blasted by winds from different bodily orifices, and what they hear and smell causes them to shut their ears and contract their faces in disgust, but they do not run from it; they stay, riveted to the spot, forming precise visual emblems of Kristeva's duality in abjection between compulsion and repulsion. Desire is both fascinated and sickened (Kristeva, 1982:1); the monks both want to hear and are pulverised by what they hear. In the process they "become prey" to their informants. The implication is that complicity with the abject enslaves them to it. Their desire for it is beyond their control; they are addicted to it. Here the pleasure that one can extract from abjection is pictured as something that, as Kayser believes, 'may also carry the player away, deprive him of his freedom, and make him afraid of the ghosts which he so frivolously invoked' (1963:187).

No other etching in *Los Caprichos* so closely associates bodily abjection (wind) with dirt, obscenity, the abject. The fact that they scrounge for such dirt and then pass it along makes the witch-informers objects to banish from the system. The crime

of the clerics, on the other hand, is that they contract such information and then listen to it, showing their piety by receiving it only through damped senses. Their senses are the orifices through which they admit information into the precinct of their moral super-egos, and we, stupid and gullible, are expected to believe that the shrinking of these orifices leads to such an erosion of the incoming information that it ceases to be defiling to the clerics and becomes nothing but objective data with which they can better judge the spiritual level of their flock. Can we really believe this of men who have gone to witches, the lowest of the low, the bottom-feeders in the margins of society, for the sole purpose of receiving dirt? – men who have plunged into a world of defiling matter simply to extract yet more defiling matter?

No. Our task, as viewers, is to expel these abominations from our own systems, to point our backsides back at them and abject them in odorous gusts of anal laughter.

And this, clearly, is the operation we are meant to perform on all of the clerics in the images I have examined so far. Since they have overstepped the limitations, codes and rules of their Faith, and have thereby made a travesty of a religious system many ordinary citizens take very seriously, corrupt clergymen must be categorised as dirt and earmarked for removal. For Goya, dealing with such subject matter as goblins, overindulgence and farting may have given great supplemental pleasure – after all, as Kristeva has claimed, 'it is out of . . . straying on excluded ground that [the deject] draws his jouissance' (1982:8) – and the viewer can share in this pleasure, but this is evidently not the patent goal of the etchings. The patent, public goal is denigration in the interests of social reform.

The last image I want to look at in this chapter, *Swallow it, Dog* (*Tragala Perro*) [Fig.75], offers a more bivocal comment, and two objects of satirical attack, but shows no softening in Goya's attitude toward the clergy, particularly when they act as divine custodians of the law.

The etching depicts flagrant aggression enacted on a man in a position of



Fig.75 Swallow It, Dog (*Tragala Perro*)

cowed abjection. The man kneels and holds out his hands in prayer as a monk with a savage face approaches carrying a huge syringe. Monks surround the man and laugh or leer at him in undisguised mockery. Submerged in the dark background are two monstrous figures, the one equipped with giant horns, a nose that recalls the shaft of the syringe, and a mouth that closely echoes the barking, dentally-over-endowed mouth of the spotlighted monk.

There is much that one could make of this image, particularly given its overt sadistic thematic (which, unsurprisingly, centres around the ferocious mouth of the monk and the rectum of the penitent man, soon to receive, courtesy of the syringe, a purging enema), and the implication that the monk's syringe is equally his penis, with which he will penetrate the penitent man, i.e., mount him from behind, screw him up the rear, rape him, exploit him<sup>10</sup>. However, such readings will embroil this discussion in complexities that may end up being more about sadism than abjection; so I will restrict myself to pointing out – and this is as clear as a bell in the etching – the extent to which sadism involves a victor and an abject, an aggressive whipper and a scapegoat. The sadist (the monk in the etching) affirms his boundaries by maltreating the other. To prevent the other from taking the place of "I" the sadist punishes, inflicts injury, uses brute force and exerts physical dominance to assuage internal anxieties and keep the ego intact. In this case the other must be made abject, both from the point of view of social status (the beaten other is robbed of social position while under the sadist's heel) and bodily condition (beaten, marked, corrupted, the limits of the other appear through the body to have been ruptured and fragmented, the classical outlines swelled, pierced, cut, flowing – no longer a whole in a misrecognised higher state of integration). Goya's etching portrays this process of purging or healing the self (and the collective unit the self represents – divine law in this instance) at the expense of the other, and in it one

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<sup>10</sup> I will remind the reader that a potential association between mounting, sodomy and exploitation of the vulnerable emerged in my discussion of *Filiation* and *You who cannot*.

can see both the operation to abject (via the monk and his syringe) and the condition to be abject (the penitent man).

According to Alcalá Flecha, the kneeling man is being punished for proving so weak a husband that he has been cuckolded:

a he-goat with giant horns and a mask with a resigned expression seem to allude to the double condition of a cuckolded husband and a submissive penitent . . . behind the cleric who carries the syringe stands the watchful figure of a woman, who must be the reason behind her unfortunate spouse's zeal' (1988:55)<sup>11</sup>. (The cuckoldry reading is supported by Sánchez and Gállego, 1995:67).

The enema is thus presumably meant to fortify the husband against further weakness in the administration of his marriage. Flecha's account is interesting in that he believes the man is voluntarily submitting to the purging. His perception of such submissiveness may have been informed by the Prado commentary: *He who lives among men will be irremediably plagued; if he wants to avoid it, he will have to go away to live in the hills and when he is there he will realise that this solitary life is a plague, too*<sup>12</sup>. In the light of this commentary another way of reading the print comes to the fore, since the image ceases to be solely or even predominantly about an isolated and specific incident in which the Church castigates a cuckold; it now acts as an interposition on the internal dynamics of the social system – the Symbolic – as a whole, which the commentary casts in a highly negative light. The Spanish verb *jeringar*, which the commentator uses, and which I translate as “to plague”, is a multifaceted term, which literally means ‘to inject’<sup>13</sup>. Cassell's Spanish Dictionary defines it thus:

11 un macho cambio de gigantescos cuernos y una carátula de expresión resignada parecer alude a la doble condición de marido cornudo y sumiso penitente . . . tras el religioso que sostiene la jeringa se yergue la figura velada de una mujer, que ha de ser el motivo de los celos del infortunado esposo. (1988:55)

12 El que viva entre los hombres será jeringado irremediabilmente; si quiere evitarlo, habrá de irse a habitar los montes y cuando esté allí conocerá también que esto de vivir solo es una jeringa. (Adapted from López-Rey, 1970:205)

13 *Jeringar* is one among many examples of the adoption, in the commentaries, of words with double or multiple meanings. Kristeva, in reference to Bakhtin, notes that this use of multivalence is a feature of carnivalesque literature: ‘Bakhtin has shown that there is a fundamental dialogism, a basic bivalence in any speech, word, or utterance in novels stemming

'to syringe; to inject; to give an enema to . . . to needle, plague' (1986:381). In short, the commentary proposes that no matter where you choose to live, whether in the society of others or alone, you will be "irremediably plagued" – life will needle you with those 'small vexations continually repeated'<sup>14</sup> of which Ben Johnson writes.

The artist's message seems simple: if you want to live in society, you will be forced to play by its rules; when you break those rules you will be plagued: injected with an enema. The organs of the Symbolic brook no disobedience. Yet it seems many – the shriven man included – whether they recognise these organs as corrupt or not, are prepared to pay the price and take their punishments and move on, because such obedience at least procures continued existence among others, in a society. This, it would seem, is better than a solitary existence outside of society, in the hills, since such a separate existence is also a plague, but without the creatural pleasures of social interaction, and is therefore more of a plague. How, one might well wonder, can frequent enemas be more desirable than life in the hills? Perhaps because life in a society means temporary moments of abjection dispersed among periods of sound integration into the social fabric, while life in the hills means permanent abjection, a life apart. This is an existence without others, where the self, I might hazard, slowly and entropically runs down, losing its barriers and limitations as the imperative to maintain them ceases. Perennial purging and abjection is presumably better than this structureless descent into a formlessness where the ego, like a bat without a radar, no longer has anything to bounce off and so deter-

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from carnivalesque tradition' (1982:138). The use of words with more than one meaning echoes the hybridity so common to the language of the Grotesque; here we have not a composite figure but a composite word.

<sup>14</sup> Johnson quoted in Edward Bloom's article, 'Eden Betray'd: City Motifs in Satire', for the fifth International Congress on the Enlightenment, 1980:962. These "continually repeated vexations" put one in mind of Freud's theory of the compulsion to repeat (1991i:290–4). The distinctive feature of this compulsion is its insistence on revisiting sites of unpleasure – sites where satisfaction has been withheld from the drives by such factors as parental chastisement. In other words, the subject returns to those things, repeats doing those things, that result in punishment, the pleasure being too great to resist. Here one might think of sadists, masochists, habitual criminals, kleptomaniacs and addicts of contraband substances.

mine its environment.

For Goya, however, the most important issue appears to be the inanity of humankind, which is prepared to mulishly submit itself to aggressive acts committed under the guise of rectitude and the maintenance of socioreligious codes simply to protect against slipping from the system – to protect against the alternative of living in exile in the hills. For the viewer, the response seems clear: look at the monks surrounding the penitent, see how they laugh, laugh with them. Scorn this pitiful, senseless, obedient creature. Use him as your scapegoat. Whip him. If he enjoys that degraded, abject, position so much, let him stay there. Be the aggressor. Take the place which is the better of two evils. Embody yourself in the monk, stick that syringe in, drive the plunger down. Deliver the enema. Purge.

For that, in its most sadistic form, is the role of the satirist, and those who feel the intoxication of his mocking laughter.

The monk's behaviour is not to be excused, however. Goya emphasises his features, his teeth and eyes in particular, to imbue him with an unmistakable savagery, verging on a cannibalistic rage. The speech he puts in the monk's mouth by way of the title denounces the shriven man as a dog and confuses swallowing with rectal imbibing in a way that underscores the monk's dominance. *You're going to swallow the medicine I give you, you dog.* The monk is tyrannical, brutal, unflinching and wrathful: the inexorable clyster pipe of divine redress. But there is nothing divine about either him or his 'justice'. In mocking him Goya mocks religious law and questions the aptness of the juridical authority vested in the clerical vocation. To him such non-secular law seems corrupt, Draconian and despotic, and only the weak submit to it. I end this chapter on *Swallow it, Dog* because it provides a constructive link to the next chapter, in which I look at images in which Goya, following his own purer moral line, fleshes out corruption and hypocrisy in secular law.

## Chapter Seven

### The Law

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ONE OF THE CONSEQUENCES of adopting a high moral line that, 'ever by Ridicule', seeks 'to recall Man from the by-ways of Unreason to the base line of Reason, that is, to present Rational Man as the norm or standard' (Randolphe in Paulson, 1971b:175), is that the satirist must commit himself or herself to exposing corruption in all areas of society, including those he or she otherwise appears to uphold. The Symbolic as it stands is an imperfect, easily-corruptible system, and what the satirist, Goya in this instance, sides with ultimately is a paragon Symbolic modelled on the ideal designs of his or her own super-ego. In this chapter I look at two works, *How They pluck Her!* and *They spruce Each Other up*, that submit social law itself, or, in any event, some of its executors, to criticism.

Capricho 21, *How They pluck Her!* (*¡Qué la descañonan!*) [Fig.76], is the most unexpected of these since it extends to the actions of the law the theme of plucking, i.e., fleecing, that Goya used in *All will Fall*, *Now They go Plucked* and *She plucks Him* to denigrate prostitutes. In *How They pluck Her!* a prostitute – represented by a bird-woman, not bait this time – is plucked by constables under the protection of a magistrate<sup>1</sup>. Both the magistrate and the constables are depicted as feline, to stress that they prey on prostitutes as voraciously as cats prey on birds<sup>2</sup>.

Now, even though the Prado commentary implies that prostitutes must take such treatment because where they mete out criminal acts they must also expect to

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<sup>1</sup> I identify the bird-woman as a prostitute and the men as constables and a magistrate on the basis of the Ayala manuscript: *Judges spread their cloaks over notaries and constables to allow them to rob prostitutes with impunity* (*Los jueces hacen capa a los escribanos y alguaciles para que roben a las mujeres públicas impunemente* [Adapted from Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:100]).

<sup>2</sup> Constables were well known, and were denounced by the likes of Torres Villarroel and the elder Moratín, for their cruelty, corruption and malice (see Alcalá Flecha, 1988:393-94).



Fig.76 How They pluck Her! (*¡Cuál la descañonan!*)

receive criminal acts back upon themselves<sup>3</sup>, the law is still depicted as the worse of two ills here. Magistrates and constables, the enforcers of the law, should not be going to prostitutes to extort money from them (if anything they should be locking them away, as in *Capricho 22, Poor little Things* [Fig.77] and *Capricho 32, Because She was Vulnerable* [Fig.88] – another two etchings, paradoxically, in which Goya seems to sympathise with prostitutes at the expense of the law). The word in Goya's title that assures us extortion is at issue is *descañonar*, from the verb *descañonar* ('to pluck'), which, like *desplumar*, figuratively means 'to rob'. Law enforcers are, of course, in an ideal position to fleece people whose occupation is criminal and are for that reason all "vulnerable" like the woman in *Capricho 32*<sup>4</sup>. Prostitutes are the easiest of targets because their social position is so shaky. Goya must lash the lawmen for their involvement with the low and rhyarographic world of prostitution, but it seems to me that what he believes dirties their hands



Fig.77 Poor Little Things! (¡Pobrecitas!)

<sup>3</sup> Young hens also encounter kites that pluck them and yet therefore it is said of them: where they give to them they take from them (*También las pollas encuentran milaneros que las desplumen y aun por eso se dijo aquello de: Donde las dan las toman* [Adapted from Sánchez and Sayre, 1989: 100]). "Las dan las toman" basically means to get back what you give, or to reap what you sow. *Cassell's Spanish Dictionary* translates the phrase as 'it works both ways' (1986:219).

