EDWARD J. OLSZEWSKI

Exorcising Goya's *The Family of Charles IV*

This study began as an attempt to trace the provenance of the cynical viewing of Goya's portrait of *The Family of Charles IV* [Fig. 1] in American college textbook literature, but led in unexpected directions. Negative interpretations of the painting extended into the more specialized literature as well, some apparently stemming from a flippant remark by a nineteenth century French critic. Yet, the French were not disrespectful of Goya. Their criticism of the royal portrait was aimed less at Goya than his sitters, and came only late in the nineteenth century, from which a popular literature developed where dates and archival findings yielded to fantasy, romantic interpretation and, on occasion, sensationalism. My analysis ends with Renoir at dinner in 1907, but I suspect that Renoir's will not be the final word.

For many of us, our first introduction to Goya's portrait of *The Family of Charles IV*, like that of so many other works of art, came from the textbook of a freshman survey course in art history. Given the demands of economy in an introductory text, the brief paragraph or two in which the painting was discussed required a concise and memorable characterization of it. H. W. Janson informed us in 1969 in his *History of Art* how:

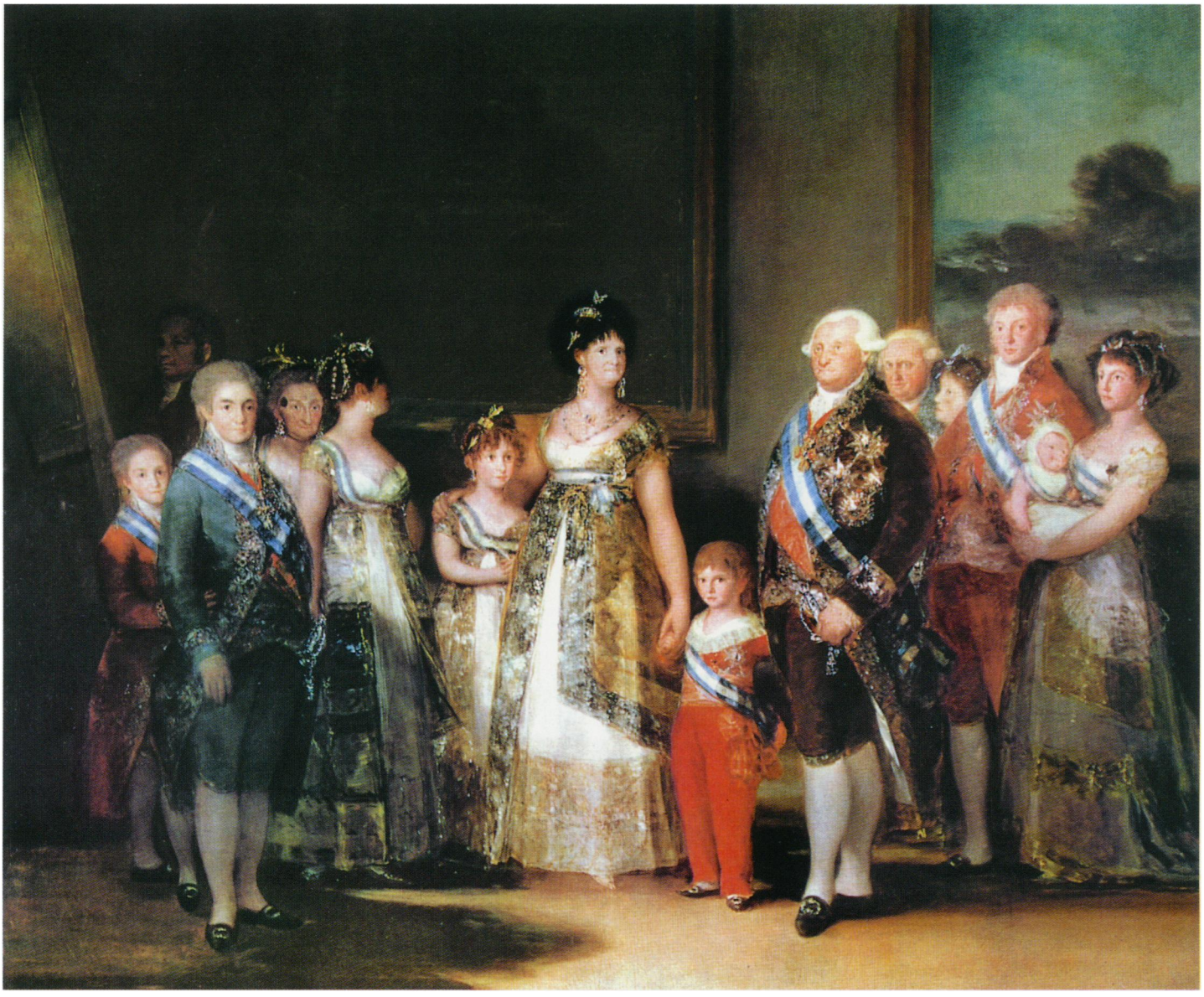
> the inner being of these individuals has been laid bare here with pitiless candor. They are like a collection of ghosts: the frightened children, the bloated vulture of a king, and—in a master stroke of sardonic humor—the grotesquely vulgar queen,...[1]

By positing Goya's presentation of the group portrait as an unmasking of evil, Janson had to question how Goya could have succeeded in this ruse so obvious to the writer: "Were they so dazzled by the splendid painting of their costumes that they failed to realize what Goya had done to them?" was presented both as an explanation and as a commentary on the royal family's stupidity. *Helen Gardner's Art Through the Ages* [1975] concurred that;

> Goya presents with a straight face a menagerie of human grotesques who, critics have long been convinced, must not have the intelligence to realize that the artist was caricaturizing them. This superb revelation of stupidity, pomposity, and vulgarity painted in 1800, led a later critic to summarize the subject as the 'grocer and his family who have just won the big lottery prize.'[2]

In her first edition in 1926, Gardner had already written,

> Goya paints into these portraits his high scorn of this sham court degenerate in both body and mind... How an



1) Goya, «Portrait of the Family of Charles IV», oil on canvas, 280 x 336 cm, 1800-1801, Prado, Madrid, no. 276.

