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The Narrativity of an Inquisitorial Process. The First Trial of Faith against Paula de Eguiluz (Cartagena de Indias, 1623-1626)

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INTRODUCTION

The grave of Paula de Eguiluz is unknown. This tells us that she was a woman of no importance. Everything known about her has remained silent for nearly four centuries, kept in some dusty bundles in the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid. Now, the work of digitalization of the archive has given us access to the complete file, which describes the three trials conducted against her by the Inquisition in the city of Cartagena de Indias between 1623 and 1635. In this work, we will only delve into the first prosecution—223 pages—as this contains enough material to enable an exploration of the narrativity of the inquisitorial process.

As a way of introducing the context, and the character of the protagonist, we let her speak through the notes taken by the scribe in the first trial. Before the court she was asked for her genealogy, and she replied:

...that she was born in the city of Santo Domingo [in 1591], in the house of Diego de Leguisamo, where her mother Guiomar, a Biafran black woman¹, worked as a slave. She knew nothing of her father, her grandparents, or any other relative. She stayed in the same city until she was 13 years old. She was offered as payment of her master's debts to Juan Nieto, who then sold her to Iñigo de Otazo. He took her to Puerto Rico, and she worked for him there for four years. Then his wife had her sent to La Habana because she was jealous of her and did not want her in the house. There she was bought by Juan de Eguiluz, who is still her master, and with whom she was working until her capture by this Holy Inquisition (AHN 1620: 40v-41r).

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¹ Native of Biafra, in the south-east region of Nigeria.

The first reference to the memory of Paula appears in 1899, a few lines from the Chilean historian José Toribio Medina "... swallowing a potion late at night, made of a toad and certain herbs, left her husband inside a closed bedchamber and flew over those worlds, and for this reason was given the same sentence [referred to as 'relaxation', meaning execution]" (Medina 1899: 213-214). Here she was made out to be a remarkable witch, while the charge by the inquisitorial prosecutor gives as many as ten reasons why her acts were justified. And, we emphasize, she had no known husband. The person who shares the bedroom with her at the Copper Mines of Santiago de Cuba is quoted as a witness in the proceedings: Úrsula, a black creole of fourteen years (AHN 1620: 14v-15r).

The next reference is in 1930, when an article by the researcher Francisco Esteve Barba appeared in the journal *Filosofía y Letras*, published by the University of Madrid. Entitled "Witches in America", it was dedicated to Paula de Eguiluz and the personal behavior of the accused (Escandell 1984: 45).

She does not crop up again until 1999, when Luz Adriana Maya Restrepo, in her doctoral thesis written at the Sorbonne under the direction of Jean-Pierre Chrétien, quotes an article entitled "Notes for the study of the female slave rebellion in the Caribbean in the XVII century." The author, taking Paula as a guide, takes a tour around the social situation and the activities of the African American women in the Caribbean—most of them slaves—focusing on practices related to sexuality. Maya Restrepo notes that Paula had learned from the union of three different worlds: from Africa, she knows animist rituals and the manufacture of amulets, from America the uses and healing properties of herbs, and from Europe the traditions of witchcraft and wizardry. The latter appears in *The Odyssey* with Circe, in *The Sorceress* by Theocritus, and in Canidia in *Epode V* by Horace, among other examples.

As we see, we are not dealing with an unknown document, but one that has not been deeply studied. This is explained by the difficulties inherent in transcribing the archaic Spanish language with no orthographic rules. There are 822 pages in the cursive gothic handwriting of several different scribes, each with his own calligraphy. There is also the peculiar difficulty that the only copies of the inquisition records of the trials

performed in Cartagena de Indias are in Madrid, the originals having been lost in a fire. All of which makes access by the Latin-American universities very difficult, in addition to the fact that a huge amount of documentation remains to be studied by the National Archive researchers. Finally, the obscurantist legends of the Inquisition—where everything related with the trials had to remain secret—has tended, according to Ballesteros Gaibrois (Escandell 1984: 41), to divide scholars into detractors and defenders, depending on their sympathy, or lack of it, with certain ideologies or religious interests. The present work will confine itself to the presentation of the text, including clarifications thought to be useful, setting aside judgments.

