

Goya in Bordeaux / Goya en Burdeos (1999)

Carlos Saura (1932-2023)

OVERVIEW

Auteur Carlos Saura was arguably the most lauded and well-known director in Spain in the second half of the twentieth century. Born in Huesca, Aragon in 1932, Saura grew up in the stark post civil-war landscape. From an early age, he experimented with photography, painting, and music, and all three artforms informed the themes and visual frames in his films. For this reason, many of his early films (most notably *Golfos* of 1962 and *La Caza* of 1966) depict the poverty and violence of both the city and the country in the mid-twentieth century. Saura's middle period was characterized by satires of the bourgeoisie and a dissection of the Spanish family unit. Saura married three different women and had a long-term relationship with his favorite actress and muse, Geraldine Chaplin. All four relationships yielded children: one daughter, and six sons. In the 1980s and 1990s, Saura became fascinated with various music and dance styles and used his documentary eye to capture the process of performance with music. His later period includes films about tango from Argentina, fados from Portugal, and flamenco and theater from Andalucía (southern Spain). Saura died in 2023, right before he was set to receive the lifetime achievement award at the aptly named Goya Awards.

Film *Goya in Bordeaux* (1999) is a surreal drama in color that depicts the last years of Goya's life under the authoritarian rule of Fernando VII. The plot involves the painter's descent into death as an old man, which incites flashbacks of Goya's experiences as a young court painter in Madrid (1789-1810). Goya was played by the famous matinee idol Francisco Rabal, who starred in several Spanish dramas of the 1960s and 70s—most notably, the handsome and mysterious cousin in Buñuel's *Viridiana* (1961). In his old age, Rabal also appeared as the dirty old man character in Almodóvar's sex dramady, *Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down* (1989).

Background Although the plot of the film traces Goya's actual experiences in Madrid and later in exile in France, the surreal screenplay was written by Saura himself and Luigi Scattini. Saura explores themes that go beyond a typical biographical feature and uses unsettling images and tableaux to characterize Goya's final days as well as his life's work. The film was nominated for several Goya Awards (similar to the Oscars). Francisco Rabal won the Goya for best actor.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

<i>Francisco de Goya</i>	Court painter and exile
<i>Rosarito</i>	Goya's young daughter and caretaker
<i>Leocadia</i>	Goya's young wife
<i>Duchess of Alba</i>	Goya's muse and lover in Madrid
<i>Leandro de Moratín</i>	Famous Spanish playwright and Goya's confidant
<i>Manuel de Godoy</i>	Spanish minister and corrupt bureaucrat under Carlos IV

SYNOPSIS

The famous Spanish painter, Francisco de Goya, lives out his last years in Bourdeaux, France (1824-1828). Although he knows he will die soon, Goya decides to move to France in order to avoid arrest by the Second Spanish Inquisition and the corrupt authoritarian rule of Fernando VII, both of which Goya openly criticized when he lived in Madrid. To stay safe, Goya lives in exile with his young wife, Leocadia, and his pubescent daughter, Rosarito.

Rosarito cares for her aging and ailing father, and she also is an artist herself. Because she is by his bedside often, Rosarito asks her father to tell her about his time as court painter. At first, the old artist

avoids talking about his past, but he gradually tells her not only of his development as an artist, but also confesses his personal mistakes.

As old Goya contemplates his life (and tells Rosarito stories), the film cuts to several flashbacks of key moments in Goya's life in Madrid, such as the moment he met his muse and lover, the Duchess of Alba, and the weeks where he had a terrible infection (possibly pneumonia), lost his hearing, and almost died. The Duchess of Alba appears multiple times throughout the film—both in the “real” flashbacks of Goya's memory and within Goya's imagined representations of her in paintings and drawings. In addition, the duchess acts as the angel of death, who visits old Goya and is a conduit into his flashbacks. In the last minutes of the film, Goya dies as the duchess's shadow covers his bedridden body.

In addition to the naturalistic flashbacks of Goya's life, there are multiple recreations or partial recreations of Goya's most famous paintings. Often, the scenes start with a backdrop canvas and figures in shadow; then, the painting comes to life with real figures doing the activities that are depicted in Goya's paintings. In other moments, Goya looks at his own finished creations as if he were a visitor to an art gallery. In this sense, the process of making the art becomes a trope-- allows Saura to drift back and forth between reality and fantasy, as well as represent multiple perspectives and periods.

SCENES

Bloody Butcher's Scene As the credits roll, we see what appears to be aerial shot of a landscape at night, but what reveals itself to be dark ground. The camera continues to pan over the black ground as classical music with castanet accents plays—Luigi Boccherini's Quintes, Op. 37. The ground gradually becomes redder and redder and looks like bloody viscera. The camera moves up to reveal a bull's severed head on the ground, a work bench, and an ax leaning on the work bench. We also see a bucket with bones and the carcass of the cow being dragged on the ground, then lifted up on hooks. There is a close-up of the hollowed-out carcass, and the rib cage and sinews morph into a face—that of an old Goya lying in bed.



Old Goya Gets His Bearings Goya looks around in bed and murmurs: “where am I?” He gets out of bed, and we see a bedroom with blood-red walls. Goya makes his way towards a window and continues murmuring “who brought me here?” He sees the condensation on the window and draws a spiral on the window pane. He remarks: “The spiral is like life.” When Goya turns back towards his bed, the whole bedroom turns into a dark-blue scene, with a lit candle, a mirror, and a mysterious woman's silhouette. Goya exits the bedroom and walks down a checkered hallway with white walls. As he leaves the bedroom, the bedroom walls return to a reddish-pinkish color. Goya sees the female figure walking ahead of him. He walks past a room that is a kitchen with shiny copper pots and dead ducks on the counter. As he surveys the scene, he notices a bowl of fruit alongside the bleeding ducks, and the scene appears much like a still-life painting. Goya walks back to the bedroom, shuffling along the checkered floor.



