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# Image and Mask in the Painting by Francisco Goya: The Ontological and Axiological Aspects



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**Ключевые слова:** Франсиско Гойя, испанская культура, архетипические черты, потусторонний мир, бессознательное, Карл Густав Юнг, Уильям Хогарт, Генри Фюсли, Теодор Жерико

**Лукичева Красимира Любеновна**

Образ и маска в живописи Франсиско Гойи – онтологические и аксиологические аспекты

**Abstract.** It is widely recognized that the development of Goya's picturesque manner is in the vein of his great predecessors — El Greco and D. Velázquez. However, with all the importance of the experimental novelty of this Spanish master's technique, the uniqueness of his creativity should be sought elsewhere. Goya managed to decidedly push the established boundaries of the European art expanding its range with the themes and problems that had previously been rarely and poorly represented. Anticipating an existential and anthropological shift that was evident back in the last decades of the 19th century and being almost a century ahead of it, those themes, plots, and problems were aimed at exteriorizing the inner world of man on the scale that appears to have never existed before. Goya systematically examines the human psyche in extreme existential situations when the conscious and the subconscious intertwine in a whimsical way. The specific feature of this perspective is an interest not in the individual and individuality but in the collective consciousness and the collective unconsciousness, as C. Jung would later justify it. The master's true goal is to break through to where the archetypal components of the psyche, thinking, and behaviour rest.

In this sense, the images of the mentally disturbed and the imprisoned become semantically significant, the atmosphere of madhouses and prisons, the world of human imagination that engendered the sphere of the irrational. Goya seeks the truth about man scrutinizing him in extreme situations and critical states. The artist often approaches the visualization of all this through a theatrical element — through masks, role-playing, and games. He is interested in that harsh inversion where a person, put into inhuman, unbearable conditions, can no longer remain rational and turns into a dreadful, meaningless human mask. The main characteristics of the artist's approach are explored in comparison with thematically similar works by William Hogarth, Henry Fuseli, and Théodore Géricault.

**Аннотация.** Общеизвестно, что развитие живописной манеры Гойи находится в русле его великих предшественников — Эль Греко и Д. Веласкеса. Но при всей значимости экспериментальной новизны техники испанского мастера, уникальность его творчества следует искать в другом. Гойе удалось решительно отодвинуть установившиеся горизонты и границы европейского искусства, включив в его сферу темы, которые до этого лишь редко и робко там проявлялись. Предвещая экзистенциально-антропологический поворот в искусстве с последних десятилетий XIX века, эти темы были направлены на экстерииоризацию, невиданной глубины и масштаба, внутреннего мира человека. Гойя систематически изучает человеческую психику в экстремальных ситуациях экзистенции, когда сознание и подсознание причудливым образом переплетаются. Специфической чертой этого ракурса является интерес не к индивиду и индивидуальности, но к коллективному сознанию и коллективному бессознательному, как это позже обосновал К.Г. Юнг. Подлинная цель мастера — пробиться туда, где покоится архетипическая составляющая психики, мышления, поведения.

В этом плане семантически значимыми становятся образы умалишенных и заключенных, атмосфера сумасшедших домов и тюрем, мир человеческого воображения, породившего иррациональную сферу. Истину о человеке Гойя ищет, всматриваясь в него, когда тот переживает крайние, пороговые состояния. Часто художник приближается к визуализации всего этого с помощью театрального начала — через маски, ролевые воплощения и игры. Его интересует та жесткая инверсия, когда человек, брошенный в нечеловеческие условия, теряет способность оставаться разумным существом и превращается в жуткую человеческую маску. Основные характеристики подхода художника исследуются в сравнении со схожими по тематике произведениями У. Хогарта, Г. Фюсли, Т. Жерико.