> artist who was so fearless of truth and so bold in his expression of it could be tolerated at such a court is a puzzle. Either Charles was too stupid to understand or he was too lazy to resent.[3]

Frederick Hartt was a bit more cautious in 1976, qualifying his criticism of the children, and identifying for us this early critic of the painting,

> With Goya... [we have] a sardonic commentator on this parade of insolence and vulgarity. The king with his red face and with his chest blazing with decorations, and the ugly and ill-natured queen are painted as they undoubtedly were. Daudet called them, 'the baker's family who have just won the big lottery prize,' but Goya's real purpose is deeper than satire; he has unmasked these people as evil—only some (not all) of the children escape his condemnation. The mystery is that the family were so obtuse as not to realize what Goya was doing to them.[4]

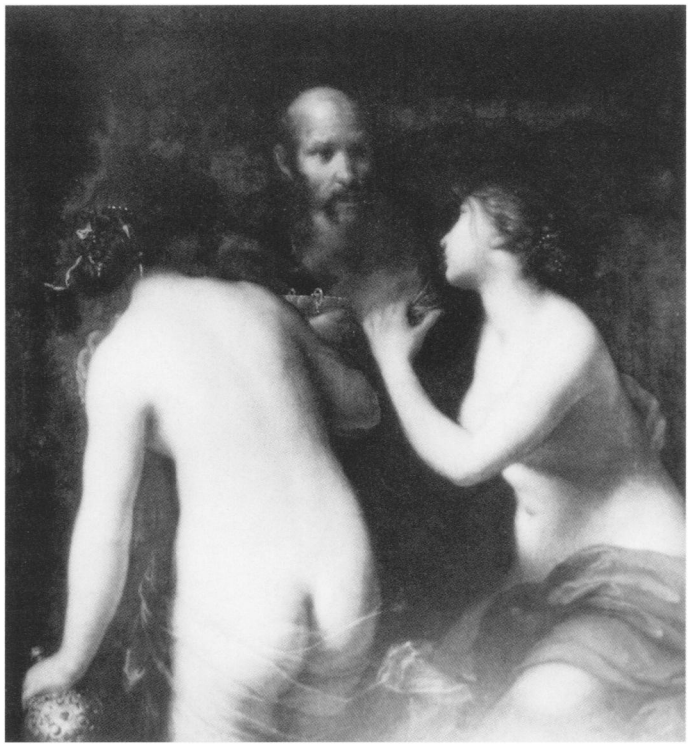
Hartt identified the source of this quotation as Daudet although he did not distinguish the French novelist, Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897) from his critic brother, Leon. Hartt did not give a source for his citation.

Not all who wrote about this picture felt at ease in their criticisms, and we might expect the specialized art literature to correct any distortions of what the viewer sees in the painting, or at least to use language somewhat less charged. Yet, in a recent essay titled, "Looking at Art. Francisco Goya, The Spanish Royal Family, Warts and All," we are told that, "His royal patrons evidently accepted this group portrait without realizing what a blue blooded rogue's gallery Goya had conjured up from an intensely undistinguished group."[5]

Most writers, having determined that Goya offered his portrait as social criticism and caricature, felt a need to explain the riddle of royal acceptance of Goya's efforts. For John Canaday, whose *Mainstreams of Modern Art* has enjoyed a useful history as a textbook for undergraduate courses in nineteenth and twentieth century art since its publication in 1959, Goya's "portraits of the royal family are explicitly of abominable, contemptable, mediocre, or at best pathetic characters."[6] He concedes that the couple at the extreme right appears normal, but views the children flanking the queen as devoid of innocence. In his reading of the canvas, Canaday has Charles IV's "grotesque queen... holding the hand of her son awkwardly enough to suggest that these maternal gestures were unfamiliar ones for her."[7]

The more specialized literature continually reinforced the opinions found in the survey texts. In 1967, Fred Licht explained that Goya was able to succeed in his "description of human bankruptcy because he had painted the royal family from a mirror."[8] The queen, Maria Luisa, stands at the king's proper right flanked by family members most of whom, Goya included, can be said to study their reflections in a mirror which coincides with the position of the spectator. Yet we can hardly expect the royal family to have stood this way for Goya. Letters from Maria Luisa establish that the artist made sketches of ten of the figures in individual sittings and that his studies received the approval of the appropriate parties.[9] Indeed, the queen seemed especially satisfied with Goya's sketches for her, commenting on their accuracy.[10] The queen wrote on 9 June 1800 to the king's former minister, Manuel Godoy, as

2) Goya, «Infanta Maria Josefa», oil sketch, 72 x 59 cm, 1800, Prado, Madrid, no. 729.



3) Francesco Furini, «Lot with His Daughters», oil on canvas, c. 1634, Prado, Madrid.

Goya began to make sketches of her, that the artist had finished the rest, and that all of them appeared very natural. Five days later she stated that her portrait was completed and considered by others to be the best of all.

Priscilla Muller has correctly noted, as have others, that Goya received no further portrait requests from the royal family after his group portrait.[11] But she also remarked that the painting was no surprise to the royal family as Goya sketched them in individual sittings, and they approved his sketches.[12] Comparison of the painting with the surviving sketches shows that Goya had adhered closely to his models [Fig. 2]. As the royal family seemed to be satisfied with Goya's depictions of them in the painting, Muller has suggested that he criticized them in the dark painting on the wall behind the sitters, a *Lot with His Daughters* by Francesco Furini [Fig. 3], which was housed in the Buen Retiro until 1792, then placed in the Royal Academy in Madrid where it remained until 1827.13 Muller interpreted this theme of drunkenness and incest as a criticism of the queen's morality.[14] If this was Goya's accusative statement, and the cause of later opprobrium heaped on Charles IV's family if not on Goya's painting, the sitters did not notice, as Muller has also observed that the royal family had the authority to order changes in the picture, even by other painters if Goya were unwilling. This did not happen. The criticisms are later and of the subjects, not the painting, that is, it is the "grocer and his family" enjoying their luck with the lottery who are mocked.

Licht had identified the source of this pasquinade as the French art critic, Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), differing from Hartt, but like him failing to give a source for the citation.[15] This characterization of Goya's portrait has the flavor of Gautier. If it came from him, we might expect to find it in his *Voyage en Espagne*, a little travel book based on a six month visit to Spain in 1840, but his only mention of Goya is a passing reference to the *Los Caprichos*, published the year before the family portrait.[16] This biting satire of Spanish society, abetted by Goya's recent deafness, presumably created the cynical mood that carried over into the royal portrait.

Gautier's major reviews of Goya's art were two articles in 1838 and 1842 in which he commented on *Los Caprichos* and Goya's painting techniques.[17] Nigel Glendenning has discussed Gautier's criticism of Goya but without reference to any comment of the "grocer and his family," although he repeated Delacroix's wry observation about "the macaronic expressions he [Gautier] invents."[18] It is possible that Gautier may have seen the royal portrait on his visit to Spain in 1840, but not likely as the *Family of Charles IV* had been sequestered in the Prado by 1827 in a room closed to the general public, and was not exhibited until 1872.[19] In any case, Gautier never mentioned the painting in his major writings on Goya. In a preliminary search of the writings on Spanish art by French critics such as Alphonse Daudet, Philippe Burty, Zacharie Astruc, Edmond Duranty, Théophile Thoré, Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, Emile Zola and Charles Baudelaire, I was unable to find any comment on the portrait as caricature.[20]

Nineteenth century French critics praised the paintings of such Spanish stalwarts as Velázquez and Zurbarán, but Goya, however masterful, presented a difficulty for them. Goya's famous *Third of May, 1808*, painted in 1814 after the French had been expelled from Spain (and marking the return of the Bourbon Ferdinand VII), showed French troops as faceless, brutal executioners. His series of etchings, *Disasters of War*, also depicted atrocities committed largely by French soldiers, but it was not published until 1863, with a second edition in 1892.