Therefore, we are not facing a literary character created by an author: Paula de Eguluz is a real woman who lived in the Caribbean in the first half of the 17th century. Given that what makes a novel distinctive is the narration of a story whose basis is the facts provided (Garrido 1993: 27), we have here a text where this is exactly what happens. According to the Russian formalists—and not contradicted by French structuralists—we have the "reason," which even comes with a hero, a crux, a denouement, and plot twists, following Aristotle's rules in the *Poetic*. If we want to critique the trial of faith as a description of Paula's life, we can note that we have as documents the records of the judicial process; therefore it will enlighten the *Rhetoric*, although the inquisitorial prosecutor does not use the enthymeme. He only presents the witnesses' statements as a true testimony of the crime committed by the accused, with none of the persuasive devices that have been used from antiquity (including by Aristotle himself) to the present day. It is known that the orator—the inquisitorial prosecutor—is trustworthy and evinces the truth convincingly, without any doubt about how it appears. In these judicial records, we see a non-artistic *narratio*, a succession of events without the interventions of a writer's opinions—many scribes are describing what they see—and typical of the forensic style, whose purpose is to clarify the facts, avoiding all types of fable-like arguments.

And, in fact, of all the characteristics shown in the *Poetics*, the mimesis is excluded, as there is no need of imitation because we face actual facts. Neither do we need to find harmony and rhythm, as this is not a structure that seeks beauty. There is, though, some unity in the action when we find a presentation (first declaration of witnesses), a crux of the matter (the development of the trial), and a denouement (the sentence). In this precise process, moreover, we see the plot twist, when the resolution defies our expectations.

The text offers no reason to refer to other classic works like Horace's "Epistle to the Pisos", included in *Ars Poetica*, as there is no balance between *res* and *verba*, there is no *decorum*, and no intention, neither in the *docere* nor in the *delectare*. We are indeed not

facing a literary work *per se*: it is a text with a social narrative, including the collective imaginary. Literary theory brings us to Cicero when he says: "The narrative that deals with people is the one that makes people talk and shows their nature". We see this in the list of witnesses that will testify before the commissioner of the Holy Inquisition in Santiago de Cuba, and in what the accused herself says before the inquisitor. In this trial of faith's long list of characters we see all the strata of Cartagena society, so it is the story not only of Paula's life but also that of the world around her, where she lives and where she belongs. In this setting of space and time, there is also room for imagination. As Tomás Albaladejo accurately puts it, all three possible "world models" are presented: there is the mundane reality with rules and instructions that can be empirically verified, a reality containing a plausible fiction that resembles the objective world, and a world of far-fetched fiction that can only exist in a mind full of fantasy (1992: 49-52).

The trial presents us with two levels of reality: the vision of the tribunal, transmitter of the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church, is confronted by the survival resources of a black slave who had lived under several masters before she was reported to the commissioner of the Holy Inquisition in Santiago de Cuba. After the Council of Trent, the Church sought more vigorously to control the religious life of the people. Philip II supported these efforts, and the Inquisition, in order to obtain more political power, put at his disposal all its resources: its network of tribunals and their procedures, its effective police methods, and its experience in the techniques of communication and mass manipulation (Dedieu 1999: 81). In the process, the hegemonic culture confronted the popular culture and tried to re-integrate what it considered a lower subculture; this inclusion was done either by completely distorting their messages or by using violence (Ginzburg 1966: 13).

When the Spanish arrived in America, they brought not only an official culture but also popular ancestral customs, which included superstitious rituals related to indigenous traditions and African spiritualist rituals, and summed up in two principal activities: love charms and healing through herbs. This natural and ritual medicine was mixed with Christian traditions, a fact that led the Inquisition to see the influence of the devil (Amodio 2013: 115). We must not forget that the Inquisition was a religious court with a specialized jurisdiction and its actions had effects on every social level, as religion was the basis of the official culture, in which political power was directly linked to what it was sacred (Escandell 1984: 224-225). In the text we find proof of the separation between the official culture and the popular one in the two types of language. The educated, literate language is seen in all the procedural expressions, the prosecutor's charge, the interrogations and the sentence on one side, and the popular language reflects the characteristics of an oral culture.