## Introduction

The history of Francisco Goya studies began shortly after his death in Bordeaux in 1828. As early as the 1830s–1840s, French<sup>(1)</sup> [Schwander, 2021, p. 30–33] and English authors [Glendinning, 1964, p. 4–14]<sup>(2)</sup> introduced the European audience to the artist's paintings and graphics. The controversy surrounding Goya's creative legacy arose almost immediately; interestingly, the evaluation of the artist's work took on different dimensions in different European countries. As of England, Goya's paintings and graphics mainly attracted the attention of connoisseurs and collectors (W. Stirling, R. Ford) [Macartney, 2007, p. 425–444], and the artist D. Wilkie<sup>(3)</sup>, who visited Spain, was more interested in the creative work of B.E. Murillo [Glendenning, 1989, p. 121]. What mattered most for many innovative artists of the time was the no-compromise approach to technical experiment found in many of Goya's works; however, scientific reflection on Goya at that time commonly contained negative connotations, which at the beginning of the 20th century found expression in one of the first comprehensive reviews on the origins and history of modern art written by J. Meier-Graefe (1867–1935). He writes, “Goya is a prototype of the irregular, a fanatic of disorder <...> A violent man from the street suddenly finds himself in a palace filled with precious objects through the reversal of all previous circumstances and tries out all the fine things for his own highly individual purposes. <...> Even in this disgust against everything systematic there is no system. <...> If it occurs to him, he is the most composed and skilful of little masters, making neat and banal carpet designs, pleasant portraits in the English style, or painting frescoes in the style of Tiepolo. <...> He is a true image of the chaotic state of the world at the transition from the old to the new”

- (1) In France, Goya's work attracted interest of the romanticists – artists and writers, such as E. Delacroix and Th. Gautier, who immediately appreciated his artistic style.
- (2) According to N. Glendinning, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Goya's works in England were not too expensive, up until 1896 they had not been exhibited in the National Gallery, and up until the middle of the century in the British Museum, there had not been a single etching or painting by the master. In French collections, Goya was presented quite widely already at the end of the 30s [Glendinning, 1964, p. 4].
- (3) David Wilkie (1785–1841) – English artist of Scottish origin, popular for his genre and historical paintings, was given the title of the Principal Painter in Ordinary.

[Meier-Graefe, 1920, p. 94–95]<sup>(4)</sup>. The German art historian and critic is of interest to us not only as a historian and theorist of modern art (of the 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) and an advocate for impressionism and subsequently expressionism – in our context, what is important is J. Meier-Graefe's assiduous attention to the Spanish artistic heritage and the fact that in his review he substantiates one of the prevailing points of view on Goya's creative work at that time, considering him as part of the triad El Greco – Velázquez – Goya. Seeing Velázquez as a distant predecessor of impressionism and El Greco as a forerunner of expressionism, and speculating on the prerequisites to the emergence of modern art, the critic refers to Goya as a minor and mediocre master. Considering the development of French painting from E. Delacroix to post-impressionism to be the greatest achievement of art, he entirely overlooks the profound influence that Goya's work, which, as already mentioned, was well known in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century France, had on a number of French masters and trends (suffice it to recall the very same Delacroix or E. Manet).

From a modern perspective, it is evident that the development of Goya's brushwork is indeed in line with his three great predecessors. As for French painting, it took three generations and almost a century to work its way to the updated painting technique that the Spanish master had achieved within his lifetime.

Nevertheless, in all the significance of the experimental novelty of Goya's technique, it appears that the uniqueness of his work is to be sought elsewhere<sup>(5)</sup>. Goya was one of the few masters who managed to decidedly push the established boundaries of the European art expanding its range with the themes and problems that had previously been rarely and poorly represented. Anticipating an existential and anthropological shift that was evident back in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and being almost a century ahead of it, those themes, plots, and problems were aimed at exteriorizing the inner world of man on the scale that appears to have

- (4) Meier-Graefe's three-volume work on the genesis and development of modern art, in which he makes this statement about Goya, was first published in Stuttgart in 1904.
- (5) The book *Francisco de Goya and the Art of Critique* by A. Cascardi outlines some important, in our opinion, prospects in studying Goya's work within the context of the philosophical concepts by I. Kant and M. Heidegger, as well as the artist's specific typological features of representation. See: [Cascardi, 2022], particularly, the chapter *The Limits of Representation* [Cascardi, 2022, p. 137–186].

never existed before. Both in painting and in graphics, Goya undertakes a comprehensive study into the human psyche in the most extreme situations of human existence, when the conscious and the subconscious intricately intertwine, the latter suppressing rational thinking. Further development of the European culture testifies to the importance of this perspective across a broad range of areas — from philosophy, psychology, and psychiatry to various manifestations in artistic practice.