Street Sequence: Dream or Reality? There is an abrupt cut to a white horse bucking, and Goya realizes that he is looking at the streets of Bourdeaux. Men and woman in cloaks walk along the street while horse-drawn carriages pass. The air is foggy. Old Goya, still in pajamas, wanders down the street. A French gentleman tries to ask him if he is ok. The woman in the black dress with the mantilla walks towards him slowly. Another French couple bumps into him and chides him in French. Goya lashes out at them and yells. A young girl gently touches Goya's back. When he turns around, old Goya recognizes his daughter Rosarito, who asks him to go back inside.



Leocadia Scolds Goya in the Bathtub Old Goya, now inside, lies in a bathtub. Leocadia, his young wife, folds and hangs laundry while another older gentleman sits by the bathtub. Leocadia asks Goya why he would wander out into the cold night, and reminds him that people will gossip. Goya remarks to the

gentleman that public opinion is all she cares about. The two men continue chatting, and we realize that Goya's visitor is the esteemed Neoclassical playwright Leandro de Moratín. Goya comments that Fernando VII remains the enemy of Spanish liberals "like us."

Moratín Arranges Goya's Will Moratín takes notes as Goya speaks. Goya tells his friend that he would like to live his remaining days in Bourdeaux with the slow rhythm and the stupendous wine—and that he wants to be buried in Bourdeaux. Moratín asks about his lithographs, and Goya implies that he will give them (and old stamps) to someone in the will. Leocadia kicks out the other servant who was eavesdropping and declares that bath time is over. Moratín bids them farewell, shouting and over-enunciating so that Goya can understand him. Goya gets angry that everyone is waiting for him to die, and he declares that he will live 99 more years. Leocadia wraps a towel around his shoulders and embraces him. Goya admits that he could not survive without her. Moratín quietly leaves the room and shuts the bathroom door.



Flashback 1: Young Goya Lusts After the Duchess of Alba A male dancer spins gracefully in front of a string ensemble in a plush room with red curtains. As he dances across the platform and plays the castanets, the camera widens to show the audience—a group of nobles with Neoclassical wigs in a luxurious palace hall. Behind them lies a long table with several decadent treats. Some nobles watch the performance, while others chat in small groups. Young Goya walks behind the buffet table and around the periphery of the hall, surveying both the guests and the performance. He spots a beautiful, thin brunette and her friend chatting and laughing at another table. Young Goya leans over to a friend and asks who the brunette is. The friend replies "the Duchess of Alba," but warns him that she is dangerous vixen. The flamenco ballet continues, and the camera cuts back and forth between the graceful steps of the dancer and close-ups of all the royal and noble faces watching the performance. The two young Bourbon princesses hold hands and seem to enjoy the performance, while the queen, the duchess, and the other adults are more ambivalent.



Young Goya's Ambitions As the dance continues, a male narrator (young Goya's internal monologue) describes how ardently he wanted to be the court painter. The narrator explains that he had a lot of high-brow competition and other painters with powerful patrons. He vows to build up his own connections with the nobles in the room so that he can transcend his own humble origins. The young Goya continues to stare at the Duchess of Alba, and she returns his gaze. The narrator explains that he understood that the Spanish court was already Frenchified and would continue to embrace Enlightened philosophy and French culture. So, he would use this cultural and political trend in order to pursue his own career.



Rosarito Cares for her Father (Old Goya) in Bed Goya continues to describe how he became court painter and how he amassed enemies. Rosario has dozed off in his bed, and Goya rings a bell to wake her up. Rosario stands up and asks her father to drink the tea. Goya ignores her and confesses that he was not a good husband to his first wife, Josefa. He then mentions that his brother-in-law, Vallero, was a bad painter and a jerk. Upon Rosario's insistence, Goya drinks the tea but throws the cup down in disgust from the bad taste. Offended, Rosario runs out of the room and Goya calls after her, ringing the bell. She returns to pick up the broken teacup and warns her father that if he continues to mistreat her, she will not be his nursemaid anymore. She tells him to get up and put on a cloak, and Goya reluctantly agrees.



Old Goya Explains How He Almost Died at 45 As a peace offering, Goya asks Rosarito if she would like to hear the story of how he went deaf. He explains how he fell deathly ill and saw visions of demons. Goya describes how everyone thought he was at death's door, but here he is—old, deaf, and alive. As he walks around the bedroom, the scene turns to another flashback where a doctor is examining the 45-yr old, bedridden Goya. The middle-aged Goya gasps for breath and drifts in and out of consciousness. The doctor tells Josefa that Goya is greatly weakened and will die at any moment. The maid tells him that he has refused last rites, but that his wife is on the way. The doctor says she must make arrangements immediately. The doctor rolls up his medical tool-kit and leaves. The camera floats above the gasping Goya with a lingering aerial shot.



Flashback 2: Goya Hallucinates in His “Almost” Deathbed The extremely ill, middle-aged Goya wakes up abruptly and stares at a Baroque painting on the wall across from his bed. There are two figures, including a woman in a dark dress whose face is in profile and obscured. As the feverish Goya stares at the painting, the female figure comes alive and turns her face toward him—it is the face of the Duchess of Alba. The Duchess moves out of the painting and towards him; her shadow covers his bed, and he yells “I don’t want to die!” Goya turns away, then looks back to see the duchess now bathed in dark blue light and slowly fading away. The old Goya, now narrating, explains that from that moment, he retreated from the world. He would also never again hear the laughter of children or the chirping of birds. The worst, as old Goya explains, was the inability to hear music.

Two Goyas Contemplate and Analyze Lithographs from *Caprichos*

To cope with his deafness, old Goya explains how he launched into his work and started creating *Caprichos*—a series of darkly-themed lithographs and disturbing paintings that would characterize his third artistic period. Middle-aged and old Goya walk in parallel lines with a row of Goya’s *Caprichos* works, bathed in dark blue light, placed between them (it is as if the two Goyas are looking at their own works on a gallery wall, but from both sides). Both Goyas stop to analyze specific pieces, such as the little girl who is afraid of the boogey man, and Cayetana, a woman who is suffering some sort of attack—possibly rape—by two men under her skirts. The gallery dream sequence ends with a deep dive into *The Sleep of Reason*, which depicts winged demons tormenting a figure slumped over a desk (one of the most recognizable Goya lithographs).