The primary basis of the accusation is the statement by the twelve witnesses, who include three religious men — a Franciscan brother, a priest, and a sacristan—and two military men: a lieutenant and a prison soldier. They are all Spaniards and assure the tribunal that they know how to read and write. We also have seven illiterate women: two Spanish married women, a creole slave, an Indian woman, and three black underage girls aged 12 to 14. It is noticeable that none of the women who testify knows how to write. The written culture has hegemony over the oral one, and there was a bond between writing and power that had existed since antiquity, when the knowledge of writing was a monopoly of the bureaucratic and clerical elites (Ginzburg 1981: 125).

During the last third of the 20th century, these situations aroused the interest of historians, anthropologists, and sociologists, who found in three different sources—literature, notary protocols, and inquisition court records—enough material to write an unpublished social story. In the study of marginalization looked at minorities, displaced people, women and poor people, the most representative leader was Michel Foucault (García Cárcel 1990: 179-1899). The 'History of Mentalities' was one of the concepts guiding the new 'postmodernity', and it was subjected to a severe methodological critique by outstanding intellectuals such as Antonio García Berrio. In an interview with professor Enrique Baena Peña (ABC 2007: 14), García does not hide his suspicion of the tendency to impose limitations and narrow margins on the study of the immensity of literature and universal art (García Berrio 2009: 775 ss; Baena 2016). Agreeing with that, we also have Josep Fontana who, talking about micro-history and quoting the work of Carlo Ginzburg, Natalie Z. Davies and Robert Darnton, argues that they do not enhance our understanding of the society in which they lived and can only be treated as a literary narrative (Fontana 2013: 151-152). This brings us to the relation between inquisition records and literature, where each researcher works towards different objectives. Witchcraft is almost not treated in Spanish literature—only fifteen references in the large production of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries—and the inquisition records cannot be treated as fiction, despite many real testimonies being full of fantastical narratives (Lara 2015: 41-65). This idea of fiction in the declarations of the trials against witches and sorcerers can be seen in the work of Anglo-Saxon researchers like M. Gaskill, who defines them as "Storytellers" (2001: 56), and R. Rowland, who uses the word "Folktales" (1998: 179). They take us to a shared imaginary, where prosecutors took these stories to be accurate and the defendants told them as their testimony or played active, participatory roles in the drama of persecution.

Despite all this complexity, if we follow the approach of García Berrio and Baena Peña, we find compelling the interdisciplinary methodology between

history, anthropology, sociology, and literary critics. This especially applies to their interest in the common people's everyday lives and the change of paradigm when we set aside the history of governors, with their political and military achievements, and focus on the governed (Henningsen 1988: 35-50). One of these reluctant subjects of the Crown is Paula de Eguluz, and her known history begins with the arrest warrant issued by the prosecutor of the Inquisition at Cartagena de Indias:

The graduate Domingo Vélez de Assas y Argos, prosecutor of this Holy Inquisition, says that, according to the Books and Register, I declare against Paula, black woman and slave of Joan de Eguluz, Governing Mayor of the Copper Mines of his Majesty in the administration of Cuba, that she seems to have committed crimes against our holy Catholic faith and evangelical law. Therefore, I request and beg that your Honor commands her arrest and brings her to the secret prisons of this Inquisition with all her remaining assets, and proceeds against her as it may be convenient. I ask for justice, the graduate Domingo Vélez de Assas y Argos.

In the morning hearing of the Holy Inquisition of Cartagena de Indias, the twenty-second of March of the year 1624, being in it the Lord Inquisitor, Doctor Agustín de Ugarte Saravia, was present the graduate Domingo Vélez de Assas y Argos, prosecutor of this Holy Inquisition, and presented this request and the information mentioned in it. It was presented before the Lord Inquisitor, and he said he will see it and provide justice. Here stands Luis Blanco de Salcedo [secretary] (AHN 1620: 2r-2v).

We will now outline the sequential and narrative-procedural structure of the trial of faith, where the legal procedure established to determine the innocence or guilt of the accused is rigorously pursued. It must be pointed out that Paula lives in the Copper Mines, next to the city of Santiago de Cuba, and the procedure is carried out in Cartagena de Indias, headquarters of the tribunal established in 1610. It had under its jurisdiction the north of the Viceroyalty of Peru, which the Bourbons later named Nueva Granada, and all the Caribbean islands. Hence, all the facts under trial happened in the island of Cuba, 1,137 kilometers away from the court of justice, which illustrates both the administrative structure developed by the Holy Inquisition to maintain social control (Pits 1976: 160-171), and the fact that the final testimonies, the procedural narrative, and its conclusion, were all intended to be exemplary.