### **The ontological and axiological status of the dimension discovered by Goya**

Meanwhile, there is an aspect that is critical for understanding this path of the artist. It lies in the fact that what Goya focuses on is not the individual and individuality, not the unique and specific but the collective consciousness and the collective unconscious, and what is typical and characteristic of them. In order to find it, he appeals to his present time and contemporaries, to the recent past, and he keeps this focus even in contexts where he introduces into his observations the elements of social criticism. This must be highlighted, since in the literature analysing the artists' creative works, it is their satirical orientation that is almost always brought to the fore and that the artist's goal-setting and meaning-making motives centre around. Nevertheless, his true objective lies in a different plane: Goya aspires to break through the perceptible external layers to where the archetypal component of the psyche, thinking, and behaviour rests — to that elemental layer that is created not by consciousness and understanding but by a (vague and spontaneous) sensation of the unity of the living and the inanimate, the superior and the inferior, the real and the irrational, the human and the inhuman, the past and the future; and the human nature is an integral part in this unity, dissolving into all its elements.

With this in mind it could be said that Goya was fortunate to have been born in Spain. Being regarded as backward and provincial in the eyes of other European countries, Spain, like no other country in Western Europe at the turn of the 18th–19th centuries, preserved the palpable archetypal principle and archetypal features in different aspects of its culture — from folk to aristocratic, from mass to elite. The archetypal elements were expressed through the forms of beliefs and rituals that

ingeniously combined the Christian and the pagan. The images inhabiting this world undiscovered in consciousness, the events and processes that fill its existence, found expression, on the one hand, in quasi-mythological legends and fairy tales, but on the other hand, in author's works of prose, poetry, and drama, even if they were intended to give a critical or satirical estimate. Of course, they are also found in the fine arts of Spain, but it is in the creative work of Goya that the artistic power of their expression comes to the peak.

It is essential to emphasize that the account given by Goya about the profound, unconscious elements of the nature and the essence of man anticipated the views not of S. Freud but of C. Jung. It seems to us that the definition of stratification and the levels of the unconscious, which Jung gives in his polemic with Freud, is surprisingly adequate in describing the ontological status of the reality created by the human psyche that Goya uncompromisingly forces through. In the work *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*<sup>(6)</sup> C. Jung, the founder of the school of analytical psychology, writes:

At first the concept of the unconscious was limited to denoting the state of repressed or forgotten contents. Even with Freud, who makes the unconscious — at least metaphorically — take the stage as the acting subject, it is really nothing but the gathering place of forgotten and repressed contents, and has a functional significance thanks only to these. For Freud, accordingly, the unconscious is of an exclusively personal nature, although he was aware of its archaic and mythological thought-forms.

A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the 'personal unconscious' [Italics in the entire quote — by C. Jung. — K.L.]. But this personal layer rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the 'collective unconscious'. I have chosen the term 'collective' because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; <...>. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us. <...>

<...> The contents of the personal unconscious are chiefly the feeling-toned complexes, as they are called; they constitute the personal and private side of psychic life. The contents of the collective unconscious, on the other hand, are known as archetypes [Jung, 2019, p. 7–8].

(6) It was first published in 1934, over a century after the Spanish master's death.

## Fuseli and Goya: innovation vs tradition?

In order to more clearly reveal the novelty (both semantic and pictorial) of the path that Goya maps out to explore the archetypal features of consciousness and psyche, let us turn to his early work *St. Francisco de Borja at the Deathbed of an Impenitent* (1787–1788)<sup>(7)</sup>. The Duchess of Osuna commissioned Goya to paint it for the chapel dedicated to the saint in the Cathedral of Valencia, since Francisco de Borja<sup>(8)</sup> was her distant ancestor.

It did not happen immediately that Goya found his own creative path and original artistic and semantic techniques. In purely iconographic terms, this work belongs to the tradition that developed back in the Middle Ages – depicting the so-called ‘immediate judgement’, which, unlike the Last Judgement, takes place at the moment of a person’s death. According to theological texts, a sinner’s soul is taken by the demons of Hell that accompany the person in their dying hours. A comparison of the rich man’s death scene from a 12th-century Romanesque relief depicting the Gospel parable of a rich man and Lazarus (the Abbey church of St. Pierre, Moissac, France) and the painting by Goya reveals this similarity from an iconographic point of view – in both of the works, the centre of the composition is the deathbed of a sinner with fierce inhabitants of the otherworld crowding at his side.

The life story of Saint Francisco de Borja tells how he was once administering the Last Communion for a sinner who would not repent. During the prayer, the crucifix in his hand started bleeding. Seeing the dying man’s disbelief, he placed its [the crucifix’s] hand in that profusely bleeding lacerated wound in its chest, hurled it with indignation at the sinner’s frowning, denigrated face and said, “‘Since you scorn this blood, which was shed for your glory, let it serve for your eternal unhappiness.’ Then that pitiful man, with an awful, blasphemous shout directed against Jesus Christ, gave up his soul, convulsed by a horrid moan, and it was turned over to the infamous ministers of fire and fright”<sup>(9)</sup>.

