THE DREAM OF REASON PRODUCES MONSTERS

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: CAPRICHOS (PRINTS AND DRAWINGS, 1797-1799) (43/85)



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	Ca. 1797 - 1799
DIMENSIONES	218 x 152 mm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Etching and aquatint
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Undisputed work
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	15 Dec 2010 / 29 May 2024
INVENTARIO	836 225

INSCRIPCIONES

el sueño de la razon produce monstruos (at the bottom)

43. (in the upper right-hand corner)

HISTORIA

See *Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, Painter*.

There is a proof of the state before lettering and of the additional aquatint that is preserved in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Goya made at least two preparatory drawings for this engraving *(1)* and *(2)*.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

On an armchair with wheels on its legs sits a man, possibly Goya himself, who rests his arms on top of a bucket on the front of which we can read *The Dream of Reason Produces Monsters*. On this bucket rest various objects that allude to the man's work: pens, pencils and sheets of paper. Several nocturnal animals, bats and owls of various sizes, advance towards it from the background, which do not seem to bode well. Equally disturbing are the cat and the lynx watching the scene, as well as the two owls leaning on the bucket on which the man is sleeping.

The artist has used a two-tone aquatint, a darker one for the background and a softer one for the front of the table, where he has left a reserve of varnish with which to write the title in white letters. The light illuminates the head and shoulders of the sleeping figure, extending slightly to the owls nearest to him, as if a spotlight had been focused on his head.

This engraving is one of the most complex in the series and, at the same time, one of the richest that has been the subject of many interpretations. In order to understand it, it is necessary to refer to the manuscripts of the period, as the Ayala manuscript states: "Fantasy abandoned by reason produces monsters, and united with it is the mother of the arts". The Prado Museum's manuscript states: "The fantasy abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters: united with it, it is the mother of the arts and the origin of marvels", while the National Library's manuscript states that "when men do not hear the cry of reason, everything becomes visions". From the reading of these texts we conclude that the image has a double meaning. Firstly, Goya stresses the importance of reason, without which all kinds of irrational sentiments lead to ignorance. Reason is the light that makes us emerge from the darkness of our own subconscious and our fears.

However, it should be pointed out that the manuscripts suggest a second meaning in which the dream, as a liberation from an inner world controlled by reason, becomes an immense source of creativity. It is possible that in this print Goya had captured something of his own essence, his condition as an artist in whom the Enlightenment mentality coexisted with pre-Romantic sentiment.

The experience described in the engraving we are dealing with here would be related to what Francisco de Quevedo narrates in the prologue to *The Dreams:* "(...) I fell asleep: as soon as my soul was freed from the task of the external senses, the following comedy struck me in this way; and so my powers recited it in the dark, and I was an auditorium and theatre for my fantasies".

One of the possible visual sources for this engraving is the work by Salvator Rosa (Naples, 1615-Rome, 1673) entitled *Democritus in Meditation* (1650, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen). In it, a man in the middle of a wild landscape leans on a cube where he appears to be meditating. Both the figure in Goya's print and the Neapolitan and the portrait that the Aragonese artist painted of his friend *Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos* seem to be affected by a strange form of melancholy. In line with these images is the engraving that opens *Alfabeto in sogno* by Giuseppe Maria Mitelli (Bologna, 1634-Bologna, 1718), in which an artist can be seen sleeping on a table.

It is also possible that the Aragonese painter was familiar with the image that opens the second volume of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Philosophie*, published in 1793. In it we can see a figure resting his head on one of his hands, seated at a table, just as the protagonist of the Goyaesque print does.

CONSERVACIÓN

The plate is preserved in the National Chalcography (no. 214).

EXPOSICIONES

Goya. Gemälde Zeichnungen. Graphik. Tapisserien
Kunsthalle Basel Basle 1953
from January 23th to April 12th 1953
cat. 230

De grafiek van Goya
Rijksmuseum Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam 1970
from November 13th 1970 to January 17th 1971
cat. 36

Goya. Das Zeitalter der Revolucionen. Kunst um 1800 (1980 – 1981)
Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980
cat. 3

Goya y el espíritu de la Ilustración
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1988
from October 6th to December 18th 1988. Exhibited also at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, January 18th to March 26th 1989; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Nueva York, May 9th to July 16th 1989, Madrid curator Manuela B. Mena Marqués, scientific directors Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez and Eleanor A. Sayre
cat. 52

Goya. La década de Los Caprichos
Madrid 1992
organized by Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando sponsored by Fundación Central Hispano, Madrid, consultant editor Nigel Glendinnig. From October 26th 1992 to January 10th 1993
cat. 7