Before detailing all the structure of the trial of faith and its constituent parts we must note, following the paradigms of Propp's narrative functions (Propp 1971), that the text follows Aristotle's 'unity of action': "... in the fable [...] the action has to be one and whole, and the parts have to be assembled in a way that, if one of them is transposed or suppressed, the whole becomes broken and disrupted" (1999: 50). In the text we can see that the three parts of a narrative are completely differentiated. We have, first, the



introduction, from the issuing of the warrant for Paula's arrest until she enters the secret prisons of the tribunal in Cartagena de Indias (AHN 1620: 1r-37r). Here we find the following Propp's functions:

- "Delivery" and "Reconnaissance", when the antagonist—the tribunal—receives information about the protagonist and orders her capture;
- "prohibition" and "violation": Paula does not respect some of the rules;
- "trickery": the tribunal captures Paula and confiscates her valuable assets;
- "mediation", "acceptation," and "departure", the harm is made public and Paula is relocated.

We can itemize the process as follows:

- The inquisitorial prosecutor, according to the evidence, requests prison and seizure of valuable assets. (C.I.²)
 - The tribunal of the Holy Inquisition receives the request. (C.I.)
 - Witnesses (S.C.³):
1. Brother Matías de Jesus, Franciscan friar, 106 years old, testifies about the death of a newborn girl, divination of the future and that Paula, transformed into a goat, is a witch.
 2. Ana María, Indian, 36 years old, illiterate, mother of the dead little girl, declares that Paula is responsible for the death, by witchcraft.
 3. Marcela, black creole and slave, 13-14 years old, illiterate, about the theft of bones from a church for making medicine for master.
 4. Polonia, creole and slave, 12 years old, illiterate, declares the same.
 5. Catalina Ramos, spouse of a prison soldier and official tailor, 33 years old, illiterate, testifies about the death of Ana Maria's daughter.
 6. Ursula, black creole, 14 years old, illiterate, Paula's roommate testifies about her nights out, a hidden unguent, and that it is known that she is a witch.
 7. Francisca de Alba, Doña, married, 19 years old, illiterate, about the girl's death, the bone theft, and the jump that Paula makes through a window without being hurt. Paula is a witch and her master is bewitched.
 8. Francisco Lopez, black, sacristan, 53 years old. Testifies about scandal at the gates of the Church. Paula does not go to mass.
 9. Joan de Góngora, priest of the mines, 53 years old, testifies about the weight felt by a man who slept at Paula's house and who saw black cats. Talks about Paula's nights out and that she does not go to mass.
 10. Damián de la Cruz, creole and slave, 42 years old, illiterate, head Shephard at Barajagua, saw Paula

two nights in a row far away from the mines. She is a witch.

11. Joan de Larrea, lieutenant of the mines, 48 years old, states what he has heard about the death of a girl and that Paula does not go to mass.
12. Miguel de Rojas, prison soldier, over 50 years old, talks about a disturbance in a flock of sheep on a stormy night, caused by Paula the witch.

(All declarations with the corresponding ratification).

- Arrest warrant and seizure of her assets. (C.I.)
- Valuable goods inventory. (S.C.)
- Request to Paula's master for 50 pesos for provisions and travel expenses. (S.C.)
- Refusal by Joan de Eguiluz to give any money. (S.C.)
- Auction of the confiscated clothes, several attempts. (S.C.)
- Agreement with the master of the frigate on payment upon arrival for his transporting the prisoner. (S.C.)
- Imprisoning of Paula. (C.I.)

The central part of the narrative, the crux, begins with Paula's first appearance in front of the court of justice and ends with her complete confession, acceptance of punishment, and her request for pardon and mercy. Here we have what Propp calls "testing" and "reaction". Paula is interrogated by the prosecutor and answers the witnesses; "struggle", is the confrontation between the prosecutor and the accused.