<sup>4</sup> I could use Paulson to put a neat and useful, if inescapably sexist, spin on this point:

The male sex counters the female's art with arts of its own; these "arts," however, are the laws of the parent, primogeniture, and male courts of law – reflecting male authority in a male-dominated society . . . Women's arts have their locus in the boudoir, men's laws in the institutions that govern society and in which women have no say. Women's actions are, therefore, automatically subversive and criminal. (1983:310)

even more is their money-grubbing. Money, they say, is the root of all evil, and it is this root that the magistrate and his constables fertilise when they break the very laws they are empowered to protect and enforce.

In short, in Goya's eyes, corruption of the law is as bad as, if not worse than, acts conducted outside the law. Both corrupt the Symbolic, but the former is committed by lawgivers, and their conduct, by bringing the entire system of the law into disrepute, can potentially make a nonsense of Symbolic hegemony.

In the image itself corruption is made visual in Goya's use of the magistrate's cape, which, as Sayre notes,

constitutes a profoundly moral play on religious representations of the Virgen de Misericordia (Virgin of Mercy), specifically in her guise as Abrigo de Pecadores (Shelter of Sinners). In an anonymous eighteenth-century woodcut we see angels spreading out the Virgin's mantle to protect the sinners who cower below it from the just wrath of God the Father and his Son, seen standing in the clouds above, ready to hurl down their arrows. In the *Capricho* the venal magistrate neither executes justice nor tempers it with mercy. Instead he protects those who rob prostitutes. (In Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:100)

The serene magistrate spreads his cloak to protect those who do wrong and thereby perpetuates a monstrous mobilisation against a sector of society that, having no legal status, cannot fight back. Any viewer aware of how Goya's image upends the tradition of the Virgin of Mercy must surely feel disgust that such a noble symbol has been invoked or condensed in the image of a corrupt public official. The cape as a shelter, a place of protection and mercy, is converted into something that screens the unlawful acts of the law from the eyes of society. It, too, is a shelter, but not a gracious one, for it envelops a hierarchy of turpitude in which, true to the principle of inversion, the top is the location not of the greatest purity and refinement, but the most absolute corruption. In a corrupt system the corrupt prevent corruption from becoming visible by harbouring the equally corrupt<sup>5</sup>.

Distortion of the law is criminal in Goya's book, and it must come under the

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<sup>5</sup> One should note in this regard that the magistrate shelters the prostitute, too, but for a price.

censure of his probity, even if in the process another form of criminality ends up cast in a more sympathetic light. As viewers confronted by a piece of satire with an obvious target, our task is simple: condemn such malpractice and banish such corrodors of the Symbolic fabric, first, from our own Imaginaries, second, from society itself. It is because these representatives of the law have offended justice and broken something as sacred as the law that their rejection must be unambivalent.

I now turn to an image that, within my methodology, offers an exemplary portrait of just how unclassified corrupters of the law really are, *They spruce Each Other up (Se repulen)* [Fig.78]. In an exterior setting that, one can argue, represents an anti-social location (outside of a community, a city), three beings, among the most alien Goya ever etched, gather to primp and preen each other. The triangular composition and the placement of two figures under the outspread wings of another make it impossible for us to miss the homology between this print and *How They pluck Her*. Some textual sources will further establish this connection.

The commentary translated by Samuel Dobree and copied by Francis Douce offers the following brief note: 'Monks, figured as vices, taking care of each other' (quoted in Glendinning, 1964:9). An identification of the etching's three beings as monks is supported largely by the figure to the right, who has a tonsured head and, from the waist down, the remains of a long garment that might be a monk's habit. The other figures show no obvious link to clerics: they are far more bestial; the winged figure whose mallet-shaped head is silhouetted against a patch of white sky, is scarcely human.

According to the Ayala manuscript, this arcane and manifestly grotesque group represents *Thieving employees [who] make excuses and cover up for each other*<sup>6</sup> – a view braced by the commentary in the Biblioteca Nacional: *'Employees who steal from the state and cover up for each other. The ringleader raises his head above the others and over-*

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Los empleados ladrones se dculpan y tapan unos á otros. (From Sayre, 1974:107)



Fig.78 They spruce Each Other up (*Se Repulen*)

shadows them with his monstrous wings' (quoted in Sánchez and Gállego, 1995:62)<sup>7</sup>. Labelling these figures "employees of the state" is not altogether satisfactory, just as reading them as monks is not satisfactory; I would suggest that each figure represents a different profession: the left-hand figure stands for the clergy, while the winged figure, being the highest authority, may, if one pursues the similarities between this Capricho and *How they Pluck Her!*, again be the judiciary (or perhaps the law in general). The figure on the right has a broad mouth fitted with puffy lips, which associates him with a feeder or bloodsucker, and since Goya often portrayed the nobility as useless entities who live off others, I would recommend we see this unsavoury character as that class's representative.

What we ultimately have, then, is an image in which Goya portrays actual social groups as witches to de-position them. This vindicates, as one would expect, Heckes's claim (1985) that '[i]t was not the monsters of superstitious belief that Goya feared, but rather the all-too-real human monsters of his age who perpetuated these beliefs in order to subjugate the Spanish people' (4)<sup>8</sup>. Goya takes social figures which he views as fallen in one way or another, and metamorphoses them into marginal creatures to emphasise their aberrant behaviour and so hold them up to society as individuals in need of removal. This use of witches is by no means unique. Douglas, whose focus is anthropological, finds it in the society of the Lugbara, where it functions in the same way:

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<sup>7</sup> Such commentaries would appear to derive their interpretations from the associations capes and nails had in eighteenth-century Spain. As Sayre explains in *The Changing Image*,

the eighteenth century Spanish expression "*Ser capa de maldades de ladrones, picaros, etc.*" meant literally "to act as a cape for the evil deeds of thieves, knaves, etc."; that is, to cover up for or to protect them. Another expression "*meter la uña*" (to apply the claw) meant to take advantage of, to defraud. (1974:106)

Askew (1988:480) also shows that nails (*uñas*) were used in a variety of sayings that connoted robbery (e.g., '*lograr las uñas*, try to commit a robbery'). Reliance on such sayings may, however, divert attention from elements in the image that could produce another interpretation, such as I offer in the text.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Sayre: 'Goya's witchcraft subjects were not the creations of picturesque fantasy but rather a vehicle for profound criticisms of the decadence of society' (1974:255).

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So here is a man in a position of authority, improperly wielding the powers of office. His legitimacy being in doubt, he must be removed, and to remove him his antagonists accuse him of having become corrupt and emanating witchcraft, a mysterious, perverted power which operates at night. (1984:107)

Likewise, Goya takes people who represent the highly structured and powerful sections of society and jettisons them into the margins, thereby demonstrating that the dangers threatening society exist within the structure, not the margins. The structure is rotten and decaying; it no longer merits classification. But it is important to be clear on the issue. By claiming that the centre is rotten, Goya is not liberating or celebrating the margins; he is placing the centre *in* the margin. The margin remains the seat of "mysterious, perverted power which operates at night", but Goya shows that it exists nearer the core of authority than society might have suspected.

With this in mind, let us return to the etching, in which the law, the clergy and the nobility (as I have identified them) meet under a variegated sky to spruce each other up: more exactly, to pare their nails. These are not retractable claws but outgrowths that can become excessive and, as the Prado commentary suggests, even dangerous: *To have long nails is so harmful that even among witches it is prohibited*<sup>9</sup>. How are we to understand this link between long nails and harm? Sayre points to an answer when she writes: '[t]he witches . . . "spruce themselves up" to hypocritically disguise their nature, protected by a third witch who conceals their transformation' (1974:106). Sprucing – the paring of nails – disguises the (true) nature of the witches. Appearances are everything. If these representatives of the law, the clergy, and the nobility are actively fleecing (that is, robbing) their citizens, flock, or subjects, they must trim off (and so mask) all evidence of their activity. If they do not they could place themselves, as the Prado commentary cautions, in danger – the danger, to put it simply, of being caught.

Nail parings fall into the class of abject products Kristeva associates with excre-

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Esto de tener las uñas largas es tan perjudicial que aun en la Brujería está prohibido.  
(Adapted from López-Rey, 1970:202)

ment: objects that, by their potential to break the boundaries of the body and separate from it, become abject. They are among the (abject[ed]) mother's abject fragments, and are disposed of to ensure the subject's integration into the Symbolic. Allowing nails to grow might indicate an attachment to the mother, a hanging onto her – the nails becoming substitutes for her lost body – and thus show a disrespect for and lack of conformity with the Social formation. In this sense the three witches in Goya's *Capricho* can be read, ironically, as dutiful sons of the Symbolic – *which is exactly the way they want others to see them*. They pare each other's nails to shed evidence of their anti-social behaviour and to seal up the ruptures their thieving, extorting, parasitical ways tear in the Symbolic fabric. As models of those areas of society presumed to be of the highest rank – the law, dealing in secular justice and order; the clergy, dealing in divine justice and order; the nobility, the most well-bred, civilised and refined class in the social structure – they are the ones most empowered, and most *expected*, to maintain the weave of the Symbolic. The trick, then, if you happen to be corrupt, is to act entirely in opposition to the social order, but preserve appearances so immaculately that no-one would dream you were guilty of lawlessness. It is a time-honoured tradition. By focusing all your attention on your *appearance* you present a picture thoroughly beguiling, because what society wants to see, ultimately, is whether or not you are renouncing the Symbolic and starting to show your debt to nature or your debt to the abject(ed) mother. Dramatise what demonstrates your pact with culture most, and you will remain, with full honours, within the Symbolic. For, after all, the Symbolic is simply a chain of significations, and signification can be manipulated.

*They spruce Each Other up* appears, thus, to be a comment on corruption, in the same vein as *How they Pluck Her!*. Where it differs from *Capricho 21* is in its extraordinary grotesque emphasis, and it is on this basis that Goya has the last laugh, for even as the witches fastidiously see to their external appearances and trim off the excesses that might betray their corruption, they fail to see that, in the eyes of

the viewer, they are hideous, inhuman, monstrous – their vile criminal acts are imprinted all over their deformed, bestialised, caricatural bodies. The informed, comprehending viewer, who knows that detraction is the pivotal function of satire, cannot fail to treat them as objects of the highest scorn, as creatures that have no business associating with a human world. Within my methodology, these witches are unclassified matter. As much as they draw on society's categories of dirt and reject objects to maintain their Symbolic integrity in the eyes of others, they are as far removed from the social formation as any abject fragment. But they are not beings that menace us because we cannot place them in our own categories of named things; they are meant to act as foils, as objects that make us feel more Symbolically secure. We are expected to realise how remote they are from our ideals of bodily beauty and good conduct, and so deny them, mock them, laugh resoundingly at their unsightly faces and disadvantageous limbs; leave them like discarded parings in the fantasy world they dominate. In so doing we purify the civil body and, strengthened by our bond with this collective identity, we walk away surer of our own bodily beauty, of our own humanity and, above all, of our own morality.

Whether degraded by their extortionist association with the degenerate margins of the community, as in *How They Pluck Her!*, or visually by being transformed into witches – creatures who emanate foul powers from the unstructured, ambiguous and anomalous interspaces of society – lawmen who corrupt the law are placed by Goya in the hangman's noose. Whether they are to be acquitted or hung is in the hands of the individual viewer. Not hanging, we either buy into their corruption or use them for purposes and in ways unspecified by the satirical ideal (e.g., for simple pleasure at their monstrosity). Hanging, we continue the lifelong process of managing the abject by means of small, incomplete repressions.

## Chapter Eight

### Struggles for Supremacy

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THE ETCHINGS I EXAMINE in this chapter, *To Rise and Fall*, *Who would believe It!* and *Love and Death*, deal with rivalry of one sort or another, and all can inform our understanding of the way contest and aggression induce the operation to abject, sometimes through murder.

I begin with an etching wholeheartedly devoted to ascent and descent, *To Rise and Fall* (*Subir y Bajar*) [Fig.79]. Ostensibly, it is a fantastical image in which a half-man, half-goat creature, presumably a satyr, sits upon a globe, possibly the earth, and toys with three men, one of whom he holds aloft while the others fall through space.

In the past (e.g., in the Ayala manuscript [see Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:124]; also see Ferrari, 1963:XIII) and still today (e.g., Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:123-24; Heckes, 1985:363; Chan, 1985:57) many scholars have interpreted the image politically, claiming that it portrays Fortune elevating Manuel Godoy to the heights of political success, the subtext being that, since Fortune is fickle, Godoy will be laid low again, in the manner of the men falling to either side of the satyr. The majority of scholars have, however, set up the political reading as one possibility, and have claimed the inconstancy of Fortune as pivotal. This is largely because the print's literal subtext, the Prado commentary, reads: *Fortune maltreats whoever honours her. She rewards with smoke the labour of rising and those who have risen she castigates by hurling them down*<sup>1</sup>. Whether one goes up or down in the world is thus in the hands of Fortune<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> La fortuna trata mal a quien la obsequia. Paga con humo la fatiga de subir y al que ha subido le castiga con precipitarle. (Adapted from Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:124)

<sup>2</sup> Another etching that evidently deals with this theme is *Some to Others* (*Unos a Otros*) [Fig.80], in which aristocrats and clergymen use pikes to prod a peasant playing the role of a bull. The Prado commentary for this Capricho runs: *So goes the world: they mock and bullfight each other; he who yesterday played the bull, today plays the bullfighting rider. Fortune directs the*



Fig. 79 To Rise and Fall (*Subir y Bajar*)

As Sayre has pointed out, however, the satyr-like figure is more likely, or at least as likely, to be Lust than/as Fortune (or is a combination of both, which accords well enough with its hybridised body), since, as she elucidates in her endnote three (1989:125), Lust was typically depicted as a satyr.