4) Goya, «The Family of the Infante Don Luis», oil on canvas, 248 x 330 cm., 1783, Fondazione Magnani-Rocca, Mamiano (Parma).

As an artist, Goya had always been popular with the French. For example, he painted for French dignitaries in Spain as early as 1788 and into the 1790s. The French diplomat Jean Francois Bourgoing wrote in 1807 of Goya's excelling as a portraitist.[21] Three years later, the artist painted a portrait of Nicolas Guye, a friend of Victor Hugo who was himself in Madrid in 1811. The curator, Vivant Denon, acquired a set of *Los Caprichos* for the print department at the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1809. Pirated versions were circulated in Paris by 1825.

Goya left Spain for France in 1824, visiting Piombières and Paris. He lived in Bordeaux the following year where he published a popular series of four lithographs, *The Bulls of Bordeaux*, one set of which Delacroix acquired. He died there

5) Goya, «Velázquez's 'Las Meninas'», etching, 1778, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris.

6) Louis-Michel Van Loo, «Family of Philip IV», oil on canvas, 406 x 511 cm., 1745, Prado, Madrid.

in 1828. The French Romantic painters generally favored Goya, and it was only later generations who were struck by his social satire, particularly after the publication of *The Disasters of War*.

The cleaning in 1967 of Goya's *The Family of Charles IV*, which Hartt also characterized as Goya's "supreme achievement in portraiture," allowed connoisseurs and critics full appreciation of its richness and detail.[22] The cleaning should have revealed a group composed for the most part of charming children, handsome men and attractive women, a dignified queen and a grandfatherly king. Historical knowledge of the

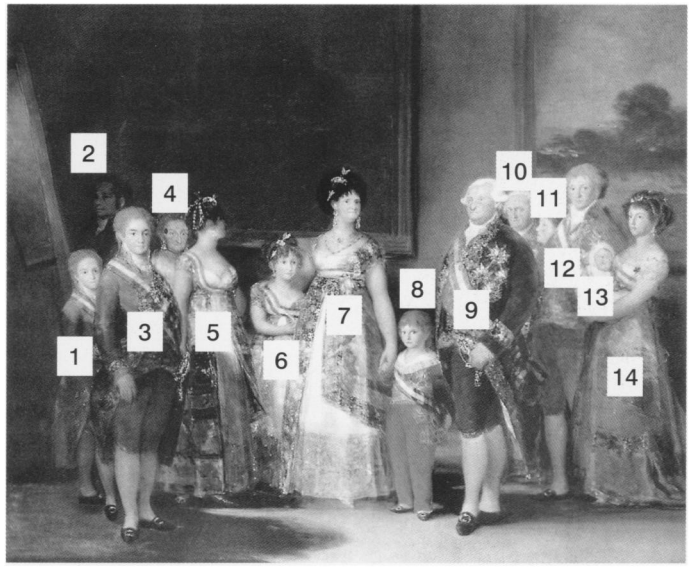
painting, of the artist and his position in the court does not support a negative interpretation of the picture, and few French or Spanish monographs on the artist comment on the painting as caricature. For example, José Gudiol calls it "one of his most important works... one of the most important in all Spanish painting," and states that, "Perhaps the secret of this painting is its profound humanity."[23]

If portraiture could be so revealing of personality and character, we would have a simple tool for identifying wife-beaters, child molesters and serial killers. Portraits provide us with details of facial topography, an indication of status through costume and setting, and occasionally allusions to personal interests and occupations through associated paraphernalia.[24] Nothing in Goya's painting tells the viewer whether the king was being duped by his wife, if she was having an affair with Godoy, that Goya was a malcontent often physically attacking patrons who criticized his portraits (such as the Duke of Wellington), or that the prince of Asturias was a fool. Not even Goya possessed such power.

Goya's portrait depicts thirteen figures representing three generations of the royal family plus the artist. He had painted only two other group portraits before this, *The Family of the Infante Don Luis* of 1783 [Fig. 4] and his *Duke and Duchess of Osuña with their Children*, 1789. Goya would have known Velázquez's *Maids of Honor* then in the Prado, as he had made an etching of the composition in 1778 [Fig. 5]. He would also have known the relaxed but pretentious portrait by Louis-Michel Van Loo of the *Family of Philip V* of 1743 [Fig. 6]. Goya's painting, with its frieze-like arrangement of figures, now looked very modern. The cleaning of the painting has brought out the glowing hues of blue and scarlet that Goya had reserved for the males, and the white, gold and silver for the garb of the women, as Goya used his loaded brush to encrust the canvas with these regal colors. He had presented the king with a bill for 2,114 *reales* in June 1800 for ultramarine pigments alone.[25]

Goya places the queen, an unpopular consort whose private life was under frequent attack, at the center of a relaxed group of figures. Most appear at ease and self-assured in an arrangement that is both casual and parade-like. They visit Goya at his easel, but rather than scrutinize the picture that he is painting, they look out at the viewer as if at themselves in a mirrored reflection that also reveals the artist and the back of his canvas, the major motif Goya borrowed from Velázquez.

The group lacks a common focus, some looking out at the viewer (which is to say, at themselves in the mirror), others toward the regents. Goya thus adds a sense of animation to the gathering, but also betrays the process of individual sketches resulting in the disparate nature of the royal assem-



7) Goya, «Family of Charles IV» (schema).

1. INFANTE DON CARLOS, the regents' second son
2. GOYA
3. PRINCE OF AUSTURIAS, the future King Ferdinand VII
4. DOÑA MARIA JOSEFA, the king's aging sister
5. FUTURE BRIDE OF THE PRINCE, as yet unchosen
6. DOÑA MARIA ISABELLA, daughter of the king and queen
7. QUEEN MARIA LUISA, daughter of Don Felipe, Duke of Parma and Isabel of France
8. INFANTE DON FRANCISCO DE PAULA ANTONIO, the regents' son
9. CHARLES IV
10. INFANTE DON ANTONIO PASCUAL, the king's brother
11. INFANTA DOÑA CARLOTA JOAQUINA (in profile), the regents' eldest daughter and wife of Joao VI, king of Portugal
12. DON LUIS DE BORBON
13. DON CARLOS LUIS, son of Don Luis, eventual Duke of Parma
14. DOÑA MARIA LUISA JOSEFINA, wife of Don Luis and the regents' daughter

Table I) The Family of Charles IV.

bly. He hints, even if unintended, at the uneasy state of European monarchies after years of revolution. The uncertain gathering shuffling onto the world stage represents Goya's attempt to assemble the heirs of a shaken monarchy. Goya tries to combine relaxed confidence with regal pomp in his kaleidescopic rearrangement of Spanish royality. Unlike van Loo's comfortably seated family of Philip V who enjoy their regency, the relatives of Charles IV stand uneasily and will soon depart. The lack of Baroque ostentation may have been Goya's attempt to present his monarchs as more accessible to their subjects. It also prepared the ground for the poor reception of the painting by later audiences, and may account for the muted response of its subjects.