It can be itemized as follows:

- *1st hearing*: Paula, black woman, slave, 33 years old. She accused herself of:
 - Incest
 - Belief in dreams and premonitions.
 - Using herbs for loving purposes, which she confessed.
 - Making a remedy for her master's fevers with bones of dead bodies, rosemary, and orange peels.

Information is given about:

- Paula's genealogy.
- Her baptism as a Catholic.
- Her illiteracy, she does not know about forbidden books.

She is given her first warning,

- *2nd hearing*: Nothing more to say; she is given her second warning.
- *3rd hearing*: Use of herbs for loving purposes. Third warning.

Accusation of the prosecutor:

- Baptized Catholic.
- Death of a girl.
- Fortune teller.

² Cartagena de Indias.

³ Santiago de Cuba.

- Bone theft from a corpse in a church
- Spent nights out and does not enter through the door.
- Threw herself through a window and was not hurt.
- She is called a sorceress at the gates of a church.
- A slave in the mines says she committed crimes.
- Storm and flock stirring.

Paula hides her crimes. Her conviction is requested.

• 1st hearing: Accused's answers:

- Explains that all the accusations are simply the results of evil and envy.
- Was punished by her mistress, went to the river to commit suicide, and heard a voice.
- The demon lifted her up in the air.
- Does not know spells.
- Sometimes does not go to the mass because she has a lot of work.
- Designation of her defence lawyer.

• 2nd hearing:

- Beaten by her master and not correctly healed, heard voices in an orchard.
- Use of the herb *spreading hogweed* for loving purposes.
- Mercy is promised to her if she confesses the truth.
- Argument with sergeant Garibay.
- Hears demon's voices, and the devil presents himself with a female body.
- The devil asks for her soul, and she gives it to him.
- Night-time flights.
- The devil asks her to commit suicide.
- As a devotee, she repents and confesses.
- She believes in the promises of the devil.
- She repents again.

3rd hearing:

- After some trouble with sergeant Garibay, the devil comes back and asks her for his soul.
- The defence lawyer advises her to tell the whole truth. He leaves the room.
- She declares that she has told everything, and the lawsuit concludes.

The testimony of the twelve witnesses is written again in the record.

Paula's answers in the order in which the witnesses statements were given:

- Denies that she hurt the child.
- She is neither a witch nor has bewitched her master.
- The devil did tell her that her master would be coming come to the bay of Nipe.
- In the mines, she has many enemies who envy her because the master likes her.

- She did not take the bones out of the grave; she found them in front of one of the doors of the church.
- She does apply unguents to her body before meeting a man.
- Her master wanted to punish her and she jumped out of a window, falling in the sea and hurting herself.
- The devil asked for her soul in exchange for whatever she desired.
- The devil commanded Paula to do some things, but she does not do them.
- The devil asks her to leave the faith and have him as her unique lord. She refuses.
- They would not let her out because, as a slave, she had done something wrong, and they would not let her out. The master's daughter wanted to punish her.
- She has never transformed herself into an animal.

The accused's answers are given in a statement to the defence lawyer.

Confession:

- Apparition of the devil as a white man and first sexual intercourse with him.
- Attends the first meeting. Rituals and denial of her faith.
- Unguents and night-time flights.
- Rituals in the second meeting.
- Third meeting, sees black cats or dogs. The devil wants sexual intercourse, and she refuses.
- She caused the death of Ana Maria's daughter, acting on behalf of the devil.

Paula asks the inquisitor for help. The demons talk to her in prison, telling her to deny everything she had said, but she refuses, and they erase her memory.

Paula asks for the salvation of her soul, an interrogation begins, and she confesses the whole truth:

- She recognized the devil as her master for a year and five months.
- She denied God and set herself aside from the Catholic faith.
- During the meetings, she did rituals of submission to the devil, denial of the faith and bad actions towards people and harvests.
- She killed a newborn following the devil's commands.
- She caused misfortune for married couples.
- She transformed into an animal.
- At that time, sometimes she attended mass secretly and saw neither the priest, the chalice, nor the host.
- The devil brought her the unguent.
- An Indian taught her the use of herbs.
- She believed in the devil's promises and thought she was not sinning.

