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Performing double-edged stories: the three trials of Paula de Eguiluz

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La octava fue PAULA DE EGUILUZ, reconciliada que ha sido otra vez por este Santo Oficio, por bruja [...]. No se acabó de leer su causa porque no se oía con el grande murmullo de la gente y así se le tocó la campanilla al lector. [...] Esta causa era la mayor y más grave de todas.

Relación del Auto de Fe, 25 March 1638, Cartagena de Indias¹

Y después de reconciliada ha continuado el mismo ejercicio de curar con ensalmos, bendiciones, y oraciones aplicando algunas cosas naturales, que siempre lo hizo así. Y lo que peor es que lo ha hecho a ciencia y paciencia de los inquisidores licenciado Juan Ortiz y don Juan Pereira cada uno en su tiempo. Y en algunas ocasiones con mandato y licencia de ambos, quedándose muchas noches y días en casa de los enfermos, saliendo en una silla de manos sin el hábito penitencial, vistiendo oro [...] mantellina coral. Y los mismos inquisidores se han curado a veces con ella. Y don Fray Christóbal de Lazárraga con licencia y mandato del inquisidor don Juan Pereira la tuvo en su casa más de veinte días curándole en dicha forma y sin hábito. Y es tanto lo que esto le vale que tiene dinero considerable. Y suele dar limosnas a sus compañeros presos y presas porque la quieren bien generalmente en el lugar.

Carta de Fray Pedro Medina Rico al Consejo de la Suprema,
31 May 1649²

'Hechicera, sortilega, y apostata de la fe'

When the African-descent woman Paula de Eguiluz appeared in the auto de fe in Cartagena de Indias on 25 March 1638, together with nine Portuguese men convicted of practicing Judaism, it was only Paula de Eguiluz's sentence that evoked an uproar from the crowd. The special treatment that Medina Rico reported a decade after her conviction attests to the authority she had garnered even among the elite residents of Cartagena. Born into slavery, she was brought by the Inquisition to Cartagena from Cuba in 1624 on charges of witchcraft. She served a two-year sentence in the Hospital of San Sebastián and then settled into the multi-ethnic neighborhood of Getsemaní. Over the subsequent six years, Paula developed a successful career in herbal healing and love remedies.³ Her master, Juan de Eguiluz, granted Paula her freedom around 1630.⁴ According to her own testimony, Paula was working as a washerwoman and *curandera* when, at age forty, she was arrested for a second time on suspicion of sorcery and apostasy.⁵

By the auto de fe of 1638, Paula had spent six years awaiting the outcome of her second and third trials. The Supreme Council of the Inquisition had mandated the third trial, questioning the Cartagena inquisitor's decision to sentence Paula to be relaxed to the secular authorities to be executed. During her long wait, this intelligent and charismatic

woman persisted in the memory of Cartagena's denizens, maintaining relationships and exercising influence inside and outside the jail. Her prominence within a broad network of ritual specialists is suggested by the number of Afrodescendant women who reported having gone to her to learn spells, Paula's role in organizing a well-attended funeral celebration for a local *brujo* (*Segunda causa*, 21r), and Medina Rico's report above.

The importance of Paula's case to the Cartagena Inquisition and the fact that it provoked disagreement between the Cartagena inquisitors and the Supreme Council in Madrid resulted in the preservation of the full transcript of the three trials. These 822 folios, housed in the Archivo Histórico de la Nación (Madrid), allow an in-depth study of the dynamic interactions within the Tribunal. The transcript has already served as an important source for understanding the religious beliefs, practices, and cultural resistance by communities of African descent in colonial Cartagena. It also sheds light on the ways in which the Inquisition used accusations of witchcraft as a means of racially based social control and imposed the European imaginary of the witches' sabbath onto the activities of African-descent people in the Nuevo Reino de Granada.⁶ Finally, the transcripts have brought to light the agency that women in Cartagena de Indias exercised over their own sexuality. Of particular note is the work of historians Diana Luz Ceballos Gómez (1994, 2002), Luz Adriana Maya Restrepo (2005), Cristina María Navarrete (1997, 2003), and Nicole Von Germeten (2013), which deeply inform my analysis.

I draw vital insights from the scholarship of historians as I analyze the trial proceedings from the perspective of performance studies, looking specifically at how Paula de Eguiluz exercised agency through storytelling.⁷ These archival documents provide a unique and compelling window onto the inter-cultural learning process of one colonial subject, which promises to shed light generally on the agency exercised by subordinated groups in the colonial contact zone: how they learned about elite society and how they deployed that knowledge in the performance of identity and social roles, manipulating knowledge of racialized stories within the social politics of empire.

Storytelling is a fundamental practice by which human beings give meaning to our lives, not only in the carefully elaborated narratives of oral and written traditions, but also through the more spontaneous stories we tell every day. I begin by looking at storytelling as a socially situated practice that has a particular audience, purpose, and consequences, in which the circumstances mediate what is told and how the teller arranges and rearranges a story over time (Gubrium and Holstein 2009). Storytelling within everyday life is culturally informed: the teller uses 'shared resources of rhetoric and narrative [...] to generate recognizable, plausible, and culturally well-informed accounts' (Atkinson 1997).

As a social activity, telling stories is performative. The storyteller draws on a repertoire of signifying practices and deploys them within a specific scenario (Taylor 2003). Inquisition scenarios—hearings and autos de fe—can be read as structured interactions that expressed cultural paradigms, worked with recognized plots and produced anticipated, 'though adaptable' outcomes. The Inquisition repertoire was especially well-defined, ritualistic, and even theatrical. The culturally constructed scenarios produced meanings, which in turn constituted social interactions and influenced their outcomes.

Within the Inquisition scenarios, storytellers—the accused, witnesses, prosecutor, defense attorney, sentencing inquisitor, and secretaries—performed twice-behaved behavior (see Schechner 2010). That is, they enacted elements of ritual repertoires that had been performed multiple times. These repertoires were well scripted in Inquisition manuals.

Fernando Valdés's *Compilación de las instrucciones del Oficio de la Santa Inquisición* (1561), used in Cartagena de Indias, provided detailed instructions on procedure. Pablo García's *Orden que comunmente se guarda en el Santo Oficio de la Inquisición* (1622) laid out detailed templates for the wording of interrogations and transcriptions of the trial. The performance of these paradigmatic scripts, in turn, produced exemplary subjects for the business of empire, including the negative model of the Afrodescendant, threat to colonial order, at times resistant, at others repentant and reformed.

Scenarios of judicial processes set particular circumstances and stakes around the telling of stories:

Most obviously, narratives at trial are in competition. [...] Witnesses, moreover, do not usually tell their stories as uninterrupted narratives. All stories must be elicited by a series of questions and answers, and the form of questioning and answering is governed by an elaborate system of rules. (Gewirtz 1998)

Though Gewirtz refers to the adversarial system of the United States, the Inquisition process, too, produced stories that competed for acceptance of their truth-value, as their creators shaped stories despite the interruptions of interrogatories and multiple hearings. Often the adversarial relations within the Inquisition trials also expressed the differing and conflicted cultures of storytelling of the contact zones of empire.

