

GOYA'S *CAPRICHOS*, THE CHURCH, THE INQUISITION, WITCHCRAFT, AND ABJECTION

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In recent decades, academic commentary on Francisco de Goya's *Caprichos* has tended to fall into two distinct camps: that which interprets the significance of the set of 80 engravings in its entirety as a manifestation of enlightened satire; and that which perceives the images as representing Spanish society in 1799, and humanity in general, as fundamentally irrational and plagued by irreconcilable conflict between reasoned, socially cooperative behavior, and violent, transgressive, antisocial, nihilistic actions.¹ One source of the ambiguity that lends itself to such different interpretations is suggested by the contrast between the purported intent of the plates, as indicated in their initial advertisement of sale, and the contents of the engravings themselves. The advertisement emphasizes the censure of civil errors, vice, fraud, and ignorance.² It implies a reformist attitude, and optimism regarding the human capacity to be reasonable and empirical, behave with moderation with respect to carnal appetites, and promote educational reform, justice and social equality—all themes addressed in some of the images. However,

1. Some critics who place the *Caprichos* firmly in the line of enlightened satire are: Glendinning (*Arte, Ideología* 43, and “El arte” 49); Alcalá Flecha (*Literatura* 19); Sayre (c); and López-Rey (83). Others who aver that the over-arching significance of the set is to emphasize that human irrationality, violence and anti-social tendencies outweigh enlightened, reformist attitudes are: Schulz (156); Hofmann (74); Licht (133); and Stoichita and Coderch (191). Bozal views the *Caprichos* as a transitional set, between the Enlightenment and a modern sense of alienation expressed by means of grotesque imagery (136), as does Helman (91).

2. The advertisement, published in the *Diario de Madrid*, February 6, 1799, states: “Persuadido el autor de que la censura de los errores y vicios humanos (aunque parece peculiar de la elocuencia y la poesía) puede también ser objeto de la pintura, ha escogido como asuntos proporcionados para su obra, entre la multitud de extravagancias y desaciertos que son comunes en toda sociedad civil, y entre las preocupaciones y embustes vulgares, autorizados por la costumbre, la ignorancia o el interés, aquellos que ha creído más aptos a suministrar materia para el ridículo, y ejercitar al mismo tiempo la fantasía del artífice” (Helman, Appendix II-1a, p. 21). To eliminate a minor distraction, I have modernized the spelling in this quote, as I do for the *Capricho* captions discussed below.

the engravings as a whole focus on humanity's darker side, its foibles, shortcomings and aberrant actions and beliefs; motifs which tend to give substance to a pessimistic vision of human interaction. Particularly ominous in this regard are the 29 plates representing witchcraft, which comprise 36% of the engravings as a whole.³ These etchings may be interpreted as enlightened satire of popular superstition, but they also suggest fascination with monsters, mayhem and depravity which some viewers interpret, in the context of reiteration, as essential human characteristics that outweigh any enlightened, satirical intent. In this study I argue that the witchcraft images are indeed consistent with the enlightened, reformist message of the set as a whole, and that their satirical purpose moves beyond criticizing popular superstition to denounce the Catholic Church as an institutional source for superstitious beliefs. This becomes evident in an analysis of the iconography of the witchcraft engravings, in the context of other prints dealing with the Church, particularly when the images are interpreted using as an analytical tool concepts related to abjection.

One of the primary forms of criticism of the Church is comprised of the 15 plates—19% of the set as a whole—satirizing the misbehavior of clerics.⁴ Most of these critiques are of clerical immorality, and as such, as Glendinning notes, they have precedents that pre-date the Enlightenment, although that does not preclude their contribution to the latter's reform impetus (*Arte, Ideología* 43). Goya satirizes gluttony (13, *Están calientes*), excessive drinking (49, *Duendecitos*, and 79, *Nadie nos ha visto*), indolence (80, *Ya era hora*), avarice (30, *¿Por qué esconderlos?*), and licentiousness, including various types of sexual transgression (8, *¡Que se la llevaron!*, 54, *El vergonzoso*, 58, *Trágala perro*, 74, *No grites, tonta*). Sometimes more than one form of clerical immorality is simultaneously depicted, as in 13, *Están calientes*, since the title denotes the hot food the friars are about to consume, while also

3. I place all of the images related to magic under the rubric witchcraft, including those depicting goblins: 12, *A caza de dientes*; 23, *Aquellos polvos*; 24 *No hubo remedio*; 43, *El sueño de la razón produce monstruos*; 44 *Hilan delgado*; 45, *Mucho hay que chupar*; 46, *Corrección*; 47 *Obsequio al maestro*; 48, *Soplones*; 49, *Duendecitos*; 51, *¿Se repulen?*; 52, *¡Lo que puede un sastre!*; 58, *Trágala perro*; 59, *¡Y aun no se van!*; 60, *Ensayos*; 61, *Volaverunt*; 62, *¡Quién lo creyera!*; 64 *Buen viaje*; 65, *¿Dónde va mamá?*; 66 *Allá va eso*; 67, *Aguarda que te unten*; 68, *Linda maestra*; 69, *Sopla*; 70, *Devota profesión*; 71, *Si amanece, nos vamos*; 72, *No te escaparás*; 74, *No grites, tonta*; 78, *Despacha, que despiertan*; 80, *Ya es hora*.

4. The relevant engravings are: 8, *¡Que se la llevaron!*; 13, *Están calientes*; 23 *Aquellos polvos*; 30, *¿Por qué esconderlos?*; 48, *Soplones*; 49, *Duendecitos*; 52, *¡Lo que puede un sastre!*; 53, *¡Qué pico de oro!*; 54 *El vergonzoso*; 58, *Trágala perro*; 70, *Devota profesión*; 74, *No grites, tonta*; 78, *Despacha, que despiertan*; 79, *Nadie nos ha visto*, 80, *Ya es hora*.

suggesting the connotative meaning ‘they are aroused.’⁵ The latter corresponds to the gaping mouths of two of the figures, and the laughter–conveying physical excitement in context–of the other two.⁶ In all of the images listed here, monkish robes are the primary identifier of the social subject of satire, but the beings wearing them do not always appear fully human, which is one way that the prints express their satirical intent. Several of the engravings (49, 74, 78, 80) depict clerics as “duendes”, that is, goblins or imps. Alcalá Flecha observes that duende was a common vernacular term for monks in Goya’s time (*Literatura* 39), so the implications of the visual allusion would have been quite evident to the *Caprichos*’ contemporary viewers.⁷ On the other hand, using this iconographic metaphor may also be understood as a means of making the engravings’ critical message less visually explicit, and therefore less a source for indignant, and possibly censorious, reaction from the clergy, but the metaphor has three additional implications that require analysis. First, it conveys a metonymic link between clerics and superstition, in this case between monks, and magical beings associated with mischievous and, or, malignant, immoral, and sexual magical forces. Second, clerics transformed into spirits suggest a displacement that in turn may be understood as a form of scapegoating; that is, the conceit implied is that ‘the clergy is not

5. Or, as the *Diccionario de la lengua castellana compuesto por la Real Academia Española* of 1803 puts it, it means “estar en zelo” (158).

6. It is likely Goya had this idea in mind, if one considers a precursor sketch for the final aquatint. This previous ink drawing, number 423 of the Madrid Album of drawings from 1796 and 1797, shows the same three figures, with the noticeable difference that the foregrounded priest on the left has a large, long, sausage-shaped nose with a knobby end, supported by a fork as he opens his mouth to eat (Gassier 174). Hunger here is obviously a metaphor for unbridled sexual desire about to be satisfied. In another preparatory drawing, the background figure carries a human head on the food tray, suggesting that clerical appetite was not only a matter of lasciviousness and gluttony, but also a matter of exploitation, a cannibalistic devouring of the Spanish populace itself that supported the Church (Gassier 177, Sueño 25, with the title *De unos hombres que se nos comían*).