The subjects of the painting are well known (see Table I). The first from left to right is the king's second son, the twelve year old Infante Don Carlos Maria Isidro [Fig. 7]. Next, just perceptible in the penumbra at the back is Goya. The sixteen year old Prince of Austurias, no. 3 in the diagram, is the future King Ferdinand VII (who will never look this handsome again, see Figs. 8, 9). Behind him is the king's aging (56 years old) sister, Doña Maria Josefa, her somewhat foolish appearance due to the effects of lupus. She died shortly after the painting was completed. The next figure, a young woman in lost profile (no. 5) was the future bride of the prince who had not yet been selected, and so her identity was not known when the portrait was painted. Maria Antonia, the daughter of Queen Caroline of Naples, could have been painted in after Ferdinand married her in October, 1802, but Goya was never approached to correct the painting in this way.

Goya presents the Infanta Doña Maria Isabella, the daughter of Charles IV, as the pretty young lady who stands under her mother's right arm. Something of the former beauty of the smiling, forty-eight year old queen emerges from the juxtaposition of mother and daughter, particularly in the large eyes.[26] She holds the hand of her and the king's six year old son, the Infante Don Francisco de Paula Antonio.

Goya's placement of the king slightly off center accounts in part for the seeming informality of the composition and results in an emphasis on the person of the queen that demands the king's impressive costume and forward projection as a necessary response. Next to the grandfatherly Charles IV is his brother, the Infante Don Antonio Pascual (no. 10). The king's eldest daughter and wife of Joao VI, King of Portugal, the Infanta Doña Carlota Joaquina, follows in profile.[27] The handsome figure next to her is Don Luis de Borbón, heir to the Parmesan branch of the House of Bourbon (no. 12). The wife of Don Luis and daughter of Charles IV, Doña Maria Luisa Josefina, holds her infant son, Don Carlos Luis, who would eventually become the Duke of Parma. The attractive Maria Luisa seems stiffly posed, her upright stance, carefully noted by Goya, compensating for a spinal defect. Or perhaps this attempt to correct for her deformity is a reflection of Goya's humanity. The men wear the sash of the Order of Charles III, the queen and the princess the sash of the Order of Maria Luisa.

Close scrutiny of the painting reveals a number of sympathetic figures. That they were duped by Goya seems as impossible to accept as the belief that Goya wanted to mock and deceive them, for their portraits derived from numerous approved sketches. The relationship of patron and artist would allow nothing other. The portrait is to serve as a recommendation of the sitter, as someone worthy of our regard. For example, in his Count Floridablanca portrait of 1783, the sitter's stance and gesture suggest a comparison with his image in a mirror [Fig. 10]. The painting is displayed at the left by Goya who includes himself in the portrait-outside-the-portrait while Floridablanca stares at the spectator whose position coincides with the implied mirror.

We do not know what Goya displays to the Count. Fred Licht has identified it as a portrait, Jean Adhémar has referred to it only as a picture, whereas Folke Nordström has made a strong case that it represents Goya's sketch for an altarpiece at San Bernardino for which Floridablanca as minister had responsibility.[28] It must be a portrait of Charles III's minister of state, or why else would he look out at the viewer positioned with the implied mirror and not at the canvas Goya displays except to compare it to his mirror image? His right hand gestures toward the canvas holding the spectacles with which he has just examined it. In the end, the Floridablanca painting remains a triple portrait of the self-aggrandizing Goya and his frontally posed patron (and patron's architect, Francesco Sabatini), and as such is all the reason needed for the sitter's direct gaze. Goya had hoped for more from the count, but was disappointed as no other commissions were forthcoming from the minister of state, who may have felt that Goya's presence in the portrait was reward enough. If he resented Goya's audacity he gave no indication, and was said to have been pleased by the work.[29]

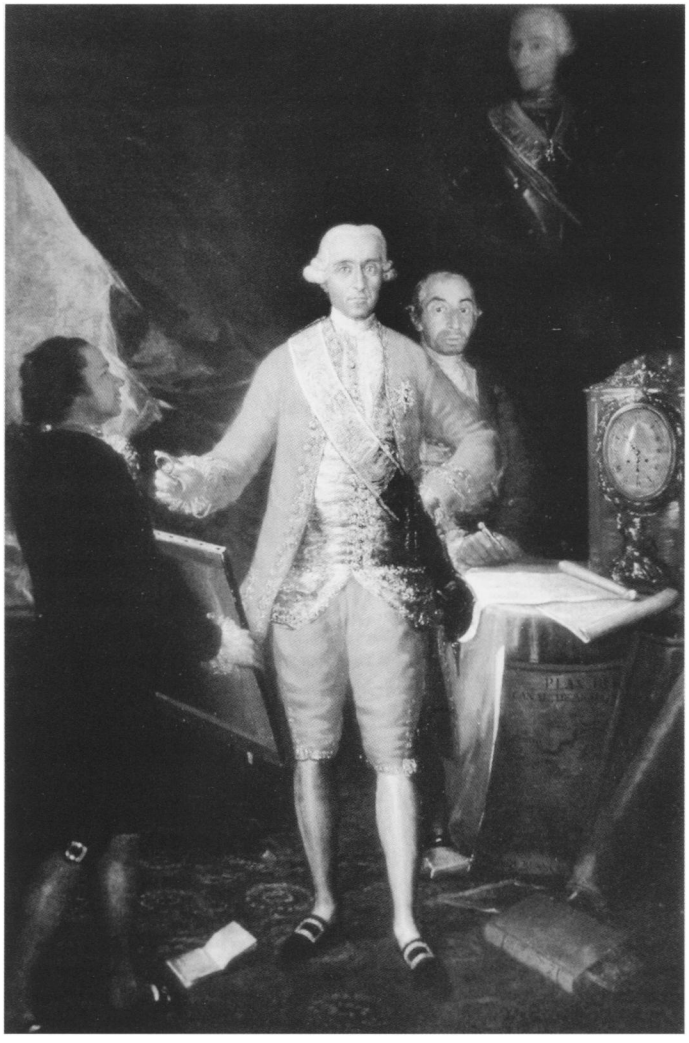
It has been speculated that the royal family watches Goya at his easel as he paints the king's minister, Godoy, also said to be the queen's lover.[30] Maria Luisa devotes her attention to this absent sitter as she embraces her youngest children, the lovers' putative offspring according to popular opinion at the time.[31] To accept this interpretation would be to make *The Family of Charles IV* a tribute to an absent royal minister, who, in any case, had already been dismissed as first minister on 30 March 1798.[32] In this argument Goya's presence is explained by the absent Godoy. But there were other ways for the painter

8) Goya, «Ferdinand VII», 1814, Prado, Madrid.