Old Goya Gets Dressed Up Old Goya and Leocadia stand in front of a mirror while Leocadia adjusts his gray suit. Leocadia’s maroon-pink dress blends in with the light red walls of old Goya’s bedroom. They walk together down the hall, and the walls of the parlor become translucent. As they walk, we see shadows of Rosario playing the piano while her instructor stands over her. When Leocadia and Goya enter the room, the lighting becomes “normal,” and the instructor prompts Rosarito (in French) to play for her parents. Rosarito plays Mozart, and old Goya lays his ear on the piano to try to hear some of the melody. He gets up and realizes that he is only imagining notes and can only feel the vibrations.



Flashback 3: Young Goya Gets a Church Commission A cleric reads scripture to young Goya in art studio. The patron and the cleric explain that they want Goya to paint a piece commemorating the life of Saint Antonio, who miraculously transported from Padua to Lisbon. In addition, San Antonio managed to save his father from wrongful conviction and execution. Antonio managed to identify the real murderer. As the cleric explains the story of the murder, there is another sequence that begins with a close-up on a coffin being pried open. The dead body of the victim in the coffin comes to life. San Antonio, surrounded by witnesses, asks the revived corpse if his father was the murderer, and the corpse proclaims the father’s innocence. Antonio asks the corpse to reveal the true murderer, and the victim points to a man in the crowd. Antonio holds out his index figure and smites him on the spot with a lightning bolt. The camera cuts back suddenly to the art studio, where young Goya



is smirking at the ridiculous story. The young Goya, as narrator, explains that he had an idea in that moment—he would honor San Antonio not by depicting the over-the-top murder tale, but rather by painting the madrileños who picnic in the meadows. He explains that madrileños from all walks of life celebrate San Antonio with this outdoor party.

Young Goya Imagines How His Fair / Picnic Paintings Will Come Together

Once young Goya decides to paint the San Antonio festival, he starts to imagine the crowds of people in the park—and of all ages and classes. The figures, in silhouette, enjoy their various fair activities. Instead of a green meadow or sunny sky, however, there is a pink backdrop and blue floor, which gives the visual feeling of a canvas behind the shadow figures. Two horses appear in the foreground drawing a carriage. Young Goya and a woman in a red dress get out, and as they descend, the scene gradually becomes more naturalistic. The silhouettes become fully lit, and the blues and pinks turn into earth tones with sunny accents. Props such as parasols, birdcages, and baskets appear. However, the backdrop remains a painting in pink. Goya slowly surveys the crowd with a painterly eye, but stops suddenly when he sees the Duchess of Alba in her trademark black mantilla. The two exchange lustful stares across the “park.” Some of the fair-goers dance in pairs.



Young Goya Paints the Cupola as Requested

Back in his studio (which is an actual studio in this moment), young Goya sketches out a scene of San Antonio administering to two young women kneeling before him. On a platform in the studio, several actors pose as the characters in San Antonio’s story. Goya studies the models carefully, adjusts their poses, and continues with his sketch. The camera pans to the rounded cupola of the church where Goya’s paintings appear. Rather than include the fair paintings, Goya has depicted scenes from San Antonio’s life, as the cleric and patron had requested.



Old Goya Advises Rosarito

Old Goya sketches at his desk in his red office in Bourdeaux. Rosario stands over him, then asks him to come back to bed. Goya explains that he would like to renew his old work on *Caprichos*, which was always one of his “strong points.” Rosario shows her father her own drawings, and Goya compliments her technique. He advises her that although it is good technical practice to copy the masters, she should eventually develop her own unique style. Goya goes on to explain that he had talent for bullfighting in his youth but lost interest once he was gored. He then decided to fight with “brushes.” He asks Rosario how old she thinks he is, and she replies—80. He says, “more,” and begins to tell her the story of what happened after his grave illness. Instead, he decides to teach her how to “hear internally.” When she closes her eyes, Rosario reports that she hears a coach, galloping horses, and a crying baby. Goya tells her that those imagined noises are not the same as “deaf hearing,” which is as sinister as a mother losing a child or a stampede of 100 cattle. Goya exhorts her to expand her imagination so that she can reach the heights of heaven or the depths of hell. Rosario nods somberly. Goya explains that artistic genius is more powerful than politicians, but there is always the danger of being consumed by darkness and madness.



Flashback 4: Rosarito Remembers Her Father Painting

As old Goya and Rosarito continue their meditation on “internal hearing” and imagination, both hear loud thunder and see bright lightning. The window flies open, and the camera cuts to a younger Rosarito—perhaps 8—looking at the Old Goya working on a *Caprichos* sketch. While still old, he seems to be more ambulatory than in the “present.” He wears a hat with a ring of candles around the rim. Goya walks over to the window and closes it, then asks the younger Rosarito why she is up in the middle of the night. When she doesn’t respond, he asks her to tell him about her nightmare. She describes how a vicious dog with knife-teeth chased her and tried to bite her. Goya comforts her by saying that there are no vicious dogs here. She points to one of his paintings of a vast landscape with a dog looking around.



Goya explains that that dog is kind but lost. He takes her hand and walks her down the hallway. He tells her that the biggest monster is man because he knowingly does harm, whereas animals just follow their needs and instincts.

Leocadia Worries About Goya's Dark Paintings After putting Rosario back to bed, Goya kisses Leocadia's neck in the main room. She looks at the *Caprichos* paintings that he has painted directly onto the walls of the house, and she asks him why he is painting on the walls—and why such dark and disturbing images. Goya retorts that he is not interested in happy figures, spring landscapes, and flowers. Leocadia warns him that they may get in trouble for these disturbing pieces, but Goya says that there is no harm creating in his own home. Leocadia also expresses concern about Goya's obsession with hellish figures and darkness, and he replies that she and Rosario can paint over the images.



Goya Has Another Attack and Hallucination Leocadia returns to bed, but Goya stays up to continue painting before the paint completely dries. We see him mixing shades of black and brown paint, then applying them to a figure's mouth. Suddenly, Goya screams in agony and grabs his head. His hat with candles flies off, and Goya sits down, still shouting and holding his head. When he lifts his head, he looks at the famous painting *Saturn Devouring his Son*, and he sees real blood dripping from the deity's mouth. He stares at the painting in horror. A swirl of faces wearing distorted marks crowd around him, and the room starts spinning. Then, the ghost version of the Duchess of Alba appears in blue and slowly walks backward. Several other figures enter the studio, and the lights turn blue. The ceiling turns into a billowing sheet, and the figures move about as though they are drowning in an ocean.