These conflicts centered Paula de Eguiluz's confessional storytelling, which fills a full third of the trial transcripts. Paula's primary audience members were the inquisitors, her primary purpose, self-defense. In Cartagena, the Inquisition had already developed a pattern of racialized prosecution, where the charge of witchcraft—as opposed to sorcery—was used to stigmatize groups that threatened the social order, particularly Afrodescendants (Ceballos Gómez 1994). Thus the competing stories in this scenario took on not only the stakes of the Church against the individual heretic or apostate, but also the stakes of the social groups they represented. The stories performed in the Tribunal participated in the constitution of unequal and exploitative social relations.

Within the violent scenario of the contact zone, Paula learned and performed the expected stories that allowed her to adopt the paradigm of the submissive imperial subject. These were primarily the European stories of witchcraft and the performance of the remorseful sinner who desired reconciliation with the Church. Paula faced a delicate balancing act. She had to admit guilt in order to conclude her story with convincing remorse. At the same time, admitting guilt required her to place herself within the fantastical imaginary of the diabolical and dangerous witch, an imaginary that contributed to the ideology of European superiority and fed a violence-provoking fear of difference. The fact that her confessions in the three trials spanned more than ten years (1624–1635) provides a fascinating opportunity to study the process by which she learned the stories, then deployed, elaborated on and twisted them into an unsettling, if local, critique of the myth of European superiority. I argue that eventually Paula combined a successful story of the repentant sinner with stories that indicted the racist hypocrisy of the colonial society that brought her to trial, incited the fears of the elites, and held up to the Church a mirror displaying the weaknesses inherent in its mechanisms of social control.

I begin with the known argument that the inquisitors themselves taught the accused the stories that would satisfy their witch-crazed view of the world.⁸ They taught this European imaginary through their lengthy and detailed accusations and by probing the accused's

statements with leading questions. Prisoners also taught each other the proper confessional content in the not-so-secret cells of the Inquisition jail. Thus in her first trial, Paula learned the codes of the European witches' sabbath as well as the properly repentant and self-denigrating performance that earned a relatively light sentence. While in her second trial, Paula de Eguiluz still followed these scripts, yet the authority she had earned meanwhile within her community and even among white elites was evident. She now dared to question colonial hypocrisy and play on the inquisitors' fears. She challenged the imperial racial habitus by depicting Cartagena society in general, and one white elite woman in particular, as immoral. She reinforced this by recounting the general immorality that her devil companion Mantelillos had carefully observed. She presented such voluble confessions of her own 'crimes' and denounced so many companions that the inquisitors spoke fearfully of a 'complicidad grande de brujas,'⁹ a conspiracy that reached beyond *casta* society to corrupt women of the white colonial elite. Finally, Paula deployed the inquisitors' stereotypes of their colonial subjects, connecting alleged witchcraft to the maroon communities surrounding Cartagena, which frightened the European-descent elite.¹⁰ In her third trial, Paula spoke much less, but she stood firm in synthesizing earlier arguments and defending herself against the damning accusations by her competitor, the mulatto surgeon Diego López. In all three trials, Paula consulted with a lawyer, yet this relationship had little effect on the bulk of the stories she told: she was only allowed to name her advocate after hearing her accusation, so although he could advise her on her responses to the accusation, by then she had already spun most of her narrative defense.

Cartagena in the 1620s and 1630s

Paula de Eguiluz recounted the stories in her own defense within the walls of a demographically diverse port city, principal slave port for the Spanish world. In 1630, about 1,800–2,000 Europeans lived in Cartagena, ninety percent of whom were Spanish and about ten percent Portuguese (Garrido 2007). Many of the Portuguese slave merchants living in Cartagena had fallen under suspicion of practicing Judaism. There were also pockets of Irish Catholics and Protestants of various nationalities (Von Germeten 2013; Álvarez Alonso 1997). At the beginning of the 1600s, 3,191 indigenous people were reported as living in the district. The number of African-descent residents is hard to calculate, but it is estimated that in the 1620s about 1,400 blacks lived in the city and 8,000–10,000 in the region (Pacheco 1959; Ruiz Rivera 2007).

The overwhelming presence of Africans and their descendants in Cartagena is key to understanding both the precariousness that white colonizers felt as well as the critique that Paula de Eguiluz performed. Thousands of enslaved Africans passed through the port city: some stayed; some escaped to the maroon communities that surrounded Cartagena (Navarrete 2003). Those who lived in the region built public edifices, mined gold, served households, worked as artisans and produced food on surrounding ranches that supplied Cartagena (Landers 2013). A significant free black population inhabited the city, many of whose members lived in the neighborhood of Getsemaní, connected to Cartagena by a single bridge. The African-descent women of Getsemaní, some of whom were property-owning heads of household (Garrido 2007), made up Paula's community and included fellow healers and ritual specialists.¹¹ This prevalence and power unnerved the

city's whites. In 1620, Bishop Diego de Torres Altamirano identified Getsemaní as the place where the most scandalous people of the city lived (Martínez Reyes 1986).

Another aspect of Cartagena society linked these African-descent women to the whites' sense of precariousness. Illness, death, pestilence, and the devil stimulated some of the greatest fears of the times (Garrido 2007). Port life engendered an uncontrollable disease environment (Solano Alonso 1998). Ten epidemics lashed the city between 1580 and 1700, including small pox, spotted fever, yellow fever, and measles (Vidal Ortega 2002). Frequent or chronic illnesses included syphilis, dysentery, diverse fevers, and abscesses. Spaniards and Creoles saw the sorcery and witchcraft of *casta* women at the root of much of this suffering, but still elites sought out folk healers to cure their illnesses (Solano Alonso 2007; Gómez 2014).

Such was the city to which Paula de Eguiluz was brought in 1624 from the copper-mining community of Santiago del Prado in Cuba to be tried by the Inquisition for witchcraft. Paula brought a wealth of experience on which she drew to navigate the daunting circumstances of an Inquisition trial in a strange city. She was born on the island of Santo Domingo to an enslaved Cazanga woman named Guiomar and a freed Bañón man named Cristóbal (*Segunda causa*, 40r). She lived in the house of her mother's owner, Diego de Leguizamón, until in her teens, when she was purchased by Íñigo de Otaza, whom she served in Puerto Rico for several years until, because of a jealous wife, she was sold in Havana to Juan de Eguiluz.¹²

Paula de Eguiluz lived on three Caribbean islands as a household slave to three men engaged in the conflictive politics of empire. Her first owner was likely the same Diego de Leguizamón who was an inspector for the Audiencia in Santo Domingo in 1588 (Ispizúa 1914) and the chief justice for the city of Santiago de los Caballeros in 1617.¹³ Her second owner, Íñigo de Otaza, was the general trustee in Puerto Rico and the owner of a sugar mill in Bayamón. He also held offices of procurator general, judge, chief justice, and town councilor (Cazull 2008). In 1608, Otaza became deeply entangled in a power struggle between local elites and the imperial administration. Paula's last owner, Juan de Eguiluz, who held the post of accountant for the royal treasury, was also embroiled in local politics when he took over the administration of the mines of Santiago del Prado, met resistance, and eventually drove the mines to financial ruin (Macías Domínguez 1978). Paula de Eguiluz claimed to have been the lover of both Otaza and Eguiluz (*Tercer proceso*, 86). While we cannot know to what political machinations Paula was privy, we do know that conversations between white men and their *casta* lovers could turn to political matters.¹⁴

