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Goya's grotesque : abjection in los Caprichos, Desastres de la Guerra, and los Disparates

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mother, or a maternal figure, who is responsible – for example, through sphincteral training – for the primary demarcation of the body into zones of ingestion and expulsion:

> Through frustrations and prohibitions, this [maternal] authority shapes the body into a *territory* having areas, orifices, points and lines, surfaces and hollows, where the archaic power of mastery and neglect, of the differentiation of proper-clean and improper-dirty, possible and impossible, is impressed and exerted. It is a "binary logic," a primal mapping of the body that I call semiotic to say that, while being the precondition of language, it is dependent upon meaning, but in a way that is not that of *linguistic* signs nor of the *symbolic order* they found. Maternal authority is the trustee of that mapping of the self's clean and proper body; it is distinguished from paternal laws . . . (1982:72)

This mapping by maternal authority, while it establishes the infant's boundaries, is not credited to the mother's account. Once the child has become a subject in the Symbolic order, that primal mapping is associated with the abject, and the mother's role is subsumed within regulations against defilement. She is associated not with the act of mapping but with the substances she has taught the child to differentiate, not with the clean and proper body but with the extrusions from the body that threaten its autonomy and cleanliness[40].

Furthermore, all objects associated with the mother's role in child-rearing, from the faeces the child first learns to control on the potty to the diapers that become traces of bodily disruption, open gaps in Symbolic discourse: they are named things, but their utterance in society is regulated by a sense of the taboo/improper, and they

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40 Theweleit, without any apparent knowledge of Kristeva, but in full support of her, sees this process at work in the attitude of Freikorps soldiers toward women:

> In another sphere of activity – the household – women were the living entities associated with hybrid substances. They turned solids into liquids when they cooked; and when they washed clothes and dishes, or took care of babies, they worked with, and in, things that were swampy, mushy. They stripped off the babies' wet pants and wiped the shit from their behinds. They cleared black muck out of stopped-up drains and cleaned toilets. They boiled the juice out of fruits and stored the extract. They wiped the floors and got their hands into liquid manure. And on and on. (1987:409–10)

Theweleit does not fail to suggest that these "hybrid substances" roused both the fear and the fascination of the soldier male (410). 'So-called toilet training,' he writes elsewhere, 'turns out . . . to be a process of drying up the child and instilling guilt feelings' (413); but feelings of guilt can only exist where there is conflict – conflict between, on the one hand, the demands of civilisation, and, on the other, the pleasure-seeking orifice-centred drives of the body. Between the Symbolic and the abject, in short.

are often used in either rebellion (against conformity) or degradation (of those who do not conform). Such things as vomit, excrement, mucous, milk, blood, pus – the full range of bodily fluids to which the child is exposed from the beginning of its life – the civilising process marks off and sets aside as abject matter, and, in general, while society acknowledges that they have a place in discourse and life, it treats them circumspectly. They can be objects of liberating humour, but also of embarrassment, fear and loathing. Of this ambivalence, this compound of attraction and repulsion, I will not say more, other than to stress again that improper objects have the power to reconnect one, if only temporarily, to the repressed experiences and object (the undifferentiated mother-child unit) of primary development, and therefore exercise an uncanny temptation on us. For most subjects, however, this is a strange and disquieting desire, a potential danger to the ego, which we happily allow the super-ego to quell. After all, for most subjects, the Symbolic, the world of language and law, represents a safeguard against the death that the limitlessness of the pre-objectal domain comes to represent through repression and prohibition (recall here how womb phantasies are inverted into the fear of being buried alive). Most subjects will not go against the grain of the social formation because they know that in doing so they risk fading from it, dying in the gaps. As Lacan writes, '[i]t is . . . insofar as the subject articulates a signifying chain that he comes up against the fact that he may disappear from the chain of what he is' (1992:295), i.e., from the chain of life. The abject does not only signify death by virtue of its register of objects, but as the place beyond the signifying chain it is death itself: death, the supreme symbol of ambivalence: that which, according to Freud's concept of the death instinct (see particularly Freud, 1991*i*:307–15 and 1991*j*:380–88), is desired above all else, and also that which, in the name of life, is most feared and most repelled.

The connection between the body's abject substances – the things that disrupt its limits and are cast off, discarded, abjected – and the mother is important to understand. By claiming that abject substances – not only of the body, but of the socius in

general – are associated with the pre-objectal mother, I am not drawing any causal link; I am not claiming that the mother, or mother function, is *inherently* abject. The process is thus: when the subject proceeds, after the mirror phase, into the Symbolic order, s/he must leave the pre-objectal disposition behind, and this entails separating from the primary object of that disposition, the mother. The mother thus becomes the first and foremost abject object, and also the pattern and carry-all for all other objects and forms of behaviour that the subject will in the course of life deny and abject. The mother's abjection, in other words, founds the *category* of the abject. When matter out of place and the free radicals of pleasure need to be classified, it is into this category that the subject places them, and so the mother – whether the subject realises it or not – becomes a repository of abjection. Flows, exudations, boundless matter, disposable objects, waste, commingling substances, these are all associated with, assigned to, and enclosed within the first abject[41].



Fig.7 What Madness! (*¡Qué Locura!*)

[41] Opposed to this are all things that have discrete identities and which cannot intermix – things without ambiguity, normally united wholes, whose limits cannot be interrupted and which do not produce waste – the Imaginary things of the personified primary agent and origin of the Symbolic, the phallocentric father.

In his etchings Goya does not shy away from the set of objects for which society holds the mother accountable. In the *Desastre* titled *What Madness!* (*¡Qué Locura!*) [Fig.7], for example, he depicts a monk in the process of relieving his bowels; in *Blow* [Fig.8] and *Blowers* [Fig.9] he puts farting on display; in *To the Count Palatine* a man vomits blood, and more vomit can be found in the *Desastres* print *For this you were Born* [Fig.10]. There are many examples, and many *implied* examples. Sometimes these abject exudations are specifically associated with upbringing, i.e., bad mothering. *That of the Nurse* [Fig.11], for example, portrays a man-child who spends his idle life gorging to the point where – his fingers in his mouth – he seems ready to throw up, or to patronize his nearby toilet. Goya holds his conspicuously absent nanny and/or mother responsible for his upbringing, which has prepared him solely for eating and excretion. The child is revolting, I argue more fully in the next part, because the mother's primary mapping of the clean and proper was, according to the standards of the socius, lax and incomplete, leaving him forever at the mercy of the category of abjected things. I should also point out here that in his images of witches Goya often works with the theme of bloodsucking, turning blood into the object of a terrifying extortionist appetite. Since the bloodsuckers are apparently women, I read them further as emblems of the abject mother, sucking in the very substance that in the Symbolic has become taboo and polluting.

In such works, and others I will look at in the forthcoming analytic parts, I find Goya using objects that I associate with the abject to degrade his satirical targets, so bearing out – at least to my satisfaction – that in his understanding (and surely to some extent the understanding of his contemporaries) the body's by-products are not mute, but significant enough to service a smearing campaign.

2.2 The mother's abject whole

Goya's image of the child-man helps us to understand another of Kristeva's contentions: that the mother is problematic because she has the capacity to balk the

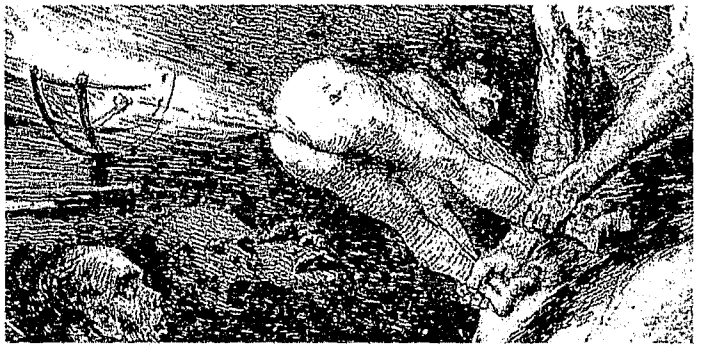

Fig.8 Detail of child-bellows from *Blow* (*Sopla*) (see Fig.74)



Fig.9 Detail of Fig.73, *Blowers* (*Soplones*), showing farting and blowing.



Fig.10 Detail of Fig.133, *For this you were Born* (*Para eso habeis Nacido*)



Fig.11 Detail of Fig.56, *That of the Nurse* (*El de la Rollona*)

child's passage into the Symbolic order.

'The abject,' writes Kristeva, 'confronts us . . . with our earliest attempts to release the hold of *maternal* authority even before existing outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language.' (1982:13) Language, the mirror phase and Oedipal relations transform the mother into the abject, part of what is excluded by the Other – a rejected gift. This is supposedly well and good for the subject, for if s/he cannot shake off the maternal s/he will not emerge as a signifier in the Symbolic, and will, in effect, inhabit only death, or at least nothingness – for the signifying chain, in Lacan and to a large extent in Kristeva, too, is what gives life through name and utterance. The problem is, it would appear that many subjects desire a return to the formlessness of primary narcissism and to the preOedipal mother – nomadic desire, forever in search of a place to call its own, will inevitably trace a circuitous and difficult path back to the contents of the repressed unconscious, among them the preobjectal world and its original object, the mother. To prevent this eventuality, society relies on the same safeguards with which it keeps the abject in general at bay: laws, rules, prohibitions and taboos. Kristeva claims that incest taboo – one of the fundamental laws of the paternal Symbolic[42] – has the power to invalidate primary

[42] The literature on incest taboo is immense, particularly since anthropologists have contributed so copiously to it. I will here only suggest that the reader turn to Freud's major work *Totem and Taboo* (1990c:mainly 53–70), which is also Kristeva's primary text for her exploration of incest prohibition. I also refer the reader to Lacan's Seminar, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis (1992:66–70), in which he deals briefly but suggestively with incest and incest prohibition. The discussion falls within his study of what he calls, after Freud, 'das Ding'. "Das Ding" (the Thing) is one of Lacan's most ambiguous concepts, especially since it at times seems synonymous with other 'things' in his theory, e.g., primary lost objects and the *objet a; but what is particularly fascinating about it is how it relates to the* mother and to incest. The following passage is quintessential:

> What we find in the incest law is located as such at the level of the unconscious in relation to *das Ding*, the Thing. The desire for the mother cannot be satisfied because it is the end, the terminal point, the abolition of the whole world of demand, which is the one that at its deepest level structures man's unconscious. It is to the extent that the function of the pleasure principle is to make man always search for what he has to find again, but which he never will attain, that one reaches the essence, namely, that sphere or relationship which is known as the law of the prohibition of incest. (68)

Now, Lacan is talking about the mother of the Oedipal relation as the end of all demand (hence of all desire), but since this mother is inextricable from the mother of the primary

narcissism:

> Incest prohibition throws a veil over primary narcissism and the always ambivalent threats with which it menaces subjective identity. It cuts short the temptation to return, with abjection and jouissance, to that passivity status within the symbolic function, where the subject, fluctuating between inside and outside, pleasure and pain, word and deed, would find death, along with nirvana. (1982:63–64)

The taboo on incest with the mother is read as a taboo on the maternal body *per se*, especially the maternal body of the infant's preOedipal environment:

> A whole facet of the sacred, true lining of the sacrificial, compulsive, and paranoid side of religions, assumes the task of warding off [contact with the mother]. This is precisely where we encounter the rituals of defilement and their derivatives, which, based on the feeling of abjection and all converging on the maternal, attempt to symbolize the other threat to the subject: that of being swamped by the dual relationship, thereby risking the loss not of a part (castration) but of the totality of his living being. The function of these religious rituals is to ward off the subject's fear of his very own identity sinking irretrievably into the *mother*. (1982:64)

Prevention of contact with the mother, achieved through incest prohibition, is thus seen as an essential step in maintaining the very identity and subjectivity of the male subject[43]. If the subject's desire to regress to the dyadic relationship of primary narcissism is not checked, the consequent confrontation with the maternal would end not in mere castration, but in a complete loss of identity. The mother, so society believes, would devour and incorporate the regressive subject, and the subject would want it, because that would have emerged as the end purpose of desire. Identity would disappear in the formlessness of the preOedipal relation. It follows

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dyad, there is no question that Lacan's "mother" is conceived in terms broad enough to take in Kristeva's maternal figure of the pre-objectal Semiotic. In one sweep Lacan associates the mother with the primary lost object that the whole pleasure principle, i.e., all desire, is geared to refind, and ultimately makes the claim that the prohibition on incest centres on preventing the subject from refinding the lost mother, a reunion that would mean not just the abolition of desire but the destruction of the Symbolic world and its reality principle. In short, Lacan's thought on the ultimate aim of incest prohibition matches Kristeva's.

43 Theweleit, again unaware of Kristeva, arrives at a very similar conclusion in regard to the need of Freikorps males to make the 'feminine' cold and uninviting: '[t]his splitting off is a defense mechanism. It saves the splitter from being swallowed up by what he detaches from . . . Could it be that making the mothers as cold and hard as steel betrays a fear of *intimacy* as something terrifying, and of a mother's *warmth* as something in which a son might easily perish?' (1987:107).

that, to prevent this loss of being (that is, being dependent on an ego formulated through mimesis of a specular other, and on an investiture in the Symbolic order), incest prohibitions are established to make the maternal (and the archaic, narcissistic environment with which it is associated) *abject.*

Abject, that is, within the chains of signification associated with the resolution of the triadic complex and the taking of the Other as origin of fullness, pleasure and meaning. The Other rejects the abject, and the subjects within its economy honour this rejection by finding a scapegoat to take on the weight of those unwanted elements of their psyches that do not come from the father[44]. Their scapegoat is the mother. The mother is made a tabooed object, an abomination; transgression of the incest prohibition would cause defilement, a shattering of system and order, a supreme crime against 'culture'. Paradoxically, while it is abomination on the one hand, the abjection associated with the mother is, on the other, the subject's source of *jouissance* – a *jouissance* all the more thunderous because it erupts into a space of prohibitions founded to exclude it[45].

Goya is at his most resolute when he deals with female protagonists, which characteristically appear as prostitutes, bawds and witches. Such women are, in his eyes, morally grotesque. Their physical monstrosity – overt when they are depicted as witches – is an obvious expression of the depravity and ethical degradation he as-

[44] Both the father of the triadic relationship and the Symbolic father, who, as Kristeva writes elsewhere, 'a father might or might not embody' (1982:10). The concept of 'father' is a complex one because it refers more to a dominant authority or a function, which has been cast as masculine, than to an actual gendered personage. In this sense mothers can also represent the paternal principle. What is at stake in the maternal function is a mother associated with primary narcissism, the dual relationship and the preverbal environment. Like primary narcissism, she is a fantasy, but no less a factor in psychic makeup for that fact. Psychoanalysis has many terms that have no precise subjectivised object – words like 'father', 'mother', 'paternal', 'maternal', 'Symbolic', 'Semiotic', 'phallus' are simply clumsy working definitions that help us to gain perspective on the psychology of the human subject and on the possible underlying formations of society: they are not to be taken as precise gendered labels for hard-edged, visible structures and forms in the known world.

[45] Building on footnote 34, *Jouissance* can be understood as the emergence of unconscious drive pleasure without the immediate prohibition and inversion that would result in a feeling of uncanniness, and a subsequent operation to abject.



Fig.12 Detail of Fig.54, Where is Mama going?
(*¿Donde va Mamá?*)

signs to them. Many women in Goya's etchings could function as virtual illustrations of Kristeva's abject mother – none more so than the overweight witch in *Where is Mama going?* [Fig.12], who is attended by incestuous sons. Depicting a mother as an obese, incestuous witch, Goya mounts society's white charger: he helps to justify the mother as an object in need of abjection, (re)inforces the taboo on the maternal, and brands those who break the taboo as undesirable, marginal, deformed grotesques.

3. *Non-differentiation*

As outlined earlier, in the primary relationship between the mother and child, which unfolds in the space of the Semiotic, the child is at the mercy of drive pulsions that hint at separation, but his or her world is characterised by non-differentiation and formlessness. This is a world where pleasure and pain exist – already a major step along the road to the thetic break Kristeva associates with the passage into the Symbolic – but in which the child has no comprehension of anything relational or oppositional since self has not been divorced from other.

For the child, this quality of non-differentiation means that the world exists, in Leach's words, as "a seamless . . . flow" (in Harpham, 1982:4). When the subject, to gain the Symbolic, leaves the Semiotic behind, this experience of a flowing, abun-

dant body is incorporated into the fantasy of primary narcissism, and becomes symbolic of undivided intimacy with the primary object (the mother). For many subjects, this fantasy vision of incomparable fusion with a fount of oneness, security and nurturing is a temptation that constantly threatens to engulf them by means of regression to that undifferentiated time – a mechanism of defence and escape that can only occur, materially, through psychosis. The only other (sane) option is sublimation through forms of activity, such as art, that cathect energy in other areas of the subject's life. Here one can talk about a provisional, willing, controlled effort to reinvest and rearticulate lost or obscured aspects of the self, a form of regression in the service of the ego. Art can function in this way, and an argument along these lines could certainly be made for Goya, although I do not commit myself in this direction.

The Symbolic subject's desire to return to a state of non-differentiation can be found – particularly during the Romantic age, which Goya had his share in – in such feelings of awe as those inspired by natural phenomena and the Sublime, as well as in spiritual/mystical concepts of oneness with god and unity with the cosmos, all of which have time and again been associated with oceans[46], infinite spaces, primor-

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46 Psychoanalysis uses the word 'oceanic' to describe this desire for unity with large expanses of water: see Freud's highly suggestive discussion in *Civilization and its Discontents*, where he deals with the feeling in relation to sensations of religious oneness with all things (1991*m*:252–60), and Klaus Theweleit, 1987:252–54, 272–88; also see Lacan's brief assessment of 'oceanic aspiration' as a phantasy (1994:31). For oceanic qualities (nothingness, non-differentiation, submersion, etc.) as a feature of the Romantic imagination see Jean Clay, Romanticism, 1981. The following passages from Clay are so instructive that I transcribe them here:

> [Turner's] was an art devoted to nothingness, to undifferentiated matter, to submersion within primordial substance [. . .] A heightened, almost giddy sense of nothingness characterizes the era [of Romanticism]. From Beckford to Hoffmann, from Nodier to Nerval, European literature is largely a series of desolate or distraught declamations on the situation of a human subject awash in and fragmented by forces over which he has no control: fleeting time, failed memory, vague depression, optical vertigo, phantasms, confused sensations, drugs, madness. (176–77)

No concept of the Romantic era expresses these feelings of submersion, vertigo and confusion better than that of the Sublime, which found its fullest treatment in Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*. It is outside the scope of this thesis to pay much attention to this important concept, but I can suggest how it ties in with abjection by offering another quote from Clay: 'The sublime is always transgressive and aggressive, for the effect of compulsion and anxiety is the subversion of the law. It resists all norms, all conformity, and promotes contradiction, rupture, lawless-

dial time, and women (cf. the second quote from Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* on the frontispiece to this chapter).

Simply by way of illustration, a classic example of the fantasised link between women and a quality of primordial formlessness can be found in the following passage from Michel Epuy's 1907 book *Le Sentiment de la Nature*:

> Woman, the great flower, the perfect flower, appears . . . as the zenith of the life of this World, because in Her our rational race (whose true bonds of attachment to Mother-Nature were broken after the conquest of language) acquires new strength and restores its youth through contact with the mystical and immaterial global effluvium, origin, end and mediator of all existence, all soul, all thought, infinite ocean that bathes and penetrates the entire universe, lives and dies in every creature, and constitutes the vital and primordial essence of All. (Quoted in Herbert, 1992:200*n*.3)[47]

Kristeva's preOedipal mother shares with Epuy's Alpha-and-Omega woman the element of fantasy; but whereas Epuy's "perfect flower" is a constructed ideal in which non-differentiation expresses a regressive desire for an earlier state of existence, Kristeva's mother is the *object* of this desire. The mother of the Pre-Oedipal milieu is not a fantasy, but – like primary narcissism – she can only be approximated, repeated, re-made and regained by means of fantasies. Now, by and large, when women are presented as symbols of formlessness and primordialism *outside* of the overly-exalted terms Epuy uses, they appear as something undesirable, threatening and engulfing: raging oceans laced with Sirens and monstrous creatures,

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ness . . .' (7) Clay's description of the Sublime could be used, directly and effortlessly, as a definition of the abject. Like the Grotesque, the Sublime is not *the* abject, but both modes of expression can act to liberate sensations, feelings, thoughts and creative activity that would seem, ultimately, to stem from and refer to the excluded domain of abjection.

47 La femme, la grande fleur, la fleur parfaite, apparaît . . . comme le fait culminant de la vie du Monde, parce qu'en Elle notre race raisonnable (don't les vrais liens qui l'attachaient à la Nature-mère sont brisés depuis la conquête du langage) se retrempe et se rajeunit au contact de la mystique et immatérielle effluve mondiale, origine, fin et intermédiaire de toute existence, de toute âme, de toute pensée, océan infinie qui baigne et pénètre tout l'Univers, vit et meurt en chaque créature, et constitue l'essence vitale et primordiale de Tout.

It bears pointing out that Epuy, many years before Kristeva, already links the triumph of language to detachment from the mother – a detachment he mourns. It is also interesting that he defines his mystical, immaterial woman as a "global effluvium" – an atmospheric waste that cloaks the entire world.

"freaks" and bigeners of nature (or the producers of such "abominations"), swamps, tempests, lava, steaming jungles, dungeons, pits, caves, death. They are presented as volatile things, things that cannot be fixed in place, calmed, closed or cheated.

What we see in these contrasting fantasies (the one outrageously transcendent, the other nihilistically and chauvinistically degraded[48]) is the work of repression, which transforms (inverts) unconscious pre-objectal contents into something either lofty and beautiful, or abysmal and deadly. How these contents emerge depends, I would argue, on the degree of repression that accompanies their appearance: if it is slight, the result will be pleasant regressive fantasies often associating endless space with the sublime, the divine or the feminine; if it is rigorous, the result will be fantasies of horror in which subjects are menaced by immense, unlimited, engulfing forces, both natural and unnatural. Those fantasies involving the abyss, apocalypse, monsters, engulfment, death and all things infernal are, of course, visitors from the province of abjection.

Thus, the abject is what the pre-objectal becomes under the weight of fierce repression, and its chief characteristics are ambiguity, boundlessness, indiscriminate mingling and a death-like nothingness. It can never be fixed, for it is '[t]he in-between, the ambiguous, the composite' (Kristeva, 1982:4). It cuts across boundaries, runs peripheries into centres, establishes intermixture between 'pure' categories, disturbs systems, defiles order and pollutes the Symbolic. Because it can never be completely and irrecoverably suppressed, its principle of amalgam and non-differentiation becomes an ever-present danger to the Symbolic subject. Death is feared because it means a return to formlessness, to a point without system or nomination – where everything is an indiscriminate flow, much like the matter society views as defiling: sewerage, urine, diarrhoea, etc. Death is feared because in its nothingness

48 It is tempting to see in this dichotomy what separates the Sublime from the Grotesque. Both stem from a common source (the repressed mother), but they form completely opposed sentimental divisions, depending, as I argue in the text, on the degree to which the subject has repressed the mother and the preOedipal environment in general.

it (re)stages the time when the subject was adrift in a cosmos of "femininity". This, for the resolutely Symbolic subject, the one for whom the mystique of primary narcissism's safe haven holds less of an attraction, is a fear that undermines every conceivable foundation on which s/he has constructed a unique and individual world – a world of the self-sufficient ego.