The naked legs of the central man, whom the satyr lifts with both hands, and the smoke torrenting from his head and hands can both be seen to evince those “uncontrolled pas-



Fig.80 Some to Others (*Unos a Otros*)

sions” of which Goya wrote in his advertisement for *Los Caprichos* (revisit Chapter One, Section IV). Smoke in this context is like the fire and wind of *Blowers*, which I associated with sexual desire.

A sexual thematic plays strongly through the preparatory drawing for *To Rise and Fall* [Fig.81], in which the rising man is displayed naked except for some kind of cloth around his loins, and the figure falling to the left of the image is entirely

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entertainment and distributes the roles according to the inconstancy of her caprices (*Así va el mundo: unos a otros se burlan y se toreañ. El que ayer hacía de toro hoy hace de caballero en plaza. La fortuna dirige la fiesta y distribuye los papeles según la inconstancia de sus caprichos* [Adapted from Sánchez and Sayre, 1939:137]). Here the word “caprichos” means whim or fancy, and the commentary seems to be fanciful itself because the relations of the image, reflecting actual social relations, do not permit a reversal of the roles the bull, the mounts and the riders are playing. In this sense the subtext is an incitement to revolution. Fortune being a smoke-screen for forces of social change. The social order (Symbolic) can be reconfigured to elevate the low (abject) to the place of the high (the guardians of the Symbolic).

unclothed. In this form, the composition draws a direct link between nakedness and libidinal excitation, which Sayre associates with a struggle for 'sexual supremacy' (1989:123). In the etching the smoke, the naked legs and the leering, lewd smile on the rising man's face have to carry the message<sup>3</sup>. Whether lustfulness is solely responsible for the ascendant/descendant oscillation Goya sets up is, however, uncertain.

The way I want to read the etching is as a supreme image of inversion and reversal, where what rises



Fig.81 Preparatory drawing for *To Rise and Fall*

must fall. We have a depiction of an up-down topography but again without the regenerative quality Bakhtin finds in the high-low circulations of Renaissance folk culture. Goya's outlook is too pessimistic for that: when you rise you fall, and when you fall, you keep falling. And such a fall, in my reading, is one into the abyss (or back to the gravity-bound earth, as Goya's etching shows), into a place of degradation and denigration, a place of abjection. Contest with Fortune brings a rise, but a fall into the 'land of oblivion' (Kristeva, 1982:8; emphases removed) seems the inescapable forfeit for your moment of glory.

The central man's elevation can be interpreted as the rise of the human subject to a position of power in the Symbolic, and if he is to fall he will fall because his

<sup>3</sup> Sayre identifies a set of genital innuendoes that enhance this eroticism: 'Lust . . . by his mere presence suggests the secondary meanings of *subir y bajar*: to be made erect and then flaccid, or to penetrate and to withdraw' (1989:123). She also sees the rising man's sword as 'a visual pun for the member by which he was enabled to rise' (123).

passion, his desire – whether for sex, wealth, power, or whatever – outsteps its Symbolic limits to become unstable and threatening. His overarching, unmanageable greed precipitates his fall, because in such rapacity we may read a desire to usurp places of authority beyond the ambit of mortals – the place of the Other, perhaps, through domination of all others – and this makes him too dangerous to the Symbolic<sup>4</sup>. The price of pleasure and power taken to immoderation is conclusive disendowment and disinheritance. He must fall (as most historical tyrants have fallen) so that the Symbolic may reintegrate and continue to function as a system within which the subject is a content constitutor of law and signification. Of course, the tyrant's legacy remains as a model of the cost of rampant desire, allowing others to learn from his anti-example and so struggle against whatever urges they may have to threaten what the Blooms have called 'totemic well-being' (1979:128). What has become abject always nourishes the Symbolic, one way or another.

In Capricho 10, *Love and Death* (*El Amor y la Muerte*) [Fig.82], the operation to abject is carried out under the banner of a duel. The etching's title makes it clear that the subjects of this image are no less than love and death, but the work is plain – by Goya's standards – and can be summed up by the Prado commentary: *Here you see one of Calderón's lovers who, not knowing how to laugh off his rival, dies in the arms of his loved one and loses her because of his temerity. It is not advisable to draw the sword too often*<sup>5</sup>. Thus, in Cervantes fashion, he objurgates the chivalry that drives a

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<sup>4</sup> Within this reading the satyr is not to be taken as representative of the Symbolic or of the Other, but as a personification of the monstrous desire of those who rise through the system. The Symbolic is not depicted, it is implied in the notion of fortune. Because it is the vaulting ambition of the men that brings them into conflict with the Symbolic, the satyr makes an understandable appearance as the executor of the fall, just as it is the executor of the rise.

<sup>5</sup> Ve aquí un amante de Calderón que por no saberse reir de su competidor muere en brazos de su querida y la pierde por su temeridad. No conviene sacar la espada muy a menudo. (From López-Rey, 1970:190)

The commentary specifically invokes the Spanish stage tradition by naming the Golden Age poet and dramatist Pedro Calderón de la Barca. According to I. L. McClelland, in *The Origins of the Romantic Movement in Spain*, Golden Age drama remained popular throughout

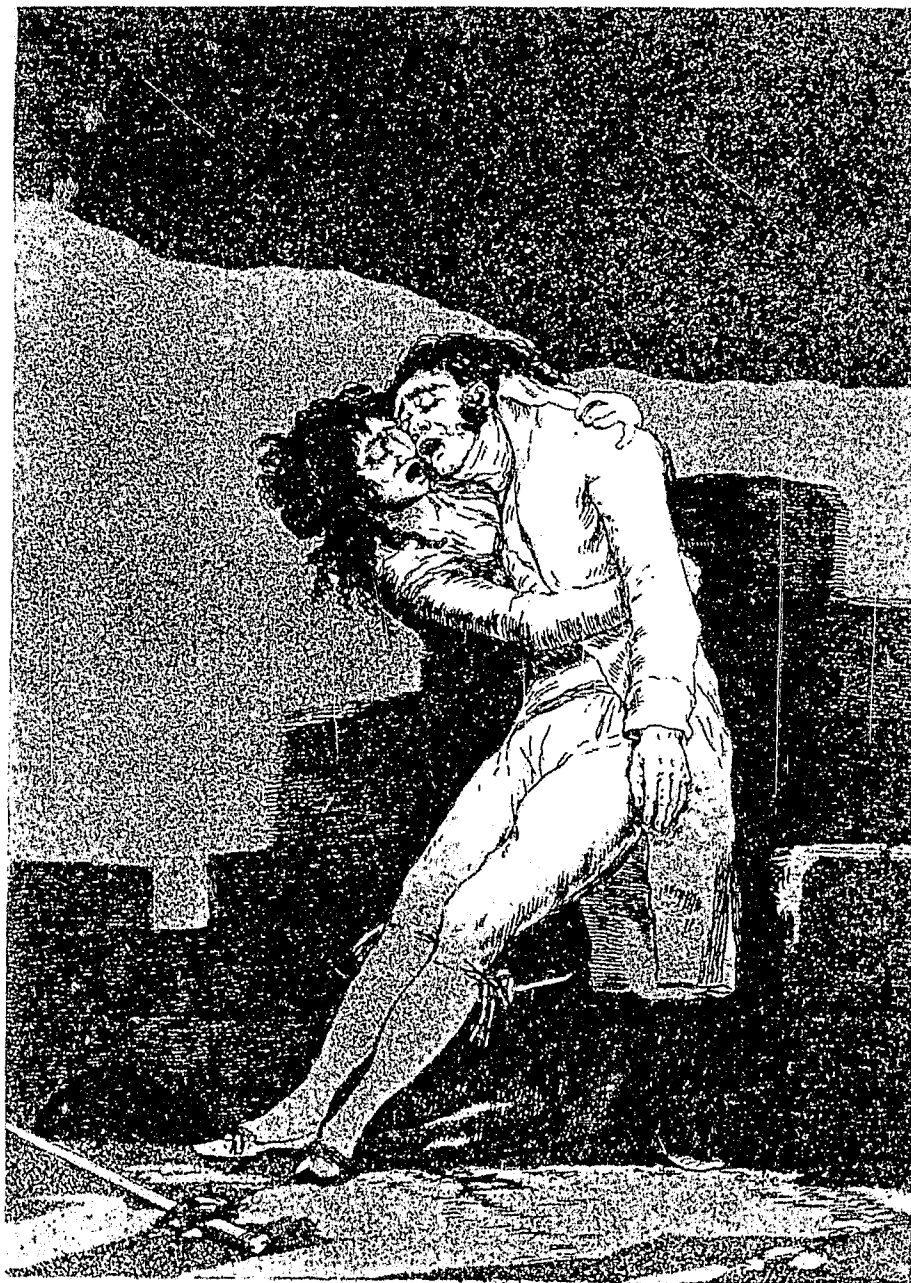


Fig. 82 Love and Death (*El Amor y la Muerte*)

man to waste his life in a duel for the love of a woman.

The writer of the Prado commentary grants the dying lover two methods for dealing with the unseen victor of the duel: (1) laugh him off, (2) duel with him. Either option would have allowed the man to split from his rival, and it is no secret which of the two has the commentator's approval. But the lover has already proved incapable of using laughter as a method of (r)ejection (that is, a way of abjecting the threat of the other lover) and has chosen to risk, and so found death in, the more decisive separation of the duel. Had he laughed his rival off, the man would have stayed alive and – if her devotion to him in death is anything to go by – probably 'won' the woman anyway. To account for his puzzling action I must turn to Lacan's account of aggressivity, which develops around the child's captation by his or her image in the mirror:

It is this captation by the *Imago* of the human form . . . which, between the ages of six months and two and a half years, dominates the entire dialectic of the child's behaviour in the presence of his *similars*. During the whole of this period, one will record the emotional reactions and the articulated evidences of a normal transitivity. The child who strikes another says that he has been struck; the child who sees another fall, cries. Similarly, it is by means of an identification with the other than [*sic*] he sees the whole gamut of reactions of bearing and display whose structural ambivalence is clearly revealed in his behaviour, the slave being identified with the despot, the actor with the spectator, the seduced with the seducer.

. . . It is this erotic relation, in which the human individual fixes upon himself an image that alienates him from himself, that are to be found the energy and the form on which this organization of the passions that he will call his ego is based.

This form will crystallize in the subject's internal conflictual tension, which determines the awakening of his desire for the object of the other's desire: here the primordial coming together (*concoirs*) is precipitated into aggressive competitiveness (*concurrence*), from which develops the triad of others, the ego and the object . . . (1977:19)

the eighteenth century. McClelland provides a list of performances in Madrid theatres for the month of April 1763, in which Calderón's plays feature prominently (1975:166). 'At the end of the [eighteenth] century,' he writes, 'the Golden Age *comedias* still constituted a very large percentage of the total number of functions.' (165) Duels were not only common in such *comedias*, but also in the public imagination: Goya knew that his audience would have had insight – even if glamorised – into this darker side of amorous life, and would have known that his satire against such rash actions had the potential to be topical and provocative.

It also occurs to me that Goya's overt use of a stage-like setting complete with ruin and reduced backdrop, in which even the sword and the man's dropped bicorn hat read as props, acts to subvert the tradition of melodrama which still gave a berth to such outmoded customs as duelling. In short, the duel could veil a subtext criticising the drama of Goya's day.

Lacan views the mirror phase, in which the subject fixes on an alienating image (the specular other), as the fundamental fissile element in the development of the individual, from which derives the triad of others-ego-objects. It is an aggressive splitting for three reasons: (1) the subject desires the object of the other's desire, which means that both elements in the Imaginary relation desire the same object, and the pursuit of that object – which is by no means specified – results in conflict; (2) the subject him/herself wants to be the object of the other's desire, and if the actions of the other indicate that the subject is not the object of his/her desire, the result is aggression; (3) the subject's ego develops around the specular other, i.e., the ego founds itself *on* an other, and is therefore itself an other, alienated – a forfeit, in a sense, for not *being* the other<sup>6</sup>. This third point bears elaboration: if both the subject and the other have equal claim on the subject's ego (since it is, after all, based on an outside imago), the subject must fight for his or her own ego. This is what Lacan refers to when, in his seminar on the Psychoses, he says:

In every relationship with the other, even an erotic one, there is some echo of this relation of exclusion, *it's either him or me*, because on the imaginary plane, the human subject is so constituted that the other is always on the point of re-adopting the place of mastery in relation to him, because there is an ego in him that is always in part foreign to him ... (1993:93)<sup>7</sup>

In other words, both self and other have the same claim to being "I", ego, and the only way the subject can assert "I" as a part of him/herself is by vigorously separating it from the other – a splitting in which the super-ego plays a paradoxical yet essential role (by drawing its principles from the collective Symbolic, i.e., the collective Other – the want/do-not-want complex being determined by how far the threatening other falls short of fulfilling the Other's dictates). The greatest aggres-

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<sup>6</sup> Lacan associated this forfeited existence with death: '[t]his life we're captive of, this essentially alienated life, existing, this life in the other, is as such joined to death, it always returns to death' (1988b:233).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the similar account in Seminar II: 'every imaginary relation comes about via a kind of *you or me* between the subject and the object. That is to say – *If it's you, I'm not. If it's me, it's you who isn't*' (1988b:169).

sion will always appear when the subject most fears that the other is usurping the place of his ego, i.e., when s/he feels that s/he is being engulfed by or immersed in the other. So writes Lacan:

The tension [desire] provokes . . . has no other outcome [in the specular relation] . . . than the destruction of the other . . . The subject's desire can only be confirmed in this relation through a competition, through an absolute rivalry with the other, in view of the object towards which it is directed. And each time we get close, in a given subject, to this primitive alienation, the most radical aggression arises – the desire for the disappearance of the other . . . (1988a:170)

This further explains why the abject must be controlled: it is that other, being in direct communication with the unconscious, which is our other within, and if we become addicted to it there is no question that it could dissolve the ego centralised around Symbolic patterns. The above passage also helps us apprehend the relations of aggression that apply in a duel. In Lacan's passage the "object towards which [desire] is directed" is the Symbolic Other, and it is the rivalry for its desire that causes aggression and the desire to do away with all other rivals. In the duel it is the woman who becomes this object of aggressive desire, and for the time that she stands at the apex of the love triangle she is literally in the place of the Other, the place from which desire is most wanted. But in a duel the woman is not the only prize, for the existence of the self is on the line and the one who dies stands to be absorbed into the self of the victor – the "its either him or me" translates into 'he becomes me and I become him when I kill him'. "I" imbibe his identity. Death is that ultimate *other side* – that margin where, as Kristeva puts it, "'I' is expelled" (1982:4), but in the duel the expelled "I" is at once assimilated by the victorious duellist, and is therefore super-added to the other<sup>8</sup>. The stakes of the duel are thus

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<sup>8</sup> It strikes me, incidentally, that this transitivity, in which death means the incorporation of the other, underlies the theme of the *Highlander* films and its television offshoot, and may explain why the original *Highlander* film was so successful among Western audiences. It appeals to a fundamental repressed desire: to kill and become the other and the one ('There can be only one,' runs the maxim of the *Highlander*). This multiplying of identity also explains the immortality of the *Highlander*, for, if we recall footnote 23 of Chapter Four, I have suggested that the reproduction of identity is a way of cheating death.

extremely high: win, and you receive the love of the desired other (the woman) and, like an amoeba, you ingest (introject) your dead opponent (who in death submits entirely and conclusively to your will, therefore your desire); lose, and you accept the immersion that Symbolic life is designed to exclude, deny or at least defer – an immersion that comes in the form of the most unequivocal abjection: the loss of self in the other, in the one who takes your life and with it your claim on the object of desire – a loss that leaves your body behind as an otiose fragment to be disposed of like so much refuse.

