

## Goya's Whims. A Facial Expression Analysis Of Engraving # 44.

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### ABSTRACT

Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828) a Spanish painter and engraver, has been one of the most relevant artists both in Spain and universally. Two of his most famous engravings, masterpieces housed in the Prado Museum in Madrid, are "La Maja Desnuda" ("The lady without clothes") and "La Maja Vestida" ("The lady with clothes"), and the portrait of the royal family entitled "The Family of Carlos V". The invasion of Spain by Napoleonic forces was captured in two masterpieces: "The charge of the Mameluks" and "The shootings at the Príncipe Pío hill" (Third of May). Within his artistic production, there was a commercial vein -his work was done to order- and a more analytical and critical element, in which the series entitled "Los Caprichos" can be framed, where, with deep irony, he satirizes the social vices and superstitions of the period. This latter aspect of his work, means that Goya can be considered a philosophical and physiognomic artist, reflecting the most sinister and sinful aspects of human beings, in the faces and expressions of his subjects.

**Key Words:** Francisco de Goya, "Los Caprichos" series, facial expression.

### INTRODUCTION

With the "Los Caprichos" series, in 1799, Goya began a series of satirical engravings, that were to be the first Spanish contribution to a set of caricaturized vignettes, similar to those already existing in England and France, but with incredible quality in the use of techniques and an innovative thematic originality.

The series, which at the beginning could be considered a satire about popular superstitions, aimed at transmitting the inner qualities of each person portrayed and reflecting an extensive repertoire of facial expression, was later to become the hallmark of the artist's work.

The aim of the present work, is to make a detailed study of the facial expressions and their relationship with the stomatognathic systems of the different figures that appear, in one of the engraving that we consider to be one of the most significant, entitled "Hilan Delgado" ("They spin finel") (#44) from the "Los Caprichos" series, addressing each figure portrayed and her anatomical characteristics individually [1].

The study sample is engraving #44 entitled "Hilan Delgado". The interpretation of the vignette is made according to the comments about Goya's work in the Manuscripts of the National Library in Madrid (Spain). We also assessed the expression of each of the faces of the individuals and their morphopsychology. The criteria followed to classify the faces and their morphopsychological analysis were those proposed by the American psychologist Paul Ekman in his work entitled "Emotion in the Human Face", where he condenses human facial

expressions into 7 basic areas: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, surprise and contempt. Later, in 1990, this list was expanded to 15 [2].

We also applied the criteria established by the protestant Reverend John Caspar Lavater (1741-1801) in his treatise on physiognomy entitled "Essays on physiognomy: designed to promote the knowledge and the love of mankind" [3], where he defined physiognomy as the science that uncovers a person's character through facial features. The facial expressions were, moreover, assessed according with an art-based anatomical dossier [4].

#### **Vignette # 44 "Hilan Delgado" (They spin finely)". Fig. 1.**

This vignette depicts three deformed women, a mixture of witches and calculating go-betweens, one of whom seems to be spinning.

Old lady 1. (Fig. A). The contraction of the *corrugator* muscle (Fig. A-1), the *orbicularis oculi* muscles of the eyes (Fig. A-2), and of the *nasalis levator* (Fig. A-3) reveal an attitude of mental effort [5] typical of manual work that requires a certain degree of psychomotor coordination. Her lips, traced with a single line (Fig. A-4), denote a cold, precise and industrious character. The cleft in the middle of her chin (Fig. A-4) is a physiognomic attribute of people with a cool reasoning capacity [6]. Her expression is one of happiness and interest.

Old lady 2. (Fig. B). This woman has a collapsed profile of the lower third of her face owing to the loss of teeth [7]. The decrease in the vertical dimension has brought her nose closer to her chin, producing a prognathic aspect (Fig. B-5). The sinking of the *mentalis muscle* of the chin (Fig. B-6) has given her a witch's chin [4]. The *orbicularis oris* muscle of the lips and the *buccinator* muscle lack a support, retracting into the mouth cavity and highlighting the *Zygomatyc* bone (Fig. B-7) [4]. The fallen commissures of her mouth (Fig. B-8) are suggestive of sadness [5, 6]. The loss of support for her lips has enhanced the wrinkles around her mouth and, together with the sinking of the *nasogenian* folds, has given her a coarse aspect [6].

In this figure the artist has managed to convey a typical edentulate aspect. According to Ekman [8], her expression would reflect evident featured of contempt.

Old lady 3. (Fig. C). The line of her mouth is inverted, the orifice being half-open and allowing us to see two crooked incisors (Fig. C-9). From the morphological point of view, the incisors, which are ugly and uncared for, are a sign of illness or mental disturbance [5]. The palpebral ptosis [7] of the right eye (Fig. C-10) could have been produced by paralysis of cranial pair V (the first branch of the trigeminal nerve) due to syphilis, which was common in the Spain of those times [9]. Her expression can be classified as lying between sadness and contempt [8].