Yet, at the same time, death is not feared. The subject both wants and does not want death; desires formlessness and loathes it intensely. This is the way of the abject: an interminable oscillation between desire for the nothingness of inanimation and desire for the differentiated, ego-based existence of the Symbolic. Repression inverts the *before* into something uncanny, turning 'the objects of its veneration . . . into objects of horror' (Wundt in Freud, 1990c:79); but the subject cannot fully withdraw cathexis from what s/he once knew – one of the reasons images of death have such a compelling effect on the living is because they can act as *objets a* for the entire domain of the excluded. They promise a means of access to the repressed and forbidden.

So, indeed, do Goya's *Desastres de la Guerra*. He portrays heaps of corpses over and over throughout the series [e.g., Fig.13], stressing how death robs the human body of all claim to individuality, reduces it to excess, discardable matter that can be piled up without discrimination, before being dumped in pits and cellars. Death repeatedly appears as a breakdown of the ego, a loss of self, a transport into a place of non-differentiation. In *Charity* [Fig.14] corpses are tossed into a crevice in the ground; for me, such a crevice, leading down into the earth, can be associated with the abject(ed) maternal body, the opening being a mouth or vagina, the interior a gut or womb – a dark buried place where the subject loses identity in a potentially limitless environment. For Goya, war is a fierce hybrid monster [Fig.15] that feeds on corpses till it can no longer contain them, till they spill from its mouth and lie there to decompose; it is a world of unplaced or displaced *stuff* that offers the viewer no relief from the excess of death.



Fig.13 So Much and More (*Tanto y Mas*)



Fig.14 Charity (*Caridad*)



Fig.15 Fierce Monster (*Fiero Monstruo*)

Why did Goya make *so many* images of death? In the name of reportage, if that was his purpose, could he not have made his point with two or three etchings of heaped corpses? When I look at these images, in which cadavers spread and intermingle in increasingly dense masses, or when I look at the living mounds of humanity that appear in *Los Disparates* [e.g., Fig.16] or in the 'Black Paintings' [e.g., Fig.17], I find it difficult to believe that the amalgam, the mass, meant nothing personal to Goya; I would argue, drawing on what psychoanalysis associates with its generalised subject in this context, that conglomerate humanity represented both a threat (of shattered boundaries, a decentralised ego) and an attraction (as a place of unrestricted, dedifferentiated pleasure) to Goya. I would argue that the abject came more and more to be representable by a mound in Goya's work. When that mound was set at a remove from other, potentially surrogate, figures in his etchings it took on the quality of a hazard in contrast to which the artist placed his ego, in the hope of strengthening his psychosocial barriers in opposition to what he *could not be*.

This concept that the subject can strengthen his or her ego by showing it what it is not (the "not" being everything forming the category of the abject) brings the discussion to the last important matter I need to address before I can commence analysing the images, the question of how the threat of the abject can be kept at bay.

III. Challenging the Abject

Should one challenge the abject? Is it essential to resolve the ambivalence between desire and repulsion – to categorically separate "I" from abject, the "me" from the "not me"? Is abjection something we must either embrace or reject, or can it be abided in its vacillating, unstable, compromising form?

According to Hal Foster '*to abject* is fundamental to the maintenance of subject and society alike, while the condition *to be abject* is corrosive of both formations' (1996:156), therefore it would seem that we cannot do without the abjecting process.



Fig.16 Detail of the mass in Disparate 9, *Folly of the Mass* (*Disparate General*) (see Fig.152)



Fig.17 Detail of mass of figures in the Black Painting *The Pilgrimage of San Isidro*

But in everyday life it is not exactly desirable to wage this kind of severe war on the abject, since we can profit as much from its content as from its exclusion. Give and take, equivocation, characterises our day-by-day interaction with what the Symbolic makes abject. The abject constantly impinges on us, and we deal with it in the way particular situations require: we will need it one moment and exclude it the next. By and large, if we are obedient subjects – people who obey the law and avoid breaking consensual taboos – the abject is something we dissociate from, a reminder of the limitations we need to acknowledge if we are to function in society; but its ambivalence, rooted deep in the repressed pleasures of the subject's most archaic stage of formation, and its grafting at so many nodes into the multiform plant of desire, make it something we can never truly stabilise, fix or denounce. One must allow that, even in the most vigorous systems of subject structuration (religion, for instance), the abject will produce equivocation, temptation and surrender.

Artistic practices are interesting in this regard because they are not necessarily vigorous when it comes to structuration. They can be used both to strengthen resistance and to permit, even promote and celebrate, a liberal attitude to ambivalence or to the abject. Through art one can, ideally, benefit from both the Symbolic and the repressed, the irresolution between the two creating its own ontological species or at least a divergent and diverse range of experiences, which might well, through specific sublimatory redirections of libidinal cathexis, include catharsis.

Goya can be taken as an ideal example of an artist who embraced ambiguity, paradox, aporia, in-betweenness, the polygeneric spawn of the threshold – scholars have claimed for years that his graphic works have no fixed, self-evident meanings (here one might recall Azaola, whom I mentioned in my Introduction). In my assessment of Goya's relationship to the abysmal, the abject is both a negative and positive midden, abundantly and putrefyingly alive, constantly transuding and brimming with the threat or the promise of volatile extrusion into the signifying field. It appears in Goya's art as a danger and a source of mysterious fascination, or as

something in between – Goya's abject is more often than not to be found in the meeting between reason and unreason, the forces of order and chaos, and is defined by hybridity and cross-pollination. What one also has to bear in mind is that Goya's graphic art takes different forms. *Los Caprichos* and *Disparates* are in the satirical and Grotesque traditions, while *Los Desastres* (excluding the *Caprichos Enfáticos*) are chiefly concerned with providing a personal view of a devastating war: not exactly reportage, but nonetheless not motivated by as strong a framework as satire provides. The concerns of the latter thus do not dramatise (except in the famine scenes) the contrast, interplay or blending between the Symbolic and abject in the way the satirical prints do. It is for this reason that I claim *Los Desastres* have more to do with the condition to be abject than the operation to abject, and it is for this reason, too, that one cannot make any strict assertion that Goya was predominantly interested in subjects and themes that moved him away from abjection.

Nevertheless, given that a fair percentage of the works discussed in this thesis *do involve satire, or at least some kind of friction between the Symbolic and the abject*, and also some degree of grotesqueness put to the service of judging or even condemning certain social groups, I need to consider ways in which the abject can be challenged and controlled through art, to the benefit of artist and viewer alike.

In my discussion of Thomson's work on the Grotesque in Chapter One, I drew attention to his claim that the characteristic "disharmony" of the Grotesque can be seen 'not merely in the work of art as such, but also in the reaction it produces and (speculatively) in the creative temperament and psychological make-up of the artist' (1972:20). In other words, the work of art impresses itself upon both its producer and its consumer. The producer stands to achieve relief from the abject by the actual act of production and by ridiculing the satirical object that stands in the place of the abject; for the consumer, however, only this after-the-fact ridicule is possible. I will look at production and ridicule in turn, to demonstrate how they

might allow the producer and the receiver to challenge the threatening face of abjection.

1. *Relief from abjection through production*

Referring to modern literature, and taking as her example the subject who has lost faith in and desire for the Symbolic Other which is the model of his or her ego, Kristeva writes:

> In a world in which the Other has collapsed, the aesthetic task – a descent into the foundations of the symbolic construct – amounts to retracing the fragile limits of the speaking being, closest to its dawn, to the bottomless "primacy" constituted by primal repression. Through that experience, which is nevertheless managed by the Other, "subject" and "object" push each other away, confront each other, collapse, and start again – inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject. (1982:18)[49]

This "descent" to the fragile place where the Symbolic first emerges "closest to its dawn" is a descent into and immersion in the abject. Just as Ruskin, Kayser and Bakhtin believe that the Grotesque is a structure that contains all that is the worst in humanity as well as all that is best, and is thus both degrading and rejuvenating, so Kristeva believes that abjection is both what most threatens the subject and the means to control its threats[50]. She expresses this dialectic again and again. For

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[49] In The Monstrous-Feminine, Creed uses the identical quote to introduce her view on the interface between art (in her case, the horror film) and the abject:

> [Through a "descent into the foundations of the symbolic construct"] the horror film brings about a confrontation with the abject (the corpse, bodily wastes, the monstrous-feminine) in order, finally, to eject the abject and re-draw the boundaries between the human and the non-human. As a form of modern defilement rite, the horror film works to separate out the symbolic order from all that threatens its stability, particularly the mother and all that her universe signifies. (1986:53; see also 1994:14)

Her terms are, however, more decisive and conclusive than Kristeva's.

[50] Here we clearly see the ambivalence of abjection, downgrading and upgrading rolled into one complex. The conjunction of these seemingly contradictory propensities or dispositions does not, however, rule out the possibility that the one can eclipse or dominate the other. The question is one of permanence: while ambivalence can be resolved, the resulting equilibrium can only – given the interpenetrative, coexistent, potentially subversive and polluting nearness of the dialectical components (disintegrative/rejuvenative) – be temporary and in need of constant reinforcement; or, where art is concerned, a given mode of expression (e.g., satire), used unsparingly and insistently, can create the appearance that a state of unchange-

instance:

> A source of evil and mingled with sin, abjection becomes the requisite for a reconciliation, in the mind, between the flesh and the law. "It is at once what produces the disease, and the source of health, it is the poisoned cup in which man drinks death and putrefaction, and at the same time the fount of reconciliation; indeed, to set oneself up as evil is to abolish evil in oneself." (1982:127–28)

This is particularly striking for its claim that you abolish evil in yourself if you set yourself up as evil – that is, if you adopt a position in which you allow the corruptive influence of "evil" to instruct you (and, potentially, those beyond you).

More interesting, in its relationship to art:

> The various means of *purifying* the abject – the various catharses – make up the history of religions, and end up with that catharsis par excellence called art . . . Seen from that standpoint, the artistic experience, which is rooted in the abject it utters and by the same token purifies, appears as the essential component of religiosity. (Kristeva, 1982:17)

Her art is, of course, writing, and she lays out how it can function to thrust aside the abject thus:

> For the subject firmly settled in its superego a writing of this sort is necessarily implicated in the interspace that characterizes perversion; and for that reason, it gives rise in turn to abjection. And yet, such texts call for a softening of the superego. Writing them implies an ability to imagine the abject, that is, to see oneself in its place and to thrust it aside only by means of the displacements of verbal play. It is only after his death, eventually, that the writer of abjection will escape his condition of waste, reject, abject. Then, he will either sink into oblivion or attain the rank of incommensurate ideal. Death would thus be the chief curator of our imaginary museum; it would protect us in the last resort from *the abjection that contemporary literature claims to expend while uttering it.* (1982:16 Emphasis added)

Kristeva relates this expenditure to Aristotelian catharsis and again emphasises that the abject can only be challenged from within its own corruption:

> To Platonic *death*, which owned, so to speak, the state of purity, Aristotle opposed the act of *poetic purification* – in itself an impure process that protects from the abject only by dint of being immersed in it. The abject . . . is *repeated*. Getting rid of it is out of the question – the final Platonic lesson has been understood, one does not get rid of the impure; one can, however, bring it into being a second time, and differently from the original impurity. (1982:27–28)

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able resolution is possible. This appearance – a veneer, if you like – is what I find in the trajectory of Goya's satirical art, that is, in the purpose the artist's interaction with the grotesque, supernatural and obscene carves out in the prospective space between himself, the work and the viewer.

In short, "poetic purification" involves a *dealing with* – a sublimation of[51] – abjection through poetics, not an eradication of defilement, for it is impossible to get rid of the abject. The unnameable, the impossible, the unsaid, is brought into being through poetics: a repetition of nothing, really, since the abject only exists (that is, *appears*, gains visibility) within symbolicity. Because the poetic text is a re-fashioning

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51 Kristeva links writing to sublimation in the following passage: '[C]ontemporary literature . . . when it is written as the language, possible at last, of that impossible constituted either by a-subjectivity or by non-objectivity, propounds, as a matter of fact, a sublimation of abjection'. (26) This is a Freudian conception of sublimation. Though, as Laplanche and Pontalis point out (1988:432–33), Freud never comprehensively formulated his thoughts on sublimation, the following passage in his Introductory Lectures opens a window on them:

> We believe that civilization has been created under the pressure of the exigencies of life at the cost of satisfaction of the instincts; and we believe that civilization is to a large extent being constantly created anew, since each individual who makes a fresh entry into human society repeats this sacrifice of instinctual satisfaction for the benefit of the whole community. Among the instinctual forces which are put to this use the sexual impulses play an important part; in this process they are sublimated – that is to say, they are diverted from their sexual aims and directed to others that are socially higher and no longer sexual. (1976:47–48)

The sexual instinct must be sublimated, Freud claims, because '[s]ociety believes that no greater threat to its civilization could arise than if the sexual instincts were to be liberated and returned to their original aims' (48). Furthermore, society 'does not wish to be reminded of this precarious portion of its foundations' (48). In short, these sexual aims have the status of something taboo or, in Kristeva's terminology, abject, and they must be repressed, i.e., made abject. Sublimation is, then, sublimation of the abject by definition.

When he discussed art as a form of sublimation, which he did primarily in his Introductory Lectures (1976:423–24) and in his essay 'Creative Writers and Day-dreaming' (1990*a*), Freud was presumptive in the extreme. In his view, artists were power-craving and sex-starved near-neurotics who could only hold their egos together or achieve any of their desires by delving into the fantasy worlds they manufactured in their creative activity. The artist 'turns away from reality and transfers all his interest, and his libido too, to the wishful constructions of his life of phantasy' (1976:423). Yet, though artists are resigned to playing with imaginary knights and damsels inside castles in the air, they are, surprisingly enough, better off than uncreative people because their ability to turn fantasies into concrete art objects allows them to express what would otherwise bottle up and drown them; and in this way, according to Freud, they help others as well:

> [the artist] knows how to link so large a yield of pleasure to [his representations] of his unconscious phantasy that, for the time being at least, repressions are outweighed and lifted by it. If he is able to accomplish all this, he makes it possible for other people once more to derive consolation and alleviation from their own sources of pleasure in their unconscious which have become inaccessible to them . . . (1976:424)

Now, as much as there is to scoff at in Freud's vision of the artist, I am unwilling to dismiss the concept that creative activity can produce a temporary lifting of repressive restrictions and permit gratification vicariously. That other people can derive pleasure and upliftment from an artist's work is also, to my mind, an indisputable fact. Freud's terms and conditions are suspect, but the ends are, I believe, accurate and functional. I believe the same of Kristeva's Freudian-derived understanding of artistic sublimation.

as much as a repetition (a representation as much as a presentation), it gives the writer licence to alter or at least determine the form abjection takes in its visible articulation, and thus to control the "impure".

To attain a corrupted, complicit purity – the only type available since one can never truly sunder the abject from the Symbolic – the artist must plunge into abjection and produce it anew in the art work. The act of production both fixes abjection in representation and at the same time temporarily expends it or alters its status through "utterance". This immersion in abjection to produce and dissipate it both liberates the artist – provided, of course, s/he keeps her or his 'mind .... focused on truth' (Kristeva, 1982:27) – and generates objects (works of art) that have the potential to liberate others. But if these "others" – the artist's receivers – cannot share in the production of the work, how are they to challenge and sublimate abjection?

2. *Relief from abjection through laughter*

In Chapter One, in my discussion of the Grotesque, I drew attention, with reference to writers like Bakhtin, Kayser and Thomson, to the possibility that laughter can function to dispel or rearticulate the repulsive aspects of the world that arise in the work of creative producers who align themselves with the Grotesque mode. Bakhtin proposed that laughter is rejuvenatory since it is associated with the material body (itself a powerful force for rebirth and growth); Kayser, having defined the Grotesque as 'an attempt to invoke and subdue the demonic aspects of the world' (1963:188), alluded to the potential of "frivolity" and "the truly artistic portrayal" to "effect a secret liberation" from the forces of the abyss; lastly, Thomson felt that laughter allows for a compromise between conflicting forces, and I used his example of the child who first laughs then cries at a distorted face to argue that laughter can control the threat of the unfamiliar by mocking or ridiculing it.

A last writer that must be mentioned in this instance, since he makes the case that the Grotesque eases the tensions of the uncanny through ridicule, is Michael

Steig. In his article, 'Defining the Grotesque: An Attempt at Synthesis', he writes:

> The grotesque involves the management of the uncanny by the comic. More specifically: a) When the infantile material is primarily threatening, comic techniques, including caricature, diminish the threat through degradation or ridicule; but at the same time, they may also enhance anxiety through their aggressive implications and through the strangeness they lend to the threatening figure. b) In what is usually called the comic-grotesque, the comic in its various forms lessens the threat of identification with infantile drives by means of ridicule; at the same time, it lulls inhibitions and makes possible on a preconscious level the same identification that it appears to the conscience or superego to prevent. In short, both extreme types of the grotesque [that is, according to Steig's own definitions, the predominantly threatening and the predominantly comic] . . . return us to childhood – the one attempts a liberation from fear, while the other attempts a liberation from inhibition; but in both a state of unresolved tension is the most common result, because of the intrapsychic conflicts involved. (1970:259–60)

For Steig, the Grotesque brings to light two types of uncanny material: the "primarily threatening" and the "predominantly comic", and in the case of both the Grotesque "manages" them through comic ridicule. I would extend this and claim that it is the laughter (whether dark- or light-hearted) provoked by ridicule that gives release from the anxiety of the infantile material Steig associates with the uncanny. This release is not guaranteed, exhaustive or permanent, to be sure, and confrontation with the Grotesque can have the opposite effect (as Steig sees it, either because caricatural distortion so estranges the relevant figures that they become threatening, or because at a preconscious level – which accords with what I have termed gaps in recognition – the viewer/reader, his or her inhibitions lulled by the Grotesque, identifies with the upwelling infantile material[52]), or it can lead, most commonly, one

52 Here we again have ambivalence: the comic grotesque as invested with the potential to both ease anxiety and cause it, this being because, as Steig explains it, the unconscious can act on the preconscious independently of the super-ego, and create disquiet even as the super-ego is taking steps to avoid or subdue such disquiet. What is true of anxiety is also true of pleasure (itself capable of appearing as unpleasurable in relation to psychic agencies such as the super-ego), and we can add that artists and viewers might gain pleasure from such "identification" with the unconscious even while caught in the process of denying, degrading and excluding the repressed. One can joy in the abject even while acting against it, because what moral conscience and the super-ego are doing at any given moment is not necessarily what the ego wants, and it is able to find a compromise between the super-ego's need to protect the ego from the disassembling potential of the repressed, and the pleasure contact with unconscious material may yield. The result is a realised or unrealised "state of unresolved tension" created by the contrary pull of the psychic operations engaged by the art work (both in its production and its reception).

should note, to "a state of unresolved tension"; but laughter induced by the satirist's or "grotesquer's" degrading and ridiculing techniques, nevertheless emerges as the viewer's/reader's chief ally in managing the threat of the uncanny.

I want to suggest, however, that what Steig views as the uncanny can be better understood as the abject. I have argued, the reader will recall, that the uncanny is an emotive response that is likely to arise in the ambivalent gulf that opens in a confrontation with the Grotesque between the moment the viewer recognises that some aspect of the repressed content of his or her unconscious has appeared in consciousness, and the moment when prohibition pushes the repressed material back. In other words, the uncanny is not a component of the unconscious, but an effect of the emergence into consciousness of unconscious elements, e.g., the abject. Thus, in the following passage, in which Steig discusses Mrs Gamp, a character in Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the identification with uncanny drives he describes is, in my view, better understood as an identification with the abject:

> Mrs. Gamp, through her disconnected speech, immense ugliness, lack of rational intelligence, uncouthness, and selfishness, is made ludicrous, almost contemptible, so that the possibility of our conscious identification with the compelling but forbidden drives she embodies is minimized. (1970:259)

In Steig's characterisation of Mrs Gamp, one can see the type of satirical techniques – the grotesque body primarily – Dickens marshals to subdue the threat Mrs Gamp presents as a container of "forbidden drives", i.e., as a lure that compels the reader to the place of the prohibited and repressed. With the assistance of my foregoing discussions, one can argue that Steig's reading casts Mrs Gamp in a way that makes her a fitting representative of the abject mother: she is physically unattractive (verging toward the monstrous), self-centred (i.e., narcissistic), irrational (another characteristic of the Grotesque), uncouth (thus lacking civilisation, loyalty to the reality principle), and last, but far from least, her speech is "disconnected" (her adoption of language, thus her passage into the Symbolic, was incomplete). Unsurprisingly, in his further investigation of her character, Steig mentions that critics

have found her an ambivalent figure, both repulsive and attractive (1970:259): she thus embodies the familiar complex of negative and positive impulses Kristeva associates with abjection. Mrs Gamp is in every respect a marginal figure, a woman who has narcissistically clung to a preSymbolic existence, for which she has paid the price of lacking all refinement, in appearance, manner and intelligence. She is everything her society would appear to reject in a woman, and is therefore predominantly threatening rather than comic. One cannot simply laugh her off as an eccentric; she is a threat to the very terms in which society structures itself; she is erosive of order, not merely a quaint tester of limits; she has gone beyond the bounds of the familiar: to keep her under control (that is, her embodiments in the real world) she must be made as grotesque and worthy of exclusion as possible. This is where mocking laughter comes in, and here would be a good place to reintroduce the long quote from the Blooms that I looked at in Chapter One:

> For many satirists . . . laughter is analogous to propitiatory sacrifice: a form of discovery and released emotion through which a scapegoat makes it possible for a community fragmented by shame and guilt to reintegrate itself. Society has always needed . . . ceremonial victims, upon whom man's aggregate sins are publicly and symbolically discharged. The scapegoat becomes the agent in whom is concentrated whatever threatens totemic well-being . . . His availability perhaps betokens man's sadistic instincts, but it also provides an illusory source of healing transference . . . the reader transfers his assumed inadequacy to a nearby satiric target. Then he feels better about himself . . . in judging others guilty, he can pretend that virtue accrues to him. Instead of being whipped, he places himself in the role of the superior, aggressive whipper . . . satiric laughter may become a source of both catharsis and redemption for satirist and reader alike. (Bloom, 1979:128–29)

Mrs Gamp is just such a sacrificial scapegoat, and she provides the reader with a target upon which to transfer "his assumed inadequacy". By laughing at her, by deriding her social shortcomings, the reader scoffs her into a place apart, into the margin of abjection where, outside of the collective, her anti-social exorbitancy is mediated toward neutrality. The result for the one who has laughed her into this position is a release from her dangers, thus a lifting of anxiety. The community at large stands to benefit from this ludic displacement of guilt, sin and defilement, for their collective impurity can now be relegated to a single figure. Art functions in

this way to relieve tension.