Three results of the duel thus involve abjection: (1) a living body becomes a corpse, the ultimate abjection; (2) the victor abjects the loser's threat by murdering him, turning him into a disposable object; (3) the loser's surrender, his dissolution into the enlarged self of the victor, means that he abjects *himself*, spits himself out, and offers that self to the ego of the other (which promptly introjects in the name of its own affirmation). For all these reasons duelling is a practice not worth endorsing. The duel is death or life for the sake of love, but if the loser of the duel loses both life and love *and* becomes captated within the victorious other, what is the point of fighting for love? Is it not better to laugh off your rival, and thereby gain, if not the object of desire, at least continued, separate Symbolic existence?

Goya's etching does, however, have a kink in its tail – at least from the perspective in which I am reading it. The mortally wounded duellist does not lose the object of desire: she, in fact, takes him in her arms and the two are shown in the moment either before or after a last dying kiss, their lippy, gaping mouths almost mirroring each other. It is as if the woman has sought to capture his last breath and so incorporate him within herself. She assimilates his expelled "I" into herself. In this sense the victorious duellist achieves nothing, neither the woman nor the psyche of his opponent. He is the one that becomes abject, the flotsam of the duel. He achieves the goal of the duel – removal of the rival, disappearance of the other – but nevertheless suffers a rejection of desire. The other (the woman) drops him like

faeces, a rejected gift, abject. His off-stage, off-image status reads as a permanent emplacement in the category of expelled, unwanted things.

*Who would believe It! (¡Quién lo creyera!)* [Fig.83] takes up the fall into the abyss pictured in *To Rise and Fall* and the aggressive struggle for supremacy of the duel situation, as depicted in *Love and Death*. It thus serves as a useful concluding image for this chapter.

Two witches wrestle in an indefinite, strangely-tilted space populated by two monsters, one of which reaches for the witches with fierce bear-like paws.

The Prado commentary poses this invitation: *See here a cruel quarrel over which of the two is more of a witch. Who would have said that the Blear-eyed one and the Curly one would pull their hair this way? Friendship is the daughter of virtue. Evil ones can be accomplices but not friends*<sup>9</sup>. If witches generally symbolise real people and social orders in Goya, what might these fighting beauts mean? In the available literature one finds some possibilities: Heckes mentions the Ayala and Biblioteca Nacional commentaries, which contend that the print portrays an old couple 'trapped by their own lasciviousness' (1985:87). Sánchez and Gállego, however, suggest that the witches stand for political rivals too caught up in their own power struggles to realise that, all around them, the world is in the meantime going to the beasts (1995:70). They allude further to the preparatory drawing for the etching, which bears the inscription: "The proudest witches are hurled down from the highest point of their flight" (70; also see Heckes, 1985:85). If Goya did indeed carry this concept into the etching, then what we see are rivals – rival politicians, rival procur-esses, rival brides or bridegrooms, whatever – descending as a result of the blind aggression they have shown toward each other.

Rivalry emerges as an engagement with dire consequences for both combatants,

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Ve aquí una pelotera cruel sobre cual es mas bruja de las dos. Quién diría que la petiñosa y la crespá se repelarán así? La amistad es hija de la virtud: los malvados pueden ser complices pero amigos no. (Adapted from Heckes, 1985:119n.176)



Fig.83 Who would believe It! (*¿Quién lo creyera!*)

for both are abjected by their desire to destroy the other. There are monsters larger and more fearsome than the undesired other, and Goya seems to make the point that petty contests can have severe ramifications, that smalltime aggression can bring one into a realm where encounters play out on a far darker and more bestial level. In this sense the monsters read as representations of the human subject's deepest and rawest passions (as I explored in *Love and Death*), and so talk about a violent aggressivity that the subject has repressed in the course of socialisation, but which still exists and can be revived by smaller forms of combat. The 'witches' are tumbling into the abyss of their own submerged hatred toward the other, are immersed in the savage desire for destruction of all those who threaten to master or moderate the self. The result of such rivalry is the inundation of the self in the almost corporealised twilight of the repressed, a teratological and terrifying space. The urge to destroy or master the other, which aims at placing him or her in a position of abjection, leads the belligerents into the ultimate abject locale.

This locale merits attention. For Sánchez and Gállego the witches are 'falling into a dark abyss full of monsters' (1995:70), and Heckes claims that 'the witches are now trapped in an unending abyss populated by hideous monsters' (1985:86). Both imply that the witches are *in* an abyss, falling lower, and that both monsters inhabit the abyss. But, in fact, the one monster is below the witches, waiting to receive them, and the other is *above* them – at least topographically. And are the witches really falling? This interpretation is dependent on how one identifies the lightly-aquatinted trapezoidal shape against which the witches are illuminated. Is this really a projection of rock or mountainside in the distance, as most scholars assume, or is it the platform of a rocky outcrop, seen from above, *on which the witches wrestle?*

Identifying the shape thus, the witches have not yet fallen, but are struggling on the brink of a precipice. Only the monster at the bottom can therefore be associated with a chasm. But, as Fred Licht writes,

Goya . . . deliberately confuses us about such essential perceptions as up and down. There is no way of telling whether the figures in this image are dropping down toward the lower frame of the picture or hurtling away from us in an uncoordinated space into the picture's depth. (1980:101)

Or whether, indeed, they have left *terra firma* at all. The problem is one of perspective – where in the world are viewers to position themselves? The side-on presentation of the witches suggests that the viewing eye is located in a conventional emplacement meant to facilitate the Imaginary extension of the viewer's body into the space – the viewer's floor being the floor for the image as well. But then everything falls apart on the flat bed of the rocky outcrop, which is tilted – or so it seems – to square with the flat picture plane. Against such a level surface it is no wonder the volumetric witches carve out a detached space, 'closer' to the viewer, through which they might fall, and thereby kindle the proposition that they are dropping through space. But the shadows on the planar shape, which tally sufficiently with the bodies of the witches, indicate that Goya intended them to have some kind of connection with it. Now, if we are not level with the witches, but are, indeed, looking down on them, what does that mean for our placement of the monsters? Can we continue to claim that, topographically, the one is higher than the other? No, because the rock platform becomes the highest marker in the "landscape" and the dark space around it reads as the abyss, and now, against expectations, *both* monsters end up inhabiting the same space, which we look down on (or into). But does this satisfactorily establish the relations in the print? Licht would claim not:

The light crystallizes into strong formal patterns – but it becomes impossible to understand these patterns except structurally. The figures, too, begin to move into a realm that lies beyond our logical comprehension. The two fighting witches in the center have substance enough. Even though we do not know why or where they are fighting, we can at least apprehend them as volumetric bodies resembling the human frame. The horselike figure in the upper zone of the image, however, is puzzling not only in its form but also in its substance. Is it a shadow? A projection from a *laterna magica*? Is it an animal? Or is it an odd cloud-shape suggestive of an animal? Or an embroidered image on a large cloth? The identification of forms in naturalistic terms is gradually becoming immaterial to Goya. (1980:101-2)

Having read this, the spatial relations we might set up by treating the platform

orthogonally fall again into mystery, and we have to admit that '[w]e are lost in a universe in which our ordinary terms of orientation no longer function' (Licht, 1980: 102). This "universe" – polyverse may be a better term – is grotesque in the sense Harpham describes it:

Grotesqueries . . . stand at a margin of consciousness between the known and the unknown, the perceived and the unperceived, calling into question the adequacy of our ways of organizing the world, of dividing the continuum of experience into knowable particles. (1982:3)

A view that finds its echo in Licht: 'It is the ambiguity of the setting that allows Goya to destroy all our normal approaches to perceived reality. The world into which he introduces us is uncanny, unknown and unknowable' (1980:102)

Goya's space is indeed "uncanny, unknown and unknowable", hence its power to dislocate, disorientate and disturb the viewer. In the moment that the witches are snared in their animosity, the viewer is brought face to face with a representational element that might speak of the danger and the obscurity of the repressed. The darkness, the unreadability, the depicted emerging as monstrous and fierce, these things pose problems for the clarity of the viewer's Symbolic patterns of interpretation, and can, I suspect, at least raise the fear of disintegrating into another kind of unknowability, turned abject by social pressures: the unknowability of the pre-Symbolic or Semiotic disposition.

Viewers might thus be caught in their own tussles for supremacy, focused on mastering, and so abjecting, the threat implicit in the uncanny environment Goya adumbrates. To feel whole again, to restore purity to our selfhood and with it our sense of self-mastery, the best option is to overleap the unknowable gaps by recognising that the pictorial world is a "new pattern of reality", one that can be treated as unreal and unnecessary within a logical (Symbolic) order. This is really an act of (dis)placement, whereby one accepts the falsity of Goya's constructed world and so deprives it of the ability to effectively challenge our structuring of the actual world. What is not of *this* reality – the one in which the subject moves and lives – cannot be

threatening. *That* alien space is not real; *those* bisexed/desexed witches are not real; *those* hybrid, alloyed monsters are not real: I put them *over there*. We use demonstrative adjectives to allocate elsewhere, to abject. *Bon voyage*, one can say to the witches, in echo of Capricho 64 (*Buen Viaje*), as they edge toward/tumble down the precipice; their voyage being one into the eternal night and obscurity of abjection. Their agonistic passions have put them there, and the menacing aspects of their world encourage us to feel not allure but a horror we need to keep back.

The etchings of this chapter share an emphasis on up-down relations, whether patent (as in *To Rise and Fall* and *Who would believe it!*) or implicit (the alive-dead relation of the duel in *Love and Death*). Above all, however, they contend that rivalry is a doomed and deadly business. Those who fight off both rivals and Fortune to become politically dominant are destined to fall, those who duel for love are destined to die or fail to secure the assumed prize of the duel, those who struggle hand to hand for some other kind of prize are destined to be overwhelmed by the monsters of their own unseeing desires. Goya's satire appeals to the merits of restraint and reason; the consequence of choosing what he questions, choosing to struggle for the illusion of supremacy, is the abyss depicted in *Who would believe it!*. Those who wish to avoid the abyss have the option to laugh, in the most cynical way, at the idiot face of the smoke-expelling man in Capricho 56, the brainless chivalry of the gentleman in Capricho 10, and the unheeding engrossment of the witches in Capricho 62; in laughing them off we secure temporary release from the concerns and fears they may raise in us, and we gain from them instruction in a lifestyle that would not make us prey to such foolishness.

In the next section of the thesis I focus on a few images that complicate the will to laugh since they do not obviously disclose which characters in the images are meant to be laughed off.

## Section Two: Targets of Equivocal Satirical Attack

In this section I look at those *Caprichos* that appear to manifest a certain ambivalence in Goya's attitude toward his satirical object. One cannot say for certain whether Goya is antithetical or sympathetic to these objects. His attitude, as it comes through in the prints, seems to accommodate both positions, as if he himself was unsure of his feelings about the said targets. I have looked at *bivocal* images, viz., *You Who cannot, Look how Grave!* and, especially, *Swallow it, Dog*, in which Goya's satirical target is twofold (nobility and peasantry, clergy and penitents), but not ambivalent. I have also drawn attention to *How They pluck Her!*, in which the artist equivocally appears to sympathise with a sector of society he had previously slated emphatically, viz., prostitutes. In that instance, however, the ambivalence is largely a by-product of the etching, an inevitable result of dealing with a subject – the corruption of the law – that Goya could not take up without also taking on the subject's object: prostitution. In discussing the work, I suggested that prostitution emerged as the lesser of two evils, not as a pure social service victimised by the law. Now I want to look at works in which Goya's opinion of his satirical target is unclear, viz., *There was no Remedy, Sleep overcomes Them* and *The Shamefaced One*.

The equivocation I examine here is one generated by the uncertainty of Goya's attitude toward his subject matter. This may, of course, suggest that the artist's ambiguity was due to a deep-seated ambivalence involving the abject and the ego in some kind of alliance for the overall benefit of the self, but this is not the route I take here. Goya's positionality in regard to the Symbolic has emerged as a mobile one, but for me that mobility arises because the Symbolic itself is not perfect, and while it can, as a model of rule and conduct, be sided with most of the time, it is open to criticism and resistance. Goya, as moralising satirist, upholds as purified and exacting a code of conduct as possible, and this commits him to a line that branches off from the Symbolic at those points where it, the Symbolic, emerges as

corrupt in his eyes. To provide his viewers with a strict and regular impression of a regulated, structured world, Goya had to question, censure, condemn and degrade *everything* that corrupted the most rarefied principles of probity, ethics and morality, even if this meant taking a stand against his society's chief apparatuses of due process and order, the Church and the law. Goya seems to have been attracted to the law as a system that, ideally and correctly applied, promised to order and manage a perfect form of society; but he was repulsed by it when it was corrupted from within. This accounts for his equivocation.