(7) St. Francisco de Borja at the Deathbed of an Impenitent. 1787–88. Oil on canvas. 350 × 300 cm. The Cathedral of Valencia.

(8) Francisco de Borja (1510–1572) – representative of the Spanish branch of the Italian Borgia family, associate of Ignatius of Loyola, Third Jesuit Superior General. He was canonized on June 20, 1670.

(9) F. de Borja’s history of life was written in 1717 by Cardinal Alvaro Cienfuego (Alvaro Cienfuego), cit.: [Schulz, 1998, p. 667–668].

Technically, Goya illustrates one of the scenes in the saint’s biography which was already quite graphically described in the hagiographic story. In terms of composition and, to a certain extent, iconography, one can notice an apparent similarity between this painting by Goya and *The Nightmare* by H. Fuseli (1781, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit), however, this similarity is definitely not the result of Goya’s exposure to the English master’s works. Both of the mentioned paintings, to a greater or lesser degree, follow in the above-mentioned iconographic tradition which established a fairly consistent compositional core that specified how the inhabitants of hell and the otherworld who haunt man should be depicted. Meanwhile, between the works under analysis there are two fundamental differences, one of which will later be nullified: the point is not only that Goya’s painting traces back to a particular verbal source, while the one by Fuseli does not. It is all about the reality that the artist visualizes. Goya’s work is in line with the religious cultural code of the European tradition and expresses the reality that is fully covered within the written and oral tradition, whereas Fuseli goes into the uncharted territory of dreams and visions, the reality that the subconscious constructs from scraps following some unknown laws. The first to take a close interest in that reality on a philosophical and artistic level were romanticists, and Fuseli was certainly one of those at the origins of that interest. As for Goya, soon he found interest in the unreal and irrational element (which lasted until the end of his days), but he would never limit it to just dreams and visions.

The second difference relates to the individual style of both masters. Both in the original composition of 1781, and in the one of 1791 painted in a much freer manner, Fuseli stayed within the academic painting system with its smooth, flat, impasto-free paintwork and the rational pass of light within the pictorial space. The technique characteristic of Goya is completely different. Let us highlight its features on the example of the preparatory etude<sup>(10)</sup> he created for a painting: colour contrast accompanied by disharmonious accents (a combination of red and green); exacerbated opposition of light and darkness, including by means of bright impasto strokes of white; the use of colour shades and, above all, the abundance of the red one; expressive distortion of images; and finally, a bold impasto technique. An important technique which continues in the painting from the cathedral is the introduction of an additional

(10) St. Francisco de Borja at the Deathbed of an Impenitent. Etude. 1787–1788. Oil on canvas. 38 × 29,3 cm. Private collection.



(but invisible to the viewer) source of light in opposition to the backlight coming from the wheel window in the background. This second light source, fundamental for the semantic and compositional structure of the painting, is put in that very place where, conventionally, the viewer should be located, thus highlighting the key fragments of the painting. Not only does such a use of light add semantic load, but it also makes the work easier to understand.

Of course it is an etude, but the same qualities are largely preserved in the completed work as well. And even more important is the fact that it is exactly in that very direction that Goya's painting style and technique would further develop and the mentioned characteristics would be transferred into his finished works.

### **The aspects Goya's visualization of the archetypal psychic reality: witches, witchers, and their confrontation with man**

The archetypal dimension of the great master's work is most visible in a series of paintings on the theme of witches, which in the time of Goya was equally popular both with the lower social strata of the Spanish society and with the Spanish aristocracy, where the interest remained throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. Various characters of the dark otherworld were present in popular culture, as well as in the literary works of famous writers. The *Witches* series was created by Goya in 1798 for his patrons and clients – the Duke and Duchess of Osuna, and was put up in their country house. Typologically, the paintings of the series classify as the so-called 'cabinet painting'<sup>(11)</sup>. It is known that the series consisted of six paintings, but in 1898 it was sold at auction and separated, and the whereabouts of two