### **DISCUSSION**

According to the comments present in the manuscripts of the National Library, about this engraving [10] (Manuscrito de la Biblioteca Nacional ms 20558, nº 23), *Go-betweens (and at the same time the killers of unwanted babies) take their profession very seriously and charge a lot of money for the boys and girls they "attend to", seen as bundles of linen*). In the times of the artist, the term "go-between" was used to refer to people who concerted, covered-up or facilitated what usually were illicit relationships (*"As mentioned, some of their other activities were much more sinister"*). In the Spanish literature of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish playwright Lope de Vega y Carpio, in the play entitled "The Gentleman from Olmedo", referred to their relation with dental cosmetics: *"Tooth powder, hand soaps, curious and useful things"* said the go-between Fabia to her lady friend when asked what she kept in her drawer.

Go-betweens were also believed to have curative powers, which they would exert through spells practiced with teeth extracted from people who had been hanged "*I went with her to steal a tooth from a man who had been hanged; like a acrobat I placed the ladder up one side*" [11]. But of all the malice attributed to them, the worst was their responsibility for the death of young babies [12], reflected in the "bundles of linen" towards the upper of the vignette (upper right side),

"Capricho" could be interpreted as a fantasy or an expression of the imagination, but its meaning is linked to the ironic humour of the artist regarding the vices and corruption of his times.

The series of engraving known as "Los Caprichos" was created in a period of enormous social repression and huge economic crisis in Spain. With this series Goya analyses the human condition and at the same time denounces the social backwardness and intellectual oppression pervading his world, both due to political corruption and an overly powerful clergy, thus leaving expressing his political liberalism.

The faces he portrayed mark him as someone who was very familiar with morphopsychology and as a consummate physiognomist, and they invite us to reflect on the people represented in his series; faces imbued with a repulsive ugliness that the artist created at moments of overwhelming fantasy to express the vices, sins, and gaucheness of his fellow humans.