Kristeva assigns a similar tension-reducing role to laughter in the life of the Semiotically-situated infant, as Kelly Oliver explains:

> Prior to its constitution as a subject . . . the infant . . . expels sounds in order to release tension, either pain or pleasure, in order to survive. One such sound is laughter. (1993:35)[53]

In time this unfocused laughter becomes a controlled reaction, and once the child becomes a subject in the Symbolic order s/he learns to use laughter in various ways, one of which is to ridicule others. At this point laughter's ability to govern the subject's experience of pleasure and pain becomes a more fixed regulatory function. As Kristeva writes, 'laughter . . . is a way of placing or displacing abjection' (1982:8). Laughter can place, that is position, abjection, and it can displace it, i.e., repel it, put it elsewhere[54]. When laughter is used to ridicule, it is in the service of *dis*placing abjection. In shifting abjection fantasmatically onto a particular target, viz., the object of satirical attack, laughter also *places* abjection – fixes it in the body and environment of the one satirised. Placing abjection makes the relevant object abject; displacing it eases the anxious subject's degree of contact with and

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[53] Oliver derives this point from a complicated discussion in Kristeva's Desire in Language (1989:280–86). Kristeva is incredibly cryptic on this issue, to the point where no matter how hard one attempts to understand her claim it keeps slipping away; but it would appear that, for her, it is the relationship between the child, the mother, movement and space that, for some unclear reason, causes preverbal laughter. This laughter is a means of 'avoiding inhibition' (285) which becomes projected onto the mother's face (283) or onto some 'distant place that absorbs, defers, and therefore sublimates anguish' (285). I personally do not understand where Kristeva locates original laughter, but what seems clear is that laughter helps to define the space of the *chora*, to initiate an early form of object relation, and to carve out a place to act as a receptacle for the infant's projections – for the tension s/he discharges by means of laughter. In this regard laughter must be understood as fundamental in the procedure of delimiting self from other and, hence, founding the place where "I" – the ego – centres itself and the place where the unconscious accumulates all that the ego excludes in the process of this centralisation. Laughter remains throughout the subject's life a primary method of escaping those things s/he feels threatened by or which s/he does not understand because they do not accord with her or his "discriminatory grid", super-ego or Symbolic.

[54] This displacement is not to be confused with the dream process I introduced in Chapter One. By the displacement of abjection I think Kristeva principally means its resubsidence during acts of classification. What such displacement shares with dream displacement is a repressing function. Displaced into the unconscious, the abject is repressed.

contamination by the abject.

In Louis-Ferdinand Céline Kristeva finds the ultimate example of a writer who uses laughter to "place" abjection; from the matter-of-fact accumulation of abject material (e.g., corpses) he builds a laughter that questions '[a] universe of borders, seesaws, fragile and mingled identities, wanderings of the subject and its objects, fears and struggles, abjections and lyricisms' (1982:135). Goya, I would suggest, does the same thing: he *places* abjection in his works and thereby *displaces* it into the fringes of his subjectivity. He gives himself (and his viewer) an image of abjection in which they can (al)locate their anxieties and uncertainties, and so gain relief from them. The object of satirical attack is degraded while the producer, with him the viewer, is elevated above the hazardous mire. This is all merely another way of understanding the crucial dialectic between the condition to be abject and the operation to abject. Placing abjection is a process of representing the condition to be abject, and it can serve to show the viewer what s/he should displace (the operation to abject) to the margins of mental functioning.

When in the service of satire, particularly, the representation of the condition to be abject cannot be disinterested; the satirist must parade the impure and cast it in terms that provoke the receiver to ne kind of emotional agitation. Only if the receiver is lured in and driven to laughter, anger or some other appropriate feeling will s/he respond to the underlying function of the satire: to displace, subdue and control the menacing face of the abject. The comic, the grotesque, the obscene, the supernatural, these and other strategies act as the required lure; what the viewer makes of them thereafter is an individual matter. Some will take the bait and push back what the satire raises into view; others will prefer to relish the bait itself, to joy in the passions, fascinations and paradoxes of the abject for its own sake.

To sum up, then. It is in the *producer* of a work of art that the orgiastic and impure principle Kristeva relates to Aristotelian catharsis finds exemplary status. Repeating the abject through an artistic production itself undetachable from the im-

purity that feeds it, the producer (re)creates the abject anew in a more manageable and classifiable form. For him or her the indulgence in filth and obscenity can master, at least pro tem, relatively defined sets of impressions, objects, and infantile trauma. S/he brings abjection into being, into representation, *places* abjection (or, to put it another way, depicts the condition to be abject), and, cueing the reader's response through the language of the mode used (satire, Grotesque), encourages a *displacement* of abjection (the operation to abject) into the repressed, or at least into the unstable, inversive threshold between the Symbolic and the abject.

For the consumer of works of satiric art, displacement can occur *in the act of laughter* – the expulsion of sound and energy through laughter acting at the psychological level as an expulsion of abjection. Thus, the relationship between artist and audience is a symbiotic one. The artist, aiming at an ideal social state (and perhaps, underneath, a euphoric interaction with the off-limits) drags him/herself through the slime, sleaze and obscenity of society's 'sewers' to place abjection in works of art. The audience, if it treats the satire seriously and does not simply exploit its fascinations and ribald spirit – which it may well do, given the yield of pleasure promised by things that fly the coops of society's Symbolic systems – will laugh at those ridiculed in the works, and so effect a displacement that would function to restore the balance of society – a balance in which the likes of Mrs Gamp would not be permitted out of the margins, the alleys and back rooms except at times, suitably carnivalesque, when, for the communal good, she would have to again play the role of sacrificial scapegoat.

In the next part I analyse select works from Goya's most famous and most patently satirical etching series, *Los Caprichos*, in the light of the findings of Part One, and so transform what has only been theory thus far into a practical visual approach to the comprehension of the Grotesque in Goya.

Part Two
Abjection in *Los Caprichos*

As if in fear of entering the den of a savage beast, Nicolás remained in the doorway, and from there, into the middle of the darkness, he flung these words:

'Woman, are you here? . . . I can't see anything.'

'Yes, sir, I am here,' she murmured.

[. . .]

'. . . I pegged you for a woman who'd lost her way, not for one who was corrupt, and now I see that you are what is called a monster.'

[. . .]

'. . . Concubinage now; later prostitution, the abyss. Yes, the abyss. There you have it; look at it, open already, its mouth black and uglier than that of a dragon. And there is no remedy . . .'

Como el que recela penetrar en la madriguera de una bestia feroz, Nicolás permaneció en la puerta, y desde ella lanzó, en medio de la obscuridad, estas palabras:

–Mujer, ¿está usted aquí? . . . No veo nada.

–Aquí estoy, sí señor–murmuró ella.

[. . .]

. . . La tuve a usted por extraviada, no por corrompida, y ahora veo que es usted lo que se llama un monstruo.

[. . .]

. . . El amancebamiento ahora; después, la prostitución, el abismo. Sí, ahí lo tiene usted, mírelo abierto ya, con su boca negra, más fea que la boca de un dragón. Y no hay remedio . . .

(Benito Pérez Galdós, *Fortunata y Jacinta* Obras Completas: Novelas, Serie Contemporanea, II [Madrid: Aguilar, 1973] pp.724–26. [*Fortunata y Jacinta* was completed in 1887.])

Chapter Three
An Introduction to *Los Caprichos*

IN 1794 GOYA WROTE a letter to Bernardo de Iriarte, protector of the Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, in which he discussed a set of "cabinet pictures" he had painted on tin plate in 1793, while recuperating from the near-fatal illness that had gripped him during a visit to Cadiz in October 1792. According to de Salas (1979:711–12) and Sánchez and Sayre (1989:48), Goya presented the works to the Academy to demonstrate that he had recovered from his illness and was fit to resume his place as one of Spain's leading artists. The Academy judged the paintings, and Goya received its approval. (A year later he was appointed to the directorship of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, and in 1799, ironically, the year of *Los Caprichos*, he was made first painter to the King.)

Exactly which works comprised Goya's cabinet paintings remains in doubt (particularly since the minutes of the session during which the Academy viewed the works refer to eleven paintings 'on various subjects related to national pastimes' [Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:48]), but they are thought to include fourteen paintings, of which eight depict bullfights and the remainder an assortment of scenes, including *The Strolling Players* [Fig.18] and *Courtyard with Lunatics* [Fig.19].

Goya's letter to Iriarte contains his first documented use of the term 'capricho':

> To occupy my imagination, mortified by thoughts on my misfortunes, and to recover some of the large expenses they have caused me, I dedicated myself to painting a set of cabinet pictures, in which I have succeeded in making observations for which commissioned works normally provide no place, and in which caprice and invention have no scope. (January 4, 1794)[1]

Five years later *Los Caprichos*, an extended exercise in "caprice" and "invention",

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1 Para ocupar la imaginación mortificada en la consideración de mis males, y para resarcir en parte los grandes dispendios que me han ocasionado, me dedique a pintar un juego de cuadros de gabinete, en que he logrado hacer observacios a que regularmente no dan lugar las obras encargadas, y en que el capricho y la invención no tienen ensanches.



Fig.18 *The Strolling Players*



Fig.19 Courtyard with Lunatics (*Corral de Locos*)

were published, and may be viewed as the culmination of the wish Goya expressed in his letter[2].

Goya's continued interest in caprice after the cabinet paintings emerges in the two albums of drawings he produced in Sanlúcar, Cadiz and Madrid between 1796 and 1797, which were to prove critical in the genesis of *Los Caprichos*. The first, the so-called Sanlúcar album, was inspired by the artist's stay at the summer residence of María del Pilar Teresa Cayetana de Silva, the Duchess of Alba. The second, which Goya began while recovering from a minor illness at Cadiz between late 1796 and March of 1797, and completed in Madrid, has come to be known as the Madrid, or Cadiz-Madrid, album.

2 I will return to the quoted section of Goya's letter to Iriarte in my epilogue, where I will use it to show that Goya was not oblivious to art's potential to act cathartically.

The Sanlúcar drawings [e.g., Fig.20], almost without exception, are characterised by a lightness of touch and tone, suggesting that the artist's disposition during this period was unusually elevated. Women in playful and intimate poses comprise the subject matter; most are clothed, although a few are either naked or partially so. Many of these women may represent the Duchess of Alba, whose company the artist would have enjoyed on an almost daily basis during his sojourn at her residence. Generally, Goya places his figures in standing frontal positions; few are active or industrious. The album is a curious blend of unimaginative poses and a frivolous air: it has the quality of a doodle[3].



Fig.20 *Young Woman arranging Her Hair Beside Another Woman on a Bed*

The subsequent Cadiz-Madrid album is more difficult to characterise. Although it initially extends the lighthearted air of its predecessor, it undergoes some degree of change before it reaches its end, and the nature of this change has led to a fair amount of critical attention. In brief, more-or-less halfway through the album, and for a total of nine or ten drawings, Goya turns to a satirical mode that closely anticipates *Los Caprichos* [4]. Some of the images executed in this mode, e.g. *Masks, Cruel*

3 For images of the drawings see Gassier, Wilson, Lachenal, 1994:171–72, no's 356–76.

4 Among others, Gassier, Wilson, Lachenal (1994:118–23, especially pages 119 and 120) and López-Rey (1970:9, 55) divide the Cadiz-Madrid album into parts, subscribing to an



Fig.21 Masks, Cruel Ones (*Máscaras, Crueles*)



Fig.22 Caricatures, The Wife asks the Husband for an Explanation (*Caricaturas/Le pide cuentas la Mujer al Marido*)

Ones (*Mascaras crueles*) [Fig.21] and *Caricatures, The Wife asks the Husband for an Explanation* (*Caricaturas, le pide cuentas la Mujer al Marido*) [Fig.22], show a manifest interest in masquerade and caricature. This interest, continued in *Los Caprichos*, has led many observers to assume that Goya was influenced by the satirical prints then being produced in England by the likes of Rowlandson and Gillray.

Xavier de Salas, in 1979, was the first to assertively introduce Goya scholarship

idea that after a certain point the entire tone of the drawings changes. In this view, the lightness of the Sanlúcar album is 'invaded by the irrational world' (Gassier, Wilson, Lachenal, 1994:119). There is no visual support for this assumption. The first trace of satire surfaces in drawing no. 49, in which a woman is seen with a pot-bellied man; then in number 55, *Masks, Cruel Ones*, a *maja* joins the company of two masked men. Thereafter we do indeed enter the album as Gassier, Wilson and Lachenal see it: no's 56 to 63 are all distinguished by their grotesque subject matter; their titles, almost without exception, identify masks, caricatures or witches as central. But from no. 64 on masks and caricatures disappear save for two drawings depicting asses dressed as men and a few drawings in which Goya treats some of the protagonists as caricatures. Otherwise, the subject matter has little or nothing to do with an "irrational world". Where it does, admittedly, differ from the more lighthearted subjects prior to no. 49 is in its consistent satirical approach.

to this apparent link between Goya's *Caprichos* and English prints[5]. De Salas suggests that Goya came into contact with English satirists through his friend, the playwright Leandro Fernández Moratín, who returned to Spain in 1796 after a world tour of some four years. Moratín had spent over a year in London and, as his own diary reveals (1979:712, 715), was taken by the qualities of English caricatures. Moratín and Goya were both in Cadiz between late 1796 and early 1797, and the playwright's diary records meetings between the two men. It is possible that Moratín brought copies of English prints back from England, which, it stands to reason, he would have shown to his artist friend (1979:715; also Glendinning, 1981*b*:244). I should clarify that Goya was in Cadiz to recover from a slight recurrence of his 1792 illness, residing in the home of his friend Sebastián Martínez, who had an impressive library and art collection. According to Askew, the art collection 'included prints by Hogarth' (1988:301; also see Wolf, 1987:105–6; worth noting in this regard is Glendinning's article 'Goya's Patrons', which lists the contents of Martínez's collection [1981*b*:244]). This direct contact, if verifiable, would have further deepened Goya's link with the English satirical tradition.

Further connections between Goya's work and that of the English caricaturists were highlighted in 1991 by the travelling exhibition 'Goya and the satirical print in England and on the continent, 1730 to 1850'. In his brief review of this exhibition in Art in America, Thomas Frick reproduces a few examples to demonstrate 'how a limited store of satirical characters and themes was appropriated and redeployed over the years and from country to country' (1992:55). These include: *They are Hot* [Fig.23], which the exhibition related to Hogarth's *A Midnight Modern Conversation* [Fig.24] (a relation that may be a little attenuated); *And He Himself burns the House*

5 Although others had previously made mention of it. Count Joseph de Maistre was the first, in a letter he wrote in 1808 (see Glendinning, 1977:63). Gombrich alluded to the relationship between Goya and the English satirists in his 1949 article 'Imagery and Art in the Romantic Period'. Strangely enough, he makes the allusion on the basis of something he uncovered in a text – unspecified in Gombrich's notes – by F. D. Klingender, dating from 1944 (Gombrich, 1994*a*:124 and *n*.17).

[Fig.25] (which was linked, credibly, to another Hogarth print, *After* [Fig.26]); and the prints *This certainly is reading* [Fig.27] and *She Plucks Him* [Fig.28], which the exhibition linked to earlier and later prints, including a Hogarth (the enclosed barber scene to the left of the print *Night* [Fig.29]). The exhibition team did not use these and other examples to show explicit influence, but rather to provide a picture of an eighteenth-century Europe in which certain ideas and themes circulated, furnishing several artists in different countries with material for similar artistic statements[6].

The most comprehensive study to date on the link between Goya and the satirical print in England is Reva Wolf's Ph.D. Francisco Goya and the Interest in British Art and Aesthetics in Late Eighteenth-Century Spain. Among the important points she raises is the following:

> A commonplace in the recent literature on Goya is that the prints which he would have seen in Martínez' collection during visits to Cádiz in 1792-93 and 1796-97 had an important influence on his work. But Goya also could have become familiar with the latest foreign trends in art without ever having left Madrid. As the newspaper advertisements make clear, by the mid-1780s British prints were well known and a desirable commodity in the Spanish capital, far away from the southern port of Cadiz. (1987:52)

However Goya came into contact with them – and clearly more than one circumstance fomented this contact – it seems indisputable that he did encounter British prints while working on the Cadiz-Madrid album, and that they determined, at least in part, the conception and form of *Los Caprichos*[7].

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6 Though the connection between Goya and the continent is not my area of interest, in the course of research I nevertheless came across a few other prints that suggest influence, e.g., Rowlandson's *Transplanting of Teeth* [Fig.30], which reminds one strongly of Goya's attack on quack dentists in *To the Count Palatine* [Fig.3], and Gillray's *The Finishing Touch* [Fig.31], which is so close to Goya's *Until Death* [Fig.32] that direct influence seems likely.

7 Other factors would also have played a role, but since I want to maintain the focus of my discussion on satire – given that it provides the keynote for Part Two of the thesis – the most I can do here is briefly list some of the more significant of these factors:

(1) Goya's illness of 1792–3. Falling just short of claiming his life, it left him permanently deaf, and has been consistently cited to explain the emergence in his outlook of an almost misanthropic pessimism and bitterness not evident earlier in his career. (Askew reviews this and other traditional views of the "turning point" in Goya's art in her Ph.D. thesis, 1988:155–61]. Her footnote 6 [155] provides a bibliography including most books that treat Goya's illness as a hallmark event.) Other writers, such as Edith Helman, have argued against this



Fig.23 They are Hot (*Estan Calientes*)



Fig.24 Hogarth, *A Midnight Modern Conversation*



Fig.25 And He Himself burns the House (*Y se le quema la Casa*)



Fig.26 Hogarth, *After*



Fig.27 This certainly is Reading (*Esto si que es Leer*)



Fig.28 She plucks Him (*Le descañona*)



Fig.29 Hogarth, Detail of *Night*



Fig.30 Rowlandson, *Transplanting of Teeth*

Fig.31 Gillray, *The Finishing Touch*





Fig.32 Until Death (*Hasta la Muerte*)

In 1797 Goya used the excuse of poor health to withdraw from his position as Director of Painting at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts – a post he had held since 1795. This move freed him the time to work with focus and pace on those subjects

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view (see Glendinning, 1977:206), claiming that *Los Caprichos* intensified trends already apparent in the earlier work. Most modern scholars take a middle road, acknowledging that an experience as traumatic as Goya's illness and his subsequent deafness *must* have affected his later work, while granting that "threads of caprice" – to borrow the title of Janis Tomlinson's Ph.D. thesis (1981) – were visible in the earlier work.

(2) Goya's affair with the Duchess of Alba. Although the veracity of the affair continues to be debated, there is circumstantial evidence (e.g., the drawings in the Sanlúcar album, the words "Solo Goya" [Only Goya] drawn in the sand in Goya's 1797 portrait of the Duchess as a *maja*, and the unusual gesture the Duchess made to include Goya's son Javier in her will [Askew, 1988:296]) that, even if they never progressed as far as a sexual relationship, they did grow intimate during the period Goya spent at Sanlúcar. Some writers have claimed that the Duchess spurned Goya's alleged love for her, and thereby played a significant role in shaping not only his midlife attitude to women but his general vision of humanity. Gassier, Wilson and Lachenal, in their important catalogue Goya: Life and Work, taking for granted that the relationship between Goya and the Duchess turned sour, write:

> Already cut off from the outside world by his deafness, Goya withdrew into a private world of dreams and caricatures where fantasy and eroticism, which he had just experienced so painfully, were to combine in the creation of a new art. (1994:123)

This is the epitome of the once-fashionable view that Goya withdrew into the world of "dreams" and "caricatures" (an allusion to *Los Caprichos*) because he was deaf and had just been emotionally mauled by a thirty-four-year-old beauty whose every hair inspired desire. (On the erotic power of the Duchess's hair see Askew, 1988:293, and Gassier, Wilson, Lachenal, 1994:117). Biographical support for such a view is difficult to find, and even if it is authentic, one cannot claim it as the sole cause of Goya's supposed retreat into fantasy.

(3) Goya's stay in Cadiz, which might have given him the opportunity to see the 1797 Cadiz Carnival – a likely source for his interest in Carnival imagery, strongly reflected in some works in the Cadiz-Madrid album (see Heckes, 1985:39–40; and Askew, 1988:324) – and to experience the hustle and bustle of the city itself, which, Askew claims, may have been influential:

> Cadiz itself, a large trading center filled with foreign merchants, was one of the most liberal cities in Spain and notorious for wide circulation of forbidden revolutionary literature . . . Goya may well have been exposed to radical ideas and French propaganda prints during his sojourn. (301)

(4) the political situation in Spain at the time, particularly the intrigues at court, which may have offered opportunities for satire that Goya could not resist (e.g., the alleged amorous relationship between Queen María Luisa and Manuel Godoy). Whether Goya mocked actual political figures in *Los Caprichos* remains moot, and certainly should not be viewed as a major premise for the etching project, but such an image as the one he excluded from the published series, *The Old Lady and Her Beaux* [Fig.33] – which appears to portray the Queen entertaining a young man – is suggestive.

(5) *costumbrista* prints. (For a brief definition of these prints and a reference to a text with further information, see Chapter One, footnote 58).

(6) *comedias de Magia*. These "magic plays" provided a popular form of entertainment in the eighteenth century, which relied on exaggeration and stage tricks for its impact (see Askew, 1988:36–38). In their embrace of plotlessness, excess, whimsy, hybridity and metamorphosis, they do strike me as similar in spirit to the theatricality of Goya's *Caprichos*.



Fig.33 *The Old Lady and Her Beaux*

that suited his desire for "capricho" and "invention", and he soon completed the albums and began drawings for a set of satirical prints which he originally planned to call *Sueños* (*Dreams*). As mentioned in Chapter One, the idea of *sueños* has a long history, its most illustrious advocate being the seventeenth-century poet Francisco de Quevedo. According to López-Rey (1970:99)[8], Quevedo's *Sueños* were reprinted in 1791, which leads one to assume that Goya came into (re)contact with Quevedo's work at some point prior to 1797, and was certainly influenced by the early master's

[8] López-Rey's subsequent comparison between the works of Goya and Quevedo (1970: 100-1) makes for interesting reading. The differences he cites demonstrate to what extent Goya treated Quevedo as an influence or mentor, not a source or prototype to be aped in the manner of a "servile copyist".

satirical stance[9]. Where the English caricatures would have helped Goya with imagery and composition, Quevedo's poetry would have offered conceptual, thematic and narrative possibilities.

Goya adapted many of his *Sueños* drawings for etching, transferring all but two directly to the plate[10]. At this point Goya's original *Sueños* project transformed into *Los Caprichos*.

On Wednesday 6 February 1799 an advertisement for *Los Caprichos* appeared in the *Diario de Madrid*. It covered the newspaper's front page and offered a somewhat impersonal prospectus on the etching series, replete with apologias, justifications and defences against future criticism (for more, revisit Chapter One).

Los Caprichos sets were put on sale, for 320 reales each (Askew, 1988:153)[11], at a shop retailing perfume and spirits in the Calle del Desengaño (Wilson-Bareau, 1996: 3). Sale of the work did not go well, and on February 19 an abbreviated notice was printed in another of Madrid's leading newspapers, the *Gaceta de Madrid*. Sales did not improve, and not long afterwards, *Los Caprichos* were withdrawn from the market[12]. The speed of their removal, taken with Goya's decision to sell them in a perfumery rather than a bookshop (which, according to Wilson-Bareau, was the norm [23]), has led some scholars, most notably Sayre, to assume that the artist had rea-

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9 In books on Spanish literary history it is not uncommon to find a reference to Goya when one reads up on Quevedo (e.g., Bell, 1938:118–19, and Brenan, 1965:266). Brenan, in fact, refers to Goya's *Caprichos* and *Disparates* as 'commentaries' on Quevedo's *Sueños*.

10 Probably the best available source for information on the transformation of the *Sueños* into *Los Caprichos* is Askew, 1988:384–92, 425–28, 463–76.

11 As Wolf points out, the sale of etchings in bound sets was unusual in Goya's Spain. More commonly, individual prints were sold, and if prints formed a series they would still be sold individually on an instalment basis. However, in England, bound volumes of satirical prints were more common. Wolf argues that Goya probably derived the idea for selling *Los Caprichos* in sets from the English model (1987:93–97; also see Askew, 1988:153–54).