(11) Cabinet painting started in the 15th-century Italy and in the 16<sup>th</sup> century spread in other Western European countries. Small-format cabinet paintings were commissioned by collectors and art devotees for collections or home decoration. Often artists created them for sale to individuals. Subjects were chosen by customers or the masters themselves, and covered a wide range of items – mythological and religious painting, portraits, or landscapes. At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the Netherlands, the depiction of genre scenes was becoming increasingly popular. Thus, cabinet painting had its particular segment of the art market and performed certain social functions that were far from official commissions. In cabinet painting, artists felt more creative freedom, both in the plot and in technical manner, since regulatory norms and rules were reduced. Cabinet painting is the result of the new forms of the social life of art and a reflection of the views and tastes of the layers of society the customers belonged to (aristocracy, upper class, lower middle class).

of them are unknown. The paintings were mainly themed on the plays by Spanish playwrights, Antonio de Zamora (1665–1727) in particular, since the Duke and Duchess of Osuna were great admirers of his work and even staged his plays in their country house. A theatre devotee, the Duchess often appeared on stage herself, despite her belonging to the most noble layer of the Spanish society.

It was to the series of paintings of witches and witchers that the stereotypical judgments mentioned above were primarily applied. In his comprehensive monograph on Goya's creative work and life, J. Tomlinson argues that in this series of paintings the artist satirically points to and condemns prejudices, apprehension, fears of the otherworldly forces hostile to man and bringing death, and the convictions of many that they surround and pursue their victims anytime and anywhere. According to J. Tomlinson, this stance is fully consistent with the views of the Duke and Duchess of Osuna and Goya himself which were formed and influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment [Tomlinson, 2020, p. 166].

Without a doubt, Goya and his clients did belong to that part of the Spanish society whose worldview had shaped by the ideals of the Enlightenment and was antithetical to such spontaneous obscurantism. It is known and documented that Goya was on friendly terms with many influential Enlightenment thinkers of Spain. Moreover, the plays by Antonio de Zamora and José de Cañizares, which some of these paintings by Goya were based on, actually convey satirical notes and condemnation of those who are subject to such superstitions. However, Goya's works do not solely centre around such connotations; they were painted not only in order to reinforce critical assessments, visually confronting the audience with the comical appearance and behaviour of victims of superstition. Goya created those works not at all as a critic and satirist, opposing himself to what contradicts the enlightened mind that rationally perceives reality. It is not his objective to demonstrate the superiority of this mind equipped with a genuine understanding of reality over the consciousness lost in superstition by means of presenting it as a grotesque image. He takes an attitude not just of an interested observer but of a researcher seeking to penetrate through the spontaneous ideas of such a person, to see and perceive the world created by the consciousness and the subconscious which are dominated by fears of otherworldly hostile forces. Goya studies this world step by step, realizing that for his characters it is only he

who is as real as an objective reality. And the artist sees and depicts this world precisely as an objectified reality where the characters live. In this regard, Goya's mastery lies precisely in the fact that he managed to identify the substrate of psychic entity created by the consciousness and the subconscious, and at the expense of (quasi) hypostatization create its unusually expressive visual equivalent: this is where Goya immerses his audience, making them perceive the reality of those unfortunate people he depicts.

The verbal sources the master relies on provide specific examples of prejudice, which he further subjects to his own rules of visual objectification enabling the audience to find themselves vis-a-vis this reality. Goya's artistic strategy includes the following central elements:

In all of the paintings of the series the action takes place on ground — mainly in a landscape, in one of them — in a room. The spatial coordinates of the top and bottom parts are clearly expressed, the development of pictorial space is carried out by the artist from a single perspective, following the rational logic of perception. The space itself is characterized superficially, without detail. This visual algorithm applies to all the four canvases and connects with the same time coordinate — the action always takes place at night. The artist develops a *single* chronotope in which people and otherworldly creatures are inseparable: people are doomed to become victims of otherworldly being who are right there next to them, in their earthly realm.

The ugly becomes the main artistic and aesthetic category — following it, Goya depicts witches and witchers as ugly and deeply repulsive, approaching naturalism<sup>(12)</sup>. What does not allow going over this line is the broad and light brushwork which demonstrates its immanent qualities every time the viewer is disposed to give in to image manipulation (substitution of a virtual image for a real one). The plasticity of depicted bodies is expressed broadly and convincingly, sometimes sculpturally.