Meeting of Liberal Intellectuals Old (yet mobile) Goya sits at the head of a table surrounded by men. Leandro Moratín, the famous playwright, stands at the other end of the table and offers a toast to the liberal cause. As he does so, Moratín recites rhyming verses about the good wine and poor chocolate of Bordeaux, and everyone laughs at the clever poem. Goya toasts a free, enlightened Spain liberated from tyranny and war. A waiter sings a song in which the singer criticizes the authoritarian rule of Fernando VII. A female cook takes over playing guitar while the singer performs a simple folk dance. The intellectuals cheer on the performance. Goya gets up and imagines himself dancing with similar choreography—in silhouette. His feet move gracefully, although his arms are stiff.



Flashback 5: Middle-Aged Goya Paints the Duchess of Alba There is a close-up of the Duchess of Alba's torso and face covered in her trademark black mantilla. We see young Goya seated in front of the canvas and studying the duchess. He asks her to turn to the left, and she does so—she looks directly at Goya with a frontal pose. She asks if she has to stay standing the whole time, and he asks her to speak more slowly (and reminds her that he is somewhat deaf). The viewer realizes that this portrait was created shortly after 45-year-old Goya's illness. Goya offers to let the duchess take a break, but she persists and says that “we have to pay” for high art. Goya's wife, Josefa, interrupts the session and tells Goya that she is going to bed. Josefa bids the duchess goodnight and looks at her suspiciously. When Josefa leaves, the duchess tells Goya to drop “protocol” and call her “cayetana”—which is her nickname and a family tradition. She asks why Goya always paints at night, and he replies that the hues of the paint look more vibrant by candlelight. The duchess retorts that the viewer would also have to look at the paintings at night. The two playfully accuse each other of having little “love affairs.” Neither one denies their promiscuous reputation.



Making the Lithograph Rosario looks on as old Goya and a French printmaker press the paper to make a lithograph of one of Goya's *Caprichos*. After taking the paper out of press, Goya himself places the paper on the stone and peels it back. Rosario is captivated by the process and shouts “Qué precioso, padre!” (How beautiful, father!) All three look at the finished product, and Rosario declares the scene—a



bullfight—Goya's best lithograph yet. The printmaker compliments Goya's artistry.

Flashback 6: Middle-Aged Goya Paints the Duchess in the Nude

The duchess lies nude on a chaise longue, facing away from middle-aged Goya. She turns her head to look at Goya and asks why he wants a portrait in the nude. Goya answers: "naked, we are equal before God." The duchess retorts that she is unique, and Goya agrees. The duchess turns over, places a sheet over her torso, and looks directly at the artist. She says that if he can read her lips while she is talking quickly, she will give him a "prize." The duchess begins a rapid-fire list of Goya's faults with a couple of compliments hidden in. Goya watches her lips carefully and replies that some of her accusations are true, but the insult about being "barbero," or rude / rough, is unfair. Goya returns the favor by listing both compliments and insults about the duchess, and ends by saying that he loves her for all of those reasons. He abandons the painting and walks over to her. We see he doesn't have pants on, and he starts to mount her on the chaise. The duchess cries out in pain and calls him a brute. Goya pauses and caresses her face, saying that they belong to each other. The duchess teases that he actually is attracted to fat women with round bodies. Goya retorts that he loves her body, and he lists her "qualities." She laughs and kisses him.



Old Goya Draws the Duchess from Memory Back at the studio in Bourdeaux, old Goya draws a frontal nude of the duchess. He murmurs to himself, remembering the details of her body and her sexual features. Rosarito quietly approaches from behind and peers over his shoulder. When she loses her balance, old Goya notices her snooping and chides her for being too curious. He gets up and walks away from the drawing. Rosarito asks if the duchess was as beautiful as they say. Goya equivocates, but Rosarito demands answers and reminds him that she is a woman now. Goya reluctantly agrees to tell her about the affair, but only if she keeps it a secret. He reveals the portrait of the duchess in her black dress with white shoes. Goya explains how he was obsessively pining for her and jealous of anyone who even looked at her.



The Duchess Gets Caught Up in Political Intrigue Goya explains that the duchess loved to take risks and was probably a spy, but the political scene was beginning to get more and more dangerous. There is a cut to the duchess in bed, gasping as if she is either having a nightmare or is in extreme pain. Rosarito guesses that someone poisoned the duchess. Goya describes the official line—that the duchess was ill and killed herself to avoid getting older and sicker. He tells Rosarito that all that was lies, and that the duchess and the queen were political enemies. Also, Goya reports that the queen had always struck him as obsessed with power and riches. Goya explains his theory: that the duchess had become an enemy of the queen Maria Luisa and the queen's lover, the Minister Godoy. So, the two conspired to get rid of the duchess. Goya describes how ambitious and clever Godoy was, and he accuses him of dirty dealings. Rosarito listens to the story with rapt attention.

Flashback 7: Godoy Shows Off the Art Academy Paintings The Minister Godoy is leading a tour of famous paintings in the Art Academy of San Fernando, where Goya was the director. Goya is present and looks at the paintings silently. Godoy asks Goya his opinion of various Venuses and other paintings, and Goya praises the talents of the masters. Godoy quips that the court painter doesn't like to see talent greater than his own, but Goya replies that the comparisons do not bother him. Godoy moves onto one of the Goya's own paintings, and the camera slowly pans to show Goya's famous *Maja vestida*, with a reclining woman on a chaise. Godoy asks the group if they recognize the woman in the portrait. When no one guesses, he merely says that she is "made up." Godoy uses his mirrored instrument to move the light over the painting, which reveals the version of the portrait where the maja is nude. The visitors gasp in surprise, and some of the men warn Godoy that the Inquisition is looking for reasons to arrest people.



