

ESSAY

Paganism and Anti-Christian Violence During the Chilean Revolts of 2019

J. Claudio Gutierrez, University of California, Davis

Steven D. Holladay, University of Georgia

A time of Chilean social disturbances that included massive demonstrations and riots began in 2019 and became known in the media as the “Estallido social Chileno/Chilean social revolt.” Many crimes were committed by revolutionary groups. The reason for the revolt according to major activists and the mainstream media was a fight for a more equal Chilean society. The word “dignity” was used to defend the uprising by activists and politicians. The revolt was clearly an anti-establishment movement with anti-capitalism and anarchist components. As described by Chilean philosopher Arturo Ruiz,

A wave of political frenzy, festive but dark, took over Chile on October 18th of 2019. It began with high school students jumping the ticket barrier in the metro stations. This continued with the complete burning of about 70 metro stations and vandalizations in Santiago and other cities of the country. An unusual feeling was in the air, like something else was really happening. Some people started talking about a spiritual war, even more after the burning of churches and sacred artifacts. (Ruiz 2023)

There have been some more recent suggestions that the social revolt was coordinated with the help of international and Chilean communist groups trying to overthrow the government of the late president of Chile, Sebastian Piñera.

This essay reviews general aspects of occult/pagan symbolism and analyzes some manifestations of such symbols in the Chilean social revolts of 2019 that had a clear anti-Christian sentiment.

Aspects of Witchcraft Lore and Satanism

Occult practices are in most cases not understood by the general population due to typically being conducted in secrecy and communicated only to the initiated members of a congregation or following. These include individuals identifying with Satanism, Witchcraft, Voodoo, aspects of Santería (a pantheistic Afro-Cuban folk religion that seeks to develop relationships through divination or mediumship) and other practices (Kail 2015; Brooks 2018).

The European body of traditions of the “witches’ gatherings” or “witches’ sabbath” is historically abundant (Fernandez-Juarez 2014). These sabbaths were characterized by different types of assembly. Some were conducted on ancient anniversaries or “high days” believed to be special, with particularly solemn meetings and as large an attendance as possible. At other times these gatherings would be more random and occasional, attended by small groups as opportunity served. There were also variations in each country, and a seemingly endless number of local peculiarities. The witches were believed to fly to these strange sabbath observances at night, mounted on sticks or brooms, or on a sheep or goat (Figure 1). A crowing of a rooster was then often a signal for the end of the sabbath gathering (Gari-LaCruz 1993). Among the many animal forms which the lead sorcerer of the sabbath might assume in masquerade, the most common were the bull, the cat and above all, the goat. These sabbaths might also include normally shunned sexual activities in the presence of a demon appearing in the form of a huge, “He goat” in front of the crowd (Summers 2017).



Figure 1. **Upper left:** The pagan goat Baphomet by Eliphas Levi. **Upper right:** Pagan deity Moloch. **Lower left:** Goya’s capricho number 60: “Ensayo/Trials.” Museo del Prado, Madrid Spain. **Lower right:** Baphomet, Satanic Temple, Salem Massachusetts. All these images are in the public domain.

In a higher level of hierarchy, the devil, or sometimes higher demons, are described as the central axis of the sabbath, creatures that adopt different forms which, as in shamanism, usually are animal shapes. The lore represents these forms as always unclean and abominable, often in the form of a fox, large dog, He goat, wolf, cat, badger, bull, bear, monkey, or another beast (Bailey 2021) (Figure 1). In witchcraft lore, the animal symbols were used to add a presence of magical power by acting as catalysts or as agents bearing the wishes of the witch or warlock. Examples of this are the “familiars,” believed to obey the commands of their dark-force demon or other owners (Smith 1978). The curious belief that a human being was at times unwillingly subject to being changed into an animal form, or had the power to willingly transform himself, is of great antiquity and universality. The early writers on the subject recorded numerous human-to-animal mutations such as beavers, donkeys, or goats, with the most popular assumed beast shape being “lupine” (wolf; wolfish). From this, European lore is replete with tales of the werewolf or a human who has assumed the form of a wolf. However, some have noted that parts of Europe where populations of wolves had been small to non-present also laced lore for that shape being adopted by witches (Ewen 1970).