## Chapter Nine

### Equivocation

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**I**N *THERE WAS NO REMEDY* (*No hubo Remedio*) [Fig.85] a woman is led on an ass through a crowd to her *auto-da-fé*. The etching is a companion piece to Capricho 23, *That Dust* (*Aquellos Polvos*) [Fig.84], in which we see the penitent woman at the Inquisition. It might also be the next in what could be a chain of etchings about the arrest, trial, public humiliation and incarceration of prostitutes which includes *Poor little Things* (arrest), *Because She was Vulnerable* (incarceration) and *Sleep overcomes Them* (incarceration), which I will look at shortly.



Fig.84 That Dust (*Aquellos Polvos*)



Fig.85 There was no Remedy (*No hubo Remedio*)

Given the image – this woman with humility and sorrow all over her face, her feet and breasts bare to enhance her shame, mounted on a donkey (the evergreen symbol of asinine behaviour), and moving through a crowd filled with hate-contorted caricatures – it comes as something of a surprise that the Prado manuscript lambastes the woman: *They are persecuting this saintly lady to death! After writing her life, they parade her in triumph. She deserves all of it, and if they do it to insult her they are wasting their time. No-one can shame those who have no shame*<sup>1</sup>. One understandably responds to such phrases in the commentary as “persecuting . . . to death” and “writing her life” – which sounds like an editing function undertaken by the Inquisition to make facts fit a crime or to fabricate a crime for which the woman could be tried – but otherwise the commentary is biased against the woman.

If Goya was indeed the one who wrote the commentary, he may have taken the tack he did to foreground his moral line in words or possibly even to use irony to heighten the insanity of the woman's fate, because, to my mind – and this may be disputed, of course – the etching itself treats the woman as the victim of a ferocious law system, and as an object of scorn and mockery directed at her by a rabble – the kind of rabble Goya would later portray in the *Desastres* print called *Mob* [Fig.114] beating a man to death with clubs.

The said rabble is divided into those on the ground – the majority – and those mounted on horses – two. The riders, one quickly notes, wear the same collars and capes, and have the same distinctly feline faces, as the sheltering magistrate in *How They pluck Her!* [Fig.76]. They are the lawmen entrusted with seeing that the woman's sentence is carried out, and their cat personas make it clear that they will relish watching her shamed as much as a cat relishes toying with a captured bird.

Now, as for the mass on the ground, only one individual within it is given an

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A esta Sta. Señora la persiguen de muerte! después de escribirla la vida la sacan en triunfo. Todo se lo merece y si lo hacen por afrentarla es tiempo perdido. Nadie puede avergonzar a quien no tiene vergüenza. (Adapted from López-Rey, 1970:194–95)

animal persona – he walks to the extreme left, next to the man leading the donkey, and his face seems to combine the features of monkeys and cats – but every other constituent is also unpleasing to the eye. There is not a single sympathetic or kind face: each one is stamped with a bitter gloom that seems the smoke of a smouldering rage. In places faces are lost in the anonymity of hair, caps, hats and cloths, in others figures detach and exhibit their distorted countenances – the man behind the donkey, for example, who fixes what appear to be cataracted eyes on the woman, while his nearly-simian mouth stretches toward a grin. In the front flank a group of men in hats, with their backs to their viewer, draws conspiratorially close to discuss what is going on or to pass comments among themselves about the penitent. One has the feeling that, under their breath, they make unsavoury jokes at her expense. There is no question that, for this mob – which is a definite precedent for such agglutinated masses as we will later find in *Disparates* like *Folly of the Mass* [Fig.152] – the woman is a spectacle, an object to be scorned and derided. She is their scapegoat, and they are the aggressive whippers who will vent steam by stripping every last vestige of dignity from her.

This is a serious and extremely denigratory form of mocking that goes far beyond the laughter of the lampoon, burlesque or buffoon – the kind of laughter men gratify in etchings such as *Until Death (Hasta la Muerte)* [Fig.32], where they secretly titter under their concealing hands, *Bravo! (¡Bravisimo!)* [Fig.86], where they again chuckle quietly, and even *They already have a Seat (Ya tienen Asiento)* [Fig.90], in which men laugh uproariously at two women who stand or sit with both their petticoats and upended chairs on their heads. In these cases the laughter is scornful, yes, and it is probably designed to guide the viewer's response (to make him or her laugh along and so mock and degrade the objects of attack), but it lacks the embedded fury and latent violence that emerges in *There was no Remedy*. The woman in Capricho 24 seems destined not just for a flogging or cabbage-hurling or some such public shaming, but a burning at the stake. It is as if the crowd takes her for a

witch. She is not simply to be laughed off; she must be "persecuted . . . to death". For it is in this way that the structured areas of society reduce ambiguity and suppress the threats that debouch from the largely fantastical and Imaginary unstructured areas, which this woman has come to represent in their entirety.

Can this be what Goya wanted? Did the etching give him a fantasmatic way of destroying this woman for whatever sins she embodies? Are his sympathies



Fig.86 Bravo! (¡Bravisimo!)

with the crowd? Or did he want the viewer to see that there are limits – that certain forms of behaviour, even when released against an object whose deposition secures communal contentedness, need to be guarded and avoided? Is the etching a lesson in moderation and respect even for those the law has found guilty of criminal behaviour? One cannot answer these questions: the image is too ambivalent.

What one can take from it, however, is its fine depiction of what I have been stressing as the two-edged sword of abjection: the operation to abject – which the crowd puts into effect *en masse* – and the position to be abject, which is the position the woman fills. She has broken the law, and so brought the integrity of the collective body into question. To assure others that she is a minor disruption to society's skin, the equivalent of a boil, she must be lanced, and the best way for the keepers of the law to accomplish this is by involving the entire community in the process that purges her. This way, as a group, they feel they have played a role in maintain-

ing social good, the status quo. In rallying to eject those who step out of line, or to humble them back into it, the community deploys power operations and injunctions that come from elsewhere, from above, from the law, and so endorse and speed the work of the ruling other.

There is a politics here: scapegoats such as this woman offer temporary distractions for communities that, in their oppression, might otherwise find other, more centralised, targets for their aggression. Many objects of communal scorn are thus pawns in a greater power game; their abjection serves the interests of those in the highest strata of society. Many Inquisition victims were surely used for such a purpose: to keep the heat off the true corrupters of the law – the Church, the nobility, the lawmen themselves, i.e., those facets of society Goya represented as grotesque witches in *They spruce Each Other up*. The feline refinement of the grinning constables in *There was no Remedy* seems to bear me out, since it makes them seem crafty and dubious: they know something the mob does not. They know that in abjecting individuals from their own community, the mob unknowingly does the law a service, turns itself against itself and, through such acts of rejection, actually weakens its standing to the law even as it thinks it fortifies its collectivity. Hereby the mob makes itself more prone to the containing rigours of oppression.

The Symbolic is not uniform and equal; it is subject to power structures and facilitations that operate divergently in different orders of class, gender, race, and so on. Again, it is because signification is manipulable that the Symbolic order can never be entirely trusted, and must always be compared with the dictates of its representative in the individual, the super-ego. Which explains why satire can berth itself among the occupations and pursuits of society. Its idealised, aspirant model of purified, upstanding behaviour offers a goal that the law should, but fails, to uphold, and therefore finds its interpenetration with society at the level of questioning the status quo and calling for reformation, either towards more progressive or more conservative poles.

In Capricho 34, *Sleep overcomes Them* (*Las rinde el Sueño*) [Fig.87], Goya swaps the mean streets for a possibly even meaner place: a prison interior. Four figures are imprisoned within it: a woman who sits facing the viewer and three figures seen from behind, two of which wear hooded capes. The Ayaña commentary suggests that the dress of the three front figures – the caped ones in particular – could be taken for the habits of priests and nuns: ‘*What could the friars and nuns do but sleep after drunken perversions in their convents?*’ (quoted in Sánchez and Gállego, 1995:53). In this light, the print is a moral comment on the immoderation of the clergy, and the prison becomes a bigendered lockup used indiscriminately to confine the community’s law-breakers<sup>2</sup>. However, Goya generally portrays his procuresses in similar hooded garments, and I think one can safely assume that the print depicts two prostitutes (one of whom is recumbent and asleep in the foreground) and two procuresses.

The Prado commentary to this etching is almost tender: *One must not wake them, perhaps sleep is the only happiness of the wretched*<sup>3</sup>. The word “desdichados”, which I translate as “wretched” also means unfortunate and luckless, i.e., it does not carry any ironic or subversive subtext. It would seem that Goya has genuine sympathy for these incarcerated women – the same sympathy one finds in *Because she was Vulnerable* (*Porque fue Sensible*) [Fig.88], which could serve as a companion piece to *How They pluck Her!* if we read the woman in this print, mournful inside her ratty cell, as a prostitute whose vulnerability before the law has led her to be jailed, presumably because she did not allow the constables to rob her. Whether the prostitutes and bawds in Capricho 34 have been imprisoned for a similar reason is impossible to say, but Goya evidently hoped to exacerbate their plight by using the jail itself as a character – almost as a representation of the heavy hand of the law itself.

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<sup>2</sup> Or even its threats to public health: the left leg of the immodestly-seated woman facing the viewer is knobby and scarred, suggesting disease.

<sup>3</sup> No hay que despertaras, tal vez el sueño es la única felicidad de los desdichados. (Adapted from López-Rey, 1970:197)



Fig.87 Sleep overcomes Them (*Las rinde el Sueño*)

Alcalá Flecha (1988:402) and López-Rey (1970:126) have both described the prison as 'fantastic', that is, as a fantasy version of a real prison; indeed, when one compares it to the cell of *Because she was Vulnerable*, one realises to what extent Goya has invented the prison interior of *Sleep overcomes Them*. Whereas both spaces are bare and generalised, that in *Sleep overcomes Them* is less conventional, a kind of barred cave. The fantastical setting gives Goya the opportunity to make the idea of prison function more symbolically or metaphorically: immurement is not just about being in a circumscribed space, it is about extreme discomfort (conveyed by the rocky floor of the cell), the absolute barring of escape (witness the close-meshed grille of the cell gate), and about oppression – both the oppression of being confined and oppression by the unseen authorities.



Fig.88 *Because She was Vulnerable* (*Porque fue Sensible*)

It would seem, then, that Goya is sympathetic toward the women. Unfortunate-

ly, the fact that a marked percentage of *Los Caprichos* take prostitution to task in no uncertain terms means that it is equally possible to interpret the prison as a space the women fully deserve to be detained in: a space outside of society where they cannot be seen, cannot be heard and cannot ply their trade. If the woman facing the viewer is diseased, in there she can prove no threat to collective health.

The prison is a place threatened by darkness and lacking in pleasures for the senses, a place where escape is prohibited and prevented by bars, close in spirit to the grave. In this reading, the sleep of the women could as easily be the sleep of death. In a sense they have even been buried alive, deep in the womb of the earth (a reading enhanced by the exposed bedrock). Such is the environment of the incarcerated: a place where, in Paulson's words, 'prison and mouth are one as consuming agents' (1983:371); a space tailored for the most abject and cast-out of society's members.

The equivocation remains, however. Do we sympathise with them and criticise the law for both their imprisonment and the unpleasant nature of their cell, or do we congratulate the law on a job well done? The lack of information makes us lean toward the former option, but Goya's prior condemnation of prostitutes and procuresses makes us turn the other way. Perhaps the question now begged is whether this condition of in-betweenness and irresolution was the goal of the etching, a result that Goya was, in contradiction of his predominant stance in the *Caprichos*, content to let ride, or the result of a misreading?

Ambivalence makes no demand for resolution, so I will move on to the last print I look at in this chapter, Capricho 54, *The Shamefaced One (El Vergonzoso)* [Fig.89].

The blankness of the etching's space is no doubt designed to focus the viewer's full attention on the three figures, none of which is physically appealing, although the central figure, who wears his breeches over his head, takes the prize as the least attractive member of the trio. It would appear that this man is accepting food from the bowl offered by the man on the left, who gazes at the recipient of his benevol-



Fig.89 The Shamefaced One (*El Vergonzoso*)

ent act with a fascination bordering on alarm. What the man in the background is up to is anybody's guess, although he seems to be showing his fists – anger? – in the general direction of the main figure<sup>4</sup>. This figure, to return to him, as his exorbitancy demands, not only has his breeches over his head, but has a nose that looks like a penis. Goya is working with a particular kind of inversion here, in which the face becomes the genitalia. The implication is that the “shamefaced” man constantly has sexual activity on the brain, or that sex occupies the seat of his reason<sup>5</sup>.

The vitriolic tone implied by the etching's conflation of face and genitalia is enhanced by the Prado commentary: *There are men whose faces are the most indecent part of their whole bodies and it would be good if those who have such disagreeable and ridiculous faces put them in their breeches*<sup>6</sup>. So far it seems that the etching is far from ambivalent: Goya is condemning men whose sexual desire becomes rampant. Seekers after sensual pleasure again become disruptive and in need of a censure that puts them in their place (in the margin, that is). There is even an implication in the com-

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<sup>4</sup> López-Rey (1970:146) seems to suggest that the man is trying to shake off his sleep. Presumably we see him awakening, yawning and stretching his arms. Askew (1988:475) sees a reference to testicles in the man's balled fists, which may offer support for those who, on the basis of the Ayala and Biblioteca Nacional commentaries, believe this etching has something to do with sodomy and homosexuality – ... adding I, incidentally, find no evidence for.