12 To complete the history of the series: in 1803 Goya, possibly with the help of Godoy (Wilson-Bareau, 1996:23), offered the remaining 240 sets of *Los Caprichos* to the Royal Chalcography in return for a travel pension for his son Xavier.

son to fear a more than critical response to his work. A bookshop, according to Sayre, would have been risky for such a retail venture 'since the numerous purveyors of books and prints in Madrid were subject to visits from Inquisition inspectors', who were charged with preserving 'not only . . . the status quo of faith but also of the state and of the society from which it derived its power' (in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:c). Other writers, Askew in particular (1988:156–57, 455–60), have criticised this explanation for the withdrawal of *Los Caprichos*[13]. Goya himself did, however, in an 1825 letter to his friend Joaquín Ferrer, claim that he had been forced to withdraw the prints under threat of the Inquisition. Since no documentation exists of a trial, it is somewhat difficult to account for Goya's statement, and there are arguments about its truthfulness.

Wherever the truth about these questions lies, there is no doubting their common origin in the enigma of Goya's satire. I would argue that some scholars have linked the financial failure of *Los Caprichos* to the subject matter of the etchings because they believe Goya *did* ridicule definite historical individuals. The individuals thus ridiculed would not have bought or endorsed the etchings, for obvious reasons, and the subjects of these individuals would also not have bought the prints because they would thereby have appeared complicitous. This is the same as claiming that the etchings failed because they condemned too harshly, i.e., they rejected and degraded – that is, *abjected* – their objects too emphatically – were too successful. On this trajectory, one could claim that Goya's objects of satirical attack were too abject for localised or widespread consumption. In his attempts to degrade others Goya may have degraded himself, turned himself into an abject entity in Madrid society, with which most strata of the society declined contact.

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13 She suggests, instead, that the withdrawal of the prints had to do with the volatile religious conflict between the forces of Jansenism and the Jesuits that entered an especially heated phase precisely around the time Goya published his prints. Since many of the *Caprichos* are anti-clerical in a way that would have made Goya appear to be a Jansenist supporter, he may have withdrawn his prints to spare himself from becoming embroiled in potentially dangerous political debates (1988:357–58, 459–60, 481–86).

This is not the angle I take in my forthcoming analyses of select works, because it would require a research project in its own right and because the theory that Goya's satires targeted specific individuals is not my premise. Instead I attempt to show that the reason the etchings work as satires is because they use what I have chosen to term the abject body, abject environments and abject behaviour *to abject* – again my terminology, not Goya's – their objects of attack.

I couch my discussion of individual works between brackets, which act as a symbolic porous container for the separate analyses. I use Goya's most famous Capricho, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters,* to open the bracket, and leave it yawning on the other side with an examination of *And Still They do not go!*, which I read as a lament over the persistence of the monsters released while Reason slept.

Open Bracket: *The Sleep of Reason produces Monsters*

The Sleep of Reason produces Monsters[1] [Fig.34] is one of Goya's most demonstrative and emblematic works, and can be taken on to illustrate any number of viewpoints, positions and ideologies. An eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinker might have used it to exemplify the perils of deserting reason. A theologian could use it to point out what happens when one allows oneself to fall into a sinful sleep apart from God. A psychoanalyst might use it to demonstrate the emergence of the unconscious during the sleep of the conscious. I use it as an emblem of the appearance of abjection in the absence of Symbolic control.

A man sits in an awkward position at his desk, evidently asleep. The writing materials beneath his folded arms suggest that he is a writer who has worked himself beyond exhaustion into unconsciousness. The result of this unconsciousness emerges from the shadows behind him in the form of bats, owls, a black cat (which may be clambering over the backrest of his chair) and, lying on the ground to the bottom right of the picture, a lynx. One owl, its wings aglow, perches on the sleeper's back, while another holds out a pen to him. As some writers have pointed out (Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:115, and Ilie, 1984*a*), these animals are not monsters in the sense of fictional, invented creatures, but are transcriptions from the natural

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1 Goya's title, *El Sueño de la Razón produce Monstruos* (which appears within the etching – Goya's only use of a title within an image), has itself been variously interpreted, primarily because the noun Goya uses, *sueño*, can also mean *dream* in English. Thus the title could be translated as *The* Dream *of Reason produces Monsters*. This, as Ilie demonstrates in his article 'Goya's Teratology and the Critique of Reason' (1984*a*), opens a fresh can of worms because it can imply (1) that in dreaming (i.e., fantasising) about reason one produces monsters – thus, *reason* is potentially monstrous, or (2) that reason itself – the abstract quality of the mind – is dreaming, and in so doing produces monsters, which is pretty much another way of stating point one. Though Ilie seems attracted to this interpretation, I find it untenable. The image clearly portrays sleep and the dreams of sleep. If we understand reason as a faculty of conscious processes – as Enlightenment thinking and, I would hazard, Goya's thinking, would have understood it – then it would not have been linked with processes occurring during sleep. What is monstrous here is not the dreams of a *conscious* faculty (reason), but those of an *unconscious* activity (sleep), which excludes reason. These, in their turn, might then be symbolic of the kind of slumber of reason that leads to superstition, belief in the supernatural, ignorance and all the other deformities of conviction that the inconstant and manipulable human mind is heir to.

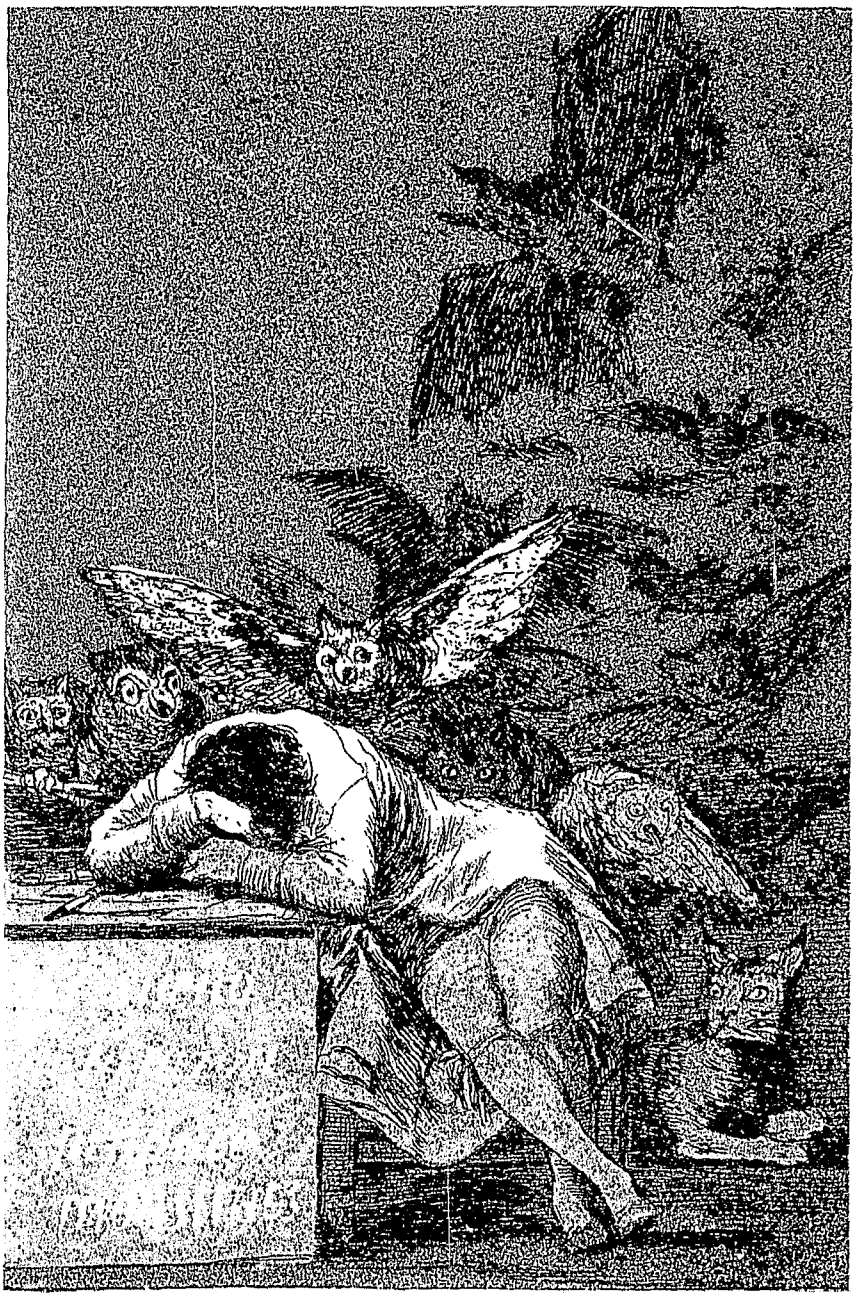

Fig.34 The Sleep of Reason produces Monsters (*El Sueño de la Razón produce Monstruos*)

world. Their attributes as sinister animals of the night do, however, give them the connotations of monsters every bit as disconcerting as those Goya produced from his imagination (e.g., the half-seen beasts in *Who would believe It!* [Fig.83]). The owl offering the pen is possibly the most sinister of the entire mob: it seems to expect the sleeper to take the pen and act as a scribe for the underworld, an amanuensis who will promulgate a fresh tale, a new history: that of the world beyond, or rather beneath, the conscious, the world of Ruskin's gaps and Kayser's abyss[2]. Does Goya imply that the sleeper must at all cost avoid taking up that pen, avoid any collaboration with the monsters, or does he suggest that the sleeper – whether he represents the artist or an Enlightenment thinker – accept the pen and, at the risk of damning himself, write the owl's story to its detriment and the benefit of all those who support the cause of reason? The fact that *Los Caprichos* form a visual text in which the owl's world is a leitmotif clearly represented to condemn the dark (unreason) and champion the light (reason), favours the latter interpretation.

I read the monsters idiosyncratically, as symbolic of the uncontrollable productions of the unconscious. A person falls asleep, and with the conscious out the way the unconscious steps onto the platform of the mind. This is more than just an entertainment, however: the unconscious is a part of our existence over which we have no control, a place of pleasure (your proverbial "sweet" dreams) and unpleasure (nightmare), a place of impossible occurrences and impossible forms where narratives unwind according to irrational plots, and in which people and events are scrambled, combined and dispersed. Goya associates this place with monsters, with the nightmare portion of dreams, the dark side of the unconscious.

If we thus say that the monsters represent the abysmal preverbal aspects of the unconscious (the owl gives the pen to the sleeper: it cannot write its own story), we must understand "reason" as their opposite, namely, language and symbolicity. In

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2 In my suggestion that the owl wishes the sleeper to act as its scribe I have been to some extent preempted by López-Rey (1970:137).

short, we can set up a dichotomy between the abject (monsters) and the Symbolic (reason). When the Symbolic is temporarily suspended, the abject comes to the fore.

This is what I argued in Part One, Chapter One, where I stressed that the abject emerges in the gaps and is first experienced as uncanny or, more significantly, grotesque. What is the gap in Goya's image? The absence of reason. In this sense Ilie is correct: '[t]he grotesque mode, with Goya, crosses the Romantic threshold into a new phase governed by esthetic values . . . like imagination and dream [that] destabilize the Enlightenment sensibility and give prominence for the first time to the concept of monstrosity' (1984*a*:35). What one must bear in mind, however – and this will become evident in the analyses of this chapter – is my argument that Goya gave "prominence to monstrosity" to *support* reason.

In Capricho 43 Goya appears to tell us two things: (1) if you don't keep a tight rein on your reason you're going to slip into the abyss of the monstrous (in my terms: lose yourself in abjection); (2) the monstrous needs to be portrayed in image (the etching) and text (the narrative the owl would have the sleeper write) to act as a deterrent to those who stray to the brink for a quick look. The act of representing the monstrous is one of *placing* abjection, and its end result – the one I must assume Goya intended, even granting his terms were different to mine – is a *displacement* of abjection by the viewer. Goya wants his audience to prevent the emergence or return of the monsters of unreason – however one chooses to define them – by staying awake (in the most common figurative sense).

Throughout the coming etchings, with the exception of a few in which his intention is unclear or equivocal, Goya uses satire to degrade the objects of his attack into the abyss of the monstrous (abject, in my reading), thereby to exclude them from a society based on reason. Goya is an ambivalent artist; in that he repeatedly uses satirical distortion and monstrosity to ridicule clerics, nobles and prostitutes, he appears to relish the excessiveness and liberality of the distortion itself; but in that he almost always seems to be contrasting his subject matter to a

moral purpose disclosed as much, sometimes more, in the titles and commentaries to the prints as in the prints themselves, he emerges as a satirist seeking, if not to reform, at least speak to, his wayward society. He wants to make the norm attractive, and assumes that the best way to do this is by displaying an extreme, grotesque abnorm against which his viewers can contrast the norms of Symbolic law, and so persuade themselves away from what they *will be* if they do not buy into his high moral plan. This, as I have already claimed, is my interpretative focus; it does not exclude the possibility, however, that in those obscure and irrecuperable fringes of Goya's subjectivity the ambivalence itself and the contact with excess, obscenity, aberration and the partly forbidden may have ameliorated his anxiety, or, for that matter, increased his yield of pleasure. We must allow that Goya could have affirmed his ego both by bedding with the abject, so to speak, and by using vilifying processes to separate himself from it (the former activity servicing the id, the latter servicing the super-ego). Since the divisive process is the one I perceive most clearly, in *Los Caprichos* at any rate, it is the one I concentrate on.

The sleeper in the etching seems to some extent to be a self portrait, which implies that Goya feared the sleep of reason. In this line of argument, he took up his etching tools to combat unreason, and portrayed its results to relieve himself of its dangers. One delimits an invisible foe, uses the imagination to create representations of the unseen, and so combats the menace through images. If *The Sleep of Reason produces Monsters* represents the relationship in which the artist feels he stands to the invisible monstrous menace, the other etchings in *Los Caprichos* are the images that help him awake and chase the monsters back into the abyss, even if only for a little while.

Section One: Targets of Direct Satirical Attack

In this first section of Part Two I look at images in which Goya's attitude to his satirical object is self-evident and unambiguous – images in which he exposes a character or set of characters to ridicule and degradation, thereby, to put it in my terms, abjecting them. His primary objects of contempt are women of questionable morals, idle nobles, gluttonous clerics, corrupters of the law and those who struggle to their detriment for positions of mastery. Through systematic analyses in which I try to balance available information and interpretations of the etchings with my own readings, I demonstrate how Goya's censure of these targets degrades them, both in the image and by virtue of the position the viewer is influenced to adopt by the image. Goya uses satire, and the things that brace satire, e.g., the Grotesque and masquerade, to either portray the deficiencies of a social group that he sees as inherently loathsome or corrupt (e.g., prostitutes) or to deflate the importance of groups inserted into society's places of authority (e.g., clerics and nobles) because he believes they have corrupted the ideals society vests in them. In both cases I argue that Goya's procedure can be understood as a use of the abject (e.g., the deformed body) *to abject* (cast out) his targeted individuals from the Symbolic structure (society) into the abject (a place of exclusion and rejection, beyond the boundaries of the accepted). He uses satire to influence collective thinking in the hope of bringing about reform against those he targets in his etchings.

Chapter Four
Women of Questionable Morals

GOYA HAS MUCH TO say about women in *Los Caprichos*, mostly about their avarice in contracting marriages and about their sexual exorbitancy. Almost characteristically unsympathetic, he renders them in one of three ways: (1) naturalistically (Goya's prostitutes and procuresses, in which the artist frequently contrasts the youthful classical beauty of the prostitutes with the aged, greed-contorted faces of the bawds), (2) masked – such women are rare in the series, but when they do appear they are normally up to some kind of marital mischief, (3) as witches, in which case the prostitutes and procuresses of before are transformed into florid examples of female depravity.

In this chapter I deal with examples of each of these forms of rendering.

1. Naturalistically-rendered women

In this section I concern myself with three etchings, *God forgive Her: and it was Her Mother, All will Fall*, and its companion piece *Now they go Plucked*. The latter works have non-naturalistic fantasy elements in them (bird people), but the female figures in both are treated naturalistically.

In *God forgive Her: and it was Her Mother* (*Dios la perdone. Y era su Madre*) [Fig.35] a young woman stands tall in the middle of the composition, one gloved arm proudly caught in mid-swing, a fan in her other hand, absurdly turned-out feet planted on the ground. She shows her back to an old woman in the foreground of the print, who submissively begs for alms. The young woman's response to the beggar is clear in her eyes, which gaze at the viewer and reflect no acknowledgement of, interest in, or sympathy for the one who has accosted her.

The Prado commentary on the etching is practically a short story: *The young woman left home as a small child; did her apprenticeship in Cadiz, came to Madrid; won*



Fig.35 God Forgive Her: And it was Her Mother (*Dios la perdone: Y era Su Madre*)

the lottery. Going to the Prado, she hears a grimy and decrepit old woman ask her for alms; she sends her away; the old woman insists. The affected lady turns around and finds . . . who could foresee it? . . . that the poor wretch is her mother[1].

The commentary outlines something of an inverted prodigal-child story – a daughter goes out to the world while still green to forge a life, but instead of crashing to the mud and returning to her mother's house in rags, the opposite happens: she prospers while her home self-destructs, and now, faced with the chance of returning to her mother (but on her own terms, not those of her parent) she turns away. The commentary's allusions to prostitution complicate this picture. The first hint that the young woman is not simply a "petimetra" (or fashionable lady), as the commentary labels her, is the word "apprenticeship" (or trade), which, on the other textual evidence, can be read as instruction in the ways of the street-walker. What other "textual evidence" is there? Firstly, the phrase "won the lottery", which could refer not to an actual lottery but a metaphorical one: the financial rewards of being a successful prostitute. Secondly, the location: the "Prado". According to Sayre (in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:86), the Prado (i.e., promenade) was in Goya's time a place where professional prostitutes went for 'walks'; hence the young woman's walk could be viewed as part of her nightly routine to sustain her profession. Thirdly, the word *pobretona* ("poor wretch"), which carries the subtext harlot. The final allusion is the title "mother", commonly applied in Goya's day to procuresses: the old women who, while acting as go-betweens and teachers for their prostitutes, become surrogate mothers.

Returning to the etching, it is easy to identify the old woman as a fallen procuress by her clothes (which are similar to both the young woman's and that of other bawds in Goya's works) and, more significantly, by her rosary. Sayre explains that 'in

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1 La señorita salió muy niña de su tierra; hizo su aprendizaje en Cádiz, vino a Madrid; la cayó la lotería. Baja al Prado, oye que una vieja mugrienta y decrépita la pide limosna, ella la despide, ynsta la vieja. Vuélvese la petimetra y halla . . . quién lo diría? . . . que la pobretona es su madre. (From López-Rey, 1970:192)

Spain the universal symbol of the [procuress] was an elderly hand prominently fingering a rosary' (Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:97; also consult Alcalá Flecha, 1988:375–77). It is likely, then, that this woman is not the young lady's biological mother, but a former bawd who showed the "fashionable lady" the ropes of her sensual career. In spurning her, the young woman denies the role the old "mother" played in winning the "lottery" on her pupil's behalf.

Now, some viewers of this etching may look at the stance of the young woman and decide that she is not turning away from the old woman but toward her. The commentary, after all, defines this moment as an act of turning back, not away. Whether the exact action she is taking is one of turning back or away does not alter my reading that she is spurning the "mother", since Goya's title – "God forgive her, *and* it was her mother" – only makes sense if we attribute to her attitude as a whole the indifference evident on her face. The title is clearly asking, in a tongue-in-cheek way, that God forgive the woman because she has chosen to ignore her "mother". The title is in the past tense, it is a comment on an already completed act – the act of turning, ignoring, spurning. And '[t]he violence of this turning away,' as August Mayer writes, 'is denoted by an "unnatural" position of the feet, making us feel intensely the acute bodily and spiritual wrench' (in Glendinning, 1977:152).

Now, reading the print psychoanalytically, one notes that in turning away from the "mother", the "daughter" (re)enacts the primary split Freud claims the female subject puts into effect during the Oedipal phase: she rejects the mother as an object of love – the strongest motive for which, in Freud's system, is 'the reproach that her mother did not give her a proper penis' (1991*n*:381)[2] – and takes the father as her model (represented by the unseen male partners that Goya's young woman meets with in the course of her professional life). In doing this the woman upholds

2 It is not, however, the only motive. Others include the mother's prohibition of the daughter's masturbatory activity and the daughter's dissatisfaction at her mother's failure to suckle her enough (see Freud, 1991*n*:371–92).

the Symbolic. In the process, however, she detaches from the mother and denies all contact with her at the level of desire. In other words, she *abjects* the mother, just as all subjects, male or female, originally abject the mother to achieve full Symbolic investiture. The young prostitute does not want "that", her mother, for that former source of plenitude (in the sense that she contracted appointments for the young woman and brought her financial security) is a tie to a dependent past in which her identity was intermixed with her "mother's". The "mother" is a drawback in her new life, and an object worthy only of abjection. Furthermore, the old woman is also a beggar; socially and financially, she is in an abject position, which makes her an object of some repulsion from the outset. It is that much easier for the young woman to turn away, to impose the operation to abject and so cast her surrogate parent into the category of abject things.

In short, I have chosen to interpret the etching in terms of 'normative' Oedipal psychology. The prostitute is only doing what all female subjects are expected to do. Where, then, is the satire? To find it, I must reintroduce Goya, the producer. For Goya, it would appear that the young woman is acting intolerably by turning her back on a surrogate mother who has been laid low by the caprices of time. Thus, even though we must assume, in the light of his general comment, that both prostitute and procuress are objects of repulsion to him, he associates 'normative' ethical standards with them – he expects them to obey the commandments society consensually claims to obey, such as Honour Thy Father and thy Mother. It is because the young woman disobeys this commandment, thereby withholding due respect from her surrogate mother, that she becomes the object of greatest contempt in the image. In other words, for Goya, she falls flat on moral grounds. The procuress is a reprehensible figure, one whose dedication to a cause other than child-rearing (to a cause, indeed – as we will see in due course – that even involves the murder of offspring) places her outside the social set, and Goya understandably depicts her in poverty, showing that she is reaping what she sowed. But it is the *prostitute* whom

Goya most wants the audience to scold and spurn, not so much because of her occupation, but because she dares to break a commandment, a law. It would seem that, in Goya's eyes, there is nothing worse than an individual who turns her back on a moral precept, and so denies the dictates of the Symbolic's representative in the individual, the super-ego. Thus, even as she follows the Symbolic by spurning what it spurns, she loses Symbolic credibility on the grounds of a different law.

In the etchings *All will Fall* and *Now they go Plucked* Goya is more interested in the consequences of prostitution per se.

In Capricho 19, *All will Fall* (*Todos caerán*) [Fig.36], Goya allows that *men* are responsible for what he sees as a demise when their sexual urges lead them to seek gratification in sex workers, but the difference in his treatment of the men and the prostitutes leaves the viewer in little doubt as to whom he sees as more depraved.

The upper register of the image is dominated by a twisted tree rigged with a platform on which a buxom bird-woman perches while a constellation of bird-men hone in on her[3]. In the lower register of the print, three women, considerably larger in scale than the bird-figures in the upper section, are seated. The old one on the left is recognisably a procuress, making the younger ones, who manhandle a plucked bird-man, prostitutes.

The operations within the print are not difficult to grasp. The bird-woman on the perch is a lure – 'a sign advertising a brothel', as an anonymous French writer contemporaneous with Goya so eloquently put it (quoted in Glendinning, 1977:64)[4]

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3 At least three of these bird-men are distinctly characterised. The one on the left has frequently been interpreted as a representation of Godoy, while the one closest to the bird-woman has been identified as Goya; further back is a bird-man with a cowl over his head and other indications of a habit, implying a member of the clergy.