For Anton Lavey, the founder of the satanic church in America, Satanism appears as a parasitic religion, and one that seemingly exists only as mockery of more institutionalized religions. Lavey recommends in his rituals the inclusion of animals as an important aspect of the type of religious message practitioners should desire to convey. Specifically, Lavey stated “the purpose of the ceremony is for the participants to regress willingly to an animal level” (Andrade 2021: p. 52). The often-related “familiars” are defined in demonology as metaphysical beings associated with witches or under their control, and were lower demons that could be either invisible or disguised in animal forms. Their services were more particularly required in divination, or for carrying out supernatural acts under the instruction of the witch.

There is some variability in witchcraft and demonology lore between the devil and the spirits subservient to the witch regarding their ability to assume animal forms. It was believed that a newly initiated witch had a lower demon or familiar assigned to her that would act as a servant and guardian for the witch. For example, the familiar could take the form of a winged goat to carry the witch to the sabbath (Ewen 1970; Summers 1974). This sabbath lore again speaks of improper sexual activities during the rituals where the devil, most commonly in the form of a black goat, materialized and presided over the “hellish revelries” (King 1987). The folklore links sabbath to the practice of black masses, particularly in the Middle Ages, as a parody of the Holy Catholic mass morphed into a tribute to the devil, often in the company of a strange periodic gathering of covens of witches, warlocks, and necromancers (Wedeck 1994). In such black masses, the altar was surmounted by a bizarre goat figure, and the candles were made of black wax; the bowls contained congealed blood or human fat. The officiating priest, by preference one who had been defrocked, and the servants were naked under an ornate

cassock or full-length garment featuring satanic symbols such as inverted pentagrams. The inverted pentagram represents the head with horns of the sabbatic goat and is a symbol of carnality in satanism. The pentagram is sometimes encircled by Hebrew characters that represent the word “Leviathan” which references the sea creature that battles God in Job 41 of the Hebrew bible (Holt 2011). Such pentagrams, hexagrams, and octograms were used in the occult while conjuring evil, doing magic, and invoking demonic entities (Von Frederick-Rowlins 2011) (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Media screenshots of the Chilean social revolts. **A:** Example of graffiti of the mapapacos dog. **B:** Activists carrying a mapapaco’s dog idol. **C:** Statue of General Baquedano painted in red at Santiago town square. **D:** Activist placement of the mapapacos’ idol in place of the statue of General Baquedano statue (later removed). **E:** Pagan performance of people dressed like red devils. **F:** Activist drawing a pentagram in a pagan performance. All images are in the category of “fair use” for purposes of research and scholarship.

These unholy ceremonies took place in an atmosphere heavily charged with perfume and incense that quickly degenerated into a “convulsive bacchanalia” (Roman festival of Bacchus celebrated with dancing and revelry) (Tondriau 1970). At these ceremonies, often seen as disturbing by the non-initiated, perverted back-to-back dances are also described by the lore. The sabbath overlapped into the black mass ceremonials and this merging of practices became symbolically one unit summarized in contact with the dark forces and rejection of Christianity (Wedek 1994). According to the lore, in a pact with the devil, an “initiate neophyte” (new believer) undertakes among other things denial of Christian faith, denial of baptism, surrendering to the devil a piece of his clothing, vowing services to the devil, promising to pay tribute and give gifts to the demons, and promises to sacrifice children to the devil. This last step led to the stories of witches and associated disappearances of children (Robbins 1981).

The witchcraft lore—Brujería in Spanish—was portrayed in detail by famed Spanish painter Francisco de Goya (1746 – 1828) in both paintings and caprichos (engravings/prints). A vivid example is his witchcraft series of the caprichos pullulate with hags, terrifying monsters, sabbath, and grotesque naturalism. In this series, his many depicted monsters appear to escalate from satire to almost real satanism conjured up by a spirit sick in the sleep of reason which was part of Spanish society of the time (Williams 1976). Goya came to increasingly recognize that a darker side of reason still existed, and leveraged what he viewed as irrational, unbridled passions, and the power of aggression and fear, that were still omnipresent in the Spain of his time. For Goya, flying humans and human-like beings was, above all, an embodiment of the demonic, and images of witches freely moving through the air played a key role in his illustrations (Buchholz 2000). The ilustrado/rationalist attitude, clearly visible in the caprichos, was made explicit by Goya in the commentaries in his own handwriting preserved at the Museo del Prado.