The first trial: learning the required story

The trial transcripts illuminate Paula de Eguiluz's gradual process of learning and developing her story.¹⁵ The Inquisition's rule of secrecy highlights this process, as prisoners were not presented with an accusation until after at least three hearings and monitions, the latter requiring them to confess all their crimes against the Church. When Paula appeared at her first four hearings she seemed not to know why she had been arrested. The event that spurred the denunciations in Cuba was the death of a newborn, which the community transformed into an act of murder, achieved by Paula's having 'sucked' the baby's navel. The rumor mill cemented Paula's reputation as a witch (Ceballos

Gómez 2002). Ignorant of the charges, Paula confessed to incest, to the use of the *hierba curia* for love magic, and to planning to prepare a remedy for her master made from orange peel, rosemary, and bones of the dead, a remedy that he did not allow her to make.¹⁶

What Paula de Eguiluz did not initially understand is that the inquisitors, Lic. Domingo Vélez de Asas y Argos and Dr. Agustín de Ugarte Sarabia, were caught in the grips of the same witch-crazed fervor as the enemies who denounced her and they would not accept rational explanations. Though Paula explained that the baby was already dying when she was called in, the inquisitors would settle for nothing less than a confession of diabolical witchcraft. Asas y Argos and Ugarte Sarabia did not agree with the ideology regarding witchcraft that was developing in Madrid. In Spain, the Supreme Council of the Inquisition had become skeptical of denunciations of witchcraft, instructing its districts to investigate whether the deeds attributed to accused witches were real or whether they had rational explanations (Henningsen 2004). The Logroño witch hunt of 1609–1614 ended with an ‘edict of silence’ that sought to quiet the witch craze. The ‘Instrucciones de Logroño’ required inquisitors in all the Tribunal’s districts to seek rational explanations—explanations of the type Paula de Eguiluz tries to give—to explain what was denounced as witchcraft. The split between Cartagena and Madrid was ultimately what saved Paula’s life.

In the Cartagena Inquisition, accusations of sorcery (*hechicería*) were meted out in an individual mode, while accusations of witchcraft (*brujería*) had both institutional and social functions, stigmatizing social groups—principally women of African descent—that were seen as threatening the imposed social order (Ceballos Gómez 1994). From 1618 to 1620, several first-generation enslaved immigrants were convicted of witchcraft in the gold-mining community of Zaragoza, on the Cauca River south of Cartagena. This witch craze occurred at the same time as an armed resistance by maroons in Matuna, near Cartagena, led by Benkos Bioho (Maya Restrepo 2005). These events would have been fresh in the memory of elite Cartagena society when Paula entered the Inquisition jail on 21 May 1624.

Given the secrecy of the Inquisition process, it took Paula de Eguiluz three months and thirteen hearings to learn the European story of the witches’ sabbath or to understand that it was the story she had to tell. During her first four hearings, she either did not understand that Ugarte Sarabia and Asas y Argos expected this story or she thought she could convince them with rational explanations. In the transcription of her fifth hearing, Paula listens to the prosecutor’s full accusation, in which he weaves a synthesis of the witnesses’ denunciations together with Catholic doctrine to tell a story in which the protagonist—Paula—a depraved, ungrateful, perjuring woman, is worthy of punishment and guilty of witchcraft. Even after hearing this accusation, Paula responds rationally (48r–52v). She denies being a witch or having made a pact with the devil. She did not suck the infant’s navel, but responded to a mother’s request for help, applying a plaster of rosemary and lavender to the baby’s distended belly. She did not bilocate as charged or go out into the night as a witch, but rather left her room at night to meet with her lover. Yes, she did fall out of a window, but she did not land on rocks magically unharmed: the sea broke her fall and she suffered numbness in her arm for a month. No, she does not remember having been awakened by four black cats circling the bed in her house. Finally, if she

has failed to attend mass it was not because she is not a good Christian, but rather because her duties in her master's household have prevented her (48r–52v).

However, on the afternoon of the same day that Paula gives this resistant response, she makes a major shift away from her own narrative perspective toward an engagement with the narrative the inquisitors seek. During this and the next four hearings, Paula brings the devil into her story, though not as the devil of the witches' sabbath. The devil first appears to her as a voice in a whirlwind (49r). Next, he comes when she evokes his name, but only after her master's similar outburst: angry at being criticized for injuring Paula, Juan de Eguiluz exclaims, 'Mas que la lleve el diablo el alma,' to which Paula responds, '¡Mas que me lleven todos los diablos juntos!' (53r). When the devil appears, he seems more of an African-style malignant spirit than God's principal antagonist (Ceballos Gómez 2002). Paula tosses him a piece of sugarcane, which he accepts in lieu of her soul (53r).

At her eleventh hearing, Paula shows that she finally recognizes the required cultural repertoire and performs the desired role of witch protagonist. It is in this hearing that the compiled testimony of the witnesses is made public, their names expurgated. This testimony confirms for Paula the story her inquisitors have expected during three months of hearings. It is impossible to know where Paula de Eguiluz has learned the story, whether in Cuba or in the Cartagena jail, but she has clearly learned it well. She tells of a full-blown European witches' sabbath, giving it her personal touch, for example describing her own devil companion as a well-spoken and well-dressed white man (73r/v). The witches' gathering includes the requisite symbols: an enthroned goat-like devil, sexual coupling by women and demons, dancing, lit candles, and rituals that invert Christian symbolism. It is at this eleventh hearing that Paula finally states that she did kill the baby whose death ignited the rumors that provoked her denunciation (75r).

In the Inquisition scenario, Paula has become a performer and has taken on a prescribed role. The performance of guilt by witchcraft throws Paula into crisis. This role, induced within a scripted scenario, with an expected outcome is transforming her: that transformation brings emotional breakdown. Three days after her confession, she pleads for help from the inquisitors. The demons have spoken to her in her cell. They have quarreled with her for having confessed blasphemy. The devil has erased her memory and she begs Ugarte Sarabia to help her continue her confession by asking her specific questions. Such a transformation seems akin to the ritual performative transformation that Schechner (2010) theorizes in *Between Theater and Anthropology*. The scribe conveys the pathos she narrates:

Y con esta tribulación, no pudiendo sosegar en toda la noche como no lo ha hecho después acá, llamó el sábado al ayudante y le pidió encarecidamente dijese al señor Inquisidor la diese audiencia. A quien suplica por las entrañas de Dios y porque su alma se salve la ayude y favorezca con hacerla algunas preguntas para que así confiese en todo la verdad de lo en que el demonio la engañó y ha pasado por ella, porque ella esta tan turbada y atribulada que no acertará a decir nada. Y la parece que lo que el demonio la dijo de que la había de quitar de la memoria cuanto la había enseñado y tenía hecho que le restaba de confesar, lo ha cumplido y hecho así, porque esta no se acuerda de nada. (76v–77r)

Surely the posture expresses real angst: Paula recognizes that her rational stories have not persuaded the inquisitors and neither have her attempts at portraying a devil in terms familiar to herself. She now knows that she must adopt the fictions of European witchcraft.

However, she seems unsure of the exact elements to include—after all it is a fiction, and not her own truth—and so she requests access to the script.