4 The bird-woman is a deceptive object, real enough to beguile the gullible, but otherwise just a sign. Yet, if one reads the following passage from that (in)famous manual on witchcraft, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, one begins to believe that men – or at least some of them – have through the centuries viewed flesh-and-blood women in the same way: 'What else is woman but a foe to friendship, an unescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil of nature, painted with fair colours!' (quoted in Creed, 1994:75).



Fig.36 All will Fall (*Todos Caerán*)

– to bring in men and foster the sex industry. Those who take the bait are snatched out of the air by the procuress and handed to the prostitutes, who pluck, that is, 'fleece', them[5]. There is no help for these luckless souls, says the Prado manuscript: *And those who do not learn the lesson are going to fall, following the example of those who have fallen! But there is no remedy: all will fall*[6]. All, that is, who allow themselves to fall for a decoy.

All will Fall is in this sense a more emphatic version of *She prays for Her* (*Ruega por Ella*) [Fig.37], in which three women – one prostitute, one maid (or another prostitute) and a procuress – interact within a dark interior.



Fig.37 She prays for Her (*Ruega por Ella*)

Both prints (along with *Now They go Plucked*, which I discuss next) bear out Jutta

5 I will explore the connection between plucking and 'fleecing', i.e., robbing, in my discussion of *Now they go, Plucked.*

6 Y que no escarmienten los que van a caer con el ejemplo de los que han caído. Pero no hay remedio, todos caerán. (Adapted from López-Rey, 1970:193)

Held's point that

> [a] significant feature of the cultural upheavals of the late eighteenth century was the criminalisation of . . . old forms of matchmaking. The bourgeois Enlightenment felt that relations of love and marriage ought to be made to coincide, and sought to make this a moral rule. Premarital relations, previously half tolerated, were now bitterly denounced as prostitution. The traditional matchmaking services of the procuress thus fell into disrepute. In Goya's rendering of this "illicit" traffic in love, there is none of the passion and feeling that traditionally had been a feature of stories of love affairs struck up outside the arranged marriage – think for example of Romeo and Juliet. What he emphasises rather is secrecy, mistrust, contempt and mutual exploitation. (1987:47)

Another thing he emphasises is deception and fatalistic temptation. He claims in both etchings that prostitutes display themselves to deliberately entrap men. In *She prays for Her*, the foreground woman, the prostitute, her left leg snug and shapely in a stocking, is evidently meant to lure the viewer into a scenario that can, of course, only act out fantasmatically. It is as if Goya uses her to test the moral fibre of his audience. She is the naturalistic version of the bird-woman in Capricho 19, but whereas Goya in *She prays for Her* leaves the seduction and subsequent fall to the imagination of the viewer, in *All will Fall* he graphically exhibits it, and it is not a pretty sight.

In 1959, in his important article 'Some Emblematic Sources of Goya', George Levitine went to emblem books to find possible sources for Goya's etchings[7]. '[The] universal language [of emblems],' Levitine writes, 'was very much alive in the eighteenth century [and] was not forgotten in Spain at the time of Goya.' (1959: 106–7) Levitine's discussion of *All will Fall* bears this statement out: the emblems he provides as sources for the Capricho are more than a little convincing (109–10, and plate page 15). One of the emblems dates from 1579 and illustrates winged fools

7 Martin Soria originated the emblematic line of study in 1948 with his article 'Goya's Allegories of Fact and Fiction'. Other writers who have investigated emblematic sources include Folke Nordström, Goya, Saturn and Melancholy (1962) and Sten Ake Nilsson, 'The Ass Sequence in Los Caprichos' (1978). I should point out that very few credible connections have been drawn between Goya's etchings and emblems; they do not, therefore, constitute a reliable or comprehensive source for context-based readings or the kind of reading I offer here, pointing to Goya's refashioning of emblematic themes.

first flying into, then falling out of, a dovecote, while a foreground woman gestures to the viewer as if to say 'You see what happens to fools?' [Fig.38].



Fig.38 Dovecote Emblem, *Amatorum Caesitas*

The other emblem is dated 1627 and shows almost the identical scene, except that there are now two women, who fish or sieve the men out of the pond they have fallen into from the dovecote [Fig.39].

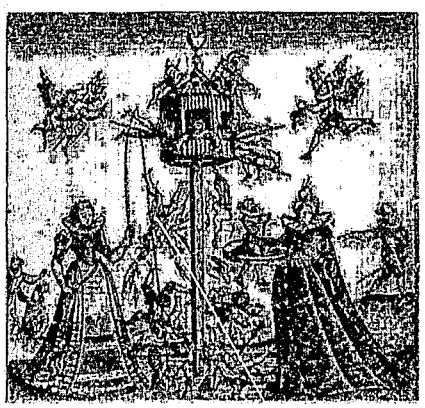

Fig.39 Dovecote Emblem, *Columbarium Puellarum*

Licht suggests another source for the theme of *All will Fall*: '[t]he motif of "love birds" having their wings clipped' (1980:94). Goya's image is a bleak transformation of this idyllic precedent, for the "love birds" in the Capricho do not simply have

their wings clipped; they have their entrails ripped out[8].

Such sources provide a context for Capricho 19 and reveal, firstly, Goya's readiness to borrow concepts and imagery from older traditions, and, secondly, his ability to translate and transform them. In this case he extracts a top-bottom principle of falling from earlier emblems and uses it to create a quintessential statement on how lust can lead men to degrade themselves.

Everything in the image is geared to this debasing concept. For starters, men are reduced to birds: to satisfy their rampant lust, they fall subject to the conditions of the space they enter, and, for Goya, the primary condition or requirement is that they lose their manly form and adopt the fragile bodies of birds that can be plucked from the skies. The world they enter, however, is not a world of birds: it is inhabited by full-bodied flesh-and-blood women, whose scale relation to the bird-men turns the men into Lilliputians before a trio of female Gullivers. The difference in scale and weight is important, for it emphasises the corporeality of the women as opposed to the fragility of the men, and stresses the loss of freedom that comes with flightlessness. It may also establish a moral relation – the men, gullible as they are, are the ones who inhabit the upper regions, while the baser prostitutes cannot leave the ground (except through a fabricated decoy), and can be read as less ascendant, less pure, than their male prey. It would appear that for Goya, as for Bakhtin, '"Upward" and "downward" have here an absolute and strictly topographical meaning. "Downward" is earth, "upward" is heaven. Earth is an element that devours, swallows up (the grave, the womb)' (1968:21). But whereas Bakhtin sees earth more as a womb, thus as a site for rebirth, Goya sees it as a place where the male subject meets with extreme grief. The fall from the skies means a descent into a world of female monsters and a sorry end as a meal. This is what happens when men, com-

8 The manuscript in the Biblioteca Nacional identifies the women's action as that of tearing out entrails – an action humans use to clean out the insides of edible birds. There is an obvious parallel between evisceration of the bowels and castration of the sex organs, a point I take up in the text.

pelled by sexual urges, dare to enter a realm secured and possessed by women – a (monstrous-)'feminine' place. The male subject is downgraded to the level of a puny animal that can do nothing more than vomit or dribble – note this depiction of an abject flow: degraded, the male subject literally *bottoms out* in the class of (abject) objects he would ordinarily have tried to keep within or separate from his body – while the prostitutes pluck him of everything he owns (feathers here being equivalent to property – the women are taking the very coat off his back).

Goya handles these women naturalistically. The procuress, to be sure, is not far from a caricature, but none of her features can be classified as distorted beyond the strictly human. As for the prostitutes, Goya seems to have tried to make them pretty. This is in keeping with his general treatment of prostitutes and go-betweens – the former are always somewhat attractive (which they have to be to lure men), but the latter are old, ugly, wrinkled, shifty-eyed, snub-nosed, toothless, bent creatures tottering on the verge of blatant caricature. They seem to represent what, in Goya's appraisal, all women who toy with the sex industry are destined to become. Earthly beauty is a temporal thing, and age brings an unattractiveness that shows a particular lack of mercy for procuresses. Yet while they have beauty, these sex workers show no scruples about using it to net men, and Goya wants to convince his viewers that beauty can be evil. The true character of the prostitutes in *All will Fall* is revealed not in their sweet features, but in the nonchalant way they pluck those bird-men who fall. This duplicity makes the prostitutes deceptive, ambiguous shape changers – grotesque hybrids, in short. A figure need not be compounded of different body parts to be polygeneric; it simply need be many-faced. Unreliable, unclassifiable, shifty, it is no surprise they find their place at the bottom of Goya's hierarchy. It is only there, in such an abject, abysmal position that they become fixed and, therefore, manageable.

From the psychoanalytic angle I am developing, the women of *All will Fall* are representatives of the abject mother whom excessive repression has turned into a

monster – a castrator, disemboweller and devourer. This is not woman as desired limitlessness, but woman (de)limited as terror – as a domain in which the male subject expires. Castrated, swamped by the "monstrous-feminine", forever cut off from the ordered Symbolic world from which they came, these bird-men are as abject as the women who destroy them[9].

So, in *All will Fall*, Goya focuses his attention on what lies below, on sex workers as deceivers, contrivers of snares, exploiters, devourers. In this case it would seem that, while he disapproves of men who sustain the industry by going to prostitutes to gratify their sensual desires, he spurns the prostitutes more.

In the following Capricho, *Now They go Plucked* (*Ya van Desplumados*) [Fig.40], he appears to take the opposite tack. Here there is only one level and both the sex workers (two prostitutes and two procuresses) and the bird-men they have plucked occupy it. This "level" is the floor of some kind of interior. It has a door at one end, toward which the two broom-wielding prostitutes steer the plucked bird-men. One of the men is poised in the door, leaning forward. This is an essential point. If the bird-man is leaning out of the door it suggests that he is about to fall forward – there is a space on the other side of the door, and it has height to it. This puts me in mind of the dovecotes in Levitine's exemplary emblems, and I choose to read the interior of *Now They go Plucked* as the inside of a dovecote. The bird-man is about to tumble through space to the bottom of the dovecote, i.e., having fallen to the disgrace of being fleeced by prostitutes, he is about to fall further. In falling further he will, it stands to reason, drop to a level *below* that of the prostitutes. Hence it would seem that in this etching Goya aims his censure more specifically at the men, showing that, once they first start down the road of sexual gratification outside of 'nor-

9 Moreover, their fate, as the Prado manuscript claims, is guaranteed from the beginning. They are hybrid creatures, part man, part bird, and as such are unstable displaced compounds of matter. Goya gives them a place. He pulls them out of the skies and throws them to the prostitutes, which can be read as an act of placing matter by casting it out, into the category of abject things.



Fig.40 Now They go Plucked (*Ya van Desplumados*)

mative' sexual relations, they have a longer way to fall than the prostitutes. The implication, no doubt, is that the higher you are, the longer the drop, which suggests that Goya still ranks men above prostitutes – but only insofar as they avoid the temptations of the brothel[10].

The fall the men must take from the dovecote is in many ways a more terrifying prospect, since the height of the drop and, more importantly, what lies at the bottom are not depicted. These are left to the imagination of the viewer, and as a result Goya's open door begins to seem more than a little like one of Ruskin's gaps – a split in the fabric of the image, a portal to another space. It must be overleaped if viewers are not to be menaced by their private fears, if the demons in their repressed repositories are not to emerge, in a flourish of uncanniness, and drag them

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10 Both are, however, diseased, the women as fount of the disease and the men as objects of the disease. Sayre, having described the proliferation in Goya's day of illegal brothels – which were breeding grounds for syphilis – explains:

> [D]*esplumar* . . . contains an additional implication. The verb *pelar* (to skin) was used interchangeably with *desplumar*. *Pelado* (past participle of *pelar*) was the common term for "bald." Thus there is yet another pun in Goya's title, for it may also be translated: "There they go bald." Turning to the aquatint, we see that in fact little more than a last reluctant fringe of hair still clings to the pates of the three pathetic victims. They have become bald because they have contracted syphilis. (Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:97)

Syphilis, in turn, becomes symbolic of what amounts to castration. Sayre again:

> Syphilis has had an additional deleterious effect on the birdman at the rear of the procession, who is limping. His leg is bound; and this *ligadura* (ligature) conveyed information about the progress of his disease, for in both Spanish and English, ligature also meant a state of impotency, produced as though by an act of *maleficia*, or enchantment. (97)

Freud draws a connection between syphilis and castration in Lecture 32 of his New Introductory Lectures:

> the danger of castration persists under the mark of syphilidophobia. It is true that as an adult one knows that castration is no longer customary as a punishment for the indulgence of sexual desires, but on the other hand one has learnt that instinctual liberty of that kind is threatened by serious diseases. (1991*o*:121)

The *maleficia* Sayre refers to in the previous quote can thus be interpreted as the evil power of women who operate outside the Symbolic order, preying on men foolish enough to risk castration (and more: the total loss of being) at their hands.

It is worth tagging on here that prostitutes were considered dangerous because of the risk of disease – a point that crops up frequently in the literature of the day (see Alcalá Flecha, 1988:368–69). They were thus seen, to use my terms, as contaminated bodies capable of drawing others into the abjection of their condition. As such they were matter out of place, and could only be controlled by warning the male public of their dangers, as Goya does in the etching.

down to the abyss of the unconscious where the abject mother lies buried, shaping swiftly from undifferentiated matter into a figure of terror. Here the prostitutes are castrators, hybrid deceivers and adroit manipulators of male desire, but they are not the bottom itself, they are merely representatives of that most repressed of all times, places and terms. For the male subject there are other horrors than these, deeper-lying monsters, and the bird-man in the door goes to meet them.

The effectiveness of this passage from the interior of the dovecote to the undefined exterior depends on concepts of home – on the pitiful quest desire undertakes to find a home. It is this quest, or so my reading runs, that has led these bird-men to the dovecote, thinking that desire can be satisfied by sex. The brothel, if not home itself, at least represents, for the men, a temporary place of comfort, liberty and gratification. Within the strict morality Goya carries through most of *Los Caprichos*, however, there are no creature comforts in a brothel, only creatures. First they fleece you – the verb *desplumar* (conjugated in Goya's title as *desplumados*), meaning 'to pluck', figuratively carries the connotation of flaying and fleecing, which in Spanish, as in English, means to rob and generally exploit someone – then they send you to another doom. In other words, for the subject who has strayed to the brothel in search of desire's rainbow, the homely place becomes unhomely. And the price you pay for presuming to find an end to desire in a place of self-possessed women is eternal damnation in the place of the abjected, where the mother exists not as a divine or sublime principle of oneness, but as a consuming predator. The price is not just plucked feathers and syphilis (i.e., castration) but a complete loss of being (in the illimitability of the abject).

Now they go Plucked overturns patriarchal relations, emphasises women's power, but it does so to undermine a particular group of women, not to celebrate them. I can only believe that Goya wanted his audience to be shocked by such an inverted vision. Look, I take him as saying, this is what men do when, overcome by their own sensuality, they go to women for satisfaction: they turn the world upside-down,

surrender their place in society and allow women to dominate them. And for Goya, it seems, the only way to reestablish what his morality appears to take for the normal balance of power is to riddle the men with disease, ridicule them to the size of birds, and send them out a doorway leading nowhere – this nowhere, in my reading, being a place beyond the Symbolic: the abject.

This reading merely enhances what Goya has done; through it I have attempted to show that Goya's imagery cuts deeper than at first appears. I would like the reader to grasp that Goya's works have such unsettling power because his subject matter, and the iconography in which he conveys it, scrapes the surface of profound and relatively timeless psychological issues – issues that we, the interpreters of today, have good reason to find in his works because in theorising about them we can make them relevant to the discourses of today and so mobilise theories of the subject that can help us comprehend the form individual cultural productions have taken in specific historical moments.

2. *Masked women*

Since the subject of this section is masking I need to briefly examine masquerade and its potential historical significance in Goya's time.

In her study of masquerade in eighteenth-century England, Terry Castle emphasises that its detractors viewed its behavioural norms as 'a convulsive, unstoppable ripple through the core of things, a metaphysical shock wave' (1986:84). Its subversive, or at least undermining, potential arose principally from its 'unholy mixing of things meant to remain apart – its impulse, as it were, toward an incest of forms' (80)[11]. In Castle's view it was the masquerade's tendency – a most Grotesque ten-

[11] The mixing of the sexes itself seemed enough of an affront to certain members of society. In 'Cultural Norms in the Spain of Soler', Ilie writes: 'As Saint Augustine wrote, and Spanish clerics loved to quote, "El baile es un círculo cuyo centro es el diablo . . . se mezclan los hombres y mujeres"' (1984*b*:14) (The dance is a circle whose centre is the devil . . . it intermixes men and women). In this sense it looks much like the Grotesque, which also, as Harpham writes, 'opens into a realm of contradiction and ambiguity, frequently through the fusion of forms or

dency - to create a world without discrete borders, where gender, class and all other markers of social distinction were submerged in a disorder 'in which hybrids proliferated and taxonomy failed' (86), which gave the phenomenon both its power to disturb orthodox society, and its bad name. Castle argues that the generation of detractors who condemned and sought to annihilate masquerade was the first of the 'modern' age, by which Castle means a specific Western tradition that first gained strength in the eighteenth century (1986:102). She believes that masquerade succumbed under the pressure of this new generation:

> it was the very fluidity of carnival - the way it subverted the dualities of male and female, animal and human, dark and light, life and death - that made it so inimical to the new "atomizing" sensibility that heralded the development of modern bourgeois society. Rational individualism, the discourse of Descartes and Locke, predicates the discrete nature of bodies, their differentiation from one another and their classifiability . . . Ambiguous or hybrid forms, forms that reach beyond themselves and are neither one thing nor another, are rejected. With technological advance, industrialization, and the rise of consumer capitalism, the rigidly differentiated cosmos of bourgeois rationalism and "the petty, inert 'material principle' of class society" came to the fore. The carnival was drained of its ancient religious and metaphysical meaning; its fantastic vision of the mutable, all-encompassing "double body" disavowed. It became marginal, anachronistic. (103)

It was, however, by no means extinguished. Indeed, it has remained a trope up till modern times (and, of course, it is now receiving - at least within the critical domain - a fair amount of attention). At the time Goya produced his *Caprichos*, masquerade was by no means dead in Spain[12]; paradoxically, however, Goya's satirical enterprise placed him in opposition to the masquerade, in the place of those members of modern society whom Castle incorporates within such terms as "rational individualism" and "bourgeois rationalism". Ambiguous as Goya's attitude to the carnivalesque was - it appeared to intrigue him even as he used it for satirical purposes - his broad purpose in *Los Caprichos*, as expressed in his advertisement[13],

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realms we know to be separate' (1976:464).

12 Although it was probably still the target of 'intermittent bans' (Ilie, 1984*b*:14).

13 Here it would be useful to reproduce the relevant passage:

> The author, persuaded that censure of human errors and vices (although it seems pecu-

was to censure society's errors and vices, which I understand as an attempt to delimit boundaries on behalf of his society, *i.e., to bring order* to a world gone bad – a world one could, in fact, easily relate to the confused and promiscuous environment of the masquerade[14]. Castle writes that 'when eighteenth-century satirists wished to depict a larger cultural sickness – the morbid state of civilization itself – the masquerade, not surprisingly, offered an image of universal corruption' (1986: 85)[15]. In other words, eighteenth-century satirists turned to the masquerade as a framework within which to situate their criticism. Since it was widely understood as a depraved form of behaviour, it could easily be used to satirize corrupt individuals. Goya used the masquerade in precisely this way. Guided by the dictates of his morality[16] and his rationalism – a mixture, it would seem, of his own reason and En-

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liar to oratory and poetry) can also be the object of painting, has chosen such subjects proportionate for his work, among the multitude of eccentricities and errors that are common in every civil society, and among the prejudices and common falsehoods authorised by habit, ignorance or interest, those that he has thought most suitable matter for ridicule . . .

[14] This assumed promiscuity is the main cause for the following Spanish cleric's denouncement of masked balls and other entertainments that acted as

> incitements to sensuality; which, through the dances referred to, excite motions, gyrations and lascivious movements unworthy of the Christian century, and scandalous contact and touching between both men and women, now with the hands, now the linking of arms, now breast to breast, and on the back, now with the knees . . . and other lewd inventions whose freedom of manner ravages the virginal modesty of maids, the honour of the married . . . (incentivos de la sensualidad; que por los referidos bailes se excitan en mudanzas, meneos, y movimientos lascivos e indignos de la centuria cristiana y en contactos y tocamientos escandalosos de los varones a las mujeres y recíprocamente, ya en las manos, ya en el enlace de los brazos, ya pecho a pecho, y en las espaldas, ya en las rodillas . . . y otras livianas invenciones; con cuya desenvoltura se estraga el pudor virginal de las doncellas, el honor de las casadas . . .) (Edict of Inquisitor General Francisco Pérez de Prado, quoted in Ilie, 1984*b*:28*n*.7)

[15] *Further:* 'For the eighteenth-century satirist the real world, in all its chicanery and bad faith, was ultimately indistinguishable from the masquerade; both resolved, pathologically, into a *mundus inversus*, where all pretended to be what they were not' (Castle, 1986:85).

[16] Did Goya have a sense of morality? According to Charles Yriarte, an early, and by no means reliable, biographer of Goya, '[h]e respected neither the family, nor the monarchy, nor the God of his fathers; and yet his *Caprichos*, according to the artist himself – and this is pure irony – was a course of high morality' (cited and translated in Glendinning, 1977:90). In this understanding, Goya had a morality, all right, but in Yriarte's eyes it did not always accord with the morality of the socius in general. As I see it, Goya's morality, perhaps more a function

lightenment rationalism – he exposed what he saw as ills in society with the help of the chaotic, unruly, agglomerated, hybrid vocabulary of the carnivalesque.

Goya's view of society is a grim one, but he treats the subject with the humour of a confident satirist. Goya, in the words of Kernan, 'shows us men whose . . . pretensions to decency and honour are as much a sham as their speech' (1965:32–33). These are individuals Goya ridicules for the effort they invest in maintaining a socially effective façade while being, beneath the elaborations of dress, title and filiation, merely empty shells driven by a distasteful compulsion to triumph materially through deceit. Goya degrades his subject by closing the distinction between life and masquerade, between the individual and the mask, to claim that people are not merely capable of acting but are always *actors*. Society in this view of the world is reduced to a Carnival procession[17].

'The mask was not in Goya's view something which hid the face but that which determined it,' writes André Malraux (1957:42). To be more exact, Goya used the mask to make the depravity of its wearer evident to the viewer but not to the protagonists within the etching. Bakhtin, in Rabelais and His World, argues that the mask emerged as something meant to cloak identity during the Romantic age. In its folk-

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he fulfilled through his art than a deep commitment to a particular way of life, was one that followed the highest principles of his super-ego, and as such could brook no compromises, not even for the sake of society's supposedly incorruptible stalwarts, the family, the monarchy and the Church. His super-ego could not allow him to ignore corruption, once sighted. Whether his ego benefited most from the morality or from the contact with corruption is, of course, another matter, and a real possibility.