Goya’s texts are of enormous value for the interpretation of each one of the caprichos images. Some authors believe Goya intended hidden meanings of the real interpretations of his caprichos, an idea that has likely become impossible to prove (Lopez-Rey 1953). The prints were in some cases graphic or fierce enough to provoke their suppression. Some were searing attacks on the monks, friars, the Church, and superstition, direct or in the guise of satires on witches and goblins, while others were transparent jives at hereditary aristocracy or carried a potent charge of satire on sexual mores (Williams 1976). The humor of the caprichos is constantly overshadowed by an element of nightmare. Technically revealing the influence of Rembrandt, they feature savagely satirical attacks on social customs, with elements of the macabre in scenes of witchcraft and diabolism (Peitcheva 2015).

Goya’s capricho number 60 entitled “Ensayo/Trials” depicts the levitation of two witches supervised by *the great He goat* demon (Figure 1). The first draft for this capricho had a

written note that read: “Ensayo de brujas primerisas de primer vuelo y con temor se prueban para trabajar.” This translates as: “First flight practice of unexperienced witches, and with fear they rehearse their work.” His commentary for this Capricho was: “Little by little she is making progress. She is already making her first steps and in time, she will know as much as her master” (Casariego 1965).

Animal Symbol Idolatry

Historians of religion have dedicated great efforts to studying how animal forms are represented throughout different religious manifestations (Andrade 2021). From ancient times, idolatry has been a constant theme in paganism. The pagan demon Moloch was worshipped by ancient Canaanite and Carthaginian peoples and was depicted with a human torso and arms and with the head of a calf or bull. Historic rituals associated with Moloch worship included unthinkable sacrifices of children before his pagan image (Ivanova 2021). Some of the ceremonies to Moloch were supposed to have been as follows: The priest stood on a platform in front of the idol, and while the people bowed down and murmured their prayers, he placed the child sacrifice in the hands of the idol, frequently a little infant (Figure 1). By some cruel machinery, the idol’s hands came together, crushing the child, while the musicians beat their drums to drown out its cries (Dobbins 1897). In another account, the pagan deity Baphomet is described as goat-headed with hooved feet and shaggy legs. Baphomet first appears in accounts of the early modern sabbaths. Eliphas Levi, a renowned 19th-century French occultist, drew an image of Baphomet that is very commonly reproduced, which depicted a goat-headed deity, a flame burning between the horns, black wings, an erect phallus, and breasts (Ezzy 2015). Eliphas Levi, born Alphonse Louis Constant, 1810-1875, created what appears to be the first recognized drawing of Baphomet, which depicts a hermaphroditic goat-headed demon with black wings, esoteric symbols, and breasts (Figure 1). This Baphomet became a symbol of satanism worldwide, including acting as the major symbol of the Satanic Temple in Salem, Massachusetts, USA. It is believed that Levi did not believe in the Devil as a specific entity, but as a symbol of the negation of good (Strube 2016). When the Medieval order of the Knights Templars was disbanded, they were accused of worshiping this demon by the name of Baphomet. For Anton Lavey (founder of the satanic church), the concept of Baphomet became central in his representations, as he reckoned that it was a powerful manifestation of the esthetic and the religious message he wanted to convey. His intention is clearly expressed in *The Satanic Bible*: “Baphomet represents the Powers of Darkness combined with the generative fertility of the goat. In its ‘pure’ form the pentagram is shown encompassing the figure of a man in the five points of the star - three points up, two pointing down - symbolizing man’s spiritual nature” (Andrade 2021: p. 55).

Aspects of the Occult and Anti-Christian Demonstrations during the Chilean Social Disturbances

The Chilean social disturbances that included massive demonstrations and riots began October 18th, 2019, continued through 2022, and became known in the media as the “Estallido social Chileno/Chilean social revolt.” Among associated crimes committed by some revolutionary groups were massive looting and destruction of public and private property, complete and partial destruction of dozens of metro stations by arson, critical attacks on the police force, and burning and desecration of Christian Catholic churches (Figures 2 and 3). It is important to note that there is no attempt in this essay to analyze the social requests made by some of the protesting groups during this time. There were associated signs of pagan, occult, and anti-Christian aspects of the revolt. Most of the population of Chile is Christian with most of these being Catholic.