Ugarte Sarabia complies eagerly, asking numerous leading questions. Did the devil give her earth or powders with which to do evil? Did he command her to serve him by harming persons, fields, or livestock? Did she ever retain the consecrated Host in her mouth after confession and abuse it, stepping on it or carrying it with her when she flew? Did she ever see the devil at the witches' sabbath saying mass, imitating Christian priests? (79r, 79v, 81r)

Now that Paula understands the meaning of the story's conclusion—acceptance of the social control enforced by the Inquisition, through admission of her guilt as a witch and her performance of remorse—she must supply and arrange the details of the story so that they are plausible and so that they support this conclusion. Paula gives the inquisitor much of what he asks for, creating verisimilitude through detail: yes, she was wickedly disposed to serve the devil; yes, she renounced God and pledged loyalty to the devil, throwing her head back, placing her left hand on a book whose pages were all black, and speaking in a clear voice (78r–79r). She does not accede to all the inquisitor's questions, however, maintaining a measure of control over her self-portrayal. The devil never gave her powders to cause harm; she has not held the consecrated Host in her mouth; neither has she offered the devil an animal sacrifice (79r, 81r, 82r).

Over the course of thirteen confessions, Paula de Eguluz develops her narrative role gradually, composing her story according to her changing perception of her circumstances. The scripted scenario of the Inquisition allows reconciliation for remorseful and cooperative prisoners, who thus avoid the death penalty.¹⁷ It takes Paula several hearings to fully develop the corresponding plot. In early hearings, she rarely expresses remorse. She presents herself as a good Christian, but insists on her innocence. She expresses remorse only after the prosecutor's formal accusation. At this point, she briefly states that she feels regret for having delivered her soul to the devil and for having distanced herself from Christ and the faith (57r). Later she again expresses remorse, apparently to soften the edge of her 'perjury' as she replaces one version of her story with another:

Dijo que pide misericordia, porque confiesa que de vergüenza y por ser cosa tan mala y temiendo el castigo, no se ha atrevido a decir lo que ahora está dispuesta a confesar, pesándole de todo corazón de haber ofendido a Nuestro Señor Jesucristo y a su gloriosa y bendita Madre tan gravemente. (70r)

In her fourteenth hearing, Paula finally composes a fully submissive performance, assuring the inquisitors, with repeated protestations of guilt and remorse. She is a repentant Christian who has strayed from the flock. She humbly implores the Tribunal's mercy and she understands what the Church requires of the sinner:

Preguntada qué le ha movido ahora a apartarse de ser bruja y reducirse a la Fe Católica, dijo que la merced que ha recibido de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, que como le costó tanto no quiere que su alma se pierda. Y así la ha abierto los ojos para que viese cuán errada iba en dejarse llevar de las abominaciones y torpezas del demonio y sus promesas con que la tenía a esta engañada, para con sus esperanzas llevarla al infierno.

Preguntada si está arrepentida, y le pesa como debe, de haber errado y delinquido contra la Fe Católica y haberse apartado de ella y si reconoce su gran culpa y yerro, dijo que está

arrepentida y le pesa en el alma y en la vida de haber ofendido tan gravemente a Nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Y reconoce la gravedad grande de su culpa y pide y suplica a la Reina de los Ángeles, Madre de Dios, interceda por ella con su precioso hijo, para que la perdone y su alma no se pierda. Y la dé el dolor que debe tener de tan graves, horrendos y abominables pecados como esta cometió. (86r)

Her sentencing in the first trial confirms that, despite having begun the trial without the requisite knowledge, Paula de Eguiluz learned the grand story of witchcraft into which the denunciations placed her; she competently and compellingly recited that story, with personal detail; and she performed her duly submissive role as a member of a feared subordinated racial group, giving the inquisitors an ending appropriate for this ritual scenario. Paula was admitted to reconciliation, she was sentenced to appear in an *auto de fe* with the insignia of a witch, to hear her sentence and abjure, to be whipped with two hundred lashes on the public streets, and to serve for two years in the city's general hospital while wearing the *sambenito*, exiled perpetually from Cuba (88v–89r). The *auto* was carried out on 30 November 1624, over a year after the initial denunciations and eight months after her arrest.

The second trial: performing conformity and criticism

Paula de Eguiluz was arrested again, on 20 September 1632, on suspicion of having relapsed into witchcraft and making another pact with the devil. It is impossible to know what outcome Paula de Eguiluz expected or feared as a relapsed heretic and a high-profile ritual healer. Relapsed heretics could be relaxed to the secular authorities to be executed (García 1622). Nevertheless, while three *autos de fe* had occurred in Cartagena since Paula had arrived and fifty-six heretics had been punished, only one condemned prisoner—Juan Vicente—had been executed, for relapse into practicing Judaism. Paula might have known, or thought, that this relapsed heretic was given not only a second, but also a third chance for life: he was condemned and reconciled in both Coimbra and Lima before being prosecuted in Cartagena (Splendiani 1997, vol. 2). Paula likely knew that the stakes for her performance were higher than before, but that there was a possibility for self-preservation. So she planned and staged her confessions carefully to play on the inquisitors' expectations and sympathies.

While the trial procedure was heavily scripted, Paula exercised significant control over the direction and content of the hearings. She knew the Inquisition procedures and scripts well enough to engage astutely in the twice-behaved, rule-governed behavior of the Inquisition scenario.¹⁸ Notably, more of her testimony was self-initiated than that which was elicited from interrogation. In all, Paula appeared at twenty-one hearings in her second trial (September to December, 1632), requesting fifteen of them herself. She developed her declarations in consultation with friends and colleagues who had been arrested, as she requested and obtained transfers from one cell to another within the supposedly secret Inquisition jail.¹⁹

Paula de Eguiluz had now put down roots in the local community. She had immersed herself in local culture and had developed friendships, occupational networks, an extensive clientele, and admiration as a healer and ritual specialist. Paula had developed the kind of authority that J. C. Bristol found among female Afro-Mexican healers, whose 'ability to cure misfortune could earn [them] the respect and deference of their clients of all

castes, including those who outranked them' (2006, par. 3). Paula quickly engaged these relationships and enmeshed her trial in the power jockeying among competitive healers and ritual specialists in Cartagena.²⁰ Probably with the intent of lightening her own sentence through collaboration, but possibly also to tell a story about Cartagena society, she supplied a long list of names of fellow witches. Her testimony unleashed a chain of denunciations that brought twenty-one convicted witches into the public spectacle of the auto de fe of 26 March 1633 (Splendiani 1997, vol. 2). Paula had also learned the recent history of racialized Inquisitorial prosecutions and had almost certainly heard the recent history of maroon activities, which were again worrying the Cartagena elite precisely at the time of Paula's second arrest.

Paula's confessions, then, must be read as engaging in or responding to some of these negotiations for social power. It is mostly Paula's words and actions that fill the space and time of the hearings and the folios of the transcripts. She testifies. The secretary records her narratives and reads them back for her to confirm their accuracy. Paula tells stories that draw on her authority among a community of healers and their multiracial clientele and that deploy her knowledge of illness and healing in Cartagena to construct herself as a healer among malevolent witches, a sinful black woman in a society rife with the sinfulness of its elite, and as a woman who knows the fears of her audience of the threats they themselves have created through a racially exploitative society. Paula listens to the prosecutor read seventy-one chapters of accusation, many of them based on her own confessions. She responds to each accusation, confirming, denying, and correcting, thus having the final word on her actions—at least within the scenario of the hearing.