Spatial depth, volume and plasticity are expressed exclusively by means of colour without the slightest hint of flatness — through tonal and colour transitions from warm to cool, from dark to light. Chiaroscuro

(12) On the 'death of beauty' and semantic and functional role of the ugly the philosophical and aesthetic terms in Goya, see: [Allan, 2016, p. 968–980].

plays an important role in creating spatial illusion. During the restoration of the painting *The Conjuraton*, it was found out that Goya first had painted over the entire primer with black paint, and then applied colours changing from dark to light. This technique is a metaphor that embodies the confrontation between light and darkness, the artistic and symbolic dominance of the latter.

The postures, movements, perspectives, and spatial arrangement of the bodies are strikingly natural and convincing. Certain elements acquire pronounced semantic value, becoming iconographic features found in all the paintings of the series, as well as in other works of similar content. These can include attributes, such as steeple headdress which were used for convicts in inquisition and in flagellant processions, or recurrent characters and images that passed over from the verbal to the pictorial sphere (e.g. Satan depicted as a black goat, skeletons of infants, etc.).

Goya unmistakably selects the elements of sorcery whose 'negative expressiveness' leaves a strong impression on the viewer. (In a scene from Act II of Antonio de Zamora's play *The Man Bewitched by Force*, a monk who believes he is bewitched and will die when the oil runs out in the lamp in the devil's hands (depicted as a goat), tries to keep it alight. His dismayed image appears against the background of dancing donkeys — also characters in the play).

### Another aspect of the psyche: the actor's mask and the existential mask

In the chosen perspective of analysing the psychic reality constructed with archetypal features, the images of the insane and prisoners and Goya's vision of the atmosphere of madhouses and prisons are important. They represent the world of a sick or utterly exhausted human mind and imagination projecting the unreal and irrational. And this is where we should return to the already discussed problem, since all this, just like the *Witches* series, destroys the humanist ideal about a rational, natural man existing in harmony with the surrounding world — the ideal formed in the Age of the Enlightenment. The impression of paradox, created by the appeal to all this of Goya, whose worldview was built on humanistic ideas, is very superficial. His images do not go beyond the boundaries of the humanistic ideal and do not satirize what does not

conform to it. They break through the flat, one-dimensional idea of a man which centres around the rational norm and governs his understanding of the role of the regulatory functions of will and mind in his behaviour, in manifestation of his fundamental nature. Goya seeks the truth about man scrutinizing him in extreme situations and critical states. The artist commonly approaches visualization with the help of a theatrical element – through role-playing, games, and masks. As often as not, he introduces inversion, when put into inhuman, unbearable conditions, a person can no longer to remain rational and turns into a dreadful, meaningless human mask.

The variations of such visual transitions can be found in Goya's earliest series of cabinet paintings dating back to 1793–1794. He started it in Cádiz and completed in Madrid after he had recovered from an unknown illness (which has long been subject for debate and speculations<sup>(13)</sup>), after which his hearing began to deteriorate. The applied pictorial technique is of interest, starting with the materials used. Goya paints in oil on tin and covers small plates with reddish brick and the pink primer. This unusual support, which was almost absolutely rigid as compared to canvas on a stretcher, made it possible to achieve precision and delicacy in detailing in the chosen small format. Colourful, with a transition of warm tones, the ground opened up wide opportunities for coloristic experiments.

The series of paintings can be divided into two parts according to their plots: six of them depict scenes of bullfighting, the remaining six present heterogeneous episodes. For instance, *The Traveling Comedians* (1793–1794, Museo del Prado, Madrid) presents a scene from an Italian commedia dell'arte – a love triangle between Pierrot, Columbine, and Pantalone. To their left, juggling three glasses, there is Harlequin. The painting contains numerous allusions: the action of Harlequin alluding to the fragility and elusiveness of love, or the inscription in the left corner, which reads as “an allegory of Menander” alluding to the satirical and moralistic meaning of the plays by the ancient Greek author. In the time of Goya,

(13) In 2019, experts in medicine once again studied in detail the preserved documentation about Goya's illness and its causes, and came to the conclusion that there definitely was not enough reliable information to give confident, unambiguous answers to the questions posed. And, since it is highly unlikely that new reliable documents will be found, the questions about his illness will remain unanswered [Tomlinson, 2020, p. 124].

his contemporaries assumed that the painting contained a veiled allusion to the widely discussed love triangle in the royal family (King Charles IV, Queen Maria Louise and the Queen's favourite Manuel Godoy).

