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How Pedro Quiñonez Lost His Soul: Suicide, Routine Violence, and State Formation in Nineteenth-Century Paraguay

Abstract

This article uses judicial records of suicide cases from mid-nineteenth-century Paraguay to explore how inhabitants of the country experienced postcolonial state formation. The Republic of Paraguay, founded in 1813, was a marginal, autonomous state in South America, forged from a former Spanish colonial frontier province and dominated by autocratic regimes until its near destruction in the Triple Alliance War (1864–1870). Conventional historical wisdom suggests that unlike other countries in Latin America at the time, matters of nationhood and state sovereignty in Paraguay were largely resolved. Stable autocratic regimes, muted social inequalities among a common peasantry, and ethnolinguistic bonds born of the indigenous-origin vernacular Guaraní allegedly provided for this resolution. However, this article disrupts such received wisdom and finds that state formation in Paraguay by the mid-nineteenth century was still very much an unsettled, ongoing affair, especially in the intensely local contexts of the countryside. Its narrative follows the 1865 suicide of the retired militia officer Pedro Quiñonez and what a local judge did and wrote to condemn his soul. In fact, this and dozens of other cases of suicide reviewed in the article reveal a social world of servitude, racialized denigration, and routine violence that were part and parcel of everyday people's incorporation into ñane retã—the Guaraní-language expression for the nation-state—and the consequent slippery ambivalence that Pedro and others manifested in their relation to this polity.

Pedro Quiñonez likely walked the final paces of his life with tired, deliberate strides. He was an aged man in September 1865—a retired sergeant from the militia—when the advent of war in Paraguay mandated his return to service. He remained at his home near Tobatí, tending to his fields. But the local commander also required that he oversee work details and counts of sowed crops in the district. By all accounts, Quiñonez was a loyal soldier and upstanding member of the community. Relatives, neighbors, and local authorities considered him a good Christian. Then early one morning, after taking some mate, he wandered into a nearby wood and hanged himself from a tree. The search party that

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discovered the corpse the following day found that he had also cut his throat. Blood covered his neck and chest. His rosary tangled still on his body. His knife laid cast aside on the ground along with his poncho and sombrero. As had become obligatory, the local civil magistrate held a legal inquest into the matter.¹ He could hardly contain his disgust. The magistrate later called the act a “horrible crime,” the result of a “deplorable cowardice.” This was, in his words, “a moral breakdown, in the law of God and Patria that encompasses all Christianity.”² From the magistrate’s perspective, the old man’s suicide was not only sinful; it was treasonous. And measures could yet be taken in the social and political imaginary of this frontier society to punish corpse and soul.

How Pedro could lose his soul raises an intriguing historical problem about nineteenth-century Paraguay—a place that needs some introduction. At the time, the Republic of Paraguay, founded in 1813, was a marginal, autonomous state in the interior of South America, forged from a former Spanish colonial frontier province and dominated by autocratic regimes until its near immolation in the conflict Pedro chose not to fight—the so-called Paraguayan War, or the War of the Triple Alliance (1864–1870). This was, in human terms, the costliest interstate conflict in the history of the Americas, which pitted Paraguay against the combined armies of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay and ended with Paraguay’s catastrophic defeat. The territory’s population of nearly a half million would be reduced by half.³ But when Pedro walked out to the woods to take his own life, the enormity of this collective catastrophe could not be foreseen. In Paraguay, a smallholder and rentier peasantry that spoke only the indigenous vernacular, Guaraní, extended over a territory that still overlapped with plains, forests, and hillsides controlled by unconquered indigenous groups. The territory saw little of the civil conflict that raged throughout the continent over the previous half century. Meanwhile a steady export of yerba mate—a widely-consumed tea in the region extracted from frontier areas—sustained the growing wealth of a stable, mid-century Paraguayan state and its small, propertied ruling class. Pedro appeared to be an emblematic member of the majority Guaraní-speaking peasantry: acquiescent, if not actively loyal, in service to this state.⁴ That was, presumably, until his suicide just as the war was starting.