9) Vicente Lopez, «Portrait of Ferdinand VII», 1802, Prado, Madrid.

to rationalize his inclusion among the royal family, beginning with the precendent of Velázquez in the *Las Meninas*, and the fact of Goya's official title as First Painter of the Chamber. The painting is a portrait of the royal family, and by implication Goya paints them in front of a mirror, Goya's presence implying its presence. That is, as he paints the royal family from their reflection in a mirror, he does so discreetly behind them where they do not notice him. Like us, they have no view of his canvas, although they would have seen him reflected with them in the mirror. The mirror, as Leonardo da Vinci's perfect artist, reproduces all with which it comes into contact, including the unsuccessfully discreet Goya and the back of his canvas.[33]

In reality, Goya cannot be painting them from their reflection in a mirror, for then Ferdinand, who wears a sword on his left hip in the painting showing he is right handed, should be



10) Goya, «Portrait of Count Floridablanca», oil on canvas, 262 x 166 cm, 1783, Urquijo Bank, Madrid.

reversed. That is, the mirror image, which is to say the painting, should show him as left handed with the sword on the right hip. Similarly, the sashes across the men's chests would fall from the left shoulder in a reflected image.

As casual as the royal portrait appears, it is nonetheless tightly structured. The queen is clearly at the center of the composition yet decorously positioned at the king's proper right, Goya correcting the inverted order in Van Loo's placement of king and queen in the portrait of Philip V and his family [Fig. 6].[34] Ferdinand's unidentified bride-to-be in lost profile calls attention to the queen from the left, and the king's sister in profile at the right serves the same function in formal terms. The future queen also looks to Maria Luisa as her model, which are good reasons for the figure not being changed after the prince had chosen his bride two years later. Charles IV, although right of center, advances toward the central position, as Goya dictates how the picture is to be read. The spectator's attention may wander from one to the next of the almost life-size figures, dazzled by the splendor of Goya's creamy pigments and their sumptuous hues, but in the end their relationships are unchanged and Goya's tectonics dictate the painting's eternal structure. Velázquez's perspective recession is irrelevant here.

The king moves diagonally front and center where he will be met by Ferdinand, both eclipsing the centrally positioned queen. At the far right, the future Duke of Parma follows the king's lead. The dynastic successions are clearly drawn.35 Charles IV's brother and sister lurk in the background where their positions (and status) are fixed. Psychologically, the king is separated from all his sons, whose sizes (which is to say, order of birth) dictate their importance. The most direct parental statement is made by the queen who holds the two youngest offspring, male and female, demonstrating only the closest (that is, the most recent) maternal line. The twelve year old Infante Don Carlos stands behind the future Ferdinand VII ready to succeed him should necessity dictate, his right foot pointing forward, but his left firmly in place. He is reduced in size and eclipsed by his brother. Don Luis de Borbon and his wife at the far right stand shoulder to shoulder in the king's wake, detached, independent regents of a satellite state, tied to Charles by birth and marriage, but also eventually yielding to the orbit of Ferdinand VII in this blinking constellation of Bourbon stars. Goya's royal portrait has less to do with space than time.

Psychologically, the relationship of father and sons is less one of affection than of state, and king and daughters are also physically distanced, more a statement of their function as barter in dynastic marriages. All here are subserviant to the rights of kingship. A concession is made to the emotional needs of the most recent offspring who has the remotest claim to power but, as the youngest, is placed between his parents. He separates Maria Luisa and Charles, but he also represents their most recent link, a function that he continues to serve in Vicente Lopez's *Portrait of the Family of Charles IV* [Fig. 11]. In this painting commemorating the monarchs' visit to the University of Valencia, Lopez places Charles left of center with Maria Luisa seated, the Infante Don Francisco again between

11) Vicente Lopez, «Portrait of the Family of Charles IV», 1802, Prado, Madrid.

them. The arrangement is given the Baroque flair that Goya's portrait locks, but the physiognomies are hardly flattering.

Goya had intended to establish himself in Madrid as a painter of fashionable portraits. He took great satisfaction in his position as court painter, having aspired to the royal circle, even boasting of his position there in letters to friends. If it is true that the royal family was corrupt, the queen involved in numerous affairs, perhaps even producing children who were not fathered by the king, the court was not setting precedents that stretched the bounds of other courts, such as that of Louis XIV or of the Medici in earlier times.

Catty remarks about the royal family were common in other courts. For example, the French ambassador, Alquier, wrote of the queen, that,

> At the age of fifty [1802] she has the pretensions and coquetry scarcely to be pardoned in a young and pretty woman. Her expenditure on jewels and finery is enormous and it is rare that a courier from an ambassador arrives without bringing her two or three gowns.[36]

Maria Antonina, whom Goya has prophetically turn away from Ferdinand in the painting, later wrote her mother that he is,

> A bewildered husband, idle, deceitful, mean, sly and not even a man physically. It is a shame when at the age of eighteen one responds to nothing: neither commands nor persuasion have any effect on him... The Prince does nothing, doesn't read, doesn't write, doesn't think... Nothing... And this is deliberate because they want him to be an idiot. He makes me blush at his coarseness to people.[37]

Goya had become Painter to the King in 1786. Charles III died in late June of that year, but Goya retained the title under Charles IV, even exclaiming to his friend, Martin Zapater, of his annual allowance of 15,000 reals.[38] In April, 1789, Goya became Painter of the Chamber with the new rights that this position conferred. Ten years later, he was made First Painter of the Chamber as decreed by the king's minister Urquijo with a tax free annual income of 50,000 reals plus 500 ducats for the upkeep of a carriage.[39] Goya was quite satisfied with his place in the court, and the evidence of his relationship with the king and queen offers no hints that he was on the verge of caricaturing them. Claims of his womanizing and alleged bouts of syphyllis, if true, would hardly put him in a position to pass moral judgments on the royal court.[40]

That Goya suffered a serious illness in 1792 that was the cause of his deafness is well established.[41] Deprived of conversation, music, and his beloved theater, and able to communicate only by gesture and letter, he became introspective and bitter. His changing mood is reflected in the major work of these years following his illness, *Los Caprichos*, wherein the courtier took on a second function of moralist and social critic. That his portrait of the royal family followed on the heels of these sardonic etchings was taken by many commentators as just another forum for this critical idiom.[42]

Goya's rumored affair with the Duchess of Alba is another sensational and apocryphal embellishment of his career. As she was also rumored to be the mistress of Count Godoy at the time, this would have made the fifty-four year old painter the ultimate risk-taker and thrill-seeker at the turn of the century. Goya's thirty-six year marriage to Josefa Bayeu, the sister of his artist friend, Francisco Bayeu, was one of devoted spouses as letters to his son, Javier, attest. Goya was deeply moved by his wife's death in 1811.43 In any case, his "portrait" of the *Naked Maja* may have been made instead from the model, Pepita Tudo, whom Godoy kept in a house that he had bought for her on the street where Goya lived.[44] The paintings of the two *majas* were referred to in the Godoy inventory of 1808 as "*gitanas*," or gypsys, and it has recently been suggested that the picture of the *Naked Maja* was not based on a model at all but represented a fashionable, late eighteenth-century paradigm of the female body.[45]

Another factor affecting Goya criticism in America at mid-century was the appearance of Lion Feuchtwanger's novel about Goya, published in English translation in 1951. It became a Book of the Month Club selection, went through numerous printings, and was translated into 24 languages.[46] The author had viewed Goya's paintings in the Prado in 1926. He left Germany in 1933, fleeing to Moscow, then France and Spain. Feuchtwanger arrived in America in 1943, where he worked in Los Angeles. He left the United States when summoned to answer for his leftist views in the McCarthy hearings.