Middle-Aged Goya Rationalizes His Complicity Goya walks away from the group, and the old Goya (as narrator), explains that he was cowardly and wished he had stood up to Godoy earlier. The narrator explains that in order to avoid a scandal and the critique of the Inquisitors, Goya only painted noblemen and rich madrileños, and he was bored. Old Goya chides himself for making too many concessions and compromises, but the middle-aged Goya retorts that they were only small concessions—and it was worth it to remain court painter and director of the gallery. Old Goya emphasizes the hypocrisy of the Godoy years—the court pretended to be Frenchified and enlightened, but they were really ignorant and corrupt.



Middle-Aged Goya Feels Remorse for His Adultery There is an outdoor picnic scene with noble guests playing games on the lawn. Some swing under a canopy, while others toss the straw men. All of the women are dressed in white—even the duchess. Flocks of birds fly out of the trees. Josefa, Goya's wife, stares at the duchess from across the lawn. Josefa turns away, but then looks directly at the camera. There is a cut to a close-up of a 60ish Goya looking back at Josefa, then a close-up of the duchess. A group of women, including Josefa, turn to look directly at the camera, and we see Goya's reaction. There is a cut to Josefa running through the forest towards a pond. Two men are carrying a dead body out of the pond, and Josefa, watching from a gazebo on the shore, faints.



Old Goya Gets in Bed with Leocadia Old Goya checks on a sleeping Rosarito, then shuffles off to his own bedroom. He gets in bed with a sleeping Leocadia and strokes her back. She wakes up and asks what's wrong, and he replies that he's cold. She cuddles with him and caresses his face. He murmurs: "What would I do without you?"

Flashback 8: Young Goya Studies Velázquez's *Las Meninas* An unknown official (speaking Spanish with a strong Italian accent) escorts young Goya into an artistic studio. They look at Velázquez's famous painting *Las meninas*, which depicts the Hapsburg princesses with their attendants. The frame lies on the ground, yet young Goya studies it closely. He remarks that the princesses look real and the brushstrokes seem effortless. Goya also notices that Velazquez painted himself into the portrait. The Italian replies that Velazquez painted his reflection in a mirror, and that all painting has elements of doubling and reflection—a mirror within a mirror. The Italian leaves Goya to contemplate the painting. Young Goya's inner monologue becomes the narrator, and the narration explains yet again why this painting is so famous and remarkable. Young Goya approaches the painting, then turns to the right. There is a series of floor-length mirrors in a semi-circle, and Goya sees himself reflected several times at multiple angles (as in a fun-house).

Young and Old Goya Intersect in the Red Bedroom The narration of Young Goya continues to explain Goya's influences and philosophy, and he declares that he has three masters: Velázquez, Rembrandt, and nature itself. He begins to walk down a hallway which then becomes the wall of old Goya's red bedroom. Old Goya lies face up in bed as Young Goya approaches and enters the bedroom. Old Goya continues the musings on painterly technique and influences—but Old Goya emphasizes imagination. Then, Old Goya looks directly at his young self and begins to complain about the corruption of Spain in the nineteenth century. Young Goya reminds him that the liberals depended upon French Enlightenment as a model for Spain, but this model was too lofty for an uneducated Spanish public. Old Goya adds that France betrayed them by letting Napoleon invade.



Dream Painting Sequence: The 2nd and 3rd of May As Old Goya describes the Napoleonic invasion, the camera cuts to a moving tableau of war scenes from Goya's famous battle paintings—*El dos de mayo* and *El tres de mayo*. The sequence begins with a sunset orange backdrop, shadowy figures pushing a cart up a hill, and Napoleonic soldiers in uniform. As the camera pans across the "battlefield," the



silhouettes become lit and we see wounded Spanish soldiers and graves with heads sticking out of the mounds of dirt. We then see women mourning their dead husbands in a recreation of one of Goya's winter paintings. The peasants cry out and trek across the snow and mud while the wind blows against their faces. There are two close-ups of Old Goya's face as he remembers both the horrors of the invasion and his visual interpretation of the battles. The battle-painting reenactments continue (now lit in green) with the climax of the execution scenes—both the 2nd of May and other images from Goya's war paintings. The finale of the sequence is in blue with a pink painted backdrop—and snow falling and on the ground. The survivors pile dead soldiers' bodies in the snow and spread powder on top of the mass grave.

Old Goya Dies Old Goya lies in bed, wheezing, and contemplating his life. He asks himself “Who am I now?” as if to answer his own question, he raises his right hand and points his index finger towards the wall (this pointing is an obvious callback to the duchess pointing down at her shoes and the inscription “Only Goya” in the mourning portrait). Old Goya moves his finger around, which cast shadows on his face. He imagines scenes from his childhood, including the woods and an Aragonese village. There is a cut to a shot of spiral staircases from a low angle. We see Rosarito climbing the stairs hurriedly with her white skirt swaying. She enters the bedroom and rushes to Old Goya's bedside. He murmurs “Cayetana,” and Rosarito looks at where he is looking. The duchess's shadow slowly covers Goya in bed, and we see the outline of her mantilla headdress obscure Goya's face.



Child Labor in White After Old Goya Dies, there is one final flashback scene, or is it Goya's last imagined fantasy?: a white bedroom with white walls—and a large wooden crucifix behind the backboard. Two nurses stand over a woman in labor. The nurses hold up a swaddled, new-born baby. As one nurse moves to the side slightly, we see the face of the woman in labor—and she appears to be the Duchess of Alba. The screen fades to white with a single quote by Andre Malraux: “Modern painting begins after Goya.”



CHARACTER ANALYSIS

OLD GOYA

Old Goya is a mostly bedridden eighty-two-year-old at death's door. However, he is also the protagonist of the film, as it is mostly his perspective that drives the contemplation of his life and art. Old Goya is physically weak, yet he rebels against both death and tyranny. His last months allow him to contemplate his life.

Rebellious Although Old Goya knows that he will die soon, he continues to fight for more time with his loved ones and more time to create. He continues to draw, and he declares that he will live “99 more years.” In addition, Goya remains part of the liberal resistance and continues to rail against Fernando VII's tyranny—even from the bathtub.