7. See Andioc for an extensive, and authoritative, analysis of the contemporary manuscript commentaries—those not written on the plates themselves—, as well as for the latter, in terms of the chronology of the multiple variations (“Al margen de los *Caprichos*. Las ‘explicaciones manuscritas,’” in *Goya: letra y figuras*, 197-256). The Biblioteca Nacional text (BN) and the Ayala text (A), in their comments on plate 49, *Duendecitos*, identify “curas y frailes” as the “verdaderos duendes” (in BN), or “verdaderos duendecitos” (in A) “de este mundo” (Bla 266). The BN and A texts make additional references to frailes as duendes in plates 74, *No grites, tonta*, and 78, *Despacha, que despiertan*, and to bishops and canons as duendes in 80, *Ya es hora*.

responsible for the transgressions depicted, it was dark magic.' In the case of duendes, these implications may be interpreted as a mild sort of irony, but the same reasoning is expressed much more forcefully, as I argue below, in the witchcraft engravings. Third, the substitution of goblins for people is a form of dehumanization that conveys abjection; a concept I will now discuss in some detail, before proceeding to apply it to some examples.

The formulation of abjection that I summarize here comes primarily from Julia Kristeva's *The Powers of Horror*. Kristeva presents abjection as a phenomenon of liminality, caused by ambivalence and confusion between the boundaries of the self and the other. It stems from a universal uterine state of unity with the mother which is lost as the individual infant develops a sense of self. On a profound, unconscious level, in Freudian terms, the developing individual must repress desire for maternal unity, including its manifestation as incestuous sexual desire, while also learning to define and clearly maintain distinctions of self and otherness in various domains, such as the limits of the body, the exclusion of bodily waste, and the formulation of the autonomy of self vis-a-vis that of others with whom the infant self relates. The repression of infantile maternal desire and the drive to recover the lost prenatal and neonatal sense of boundless unity and completeness is not absolute, and signs of repressed urges can return. One example is the Freudian phenomenon of unheimlich—strangeness, in which something or someone is hauntingly and fascinatingly familiar, yet simultaneously foreign and disturbing, because the self is apprehending the eerie manifestation of something desired but excluded from conscious recognition (Freud 225-26). Abjection is similar, in that it refers to the porous, unstable differentiation between subject and object—in the abject—which combines a sense of powerful, primal desire conjoined with, but also in conflict with, an equally strong sense of revulsion and psychological prohibition. This sense of unresolved contradiction is a source of ambiguity, ambivalence and fascination, more pronounced when the abject source evokes the desires and social prohibitions fundamental to infantile development.⁸ Abjection is universal, although its formulation varies according to the strictures of

8. Kristeva discusses the concepts presented here in her chapter "Approaching Abjection" (1-31). Here is a good summary of the key ideas: "We may call it [abjection] a border; abjection is above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it—on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger. But also because abjection itself is a composite of judgement and affect, of condemnation and yearning, of signs and drives. Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be—maintaining that night in which the outline of the signified thing vanishes and where only the imponderable affect is carried out" (10).

given cultures and social practices, and its fundamental nature of ambiguous contradiction combining attraction and repulsion can be much attenuated yet still evocative. In fact, while Fredric Bogle does not refer specifically to abjection, he articulates its defining qualities, in the form of a double structure, as the universal basis of satire: the evocation of something—in a sense affirming it by recognizing sameness—combined with its critique or rejection at another, contradictory level, as a result of a threatening proximity between subject and object, and the psychological and social need to establish mechanisms of difference (41-42). Bogle's interpretation of satire is informed in part by Mary Douglas' anthropological study *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*, as is Kristeva's application of abjection to social institutions. Douglas has analyzed how the integrity of the self is determined in relation to definitions of the purity, or internal consistency, of the social institution, which excludes otherness to reenforce its own stability. The confusion, or mixing, of aspects of the social subject with otherness constitutes pollution, defilement of the social body, and to avoid this, social institutions formulate and maintain cleansing and exclusion practices of prohibition and censure. Such practices are particularly important in religious institutions; a point which Douglas examines in terms of purity and danger in primitive cultures, and Kristeva explores with regards to the exclusion of abjection in the Judeo-Christian tradition.⁹

The question of how abjection is represented in relation to the ideology of religious institutions is also fundamental to understanding Goya's *Caprichos* dealing with the Catholic Church, the Inquisition, and witchcraft.¹⁰

9. Kristeva cites Douglas several times in her first chapter on abjection and religious prohibition, "From Filth to Defilement," (56-89). She also observes the following, in a comment that I think would place the *Caprichos* on the 'far side': "The various means of purifying the abject—the various catharses—make up the history of religions, and end up with that catharsis par excellence called art, both on the far and near side of religion" (17).

10. In *Goya's Caprichos. Aesthetics, Perceptions, and the Body*, Schulz focuses on the dehumanized, grotesque imagery in the etchings taken as a whole as a critical response to lack of possibilities of progress towards the Enlightenment, expressed in the emphasis on somatic function, distorted, anti-neoclassic bodies and unreasonable actions, combined with a failure of vision and sensory perception to reasonably illuminate understanding. However, Schultz also notes "that it is the semantic indeterminacy of *Los Caprichos* that accounts for the continuous fascination of two centuries of viewers, as well as the shifting and often contradictory interpretations to which the prints have been subjected" (193). At the heart of this semantic indeterminacy, I believe, are the contradictory, simultaneously attractive and repellent, elements of abjection.

A case in point is plate 49, *Duendecitos*, in which the attractive component of abjection, that is, the elements in the image associated with the unity of the self and the integrity of the social body, are conveyed by the clerical attire. Monks' habits ideally signify humility, the renunciation of worldly attributes (habits), and spiritual devotion. Distinct from the two lateral friars, the central figure wears a priest's somewhat more elegant cassock, buckled shoes and bonnet, with his clothing suggesting the material substance of the Church and clergy as the social manifestation and affirmation of its spiritual finery. While depictions of friars are more common than the presence of priests in the *Caprichos* as a whole, the satire here of monastic representatives united with a liturgy-oriented priest suggests that Goya's criticisms of the monks extends to the clergy at large. Abjection is present in the engraving in the contrast between the virtues ideally associated with the clergy, and the dehumanized features of the clerics, combined with the implications of their actions. The two flanking friars have disproportionately large hands, mouths, lips, noses, and ears, yet are recognizable as human, all of which, joined with the fact that the left figure is eating and drinking, and the other two are drinking, imply excess physical indulgence, via the iconography of exaggerated size of sensorial appendages and orifices as a metaphor for exaggerated appetite. In terms of abjection, disproportion suggests confusing the boundaries between the moderate self, the disciplined religious subject of abstinence, in conflict with, but also united with, the domain of carnal desires and transgressive behavior. The central figure, symbolically the most important, the priest, is also the most deformed and dehumanized. His gaping mouth sports predatory fangs, echoed by the claw-like nature of his fingers and nails.¹¹ His disproportionately large right hand extended as if to grasp something, which forms the visual center of the engraving, combined with his direct gaze towards the viewer, communicates that the source of the physical indulgence and pleasure of these clerics is their rapacious hold on the Spanish populace itself.¹² In sum, iconic suggestions of spiritual devotion

11. As noted, abjection can express a metonymic association of transgressive desire, such as that between gluttony and sexual activity. Regarding the frequent dehumanization of *Capricho* protagonists represented as animals, or humans with some animal features, Kristeva's observation is germane: "The abject confronts us, on the one hand, with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of *animal*. Thus, by way of abjection, primitive societies have marked out a precise area of their culture in order to remove it from the threatening world of animals or animalism, which were imagined as representatives of sex and murder" (12-13, author's italics).