Feuchtwanger adopted the historical novel as a vehicle to demonstrate his own view of history as the struggle of a critical minority against the unthinking majority who lived by instinct and impulse. The author writes that Goya bedecked the royal family in intoxicating colors to offset "the hard, cruel truth of their pathetic faces."[47] The literature on Goya is filled with much speculation and romantic fanticizing. No other artist has lent himself so readily to interpretation, although the major monographs on Goya tend to maintain a degree of objectivity.

Finally, the visual information in Goya's portrait indicates that the members of the royal family were anything but ghouls. The caricatures of the *Family of Charles IV* stem not from Goya, but from widely circulated American survey texts that want to tell a good story if not be sensational, in part extrapolating from the biting satires of Goya's etchings first published

after 1860. The charged language is sanctioned by similar usage in the scholarly literature, journal articles and some monographs. But not all the serious literature on Goya takes a negative approach. That which does is based on a myth about the painting that seems to have its basis in a flippant remark from late nineteenth-century French criticism, witty and amusing, but which has never been referenced and is likely apocryphal. It reflects a French political bias against the Bourbons who were exiled on Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1808. It offered another way of attacking the Spanish monarchy, rather than Goya, who was always held in high regard by the French.

If Goya was never asked to paint another royal portrait, it is true that he had already painted numerous individual portraits of the king and queen and other members of the royal household (most of which, it can be added, are quite flattering).[48] Possibly the king and queen felt that he had marked the turn of the century with the definitive royal portrait. When Vicente Lopez entered the royal household in 1802 with the title of Court Painter, and the modernism of his Neo-Classical style, he could offer the royal family court pictures in a sharper idiom. Other than one family grouping, however, he seems to have painted primarily single, bold portraits of Ferdinand VII [Fig. 9].[49] In any case, by this time Goya had ingratiated himself with another important patron, Manuel Godoy, who allowed him the freedom to explore a wide range of subjects.

In 1995, a new textbook appeared in print, and has quickly become popular in college survey courses, Marilyn Stokstad's *Art History*. Continuing the pejorative litany of American art criticism of the painting, the author observed in hushed tones that,

> a chill forboding seems to grip Goya's royal family. Charles IV appears almost catatonic, and the rest of the group is strangely quiet and apprehensive before the artist's—and the viewer's—pitiless scrutiny. Even the future Ferdinand VII, presumably at the heights of his youth and vigor, shares in the general paralysis, and his fiancée at his side is shown, curiously, with her face averted.[50]

It is a tribute to the power of good writing that the demonization of Goya's portrait could have persisted for so long. The compelling melodrama of Stokstad's "chill forboding" and Gardner's "menagerie of human grotesques," rivets the reader's attention, and their mythology is reinforced by references to details with sinister implications such as Ferdinand VII's fiancée with "her face averted," or Janson's "bloated vulture of a king." If anything, the survey texts served their readers too well. If the writing had been poorer, the interpretation would have fallen into oblivion, and the painting merely accepted as Goya's greatest portrait, rivalled in Spanish art only by the precedent of Velázquez.

Goya's royal portrait became the victim of a classic misreading by art historians who preferred to interpret rather than look, and who failed to consider the painting as document. Postmodernist criticism has often faulted the monographic study and the catalogue raisonné for being overly cautions, but in this instance, in their reluctance to stray from the archival data, these approaches reflected the soundest judgement, and the most demonstrable interpretation.

James Fenton in a two-part essay on the 1996 Degas exhibition in Chicago referred to the diaries of Henry Graf Kessler (1868-1937), who was a frequent guest of Ambroise Vollard at his weekly dinners in Amboise (Paris), which were attended by Edgar Degas, Auguste Renoir, Pierre Bonnard, Jean-Louis Forain and others.51 Because Degas and Renoir could not abide each other, Vollard invited them to his cellar on different days, Degas on Wednesday night, Renoir the following evening. Kessler kept accounts of the conversations at these weekly meetings, which were opinionated, scandlous, freewheeling, unguarded and marked by flippant remarks, oft-repeated insults, crude jokes, and anti-Semitic and anti-feminist stances. One account in particular is noteworthy for the light it sheds on Goya's portrait.

At the Thursday gathering on 27 June 1907, Kessler joined Vollard and his guests who included Renoir, the poet Paul-Jean Toulet (1867-1920), the painters José Maria Sert (1876-1945) and Maxime Dethomas (1867-1929). The conversation ranged through the usual vulgarities as Vollard circulated plates of his monotonous stew, but at one point turned to the issue of Realism. Renoir conceded that both Velázquez and Goya were Realists, but clarified the dilemma of differences in their style by reverting to a cliché that had been popular in the Italian Renaissance in the writings of Savonarola, Lorenzo de' Medici and Leonardo da Vinci, "*ogni pittore si dipengeva*," or "every painter paints himself."

Renoir's statement is important because it is the first time that an explicit criticism of Goya appears, but one which was probably common parlance at the time, and which formed the basis for later interpretations of Goya's portrait of the royal family.[52] Renoir noted that:

> Every artist puts something of himself into what he does, whether he wants to be a Realist or not. Look, take Velázquez and Goya, who were both of them Realists. But when Velázquez paints the members of the Royal family, they all become noblemen, because Velázquez himself was a nobleman. But Goya, when he painted the Royal Family—he made them look like a butcher's family in their

> Sunday best, like savages, dressed up in gilded costumes with epaulettes. Everyone puts something of himself [into a painting]. What survives of the artist is the feeling which he gives by means of objects.[53]

Goya's portrait satisfied its sitters' sense of self. It reflected the artist's priorities, and it met the social expectations of the picture's audience from 1800 to 1907 and on to the present, expectations dictated in large part since 1927 by survey textbooks and the American literature on Goya. Only the most successful survey books dealt with Goya's royal portrait. Of more than forty other college art history textbooks published in America during the past twenty-five years, only one cited this painting, and it, too, took a negative view of it.[54]

The literary critic, Northrup Frye, noted that the visual arts are mute, and depend on the viewer for articulation.[55] John Pope-Hennessy added a corollary to this observation when he observed that, "Whatever he [the critic] may say of any work of art, the work remains the same..."[56] Clearly, the work of art does not change, but comments about it can modify our perceptions of the object. We continue to wait for Goya's portrait to speak for itself.

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[1] H. W. Janson, *History of Art*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1969, p. 479.

[2] H. de la Croix & R. Tansey, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*, New York, 6th. ed., 1975, p. 663.

[3] Gardner, o*p. cit.*, p. 315 (repeated in 2nd? ed., 1936, p. 474). The painting was omitted from discussion in the fourth edition in 1959.