Weak Old Goya is physically weak and mentally unstable. He cannot stand or walk very far, and he continues to suffer from headaches. When he is lost on the streets of Bourdeaux in an early scene, the implication is that Goya may also have dementia.

Contemplative Throughout the film, Goya is assessing his past and his legacy. He repents his mistreatment of Josefa and his complicity in Godoy's corruption. He also realizes how precious Leocadia and Rosarito are for this stage of his life. In addition, he reflects on his contributions to art.

YOUNG (OR MIDDLE-AGED) GOYA

In some respects, the younger Goya is a different character than his older counterpart; in other respects, he mirrors his older self. Younger Goya identifies himself as a painter and lover first, and he is passionate and ambitious about both his art and his affairs. His drive makes him successful and resilient, as well as selfish and a poor husband.

Passionate Young Goya has a lust for life, for art, for music, and for women. He gives himself over to his imagination to the point of madness, which, according to Old Goya, is the key to artistic genius. He is so obsessed with the duchess that he wants to possess her body and her image.

Resilient Even though Goya grew up in Segovia as a waiter, he claws his way up the social ladder and manages to prove himself enough to become court painter. He rides the political tide so that he can stay in positions of power. When he is on death's door at 45, he fights back, survives, and continues to paint despite his deafness.

Selfish Because of his passion and obsession, younger Goya neglects his first wife and children. He stays up all night painting and has multiple affairs. When Godoy worms his way into the court, Goya remains silent so that he can keep his position as director of the Art Academy.

ROSARITO

Rosarito is Goya and Leocadia's young teenage daughter (perhaps 13). She is an aspiring artist, but she spends most of her days caring for her ailing father. Like her father, Rosarito is persistent in her search for truth and is a sensitive and intuitive person.

Persistent Rosarito consistently cares for her father and persists in learning about his life and his art. She insists that he drink the tea and wear his robe, and she comes to find him when he wanders out into the street. When her father is not bedridden, she spies on him and his work, and she keeps asking him about the duchess until he agrees to tell his secrets.

Intuitive Rosarito is on a similar wavelength to her father. She can sense when he needs help, and she also can tell when he is being secretive. When Goya tries to teach her to hear internally, she quickly learns how to use her imagination.

THEMES

POLITICS

Intrigue It is obvious that Old Goya's politics are those of the liberals against the authoritarian rule of Fernando VII (1808-1833). Goya, Moratin, and the other senior intellectuals consider Fernando a usurper and a traitor to the enlightened principals and liberal constitution of 1812. In fact, Old Goya criticizes Fernando several times in the "present" timeline of Bourdeaux. However, the nods to Spanish liberalism do not constitute the heart of the political backdrop in the film. Instead, Saura creates suspense by alluding to the suspicious death of the Duchess of Alba and the corruption of the Spanish monarchy during Carlos IV's reign (1788-1808). Both the middle-aged and old Goya describe how the corrupt Minister Godoy not only seduced the queen María Luisa, but also stole money from the state and sabotaged Bourbon rule. Some historians suggest that Godoy conspired with Napoleon to get Carlos IV to abdicate. For this reason, Goya suspects that the duchess was assassinated as an enemy to Godoy and the queen. He also implies that she was a spy and used her noble connections against the royal family. Conversely, Old Goya criticizes his young self for being complicit in the corruption that paved the way for the Napoleonic invasion of Spain and Fernando VII's oppressive rule.

Illustrative Moment: Old Goya Explains His Assassination Theory to Rosarito

Goya explains that the duchess loved to take risks and was probably a spy, but the political scene was beginning to get more and more dangerous. There is a cut to the duchess in bed, gasping as if she is either having a nightmare or is in extreme pain. Rosarito guesses that someone poisoned the duchess. Goya describes the official line—that the duchess was ill and killed herself to avoid getting older and sicker. He tells Rosarito that all that was lies, and that the duchess and the queen were political enemies. Goya explains his theory: that the duchess had become an enemy of the queen María Luisa and the queen's lover, the Minister Godoy. While historians and the viewers don't know the cause of the duchess's death, Saura has created a narrative in which the noblewoman was caught up in the intrigue at court—which, by



all accounts, was well-documented. Even if the duchess had committed suicide or died in childbirth, the shadow of corruption hangs over the period and haunts Goya throughout the film.

RELATIONSHIP

Desire Because the film explores Goya's yearnings and psychology from his 30s to his 90s, his desire and ambition are palpable throughout. Young and middle-aged Goya passionately pursue their career goals of becoming court painter and the Director of the Academy of San Antonio, which is a remarkable feat considering that Goya did not have connections or a famous name (at least initially). Still, Goya's passion spurs him on to achieve all of his goals, and sometimes at the expense of his integrity. This desirous ambition also characterizes the queen María Luisa, Godoy, Rosario, and tangentially, Moratín. Almost all of the characters long for power, recognition, and artistic freedom. Often, the lust for power or freedom of expression is accompanied by sexual desire. Goya beds several women at court, and Godoy uses his affair with the queen to further his political ambitions. Goya's passion also spills into his desire for the duchess, which consumes him for several years. Along with being his muse, the duchess acts as both an object of art and as a sexual object. Despite her early death, Goya does manage to capture the duchess in body, image, and spirit—at least within Saura's interpretation of Goya's life. It is implied that the duchess may have born Goya's child after a long sexual relationship, and all of the portraits of the duchess live on in Goya's most famous paintings and lithographs. Ironically, the ghost of the duchess is the one who possesses old Goya in his last minutes—it is she who takes him to the other world.

Illustrative Moment: Middle-Aged Goya Paints, then Penetrates, the Nude Duchess

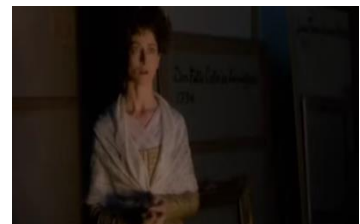
The duchess lies nude on a chaise lounge, facing away from middle-aged Goya. She turns her head to look at Goya and asks why he wants a portrait in the nude. Goya answers: "naked, we are equal before God." The duchess turns over, places a sheet over her torso, and looks directly at the artist. Goya abandons the painting and walks over to her. We see he doesn't have pants on, and he starts to mount her on the chaise. The duchess cries out in pain and calls him a brute. Goya pauses and caresses her face, saying that they belong to each other. The duchess teases that he actually is attracted to fat women with round bodies. Goya retorts that he loves her body, and he lists her "qualities." She laughs and kisses him. In this scene, Goya desires to capture, or possess, the duchess in a number of ways: as the subject of a classic nude, as his sexual partner, and as a foil to his own self. It could be this moment of possession that results in the duchess's doomed pregnancy.