- She told of the food in the meetings and the orgies.
- She claims repentance. She wants to stay in the Church and the salvation of her soul.
- She devoted herself to the devil because she was desperate.
- She promises not to go back to trickeries and fake promises to the devil.
- She accepts she will be punished. Begs for forgiveness and mercy.

In this central part, when Paula recounts her experiences, there are echoes of Aristotle's *aesthesis* (1999: 51) as we feel compassion at certain points: Doña Francisca de Alba declares that when Paula was in La Habana with her master, he was going to hit her with a sword and she threw herself out of a window (AHN 1620: 17v). At one point, Paula remembers that: "...she was reprimanded and punished by her bored and furious mistress; and because of that she left and went to the riverside, which is close to the house, and was sitting there crying when she felt the impulse to throw herself in the river." (AHN 1620: 50v). At another point, she confesses that she did not obey all the devil's commands, as he once said: "take that rope and hang yourself" (AHN 1620: 55v). All these facts, which arouse fear and compassion towards the accused, are presented unexpectedly as they contradict the witnesses' testimonies, which consist only of horrible things about her.

The last part of the narrative, the denouement, begins when the defence lawyer states that Paula has no excuse for her crimes, she regrets them and begs for mercy from the tribunal because she wants to live and die in the faith of Christ (AHN 1620: 87r- 88r). Here we find several of Propp's categories. We have "rescue", when Paula asks for forgiveness and mercy and she is heard; "punishment", when several sentences are imposed on her; "solution" and "recognition", when she does what it is commanded in the sentence and the wrong is forgiven; finally "transfiguration", when Paula is set free. In the text, we have sixteen of the thirty-one functions Propp claimed to identify as narrative elements.

The lawsuit concludes the sentence agreed between all the members of the tribunal is as follows:

By unanimous decision they agreed that, as it is a public trial of faith, she must attend mass in the local church, or in the major church of this city on a Sunday or a holiday, and she must be admitted in order to be reconciled, and there hear her sentence, and leave with a witch's badge. And on another day, she is to be punished with two hundred lashes through the public streets of this city. She must wear the reconciling habit for two years, and serve this period at the General Hospital of this city. She will be exiled for life from the island of Santiago de Cuba. It was stated in front of me, Luis Blanco de Salcedo, secretary (AHN 1620: 88v-89r).

The facts of the accusation are proved, and her repentance is accepted. Paula is reconciled with the Church and the sentence is imposed. The accused swears an oath and she is absolved, watched by the city dignitaries. She receives the agreed lashes as a penance, and she is advised of the punishment that awaits her if she breaks her promises.

Two years later, two priests who work at the hospital are called by the tribunal. They both assure them that Paula has faithfully accomplished her penance and behaved as a good Christian.

In the morning hearing of the Holy Inquisition of Cartagena, the fifth day of December of 1626, being in it the lord Inquisitor, Doctor Agustin de Ugarte Sarabia, having seen the information gathered in this Holy Tribunal regarding the accomplishment of the penance imposed on Paula de Eguluz, black slave of the Governing Mayor Joan de Eguluz, reconciled by him.

I command that, as she has accomplished the time agreed, the stigma upon her may be withdrawn, and she is advised about how grateful she must be at the great grace of Our Lord and at the mercy she has received by this tribunal, and the danger she would be in if she falls back into her witch's sect or any other heresy. And she cannot leave the kingdoms and estates of his Majesty. Here, Luis Blanco de Salcedo, secretary.

And then, [...] being present in this hearing Paula de Eguluz herself, reconciled as she has heard and understood what has been said in the Trial from the mouth of Lord Inquisitor Agustín de Ugarte, she promised to accomplish it, and being always a devoted and true Catholic, not leaving the realms of his Majesty, she removed the penitential sign from her shoulders and left it on the dock of the tribunal, as I attest, Luis Blanco de Salcedo, secretary. It will stay in the secret chamber of this Inquisition of Cartagena de Indias, as I signed according to it. Joan de Prioste Araos, secretary (AHN 1620: 111r-111v).

The story of Paula is not too far distant in some ways from situations that arise nowadays. Although the Inquisition as an institution was abolished more than two hundred years ago, there are traces of its stories in the contemporary world, its mentality, and its desire to make examples of people, which are not different from the eternal conflict between freedom and intransigence, where the dominant man imposes himself and deals with ideological and personal antagonisms.

