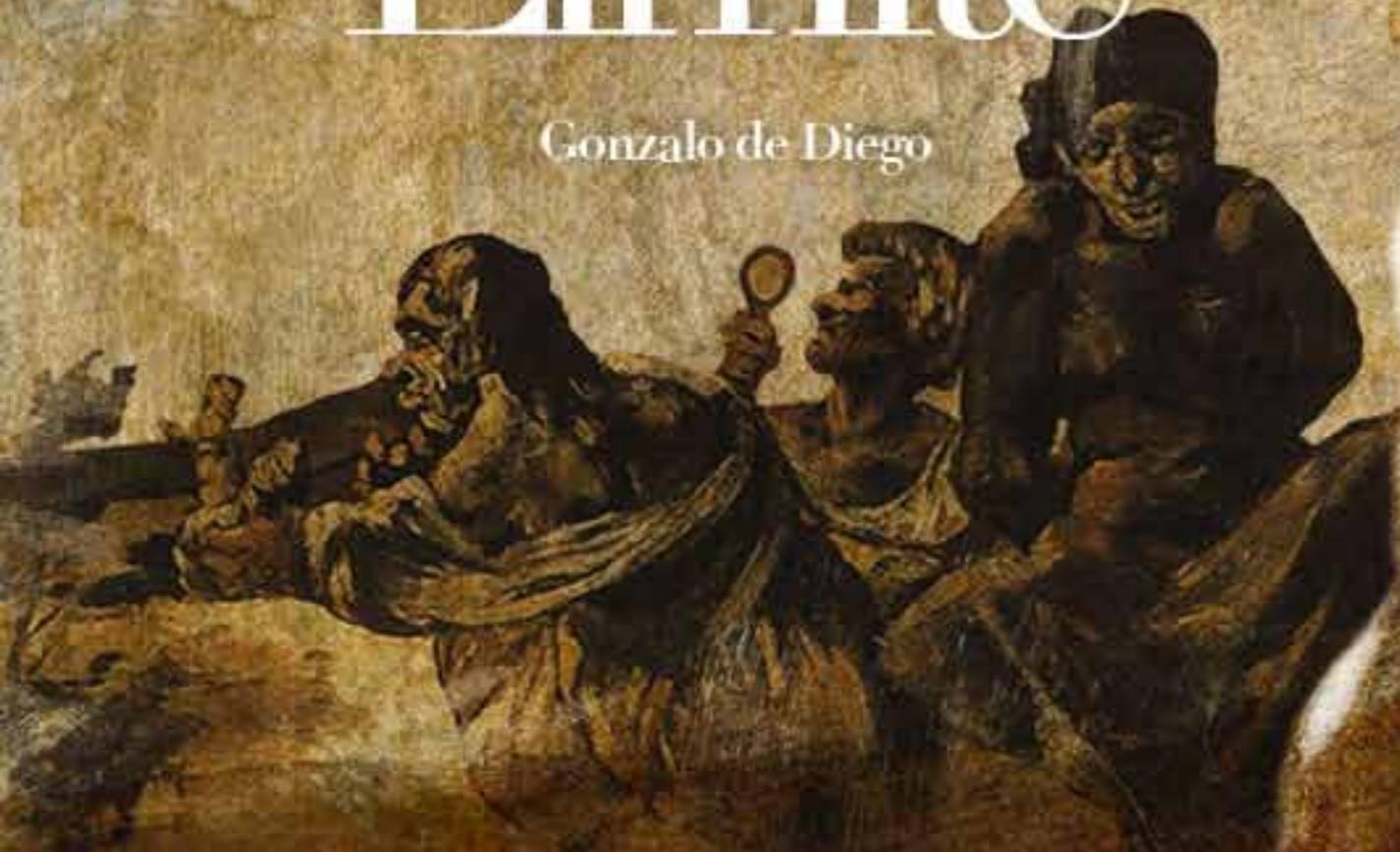


Goya al Límite

Gonzalo de Diego



English Preview

Introduction



Life draws many boundaries. Anyone daring to take a closer look at a boundary providing no answers once crossed is asking for trouble: not only on this side of it, but also on the borderline and beyond it.