17 The best source for an overview of Carnival in Spain is Julio Caro Baroja's El Carnaval (1965), especially chapters one to five. Bennassar (1979:31–34) and Burke (1988:178–204) could also be consulted in this regard. One might reintroduce Bakhtin (1968), too, along with Castle (1986), and Stallybrass and White (1986). Studies on the use of Carnival language in Goya's art include: Glendinning, 'Some Versions of Carnival: Goya and Alas' (1972); Soubeyroux, 'Ordre Social et Subversion de L'Ordre dans les Caprices de Goya' (1981:126–131); Lorenzo de Márquez, 'Carnival Traditions in Goya's Iconic Language' (in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989: LXXXV–XCIV); and Askew, The 'Caprichos' of Francisco Goya (1988:321–24). While many writers briefly allude to the connection between Goya's iconography and Carnival practices (e.g., Wilson-Bareau, 1996:78, and Tomlinson, 1989*a*:50 – both of these references, incidentally, are to discussions of *Los Disparates*, which, as will be seen, make use of an even more pointed carnivalesque language), a great deal of work still has to be done in this area.

carnival sense Bakhtin relates the mask to 'transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and familiar nicknames' (1968:40); but in the Romantic age this more flexible and dynamic underpinning for masking gave way to conceptions of the mask as an addition that, in Bakhtin's view, 'hides something, keeps a secret, deceives' (40). Thus, the wearers of masks in Goya's etchings assume them for the purposes of subterfuge, but Goya exposes them in their concealment. While they think they are disguised, the viewer sees them for what they are. How? Easily, because the situations in which Goya depicts masked individuals, except in the case of the mysterious *Nobody knows Himself* (*Nadie se conoce*) [Fig.41], do not call for masks.

I will deal with only one image of masking here, Capricho 57, *Filiation* (*La Filiación*) [Fig.42], in which a masked woman - clearly endowed with a deceptive nature - attempts to win the affection of an aristocrat by producing a family tree to establish the refinement of her blood[18].

The would-be bride sits to the right of the etching, her face concealed behind a vulpine mask. Around her cluster a group of people, most of whom are lost in shadows. One individual records



Fig.41 Nobody knows Himself (*Nadie se Conoce*)

[18] In her article on the etching, Teresa Lorenzo de Márquez offers an alternative reading: she identifies the masked woman as a married aristocrat indulging in an adulterous affair (1995:292–93). This interpretation does not alter the underlying focus of the print: the duplicitous connivings of ambitious women.



Fig.42 Filiation (*La Filiación*)

the woman's ancestry[19] while another, whose features are distinctly vulturine, holds an eyeglass close to his face and examines a diminutive figure (probably the would-be groom, gasping in apparent approval at the developing list of names) between himself[20] and the person compiling the genealogy. Above the gasping diminutive groom rises a figure in a large hat, who appears to hold the pair of giant spectacles that towers over the scene. These spectacles, according to Márquez (1995:291; also in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:LXXXVIII), signify deceit. So, too, does the eyeglass of the vulturine man. Both optical devices thus enhance the print's thematic of deception.

The Prado commentary emphasises the woman's deception: *Here it is a case of try-*

[19] See Márquez (1995:294–95) for an interesting reading of this somewhat androgynous figure. She relates it to a living cadaver, outmoded reliquary or dummy – the kind of figure Goya exploits often in his oeuvre. In *Los Desastres* he uses such figures (in the print *This no Less* [Fig.43], which I do not discuss) to signify an outmoded, anachronistic nobility; if Márquez is correct, he might be doing the same thing with the ambiguous figure in *Filiation*.

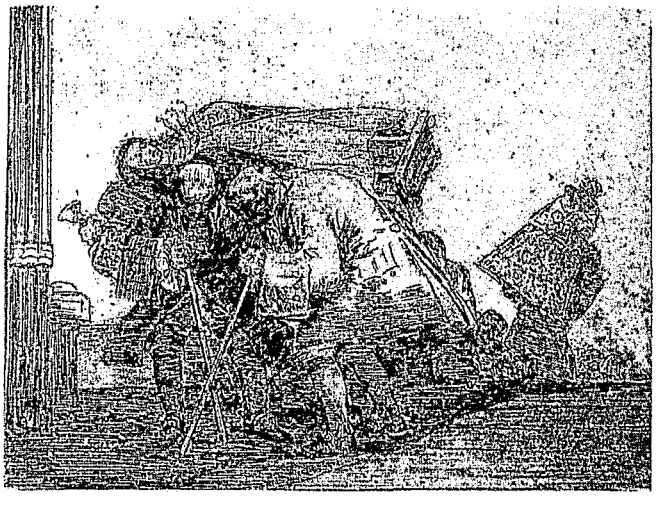

Fig.43 This no Less (*Esta no lo es Menos*)

[20] Márquez (1995) pays special attention to this figure, pointing out his bizarre hat, which is decidedly saddle-like, and his phallic nose. These attributes associate him with a mount, not only a sodomite but a figure that can be easily mounted and ridden, i.e., controlled. His dress identifies him as a magistrate, and the extreme attention he pays to the groom (or to the genealogy being transcribed) while ignoring the obvious deceit of the masked woman, identifies him as a bad magistrate. Márquez (1995:294) claims Goya is depicting weak justice: the type that can be corrupted to concern itself with minor details while turning away from such real social and moral problems as adultery.

ing to coax the boyfriend by making him see in the letter of nobility who the parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents of the young woman were; and as for her, who is she? Later he will find out [21]. The stress on concealment is born out in the etching, where the mask literally prevents the boyfriend from seeing who the would-be bride is. In time, of course, all will be revealed, and the man will realise that he has married purely on appearances, on the evidence of the woman's nobility, not her morality. Goya is certainly claiming that a woman who deceives cannot be moral and cannot make a good wife.

The masquerade itself would have braced Goya's intentions, since it provided him with a setting whose language of hybridity, heterogeneity and licentiousness would have been recognisably aberrant to most of his more enlightened, reasoning or rationalist viewers. As Márquez writes:

> Throughout Europe masquerades had the reputation of being a phenomenon [that] constituted the essence of the erotic life of the urban masses. They were frequently scenes of seduction, rape, adultery, etc. The mask itself, an obvious symbol of hypocrisy and duplicity, was considered in its turn to be an aphrodisiac, which was associated with prostitutes and, even more, released its wearers, women in particular, from all moral control. (1995:286)[22]

Relieved of "moral control", the women of the masquerade were able to wear the pants, so to speak, to exercise a power not permitted to them in the 'real' male-dominated world. 'It should not surprise us,' Castle writes, 'that when eighteenth-century writers wish to embody the anti-world of the masquerade, they inevitably figure a gynesium – a realm pervaded by female desire, authority and influence.' (1986:253-

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21 Aquí se trata de engatusar al novio haciéndole ver por la ejecutoria quienes fueron los padres, abuelos, bisabuelos y tatarabuelos de la señorita; y ella, ¿quién es? Luego lo verá. (Adapted from López-Rey, 1970:204)

22 En toda Europa las mascaradas tenían la reputación de un fenómeno . . . de constituir una quintaesencia de la vida erótica de las masas urbanas. Eran con frecuencia ocasión de seducciones, violaciones, adulterios, etc. La máscara misma, símbolo muy obvio de hipocresía y doblez, se consideraba a su vez como un afrodisíaco, que se asociaba con prostitutas y, más aún, absolvía a quien la llevaba de todo control moral, sobre todo a las mujeres.

This passage is based on a longer discussion in Terry Castle's 'The Culture of Travesty: Sexuality and Masquerade in Eighteenth-Century England' (reprinted in The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny, 1995:86-88)

54) An inverted world, then, a 'feminocracy' for which the 'most potent emblem' is the 'magisterial, dominant, or disorderly woman' (253) – the kind of woman Goya portrays in *Filiation*, endowed with the power to influence and persuade through deceptive wiles.

Here life informs art; to grasp the ramifications of the image one has to place it in relation to the immorality so many people in Europe associated with masking. Goya, I am sure, would have been able to predict the reaction of his target audience to an image like *Filiation*, and would have known that the otherwise eccentric importation of a character from the masquerade into an etching in which most of the other figures *are* their masks (i.e., are caricatures) would have been received as satire, as a jibe at the individual so masked. Forewarned, so to speak, his audience would have interpreted the woman as a flagrant impostor, not merely as a would-be bride flirting playfully under the liberation of a disguise. The viewer sees what the boyfriend cannot see. I see through you; I see you are not you; you are a deceiver, and I do not want that. For the viewer, then, the act of discerning is easily accomplished, and should, to uphold Goya's moral besmirching of masking, have only one outcome: the rejection of the woman as an undesirable presence in the social order.

To put it another way, masks interrupt Imaginary relations, cloud separations between self and other (and all the identities these lead to, e.g., masculine/feminine) and so establish a world in which representation founds a different Imaginary, one with its own set of rules, where sexuality is more dubious and sex more rampant, where the Imaginary identity displaces the real, hidden one and so liberates the masquer to act outside of Symbolic restraints, codes and prohibitions. Terry Castle believes that this toying with identity gave the masquerade the ability to induce

> nostalgia for an earlier developmental stage – for the stage, perhaps, of polymorphous perversity, that pre-Oedipal moment before self and other have been differentiated . . . [The masquerade's] energies, in Freudian terms, were oceanic, and recalled a state before civilization's repressive separations and taxing demands

on libido' (1986:90).

Masquers, in Castle's view, emerge as regressive personalities eager to sacrifice the ways of the Symbolic to return to the non-differentiated world of unbounded pleasure that existed prior to Oedipus. The masquerade sets the scene for a return of the mother, so to speak, for a mass, orgiastic indulgence in her formless "oceanic" identity, where no identity is fixed and every identity permissible – an indulgence, in sum, intolerable to a Symbolic order based on precise, separate identities. The masquerade is transgressive for this reason, and while Goya would not have understood it in these terms, we can read in his deployment the assumption that those who are able to take masking's transgressive energy[23] into the realm of ordinary Symbolic interaction are like foxy predators who can devour whomever they set their shifty eyes upon. They do not play by the rules of the set (the Symbolic) and are therefore able to manipulate it. Goya depicts such individuals, to demonstrate that they exist, and so prepares his viewers for encounters with their more dangerous counterparts in real life and even within themselves. So prepared, his viewers would presumably see through such existing deceivers and send them away, and so defer the threat of indulging in that dance of non-differentiation.

From the point of view of my reading, this satirical rejection can easily be under-

[23] An energy whose source, I would speculate, is found in masking itself, to the extent that a mask *doubles* the subject. In Freud's concept of "the double" we encounter both the clearest precedent for Lacanian articulations of subject and other, and a fascinating suggestion that doubling is a safeguard against death. Important as the first point is, I will not take it up here; the second, however, is vital. In his essay on the uncanny, Freud writes: 'the "double" was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, an "energetic denial of the power of death"' (1990*d*:356). The idea is, by duplicating oneself one cheats mortality: there is always another I. Lacan's conception of the signifier completes Freud's picture, for if death is most apparent in the subject's realisation that s/he might disappear from the signifying chain, then the way to prevent such fading is by generating signifiers of one's self. This, surely, is the essence of masquerade: the multiplication of self to fend off death. In this sense, the doubly-masked woman in *Filiation* has more chance of maintaining life than her unmasked companions, and it is this vitalisation through duplication that gives her an edge. She is like a cat with nine lives. She is equally the "harbinger of death", which Freud states the "double" becomes through reversal by repression (357). What grants her the energy of immortality is precisely what links her most with darkness and death.

stood in terms of the operation to abject, and there is one pivotal reason why, as modern viewers and dutiful Symbolic subjects – which is what we have to be to comply with the ideal moral viewer Goya appeals to – we should perform this operation, and so make the woman abject, at least within our own system. It has to do with a hermaphroditic subtext to *Filiation.*

In the etching one finds the mask of an old man's face in the foxy woman's lap. This mask is a development of one that appeared initially in the drawings that preceded the etching, *He puts her down as a Hermaphrodite (La apunta por Hermafrodita)* [Fig.44] and *Caricatural Masks that they note for their Significance (Máscaras de Caricaturas que apuntan por su significado)* [Fig.45]. Both drawings make explicit use of masquerade. The earlier one, from the Cadiz-Madrid album, seems to depict an inventory-taking in which a man, himself masked, lists the role each masker is feigning for a masquerade. The woman in this drawing is 'pretending' to be a hermaphrodite, hence the mask she holds between her legs, whose features are distorted so that the mouth invokes a vagina and the nose a penis. Goya took the theme further in the *sueño* sketch *Caricatural Masks that they note for their Significance,* which again has the sense of an inventory-taking, but now the man who will become the vulturine magistrate in the final etching has been installed, and the mask has become even more provocative: the nose is excessively phallic, the mouth is a lipless cleft, and the moustache has all the qualities of pubic hair[24].

By the time Goya reached the etching stage he played down the genital characteristics of the mask and made it look more like a head with a pronounced nose. He also gave the mask horns – clearly visible in the preparatory drawing, but obfuscated

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24 It should be noted that the masquerade theme of the drawings granted Goya the licence to deal with concepts that were otherwise taboo in his society (see Castle, 1995:98–99, for a discussion of this empowering aspect of the masquerade). Only in his role as fool-satirist can the artist depict hermaphroditism and the 'unnatural' in such a manner, and still avoid public outrage. However, the fact that Goya reduced the bisexual connotations of the drawings in the final etching suggests he feared his image might overstep the bounds of social sanction.



Fig. 44 Masks, He puts Her Down as a Hermaphrodite (*Máscaras/ La apunta por Hermafrodita*)



Fig.45 Caricatural Masks that They Note for Their Significance (*Máscaras de caricaturas/que apuntan por su Significado*).

in the final print by the caressing hands of the would-be bride.

Regardless of its changes, the mask remains in the final print an image of something 'unnatural'; it retains its prior history and can be read as a summation of all the ideas Goya worked through to arrive at the final composition. It may have lost the impact of the hermaphroditic mask in the earlier drawings, but the conjunction of two masks, one on the woman's face and one in her lap, generates a picture of two-sidedness that fully exposes her deceptive nature[25].

We, modern interpreters, can associate the sexuality of the deceiving lady in *Filiation* with the non-differentiated sexuality that dominates early infantile life. Here one thinks of the polymorphous perversity Castle refers to in the quote on page 204[26], but also, more exactly, of Freud's potentially revolutionary claim – in terms of what it means for the so-called norm of heterosexuality – that bisexuality forms an essential element in the development of men and women[27]. In his view, infants, male and female, cannot initially distinguish between masculine and feminine, but share common erotogenic zones such as the skin and anus (1991c:102–4, 141–42, *passim*). Only once they are able to recognise their biological differences do they switch their pleasure zones to their respective genitalia[28]. From this point on

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25 Not to mention her voracious nature, which Paulson draws attention to:

> the young lady in *Capricho* 57 . . . also holds a mask or a head between her thighs, revealing her hidden rewards as yet another disguise, as a mouth – an organ of devouring . . . There is the *vagina dentata*, on the one hand, in which the fear is of castration, and on the other there is the well-known Hispanic *Devoradora*, or devourer-of-men. (1983:369)

26 'Polymorphous perversity' is Freud's term. To situate it in his system see, for instance, 1991c:109, 155–56, 164, 1976:245–46, 352–59. The term relates to the predisposition in children to associate eroticism with objects (e.g., the parents and also other objects such as excrement) that civilisation in time teaches them to reject, and with parts of their bodies other than the genitals – that is, with parts not involved in reproduction. The domain of polymorphous perversity is one of excluded, repressed erotic objects existing in the condition of abjection.

27 Witness this statement from essay three of *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*: 'without taking bisexuality into account I think it would scarcely be possible to arrive at an understanding of the sexual manifestations that are actually to be observed in men and women' (1991c:142).

28 This transference of desire from anal to genital is primary in establishing norms and

the socialising process comes into play, separating 'masculine' from 'feminine' identities and emphasising heterosexuality as the norm. In the process bisexuality is relegated to the realm of anti-nature, i.e., to a zone of abjection. A hermaphrodite, by failing to achieve unisexuality and differentiation, is the supreme symbol of this abjected infantile existence. Bigeneric, she/he is one of the most unclassifiable of objects, representing a threat to the foundations of the Symbolic, in which the split between self and other, chiefly realised in the split between male and female, is taken as a norm and a guarantee of biological and social identity.

In the etching, the male mask the woman places in her lap gives a masculine identity to her genitalia (reinforced by the projections from the head of the mask, which the woman rubs). This, plus the fox mask – which could be of either gender – give her the unclassifiable sexuality that glared through the earlier drawings. The viewer may need to deal with this image of unstable sexuality, for if s/he recognises in it the bisexuality s/he was forced to repress to take on a specific socially-sanctioned female or male identity, s/he may be so drawn to it as to suffer (in the most extreme scenario) a decentring of the ego, and a resultant split into a multiple subject with a multiple sexuality[29].

In the model I have presented, bisexuality would be a familiar constituent of the repressed unconscious, one that, sufficiently enticed by an image, could emerge

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abnorms. As Freud, drawing on Lou Andreas-Salomé, writes:

> the history of the first prohibition which a child comes across – the prohibition against getting pleasure from anal activity and its products – has a decisive effect on his whole development. This must be the first occasion on which the infant has a glimpse of an environment hostile to his instinctual impulses, on which he learns to separate his own identity from this alien one and on which he carries out the first "repression" of his possibilities for pleasure. From that time on, what is "anal" remains the symbol of everything that is to be repudiated and excluded from life. (1991*c*:104*n*.1)

As an aspect of the period of anal eroticism, the infant's bisexuality also becomes something that must be "repudiated and excluded from life", i.e., abjected.

[29] This is the possibility I follow since I think it relates most strongly to Goya's deceptive woman, but I must note that contact with repressed bisexuality could also cause the viewer pleasure and may be more desirable than an action that would result in the abjection of polymorphous sexuality and the woman who comes to represent it in *Filiation*.

with a feeling of uncanniness, and to which desire might attach itself again. The Symbolically-invested subject, secure in the belief that heterosexuality is 'natural' and bisexuality 'unnatural', can deal with such a situation easily: a good cuff to the psyche delivered with compliments by the heavy hand of prohibition, i.e., the operation to abject. The subject says "not me, not that" and expels the menace of bi-sexuality into the class of all other reject matter, repressing it once more in the unconscious. The subject who feels the threat to sexuality more keenly will have to rely on imaginative practices, on fantasies and "new patterns of reality" within which bisexual pleasure might be enacted as something perverted and anti-social – the conduct of witches, for instance, or even that of masqueraders. Goya's satirical degradation guides the way, for as we abject the woman for her duplicity, we are given the opportunity to utilise the same distasteful feelings to abject the unconscious threats she may have raised in us. Two birds with one stone. The method is not permanent, but it does bring temporary relief.

3. *Witches*

Throughout the series, although more especially after the etching *The Sleep of Reason produces Monsters,* one finds witches going about their business of casting spells, holding sabbaths, teaching and anointing novices, and tussling for supremacy. Goya's witches display the body in its greatest extremes; his satiric scene, to borrow from Alvin B. Kernan (in Paulson, 1971:258), is 'fundamentally [a] picture of a dense and grotesque world of decaying matter . . . denying the human ideal which once molded the crowd into a society'. Goya exhibits the taboos, the embarrassments, the 'mistakes' of nature. The image of the 'classical body' (as defined in comparison to the "material" body by Bakhtin [1968:25–27; also see Stallybrass and White, 1986:21–23]) is hard to find in these etchings, and when it does occur (e.g., the novice witch in *Pretty Teacher!* [Fig.46]) it is juxtaposed with the corrupted Grotesque form it is destined to become. The degraded material body is the primary

object of Goya's witch imaginary, a pillar of flesh, organs and bones whose extensive internal operations cannot be masked by the fantasy of an uninterrupted skin. Goya opens the orifices and lets them discharge the contents of the inner body; he distorts, disfigures, withers and de-sexes; he bares the aged body, its slumped flesh, wrinkled skin and scarcely-covered skeleton; he depicts creatures paring nails and eating, thereby exposing the imperfections of a body whose boundaries need to be broken, into which external elements must be introduced and from which growths must be clipped; he transforms the human body with the addition of bestial features, lowering it toward the intellectually barren level of animals or the still lower realm of the supernatural; he even introduces figures that hint at the classical body's supreme and impure opposite: the corpse.

This obverse body is abject precisely because it is not society's ideal. It challenges ideals, destabilises them, becomes a threat that the establishment must dispel by emphasising its anti-social, obscene nature. Satire is the primary vehicle for this emphasis. And for Goya the most grotesque, abominable, repulsive, abnormal satirical objects of all are witches. Goya splices the antithetical image of the witch into his satirical enterprise to undermine two types of people: (1) those who are already marginal because their métiers are abided but not legitimised by the social order, (2) those who hold positions of authority, but who have so abused and corrupted these positions that the artist takes it upon himself to objurgate and discredit them. The primary object of the first of these targets is the prostitute; the primary objects of the second are the clergy and the law. In this chapter I focus purely on the link Goya forges between witches and prostitutes. The second link, between witches and figures in authority, I will take up in Chapter Seven, which is devoted to Goya's denigration of the law.

Female prostitution, as I pointed out in my discussion of *All will Fall*, where I quoted a significant passage from Held (1987), was criminalised in Goya's day. Nevertheless, it was not eradicated; indeed, Goya's prints suggest that it was toler-

ated well enough, as it would be in a male-dominated society, and in a print like *How They pluck Her!* [Fig.76], where a prostitute submits to financial extortion at the hands of society's lawmen to buy her continued liberty to ply her trade, we find an explanation for its persistence (see my study of this etching in Chapter Seven). Both in and out of society, used and abused, the prostitute's status is a threshold one. Neither legal nor forbidden, totally accepted nor totally rejected, the prostitute spans categories, and must exist in a contingent relation to the society that cannot altogether characterise her. Her position, I want to suggest, is akin to the liminal one anthropologists like Victor Turner associate with ritual initiations.

In The Forest of Symbols, Turner devotes a chapter to what he calls the "liminal period" in Ndembu rites of passage (1967:93–110). While my motivation has nothing in common with Turner's, the concept of liminality is constructive in a wider spectrum and appears applicable to this discussion[30]. The "liminal persona" of which Turner writes is the individual undergoing, within a ritual context, initiation or some other ceremony whose end result is transition. While immersed in the ritual, such individuals are characterised by their social flux, which has significant connotations:

> The symbolism attached to and surrounding the liminal *persona[e]* is complex and bizarre . . . They are at once no longer classified and not yet classified. In so far as they are no longer classified, the symbols that represent them are, in many societies, drawn from the biology of death, decomposition, catabolism, and other physical processes that have a negative tinge, such as menstruation . . . The

30 The flexibility of the term liminality is clear in Harpham's use of it to describe simultaneity in grotesque images (his example being the paintings of Arcimboldo, which are between two worlds, that of the assembled organic objects and that of the human portrait they compose) (1982:14). Whether liminality should be used with so little appreciation for its original context is another matter. In his comments to Babcock's 1978 collection, The Reversible World, (1978:286–87) Turner himself questioned the ductility that had crept into the use of the word since he first borrowed it from Von Genep years before, and suggested the word "liminoid" for all liminal activities that occur outside of ritual contexts in 'tribal and agrarian societies'. He developed this suggestion in a later book, From Ritual to Theatre, where he goes to some length to distinguish the two terms (1982:53–55). The word "liminoid", which Turner sees as charting a linguistic resemblance to "liminal" (32), has never, to my mind, gone beyond the terms in which Turner himself described it, as 'gratingly neologistic' (113). Certainly it is unclear to me why "liminoid" should be any less contentious than "liminal", and time has made this distinction insignificant.