Marriage While the Duchess of Alba remains Goya's lifelong obsession and incarnates the angel of death, she does not marry Goya. Instead, Goya marries Josefa as a young man and Leocadia as an old man. Goya's first marriage is not well fleshed out, but it is obvious that Goya neglects her and sleeps around constantly. He stays up all night painting, and even Josefa is well aware of the sexual tension between him and the duchess. Later, Goya himself recognizes his sinful behavior, both in his imagined flashbacks and explicitly admitting to Rosario that he was a bad husband to Josefa. With Leocadia, Goya has a far different dynamic. As an infirm and disabled old man, Leocadia takes care of and comforts her husband almost as if she were his mother, daughter, or nurse. Old Goya still has sexual urges, but he also recognizes how much Leocadia takes care of him. He repeats "what would I do without you?" several times. In this sense, Old Goya has learned to appreciate the sacrifices that his wives made for his art. The focus on adultery throughout the film indicates that Josefa is not the only victim of selfish desire. The duchess and the queen humiliate their husbands with their illicit affairs, although the cuckolds are not featured in the film. The implication is that no marriage can survive the political machinations and sexual affairs at court.

Illustrative Moment: Josefa Interrupts the Midnight Painting

There is a close-up of the Duchess of Alba's torso and face covered in her trademark black mantilla. We see young Goya seated in front of the canvas and studying the duchess. He asks her to turn to the left, and she does so—she looks directly at Goya with a frontal pose. Goya's wife, Josefa, interrupts the session and tells Goya that she is going to bed.



Josefa bids the duchess goodnight and looks at her suspiciously. When Josefa leaves, the duchess asks why Goya always paints at night, and he replies that the hues of the paint look more vibrant by candlelight. The duchess retorts that the viewer would also have to look at the paintings at night. The two playfully accuse each other of having little “love affairs.” Neither one denies their promiscuous reputation. While this scene emphasizes the burgeoning desire between Goya and the duchess, it also underscores the ways in which Goya ignores Josefa and neglects his marriage. They no longer sleep together literally or figuratively, and Goya cannot tear away his gaze or attention from his art or the subject before him. In this way, the duchess’s famous black mourning dress signals the death of the marriage.

Fatherhood While middle-aged Goya is a so-so husband at best, the Old Goya seems to be a dedicated father to Rosario. He tells her tales of his past, and he mentors and encourages her as an artist. In several scenes in *Bourdeaux*, old Goya takes Rosario with him on his errands, and she even witnesses the creation of his bullfighting lithograph. When he was more mobile, Goya comforted Rosario and puts her to bed when she had nightmares. Ironically, Rosario becomes a mother figure to Goya as his health and cognition decline—she is his primary caretaker. The relationship between Goya and Rosario becomes even more precious when we realize that the artist missed the opportunity to raise the child he fathered with the Duchess of Alba. Rosario carries his genetic line and has inherited his artistic talent. In real life, Goya had at least seven children with Josefa, including a first-born son, yet none of the children appear in the flashbacks. This omission could signal that Goya in the film regrets his neglect and considers Rosario to be his last chance to be a father.

Illustrative Moment: Old Goya Teaches 13-yr old Rosario and Comforts 8-Yr Old Rosario

Goya decides to teach Rosario how to “hear internally.” When she closes her eyes, Rosario reports that she hears a coach, galloping horses, and a crying baby. Goya tells her that those imagined noises are not the same as “deaf hearing,” which is as sinister as a mother losing a child or a stampede of 100 cattle. Goya exhorts her to expand her imagination so that she can reach the heights of heaven or the depths of hell. As old Goya and Rosario continue their meditation on “internal hearing” and imagination, both hear loud thunder and see bright lightning. The window flies open, and the camera cuts to a younger Rosario—perhaps 8—looking at the Old Goya working on a *Caprichos* sketch. Goya walks over to the window and closes it, then asks the younger Rosario why she is up in the middle of the night. When she doesn’t respond, he asks her to tell him about her nightmare. She describes how a vicious dog with knife-teeth chased her and tried to bite her. Goya comforts her by saying that there are no vicious dogs here. He takes her hand and walks her down the hallway. In this sequence, we see old Goya mentoring pubescent Rosario and taking young Rosario back to bed after her nightmare. Rather than ignoring her and continuing to paint, Goya decides to invest in his daughter and her artistic talent.



LIFE STAGES

Old Age / Death The entire thematic framing of the movie is that Old Goya is close to death; therefore, he must reconcile with his perception of himself, his legacy, his sins, and his current relationships to Leocadia, Rosario, and his friends. The flashbacks serve as a means of interpreting Goya’s life. In addition, Goya has gained the wisdom and perspective of age so that he may admit his sins and mistakes. He must also contend with the physical challenges of old age: deafness, headaches, dementia, and stiffness / immobility. Because of his artistic and fierce spirit, Goya absorbs all of these aspects of aging through imagination and his painterly eye. Even his fits of pain and dementia begin with one of his paintings coming to life in a disturbing fashion, and the flashbacks occur when the bedroom changes color as if it were soaked in paint. In addition, Goya’s perception of death is the young Duchess of Alba in the black mourning dress, which is captured not only in Goya’s memory, but in one of his most famous paintings. Although death wins out in the end—the shadow takes his last breath—Goya has managed to win several battles against death throughout his life. He should have died at 45 with the respiratory disease, but he carries on for decades with deafness and headaches, and he even taunts death with the demonic images of his *Caprichos*. Goya also secures immortality through his multiple

children and through the iconic images he created throughout his life. In this sense, death possesses Goya's body, but his legacy never dies.