Partly as a consequence but also coinciding with the new Millennium, the world today is in the process of crossing multiple border lands. Consequently, this book might be the right place to demonstrate highly illustrative personal situations - in this specific case regarding the figure of a genius - for someone who lived in somewhat difficult times and who went through situations of real risk and commitment.

Was Goya really conscious of this? Did Goya essentially know what we are talking about? He had to be fully aware of it, or at least he knew by pure intuition and by his clear survival instinct. If this book has any kind of pretension, it would most probably be the attempt to discover the invisible inside of a soul that, before finding peace, was subject to many tests and torments which were constantly on show. His only representative public proclamation was expressed in visual language, completely dominated by our central character (etchings almost always hidden and badly understood, drawings, visible white paintings and black paintings). This is an attempt to follow a secret spiritual itinerary as far as possible, by looking at the work, scrutinising its meaning, its actual internal mechanics, analysing the feeling and the meaning of its language. In a

word, it wishes to share the joy and sorrow, the humiliations and even the dangers of deifying reason that can manage to violate all moral curbing, within the desire to rake through the most intimate secrets of creation.

We will thereby follow a parallel itinerary at determining moments in his life, from beginning to end, but above all from the maturity of the artist in a notorious process of individualisation, and we will see how human history, and more importantly each individual's life, is not an indefinite process or even progress but that it has and always will have a final outcome as it also had a beginning. It is within this context that the language of borders comes in. It expresses our world's great need to find a path bringing us together within diversity, and a personal and untransferable inner life that lets each person be themselves by themselves, looking deep into their heart.

This type of reflection works in the early 21st century and also worked for a character such as Goya. In a double identification: as the central character and as witness of something as important as Spain's real heritage and specificity, given that Goya does not beat around the bush and goes straight for the jugular. So then, the world goes on and will continue to be full of challenges, difficult or outrageously demanding areas that make an impact on people in many places. From there we understand the constant importance of the artist who is ready for his art to

serve ideas, no matter how different or challenging they are. And although he must necessarily take a step back from the world in order to be a witness, this approximation should be definitive.

Within this way of looking at things, a set of challenges would form what is known as a boundary. This line indicates the extreme that we find it hard to reach because it opens out on to a new world, or the edges of humanity, where common sense starts to fail and we need new answers or a new search; human situations, places, problems where anyone who means well knows that something has to be done but nobody knows exactly what. That's the borderline. We know that there is a problem and that something must be done, renewed, changed but we don't know how. It is the border and its artistic explanation that is the work befalling the real creative artist.

Of course, there are other types of borders, not only geographic as seen in these global times, that go hand in hand with exclusion dynamics thereby creating human boundaries. For Goya, the poor were poor and miserable, people who begged in the street and had nowhere to sleep. They were the people that he belonged to, exploited by the corrupt ruling classes, constantly forgotten, badly educated and appallingly informed, with no rosy future; also anyone on the edge of exclusion, abandoned by their clergymen and by their miserable rulers and who almost had nothing left to

lose, and yet rose up against the invader and ended up losing their life. These were the people with whom a moral and intellectual artist such as Goya identified and for whom he bore witness of a tremendous and disappointing time.

Non-conformist and resilient, Goya was actually very unhappy and resisted this lack of happiness stubbornly, constantly and determinedly every day of his life. It is true that he had one of the most luminous palettes in the Enlightenment but also - within his permanent and inherent duality - his way of thinking and much of his private life remained in the shadows. This explains why over his lifetime we find that there are also borders of depth - that this book will attempt to highlight as far as possible - in practically all fields. Goya saw them and expressed them in his own way as very close although decidedly different dualities. These are borders of depth that oblige because they bear a challenge, a deep goal, and a utopia. These were borders where Goya wanted to be and to cross, despite all this and because his way of being, his training and his personality obliged him beyond the spirit of preservation. Anyone can take the easy route; it is the difficult path that requires a different will and an exceptional capacity for artistic expression to demonstrate it to the world in exemplary fashion. In essence, this was Goya.