12. Alcalá Flecha also comments on the "bonete sacerdotal" identifying the central figure as a priest, and notes the interpretation of the image offered by the BN textual commentaries: "Los verdaderos duendes de este mundo son los curas y

are mixed with degradation and defilement of the idealized, sublimated body, along with animalistic predation, to convey abjection as a clerical quality; an inappropriate mixing of behaviors and attributes. The ambiguity of the engraving's title is consistent, since the familiarity of the diminutive suffix "itos" in *Duendecitos* signifies acceptance or affection, as for children, friends, relatives, and social subordinates, and also implies something figuratively or literally small and inoffensive; this is the attractive, 'subject' side of abjection. In contrast, duende-goblin-means something inhuman, the object or other in abjection, as well as alluding, as noted, to an association of superstitious belief in magic and the Church.

The *Caprichos*' critique of Catholic institutional practices is not limited to clerical carnal excess and immorality; it also expresses concern with the deleterious effects of religious instruction and dogma.¹³ In plate 53, *¡Qué pico de oro!*, a group of friars, mouths open in expressions of wonderment, gaze raptly upward towards a pulpit, or podium, where a parrot stands, beak open, addressing them, while raising one clawed foot in an instructive gesture. Helman has explored the close relationship of this image with the treatment of unthinking, nonsensical sermons in Padre Isla's *Fray Gerundio de Campazas* (77-79).¹⁴ With or without this antecedent in mind, it is significant to note that institutional authority is conveyed not only by the superior position of the parrot and the deference of the monks, but also by

frailes, que comen y beben a costa nuestra. La Iglesia o el clero tiene el diente afilado y la mano derecha monstruosa y larga para agarrar..." (*Literatura* 66).

13. Hughes cautions against assuming that Goya's satirical critique of clerics' foibles and of ecclesiastic institutional oppression and corruption means that Goya was either an agnostic or an atheist. In fact, Hughes affirms that Goya was indubitably a Catholic, "though a Catholic without priests, perhaps even without the custom of going to Mass. There is no record of his doing so, and when he died in Bordeaux, there was no priest summoned to his bedside, no confession, no last Communion" (157). Let Hughes' cautionary remarks serve in this essay to focus attention on Goya's satirical intent without unsubstantiated assumptions about his religiosity.

14. The Prado textual commentary describes the audience depicted in this image as a "junta académica," while the BN text identifies its members as "frailes" (Blas 282). Authorship is unknown for all four early commentaries consulted for this study (P, BN, A, CN; corresponding to Prado, Biblioteca Nacional, Ayala, and Calcografía Nacional, with source notes in Blas, 58, 64), and may not coincide with Goya's artistic intent, which in turn need not coincide with how his contemporary and subsequent viewers interpret the image. In addition, the commentaries, particularly the Prado one, in which Goya may have participated more directly than in the others, may at times have the purpose of misdirection, in order to diffuse the critical import of the image. Helman believes that to be the case in this instance (79).

the vigilant gaze of a figure watching the friars instead of looking at the bird like the rest of the audience, and, as in *Duendecitos*, wearing a cap in contrast to the hatless monks, again as a symbol of hierarchical ascendance. The implication is that this is not merely a case of the humble brethren fooled by one of their own, rather, this is an institutionally ratified practice approved by the Church hierarchy as well. In this engraving abjection is again articulated in the combination of monkish attire with dehumanization, and, as in *Duendecitos*, the latter quality is given preponderant, satirical importance by making it visually central and elevated in comparison to the monks. Striking as well is the symbolism of chiaroscuro, in which the light is not realistically ascribed to a single source, but rather seems to emanate from the parrot and the monks, while the deep, inky darkness, achieved through Goya's use of aquatint, predominates in the space above and around them. While the balance of light and dark in the image is roughly comparable, as if to suggest a universal struggle between spiritual and mental illumination and obscurantism, the positive move towards the sublime in the ascendent, triangular configuration of the light is rendered abject by the dehumanization—the parrot—at its apex, reenforced by the institutional vigilance, symbolically grey, and the dark pulpit of unenlightened discourse.



Plate 52, *¡Lo que puede un sastre!* is closely linked in theme and iconographic symbolism with the subsequent engraving, 53, *¡Qué pico de oro!* In plate 52, a woman kneels in rapt deference before an enormous tree dressed in a monk's robe, while other people in the background also convey devotion and awe via clasped hands raised in prayer, attentive gazes upward, mouths agape, etc. Both engravings convey the audience's susceptibility—that of monks and the clergy as a whole in 53, and that of the populace in 52—to an unthinking discourse, or merely the appearance of a discourse, legitimated by the trappings of the Church. The preponderance of women in the audience of plate 52 suggest they are particularly susceptible—according to an enlightened perspective due to their lack of education and their subordinate social roles—to the effects on the populace of unreasonable ecclesiastic ideology. These effects are symbolically present in the engraving's witchcraft imagery, that is, in the figures flying in the background behind the pontificating tree. On the right, is a naked witch—the outline of breasts and female hips determines the gender—astride a flying owl. On the left, is a group of three nude figures flying in a crouched position. The two figures nearer the foreground are dehumanized, with

pointed, animal ears, and the figure sketched in the most detail has a head not unlike that of the duende in *Duendecitos*, with a predatory aspect. It is possible to interpret the witchcraft in this engraving, along with the public's reverence for the tree dressed in a robe, or merely a sheet that resembles a monk's habit, as a critique of popular superstition without the implication that the Church is responsible for promoting credulity regarding such things.¹⁵ Yet the parallel nature of the two contiguous images *¡Lo que puede un sastre!* and *¡Qué pico de oro!*, which use the same hyperbolic irony in the title, and the same iconographic form of a devotional, religious triangle in which the expectation for a sublime angle at its apex is rendered abject by dehumanizing the clerical agency situated at the symbolic high-point and center, argue otherwise.¹⁶ The link between superstitious belief and religious institutional practice in *¡Lo que puede un sastre!* is present in two levels of abjection. The first is Goya's satirical use of abjection, by combining an icon of reverence—the monk's habit and the physical disposition as if blessing devotees—with its embodiment as dehumanized other—the tree. The second level of abjection is the representation of that which the Church simultaneously promotes and excludes to maintain its own institutional stability. For the Church, the supernatural is positive if it is miraculous, divine or saintly, and negative if it is pagan, Satanic, or apocryphal. Desire is good if it is sublimated as religious fervor, spirituality, and a quest for unity with the divine, but opprobrious if it is expressed as unsanctioned sexuality, outside of marital procreation. Nevertheless, the supernatural, and powerful desire, are on both sides of the opposition, in a sense inviting ambivalence

15. Hughes comments on Goya's four witchcraft paintings for the Duke and Duchess of Osuna as part of a European "taste for ruins, hauntings, diabolic transactions, and magic" that "spread quite rapidly to the sophisticates of Goya's set" (151). He characterizes this taste as a manifestation of a titillating, campy subject, one that offered "a certain *frisson* to the enlightened mind, even if only as emblems of superstition you had transcended" (Ibid). This makes good sense to me, although I would add that such a taste may well have also been a covert way of mocking not just popular superstition, but also the Church held responsible for it.