Much of the time, Paula tells the inquisitors the stories they want to hear. She is forthcoming in her confession and repentance, admitting to both witchcraft and devil worship, telling extensively of *juntas* of witches on the outskirts of the city, and pleading for mercy and reintegration into the body of the Church. Despite her deft performance of the contrite Christian, however, Paula's storytelling in the second trial is not simply submissive. Paula tells stories that strategically deploy her status and authority as a healer and ritual specialist in Cartagena. Like her Afro-Mexican peers as described by Bristol (2006), Paula uses her knowledge of herbalism and magic and of their use in Cartagena to play on the fears of those who do not have the knowledge of herbal cures and malefactions. It is in her second trial where Paula develops her harshest—if somewhat veiled—criticism of elite society.

Entering the Inquisition scenario for a second time, Paula draws on the expected repertoire of behaviors and chooses dramatically where in the script and how she wishes to begin. Rather than waiting to be called, she requests a hearing; instead of beginning with the genealogy and life history as prescribed in the Inquisition manuals (García 1622), she tells her own stories. She performs a more complex role in this second trial: she takes a firmer hold of her performative agency and blends her performance of remorse with a storyline that alternates between conformity and criticism.

Paula opens her testimony by pointing out the Inquisition's failure to transform her into an obedient Christian. Her declaration locates her performance of heterodox practices within what should be a highly controlled religious space. She tells how just thirty days after leaving the Inquisition jail, in 1624, and while serving her sentence in the Hospital del Espíritu Santo, her devil Mantelillos visited her and reclaimed her friendship (*Segunda causa*, 28v). On the one hand, she is performing as a 'buena confitente,' with

a spontaneous confession of guilt, portraying herself as the ‘mujer flaca y fácil,’ of Catholic stories of womanhood; she uses these exact words to describe herself in a later hearing (136r). On the other hand, if the fact that a witch and her companion demon collude within a religiously controlled space and during the very term of her punishment feeds the myth of racial inferiority, then it also carries an understory of the Inquisition’s inefficacy (43r).

In this second trial, Paula arranges the elements of her story such that more often than not she appears as an apprentice learning healing practices and spells from the broad network of witches who live in Getsemaní, rather than as the leader of witches she is accused of being (von Germeten 2013). Although on occasion Paula admits to having caused harm, she emphasizes her work of herbal healing, which contrasts sharply with the illnesses and death caused by other witches:

Y declara por descargo de su conciencia que muchos males de estos hechos por brujos hay en esta ciudad, con capa de bubas y éticos. Y la verdad es que son causados con el maleficio que hacen dichas brujas por consejo del diablo y por lo que da para ello. (*Segunda Causa*).

She names several women as having confessed to her that they have killed other people, in some cases telling her not to treat their victims.²¹

In some cases, Paula portrays her healing work as part of an ongoing collegial relationship, as when she cured the black freedwoman Teodora of a venereal wound (*Segunda causa*, 34r). Most often, however, she presents her role as a healer within conflicts that emphasize her preference to heal, rather than to harm. For example, she attempted to heal her lover Pedro de Cazorla of a stomach illness using rosemary oil, but initially failed because the jealous Marta de San Antón had given him harmful herbs. Paula’s healing powers eventually triumphed, however, when she applied her demon companion Mantelillo’s powders and oil of sweet wormwood (66v). Sometimes she reports that she chose not to cross a competitor who warned her not to heal a victim, as when Juana la Colorada killed the black slave María (69r/v). Here, the plot line builds up the evil of the other characters to highlight Paula’s own relative weakness, and thus to counteract the stories told against her, in which she is the teacher and leader of the witches.

As she transforms her character from weak woman to healer, Paula also develops an ever-increasing social critique that contradicts the racial habitus of colonial society. If Paula points out the failure of the Church to contain her own un-Christian behavior within its very walls, she also criticizes the loose morals of the white elite. Thus she challenges the imperial association of blackness with immorality, within the very space and time of Catholic festivities. She also makes veiled reference to the threat constituted by an enslaved population and thus indirectly addresses the cruelty of imperialism’s system of slavery. Paula weaves these critiques covertly into the implicit messages of her confessional stories. This narrative embeddedness masks the degree to which Paula and other members of subordinated groups might have spoken among themselves about the social and imperial structures of oppression. However, the stories insert into public discourse an unsettling of the lie of racial superiority.

If Paula opens her second trial with a confession that she succumbed to the devil’s temptations in a society that associates the evils of witchcraft with blackness, she undermines this essentialism by reminding the inquisitors that all of Cartagena society is sinful. She tells a story of the Jubilee of the Portiuncula in Cartagena, the Feast of Pardon, which,

she says, has failed in its central purpose of the forgiveness of sin. The recalcitrance of Cartagena society is at fault. During the Franciscan celebration on 2 August, all those truly contrite and fully confessed Christians who visit a Franciscan church receive an indulgence that absolves them of all the sins they have committed from the time of their birth until the feast day (Bihl 1911). Paula recounts that once, around the time of this Jubilee, celebrated at the church of San Francisco in Cartagena, she did not see her demon Mantelillos for several days. When he reappeared, he explained that he had been very busy, first attending all the confessions and recording them in his book and then reporting on them (*Segunda causa*, 58v). Mantelillos told Paula that so many people's sins had doubled, that very few had earned the indulgence. In this story, Paula inverts the moral order, making of her devil the monitor of righteousness, through whom she criticizes the immorality and religious hypocrisy of Cartagena society.

In addition to this blanket indictment, Paula points a finger at a specific sinner belonging to the white elite. The twenty-two-year-old Doña Ana de Fuentes was married to don Francisco de la Guerra and resided in Tolú, about a hundred miles south of Cartagena. Doña Ana was the witness whose denunciations led the inquisitors to arrest Paula the second time. Again, we see the Inquisition scenario as a space in which competing stories are performed as Paula turns Doña Ana's accusation on its head. It seems likely that Paula de Eguiluz does so only after finding out that Doña Ana is her principal accuser.²²

In her testimony, Doña Ana claimed that she sought help from Paula de Eguiluz for marital discord and found that none of Paula's spells was effective. She accused Paula of having a relationship with the devil, and of offering her—Doña Ana—a substance with which to kill her husband. Paula, on the contrary, recounts that Doña Ana was the too-curious woman who sought to learn spells and potions from her. She sought Paula's assistance in order to stupefy her husband and thus distract him from her adulterous affair and even to kill him (*Segunda causa*, 38r–53r). Paula portrays the love remedies that she offered Doña Ana as ineffectual and as a means to put off a persistent woman, who told Paula that she had already spoken with three devils in Tolú (51v, 109v). In Paula's narrative on the other hand, she herself is the cautious and reasonable woman, trying to fend off Doña Ana and prevent her from working harm. Paula even cures Don Francisco de la Guerra of a serious stomach malady using the powders that her companion demon Mantelillos has given her and with oil of sweet wormwood (38v, 51r). In so doing, she says, she angered Doña Ana, who intended to kill her husband (73r). In Paula's story, Doña Ana is the reckless libertine, whose colonial elite society—hypocritically—accepts her as a member in good standing.