> essential feature of these symbolizations is that the [liminal *personae*] are neither living nor dead from one aspect, and both living and dead from another. Their condition is one of ambiguity and paradox, a confusion of all the customary categories. (96-97)

Shortly after making these observations, Turner introduces Mary Douglas to extend his argument:

> The unclear is the unclean . . . From this standpoint, one would expect to find that transitional beings are particularly polluting, since they are neither one thing nor another; or may be both; or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere (in terms of any recognized cultural topography), and are at the very least "betwixt and between" all the recognized fixed points in space-time of structural classification. (1967:97)

What we have, then, is a transitional or liminal being who exists in more than one category of time-space reality simultaneously – a temporary outsider whose ability to confuse the established categories of things prevents him or her from entering communal space (as Turner relates, liminal personae 'are very commonly secluded . . . from the realm of culturally defined and ordered states and statuses' [98]). Moreover, as a breaker of categories, s/he is no longer classifiable, and as such can only be represented by symbols taken from the realm of death and bodily functions that imply unstable limits. Liminal personae, in sum, are abject, and can therefore only be symbolised by objects voided from the body (faeces, menses) or from the community (corpses). Ultimately, they are closer to bodily wastes, for as Turner writes, "they are neither living nor dead from one aspect, and both living and dead from another". Above all, it is because they elude "any recognized cultural topography" that they are unfixable, unclean and polluting. They are impure because they escape categorisation, because the Symbolic order in which they are normally inserted cannot tabulate them. Whatever exceeds cultural order can always be understood as abject, because, as unnameable, it is in opposition to the concatenations and classes of that order.

Now, prostitutes are not liminal in this sense; they are named and categorised, and do not form a group of beings that is entirely ataxonomic. However, where they are liminal – and thus share almost all the characteristics Turner associates

with the ritual initiate (ambiguous classification, paradox, impurity, pollution, polypous identity, *a*positionality) – is in their unfixed social location. It is because they are tolerated by a corrupt law system while being excluded by most other social strata that they become interstitial creatures with one foot in the Symbolic and one in abjection. They cannot be absolutely placed, and as such have a potentially transgressive, even aggressive, oppositional energy that the social formation attempts to subdue by affiliating them, where the mental niceties are concerned, with depravity, immorality, sensual immoderation, spiritual impurity and, where the physical niceties are concerned, with bodily impurity, a lack of hygiene, disease, abortion, death. No single symbolic act aimed at placing, and so displacing, such liminal social elements is more emphatic, however, than the one that classifies them as witches.

Here, we may note, a "new pattern of reality" is called on to act as an enclosure and muffler for the potentially defiling category of the prostitute. From the viewpoint of credence, it seems unbelievable that a social group should be denigrated through comparison with creatures of fantasy and superstition, but history has many tales to recount in this regard, and the following quote from Held reveals that such procedures were adopted in Goya's day to socially control women:

> In the eighteenth century the "art" of recognising witches and rooting them out, originally imposed on folk culture from above . . . was taken over by the people and put to their own uses. Accusations of witchcraft served them as a means of ostracising and condemning women. (1987:47)

Turning to Mary Douglas, we can find a conceptual framework within which to comprehend this singular de-liminising social protocol. Douglas is led to witchcraft through her discussion of the power balance in a society between recognised authorities (governing bodies of the state and of religion, for example) and unrecognised authorities or authorities that conceal their influence – a balance in which the powers of the former are accepted and seen as punitive and controlled, while those of the latter are feared and seen as menacing and uncontrolled (1984:101–2):

> In these cases the articulate, conscious points in the social structure are armed with articulate, conscious powers to protect the system; the inarticulate, unstructured areas emanate unconscious powers which provoke others to demand that ambiguity be reduced. When such unhappy or angry interstitial persons are accused of witchcraft it is like a warning to bring their rebellious feelings into line with their correct situation. If this were found to hold good more generally, then witchcraft, defined as an alleged psychic force, could also be defined structurally. It would be the anti-social psychic power with which persons in relatively unstructured areas of society are credited, the accusation being a means of exerting control where practical forms of control are difficult. Witchcraft, then, is found in the non-structure. Witches are social equivalents of beetles and spiders who live in the cracks of the walls and wainscoting. They attract . . . fears and dislikes . . . and the kind of powers attributed to them symbolise their ambiguous, inarticulate status. (1984:102)[31]

We can apply Douglas's point to describe the way society deals with prostitutes. They, too, I would claim, cause the more structured or authoritative sectors of society "to demand that ambiguity be reduced"; and since the disruptive liminality of the prostitute cannot be exhausted by categorisation – because prostitution always exceeds its boundaries through its potential health threats and its fantasy threat of a disorderly, voracious and socially-undermining sexual appetite – those constituents of the more structured, i.e., Symbolic, parts of society who cannot tolerate prostitution in any form, whether licit or illicit, resort to a fictional category and refer to an "alleged psychic force" to make prostitution so vile and infernal that it must at all costs be eliminated. This is the route Goya takes, and while it revolves around an ambivalent, liminal social figure, it is not obviously marked by an ambivalence in its patent, visible, articulated direction.

Now, why should prostitution be seen as threatening? Here we must recall that, in Freudian psychoanalysis, civilisation emerges as a repressive force acting against one chief counter force, that of libidinous pleasure. Prostitution can be taken to represent an anti-social, disobedient commitment to such pleasures, a refusal of subli-

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31 One can use Barbara Creed's The Monstrous-Feminine to increase the list of creepy things that witches are the "equivalents" of: 'The witch is also associated with a range of abject things: filth, decay, spiders, bats, cobwebs, brews, potions and even cannibalism' (1994:76). The relation of witches to cannibalism will become clearer in my later discussions of the etchings *They spin Finely* and *One has to suck a lot.*

mation, and a blatant embrace of all that the Symbolic order attempts to quell and repress (here lies one way of understanding Douglas's description of the powers that stem from the "unstructured areas" of society as "unconscious"). This gives the prostitute, particularly in the anxieties and fantasies of those who comfortably inhabit the Symbolic, a potentially rebellious power – the power to undermine known structures and assert a new model of the universe, one based on unqualified sensual and material gratification. To stave off this almost entirely fabricated or Imaginary threat, the structured parts of society accuse their unstructured counterpart of witchcraft. The resultant castigatory action undertaken by the central society on its supposedly menacing margins, whether it takes the form of brush-offs, cold shoulders and other snubs, or more violent, punitive measures (such as, in Goya's time, trial by the Inquisition), aims to (re)structure society – to bring all areas of it into line[32]. At the same time the structured area of the society (af)firms itself, hardens its identity by negating what it is not.

A last aspect of the Douglas passage I want to highlight, since it ties up with the concept of liminality, is its attribution of a place to witches in the non-structure. This situates them on the margins of society, where they live interjacently like insects in the cracks and exposed panelling of a house. In short, they are to the Symbolic order what the repressed unconscious is to the conscious: something that exists in the gaps. And, if we recall Harpham (see Chapter One, Section V), it is from the gaps that hybrids, monsters and aberrations of the vilest order arise to terrify those whose discriminatory grids are not malleable enough to ingest such impossible irruptions into the Symbolic. It is to such interspatial and abject creatures that I now turn, in an effort to demonstrate how Goya's graphic art transforms a socially liminal group into a witch coven, and so fixes its members as undeniably ignominious,

32 After all, as Stallybrass and White point out, '[t]he public sphere is neither pure ideation nor something which existed only in and for itself: it is, like any form of identity, created through negations, it produces a new domain by taking into itself as *negative introjections* the very domains which surround and threaten it' (1986:89).

and in need of banishment from the social chain.

In *Pretty Teacher!* (*¡Linda Maestra!*) [Fig.46], an etching that, like *All will Fall* and *Now They go Plucked,* does nothing for the image of the mother, or women in general, Goya presents his grotesquely satirised witches, objects of repulsion in no uncertain terms, and expects the viewer to endorse his view by excluding them.

Above a landscape marked by human presence (e.g., the figures on the plane and the rooftop emerging from the bottom edge of the print), two female witches ride a moonlit sky on a broom, under the observation of a large owl. The shapely woman who rides toward the back of the broom is a novice witch; the woman whose hair she grips is her ancient and well-versed flight instructor.

Sayre, in Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment, translates the Prado commentary to this etching as follows:

> The broom is one of the most necessary implements for witches, for they are not only great sweepers [thieves] (as old tales make plain), but at times they turn the broom into a saddle mule [i.e., a dildoe], on which they travel at such a pace that the Devil himself cannot overtake them. (1989:125. The square brackets are in Sayre's text.)[33]

At first glance, Sayre's association of the broom with a dildo may seem anachronistic, but it is corroborated by the manuscript in the Biblioteca Nacional: *Old women take the broom from the hands of those who have good moustaches; they give them lessons in flying around the world; penetrating them for the first time, even if it be the shaft of a broom between the legs*[34]. By "those who have good moustaches" the writer of the commentary may mean those who have 'abundant pubic hair' (Sayre in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:126) or even, according to Heckes (1985:71), 'strong-willed, attractive

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33 La escoba es uno de los utensilios más necesarios a las brujas porque además de ser ellas grandes barrenderas (como consta por las historias) tal vez convierten la escoba en mula de pasa y van con ella que el Diablo no las alcanzara. (Adapted from Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:125)

34 Las viejas quitan la escoba de las manos a las que tienen buenos bigotes; las dan lecciónes de volar por el mundo; metiendolas por primera vez, aunque sea un palo de escoba entre las piernas. (Adapted from Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:126)



Fig.46 Pretty Teacher! (*¡Linda Maestra!*)

women'. In her translation, Sayre includes in square brackets "having orgasms" as the subtext of "flying around the world" (1989:126)[35].

The etching confirms the suggestiveness of these readings[36]. For one thing, the broom, even in its elevation and its reversal so that the bristle head appears at the top, is unquestionably phallic. For another, the positions of the women are less than modest: the novice straddles her legs in such a way that she possesses the phallic broom herself, and uses it to penetrate the old woman (whose deep pleasure shows in her aged face and her act of closing her thighs over the broom's shaft). This dominant sexual metaphoric leads Sayre to a sound conclusion:

> In this *Capricho*, Goya has depicted a bawd who has begun the education of an inexperienced young woman. The presence of the *búho* (a species of owl) flying in darkness at the upper right indicates that she is to be taught more than the art of enjoying her own sexuality; *búho* was a slang term for a streetwalker. (1989:125)

Prostitution appears to be the veiled object of attack in this etching, and by all his means of emphasising acts of penetration Goya degrades the profession to the level of the sex act, which humans share with animals. He associates sex workers with the noctivagant activity of witchcraft. Further, he draws a comparison between the novice and her teacher, implying that the voluptuous, near-classical body the novice brings into the profession is not the one she will take out of it; over the years that body will wither, wrinkle, and lose its maternal properties, to become much like that of her "pretty" teacher. Goya's satire is clear: society should not give prostitutes a place; he equates them with witches and homosexuals, and on these grounds expects his viewers to expel (abject, in my terms) them. As much as we might find ambivalence in Goya – does he not delight to some extent in defining the full forms of the novice and the creased skeletal body of the teacher, or indeed in what they

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35 Freud also associated flying with orgasm, or at least with sexual intercourse. See his essay 'Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood', 1990*b*:219–20.

36 See Appendix Two, in which I point out that Goya's letters sometimes showed a love of obscenity that makes such suggestive readings more than feasible.

are doing? – but there is no ambivalence in the message. Prostitutes, like witches, should be eradicated.

In his depictions of witches, Goya isolates them from the general society they prey on. Occasionally he includes the prey within a composition (e.g., the baby in *Gift to the Master* [Fig.47] and the sacks of children in *When Dawn breaks, We go* [Fig.48]), but then they are entirely subject to the insular and intervenient world of witchcraft. By stressing their status outside of society, Goya both reinforces the banishment of the witches and emphasises their private, internal unity.



Fig.47 Gift to the Master (*Obsequio a el Maestro*)

No image captures this self-containment more vividly than Capricho 44, *They spin Finely* (*Hilan Delgado*) [Fig. 49], in which three witches gather to spin thread, overlooked by a clump of trussed babies.

The front witch, spotlit by Goya's selective lighting, works with a distaff and spindle; the witch behind her winds thread over a cross-shaped distaff; and the witch emerging from the left framing edge sits with a broom in one hand. All three are treated as grotesques: the one at the back has a con-



Fig.48 When Dawn breaks, We go (*Si Amanece; Nos vamos*)



Fig.49 They spin Finely (*Hilan Delgado*)

cealed eye – a physical blindness that may betoken spiritual blindness – and large teeth that distort her mouth; the one to the left has an inflated lower lip and a face with a notably sloping, prognathous, facial angle[37]; the front witch is old and bony – Goya again makes the aged female body something ugly and undesirable. Together, the witches form a trio deficient in physique, mentality and purpose.

They spin finely, states the Prado commentary, *and the weft they contrive not even the devil will be able to undo*[38]. The verb *urdir* (conjugated as *urden*: "they contrive") figuratively means 'to hatch a plot'. The word Goya uses in his title, *hilar*, carries much the same connotation, and *hilar delgado* means 'to go into close detail' (Cassell's Spanish Dictionary, 1986:352). If one equates spinning thread with spinning a web, one further sharpens the possibilities of the image. The only question is, what detailed scheme are the witches plotting? The commentary claims it is one that not even the devil would be able to influence, which unquestionably assigns a great deal of power to the women. And, indeed, when one turns to the mythology of the ancient Greeks and Romans, one finds women endowed with that kind of power in the Three Fates, Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, who held an unconditional control

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37 One of the principles of Johann Caspar Lavater's physiognomic theory is that the verticality of the facial angle of a profile face denotes intelligence and civilisation – the more vertical the angle the greater the degree of sophistication (see Sheon, 1976:146). Lavater further proposed that an enlarged lower jaw, extending beyond the upper (as in Goya's witch) indicated 'stupidity' (Sheon, 1976:146). The possible influence of Lavater's physiognomy on Goya has frequently been raised in Goya studies, most notably by López-Rey (1970). Askew sums up the situation:

> Physiognomy was certainly "in the air" during the eighteenth century, and whether or not Goya was acquainted with Lavater's writings, he probably was aware of the notion . . . [He] was fascinated with the expressive power of animalistic deformation, and he obviously believed that such outward physical characteristics were a useful artistic device for *representing* the inner condition of human beings. (1988:315)

Schulz argues that Goya could not have been influenced by Lavater since his physiognomic theories 'did not have a significant impact in Spain until well into the nineteenth century' (1996:115). Physiognomy was, however, very much "in the air", as Askew suggests, but as a result of the likes of Giambattista della Porta, whose sixteenth-century text *De Humana Physiognomia* Schulz describes as 'the most widely disseminated tract on physiognomy' at the time (116). (For a brief history of physiognomy see Baltrušaitis, 1989.)

38 Hilan delgado y la trama que urden ni el diablo la podrá deshacer. (Adapted from Heckes, 1985:120*n*.182)

over life and death. It is no surprise, then, that several writers (e.g., López-Rey, 1970: 138; Heckes, 1985:89; Sánchez and Gállego, 1995:59) have associated the women with the Three Fates. The link breaks down on the figure of Atropos, normally depicted with scissors to cut the thread of life, but who in this instance can only be represented by the witch holding the broom[39]; but the chances are good that Goya had the Three Fates in mind while contriving this scheme of his own. Why he should have given his witches this role is explicable in the obvious sense that they are capturing and killing infants, and therefore have the power of life and death over them. But if, as I suggested earlier, Goya's witches are metaphorical of social individuals and groups, what connection is he establishing between the fate-controlling witches and the infants? Here Jutta Held can be of great use:

> The plate showing three witches spinning children's thread of life and breaking it at their pleasure, represents in my view not so much the three fates – that is the superstitious belief in blind fortune criticised by enlightened opinion – but rather the much more concrete idea of three child murderers . . . The Moirai or Fates are recalled here by Goya in their original role as "wise women", midwives who had power over the lives of new born children . . . [Goya] was unceremoniously condemning the old forms of birth control – that is child murder – as a kind of witchcraft. He sees it as the work of women endowed with magical powers, who have sunk into witchcraft . . . (1987:47–8)

In Held's view, and I agree with it, the three women in the etching are procuresses functioning as midwives, whom Goya condemns by associating them, and their methods of dealing with the inevitable results of the sex industry, with witchcraft. For him abortionist procuresses appear to signify women endowed with an unacceptable dominion over birth and death, and it is on this basis, as much as their evident physical grotesqueness, that he expects the viewer to reject these

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39 Heckes indicates how the witch with the broom echoes Atropos in the following sentence: 'Goya endows her with thick, puckered lips and a broom to signify that she sucks out man's life blood and then sweeps him away' (1985:89; Paulson alludes to a similar view when he writes that the 'witch *Caprichos*' issue a fear 'of being sucked into nothingness' [1983: 377]). One can, of course, also equate the biting action of the teeth and jaws with the snip of scissors. Such an action invites one to think of the mouth as a mechanism for destruction, a place, suitably abysmal and grave-like, where life is extinguished. This feeds into the argument I will present in a moment concerning the etching's primary subject.

women. Life is not to be toyed with in this manner, he seems to say, and women like this should not be allowed to exist and thereby promulgate abominable acts.

Goya appears to have felt strongly enough on this issue to deal with it in a second etching, Capricho 45, *One has to suck a lot* (*Mucho hay que chupar*) [Fig.50].

Here we again find three figures within a composition that includes a clutch of babies – in a basket, this time. With this Fates-like triad in place it is no surprise that the manuscript in the Biblioteca Nacional reads the witches as procuresses: *Pimps and procuresses cripple hundreds of little children, giving them abortive drugs: when there is a need for secrecy*[40]. This certainly buttresses Held's interpretation, but does not help us understand a particular feature of this etching: its emphasis on sucking. This emphasis is transmitted through the title, the Prado commentary, and the etching itself, which enormously exaggerates the mouthparts of the witches, giving the one on the left a bottom jaw at least as strong and heavy as a plough, and the one on the left lips inflated like inner tubes. Like the verb *desplumar*, to which I drew attention in my discussion of *Now They go Plucked*, the Spanish word for suck, *chupar* (which Goya uses in his title), figuratively means 'to take advantage of' (Heckes, 1985:90), that is, to exploit. The witches in the etching suck babies, which means that the object implied by the noun 'much' is human blood and other vital fluids. In English, any kind of leech-like or parasitical dependency on another person is often compared metaphorically with bloodsucking, blood coming to stand, by metonymy, for the human subject as a whole. Thus we have the concept that these witches feed off others. Now, within my psychoanalytic reading, the bloodlust of these witches is more than enough to make them abject[41]. But, within Goya's moral plan, the blood they suck would be pure; in the passage from the bodies of the

40 Los rufianes y alcahuetas desgracian centadas de chiquillos, dando drogas para abortar: cuando el secreto lo exige. (From Heckes, 1985:120*n*.186)

41 Cf. Creed: 'Given the abject status of women's blood within religious and cultural discourses, bloodletting alone constitutes a prime case of abjection' (1994:61).



Fig.50 One has to suck a lot (*Mucho hay que chupar*)

infants to the bodies of the witches the blood becomes ambiguous, for an instant it is matter out of place, complicit in all manner of admixture, cross-fusion and confusion. Incorporated within the witches, however, it is utterly corrupted, becoming a substance truly on the other side of life, a by-product of life, waste.

At this point it becomes classified, for it is back in the place of the abject(ed) mother, who, as I pointed out in Part One, Chapter Two, comes in Kristeva's system to represent all objects and substances that defile: 'defilement is the translinguistic spoor of the most archaic boundaries of the self's clean and proper body. In that sense, if it is a jettisoned object, it is so from the mother' (1982:73). I am content to read the witches in *One has to suck a lot* as abject mothers feeding on the blood of subjects whose disengagement from the maternal environment and passage into the Symbolic they thereby preclude. And here I find my tie up with the witches in *They spin Finely*. In Kristeva's psychoanalytic theory there is only one figure who has the same control over life and death as the Fates or the Fate-like witches in Goya's etchings, and that is the abject(ed) mother. Her dominion over life and death is a more metaphorical one, to be sure, but if one takes the Symbolic as the norm, which it is in all societies, differences existing at the level of formation not the basic principle of law and symbol, then any deviance from it would be like a death. As I suggested in Part One, Chapter Two, it is the signifying chain that gives the subject his or her place and sense of existence; to fall from it would be to fall out of the system by which subjects position themselves and others, thereby determining reality. For the infants in Caprichos 44 and 45, the fall is into a world where the dominant term is the witch mother, the procuress "mother" and, in my reading, the abject mother. In this environment, where a consuming female term holds absolute sway, the subject is doomed to be nothing more than the matter on which the "monstrous-feminine" feeds.

Here I need to draw attention to Goya's use of three women united in the function of thriving off others, the male subject in particular. We have seen this triad in *She Prays for Her, All will Fall, They spin Finely* and *One has to suck a lot*. Variations

on it involving between two and four women can also be found in *Two of a Kind* [Fig.51], *Fine Advice* [Fig.52], *It is well pulled up* [Fig.53], *Now They go Plucked* and *She plucks Him* [Fig.28]. Now, triadic figure compositions are common in *Los Caprichos*, so Goya's choice of three women may, except in the case of *They spin Finely*, be fortuitous. What does not appear to be fortuitous is his repetitive representation of separate(d) spaces dominated by women – spaces in which the male subject, chiefly, is cast in the role of a toy, or is not depicted at all. These are enclosed, insular, enveloping places that focus the viewer's gaze on women of questionable morals and set them apart as a threat. I find a similar menace in these etchings as Norman Bryson finds in certain Dutch still life paintings. Drawing on, although not citing, psychoanalytic theory, Bryson claims that

> the persistence of the [male child's] desire to remain within the maternal orbit represents a menace to the very centre of his being, a possibility of engulfment and immersion that threatens his entire development and viability as a subject; the enclosure woven by the mother's skin, touch and voice threatens his ability as subject to enter the world of representation and signification. The seductiveness of the mother's body, together with her milieu and its mystique, become dangers he must escape; and he can do so by . . . claiming as his another kind of space, away from that cocoon and its fascinations; a space that is definitively and assuredly *outside*, behind a protective barrier, a space where the process of identification with the masculine can begin and can succeed. (1990:172)

This is ground familiar to us from my discussions in Part One, Chapter Two. Bryson goes on to claim that

> Still life bears all the marks of this double-edged exclusion and nostalgia, this irresolvable ambivalence which gives to feminine space a power of attraction intense enough to motor the entire development of still life as a genre, yet at the same time apprehends feminine space as alien, as a space which also menaces the masculine subject to the core of his identity as male. (172–73)

Goya's etchings can be read in this way more profitably than still life paintings, especially in the case of *All will Fall, Now They go Plucked* and *They spin Finely* where women are blatantly portrayed as menacing, dangerous creatures who will eagerly mistreat any man who strays into their arachnoid domains. In Goya's etchings the threat is palpable; it is meant to threaten the male subject to the core of his identity, because only in perceiving this menace will he stay clear of it. Less gender-specifi-



Fig.51 Two of a Kind (*Tal para cual*)



Fig.52 Fine Advice (*Bellos Consejos*)

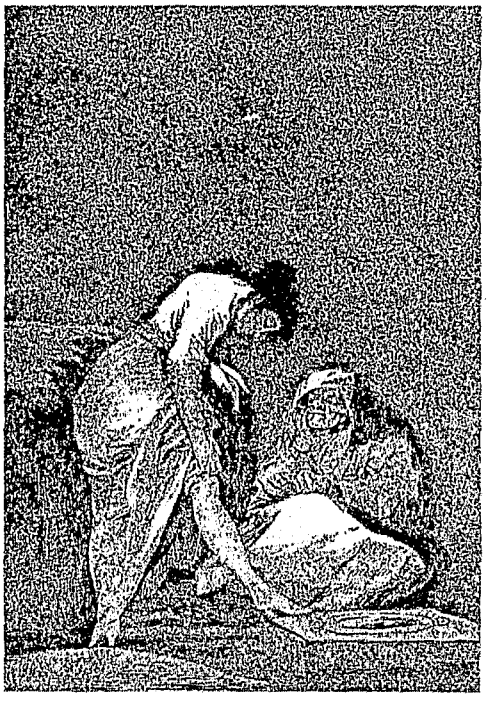

Fig.53 It is well pulled up (*Bien tirada está*)

cally, Goya's images of groups of women represent the "not me, not that" (prostitutes, murderers, exploiters) - the frightening, potentially engulfing *other* to principled social dispositions which the artist asks his viewers to spurn. In this way such etchings serve the Symbolic; they help to maintain the maternal in the gloomy immurement of abjection, and help the viewing subject to prevent desire from straying to that border beyond which s/he will encounter the repressed mother. Such, at least, is the spin we can put on our interpretations of Goya's images today.