The author provides a solution to character portrayal which is traditional for depicting characters in a comedy of masks. However, the image of a dwarf dancing with a bottle and glass in hands is quite non-trivial. His appearance is noticeably reminiscent of Sebastián de Morra, the royal jester from the 1644 portrait by Velázquez. It is known that in 1778, based on this painting by Velázquez, Goya created an etching. The appearance of the image with a reference to the character of Velázquez is not entirely coincidental – the fact that Sebastián de Morra was a royal jester living in the 17th century is likely to confirm and reinforce the allusion to the royal family.

For all its outstanding picturesque features, the painting *The Traveling Comedians*, as we have already stated, shows an approach to the plot classic for the genre. The images are typical for commedia dell'arte; there is a pronounced allegorical overtone often found in paintings based on popular plays, which adds relevance to the image, keeps the narrative up to date, and arouses the audience's interest. However, it is particularly remarkable that the same first series of cabinet paintings includes works that appear semantically innovative, different from the traditional, previously generally accepted interpretations of a certain plot. Various researchers of Goya's heritage consider this series a turning point in his creative activity. Arthur Danto elaborates on this in his review of the three monographs on Goya<sup>(14)</sup> published almost simultaneously (the review was published with *Artforum International*, where Danto was one of the editors). A distinguished American philosopher of art characterizes the shift in the first series of cabinet paintings as follows: “The shift, figuratively speaking, from a world in which there are no shadows to one in which there is no light is not a normal stylistic evolution. It cries out for biographical explanation” [Danto, 2004, p. 49]. Danto, as well as the authors of the monographs he reviewed, believes that to a great extent it was the external factors related to biography that caused the change in the ‘optics’ of Goya's perception of the world and the appeal to a completely different layer

(14) A. Danto reviewed the books by E. Connell, R. Hughes, and W. Hofmann.



of life manifestations<sup>(15)</sup>. Apparently, Goya himself testified to the fact that the reasons for the shift lay in his biography, saying that twelve works were created “to occupy my imagination, tormented as it is by contemplation of my sufferings” [cit.: Danto, 2004, p. 49]. Undoubtedly, a retrospective biographical approach is justified and logical, especially when it comes to consistent introspection caused by the events of personal life, which at that point became a primary means of immersion in psychic reality. But reaching a new level of meaning-making is not limited to the awareness and visualization of solely one’s own mental states. This is where the search for exteriorization in the visual images of a person’s inner world begins; the world where, as noted above, the uniqueness of Goya’s creative path is to be sought.

One of the paintings that reflected the new stage is *The Yard of a Madhouse* (1793–1794, Meadows Museum, Dallas), Goya’s earliest work on the theme of the insane and the atmosphere of a madhouse which further continued in numerous graphic plates and paintings. The painting depicts the yard of a madhouse in Zaragoza. As Goya wrote to his friend Bernardo de Iriarte, he had created the painting under the impression of his visit there. The theme itself, of course, is not new. Even before Goya, artists had turned to similar motifs, for instance, W. Hogarth<sup>(16)</sup>. Though, for Hogarth it was a secondary theme — the image of the madhouse looks moralistic; it is a natural result of a dissolute lifestyle, which adds to the general moralism of the main theme. In addition, an overly fragmented and detailed visual style focusing the audience’s attention to the narrative, forcing them to find and analyse interesting details in which the integrity of the figurative structure and the atmosphere dissolve. Hogarth’s choice of such a perspective, focusing simultaneously on the didactic narration and entertainment, is not coincidental. In the engraving, along with the insane, the viewer sees characters who find themselves in the same spectator’s position and with interest observe the patients. Meanwhile, in Hogarth’s time in London, it was customary to visit the most famous

(15) The 1793–1794 series of cabinet paintings contains twelve paintings. Six of them depict bullfighting and other scenes featuring bulls; the rest depict situations caused by natural disasters or extreme human actions — fires, shipwrecks, prisons and madhouses, and even scenes of cannibalism.

(16) See: e.g. *A Rake’s Progress* (series of engravings), Plate 8, 1735, Bethlem Hospital (Bedlam), in which W. Hogarth also presents insane people in various maniacal images.

madhouse in England — Bedlam, as if a theatre, and watch the patients and their actions out of curiosity, as a form of entertainment<sup>(17)</sup>.