<sup>5</sup> Goya makes use of this pun on the seat of reason and the seat of one's pants in the etching *They already have a Seat* [Fig.90], where two women wear their petticoats and two up-ended chairs on their heads. This was a common Carnival inversion, as Márquez explains,

petticoats on women's heads . . . appeared at Carnivals, as well as in literature, and in such colloquial expressions as *al revés de la gente* (the opposite of [normal] people), and *tener los pies en la cabeza y la cabeza en los pies* (to have your feet where your head is and your head where your feet are). These were used to indicate sexual disturbance and perversion. (In Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:xc1)

In Goya's use of this inversion, López-Rey sees 'a device consistent with the physiognomical belief that the countenance reveals the actual character of man more clearly than any other part of his body' (1970:121). By putting the petticoats around the women's heads, Goya effectively shifts the site of their sexual organs to their faces. This carnivalesque inversion unsparingly equates the prostitutes with their sex, thereby reducing them to the level of creatures that indulge in sexual activity in the absence of reason. It would seem that Goya had the same concept in mind for his shamefaced one.

<sup>6</sup> Hay hombres cuya cara es lo mas indecente de todo su cuerpo y sería bien que los que la tienen tan desgraciada y ridícula se la metieran en los calzones. (From López-Rey, 1970: 203)

mentary that such people would do better to wipe the evidence of their desire off their faces and keep sexual drives out of sight in their trousers, i.e., not wear their carnality on (or is that in?) their sleeve(s). But the etching depicts an act of charity, and even if the man in the background is expressing anger at this act, it remains a demonstration of goodwill. In other words, as much as the etching seems to ask the viewer to cast out the shamefaced man, it also, through the surrogate of the man to the left, equally asks the viewer to act charitably toward him. How do we come to terms with this ambivalence of attitude?

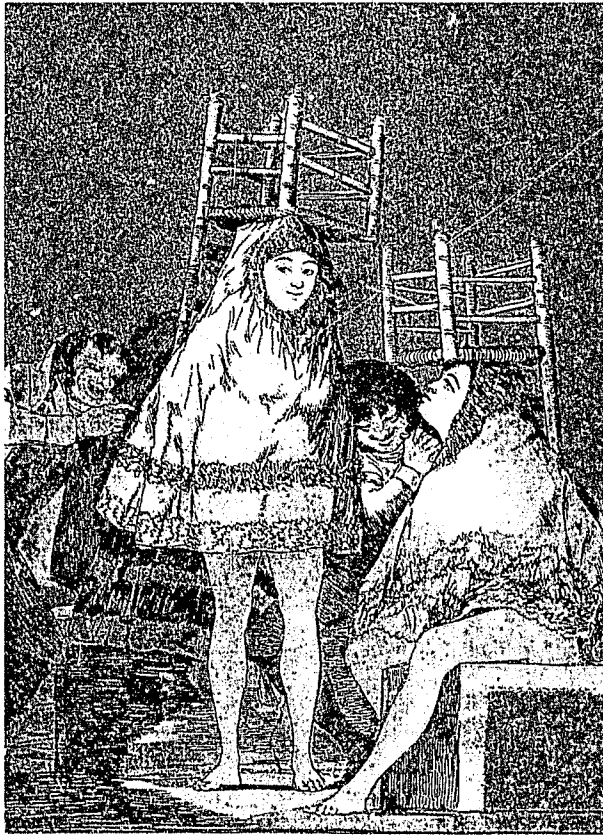


Fig.90 They already have a Seat (*Ya tienen Asiento*)

The more I look at *The Shamefaced One* the more I read the space in which these three men accumulate as some kind of alley, shelter or other place (possibly even a

prison or an insane asylum) where society has forced them to live a life apart from the community, i.e., as an abject environment into which the collective body has ejected them. They do not fit the mould – none more so than the shamefaced man. What one might be looking at, then, is a depiction of men on an equally low social footing whom Goya to some degree elevates by showing that they – or some of them – are capable of charity even under their abject, impoverished living conditions.

How do we know that these men are on an equal social level? None of them is noticeably better off than the other (all are a shabbily-dressed, coarse and unattractive), and none is set to act as an instructive comparison, a foil, to the others. Goya's caricatural vocabulary repeatedly draws on notions of aberration and monstrous births to make didactic moral points. In *What a Sacrifice!*, for example, the viewer sympathises with the young bride because she is being given away to an ugly, frog-like, bow-legged, hunch-backed groom [Fig.6]. But in *The Shamefaced One* no-one and nothing acts as an alternative to the prevailing lack of beauty. This absence of comparison is not unique in the series (there is no inbuilt comparison in *Little Goblins*, for example), but what is unique is the depiction of a lowly place in which figures satire would counsel us to dispose of wholesale, without discrimination, display acts – at least, one of them does – that make us vacillate between deciding whether they are depraved or deprived. The fact that charity is shown toward a man whose apparent sexual obsession has turned him into a hybrid difficult to classify (hence, into an individual who, even in the place of abjection, is more out of place, mobile and potentially unfixable than his companions) makes the deprivation side of the balance look more befitting. And if they are deprived, they are so because the civil body treats them as the individual body treats excrement. But if the abject can act as benefactors for the still-more-abject, surely those who exist in full integration with the Symbolic can find it in themselves to be altruistic toward those less fortunate?

This could be the kind of question Goya raises, thereby betraying sympathy

even for those whose features mark them as dedicated to sensual pursuits civilisation could never condone or promote. At the same time, given Goya's repeated condemnation of anti-social pleasures, he could simply be lashing his scourge. The act of charity may not be important; maybe the artist fully expects the sexually obsessed to wear their trousers over their heads in everyday society to clearly mark them as objects to be mocked, laughed at, spat at, scorned into virtual oblivion. The shamefaced man is precisely such a scapegoat; he *can* function this way. What we, as viewers, have to ponder is whether Goya wants us to complete the process of casting out by mocking and jeering, or to follow the example of the man who holds out his bowl, offering food to one who appears not to merit it, thereby securing his own elevation and marking the shamefaced man as someone equally worthy of a second chance.

The rigour of the satirical stance, as I have developed it in this thesis, holds out for resolution and reformation – this is its goal, its ideal – but such closure can only be attained if all viewers receive and act on the satirical image in the same ideal way. In a multiplicitous, multivocal, multipositional world, such ideal reception, which implies also a decisive, redemptive destruction of the abject, is thoroughly impossible; while one reader will respond to and benefit from the ambivalence, another will feel threatened by it and will need to enforce temporary closure (e.g., by mocking the shamefaced man) at all costs.

Goya, as I have allowed, probably vacillated between these two possibilities, and may, indeed, have reaped rewards from both, or even from the in-betweenness itself. Perhaps *The Shamefaced One* can be understood as a visualisation of this dialectical mutuality; nevertheless, as a whole, Goya's *Caprichos* remain wedded to a procedure of "banishing harmful vulgarities" and "perpetuating truth". We must not make the mistake of thinking that the apparent severity and moral inflexibility of this procedure excludes the possibility that other factors were at work beneath Goya's artmaking, but we should also not assume that these other factors over-

whelmed or negated the satirical motive in its most ideal form.

Whether we exclude or include the abject(ed), that is the question begged by the prints examined in this chapter. In some cases, rejection means siding with a corrupt law that manipulates the unfortunate to sustain its hegemony (*There was no Remedy* and, possibly, *Sleep overcomes Them*); in others it means upholding Symbolic exclusions to separate out and cast aside people who might themselves be closer to the ideals of the community than appearances suggest (*The Shamefaced One*). Inclusion, on the other hand, might mean accepting figures in a state of corruption – the shriven woman on the ass might be a prostitute, so too the women in the prison, and the shamefaced man might indeed be the personification of satyriasis. Knowing the risks, do we embrace these figures, erode the walls of conscience, resolve the ambivalence by opening ourselves to the possibility of self-degradation? The third alternative is non-resolution. We could simply stay suspended between exclusion and inclusion, drawing whatever benefits there are to be found in a position of interpretative liminality. Perhaps there is even a fourth position – or fifth, if we count complete avoidance – a kind of hermeneutic miscegenation in which we juggle all possibilities simultaneously, never quite fixing on any stance but allowing oneself the opportunity to mobilise whichever one suits one's own psychological complexion at any given moment.

## A Gaping Bracket: *And still They do not go!*

Capricho 59, *And still They do not go!* (*¡Y aún no se van!*) [Fig.91], is one of Goya's most mystifying images, although it has consistently been associated with the dead in one form or another. At the literal level the slab that dominates the etching is reminiscent of a headstone or grave lid, which has encouraged scholars to read the etching's emaciated figures as people on the verge of death or the awakened dead heaving up their gravestone (see Théophile Gautier in Glendinning, 1977:79, 315n.27, and Sánchez and Gállego, 1995:68). The figures do seem almost dead, especially the one who holds up the slab, but they also look like witches. A credible link between witches and death comes to the fore in Heckes's claim that the Capricho 'expresses the oppressive persistence of superstition' (1985:99). Thus, what is 'dead' here could be superstition, which continues to exist only because some quarters of the population continue to give it credence, and thereby snag the progress of enlightened thinking.

Even when one attempts to get rid of the witches of superstition by dropping a stone on them, though they lie around in and out of slumber, they snap awake and are quick to fight back, i.e., efforts to destroy superstition will be thwarted, especially in a country where superstition still had deep, thick roots – among the working class in particular (see, for example, Heckes, 1985:54–58)<sup>1</sup>. If one takes this further it

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<sup>1</sup> The clergy were to a great extent to blame for the persistence of superstition since they did not make a concerted effort to stamp it out. A writer for *El Censor* bemoans this fact:

I repeat: I hear hardly a sermon without an invective against the maxims of the enlightened century, against fashionable education, against the philosophers of the time, which is to say, against atheism and atheists, unbelief and unbelievers. But I do not remember ever having heard a single word spoken in the pulpit against superstition. (Apenas, vuelvo a decirlo, oigo un sermón sin una invectiva contra las máximas del siglo ilustrado, contra la erudición de la moda, contra los filósofos del tiempo; que es decir, contra el ateísmo y los ateístas, la incredulidad, y los incrédulos. Más no me acuerdo, de haber oído jamás en el púlpito una sola palabra contra la superstición.) (Quoted in Alcalá Flecha, 1988:204–5)

Superstition helped, of course, to keep people, especially the lower classes, afraid and in need of the Church, and thus served to make them more 'well-adjusted' and responsible citizens. Like Inquisition penitents (scapegoats), superstition served a purpose.



Fig.91 And still They do not go! (*Y aun no se van!*)

becomes almost inevitable to read the slab as a weapon of enlightened thinking – an emphatic, even obvious, embodiment of the concept of a *crushing* weight. Impressive as it looks, however, the slab is not heavy enough, it cannot crush superstition, hence the futility, frustration and desperation in the exclamatory title: *And still They do not go!* – even in a world being swept by the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason, superstition, emaciated and close to death, still has the strength to persist.

Now I want to interpret the etching in a different way. Holding onto the idea that the slab is a weapon, I want to relate it to Goya's morality, his conscience, and I want to see the witches of superstition as unclassified, threatening anxieties – an admixture of real external threats (e.g., the persistence of superstition and the irrationality it might lead to) and internal threats (i.e., unconscious threats, mostly experienced as uncanniness and dread as they come into friction with the artist's super-ego and its cluster of rules, prohibitions, negations, denials, etc.). Goya – I will call him thus, although I am psychobiographing not the historical artist but the general subject of psychoanalysis insofar as this subject seems to inform the historical artist – experiences these anxieties as a deep uncertainty; they are undermining, indeterminate, faceless, formless. To give them form and name he casts them in a fantasy world – that of witches – which itself represents another world (the real world of superstitious belief and fear); and to destroy them he imagines an object of considerable size and weight – an object ideal for the job of crushing something beneath it: a slab<sup>2</sup>. He sets this weapon, this extension of his morality, within the Imaginary space of the etching and lets it go. But the grotesque creatures of his unconscious fight back. One of these abject beings holds the stone up until such time as the others overcome their apathy (the witches in the background, left), their

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<sup>2</sup> It is highly instructive that the sole surviving working proof for this etching bears the red-chalk caption, in Goya's hand, 'La Trampa' (the Trap), which was at some later point crossed out in ink, by another hand, and replaced by the legend 'Salga lo que saliere' ('Come what may') (see Sayre, 1974:112). The initial caption pinpoints the meaning of this print as I am reading it here. Within a fantasmatic space Goya traps the creatures (e.g., superstition personified) that worry him, and uses the slab as his mechanism to destroy them.

alarm (the woman in the centre, wringing her hands) and their slumber (the man on the ground just behind the slab, awakening with a jolt) to help. The abject is in a state of return: it has a stranglehold on the border – hence the borderline, liminal quality of the witches (betwixt life and death) – between conscious and unconscious, ego and id, Symbolic and abject. The artist fails to secure release from his fears. He has tried to abject the monsters of his repressed psyche, but has selected the wrong weapon. The balance between reason and unreason, morality and lawlessness, Symbolic and abject remains precarious.

This immensely speculative interpretation will accommodate the last move I want to make in this part, and that is to use *And still They do not go!* as a bracketing device. Thus: even at the end of the process of censuring errors and vices which *Los Caprichos* have allowed him to undertake, after eighty prints (excluding rejected ones), the artist's fears, generated by the friction between the formless, unconscious abject and the rigorously-structured and prohibitory Symbolic, persist. The artist's prohibitory slab has failed to squash the monsters of his society, of his conscience; at best it has given them a diversion. The work of destroying them must be left for later projects, and hence the bigger bracket, spanning the encounter with such hidden and forbidden fears/objects/non-things, and the envisaged (but ultimately impossible) abjection of those fears/objects/non-things, must be left to gape.