In Capricho 65, *Where is Mama going?* (*¿Donde va Mamá?*) [Fig.54], Goya combines witch and mother in a single image and a single protagonist.

Four figures hover or fly in a dense and angular knot above a landscape barren save for a city sprouting from the distant hill. Three of the figures appear to be male; one is female. In addition to these human-like beings there is an owl, which fans its wings between the widespread pincer-like legs of the bottom figure, and a cat that hovers in mid-air to the left of the main group, carrying a parasol.

Goya reduces all of the figures to grotesque caricatures; the faces of the males are repulsive in structure and gesture, and their bodies are either deformed (note the extensive buttocks of the right-hand male figure) or limber enough to adopt positions that call animals to mind (both the bottom and top figures open their legs wide and bend them at the knee, suggesting the jointed legs of crustaceans or insects).

The female figure has received special attention, all of which makes her a rolling, dimpled portrait of obesity. According to the Prado commentary, her tubbiness is the result of more than an immoderate appetite: *Mama is dropsical and they have commanded her to go for a walk. God grant that she get better*[42]. Powers greater than Mama have ordered her to take a walk; but she isn't exactly walking, is she? A gaggle of men is transporting her in flight. Neither her disease (dropsy - evident in her turgescent legs) nor her immoderate appetite (or its fleshly gain) is likely to "get

42 Mamá está hidrópica y la han mandado pasear. Dios quiera que se alivie. (Adapted from Heckes, 1985:118-19*n*.169)



Fig.54 Where is Mama going? (*¿Donde va Mama?*)

better" under these conditions. Bitter humour is added by the verb *aliviarse* (conjugated as *se alivie* in the commentary), which, besides meaning 'to get better' also translates 'to become lighter' – no doubt the spread-eagled fellow astride the owl, whose shoulders seem to support the entire horde – Mama in particular – is hoping that God will make her lighter to bear.

López-Rey, Heckes and Sánchez and Gállego are united in pointing an accusing finger at the mother figure. López-Rey (1970:154) associates her with bad upbringing; Heckes (1985:84) reads her as a mother who corrupts her children by her poor example and harmful beliefs; for Sánchez and Gállego (1995:72) she symbolises female depravity. The commentary in the Biblioteca Nacional certainly tallies with this reading: *Lasciviousness and inebriation in women bring after them infinite disorders and true sorceries*[43]. According to this, which would represent a leading view of eighteenth-century Spanish society, carnality and lack of self-control in women can only bring enormous problems (and of the most anti-social kind: witchcraft and sorcery), because such behaviour is so utterly outside the bounds set for women[44].

The above observations emerge from an iconographic reading of the image, but certain suggestions made by López-Rey and by Heckes light the way to a psychoanalytic interpretation. López-Rey writes:

> the new title, *Where is mama going?*, directs the attention to the breast-fed grown-up who presses its teeth on the witch's nipple. This suckling being, whose sex is

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43 La lascivia y embriaguez en las mujeres traen tras de sí infinitos desordenes y brujerías verdaderas. (Adapted from Heckes, 1985:119*n*.172)

44 These bounds are laid out in the following quote from Chaves McClendon's brief essay 'Idleness and the Eighteenth-Century Spanish Woman' for session six of the fifth International Congress on the Enlightenment:

> In Spain, in the eighteenth century . . . [a] woman was expected to be educated . . . She was expected to learn polite conversation although her greatest asset was silence. She was expected to be beautiful but modest, lest the fruit of her loveliness taint her, and thus her family's, reputation. [. . .] The eighteenth century female . . . was taught to be modest, moderate, discrete [*sic*], religious and humble. (1930:2027)

Evidently, there was no room in this ideal for the ways of the flesh, and the most surefire way to alienate those women who departed from it to embark on cruises of pleasure would have been to link them to what society considered most abominable, viz., witchcraft.

> hardly definable, reminds us of the grownup *Nurse's Child.* No doubt, the theme is once more the evil power of bad upbringing which is now seen as misshaping into fiendish grimaces even the expression of filial affection. And, in fact, the two beings who huddle fondly about the obese witch bring to mind children from still other *Caprichos* compositions: the two who fearfully huddle close to their mother in *Look out, here comes the Bogey-man,* and the one who cries behind its mother in *Fine Feathers make Fine Birds* [i.e., *What a Tailor can do!*]. (1970:154)

And Heckes, following this lead, surmises:

> Goya shows that a mother's bad example and superstitious beliefs convert her children into monsters. The expressions and attitudes of these grown-up children also imply an incestuous relationship between them and their "mama" that the artist seems to attribute to the evil nature of women in general. (1985:84)

The mother's monstrosity of character infects, corrupts and defiles the moral fibre of her sons, leading to incest. Incest between mother and sons poses an immense threat to the Symbolic order, since it signals the sons' re-adoption of the mother as the primary object of desire, hence of a disposition entirely other to the (paternal) one on which society was, according to psychoanalysis, founded. Incest prohibition, I argued in Part One, Chapter Two, is the essential initiative society takes to secure the identity and subjectivity of the male subject. If the subject's desire to regress to the dyadic relationship of primary narcissism – and I am making the case that one can read Goya's etching as a depiction of this primary relationship – is not checked, the consequent confrontation with the maternal body would end not in mere castration, but in a complete loss of identity. As Kristeva claims,

> A whole facet of the sacred, true lining of the sacrificial, compulsive, and paranoid side of religions, assumes the task of warding off [the danger of contact with the mother]. This is precisely where we encounter the rituals of defilement and their derivatives, which, based on the feeling of abjection and all converging on the maternal, attempt to symbolize the other threat to the subject: that of being swamped by the dual relationship, thereby risking the loss not of a part (castration) but of the totality of his living being. The function of these religious rituals is to ward off the subject's fear of his very own identity sinking irretrievably into the mother. (1982:64)

In the light of this, Creed writes:

> By refusing to relinquish her hold on her child, [the mother] prevents it from taking up its proper place in relation to the symbolic. Partly consumed by the desire to remain locked in a blissful relationship with the mother and partly terrified of separation, the child finds it easy to succumb to the comforting pleasure of the dyadic relationship. (1994:12)

These quotes illuminate the relationship I am setting up between Goya's "Mama" and her travelling companions. The ability of the mother postulated by Kristeva to "swamp" her children, which makes Goya's witch-mother serviceable as an illustration of Creed's concept of the 'monstrous-feminine', finds visual emphasis in her body, expanded equally by its own female substance and by dropsy. Both children nuzzle close to their "Mama"; one, equipped with fat lips[45], sucks on the nipple of her left breast. Their intimacy can mean only one thing: an incestuous relationship. The avaricious pleasure that creases the faces of the males speaks of their desire to be engulfed by their mother, to lose their subjectivities in her limitlessness.

Thus, Goya's etching combines witchcraft, incest and the abject(ed) mother in a sordid cocktail that exhorts the viewer to reject and banish such abominations. Its strongest weapon is its thematic of incest, which repeats one of society's cardinal prohibitions – a prohibition that, by making the mother *abject*, aims to prevent male subjects with regressive tendencies from losing their Symbolic beings in the maternal[46]. Those subjects who ignore the prohibition and embrace the excluded fall into abjection themselves. They are lost to the mother. One can find this unity-in-abjection in the etching, in the fact that the mother and her sons are flying *away* from a city – a place of social organisation and structure – which implies that they have been banished. The Prado commentary even hints at a degree of expulsion when it implies that "they" – a higher authority I would locate in the distant city – have ordered the

45 All three male figures have prominent lips, indicating their willingness to suck in copious quantities of their mother's milk – a corrupt milk that intermixes them with the mother through the exudations of her breasts, and maintains them in their abject dependency.

46 I should clarify that incest between mother and daughter and between father and son and father and daughter would all be equally condemnable, and would all be considered abject, because incest is against moral and/or legislated law, and is therefore abject by definition. In the case of incest between mother and son or mother and daughter there is, however, a clearer model of what to avoid, because the mother is inextricably caught up with abjection. For the incestuous father the issue is more complex, although I would argue that in such a situation the father would, by being rejected from the law, become abject and his waywardness would be attributed to unsound maternal upbringing. He would not become an abject father, but the offspring of an abject mother (cf. footnote 5 in the next chapter).

oedemic mother to take a walk. Off she goes to places that, if the featureless landscape beneath the spread legs of the figure supporting the mob is anything to go by, will be bleak and deserted, places beyond the limits of accepted society, places of abjection. In short, the characters are abject in feature (grotesque), occupation (witches) and behaviour (incestuous), and they can be interpreted as outcasts: they are abject and have been abjected.

In *Where is Mama going?* I find the mechanism of abjection embedded in the image (Mama is headed into the wilderness), the commentary (a higher authority has ordered Mama to take a walk, i.e., to get lost), and the implicit satirical injunction to the viewer (send such incestuous disruptors of society, such tumours on the civil body, into a categorical and social wilderness).

The etchings analysed in this chapter, ranging as they do from naturalistic depictions to representations of women as witches, and taking the viewer across a corrupted smorgasbord of scenes involving spurning, chicanery, self-interest, 'unnatural' coitus, abortion, incest and general depravity, share a common impulse which derives from their producer: an impulse to criticise, condemn and banish through manipulations of modes and conventions that Goya evidently expected his viewers to recognise as morally suspect and liminal – the masquerade, the Grotesque, the supernatural category of witches. He also targeted social types that most socially-adhering viewers would join him in criticising: the deceptive, conniving woman, representative of an invertive "feminocracy", and the bawds and prostitutes of the sex industry. In this intense focus on women of dubious morals he emerges as a satirist seeking to divulge his moral law – the super-egoic one which he *ideally* wished to abide by – through images of wanton, profligate behaviour. In this process I claim that he *places* abjection. The degeneracy of the women is meant to disgust the viewer and attract him or her to the rational virtues set up as the unseen opposing 'norm' to the displayed anti-social 'abnorm'. The process would involve the *displacement* of abjection, and the end goal would be reformation

of society along the trajectory of a more original, incorruptible principle of taxonomic purity and moral supremacy.

The satirical ideal strives for resolution, even if the issue is at heart a far more muddled and irresolute one, in which the satirist draws as much relief and gratification from depicting the immoral as from condemning it into the place of abjection. And even when one is resolute, abjection remains something one cannot do without, for as Babcock claims, 'we seem to need a "margin of mess," a category of "inverted beings" both to define and to question the orders by which we live' (1978:28). Goya draws from this "category" to question a society which has reached a state of corruption where prostitution is permitted even when it is illegal; and, by banishing his targets back into the "mess", he feeds the "margin" so essential to the definition and cohesion of the Symbolic.



Chapter Five
The Nobility

A WRITER FOR THE journal *El Censor*, which was popular in Goya's day, declares his inability to find a social role for Spain's noble class:

> The sovereign is the head, the ministers the organs and senses, artisans the stomach, merchants the entrails, soldiers the arms, etc. You, however, what are you in the political body? I don't know what jobs to give you other than those of warts, galls, tumours, scirrhi.[1]

On the evidence of his etchings, Goya asked himself the same question, and produced the same answer. The nobility he commits to the etching plate is a class of idle, parasitic, incapable and spoilt fools (see, for instance, *This certainly is Reading* [*Esto sí que es leer*] [Fig.55], a blight on Spain's social system which, in the eighteenth century, entrenched the privileges of the aristocracy on the basis not of anything so worthy as merit, but on that of bloodlines. Thus, according to Goya and other thinkers of his time (see Alcalá Flecha, 1988:101–27, for examples of anti-nobility literature and attitudes), the nobility assumed it had the birthright to live off the working classes and squander its time fruitlessly.

In one of his most successful pieces of satire, Capricho 4, *That of the Nurse* (*El de la Rollona*) [Fig.56], Goya comments on how the lavish upbringings of nobles can prepare them only to be cosseted nanny's boys.

When writers have translated the title of this print they have nine times out of ten ignored all of it but that single noun, *rollona*, meaning nurse or nanny (e.g., the translator of Ferrari goes for "The Nurse's Child", López-Rey for "Nurse's Child", and the translators of Sánchez and Gállego for "Nanny's Boy"). Sayre opts for the

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1 El soberano es la cabeza, los ministros los órganos y sentidos, los artesanos el estómago, los comerciantes las entrañas, los soldados los brazos, etc. ¿Vosotros empero qué sois en el cuerpo político? No sé ya que empleo daros sino el de verrugas, lobanillos, tumores, escirros. (Quoted in Alcalá Flecha, 1988:107. The "you" referred to – in the impersonal plural *tu* form to plainly express disrespect – is the nobility)



Fig.56 That of the Nurse (*El de la Rollona*)



Fig.55 This certainly is Reading (*Esto si que es Leer*)

contrary: her "The Childish Man"[2] *cuts out the nanny and focuses purely on the male figure.* These choices may overcome the clumsiness of translating directly, but the direct translation I opt for restores the crucial bond between child and nurse to its rightful constitutional place in the interpretation of the image: *That* [. . .] *of the Nurse.* In this construction the child appears as the unmitigated product (that [thing] of - or from [the Spanish preposition "de" also translates as "from"] - the nurse), and because the title does not specify a subject (*el de* is a Spanish relative pronoun which normally functions in grammatical expressions where the subject it refers to is mentioned in a previous or following clause), the nurse assumes greater importance: she is the subject for which there is an object (the man-child) that exists solely in the orbit of her subjectivity[3]. The same reins that link the

[2] This is her nomenclature of choice in Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment; however, in her earlier exhibition catalogue, The Changing Image, she opts for "Nanny's Boy" (1974:65).

[3] It is interesting to note that in Spanish proverbial law there are sayings very similar to Goya's title for Capricho 4. Sayre provides one, dating from the fifteenth century, in Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment: '*El niño de la rolloña, que tenía siete años y mamava*' (The child of the nurse, who was seven years old and was still suckled) (in Sánchez and Sayre, 1989:90). Alcalá Flecha, in his article 'El tema del Niño Malcriado en el Capricho 4', 1987, and in his discussion of this etching in Literatura e Ideología (1988:112-17), provides further examples from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature. All of these sayings and fragments of literature include both subject (nanny) and object (child), which tends to suggest that Goya took the step of leaving the object unnamed in the title because he assumed his audience, versed in this older literature, would have understood what he meant (especially given that they had the image to guide them).

man-child to his man-servant also link him to the unseen nurse, and these appear to be links that could be broken only at the risk of destroying the man-child.

I will return to the man-child's dependence on the nanny in a moment, but first I need to look at the internal action of the print and draw interpretations from it. The man-child is highlighted in the foreground as he leans forward and sticks a finger in his mouth. Reins attach him to the manservant in the background, and it would appear that the servant is trying to drag him away from the large open vessel to his left. Sayre defines this vessel as a 'cauldron of food' (1989:90). Behind this "cauldron" is an object Sayre identifies as a close stool – a rich man's toilet:

> In the eighteenth century there was a hierarchy of amenities for those wishing to defecate . . . Peasants used whatever stretch of earth was available; persons of modest pretensions owned chamber pots; and those with more money sat comfortably on close stools shaped like boxes or constructed like chairs, except for the appropriate opening. Circle-shaped cushions, the ultimate in comfort, were reserved for the powerful, the rich, the noble. Precisely such a cushion lies on top of the close stool belonging to this brutish, high-born, antiquated child-man whose utterly useless life is spent in gorging himself and then producing only shit. (1989:90–1)

In associating the nurse's fur-faced, amulet-waisted child with excretion, Goya makes use of a familiar satirical method: the reduction of human beings to the level of their digestive and reproductive functions – those functions that humanity has in common with animals. In an existence dominated by food and excreta, there is not much room for matters of the mind and soul, and any assumption that the child-man might be capable of such higher functions is discredited by the insistence with which he crams food into his mouth – to the point where vomiting seems certain to follow (disgorging following gorging, from both mouth and anus) – and roots his feet to the floor, preventing the manservant from tearing him away from his beloved source of nourishment. The amulets, meanwhile, degrade the noble in a different way, by conveying that he is superstitious, therefore ignorant

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Incidentally, Flecha argues that the image of the child-man was used to ridicule 'la ineptitud de las clases dirigentes' (the ineptitude of the ruling classes [i.e., the nobility]) (1987: 343).

and lacking in reason. This blind faith in charms further maintains his retardation and child-like naivety.

It would seem that Goya's point is simply that nobles are idle and spoilt; they have everything they need, from servants to luxurious toilet facilities, and the best they can do with what they have is glut on all the food, manufacture faeces, and reach adulthood without ever overcoming their superstitious fears or leaving the shadow of their surrogate mothers.

When interpreted from the angle of my argument, the image has several instructive connotations. For one thing, the man-child's dependency on food and excretion means one can situate him at the rudimentary oral-anal levels of development, which a child, in Freud's system, is expected to outgrow by the period of "sexual latency", at around four or five years of age (1991c:92–95, 119). To splint such a reading of the nanny's boy, one can draw attention to his act of taking his fingers into his mouth, as if he acknowledges no categorical separation between his own body and the food he shovels into it, between living being and nutrition, between self and other. In Freud, food, mouth and fingers are all early objects of sexual investment, and indeed the man-child's engrossment in the feeding process calls to mind Freud's claim that '[s]ensual sucking involves a complete absorption of the attention' (1991c:96). If this child-man is understood as immobilised at the place of pregenital sexual development then it is from his digits, his mouth and his anus that he draws his pleasure: he is auto-erotic, and in his feeding he has simply put the cauldron of food in place of the breast. But he is still locked within and totally reliant on the environment-as-determined-by-the-nanny. He is at the mercy of both a maternal figure – whose unseen reins are as firm as those that bond him to the man-servant – and the faeces he drops. Given his fixation at an early stage of development – and here I am simply extending my reading for the sake of cohesion – and given the fact that the toilet is installed as if it is something he makes frequent use of, he treats faeces as a gift that shows his obedience to the nanny (see Freud, 1991c:103–4,

for his argument that children relate their faeces to money or gifts of obedience), who organises this environment in such a way that food is *over here* and excrement is *over there*. To him the issue is obedience to the nanny, but the nanny's essential concern is to keep the ordure away from the food she provides, for, as Kristeva claims, society views excrement as a threat to the ego and even to life itself:

> Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.) stand for the danger to identity that comes from without: the ego threatened by the non-ego, society threatened by its outside, life by death. (1982:71)

Excrement is an unstable class of object; it poses a danger to the Symbolic subject who has repressed the libidinous drives s/he associated with such matter as a child, because if it returns – if the subject reinvests desire, therefore drive energy, in such an excluded object – it tears open the Symbolic fabric and creates the kind of gap through which a subject might fade from signification and the social formation. Wastes 'drop so that I might live', Kristeva writes (3); the ejection of waste (both physical and psychological) secures the division from that margin into which all abjects are (dis)placed, and thereby sustains life within a world where the split between self and other is the model of all identity.

The man-child has not separated from his nanny or his manservant, or even his food and faeces, and therefore has never learned to place/classify matter, to accept some things within himself and exclude others from him. Faeces and non-genital parts of his body are still the sources of his pleasure, and this makes him unacceptable as a Symbolic subject. He is to be associated not with the Symbolic but with the mother's abject fragments, to which he is so attached.

Now, as I have pointed out before, Kristeva relates excremental wastes and other abject fragments to the mother:

> maternal authority is experienced first and above all, after the first essentially oral frustrations, as sphincteral training . . . Through frustrations and prohibitions, this authority shapes the body into a *territory* having areas, orifices, points and lines, surfaces and hollows, where the archaic power of mastery and neglect, of the differentiation of proper-clean and improper-dirty, possible and impossible, is impressed and exerted. (1982:71–72)

One would think that the role of mothers or mother surrogates in mapping the "proper-clean" through such things as sphincteral training would make society esteem them, for they thereby establish those boundaries between purity and pollution that will be so important to the child's course through life, particularly in forming its morality and its super-ego. But Kristeva makes it clear that mothers are not esteemed, that the child's passage into the Symbolic occurs at the expense of the mother, who is in a sense left behind in the realm of the improper. It is as if her association with that realm forever forbids her a role in the Symbolic. Her position within symbolism is fraught with treachery because she walks in it with hands sullied by an involvement with the *other side* of life: the side of wastes and death – an involvement only enhanced by her procreative ability (which creates the other waste of which Kristeva writes, menstrual waste, and that complex object-subject-other that doubles her identity during maternity: the child she must sacrifice to the Other). Lacan, narrator extraordinaire of the Symbolic, puts it best: '[t]here is nevertheless one thing that evades the symbolic tapestry, it's procreation in its essential root – that one being is born from another' (1993:179). The result of the impossible nature of the maternal function is articulated by Kristeva:

> If language, like culture, sets up a separation and, starting with discrete elements, concatenates an order, it does so precisely by repressing maternal authority and the corporeal mapping that abuts against them. (1982:72)

That of the Nurse indicates why maternal authority supposedly needs to be repressed. For if a child is not allowed to break away from maternal authority and take its place in the Symbolic order, it becomes a dependent abomination; it never learns to walk or speak, and its understanding will never encompass more than those elementary functions and pleasures that the mother (or mother surrogate, as we have in Goya's etching, who might perform the dual role of mother and wet-nurse for an aristocratic baby) impresses on its body: eating and defecating. Goya's powerful combination figure of a child and a grown man evinces his view of the aberrant influence of molly-coddling mothers and nannies or, in the terms of my

reading, of the (monstrous) 'feminine' – the engulfing maternal figure within which the child is swallowed and forever prevented from detaching to become a separate, cohesive individual.

This psychoanalytic reading reasserts the place of the nurse in the relationship between the child and its surrogate mother. Such titles as "The Childish Man" put all the focus on the 'child' and force readings that sideline the presence and role of the nurse. But clearly her presence is essential, and Goya, while he certainly attacks the aristocracy in general in this print, does not leave it out of the equation. He specifically phrases an ellipsis into his title, forcing the viewer to consult the image – which alone contains the object of the nurse's (s)mothering – to apprehend the caption. By these means Goya effects the opposite exclusion to the one scholars so frequently make, stressing that the responsibility for the child's failure to grow up must be dumped squarely at the foot of the *only* noun and the only subject in the title: the nanny. It is because she, and the mother who employs her, have not allowed the man to emerge from their enfolding feminine gown that he has stayed a dependent child. Immersed in the maternal enclosure they construct, he is an unremitting infant: an unrealised, hence unrealis*able*, subject. Not named, the man-child is not even an 'it', never mind an 'I'.

The omission of the subject also keeps the noun that the relative pronoun refers to (the child) out of all subject-object relation, condemning it to a grammatical space outside of defined syntax – a blank grammatical space metaphoric of a blank physical, social and psychic space: the space of the abject maternal body. Since the only object (in the grammatical sense) and the only subject (in the psychoanalytic sense) in Goya's incomplete sentence is the nurse, the circuit completes itself: the missing subject and the subject responsible for its elision meet in the maternal-body representative of the nurse.

In Capricho 50, *The Chinchillas* (*Los Chinchillas*) [Fig.57], Goya repeats the subject of Capricho 4, but in this instance he does depict a nursing figure, and he em-

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