Social media at the time widely displayed pictures and videos of burning churches and vandalization of sacred religious figures and artifacts, showing a clear anti-Christian aspect to the revolt (Figure 3). Public perverted sexual acts were also officially reported by the media, including in front of the main building of the Pontificia Catholic University of Chile. Performances that simulated the sacrifice of human babies and featured pagan dances were also described. Some reports suggested the latter activities could have been a representation of the ancient cult to Moloch, the “dark pagan deity” (Dobbins 1897). In the 2023 book *Estallidos Satánicos* (Satanic revolts), Chilean author and philosopher Arturo Ruiz linked acts that occurred during the Chilean social revolts with several historical aspects of the occult and satanism. These included references to concepts propagated by early modern English satanist Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) that were found painted in Chilean wall graffiti. Symbols of what is known as “magic of chaos” were seen in graffiti in 2019 painted in the metro station Baquedano in Santiago. Also, some demonic talismanic sigil symbols were seen in some graffiti, consistent with concepts propagated by Crowley. The axiom “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law” represents Crowley’s philosophy of the magic of chaos. Interestingly, the word “Magiak” which is the way many Hispanics translate the word “Magick” propagated by Crowley, was also found in the graffiti. Crowley used the word “Magick” and not “Magic” to differentiate his beliefs from vulgar illusionism. Also, he wanted to recover what he viewed as more archaic writing (Haining 1972; Ruiz 2023, Gutierrez 2025).



Figure 3. Media screenshots of the Chilean social revolts. **A:** Desecration of Christ figures. **B:** Burning of Christian Catholic Church, where two activists show a sign that reads: Mass time, Sunday at noon. **C:** Burning of a Christian Catholic Church. **D:** Desecration of an image of the Virgin Mary. **E:** Activist showing a satanic hand sign in a Church that is still burning. **F:** Desecration of a Christ figure. All images are in the category of “fair use” for purposes of research and scholarship.

In a personal communication by one of the present authors (JCG) with Chilean Catholic priest Luis Armando Escobar, confirmation of occult-related phenomenon during the revolt was obtained. Escobar is a Chilean exorcist with extensive experience and knowledge in the fields of demonology and satanic cults, and he described signs of the occult that emerged during the Chilean revolts. In his eyes, the major occult-related aspects included targeted desecration and burning of churches and religious images, particularly Jesus Christ and virgin Mary statues and images. Revolt-related chanting “viva el diablo” (hail the devil) by some groups during the revolt were also noted by Escobar as additional evidence of the local presence of Satanism.

There were performances emulating the sacrifice of babies and the mockery of a traditional dance from the North of Chile in honor to the virgin Mary (Baile de la Tirana) by groups dressed like red devils. In the town square of Santiago (Plaza Baquedano), the monument of General Baquedano, a historical Chilean figure, and the tomb of the unknown soldier were desecrated and painted in red emulating blood (Figure 2 and 3).

Regarding idolatry, which is central to pagan religions, a curious dog figure was very popular during the Chilean revolts. The Spanish word for dog is “perro,” and the word for killing is “matar”; “Pacos” is a Chilean colloquial derogative term to refer to the Chilean police force, the Carabineros. “El perro matapacos,” which translates to “the dog that kills policeman,” was then an icon of the Chilean revolts. This dog image was literally idolized during the social revolts by subversive groups. The dog was supposed to be a loyal companion that fought the police force with the subversive groups during revolts that occurred on Friday of every week in Santiago’s town square “Plaza Baquedano.” The dog became such a recognizable icon that merchandise was produced with its image on t-shirts and other items. The dog was represented as a black mixed-breed dog with a red handkerchief around its neck. During demonstrations, statues of the dog were elevated by the demonstrators in the street and moved around as a sacred object. Even some politicians at that time wore t-shirts with the dog’s image (Figure 2).

In summary, there were clear symbols and aspects of occult paganism playing a role in the Chilean revolts. More than this, some of the revolutionary groups had a clear anti-Christian sentiment. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that every demonstrator during those times recognized or was aware of these symbols and aspects of the occult.

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