16. Several scholars have noted the importance of the quintessential Enlightenment weekly journal, *El Censor* (1781-87)—itself subject to periodic closure due to Inquisitorial censorship, as a possible influence, and certainly a source of similar Enlightened attitudes to those of the *Caprichos* regarding the Catholic Church and superstition (Williams 52, Helman 73, Alcalá Flecha, *Literatura* 28, Glendinning, "El arte" 20). *El Censor* inveighed against witches in its essays (see *Discurso* 118, p. 529), and ran a series of parodies on superstitious beliefs encouraged by the Church, (*Discursos* 146-48), mocking the "infinitos absurdos que contienen" religious publications for the masses (678), which propagate "creencias... supersticiosas [que son] unos negros y disformes lunares que afean el bello rostro de la religión santa" (679).

and instability. As Kristeva observes with regards to Biblical concern with demoniacal force, “what is the demoniacal—an inescapable, repulsive, and yet nurtured abomination? The fantasy of an archaic force, on the near side of separation, unconscious, tempting us to the point of losing our differences [...]?” (107). In the engraving, the witchcraft embodies the Church’s other, represented as perverse sexuality and the pagan supernatural. The attractive component in this manifestation of abjection, that which evokes the self’s and the social institution’s repressed desire, is symbolized by the sublime implications of flight: powerful, ascendent, transcendent, heavenly. This is combined with sexuality as a human attribute, potentially universally attractive, although mediated and sublimated by social conditioning. In the engraving, sexuality is suggested by the uniform nudity of the four flying figures. The prohibition side of abjection, its otherness, is conveyed by the close physical proximity of the three grouped flying figures, their lack of gender specificity, and their animal features, implying in conjunction a dehumanizing sexual free-for-all that could be both hetero and homosexual. The witch on the right also represents perverse sexuality, with the owl’s head she straddles metaphorically standing in for both genitals and behavior. Sayre has noted that the word *buhu* was popular slang for prostitute (ci), and Alcalá Flecha adds that the nocturnal avian predator was also associated with ignorance, error and superstition (“El Andrógino” 153). By configuring *¡Lo que puede un sastrero!* to suggest that the witchcraft in the air above the heads of the revered figure and the populace is the content of the sermonizing scene that is staged, Goya’s critique proposes that the Church is encouraging, and perhaps even creating, abjection, by promoting superstition in lieu of reasonable skepticism regarding witchcraft, and in consequence the religious institution itself is abject in the context of the Enlightenment.

The critique of the Church for promoting superstition, deployed as a form of abjection configured by its own practices to cultivate institutional stability, is also present in the two *Caprichos* specifically dealing with the Church’s orthodoxy enforcement agency, the Inquisition. Alcalá Flecha has commented that, for the enlightened in Spain, the Inquisition at the end of the eighteenth century “venía a simbolizar la quintaesencia de un país fanático y oscurantista; una institución abominable que impedía a través de una censura arbitraria la difusión de las luces que podían hacer de España una nación progresista y moderna” (*Literatura* 256).¹⁷ Plate 23, *Aquellos*

17. The Spanish Inquisition at the end of the 18th century was not what it had been roughly two hundred years before, at the beginning of the 17th. See Alcalá Flecha, *Literatura*, pp. 255-313, for a substantial treatment of the Inquisition in Goya’s time and its relationship to multiple images in his art as a whole. Still, in 1781 it had burned in an auto de fe a woman accused of being a witch, causing abortions, and laying eggs with prophetic designs on them (Hughes 202). Likewise, its prosecution

polvos, shows a woman wearing the identifying *coroza* (conical hat) and *sambenito* (vest, often with text on it referring to the accused's crime) on a raised *dias*. Below, a crowd of monks watch her, above and in the background, the court secretary reads the sentence. The abject tendency to evoke an ambivalent or distorted element of the sublime is suggested by the woman's central, raised position, her illumination in comparison to the other figures, and her attractive features, in profile, emphasizing a petite, well-shaped ear and facial features, and a tiny, elegant, pointed shoe just showing under her long skirt. The negative side of abjection, its otherness, is depicted in part in the dehumanized features of the court secretary, whose elongated ear and rather feline face contrasts with that of the victim.

of the prominent *ilustrado* Pablo de Olavide took place in 1778 (Tomlinson, *Goya in the Twilight* 18). Both events could still easily be kept in mind by *ilustrados* twenty years later, at the end of the century. Moreover, the Inquisition was revitalized as an anti-*ilustrado* institution under Charles IV, after the French revolution of 1789 (Ibid.). In the decade leading up to the publication of the *Caprichos*, several efforts were made to limit inquisitorial power, in 1794, in 1797, when Juan Antonio Llorente produced his report on the Inquisition for the "Inquisidor General" Abad y la Sierra, and again in 1797, when Jovellanos revived the project to "desterrar los abusos y las ilegalidades" of the Inquisition (Glendinning, "El arte" 49, citing Villanueva 94-95, and Llorente 33-34). However, Jovellanos was dismissed as minister in charge of religious affairs in 1798, in large part due to his reform attempts (Herr 420). Without Jovellanos' support, with Godoy in disfavor between 1798 and 1800, and with the illness of Francisco Saavedra in 1798, as Glendinning comments, "ya habría posibilidad de oposición oficial" which intensified with the *Caprichos*' publication in 1799, "puesto que bastante gente la juzgaba subversiva" ("El arte" 49). After selling only 27 sets of a costly, laborious project that produced 300 sets of 80 engravings, Goya withdrew them from public sale, after only 2 days, he maintained in 1803, although Glendinning asserts that, based on the publication of the sale notice, 4 weeks was a more likely period ("El arte" 53). Scholars since then have speculated that he did so to avoid inquisitorial prosecution (Helman 51, Carrete 14), although Tomlinson cautions against this assumption, suggesting that economic remuneration in the form of a pension for his son, which he obtained from Charles IV by turning the *Caprichos* over to the Royal Calcography may have been the primary or even the exclusive motive ("Goya and the Censors" 125-27). Glendinning indicates that, in 1811, Antonio Puig Blanch claimed that the *Caprichos* had been denounced to the Inquisition ("El arte" 50, citing Puig Blanch 441-42, note 3). Many scholars have also noted Goya's own remarks, when it was suggested to the artist that he publish the *Caprichos* in 1825, and he wrote that he could not, after turning the plates over to the king, commenting that "con todo eso me acusaron a la Santa [Inquisición]" (Carrete 14, Tomlinson 167, Alcalá Flecha *Literatura* 320, note 185, the latter citing Zapater y Gómez, p. 55, as the source). While not conclusive, I think such circumstantial evidence makes it highly likely that inquisitorial prosecution was a primary motive for suspending sale and later turning the plates and prints over to the king.

The crowd of monks also looks somewhat dehumanized, with an emphasis on cadaverous skulls and coarse features. Moreover, the woman on the dias is the antithesis of the figure raised on high for admiration. Rather, she is there to be humiliated, with a downcast, submissive posture, hands clasped as if restricted and powerless. Figuratively, she is the erotic object here as public spectacle, a fallen woman violated by the inquisitorial gaze of those who surround her. The woman's crime, presumed, is witchcraft in the form of magical powders. Helman comments on inquisitorial proceedings along similar lines just a few years before, in 1787, in which "Perico el Cojo" was tried for fabricating love powders from cadavers (121), and the BN and A textual commentaries make reference to him as well (Blas 156). Goya's advertisement for the *Caprichos* states that "en ninguna de las composiciones que forman esta colección se ha propuesto el autor, para ridiculizar los defectos particulares a uno u otro individuo" (Helman, Appendix II-1a, p. 21), although that assertion evidently did not dissuade the writers of the BN and A commentaries on the *Caprichos*. With regards to *Aquellos polvos*, in light of the protagonist's features, diminutive, feminine shoes, and the continuity of inquisitorial sentencing and punishment in two consecutive images, in which the second one clearly portrays a woman victim, it seems to me very unlikely that the engraving specifically references the case of "Perico," but, whether it does or not, the connotation of polvos as the product of witchcraft is the point.¹⁸ Goya mocks the use of a magical concoction in plate 67, *Aguarda que te unten*, in which a male goat—the Macho Cabrío that is the typical incarnation of Satan in witchcraft—is half airborne, but restrained by a naked man who has goat or donkey ears, and who is admonishing the goat to wait until he has been properly anointed with magical ointment before flying off.¹⁹ The artist also satirizes,

18. Alcalá Flecha agrees that the crime represented does not necessarily relate to a specific case, since "tales prácticas habían sido juzgadas frecuentemente durante la larga historia de la Inquisición y constitutían, por consiguiente, uno de sus más abultados capítulos" (*Literatura* 267). Alcalá Flecha also indicates that even in the 1790s the Inquisition still punished people for the manufacture of magical erotic powders, citing the observations of Joseph Townsend, in *A Journey through Spain* (Vol. 2, 231 and notes) which, in turn, are reproduced by Bennassar (Alcalá Flecha *Literatura* 268, Bennassar 192).