However, Goya’s approach is different. His author’s stance excludes any internal curious observers. Capturing real memories of a visit to such a place, the work *The Yard of a Madhouse* rises to the level of generalization largely due to the pictorial means of expression — colour and chiaroscuro drama. The contrasts between light and dark and the exacerbated expression of black coming from the grey-green in dreadful clots shape the symbolic and semantic structure of the painting. The postures and general outline of the two naked men engaged in a fight may well be found in some classical antique relief. But the feeling of classical exemplarity vanishes with the presence of a guard in black beating them with a whip. The artist chooses a rather distant perspective and seems to be balancing between the loss of logic in the construction of space and visual ‘distinctness’ in the characters’ images. The insane ‘play the parts’ of certain social types.

This technique, when patients almost frantically play their parts, as well as the application of pictorial elements of ever-increasing expression, can be seen in the later painting *The Madhouse* (1810–1816, San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Madrid). An insane suffering from delusions and portraying themselves in a certain manner is, of course, a paradoxical phenomenon. On the one hand, the mind is switched off, all the conventional norms that force one to adhere to generally accepted standards of behaviour do not matter. So, what comes to the fore is, so to speak, the human essence, the substrate unaffected by civilizational regulations. On the other hand, an insane puts on a mask and tries a certain social role. And in the strange distorted light that the insane mind sheds on this social role, its true nature also becomes visible. It is difficult to judge whether it was done much with a purpose, in order to provide a social generalization, but the artist presented a set of relevant and significant social roles. On the canvas, as if on stage, performing actions typical for their roles, there appear: ‘the Pope’ wearing a ‘tiara’, with a playing card instead of a cross on his chest, and ‘blessing’ with his right hand; behind him is ‘the emperor’ wearing a ‘tunic’ and holding a ‘sceptre’ in his

(17) The hospital itself initiated it to have additional income for the maintenance and treatment of patients.

hand; nearby is a naked man wearing a three-cornered hat and getting ready to run in to attack; the 'leader of the savages' wearing a feathered bonnet and having a 'bow' behind his back, surrounded by his retinue; next to him are the figures of 'monks', etc.

There comes to mind a comparison of *The Madhouse* with another series of iconic works along the lines discussed, created shortly after Goya's painting — the one by the French romanticist artist Théodore Géricault. This comparison of Géricault's portraits of the insane with the painting by Goya demonstrates the profound differences in the 'optics' of the two masters, which they make use of when examining the object of portrayal. The difference is not just enormous — the two approaches are totally antithetical to each other. The point is not that Géricault is focused on one person, since he also creates not an individual but a rather generalized image — such was also the task set for the artist by Dr. É.-J. Georget<sup>(18)</sup>. What is markedly different is that Géricault scrutinizes the phenomenon typical in its essence but considered separately, in isolated, autonomous existence. Meanwhile, Goya concentrates on the relationships and actions that make a certain social layer, living, unpredictable, and changing: it refers to marginal, anti-social, or rather relegated social groups. Thus, the comparison of the two approaches allows observing Being against Existence, given in an extreme situation, outside the regulatory functions of the mind.

## Conclusion

In his book *Goya: In the Shadow of the Enlightenment*, Tzvetan Todorov emphasizes that in Goya's creative work we primarily see a thinker. From this perspective, he compares Goya with J.W. von Goethe, his contemporary, and F.M. Dostoevsky, who worked half a century later [Todorov, 2021, p. 15]. Todorov distinctly sees the contradictions in the master's personality, which combines the inevitable influence of his relatively low social origin and the aspiration to enter the privileged world of the aristocracy with uncompromising reflection and self-reflection, the dream of a calm

(18) Dr. Étienne-Jean Georget, a famous French psychiatrist of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, who also treated Géricault himself, commissioned the artist to create a series of portraits of mental patients in order to use them when teaching future doctors.

and prosperous life with extraordinary boldness in creative experiments that anticipated the artistic discoveries of the late 19<sup>th</sup> — early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. All the typical, everyday, and ordinary in Goya is relegated to the sideline in comparison with the new dimensions he discovers in art and, more broadly, in culture. This primarily refers to Goya's profound psychologism, which Todorov rightfully compares with that of Dostoevsky's novels.

In the work *Goya. The Last Carnival*, V. Stoichita [Stoichita, Coderch, 1999] gets into the core of Goya's original approach to the theatrical, carnival element that was an integral part of his work. For Goya, what is hidden behind the mask one is wearing for any reason whatsoever is not the face but the soul, the conscious and the subconscious. And this is not a trivial assertion, since the transition from the revealed to the unrevealed in a person is the main intentional characteristic of the master's genius.

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