Goya
Nationalmuseum Stockholm 1994
consultant editors Juan J. Luna and Görel Cavalli-Björkman. From October 7th 1994 to January 8th 1995
cat. 64

Ydioma universal: Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional
Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1996
from September 19th to December 15th 1996
cat. 122

Francisco Goya. Sein leben im spiegel der graphik. Fuendetodos 1746-1828 Bordeaux. 1746-1996
Galerie Kornfeld Bern 1996
from November 21st 1996 to January 1997
cat. 49

Das Capriccio als Kunstprinzip
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, 1996
from December 8th 1996 to February 16th 1997, exhibited also in Zurich, Kunsthaus, from March 14th marzo 1997 to June 1st 1997 and in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum mi Palais Harrach, from June 29th 1997 to September 21st 1997.
cat. G. 39

Francisco de Goya
Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996
exhibition celebrated from September 22nd to November 17th.
cat. 43, p.70

Goya e la tradizione italiana
Fondazione Magnani Rocca Mamiano di Traversetolo (Parma) 2006
consultant editors Fred Licht and Simona Tosini Pizzetti. From September 9th to December 3th 2006
cat. 43, p.156

Goya. Opera grafica
Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio Legnano 2006
exhibition celebrated from December 16th 2006 to April 1st 2007
p.34

Goya e Italia
Museo de Zaragoza Zaragoza 2008
organized by the Fundación Goya en Aragóna, consultant editor Joan Sureda Pons. From June 1st to September 15th 2008
cat. 290

Goya et la modernité
Pinacothèque de Paris París 2013
from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014
cat. 156

Goya: Order and disorder
Museum of Fine Arts Boston 2014
cat. 40 / 162

Expérience Goya
Lille 2021
cat. 8

Agen 2019
cat. 45

Madrid 2017

London 2015
cat. 26

Madrid 2019
cat. 60

BIBLIOGRAFÍA

Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.
HARRIS, Tomás
p.115, cat. 78
1964
Bruno Cassirer

Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
p.181, cat. 536
1970
Office du livre

Goya, 1746-1828. Biografía, estudio analítico y catálogo de sus pinturas
GUDIOL, José
p.395, fig. 627
1970
Ediciones Polígrafa s.a.

Goya, la década de los caprichos: dibujos y aguafuertes
WILSON BAREAU, Juliet
pp.9-13, cat. 139.141

Goya. El capricho y la invención. Cuadros de gabinete, bocetos y miniaturas
MENA, Manuela B. y WILSON-BAREAU, Juliet (comisarias)

Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional
SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)
p.96, cat. 132
1996

1992
Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando

pp.59-61, fig. 32
1993
Museo del Prado

Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

El libro de los caprichos: dos siglos de interpretaciones (1799-1999). Catálogo de los dibujos, pruebas de estado, láminas de cobre y estampas de la primera edición

BLAS BENITO, Javier, MATILLA RODRÍGUEZ, José Manuel y MEDRANO, José Miguel
pp.238-245
1999
Museo Nacional del Prado

Zwischen Hexensabbath und PsychoanalyseGoyas sueño de la razon und Carl du Prels dramatische Spal-tung des Ich im Traume

Staedel-Jahrbuch
CLAUSBERG, Karl
pp.213-250
18
2001

Francisco Goya. Los Caprichos

POU, Anna
pp.31-38
2011
Ediciones de la Central

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo
p. 221
2013
Pinacoteca de París

Goya: Order & Disorder

ILCHMAN, Frederick y STEPANEK, Stephanie L. (comisarios)
pp. 101/248-249
2014
Museum of Fine Arts Boston Publications

WILSON-BAREAU, Juliet y BUCK, Stephanie (eds.)
pp. 134-135
2015
The Courtauld Gallery

Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum

WILSON BAREAU, Juliet
pp. 42-75
2016
Norton Simon Museum

CALVO RUATA, José Ignacio, BORRÁS GUALIS, Gonzalo M. and MARTÍNEZ HERRANZ, Amparo
p. 220
2017
Gobierno de Aragón y Fundación Bancaria Ibercaja

MOTTIN, Bruno, EFEDAQUE, Adrien and WILSON-BAREU, Juliet
p. 136
2019
Snoeck

MATILLA, José Manuel y MENA, Manuela B. (comisarios)
p. 131
2019
Museo Nacional del Prado

Expérience Goya (cat. expo)

COTENTIN, Régis
p. 32
2021
Réunion des Musées Nationaux

PALABRAS CLAVE

CAPRICCIO ANIMALES NOCTURNOS SUEÑOS ONÍRICO FANTASÍA

ENLACES EXTERNOS