19. In *Las brujas y su mundo*, Julio Caro Baroja observes that Satan appearing in the Black Mass, or "Sabbat," as a male goat had become widespread in Catholic Europe, "a manos de la Inquisición." Caro Baroja explains that "se trataba de una reunión nocturna en que mujeres se reunían con un "macho cabrío" al cual ellas 'se abandonaban' (116). Según los testimonios de la Inquisición, el "Demonio [...] aparece en varias formas, pero [...] en el momento supremo del culto adopta la de macho cabrío. Este animal—como es sabido— siempre ha sido relacionado con ritos sucios y de carácter sexual" (120).

as noted, the conjunction of superstition regarding witchcraft and sermonizing in *¡Lo que puede un sastrer!*. In this context, and in light of the dehumanization of the victimizers in comparison to the humiliation of the more attractive victim, it is clear that *Aquellos polvos* is critiquing the Inquisition for punishment given for an untenable cause: conviction for the heresy of practicing witchcraft.

Unjust punishment is also the message in the subsequent engraving, 24, *No hubo remedio*, which shows a shackled woman, naked from the waist up, wearing the same flame-covered corroza as in *Aquellos polvos*, breasts and petite feet fully exposed, led along a crowded street on a donkey. Her punishment is humiliation, since here too she is the expression of abjection: eroticism conveyed via nudity combined with prohibition and rejection in her punished state.²⁰ Here too, Goya conveys his satire by dehumanizing, and hence subverting the legitimacy, of those surrounding the woman. The two bailiffs resemble the court secretary in plate 23, the left having an even more pronounced feline appearance, probably to convey predation. The leering, jeering crowd is depicted with coarse figures, as are the monks in the previous plate, to convey their uncivilized behavior. Another important point of continuity between the two images has to do with abjection in relation to purification as a means of reaffirming the institutional integrity of the Church. In *No hubo remedio*, the punishment creates a form of perverse, or abject eroticism, by exposing the naked woman to the collective male gaze, yet perverse eroticism is also an essential characteristic of the witchcraft the Inquisition seeks to eradicate. In this sense, the title, *No hubo remedio* suggests an obsessive compulsion, in which the institution is compelled to project its own repressed impulses as erotic other in order to extirpate it, but the gesture is insufficient, since the repressed continues to return, requiring constant vigilance and repeated effort. Likewise, in *Aquellos polvos*, the Church, by punishing witchcraft through the Inquisition, gives credibility to the existence of this prohibited supernatural, again creating its own demons. *Aquellos polvos* is part of a popular refrain, 'aquellos polvos traen estos lodos,' (Helman 122), which implies that something that might appear innocuous and acceptable in fact portends a far greater problem. In a denotative way, this could be applied to the victim in these two plates, corresponding, approximately, to the expression 'you brought this on yourself.' However, in the context of the critique of the close connection

20. Alcalá Flecha comments that the individuals sentenced to be stripped from the waist up and to ride an ass historically corresponded to the inquisitorial sentence of a whipping; a sentence reduced in many cases in the eighteenth century to parading, mounted, through the streets, shirtless, shackled, wearing the corroza. This punishment was known as "vergüenza", or "humillación" (*Literatura* 268, citing Turberville p. 63).

between superstition, Church and Inquisition, the meaning connotatively refers to the religious institution, by implication, responsible for both crime and punishment.

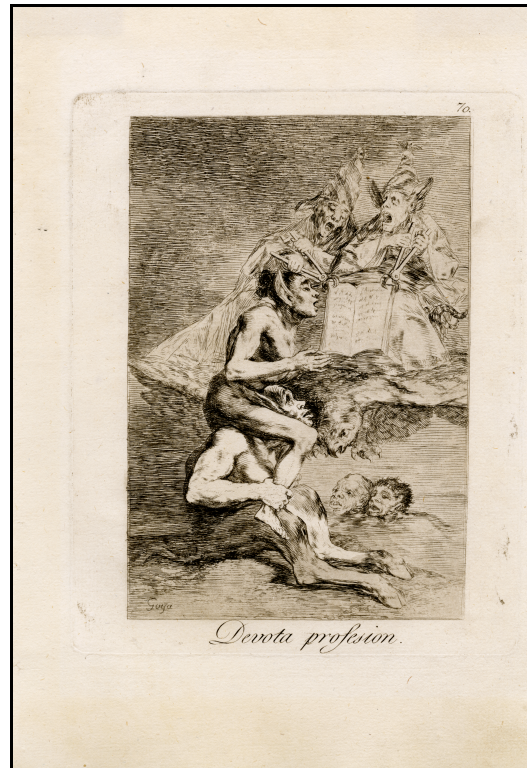


Plate 70, *Devota profesión*, is another key image exploring the relationship between superstition, the Catholic Church as a whole, and the Inquisition. The title could signify praise—both of an occupation and of a religious avowal—but juxtaposed with the image, devotion is transformed to suggest fanaticism and perversity. The exemplary models portrayed are raised to a position of authority above the others, and are singing or expounding the discourse present as text in the large open book they hold before their devotees, who are also singing or declaiming. The participants are all dehumanized, since both the authorities and the disciples have large, ass-like ears, although the ears could also be meant to suggest goats, since the bottom-most devotee has the appearance of a satyr, and the Macho Cabrío is a sign of diabolic witchcraft. This imagery could be meant to suggest a satanic mass, in which the Church liturgy is parodied by those opposed to it, but there are several symbols that suggest that the profesión belongs to the Church itself. The authority figures wear clerical robes, and, while the

conical hats are similar to those of penitents, they also resemble bishops' miters, which fits with the protagonists' role in the ceremony.²¹ The presiding officials are astride a predatory bird, which is consistent with the iconography we have seen symbolizing the Inquisition and the Church as rapacious. This bird has a serpent's tail, which may signify heresy, here associated with the riders.²² The Spanish populace is also present in the form of two befuddled figures up to their necks in water, near drowning in a sea of confusion, error and deceit, as they contemplate the spectacle of perverted liturgy. The content of the liturgy is one of error, symbolized by the flying figures, the transformation of human to animal, and the perverse eroticism of nude, dehumanized figures in contact. Finally, the complicity between the Inquisition and the Church in insisting on promoting misguided dogma is depicted with the *tenazas*—the tongs—that the authority figures use to sustain their devotional script. I can think of no other reason for the presence of the tongs used to hold the book except for their significance as hard, metallic tools designed to forcefully grasp and manipulate objects: people and their beliefs in this case.²³

A central idea in this study of the *Caprichos* is that the engravings comment satirically on a Church that created its own adversary in the form of witchcraft, and that the latter consists of the religious institution's projection of abjection; a distorted mirror embodying elements of the

21. One of the two clerics represented as duendes in an erotic dalliance with a young woman, in plate 74, *No grites, tonta*, wears a similar cap. Sayre indicates that an alternative name for this kind of *coroza* was *mitra* (miter), or technically *mitra scelerata* (infamous miter) to differentiate it from the miters worn by bishops and archbishops. However, her point is that *coroza* was used to refer to a bishop's miter, as duende referred to friars. She notes as well that Quevedo made use of this fusion of terms in one of his *Sueños*: "Estaba Nepos, Obispo, en quien fue *coroza* la *mitra*, afirmando que los santos habían de reynar con Christo (sic) en la tierra mil años en lascivias y regalos" (129, citing Covarrubias Orozco, under *coroça*, *Diccionario* [1791], under *mitra*, and Quevedo, 110). In terms of Goya's artistic intent, or at least his aim at an earlier moment when he drew "Brujas a volar" as part of the Madrid Album B, Sayre observes that in this antecedent to *Devota profesión*, the two raised figures with *corozas* also wear bishop's gloves (129). Bozal agrees, commenting: "como obispos las figuras resultan en exceso convincentes" (164).