Paula's life would have no interest if it were an isolated case, just an anecdote. But it illuminates both the imaginative and cathartic on the one hand and the life-conditions of black Caribbean slave women on the other hand: their suffering and their meager chances of survival. Furthermore, Paula is the paradigm of the "witch hunt" that was so common in the western world from medieval times onwards. She belongs to a group of people who are not completely members of society, having a minimum value, due to her slave condition, so it is safe to condemn her as a sacrifice victim, as no one

will defend her or search for vengeance (Girard 1983: 19-21).

We can also highlight something unnoticed during the trial: submission and rebellion. Paula hears the voice of the devil in a moment of desperation after being abused by her master and, willing to commit suicide, she hears the devil promise her freedom. She has so poorly absorbed Christian doctrine that she does not fully understand the reward that awaits her in Heaven after death.

Returning to narrative theory, and Propp's functions, we must explore more deeply the problem of the relationship between fantasy and the real world. Where are the limits of literature, in fiction and in the imitation of reality? (Garrido 1993: 28-29). Or, which part of life itself is an illusion? In the trial, we can see alternative worlds, each of which is understood as rational reality by its adherents. Following Albaladejo's theory of the "world model", we have in the text a range of objective facts—in the people, the court and so on—upon which the participants have built their imaginaries: their dreams, desires, fears... (Albaladejo 1992: 52-58). Alongside the evidence of the tribunal and its members, of witnesses and accused, of specific facts in a physical and temporal space—all being demonstrable circumstances—we find a "plausible fiction" in the presumed fortune-telling, the use of formulas with healing powers, the unguents with loving purposes. And it goes further, a non-believable reality, based on wonders like the personification of the devil—with the shape of a man, a woman, and a male goat—night-time flights, covens, animal metamorphosis. This last "world", which is pure fantasy to us, was believable and true for the people appearing in the trial, beginning with the members of the tribunal, and the institution that most strongly believed in the devil was the catholic Church (Caro 1993: 98-99). It continues with an accused and witnesses from the lowest social level, who are vulnerable, easily influenced, obedient, and without any intellectual education, therefore rooted in an ancestral culture with a superstitious tradition.

Following the thematic approach, the three kinds of plots described by Friedman appear in the text: action, character, and thought (1975). We see that interest in the action is directed towards how the events evolve and how the conflict is resolved. Regarding character, we see the accused change after being brought before the tribunal. She modifies her testimonies to avoid the obstacles placed in front of her by the Inquisition attorney. In a mature narrative process that leads to the "plot of thought", when we deepen in the knowledge of the situation, we see her modifying her behavior, adapting herself on the advice of the defence lawyer to a strategy that fits the aims of the tribunal. Paula admits she has been a witch and accepts her blame. Here we may be reminded that, in her

understanding of what is sacred, influenced by the primitive universe she came from, fortune takes an important role, punishing humans with violence or spreading blessings on them (Girard 1983: 328). On the other hand, the Cristian doctrine—and her defence lawyer—push her towards repentance and the plea for mercy, achieving a sentence much less severe than expected. When, after two years in the hospital, she withdraws the stigma upon her, she leaves the condition of slave and exits the tribunal as a free woman.

In conclusion, we must note something latent in all this work: we face a "direct testimony". In the 19th century, photography showed us the true image of many people without the need of a painter's portrait, and in the 20th century, we have video and audio recordings. In the trial of faith of Paula de Eguluz, we can also know directly what the participants say in the process without intermediaries. This direct communication between people who lived in the 17th century and ourselves reveals their behaviors, their economic and spiritual determinants, their beliefs and ideologies. We have before us a valuable, unpublished document to illuminate all these fields.

We might agree with the opponents of postmodernism when they say that this kind of inquisitorial record cannot be interpreted as a historical reference but rather as material about narrative, *per se*, using our knowledge of its historicity. But we also think that with our adaptation of the text to the present linguistic rules and the avoidance of obvious, continuous and perceptive repetitions of the process, it can offer the scholars—historians, anthropologists, sociologists, philologists—material for the discursive and symbolic study of an original text that exemplifies many of the characteristics of the narrative, allowing us to read it in many different ways.

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