Paula also tells stories with a threatening edge that underscores how her performance evokes an emotional imaginary for her audience. Here she engages a practice common to people of African descent in Cartagena, using against the colonial elite the very stereotypes they have fabricated of the demonized Afrodescendant. Maya Restrepo (2005) calls this deployment of the demonized black soul a powerful subversive strategy that Africans and their descendants used against the imperial system. Women in Cartagena told stories of the witches' sabbath that referred to real gatherings, recreations of African beliefs and practices. As von Germeten puts it: 'Paula succeeded in channeling the inquisitors' fears of social disruption, represented by the very real and large gatherings in the

city itself, complete with drumming, dancing, and most likely sex, toward fantastical sex with demons and the scarred, but penitent bodies of her *comadres*' (2013, 143).

In two nodal stories, Paula refers to reconstructed African spiritual practices: the first is her recounting of the *lloro* or ceremony of transition to the afterlife; the second is her narration of a witches' gathering in the district of María, southeast of Cartagena. *Lloros* in Cartagena were a reconstruction of African memories. These rituals transformed a dead person into an ancestor and maintained communication between the world of the living and the world of the dead (Maya Restrepo 2005). Paula tells the story of the *lloro* twice. In this second trial, she names the deceased simply as a free black man, Juan Bran (*Segunda causa*, 36r). Her identification of the deceased and two attendees with West and Central-West African ethnonyms—Bran, Biáfara, and Quelembe—would suggest to the inquisitors the ethnic quality of the ritual. In her third trial, Paula will add that the deceased was a great sorcerer (*gran brujo*) (*Tercer proceso*, 95r). Paula's narrative makes clear that such illicit African spiritual practices go undetected by colonial authorities: she and her fellow witches escaped through supernatural means, transformed into a herd of pigs.

Potentially more frightful, though less explicit, is the connection that Paula makes between the *juntas* of 'witches' and the activity of maroons in the area. Paula mentions that she and six companions flew to a gathering in the district of María, where they met up with a black slave belonging to Alonso Martín Hidalgo (33v):

En la junta grande que se refiere en este capítulo [de la acusación], que fue la que se hizo en María como lo tiene dicho en sus confesiones, había tanta cantidad de brujos y brujas que era una mar de ellos y de ellas y era imposible poderlos contar ni menos conocer sino las que fuesen de su cuadrilla. (114v)

The picture that Paula paints is fearful: witches so numerous that she cannot count them. What makes this story even more threatening is the linking of the witchcraft of residents of Getsemaní with the activities of the large community of maroons, who have escaped from their Cartagena masters. The broader region of the Sierra de María had been the location of the maroon community led by Domingo Bioho, King Benkos, in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. In 1631, fugitive slaves rose up again in the mountains near Usiacurí, about 110 kilometers from Cartagena. In December 1631, Governor Francisco de Murga reported the destruction of a palenque installation, but without the capture of escaped slaves (Navarrete 2003).

The Sierra de María was also the location of the well-established maroon community of Limón, which was the cause of mounting concern for the Cartagena elites in 1632, right at the time that Paula begins testimony in her second trial. The maroon soldiers of Limón had attacked neighboring ranches and taken ranchers' slaves. Captain Alonso Martín Hidalgo, the owner of the slave that Paula identifies in the *junta*, owned a ranch in the region.²³ Martín Hidalgo's description of the *palenque* on 13 June 1634 expresses the anxiety that the whites in Cartagena felt about the maroon activities, even back to 1632. He states that in that the past two years, the palenque has protagonized increasingly threatening events:

Con bastante defensa y ofensa de dos años a esta parte han salido a robar por las estancias y a matar los negros dellos, dándoles muerte a los que no se querían rendir. Y amarrando y llevando por fuerza a otros muchos. Y ansimesmo han muerto en el dicho discurso de tiempo a

muchos españoles, con lo cual vinieron a poner esta república y las circunvecinas en mucho aprieto y necesidad. De forma que los negros de las estancias andaban tan sobre sí, que juzgando que los dichos negros cimarrones los habían de poner en libertad, sacándolos de el servicio de sus amos, no se podía pasar los puertos ni andar los caminos, ni venir los bastimentos, ni ganados, ni el maíz de las estancias sin notorio riesgo y peligro. Y era tanta la avilantés que los negros de las dichas estancias habían tomado que sus amos no les osaban a mandar con la libertad que de antes. (375r/v)

Paula suggests community and communication between African-descent witches and the rebellious maroons. I do not argue that Paula herself has engaged in rebellious activities. Rather, I see her as deploying images of two ‘unruly’ communities coming together as a means to bolster her own authority. She is a woman who knows the whites’ fears and vulnerabilities and she has access to those groups who threaten the whites’ wellbeing: witches capable of murder by spells and powders, with intimate access to their masters’ food and bedrooms; and the rebellious maroons who destabilize the region’s economy, cutting off the city from its food supply, and inspiring such confidence in the people of African descent who are still enslaved that their masters cannot discipline them. By naming the complicity of witches and maroons, Paula also associates the harm done by witches to the critique of slavery or of its abuses that is implicit in the existence of maroon communities.

The third trial: distilling the main story

On 17 June 1634, the prosecutor Damian Velásquez de Contreras presented a petition to review Paula de Eguiluz’s second trial, according to the Suprema’s instructions in their letter of 26 April 1633 (*Tercer proceso* 3v–5r). The inquisitors would review the testimony from the second trial and the statements of seven additional witnesses, five of whom had already testified as part of their own trials for witchcraft. Paula’s primary antagonist in this third trial was the mulatto surgeon Diego López, whom Paula had made the mistake of naming in her second trial. Diego López testified at length against Paula as well as against two sisters, Rufina and Justa, both described as *mulatas*.²⁴ The sisters’ imprisonment enmeshed Paula’s trial in the long-term antagonism between the Cartagena Inquisition tribunal and Governor Francisco de Murga, whose loyal lieutenant, Francisco de Llano Velasco, was Rufina’s lover.

Governor Murga had engaged in conflict with the Cartagena Inquisition almost immediately on his arrival in 1629 (Rocha and Karnal 2013). By 1632, the conflict pitted Murga against the three inquisitors who tried Paula de Eguiluz, Martín de Cortázar y Azcárate, Domingo Vélez de Asas y Argos, and Augustín Ugarte Saravia. It involved disputes over salaries, property, authority, decorum, and respect, and included at least one public exchange of accusations. The inquisitors use hyperbolic rhetoric to describe Murga in letters to the Suprema:

Este cavallero es tal que de noche sueña las ocasiones que ha de buscar de día todas con mala autoridad de esta inquisición y tan sin caussa que nos da tanto en que pensar, que a tener cualquiera de los inquisidores que aquí estamos licencia de Vuestra Alteza para ir a echarnos a sus pies, lo hiciéramos, aunque fuera en un bajel destronado, para que a Vuestra Alteza le constara el poco respecto que tiene al Sancto Oficio y a nuestras personas.²⁵

On 8 July 1633, the inquisitors excommunicated Governor Murga (Rocha and Karnal 2013). Nine months later, lieutenant Llano Velasco provoked a cascade of retractions

by the women Paula had accused of witchcraft. Five of the women stated that they had confessed witchcraft because Paula de Eguiluz persuaded them to, while another three named the persuasion of Paula's close friend and ally, Juana Zamba (Splendiani 1997, vol. 2). Their retractions, in turn, led to the first use of torture in the trial, under which almost all the women retracted their retractions (Splendiani 1997, 2:381–85, 406–16).