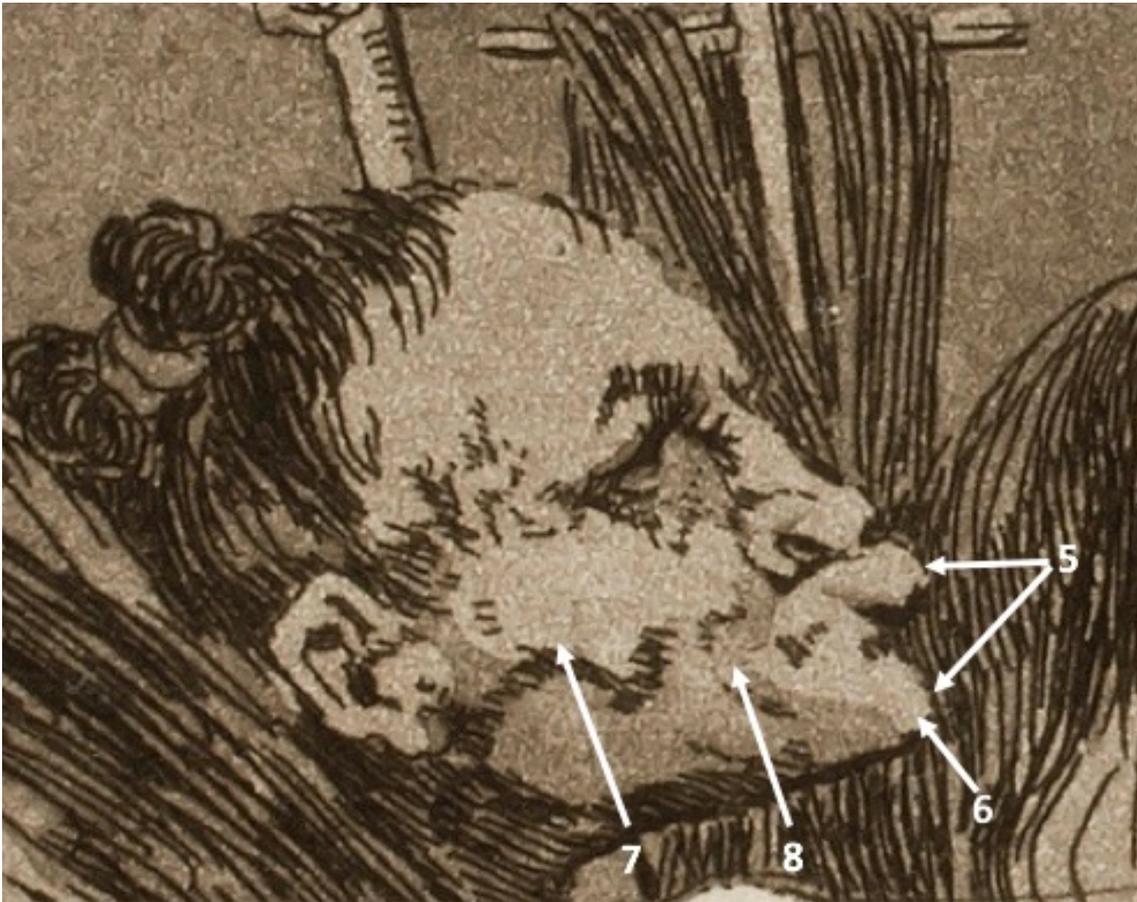
FIGURES



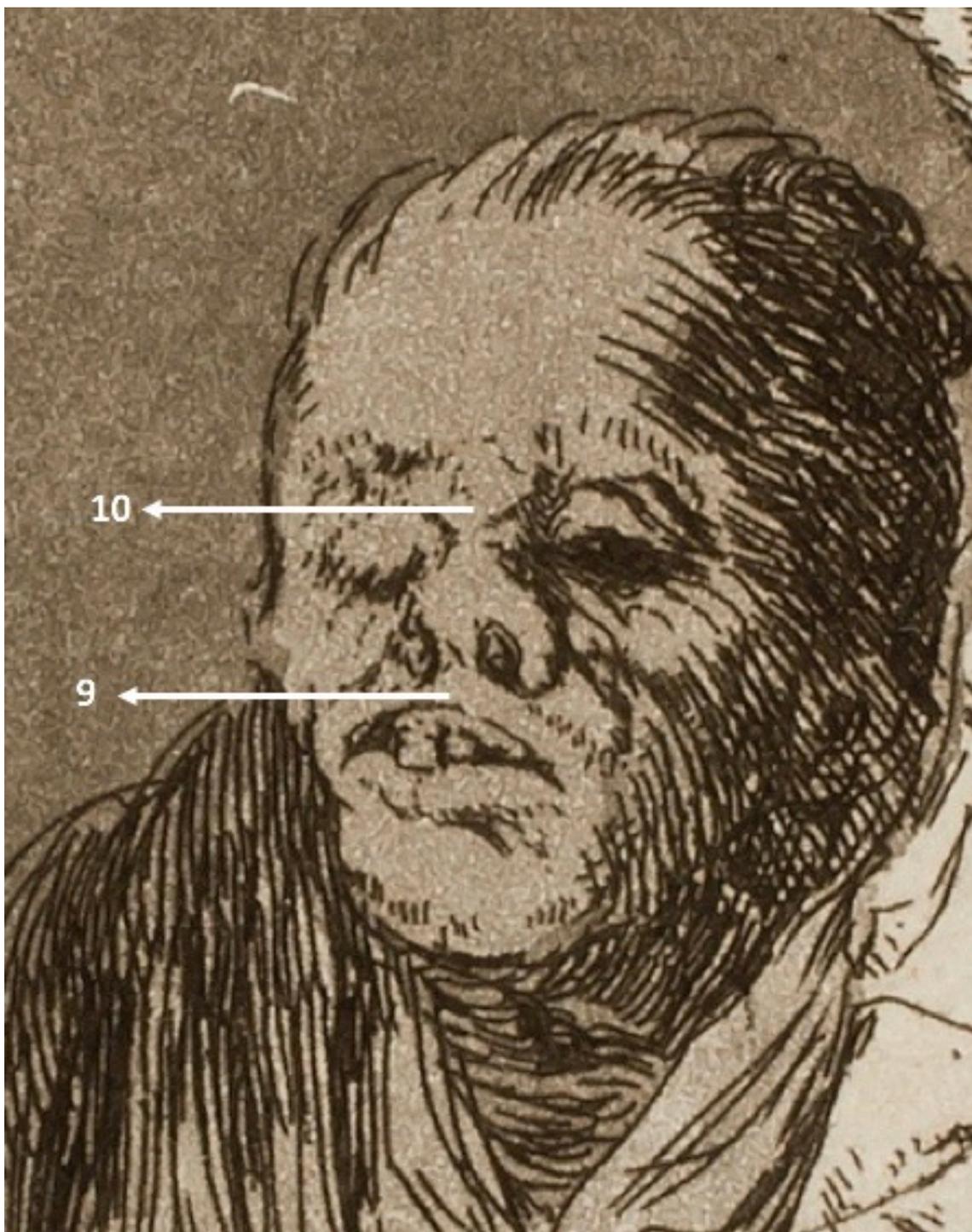
Figure 1



**Figure A**



**Figure B**



**Figure C**

**FIGURE LEGENDS**

Figure 1. Engraving # 44 from the “Los Caprichos” series, entitled “They spin finely”.

Figure A. Old lady 1 (Detail).

Figure B. Old lady 2 (Detail).

Figure C. Old lady 3 (Detail).

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