[4] F. Hartt, *A History of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*, 2 vols., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1976, II, p. 317.

[5] M. Kirby Talley, Jr., *ARTnews*, LXCIII (April 1994), 81-82.

[6] J. Canaday, *Mainstreams of Modern Art*, New York, 1959, p. 76.

[7] *Ibid.* This was Goya's last court portrait, although Canaday claimed that the royal family continued to commission portraits from the artist citing this as proof that the sitters were as stupid as he painted them to be.

[8] F. Licht, "Goya's Portrait of the Royal Family," *Art Bulletin*, XLIX (June 1967), 127. Licht modified his criticism somewhat in a later study; *Goya*, New York, 1979, pp. 73-74.

[9] Of Goya's ten oil sketches of the sitters, five are preserved in the Prado. For his sketch for the portrait of the Infanta Maria Josefa, see P. Gassier, *Goya*, 1989, p. 67. For information on the sketches, see José Gudiol, *Goya, 1746-1828, Biography, Analytical Study and Catalogue of His Paintings*, 4 vols., New York, 1971, I, pp. 109, 291-292. For discussions of the identity of the sitters, see S. Symmons, *Goya*, London, 1977, p. 61; P. Bonafoux, *Portraits of the Artist*, New York, 1985, p. 88; J. Tomlinson, *Francisco GOYA y Lucientes*, London, 1994, p. 147.

[10] The oil sketches were completed at the Palace of Aranjuez in June of 1800; Symmons, *op. cit.*

[11] Idem., "Goya's *The Family of Charles IV*: An Interpretation," *Apollo*, XCI (1970), 133. Muller modified her interpretation somewhat in a later essay; "Goya's merciless characterization of the Queen and King affirmed his respect for truth and for nature, which he believed consisted not only of that which was visible but also that which the mind understood;" idem., "Goya (y Lucientes), Francisco (Jose) de," in *Dictionary of Art*, ed., J. Turner, 34 vols., London, 1996, XIII, p. 244.

[12] Idem, *Francisco Goya y Lucientes, 1746-1828*, London, 1994, p. 134.

[13] A *Lot and His Daughters* by Francesco Furini is presently in the Prado, but it differs in format and composition from that on the back wall of Goya's portrait, and at 123 x 120 cm., is far too small to be the same painting. See J. Valdovinos, "The Italian School," in *Paintings of the Prado*, New York, 1994, p. 312. Filippo Baldinucci reported that it was painted c. 1634 for the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who presented it to Philip IV fifteen years later. It was kept in the Buen Retiro from 1792 to 1827, then went to the Royal Academy where it was frequently copied. Possibly, Goya used the Furini canvas as a frame of reference.

[14] Muller, *op. cit.*, p. 136. For more about the queen's many lovers, see C. Poore, *Goya*, New York, 1938, pp. 100-103. Xavier de Salas had observed that the children flanking Maria Luisa resembled Godoy with whom she had an adulterous affair; idem, *Goya, La Familia de Carlos IV*, Barcelona, 1944, p. 10. Tomlinson has pointed out that Maria Luisa was resented as a foreigner in the Spanish court, and questions the veracity of these accusations; Tomlinson, *Goya in the Twilight of Enlightenment*, Yale University Press, 1992, p. 63.

[15] Licht, *op. cit.*, 127. In a later study, Licht again credits Théophile Gautier for the witticism about "the corner baker and his wife" (correcting Gardner's "grocer and his family"), and underscores Goya's use of the mirror motif as dampening any criticism the sitters might have had to "one of the most disturbing group portraits ever painted;" idem, "Goya's Portrait of the Royal Family," in *Goya in Perspective*, ed., F. Licht, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1973, pp. 162-167.

[16] T. Gautier, *Voyage en Espagne*, ed., H. Steel, Boston: 1899, p. 11. Michael Spencer has characterized Gautier's comments on Goya's art as unoriginal and derivative; *The Art Criticism of Théophile Gautier*, Geneva, 1969, pp. 81-84.

[17] Idem, "Les Caprices de Goya," *La Presse* (5 July 1838); "Fran.co de Goya y Lucientes," *Le Cabinet de l'Amateur et de l'Antiquaire*, i (1842), 337-345.

[18] Idem, *Goya and His Critics*, Yale University Press, 1977, pp. 76-81, 258-259, 314-315, ns. 19-29.

[19] Tomlinson (as in note 14), p. 63.

[20] Hugh Stokes observed that, "Gautier is said to have remarked that this group of Charles IV, surrounded by his family reminded him of a small shopkeeper who had won a prize in a lottery;" *Francisco Goya*, London, 1914, pp. 235-236. He also noted of the remark attributed to Gautier that, "It is hard to believe that so gifted a critic uttered such an absurd judgment." Stokes may be the "later critic" to whom Gardner referred as a source.

[21] "Goya excelle aussi dans le portrait." I am indebted for these observations to Ilse Lipschutz, *Spanish Painting and the French Romantics*, Harvard University Press, 1972, pp. 21, 102. 173, passim.

[22] Hartt, *op. cit.*, p. 316. Recent studies which view the painting in a positive light are; Tomlinson (as in notes 9, 14); Francisco Calvo Serraller, *Goya*, Milan, 1996; M. Moreno de las Heras, *Goya 250 Anniversario*, Madrid: Prado, 1996; *Realidad e imogen, Goya, 1746-1828*, Museo de Zaragoza, 1996, p. 132.

[23] Idem (as in note 9), I, p. 109. Spanish scholars generally give Goya's portrait of the royal family the glowing evaluations that it deserves. As early as 1922, Beruete had observed that, "The Family of Charles IV is a most [sic] unique work, essentially pictorial, and one of the leading works which painting has produced either in Spain or elsewhere. It reveals the powers of a mighty artist in the exact moment of his maturity and fullness, and is the summary, the synthesis, and the archetype of his whole creation;" A. de Beruete y Moret, *Goya as Portrait Painter*, London, 1922, p. 103. The catalogue for the exhibition at the Prado in 1996 honoring the 250th anniversary of Goya's birth made a rare acknowledgment in a European text of the painting as satirical, noting the purported witticism of Théophile Gautier, but citing Licht (1973) instead of a primary source; Moreno de las Heras, *op. cit.*, pp. 384, 385, n.16; "el frances Gautier contemplara esta pintura en el Museo del Prado e interpretara estos retratos como satíricos," but concluding, "En vez de una caricatura, lo que Goya pretende, y conseque, es una idealización de la familia real,...". On the other hand, concerning interpretations of the painting as moralizing or social commentry, Janis Tomlinson has observed that, "such an intention seems unlikely in the light of historical fact;" idem (as in note 14); and Francisco Calvo Serraller has stated that there is no evidence to support the theory of Goya's approach as one of caricature, and that there is much evidence to support the royal family's satisfaction with the portrait (as in note 22), pp. 66-81.