It is not clear to me, yet, how these dynamics may have affected Paula's testimony or the outcome of her third trial. The dynamics do suggest the awareness Paula and her fellow ritual practitioners must have had of the high-level audiences and potential repercussions of their testimony. While Paula's testimony against these women aligned with the inquisitors' interests, their five-to-three vote sentenced her to death in the hands of the civil authorities (*Tercer proceso* 155r/v). Again, the Madrid Suprema overturned this sentence, and Paula would be reconciled and sentenced to perpetual prison (157r). Performing her stories before the inquisitors a year and a half after testifying in her second trial, Paula clearly still faced daunting odds. Under these threatening circumstances, she spoke much less, requesting only four of twelve hearings, but maintained the key kernels of meaning that she had produced around herself and Cartagena society in her second trial: she told of her reencounter with Mantelillos in the hospital and admitted guilt as a witch; she named other witches; she described the *lloro* for Juan Bran; she mentioned the *junta* in the district of María, where the palenque was located; and she reminded the inquisitors of the immoral curiosity of the white woman doña Ana de Fuentes about witchcraft and the devil.

One important difference that appears in the transcripts of the third trial is Paula's unwavering self-representation as a healer and her refusal to associate with any specific malefaction. She summarizes her healing works thus:

mas con [los polvos] nunca hizo mal a nadie, antes le pedía remedios a su diablo Mantelillos para curar personas que estaban tocadas de polvos que les habían dado [otros], como lo hizo curando a don Francisco de la Guerra, a Fray Pedro Arias del orden de San Agustín, a Francisco de Simancas y a María Canaria, y un hijo suyo, los cuales estaban venenados con polvos que Rafaela de Nava había dado a Don Martín Félix y a su hermano. (*Tercer proceso*, 91v–92r)

Paula's authority in identifying herself to the inquisitors explicitly as a healer or *curandera* has emerged over the three trials. In the first trial, she related her attempts to treat the dying baby as well as a thwarted intention to cure her master of a fever with a healing concoction (*Primera causa*, 38r–43r). In the second trial, she did not use the word *curandera* to name herself, but the prosecutor stated that she was known as a *curandera* (*Segunda causa*, 98v) and she fills her testimony with stories of healing. In the third trial, she calls herself a *curandera* and states that she supports herself as such and as a washer-woman (*Tercer proceso*, 84r).

Paula even seems to portray herself as victim in the initial story of her third trial, when she retells of her reencounter with her devil companion Mantelillos in the hospital. Where in the second trial Paula says she was, 'llevada de la codicia y de lo que le había prometido,' in the third trial she acts out of fear:

[Paula] se entró en la huerta [de San Sebastián], y al entrar en ella, se le apareció segunda vez su diablo Mantelillos detrás de una tinaja en figura de un Dominguillo mal vestido, echando fuego por todas las partes de su cuerpo. El cual le dijo que si no volvía a su amistad y a ser

suya como de antes, dándole el alma, que le había de ahogar. Y entonces esta, de miedo y turbada, le dijo que volvería a ser suya y le daría el alma como de antes. (89r)

The vivid detail of this story, more emotional than the one she told in the second trial, begs interpretation. The *dominguillo* is a straw-stuffed figurine, often dressed as a soldier, and used in bull-fighting, bottom-weighted so that it rights itself after being knocked over.²⁶

In Paula's story, the figure clearly takes on a menacing quality and places her in the position of the bull, whose courage is being tested. Given the devil's association in her story with the *dominguillo* and given the connection between bullfighting and religious festivals, particularly Corpus Christi, the story appears to carry complex religious overtones.²⁷ The bullfights during Corpus Christi in Spanish allegorize the triumph of the Eucharist over the devil. Within this opposition, Paula places herself in the position of the sacrificial bull, yet rather than respond with courage to the *dominguillo* and the devil, she succumbs without a fight. Once again, she is a 'mujer flaca y miserable, llevada de los engaños del dicho diablo' (*Tercer proceso*, 86v), but she is partially justified by positioning herself with the bull as a sacrificial victim.

In another significant difference in this trial, Paula de Eguiluz's lawyer did provide substantive assistance in her defense against her healer-competitor, Diego López. When the testimonies against her were read, Paula immediately recognized and denounced the mulatto surgeon: 'es su enemigo que es Diego López y le tiene por hombre de mala conciencia y así lo recusa' (142r). The lawyer drew up an interrogatory to be given to other ritual healers who were imprisoned. Two of the witnesses questioned, Isabel Márquez and Elena de Viloría, testified to Diego López's malicious rants and threats against Paula in the prison, noting that López cried out, among other things, 'Esta perra Aleluya, encorozada y azotada, yo te haré el caldillo con sus especias' (149r). Here, López uses the nickname 'Aleluya' by which Paula was known. He cries out in rage against his accuser, that she will be found guilty and sentenced to lashings and the penitential habit, offering himself to serve her up a tasty dish of justice. López's outcry expresses rage and hatred, an attitude that could make his testimony suspect. Paula had allies who stood up for her, undermining López's accusations, even when facing their own prosecution.

Performing a double-edged story

In her testimony in the three trials, Paula de Eguiluz portrayed herself alternately as a woman deceived by the devil, a skillful healer, a repentant sinner, and a faithful Christian in contrast to the morally lax members of Cartagena elite society who sought adulterous pleasures and who sinned so much that they could not earn indulgences. She told stories of a community of women of African descent: witches who served the devil and carried out evil ends, sickening the residents of the port city and colluding with the masses of people of African descent who had escaped the control of their masters to the hills surrounding Cartagena, resisting control by Church, State, and elite society.

What did it matter that Paula spun these stories, enclosed in a secret hearing room, when the most bothersome criticisms she made were excised from the sentence that was publicly read in the auto de fe? I argue that it mattered very much. Paula's stories were actually heard in person or read by at least a couple dozen members of elite Cartagena society: inquisitors, secretaries, prosecutors, defense lawyers, and theological

consultants. Members of the Consejo de la Suprema in Madrid also reviewed the entire case and not only changed Paula's sentence, but also overruled the Cartagena Tribunal's vote to relax Paula to the secular authorities.

Second, Paula's stories escaped from within the walls of the Inquisition: the rule of secrecy was ineffective. Not only did the prisoners habitually confer with each other over their stories, but the trial proceedings were also discussed between prisoners and outsiders. It was more than likely that Paula's confessional stories, including her social critiques, were the topic of wide-ranging gossip beyond the Inquisition walls. Paula's stories are evidence of both the type of critical discourse that circulated among the *casta* communities and the ways in which at least some members of *casta* communities presented that critique to colonial elites, albeit cloaked in the protective armor of narrative. They thus communicated to all the Inquisition officials that the racially subordinated groups did not accept the official story of Catholic obedience.