22. Sayre observes that "Satan assumed the form of a serpent in order to bring about the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, and by logical extension this creature came to embody Heresy" (132).

23. With respect to *Devota profesión*, Sayre notes that *tenazas* were "used to tear pieces of flesh from the condemned" (129, citing Covarrubias Orozco and *Diccionario* [1791], under *atenazar* and *atenacear*, respectively).

Church itself, but presenting them in a contaminated condition that led to purification practices. The quintessential cleansing process, historically, was the auto de fe, and the recorded proceedings of one, the *Relación del auto de fe celebrado en la ciudad de Logroño en los días 7 y 8 de noviembre de 1610*, may well have been a significant source of inspiration for Goya's witchcraft *Caprichos*.²⁴ Helman believed the *Relación* was indeed Goya's source, in the form of a version which Leandro Fernández Moratín eventually published, which included his satirical comments on a text originally disseminated to confirm the existence of sorcery and demonstrate the Church's effective response to it.²⁵ Andioc disputes this hypothesis, arguing: one, that there is no record of Moratín's written commentary on the *Relación* in his letters or diary of 1797-99; two, that the commentaries reflect contemporary cultural activities for the period subsequent to the production of the *Caprichos*; and three, that Goya's images differ significantly from the contents of the *Relación* (259-71). I find Andioc's point persuasive regarding the absence of reference to Moratín's written commentaries, but I think this does not rule out the possibility that Moratín and Goya discussed the *Relación* and shared perspectives about its significance. Goya scholarship will probably never discover a definitive resolution to this question, just as it will never know

24. According to Helman, "es cierto que el auto de Logroño fue uno de los más conocidos y citados autos de brujas y la *Relación* impresa llegó a servir de manual de brujería por toda Europa en el siglo XVII y hasta en el XVIII" (187).

25. All subsequent references to Leandro Fernández de Moratín will be shortened to "Moratín." Helman affirms that Goya had the *Relación* and Moratín's satirical commentaries on it in mind when he created his witchcraft engravings (186-91). Helman also notes that several of Moratín's editions of the *Relación* circulated in the early nineteenth century (183), and lists the following ones in her bibliography: Madrid, 1811, Cádiz, 1812; Majorca, 1813; Madrid, 1820 (250). As symbolic expressions of enlightened anti-clericalism, the dates and places of publication are suggestive. In my study I refer to the 1820 edition, which coincided with the beginning of the *Trienio Liberal* in the middle of the culturally reactionary reign of Ferdinand VII. With respect to the Inquisition in the contexts of the Spanish War of Independence (1808-13), in Ferdinand VII's rule (1814-33) and in the *Trienio Liberal* (1820-23), Moratín's final footnote, at the end of the *Relación*, is revealing. In it he praises Napoleon for abolishing the Inquisition in 1808, referring to him as "el gran caudillo que al frente de cincuenta mil hombres acabó en Chamartín con las bárbaras leyes que dictó la ignorancia, en oprobio de la humanidad y de la razón," extolling this action and adding a final disparagement of the Inquisition: "todo ha sido menester para desterrar de una nación obstinada e ilusa tan absurdas opiniones, tan inicuos tribunales, tan groseras y feroces costumbres" (128, note). The generally liberal *Cortes de Cádiz*, 1810-13, also included abolition of the Inquisition in their constitution, in 1813. Ferdinand VII reinstated it in 1814, and it was finally abolished in Spain in 1820.

for certain if Moratín collaborated in, or was the author of, the original announcement of sale for the *Caprichos*, and if he participated in composing some of the early written commentaries on the set, although both of these hypotheses are probable.²⁶ Nevertheless, I think Helman was correct in proposing the *Relación* as a probable source for Goya's witchcraft imagery, and in affirming that Goya and Moratín shared the same enlightened perspective regarding witchcraft as superstition, erroneously perpetuated by the Church, whether or not Goya was inspired by Moratín's written satire, and keeping in mind that Goya may have influenced his friend rather than vice-versa. The minor differences between the *Relación* and the *Caprichos* do not rule it out as a source, rather, they could easily be the result of Goya's formidable artistic imagination and capacity for embellishment. The continuity between the contents related by the auto de fe victims accused in their confessions –obtained through torture– and the *Caprichos* include: human –and partially human– flight (plates 46, 48, 52, 60, 61, 62, 65, 66, 68, 70, 74); the presence of animals as witchcraft "familiaris" (plates 60, 65, 66); human to animal metamorphosis (plates 48, 51, 67, 70, 72); the use of magical powders and potions (plates 23, 67); the incorporation of human remains therein (plate 12, *A caza de dientes*); vampires (plates 45, 59)²⁷; necrophagia (47, *Obsequio al maestro*); responsibility for miscarriages, stillborns and infant deaths (plates 44, 45, 47); the demonic Macho Cabrío (plates 47, 60); perverse parody of liturgy (plates 46, 47, 69, 70); orgies, incest, and homosexuality (plates 52, 59, 60, 62, 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71). In many of these engravings the thematic implications are less explicit than in the auto de fe manuscript. Such is the case with necrophagia, described repeatedly in the *Relación*, including a scene in which, along with the participation of the Macho Cabrío, the accused confess, "declarando los padres cómo han comido a sus hijos, y los hijos a sus padres" (124). Plate 47, *Obsequio al maestro*, depicts witches offering to the Macho Cabrío a tiny human corpse without specifying what will become of it, although the practice of devouring infants is relatively clear in 45, *Mucho hay que chupar*, where two witches are poised to insert something from a case into their mouths, while below them sits a basket full of infant cadavers. This corresponds, even in the verb used, to an account of infanticide in the

26. Andioc believes it likely that Moratín was involved in composing the Prado commentaries, although there is no conclusive proof of this (245). Helman observes that Moratín, and, or, perhaps, Ceán Bermúdez probably influenced in the composition of the announcement of sale of the *Caprichos* (47).

27. In "El vampirismo en la obra de Goya," Alcalá Flecha studies in depth the influence of Voltaire and the significance of vampires for *ilustrados*, as well as references to vampirism in Goya's art.

Relación “Y a los niños que son pequeños [...] les sacan y chupan la sangre” (113).

It is possible that the witchcraft scenes correspond to Goya’s awareness of popular superstition rather than to an ecclesiastical document, but it is important to keep in mind that the witchcraft engravings, even the most strikingly perverse ones, could well have stemmed from an inquisitorial account; one that gives credence to them as real offenses meriting severe punishments.²⁸ The offenses themselves present a profile of what constitutes the religious institution’s formulation of abjection. As noted, flight and the supernatural in general can be interpreted as a corrupted version of the miraculous and holy. Repeated scenes of transgressive eroticism suggest the return to consciousness, and to behavior, of repressed sexuality, unsuccessfully sublimated as abnegation and spiritual engagement. Cannibalism and necrophagia, while, according to the Kristevian formulation of abjection, evoking the prohibition of a universal drive towards unity—also implied by incest—make reference in a distorted, taboo manner, to communion. *Relación* scenes of mock-liturgical practice conducted by a symbol of animalistic desire, the Macho Cabrío, in which the assassinated innocent are devoured prior to a generalized, incestuous, hetero and homosexual orgy, are the horrific antithesis of Mass emphasizing abnegation and divine sacrifice to insure eternal life. Goya, like Moratín, whether or not he specifically adapts material from the *Relación*, uses the Church’s own nightmares, given credence as real by the Inquisition, to imply that the Church’s conduct itself is something of a bad dream for the Enlightenment. As final examples, we will consider three engravings that imply a relationship between the clergy and transgressive sexual activity.

