

nos ofrece Domínguez, lleno de erudición, y que sin duda será un importante punto de partida para el análisis minucioso de muchos otros aspectos del universo cervantino.

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MICHAEL IAROCCI. *The Art of Witnessing. Francisco de Goya's Disasters of War*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2023. ix + 281 pp.

In recent years, studies on the great Spanish painter and engraver Francisco de Goya have once again attracted the attention of academics and specialists, pointing out the importance of his figure in the History of Art and the Humanities. Last biographies, including Janis A. Tomlinson's 2020 comprehensive exploration of his life, have illuminated previously overlooked facets of his existence. In addition, fresh interpretations of his extensive correspondence have emerged, providing us with a novel and enlightening outlook on his creative process. Among the notable contributions to this growing field, Michael Iarocci's work stands out as an exceptionally valuable addition. The book explores Francisco de Goya's print series, *The Disasters of War*, which depicts the brutal realities of the Peninsular War during the Napoleonic era. Iarocci's purpose is to present these prints as a powerful critique of the violence and suffering inflicted by war, departing from earlier, more idealized portrayals of warfare in European art. The book fulfills that aim, while enriching Spanish arts studies with viewpoints on the interpretation of these prints. Iarocci's book is an invaluable, interdisciplinary resource that will greatly benefit researchers delving into the study of Goya and anyone aiming to explore more deeply the significance and interpretations of his engravings.

The book probes the ethical challenges posed by the creation and consumption of violent images, as well as the sense of witnessing that Goya's prints skilfully evoke. It thoroughly examines the significance of the print sequence, highlighting the individual prints' roles within the broader structure. Ultimately, *Goya's Disasters of War* endure as a timeless contemplation of the intricate process of depicting and confronting the horrors of war. Iarocci convincingly demonstrates that Goya's prints transcend the mere depiction of historical events; instead, they represent archetypal forms of violence set in abstract temporal and spatial contexts. He establishes that the series is inherently characterized by its moral condemnation of war, showcasing how Goya's artistic prowess compels

viewers to confront the horrors while remaining aware of the constructed nature of these images.

The author starts by immersing us in the concept of pictorial illusion, highlighting how the act of viewing images portraying violence can stir deep introspection regarding one's identity and their role as a witness. Notably, the book narrows its focus to the prints dedicated to wartime atrocities within the broader series, recognizing these images as a profound canvas through which Goya navigates the intricate relationship between violence, image construction, and image consumption. Iarocci fervently advocates for a sequential reading of the book, stressing the importance of comprehending how the arrangement of the prints contributes to their collective significance.

Following closely in the footsteps of Goya's series, the book kicks off with three introductory essays (Introduction, Beginnings and Preface) that delve into the series front matter. It's crucial to highlight that *The Disasters* encourage a patient, step-by-step exploration, generously bestowing profound insights into the moral dilemmas entwined with warfare, witnessing, and the artistic craft of image-making. The text's organization is captivating, with Iarocci meticulously scrutinizing the initial forty-seven prints before drawing the curtains with an enlightening afterword.

At the heart of the book lies a collection of interpretive essays, each dedicated to a single print. These essays ingeniously blend visual analysis, textual commentary, and astute observations regarding each print's position within the overarching sequence. Through this multidimensional approach, the author challenges the notion that Goya's work can be categorized as pure realism, suggesting instead its alignment with the rich tradition of eighteenth-century satire. Within the realm of these dissertations, Goya's prints emerge as poignant critiques of human vices and profound explorations of the moral dimensions inherent in wartime violence. Moreover, the author navigates the ethical questions that loom over the portrayal of the atrocities through Goya's artistic lens, such as whether the violence of the Spanish people defending themselves is justified as seen (engravings 3 and 4), or whether we can derive visual pleasure from the representation of lifeless bodies as depicted (engraving 37). As one journeys through these compelling essays, recurring themes, such as the constructed nature of images, the individual and the collective aspects of witnessing images, or the ethical challenges of representing and watching violent images, begin to crystallize. The reader is beckoned to contemplate the significance of self-reflection, the delicate interplay between thought and emotion during the act of viewing, and the profound duality inherent in these artworks, where they simultaneously function as vivid scenes and thought-provoking pictures.

Complementing each essay is a set of notes and commentaries situated at the rear of the book. These annotations serve as a valuable supplement, offering readers deeper insights into the contextual backdrop, critical reception, recommended avenues for further exploration, and in-depth examinations of pivotal themes and nuances. The notes are thoughtfully crafted by employing language that caters to a diverse readership. For instance, in order to ensure accessibility, citations from Spanish sources are translated into English, bridging linguistic divides and inviting a broader audience to engage with this scholarship. Within the pages of this book, readers will encounter reproduced images sourced from the 1863 first edition. While the original prints possessed specific dimensions, their reproduction required a reduction in size, and the omission of blank margins, an adjustment undertaken to facilitate their presentation.

Iarocci closes his book by suggesting that, despite the darkness of the subject matter, there is hope within Goya's work, emphasizing that the power to change the world lies with the viewers and their actions after engaging with these images. He underscores that the ability to effect change in our world ultimately rests on the viewers and their actions following their engagement with these haunting images. Indeed, through his innovative examination of these engravings, Iarocci diligently reveals their underlying satirical essence and their capacity to act as catalysts for deep introspection and meaningful advocacy. His dedicated research, elaborate prose, and profound analysis coalesce to offer a stimulating intellectual voyage that challenges established interpretations. Readers not only acquire a lucid comprehension but also encounter a fresh, enlightening perspective on this influential artistic series. This book promises to captivate a diverse audience, extending its allure to both scholars and the broader public. It beckons readers into an engaging expedition, thoughtfully designed to cater to a wide spectrum of individuals, ranging from academics with specialized interests to those harbouring a general curiosity on the subject matter.

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