Such stories, wherever they circulated, must have undermined the efficacy of the Inquisition to compel Catholic colonial subjects to unquestioning obedience. Let us return to the 1638 auto de fe, the Inquisition's spectacle of exemplary punishment and a key instrument of social control. Here the official was unable to finish reading Paula de Eguiluz's sentence due to the crowd's murmuring. Paula stood flanked by nine Portuguese Jews, prominent members of the Cartagena merchant class, punished with jail time and exile, and yet hers was the only sentence to elicit such a loud response from the crowd. What was the murmuring about? Did the spectators express their fear of witches? Maybe. But then, among the spectators would have been found Paula's clients and perhaps colleagues who had escaped denunciation: they would have understood the lie behind the image of witchcraft narrated publicly in the sentence. After all, Paula's activities as a healer, a sorcerer, and a member of an African-based spiritual practice were not unusual, but rather comprised quotidian practice for many Cartagenos. Maybe the crowd was sharing stories about practices that lay veiled under the accusations of witchcraft, practices in which they themselves participated. Maybe they speculated on their own safety or appreciated that Paula, together with the witches who had appeared in the 1633 auto, was serving as a scapegoat who would satisfy the Inquisition and leave them alone. Quite possibly the crowd shared with Paula de Eguiluz a wry, though painful laugh at an Inquisition that could ruin individuals' lives, but in the end did not understand the beliefs and practices that they were trying to suppress, did not understand the members of the *casta* society it tried to control, and could not even control the spectacle of punishment of the '*dogmatizadora*'—the teacher of witches—of whom they had wished to make one of their greatest examples.

It is not a coincidence that on 8 August 1633, less than five months after twenty-one of Paula's fellow witches had been punished in a public auto, a Cartagena inquisitor wrote the following complaint to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Madrid: 'Como quiera que la más de la gente de esta tierra nos tiene odio tan mortal que a cada uno de nosotros nos quisiera ver conforme a sus deseos' (Medina 1899). At Paula de Eguiluz's auto de fe, the inquisitors must have understood the menace of disorder implicit in the murmuring of the crowd.

For us, today, in the general absence of written documentation of the stories and thought processes of people of African descent in the Spanish empire, these trial documents open a vital window. They allow us to move just a little closer to understanding

how African-descent people learned the stories of the colonizers and how they reshaped and performed them. In so doing they at times conformed and complied with imperial controls and at times they critiqued the social stratification of empire and the stories that justified a belief in racial superiority.

Notes

Archives consulted

AGI Archivo General de Indias, Seville
AHN Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid

1. Relación del auto de fe, el 25 del mes de marzo de 1638, en la ciudad de Cartagena de las Indias (Splendiani 1997, vol. 3).
2. AHN, Inquisición, L.1013, f. 360.
3. I refer to Paula de Eguiluz primarily by her given name, Paula, as it is the name that is most her own. I do not intend this as a lack of respect: to use her full name in every instance weighs down the text; to refer to her only as Eguiluz would be to call her by her master's name.
4. Paula de Eguiluz reports in her second trial that she had lived for two years as a free woman (*Segunda causa de Paula de Eguiluz, negra horra, reconciliada por bruja. 1632–1633*, 42r, *Procesos de fe de Paula de Eguiluz*, AHN, Inquisición, 1620, Exp. 10. Hereafter referred to as *Segunda causa*).
5. *Tercer proceso causado contra Paula de Eguiluz, negra horra, reconciliada por el Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de Cartagena de las Indias. 1635–1636*, 2r, 86r, *Procesos de fe de Paula de Eguiluz*, AHN, Inquisición, 1620, Exp. 10. Hereafter referred to as *Tercer proceso*.
6. While the term 'race' inadequately describes the perception of difference in the colonial period (see Fisher and O'Hara 2009), I use it here to name a habitus, 'a deeply enmeshed social coding that allows people to classify both themselves and others,' as discussed by James Sweet (2005).
7. Von Germeten (2013) considers Paula de Eguiluz's skill as a storyteller, focusing on Paula's exercise of control over her sexuality through stories. My work places a central and expanded focus on the activity of story-creation and performance. N. Z. Davis's *Fiction in the Archives* is, of course, fundamental in this move to bring together historical and literary approaches.
8. See Ceballos Gómez 2002, and Maya Restrepo 2005.
9. Inquisitors use this phrase in the summary that accompanies Eguiluz's trial transcription when it is sent to the Suprema in Madrid on 30 July 1635 (*Tercer proceso*).
10. Clandestine communities of persons who have escaped enslavement.
11. In a report on Getsemaní by the governor of Cartagena to the king, dated 24 July 1620, thirty-four of the 155 private properties listed were owned by single women, fifteen of whom are identified as *morenas*, *mulatas*, or *morenas libres* (Vidal Ortega 2010).
12. See *Primera Causa*, 40v–41r; *Segunda Causa* 41v–42r; *Tercer proceso*, 86r/v.
13. *Confirmación de oficio: Diego de Leguizamon*. 1617. AGI, Santo Domingo, 31, N. 52, f. 1r.
14. We know, for example, that Lt. Governor Don Francisco de Llano Velasco used Paula's trial to further Governor Francisco de Murga's power struggle against the Cartagena Inquisition (Medina 1899). He motivated a series of retractions by witnesses in Paula's trial, through his mulatta lover, Rufina, who had been jailed (Splendiani 1997, vol. 2).
15. See also Ceballos Gómez 2002, Navarrete 1997, von Germeten 2013, and Maya Restrepo 2005.
16. *Primera causa de Paula de Eguiluz, negra horra, reconciliada por bruja. 1623–1626*, 38r–43r. Hereafter referred to as *Primera causa*.
17. In the case of relapse, such mercy is not necessarily shown (Valdés 1561).

18. See Schechner (2010) for a discussion of performance as twice-behaved behavior—behavior that is already known or practiced.
19. Von Germeten (2013) makes a convincing argument that Paula influences the testimony of other women, through the frequent references in their testimonies to the pressure she exerts on them to make certain confessions.
20. Gómez (2013) discusses the competitive milieu of these ritual practitioners in Cartagena.
21. See for example, in the *Segunda causa*, her accusations of Teodora (34r), María Quelenbe (34v), Luisa Domínguez (35r), Ana de Zaragoza (35r), and Elena de Vioria (35r/v, 56r).
22. Paula mentions Doña Ana only in her fifth hearing, on 5 October 1632, after a woman owned by Doña Ana—Bárbara Gómez—has been jailed. While Paula does not admit to speaking with Bárbara before her first accusations against Doña Ana, she does on the same day of this testimony request to be moved to a different cell and ends up sharing a cell with Bárbara (*Segunda causa*, 45r). It is well known that prisoners communicated quite freely with each other in the prison. For example, in this trial a scandal erupts surrounding the frequent communications and resulting retractions of confessions among the imprisoned women accused of witchcraft (*Tercer proceso*, 42r, 46r, 52v).
23. Francisco de Murga. 1634. *Testimonio de los procesos y castigos—que se hicieron—por el Maestro de Campo Francisco de Murga governador y cappitan general de Cartagena—contra los negros çimarrones y alçados—de los palenqves—del Limon—Polin y Çanaguare*. AGI, Patronato, 234. R. 7. No. 2.
24. While Paula had named these sisters (*Segunda causa*, 72v), she had given little information about them.
25. Carta del licenciado Domingo Vélez de Assas y Argos y el licenciado don Martín de Cortázar y Ascárate, 7 de junio de 1632. Inquisición, L. 4816, Exp. 15, fol. 1.
26. Historians differ in whether they explain the *dominguillo* as used to gauge the bull's ferocity, enrage the animal, and take the first and worst attacks, or whether it is a figure that entertains the crowd with humor. Bullfighting was already part of cultural practice in the Nuevo Reino de Granada; Rodríguez Jiménez (2002) traces bullfighting in the realm to 1532.
27. See Romero de Solís (2002) for a discussion of the relationship between the symbolism of Corpus Christi and the symbolism of the bullfights that took place during the festival.

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