Plate 54, *El vergonzoso*, deals metaphorically with clerical homosexuality. We have already noted that eating is used to allude to sexuality in another treatment of monks, 13, *Están calientes*, and that Goya employed the same conceit more graphically in a precursory drawing for that engraving. Plate 54 centers on a man’s face with an exaggerated, phallic nose, leaning over another prostrate man, spooning food from a dish adjacent to the latter’s mid-section.²⁹ The use of eating as a metaphor for sex is reenforced by the

28. The *Relación* indicates that 53 people were accused in this auto de fe, with 6 of them receiving 200 lashes as punishment, and eleven of them burned, including five burned in effigy, who had died during their interrogation and incarceration (15).

29. Glendinning observes that “las referencias sexuales quedan muy claras, en parte por el lenguaje popular, según el cual 'las narices' son eufemismo sexual” (“El arte” 44). He also notes that Goya had captioned a preparatory drawing indicating that the man was hiding his face in his pants because his face was “indecente,” and that

fact that the eating man is wearing pants over his head—the breach buttons are clearly visible on top—suggesting that his face is enclosed by the pants waist, with his arms encased in the trouser legs. In other words, his face, particularly his nose, is a visual substitution for his genitals.³⁰ The fact that the prostrate man appears to have the waist of his own drawers open, judging from the lighter cloth suggesting underwear just behind the bowl, in combination with his physical position, feet pointing down, while his bottom is either up or reclining sideways, with the eating man's face/genitals inclined in close proximity, implies sodomy as a possible referent for the image (both the A and BN texts refer to sodomy in the image, Blas 286). Behind and above the two entwined figures, a friar is depicted, identifiable by his robes. The fact that he has an anguished expression and manacled hands, does not suggest that he is a prisoner forced to watch the spectacle in the foreground, but rather that the sexual representation is a projection, a dramatization of his own dilemma, in which he is bound to insistent, transgressive desire in spite of the social and religious institutional prohibitions that create a condition of abjection and conflict for him.

Sodomy, and, in a metonymic way, anality, are a reiterated theme in the *Relación*, and hence a source of significant concern for the Church in 1610. The *Relación* makes repeated reference to devotees kissing the Macho Cabrío's anus, as well as his genitals (pp. 29, 70, 81), and associates sodomy with both an abject Mass and with orgies that also involve incest (82-83). Goya suggests that sodomy is still an issue in two additional witchcraft engravings in which superstition is linked to the Church by means of the latter's own formulations of abjection.

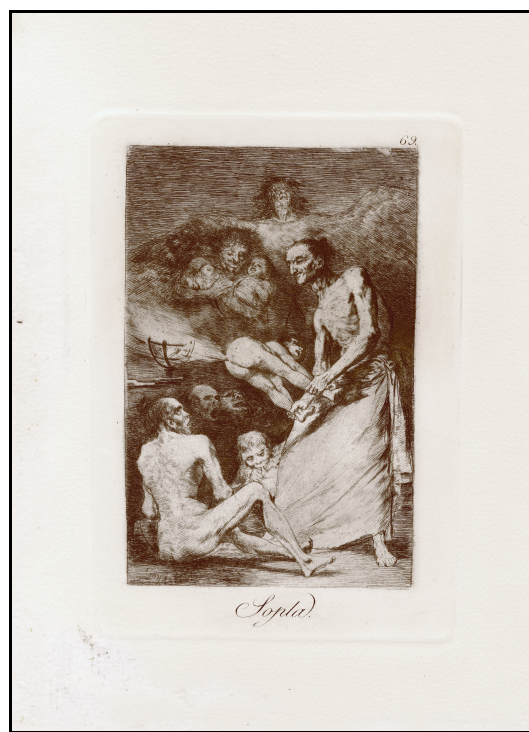
Plate 48, *Soplones*, shows three figures, presumedly all monks judging from the foregrounded figure's robe, the hood on the person to the left, and the suggestion of a robe on the right-hand protagonist. They are covering their ears and have their eyes closed, while they are attacked by a winged half-human figure astride a feline creature, and two other beasts, one yowling, also menace the monks from the right side. "Soplar" means to blow air or wind, transitively and intransitively, presenting various

he only would uncover his face to eat. Glendinning comments that "esta explicación 'realista' de la escena no resulta muy convincente, y lo más probable es que el pintor la inventara para evitar las posibles críticas de las obscenidades más o menos a la vista" (Ibid.).

30. Goya places heads in place of genitals, or covering them, but also drawing attention to them, in several *Caprichos*: 48, *Soplones*; 52, *Lo que puede un sastre!*; 57, *La filiación*; 63, *¡Miren qué graves!*; 65, *¿Dónde va mamá?*; and 70, *Devota profesión*.

implications in the context of the image and title.³¹ A “soplón” traditionally is slang for an informant –a person who gives a “tip-off” to the police or the Inquisition, for example– referring to someone who betrays or renounces a trust or commitment to obtain personal benefit, often with a venal motive implied (*Diccionario* [1803], 806). In this image, such a betrayal could refer to monks acting against their own religious ethics, or to the Church itself reenforcing superstition, if the friars were to succumb to the negative influence of belief in witchcraft embodied by the dehumanized flying creature. To the left side of the image, two naked human bottoms are emitting mephitic puffs, reproducing the noxious breath, or discourse, of the winged monster. The latter figure is suggestively hermaphroditic, since it has muscular, satyr-like, hairy legs, but also prominent naked breasts. A feline animal head draws attention to the creature’s groin, visually signaling abject desire as something prominent and compelling, like the figure’s nudity and groin, but dehumanized and bestial. Sayre notes that Goya’s witches are often ambiguous in terms of gender (128), which I think is a way of using the visual depiction of anatomy to comment on behavior, implying sexual confusion, or combination across social gender customs, and the subversion of prohibitions regarding both homosexuality and clerical abstinence. The erotic implications are intensified with two additional aspects of the engraving. One is that the verb *soplar*, according to Sayre, was slang in Goya’s day for “to fornicate”, in addition to signifying the activities of an informant (128). The second element consists of the prominence of the two naked, raised bottoms, which, in combination with the connotation of the title, the sexuality of the winged creature, and the continuity of the visual vectors of “wind” from the flying creature’s mouth and the upraised bottoms, imply sodomy, with even a possibility of orgy, since group nudity itself is a visual symbol for the transgressive group sexuality so prominent in the *Relación*, and in this scene a group of three friars simultaneously attempt to ward off the erotic ‘charge’ of the three nude, dehumanized figures that confront them. The consistency of the *Relación*’s account of transgressive sex and Goya’s representation of it is also evident in one of the artist’s depictions of a demonic liturgy, which we will now examine as a final example of the significance of superstition.

31. An oil painting by El Greco titled *El soplón*, from the early 1570s, depicts the common meaning of a puff of air, in the form of a boy blowing on an ember to light a candle.