[24] Long essays have been written about Raphael's portrait of *Baldassare Castiglione*, but the analysis of such portraits is frequently the result of information brought to the painting from written sources, such as histories, biographies and letters, and not from the face of the sitter. Raphael's painting does not tell the viewer if Castiglione was kind to beggars, devoutly religious, loyal to his friends, temperate in drink, obstinate in dealing with merchants, etc. The portrait as revealing of sitters' psychological states is a later phenomenon.

[25] Goya presented the king with another bill on 23 July for additional materials; Symmons, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[26] Goya's portraits are flattering if not idealized, as the Russian ambassador had written in 1789 that Maria Luisa had lost most of her teeth; Symmons, *op. cit.*, p. 61. Goya's many individual portraits of the king and queen are dignified presentations. Gledinning has commented that, "Conclusions about Goya's portraits are extraordinarily hypothetical, and very difficult to support with concrete evidence as opposed to personal impressions;" (as in note 18), p. 186.

[27] If the profile of the king's sister seems inserted as an afterthought, it is because she was absent in Portugal as Charles IV was planning the declaration of war against her husband's kingdom, which occurred on 31 March 1801; Tomlinson (as in note 14), p. 74.

[28] Licht (as in note 8), p. 128; (as in note 15), p. 167; (as in note 8), 1979, pp. 73-74; Jean Adhémar, *Goya*, London: 1948, pp. 12-14; Folke Nordström, "Goya's State Portrait of the Count of Floridablanca," in *Kunsthistorisk Tidskrift*, XXX (1962), 83-94.

[29] The Count of Floridablanca expressed his pleasure with Goya's portrait; Nordström, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[30] Pierre Gassier credits Xavier de Salas for this bold suggestion; *op. cit.*, p. 66.

[31] Xavier de Salas, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[32] Tomlinson (as in note 14), p. 74.

[33] Goya includes himself and his easel in his portrait of Don Luis, but here the artist's back is turned to us and we see the canvas. The premise for the family gathering is to watch him paint Don Luis in profile while his young bride, Dona Maria Teresa de Vallabriga, has her hair set. The candle, magically placed, illuminates the family, particu-

larly the Don's wife. Don Luis sits in profile, but the outline on the canvas is partly Goya's shadow. The only source of light in the painting, the candle, does not seem positioned to cast such a shadow or to illuminate Don Luis's right profile as Goya takes liberties in his placement of objects. Goya's shadow on the canvas recalls Leonardo's statement that every artist paints himself, as well as Pliny's account of the origins of painting, where the first painting was a portrait, as Gyges of Lydia traced his shadow on a wall. For more on shadows in art, particularly as distortions, see E. Olszewski, "Distortions, Shadows and Conventions in Sixteenth Century Italian Art," *Artibus et Historiae*, 11 (VI) (1985), 101-124, particularly 106-107, 123, n 27. Goya may also have intended a ludic comment on Plato's opinion of art as a shadow of a shadow world.

[34] Van Loo contradicts conventional practice by placing Philip V in the background, left of center, looking at the queen projected forward at his proper left. Van Loo isolates the king in his spacing (as Leonardo had isolated Christ from the apostles in his *Last Supper*), whereas the other figures appear in clusters. He calls attention to Philip V by the columns behind him alluding to the king as pillar of the State.

[35] Tomlinson's observation that, "Goya creates a composition devoid of hierarchy, which in turn enables him to imitate a variety of relationships among its constituents without giving priority to any," is puzzling in light of these observations; Tomlinson (as in note 14), pp. 71-72.

[36] P. Bonafoux, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 87; "Martin mio, ya soy Pintor del Rey con quince mil reales."

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[40] For Goya's illnesses, see Anon., "Late Masterpiece by Francisco Goya Added to the Institute's Collection," *Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts*, XLII/24 (October 3, 1953), 110-116. Julius Meier-Graefe considered Goya as reprehensible as the court he was criticizing; idem, *The Spanish Journey*, London, 1926, pp. 101-102.

[41] Poore, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

[42] Poore, *op. cit.*, p. 100; Glendinning (as in note 18), p. 63.

[43] Alfonso E. Perez Sanchez, *Goya*, London, 1989, p. 94.

[44] Pierre Gassier & Juliet Wilson, *The Life and Complete Work of Francisco Goya*, New York, 1971, p. 152. The authors conjecture that the Duchess of Alba may have owned the *majas* which then went to Godoy when he acquired her paintings after her death in 1802, but the *Naked Maja* was already listed in Godoy's inventory of 12 November 1800; Tomlinson (as in note 14), p. 115. Beruete had denied any resemblance to the Duchess of Alba in these works; idem. (as in note 23), p. 70.

[45] Tomlinson (as in note 14), p. 115.

[46] Jost Hermand, "The Case of the Well Crafted Novel: Lion Feuchtwanger's Goya," in *High and Low Cultures*, eds., R. Grimm & J. Hermand, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994, pp. 75-94.

[47] Lion Feuchtwanger, *This is the Hour: A Novel About Goya*, Boston, 1951, p. 88.

[48] Goya painted at least twenty portraits of the queen and fifteen of the king; André Malraux, *'Saturn', An Essay on Goya*, London, 1957, p. 98. Individual portraits of the king and queen made immediately before and after the group portrait are dignified.

[49] There is a crude boldness to both Goya's and Vicente Lopez's portraits of Ferdinand VII which verges on caricature and is typical of Spanish portraits of this period. Ferdinand never looked better than in Goya's group portrait. On the other hand, Anton Raphael Meng's portrait of Charles III in the Prado is far from handsome, yet it has never been viewed as a caricature.

[50] M. Stokstad, *Art History*, 2 vols., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1995, II, p. 965. In response to solicited comments, the authors have revised their discussion in the second edition (1999, II, p. 968).

[51] The diaries are being transcribed by Eberhard Fuchs for CD-ROM as part of the Projekt H. G. K. from the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach. See J. Fenton, "Degas in the Evening," *The New York Review of Books*, XLIII, no. 15 (17 October 1996), 48-53; "Degas in Chicago," no. 16 (17 October 1996), 14-18.

[52] Nigel Glendinning traced the interpretation of Goya's approach as caricatural to 1911, noting that, "A slightly caricaturesque painting of Maria Luisa bought by the Munich gallery in 1911 has been used to support the theory that Goya mocked Charles IV and his queen; yet Lafuente Ferrari has shown that the painting in question was in fact the work of Angel Lizcano (1846-1929) and based on two authentic Goyas in the Prado."; idem (as in note 18), p. 17.

[53] Fenton, *op. cit.*, p. 14. Renoir errs in considering Velázquez to have been of noble birth.

[54] Gina Pischel, *A World History of Art*, New York, 1978 (2nd ed., 1st ed. 1966), p. 581; "the portrait of the *Family of Charles IV*, whose ridiculous inanity Goya denounced..."

[55] "Criticism can talk, and all the arts are dumb;" Idem., *The anatomy of Criticism*, New York: Atheneum, 1970, p. 4.

[56] Idem., "Connoisseurship," in *The Study and Criticism of Italian Sculpture*, Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 11-38.