Illustrative Moment: Old Goya Has a Mental and Physical Episode

We see Goya mixing shades of black and brown paint, then applying them to a figure's mouth. Suddenly, Goya screams in agony and grabs his head. His hat with candles flies off, and Goya sits down, still shouting and holding his head. When he lifts his head, he looks at the famous painting *Saturn Devouring his Son*, and he sees real blood dripping from the deity's mouth. He stares at the painting in horror. A swirl of faces wearing distorted marks crowd around him, and the room starts spinning. Then, the ghost version of the Duchess of Alba appears in blue and slowly walks backward.



Several other figures enter the studio, and the lights turn blue. The ceiling turns into a billowing sheet, and the figures move about as though they are drowning in an ocean. This is the last scene where Old Goya is mobile and able to stand long enough to paint. There are the physical pain and mental confusion of the spell—the tangible effects of old age and illness, and there are also the imagined images of death and violence in Goya's paintings. Stitching everything together is the angel of death in the form of the duchess and the saturated blue colors.

PAST

Memory Because Old Goya is the protagonist of the film, we see the interpretation of his own life through his memories. The flashbacks offer key insights into Goya's past—each scene captures a significant moment in the artist's life or career. The memories also serve to incite Goya's self-reflection (see ARTISTIC FRAME below). He is constantly looking at himself and his art as a means of evaluating each one. Goya also considers his place in court politics and his final actions as a rebellious expat. In this sense, Goya's political memories create a timeline for the trajectory of the Bourbon kings and their policies, from the Enlightened Carlos III to the authoritarian Fernando VII. In addition, memory feeds Goya's obsession with the Duchess of Alba and allows him to recreate her ad infinitum. Even in his last days, Old Goya sketches a nude of the duchess by memory. In this sense, Goya's memories provide the scaffolding for Saura's story-telling. On the other hand, Old Goya's memories are not necessarily true or reliable, as he often conflates "real" events with his most famous paintings and the force of his imagination. Moreover, Saura establishes early on that old Goya may have some dementia and brain damage from his severe illness, so we as audience know that some of the sequences will be distorted or the nightmares of the fever dream. Nonetheless, Old Goya's memories still create the artist's emotional truth and a backdrop for the cultural and political memory of Spain as a modern nation-state.

Illustrative Moment: Middle-Aged Goya Rationalizes His Complicity

Goya walks away from the group, and the Old Goya (as narrator), explains that he was cowardly and wished he had stood up to Godoy earlier. The narrator explains that in order to avoid a scandal and the critique of the Inquisitors, Goya only painted noblemen and rich madrileños, and he was bored. Old Goya chides himself for making too many concessions and compromises, but the middle-aged Goya retorts that they were only small concessions—and it was worth it to remain court painter and director of the gallery. Old Goya emphasizes the hypocrisy of the Godoy years—the court pretended to be Frenchified and enlightened, but they were really ignorant and corrupt. This moment illustrates how Goya's memories of his career—in this case, directing the Academy—conflated with the machinations of the corrupt Minister Godoy. Old Goya remembers a very specific moment of Godoy's tour of the painting gallery, which is then followed by Old Goya reflecting on that period of his life.



APPEARANCE

Artistic Frame and the Gaze Saura masterfully uses set design, color, costumes and props not only to recreated Goya's famous paintings and lithographs, but also to signal transitions and evoke certain emotions in the viewer. The visual landscape of the film is remarkably complex and impossible to describe completely, so I advise multiple viewings. The artistic frame appears in several forms throughout the film—sometimes in a natural, realist setting, sometimes in tableaus and paintings “coming to life,” and other times in a surrealist context of Goya's imagination. There are moments when the characters look directly at a real painting or lithograph, in a realistic artistic context—such as the many times Goya looks at his own work and other masters in his studio or the San Antonio Art Gallery. In addition, there is the surrealist “gallery” of hanging Caprichos images that Old and Middle-Aged Goya contemplate simultaneously. Sometimes Saura creates images of the paintings “in process”—the images start with shadowy figures in front of a painted backdrop, then slowly come to life. Near the end of the film, there is a series of tableaus in motion that create a live-action montage of Goya's “war” paintings. In this sense, each artistic sequence is uniquely framed for the emotional moment and storytelling of a particular scene. Often, Goya is literally looking at an artwork. Other times, he is looking at it through his dementia filter, or looking at it through his mind's eye. We see this complexity through Goya's lustful gaze (and lustful memory) of the Duchess of Alba. Goya looks at her about every five minutes of the film, and in every context—at the park, at the palace, as the angel of death, and of course, as his model-muse-lover (both naked and clothed). The duchess is omnipresent and always the subject of the gaze.

Illustrative Moment: Young Goya Studies (Looks at) Las Meninas and Himself

Goya looks at Velázquez's famous painting *Las meninas* (1656), which depicts the Hapsburg princesses (Felipe IV's daughters) with their attendants. The frame lies on the ground, yet young Goya studies it closely. Goya also notices that Velazquez painted himself into the portrait. The Italian replies that Velazquez painted his reflection in a mirror, and that all painting has elements of doubling and reflection—a mirror within a mirror. Young Goya approaches the painting, then turns to the right. There is a series of floor-length mirrors in a semi-circle, and Goya sees himself reflected several times at multiple angles (as in a fun-house). This scene “reflects” the highly reflective processes involved with painting. Goya is literally looking at a famous painting, but he is also literally and figuratively looking at himself—he is trying to find how he can use the masters such as Velázquez to create his own style. Saura also employs the cinematic and painterly trope of the mirror, which stretches back to the Renaissance masters and is frequently used in film.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How is Goya portrayed throughout the film? Does he find redemption before death?
2. The flashbacks are not always in chronological order. What is the effect of time and the distorted timeline in the film?
3. Why is the Duchess of Alba the angel of death?
4. What is the effect and symbolism of colors? How does music (especially the “Quintet” theme) enhance the tone and themes of the film?
5. Which works of Goya are featured in the film, and of which of his artistic periods?
6. How is the artistic process represented?
7. How do Goya's artworks reflect his emotional and physical state (or age)?