Engraving number 69, *Sopla*, centers on an authority figure, standing, and facing a type of alter. This person, like the pontificating parrot in 53, *¡Qué pico de oro!*, and the emblematic clerical tree in 52, *¡Lo que puede un sastrer!*, is surrounded by an attentive, deferential audience, mouths agape in awe and wonder. In the background, at the apex of the triangle formed by the people in the image, is a flying figure, wings spread, figuratively embracing the scene. This background protagonist does not have dramatically dehumanized features like the one in the parallel image of *Soplones*, and suggests some angelic qualities, given its transcendent height, attitude of benediction, feathered wings—not bat wings like in *Soplones*—and human features. The foregrounded authority figure, the alter, the audience, and the angelic element configure a profile of a liturgy, offering the potentially attractive side of the conflictive formula of abjection, along with the implicitly attractive elements of erotic desire. The latter, however, also forcefully violates the prohibitions of the former. The most visually pronounced perversion is that of the authority figure, who holds a naked child by the ankles, and is using her, or him, as a bellows to fan the alter flame, with the implication that flatulence is being forced from the child to be ignited and consumed in the intensified flame. This connotation alone signifies that the illumination—the metaphor for insight and understanding—produced here is pernicious and illegitimate; a very foul wind is blown and

consumed. The image has many sexual implications, again in line with that meaning of “soplar.” The authority figure is prominently nude from the waist up, as is the child being manipulated, and the naked audience in close proximity, here, as in other images, implies orgiastic behavior. The standing protagonist has angular features and a muscular torso with no breasts or body fat, implying it is male, yet he or she also has hair pulled back in a bun and wears a skirt. An antecedent drawing from the Madrid Album B labels this protagonist as “la tía Chorriones” (Gassier 174), but this does not mean that the *Capricho* preserved this detail. This lack of clear gender identity is again a metaphor for the subversion of sexual practices conditioned by social gender expectations and prohibitions. Pedophilia, which may also involve incest, is also prominent in this scene, as one of the brujas or brujos, crouched or seated behind the standing figure, is explicitly engaged in fellatio with a child, while another participant delivers two more babies to the scene as potential victims of the activities already in progress.³² Sodomy is also evoked in the emphasis given to anality, depicted by the exposed buttocks of the child at the very center of the illuminated portion of the image. The overall sense of sexual transgression as a source of psychological and social conflict is conveyed in the agonized expression of the partially angelic figure at the highpoint of the image, using the symbolism of verticality here, in the same way that it is used with the anguished monk above the scene of sexual shame in plate 54, *El vergonzoso*. In sum, incest, pedophilia, orgy, homosexuality, and sodomy are combined with liturgical symbolism to represent an aquelarre, one that corresponds closely to that which was given credence in the Logroño auto de fe and the subsequent *Relación*.³³ As this document affirms, “Luego que el Demonio acaba su misa, los conoce a todos, hombres y mujeres, carnal y sométicamente” (82), and this activity is accompanied by that of the male

32. While Kristeva notes that the incest taboo is universal (68), and that it is foundational for religious institutions (58), she also observes that the archaic force present in abjection—the drive to maternal union that informs incestuous impulses—is made manifest as a fear of procreation in patriarchal social institutions. Kristeva observes: “Fear of the archaic mother turns out to be essentially fear of her generative power. It is this power, a dreaded one, that patrilineal filiation has the burden of subduing. It is thus not surprising to see pollution rituals proliferating in societies where patrilineal power is poorly secured, as if the latter sought, by means of purification, a support against excessive matrilineality” (77). Such is the case with the Catholic Church’s concern with witchcraft, as depicted in *Sopla*, which combines the maternal, in the form of the two babies arriving on the scene, with the suggestion of amorphous, incestuous sexuality.

33. The Spanish term for a witches’ Sabbath, used in the *Relación*, is “aquelarre.” Caro Baroja observes that aquelarre signifies in Euskera “prado o llana del macho cabrío (de “akerr”: macho cabrío y “larre,” “larra”: prado)” (263).

and female participants (brujos y brujas) with each other: "los brujos se mezclan unos con otros, hombres con mujeres, y los hombres con hombres, sin tener consideración a grados ni a parentescos" (83).

In conclusion, it is not surprising that a number of critics have interpreted the predominance of nihilistic themes in the witchcraft engravings, those dealing with pedophilia, infanticide, incest, transgressive sexuality, violent aggression, bestiality, human to beast transformation and the perversion of the sacred, as a way of emphasizing that humans are profoundly irrational. It is also true that the witchcraft images can be interpreted as popular superstition, treated satirically as an affront to the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, a detailed analysis of the iconography of these images, and of those related to the Catholic Church and the Inquisition, reveal the repeated instances in which the *Caprichos* configure superstition to be, symbolically, a satirical critique of the Church as a force promoting irrationalism and opposed to the rational ideology of the Enlightenment. As we have seen, the *Caprichos* present multiple images of clerical immorality, and suggestions of predatory exploitation of Spanish society. They also mock equivocal ideological content, especially superstition, associated with religious teaching and with the inquisitorial credence insistently and violently given to superstition in its intent to eradicate it. The witchcraft engravings correspond closely to the published proceedings of an auto de fe, whether or not that was indeed their source, implying that witchcraft is not just popular superstition, it is the threat the religious institution seeks to eradicate as part of a process that insures its own stability. The irrational nature of that threat, accepted as real by the Church, points to the irrational core of the institution itself, one in which the good supernatural can be subverted by the bad supernatural. This danger is expressed as a form of abjection, a combination of fundamental, universal impulses that involve something innately attractive, combined with other elements that provoke repression and social prohibition. The particular formulations of abjection in the witchcraft engravings present the viewer with a distorted mirror, a nightmarish image of the religious ideology of the sublime and the transcendent, subverted in reiterated examples by means of an amorphous, transgressive, sexuality. In this context, it should come as no surprise that male homosexuality, sodomy and pedophilia should be among the Inquisition-censored activities of witchcraft. The manifestations of abjection in the auto de fe, and in Goya's *Caprichos*, imply that the Inquisition created and projected an institutional threat by imposing its own apprehensions on its accused victims and forcing them, using torture, to confess that the Church's fears, projected to scapegoats outside the institution, were real. Moratín, in his satirical commentary on the *Relación*, mocks the Church's tendency to frame threats to its institutional stability in terms of irrational abjection, when he ridicules a priest—"jesuita doctísimo"—for having accused Martin Luther of being the

son “de un cabrón y de una mujer,” for affirming that all heretics employ witchcraft, and for recommending “en caridad que se les dé tormento” (85, nota). The relationship analyzed above between the Church, the Inquisition and certain types of sexual transgression, defining the latter in terms of the religious institution’s prohibitions, suggest that Goya shared Moratín’s point of view, regardless of whether or not the two friends also shared the same sources of inspiration or influenced each other. What is clear is that the artist agrees implicitly with Moratín’s assertions regarding the Inquisition’s irrationality. Decrying the Inquisition’s substantial responsibility for Spain’s ignorance and backwardness, Moratín asserts that the Inquisition has been “Un tribunal de intolerancia y error” (4) que “detenía los progresos de la ilustración,” castigando “delitos que es imposible cometer” (5). Goya’s own satire of the Inquisition’s imposible crimes is a fundamental part of his treatment of superstition. That is why the artist mocks witchcraft as ludicrous in plates such as 67, *Aguarda que te unten*, and 65, *¿Dónde va mamá?*, and implicitly urges that such superstition be abandoned, as can be deduced even in the titles of the witchcraft engravings 64, *Buen viaje*, 71, *Si amanece, nos vamos*, and the final plate in the *Capricho* set, 80, *Ya es hora*. The timely advent of dawn light Goya evokes in the latter two titles would dispel the obscurantism of the Church, obliquely critiqued in the reiterated images of witchcraft. Taken as a whole, the *Caprichos* imply that the Church must move away from superstition, as well as from other forms of corruption, and towards the Enlightenment agenda of educational reform, social justice, scientific inquiry and reasonable, moral civic behavior that Goya promotes in other images of the set.

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