### **Part Three**

#### **Abjection in *Desastres de la Guerra***

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Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the milky way? Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a colour as the visible absence of colour, and at the same time the concrete of all colours; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows – a colourless, all-colour of atheism from which we shrink? And when we consider that other theory of the natural philosophers, that all other earthly hues – every stately or lovely emblazoning – the sweet tinges of sunset skies and woods; yea, and the gilded velvets of butterflies, and the butterfly cheeks of young girls; all these are but subtle deceits, not actually inherent in substance, but only laid on from without; so that all deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot, whose allurements cover nothing but the charnel-house within; and when we proceed further, and consider that the mystical cosmetic which produces every one of her hues, the great principle of light, forever remains white or colourless in itself, and if operating without medium upon matter, would touch all objects, even tulips and roses, with its own blank tinge – pondering all this, the palsied universe lies before us a leper and like wilful travellers in Lapland, who refuse to wear coloured and colouring glasses upon their eyes, so the wretched infidel gazes himself blind at the monumental white shroud that wraps all the prospect around him.

(Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* [London: Jonathan Cape, 1925, p.186])

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## Chapter Ten

### Introduction to *Desastres de la Guerra*

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**B**ETWEEN 1808 AND 1814 Spain experienced one of the most catastrophic periods in its history<sup>1</sup>: the Napoleonic war (or, from the Spanish perspective, the War of Independence). The positive reconstructive potential of the war, a more liberal constitution for Spain, likewise brought only short-lived rewards. In 1814 this Constitution, installed after the ousting of Napoleon, was abolished and absolutist rule returned to the peninsular in the form of Fernando VII.

The war against Spain was an unexpected offshoot of Napoleon's imperialist designs on Portugal. On the face of it, relations between Napoleon and the Spanish crown were amicable: both the King, Carlos IV, and his son, Fernando VII, were receptive to Napoleon's interests. To their detriment, they were also motivated by interests of their own. Fernando VII contracted an underhand deal with Napoleon: in exchange for the hand of a Bonaparte princess and the French dictator's assistance in seizing the Spanish throne, he permitted Napoleon to mass troops in Spain in readiness for the French attack on Portugal. Carlos IV discovered Fernando's scheme to seize power and nearly tried him for treason; but by then Napoleon, who had given his support to Fernando, had asserted his presence in Spain, and the monarchy had to consider its own safety above all else. In an attempt to flee the country, the King and Queen were restrained by a crowd of Fernando's supporters at Aranjuez. The monarchy abdicated in favour of Fernando VII; but the upstart

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<sup>1</sup> I derive the following brief historical outline of the circumstances leading to the Napoleonic war from numerous art-historical sources, including Klingender, 1968:111-17; Gudiol, *Goya: Biography, Analytical Study and Catalogue of His Paintings*, 1971, and *Goya*, 1986: 22-24; Schickel, *The World of Goya*, 1972:145-52; Sayre, 1974:125-28; Heckes, 1985:193-98; Anes in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:XXXIV-XXIX; Gassier, Wilson, Lachenal, 1994:205-10; Wilson-Bareau, 1996:43-46. These sources are sufficient for my limited interest in the historical background to the print series, but are obviously no substitute for the more in-depth historical accounts - some of which can be found listed in the bibliographies of the cited works - that more diachronically-inclined readers and researchers would need to consult.

son did not reign for long. In May 1808, during a private meeting between Napoleon and the Spanish royal family in Bayonne, he was forced to abdicate in favour of his father, Carlos IV. Carlos was then compelled to hand the throne to Napoleon's brother, Joseph.

By the time Joseph ascended the throne, the Peninsular war had begun.

It is generally accepted that the war was ignited by the incidents on the second and third of May 1808 in Madrid, when the Spanish people rebelled against the presence of French and mercenary Mameluke forces in the capital. Having heard that the entire royal family was being carted off to meet with Napoleon in Bayonne, crowds obstructed the entrances to the palace to prevent the departure of the last remaining members of the ruling group, the queen of Etruria and the Infante Don Francisco de Paula. The confusion and outrage of the *Madrileños* met with the fear and exasperation of the French in vicious clashes on the second of May, and on the night of the third of May armed rioters rounded up by the French the day before were brutally executed on Príncipe Pío hill and in the Retiro park. Six years later Goya immortalised these events in two famous paintings [Fig.92 and Fig.93].

In the interim, and also following the execution of the said paintings, Goya worked on his etchings, today known simply as *Los Desastres de la Guerra*.

Goya's etchings portray, in broad terms, the consequences of the Napoleonic war in Spain. He worked on the series for about ten years (between 1810 and 1820), but was unable to publish it in his lifetime. The images are violent, passionate, unsparing and immediate. Their immediacy led several scholars in the past to assume that Goya witnessed many of the scenes he presents in the series. None has asserted this more than Fred Licht, who aligns Goya's role with that of a war photographer, that is, a beholding eye, a disembodied recorder of the consequences of war (1980:133)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> On the inclination of scholars to link Goya's prints to war photography, Tomlinson writes:

In light of the growing popularity of wartime photography after 1850, a documentary reading of *Los Desastres* was perhaps inevitable. The first edition (1863) followed Roger Fenton's celebrated photographs of the Crimean war by less than a decade, and was con-



*Fig.92 The Second of May 1808, in Madrid: The Attack on the Mamelukes*



*Fig.93 The Third of May 1808, in Madrid: The Shootings on Principe Pío Hill.*

Not unexpectedly, Licht finds support for this proposition in plate 44 of *Los Desastres*, titled *I saw it (Yo lo vi)*<sup>3</sup> [Fig.94], implying that Goya witnessed the depicted

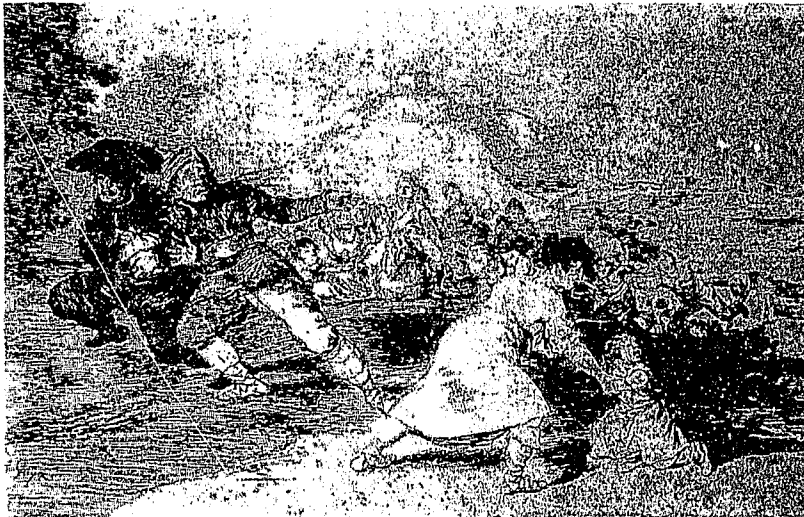


Fig.94 I saw It (*Yo lo vi*)

event. Several years before, however, Malraux (1957:93) had used the same title to claim that Goya had *not* been a witness<sup>4</sup>. Just two years before Licht published *Goya: the Origins of the Modern Temper in Art*, Glendinning had noted the rhetorical ring in Goya's title, which linked it to contemporary expressions of a similar nature (1977:247, 70, 313n.4). It is an unproductive argument, of course. No-one will ever know how much of the war Goya did or did not witness. As a *Madrileño*, he must have observed scenes similar to those in which he memorialized the famine that

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temporary with Matthew Brady's photographs of the American Civil War. Moreover, the printing techniques employed for this edition encouraged comparison with contemporary photographs, for while the early proofs suggest that the artist intended a minimal use of aquatint, the printers of the 1863 edition preferred a uniform grey tone, like that seen in contemporary photographs. (1989n:26).

<sup>3</sup> Licht writes, 'If there is one motto that can stand as the key to the entire series, it must necessarily be "I saw this"' (1980:130). The same opinion is held by Bihalji-Merin, 1981:69-70.

<sup>4</sup> Malraux is emphatic about this: 'Again, there is here no more a reporting of war than before there had been a reporting of sorcery. The element "from life," in the *Disasters* as in the *Caprichos*, is indeed slight' (1957:93).

swept Madrid in the wake of the conflict; but as regards his presence in the war, the only unquestionable datum we have is that in October 1808 Goya journeyed to Zaragoza, a town besieged by French troops, to make works on the spot<sup>5</sup>. Since there are prints, for example *What Courage!* [Fig.95], that evidently refer to events

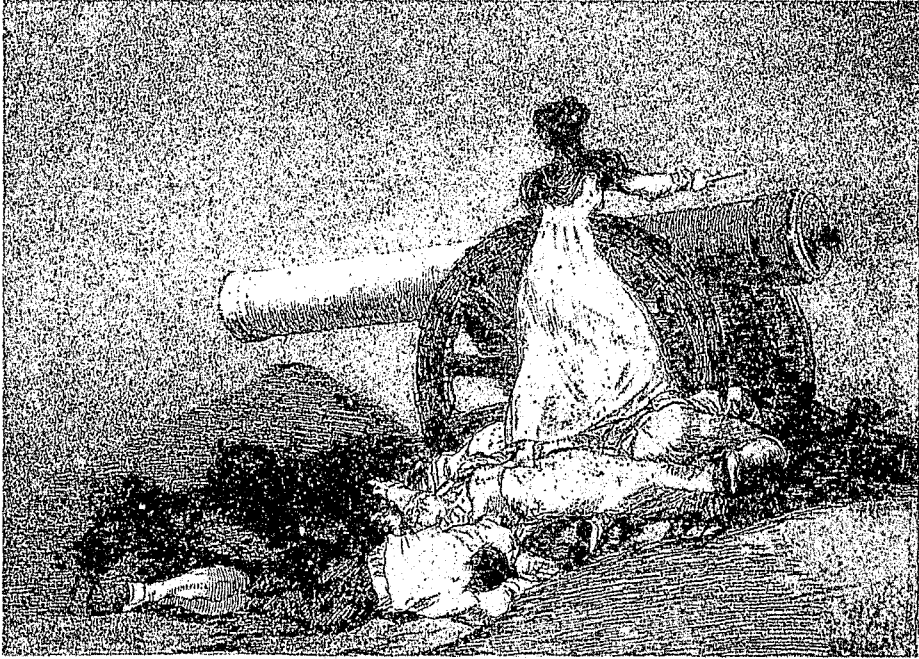


Fig.95 What Courage! (*¿Qué Valor!*)

known to have happened in Zaragoza during its besiegement<sup>6</sup>, it is at least plaus-

<sup>5</sup> Goya undertook the trip at the request of General Palafox, whose involvement in the defence of Zaragoza had made him something of a hero. Goya made paintings there, none of which has survived. An entry in the diary of Lady Holland indicates that he also made drawings, but it has been suggested that scholars have misinterpreted the diary and that the supposed drawings, slashed by French soldiers, were, in fact, the lost paintings. On Palafox and the Zaragoza trip see, for example, Klingender, 1968:135-36; Sayre, 1974:126-27; Gassier, 1983:209-13; Heckes, 1985:206-7; Vega in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:185, 188, 190; Gassier, Wilson, Lachenal, 1994:210, 212, 214, 217; Wilson-Bareau, 1996:46. On the confusion over the drawings, see Sayre, 1974:127, and Sayre in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:CIX-CX.

<sup>6</sup> It is well recorded that women assisted men in the defence of Zaragoza. One woman in particular, Agustina of Aragón, has received a place in history, and the woman in *What Courage!* has often been associated with her. See Jesusa Vega in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:190-91. Also see Sayre, 1974:133-35, for further discussion and a reproduction of the print

ible that they stem from Goya's stay there. Beyond this the facts run dry. However much of the war Goya witnessed, it seems to me that he refashioned his personal experience to make more general, and therefore more penetrating, comments on it. The final ensemble of images reflects a selective process by which he took on certain themes and sidestepped others, or even dealt with the same theme several times (e.g., images of rape and of piled-up corpses). Goya was not an impartial recorder but a reconstructor, who even then, years after *Los Caprichos*, still seemed to operate under the principle that selection distinguished the good artificer from the servile copyist (see my discussion of Goya's advertisement in Chapter One, Section IV).

*Los Desastres* can be divided into three distinct parts. The first depicts scenes of conflict between Spanish and French fighters, attempted rape, terror-driven flight from homes and monasteries, robbery, and corpses. The second depicts the results of the war (hunger thanks to massive food shortages) in Goya's home town of Madrid – some of these prints have a satirical and critical flavour that relates them to the *Caprichos*. The third part is even more reminiscent of the *Caprichos*; it consists of 15 plates, the *Caprichos Enfáticos* ("emphatic caprices"), which have an allegorical purpose and a visual appearance that relate them strongly to the works of what is generally considered Goya's final graphic project, *Los Disparates*. Given the satirical focus of these prints – which use all the basic procedures we have already seen in *Los Caprichos* – and the fact that they, in the main, form a compact political unit<sup>7</sup> that cannot be discussed piecemeal, I have chosen not to examine them in this thesis. This means that I

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by Juan Gálvez and Fernando Brambila from which Goya clearly derived the composition for his own etching.

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<sup>7</sup> Ever since Glendinning's breakthrough article, 'A Solution to the Enigma of Goya's "Emphatic Caprices"' (1978b), it has been accepted that the *Caprichos Enfáticos* from number 71 to number 78 form a political comment on the absolutist regime that Fernando VII established after the brief tenure of the 1812 constitution. This comment, it has been proved, Goya veiled with the help of the beast fable and, particularly, the poem *Gli Animali parlanti* (The talking Animals) by the Italian poet Giambattista Casti, a contemporary of Goya's. Frank Heckes has provided the most thorough investigation of this line of research in his Ph.D. thesis, *Supernatural Themes in the Art of Francisco de Goya* (1985:218–47).

will not look at such important etchings as *Nada. Ello dirá* (*Nothing. Time will tell*) [Fig. 96]. However, I feel confident that readers who have the inclination will be able to probe this, and the other *Caprichos Enfáticos* etchings, with the help of the methodology I have developed in the thesis thus far.



Fig.96 Nothing. (Time will tell) (*Nada. [Ello dirá]*)

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The arrangement Goya probably intended for the series is evident in the bound album he gave to the art historian Ceán Bermúdez. This album, which bears on its spine the title *Caprichos de Goya*<sup>8</sup> – the identical title to that of the *Caprichos* series – consists of 85 prints, including three small plates of chained prisoners, which, along with two other prints included in the album, *Fierce Monster* and *This is the Truth*, were dropped from the first published edition of *Los Desastres* (which the Academy of San Fernando issued in 1863). Furthermore, Goya gave a specific title to the work, which appears on a title page in the Ceán Bermúdez album: *Fatal consequences of the*

<sup>8</sup> See Wilson-Bareau (1996:44) for a photograph of the three etching albums (*Los Caprichos*, *Desastres de la Guerra*, *La Tauromaquia*) Goya presented to Ceán Bermúdez.

*bloody war in Spain with Bonaparte, and other emphatic caprices, in 85 prints*<sup>9</sup>.

Neither Goya's arrangement nor his title have been universally adopted in editions or reproductions of the etching series. Instead, the Academy of San Fernando's layout and the title *Desastres de la Guerra* ('invented', apparently, by the Academy; see Williams, 1976:141) have been perpetuated.

In my discussion of the series, as in my treatment of *Los Caprichos*, I circumnavigate standard arrangements to deal with the prints in 'sequences' of my own, emphasising thematic similarities. Like *Los Caprichos*, *Los Desastres* can be usefully bracketed by two striking images, viz., *Sad Presentiments of what is to come* and *Fierce Monster*, and I couch my examination of the series between these two works. The first relates war to a crepuscular formlessness, the second embodies war in a giant feeding monster.

I structure my examination into two sections, within which I deal with specific aspects of the etchings in separate chapters. The first section has to do with images of war, involving the battlefield, where Spanish men and women fight off the enemy invader, where corpses are mutilated, where women are brutally raped, where wounded soldiers are patched up and sent back to war, and where not even Spaniards are safe from their countrymen. The second section I devote to Goya's etchings of famine in Madrid, where the sick and starving beg alms from coldly indifferent French occupiers and better-off Spaniards, and where the footsteps of undertakers ring out as they move from alley to alley collecting the dead and depositing them in pits and cellars.

Both sections are haunted by a common object: the corpse; indeed, the action of the series, both on the battlefield and in the city, seems ultimately to centre around the efforts of the living to manoeuvre through a terrain, as much symbolic as physical, filled with the remainder of war, finding the living among the dead, burying

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<sup>9</sup> *Fatales consecuencias de la sangrienta guerra en España con Buonaparte. Y otros caprichos enfáticos, en 85 estampas*. The title page is reproduced in Wilson-Bareau (1996:44).

the dead, rearranging space to exclude the dead and near-dead.

What one must bear in mind in approaching this series is that Kristeva sees death and the corpse as the ultimate abjection<sup>10</sup>:

The corpse (or cadaver: *cadere*, to fall), that which has irremediably come a cropper, is cesspool, and death; it upsets even more violently the one who confronts it as fragile and fallacious chance . . . refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border. Such wastes drop so that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit – *cadere*, cadaver. If dung signifies the other side of the border, the place where I am not and which permits me to be, the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything. It is no longer I who expel, "I" is expelled . . . The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject. (1982:3–4)

Death for Kristeva involves, among other things, the cessation of the ego's life-long defensive role of expulsion and incorporation. It is the ultimate passivation; no longer do "I" expel, but my self is expelled. Dead, the subject is jettisoned into the ultimate non-space, where the self no longer acts, where the body no longer acts, where the body is *acted upon*. The remainder of death, the corpse, is left behind, not so much signifying death as *showing it* (Kristeva:3). The corpse is the final word in marginal objects, the ultimate no-longer-classified/not-yet-classified, evidence of the structured subject's transition to formlessness. This is an object foreign to the Other, a potential threat to the Symbolic order that must be controlled.

In the war situation the corpse is the inescapable residue of conflict, and death is a strategy, murder a means. War is the conclusive abjective process, whereby opposing factions seek to attack or defend by means of the sanctioned murder war entails. The operation to abject exists at this level, the level of conflict itself, and its purpose is either to eradicate the invader, where the defending country is con-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Hal Foster in *The Return of the Real*: 'If there is a subject of history for the cult of abjection at all, it is not the Worker, the Woman, or the Person of Colour, but the Corpse' (1996:166). Lacan, incidentally, sees the corpse as entirely unnameable; one cannot 'gaze at [it] face on . . . [it] hovers in the background of all the imaginings of human destiny . . . is beyond all qualification, and for [it] the word carrion is completely inadequate' (1988b:231–32).

cerned, or, where the invader is concerned, to remove sufficient volumes of the defending country's numbers so that the entire country will submit to the abjection of surrender. Incorporated in this process is the drive, on the part of the invader, to disintegrate the Symbolic of the invaded country and to substitute it with the invader's own Symbolic. On the part of the defending country the drive is to preserve the Symbolic against substitution, even if this means murdering countrymen who, by showing treasonous tendencies, threaten to undermine the Symbolic from within.

Beyond this broader, national, scope for war and the operation to abject, I will also look at what the struggle for mastery means for the individual, at the fundamental opposition between the affirmation and the dissolution of the self<sup>11</sup> that war dramatises. Here the act of killing the enemy is a means of retaining hold of one's self, of defining one's own boundaries at the expense of the other.

The condition to be abject is the result of the above abjective approaches, aimed on either side at the ultimate passivation of the other. Goya reveals several forms this inescapable condition can assume, including death, rape, injury, illness and starvation. With the exception of injury, which is interesting only for a discussion of the liminal position the wounded soldier epitomises, I look at all of these conditions in my analyses. Of particular interest are Goya's images of rape, which draw our attention to the relation between rape of women and rape of the land, and the degree to which an activity as abject as rape is during peacetime is called on during wartime to help in the process of extending the influence of the invader. Also of interest are Goya's etchings of the mutilated, in which the corpse is desecrated by

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<sup>11</sup> My perception of this opposition is informed by a reading of Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* (1987, 1989). Although historical specificity limits the potential parallels between Goya's work and the writings that form the base of Theweleit's discussion of the *Freikorps* soldier male, Theweleit's view of these soldier males as not-yet-born beings whose psychological complexes seem more assignable to a timeless maternal body than to Freud's Oedipal relation, and whose warlike existence was a continual fight to affirm the boundaries of their bodies against the dangers of dissolution into masses of various kinds (from the working-class mass to swamps, pulp, lava, and, ultimately, the body of women), has relevance for my discussion.

means of dismemberment and castration so that the invader, by manipulating it to act as a warning and to play on psychological fears, can use it to further the process of passifying, subjugating, or abjecting the enemy.

The etchings of illness and starvation in the city of Madrid are also noteworthy in the picture they create of a society divided against itself: the ill/famished opposed to the healthy/fed. Here the condition to be abject, in which the starving exist, produces the operation to abject, as the better-off citizens of Madrid do what they can to avoid contact with those dying and begging in the streets. Sometimes they even seem to ridicule those worse off than them. The result of the indifference they direct at the victims of the famine is death, and several famine scenes depict the dead being accumulated in makeshift mortuaries and cemeteries. In these places of the dead the viewer encounters a darkness and a bleakness that speaks volumes of the terrifying formlessness of death, and gives us the feeling that we are looking into the interior of some abject(ed) mother who has consumed her progeny.

With the partial exception of some of the famine scenes, I do not approach *Los Desastres de la Guerra* from the satirical viewpoint. This means that such issues as the ambivalence in Goya's attitude to his subject matter, and the question of the viewer's response, which were relatively significant in my reading of *Los Caprichos*, are not so prominent here. Indeed, given that these images are generally so detached and under-determined – which is not to call them passionless – in their treatment of their subject matter, I have interpreted them overwhelmingly from my own standpoint on the interface between war and abjection. I bring in relevant literature and references to other work by Goya where I feel these aid the discussion, but otherwise my main concern is to produce a set of readings, relying on the images to guide me.

## Open Bracket: *Sad Presentiments of what is to come*<sup>1</sup>

In an indeterminate landscape a man drops to his knees, spreads his arms wide, and tilts his head to gaze upwards [Fig.97]. His tattered clothing comes adrift in places to reveal his emaciated condition. On his wasted face anger and futility meet in a declaration of misgiving addressed to the presence evoked beyond the print's top edge.

The dark space around the man appears, on the evidence of such things as the pillow-like rocks to the bottom left of the picture, to be a cave or grotto – a suitable place for the bat hovering in the upper right-hand corner – but it also has a life of its own and boils with phantasmic forms. There appears to be a dog to the left of the man, rising on hidden back legs, its head only partially discernible but characterised by its open mouth and the absence of ears – or is there? The more one studies the image the more new phantoms consolidate while those one thought one had recognised recede into doubtful limbo.

The man has frequently been associated with Christ on the Mount of Olives or in the Garden of Gethsemane (see, for example, Sánchez and Gállego, 1995:91; Ferrari, 1963:xvii; Licht, 1980:129–30; Paulson, 1983:336; Heckes, 1985:208–9). Certainly, there are echoes of Christ's solitude and humanity in the kneeling man, but, unlike Christ, he is not asking for the "cup" to be taken from him<sup>2</sup>, for the cup has already been emptied, the blood has flowed; instead, he poses the question that reappears more than once in the print titles: *why?* Why does war have to happen?

I want to draw attention to the flux-filled darkness of the grotto, which can be taken to symbolise the sad, inevitable results of the war. These results are aligned with a tactile, phantasmagoric mass – a substance in which elements struggle to emerge as individual forms: a substance not entirely formless, but far from differentiated. It is striking enough to serve as an emblem for the non-differentiated,

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<sup>1</sup> *Tristes Presentimientos de lo que ha de acontecer.*

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42.



Fig.97 Sad Presentiments of what has to happen (*Tristes Presentimientos de lo que ha de aconecer*)

oceanic, illimitable environment of the pre-objectal or preOedipal Semiotic – the primary locale that becomes abject after the subject learns to distinguish self from other and takes a place in the Symbolic.

The gaunt man seems on the brink of disappearing into the twilight around him. For now the light keeps him whole, keeps him in place, keeps him separate from the mass of matter out of place; but if that light were to extinguish, he would at once be engulfed. Already, one arm and the contours of his face have been etched away by the murkiness. One could speculate that this was the position in which Goya felt the war placed him, but it is perhaps more likely that the man represents all humanity, and is meant to act as a dejected questioner of the merits of war if all it produces is death, deprivation, emptiness, nothingness, abjection.

Building on this with the help of my methodology, one could ask why war should be fought at all if it precipitates a situation in which the subject is abruptly returned to non-differentiation, a place without ego, without bodily limits – indeed, without body. Is war not merely a shortcut back to everything civilisation gears itself to prevent? Certainly, and in this sense we can understand it as a return to the abject(ed) mother, because it is only in non-differentiation and the other (non)attributes of the primal relationship with the mother that one can find symbolisation for that which is beyond symbolisation: death<sup>3</sup>. Goya's troubled grottoesque darkness can thus also be treated as symbolic of the interior of the abject(ed) mother. This interior is laid open as an orifice, ready to receive the despairing man.

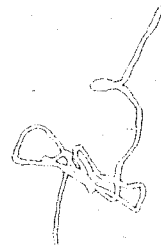
In other etchings in the series one can again argue for a connection between tunnels in rock and clefts in the ground and the interior of a body that has lost its association with reproduction and nurture to become a receptacle within which individuals expire and bodies are deposited. This is the maternal body of the abject(ed) mother inverted or reversed by repression not into a site where heaven

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Creed: 'Both the mother and death signify a monstrous obliteration of the self' (1994: 28).

opens out, in a rush of sublime feelings, in the form of an endless green plain supporting a supremely Symbolic city of precious and pure metals, but into something monstrous and devouring – an organ of engulfment that announces its return to subjectivity through uncanny feelings (for this repression-determined distinction between the monstrous and the divine, revisit the section on non-differentiation in Part One, Chapter Two).

Here is war in brief: an aggressive consuming act, an operation to abject (on the one hand to repel invaders, on the other to subdue the inhabitants) which in the end serves to engender abjection: the dead and those, like this man, who, even though they have survived the conflict, are too emaciated and worn out to benefit from life. War leaves you like an exile in the black grottoes of the hills, destitute and desperate for answers that no-one can give. Perhaps the active, swirling darkness is a projection of the man's memory of the war that has left him thus, and the threatened engulfment is within the chaos and terrors of his own unmanageable and unrepressible unconscious.



## Section One: Scenes from the Field of Battle

In this section I look less at images involving candid fighting between French and Spanish groups – which can all be interpreted much along the lines of my reading of the *Caprichos* etching *Love and Death* [Fig.82] – than at those which depict one group (predominantly French) oppressing another (Spanish) and enforcing its domination by acts of extreme abject violence (rape and mutilation) or execution.

All of these etchings are characterised by their emphasis on the barbaric cruelty of the dominant group, and are thus useful primarily for my purpose of demonstrating how the operation to abject functions during war – in a heightened way that grotesquely distorts the agonistic conditions of the specular relation. Here, unlike in *Los Caprichos*, Goya does not use the rhetoric of satire to persuade the viewer to banish what s/he sees; but there seems to me no question that he takes a stand against the brutalities of war, and in depicting them so graphically he evinces a hope that they will move the viewer to reject war as a solution to human differences. What viewers will respond to is their unmitigated portrayal of the condition to be abject, whether this condition is one, from the view of physical conjunction, of temporary duration (i.e., rape), or of permanent duration (i.e., execution).

**Author** Herbst, Michael.

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