From the perspective of the magistrate investigating his suicide, Pedro had betrayed *ñane retã*. This expression of the Guaraní language—a language spoken by commoners and elites alike—could mean alternately “our country,” “our nation,” “our republic,” or “our province.”⁵ Its widespread circulation in social and political discourse of the nineteenth century seems to confirm that, in Paraguay, organic cultural elements of nationalism were already in place at the moment of independence. In fact, classic nationalist histories of the country depict Paraguay as a land of muted social inequalities and horizontal mestizo racial bonds forged among the Hispanic-Guaraní peasant class during the colonial centuries.⁶ Modern scholarship has complicated this depiction. These studies provide a more nuanced portrayal of class divisions and ethnic/caste distinctions spread throughout late-colonial Paraguayan society and supply poignant examination of the often violent workings of its gender hierarchies.⁷ But the sociopolitical implications of these divisions are not fully appreciated. Even modern scholarship tends to still horizontally flatten the nineteenth-century Paraguayan political community. Presumptions about a relatively uniform peasantry with a shared ethnolinguistic collective identity inform the conventional scholarly

wisdom about the population's experience with nationhood.⁸ In this view, Paraguayans allegedly held reflexive, emotive, almost prepolitical attachments to the land and nation. How else to explain that, in the very war Pedro chose not to fight, more than half of the country's inhabitants perished defending their homeland, their *ñane retã*? Indeed, the case of Paraguay often proves the exception to how we now typically understand the history of nineteenth-century postcolonial Latin America: in a world of new political horizons forged among still highly unresolved sovereignties, postindependence Paraguay was allegedly one place where matters of state sovereignty and nationhood had been resolved, at least until the War of the Triple Alliance.⁹

Even so, ordinary people in mid-nineteenth-century Paraguay sometimes, like Pedro, killed themselves. The available documentation employed here does not allow for a precise rendering of suicides rates, and the meaning of those rates, for nineteenth-century Paraguay. Moreover, at a distance of 150 years, we can never know precisely why, at the moment of truth, someone like Pedro would take his own life. But the over sixty judicial inquests of suicide cases from the 1840s–60s examined here—often well-documented by local civil magistrates—do provide rich glimpses into the social tensions of everyday life and into patterns of postcolonial state formation in the Paraguayan countryside before the Triple Alliance War. Scholars have probed the links between suicide and state formation for other eras and regions of the world.¹⁰ In the case of Paraguay, it was the 1845 decision of the ruling López regime to adjudicate suicide as both a civil and religious infraction—tied closely to the state's control and revival of the diocesan church—that clearly demarcated the act as a concern of the state. It provided for intrusive interrogations into the travails haunting communities, households, and individual minds. Civil magistrates carrying out the inquests were ultimately concerned with where to bury the perpetrators and how to punish those who tried but did not quite kill themselves. And they, too, were members of rural communities where judgments would be rendered about the fates of souls in the eyes of the state. Previous historical studies of suicide in other parts of the world have used suicide inquests to explore the social tensions and cultural interpretations raised by the act.¹¹ But only occasionally do we find glimpses into episodes of everyday state formation during the nineteenth century as rich as those contained in the suicide inquests examined here. Here we encounter routine beatings within households, quests for refuge and death in wilderness, testimony about humiliation, judgments about piety, and calculated deliberations over what do with remains buried just below the soft dirt of provisional graves. In sum, these cases from nineteenth-century Paraguay provide a revelatory look into the dialectic between ordinary people and the state on the eve of war: that persistent give-and-take between inhabitants enduring the impositions of state and society and the state reacting to duplicitous actions of people it claimed to rule.¹² These cases disrupt the narrative that issues of state sovereignty and nationhood in the territory were largely solved. They raise the problem: how precisely did ordinary people in Paraguay relate to *ñane retã*?

In a word, ordinary Paraguayans were not caught in a fixed, reflexive attachment to *ñane retã*—an entity, as we shall see, very much bound up with the state in popular imagination. Rather, as this article argues, ordinary people expressed a slippery ambivalence toward *ñane retã*, to an extent that made

postcolonial state formation, even in Paraguay, an unsettled, ongoing affair. Loyalties to state and nation were hardly a given in this social environment. Acts of suicide often formed a correlative part of a larger repertoire of routine violence that manifested the internal rifts of Paraguayan society.¹³ Here we put to rest any lingering notions that this society was an exceptional arcadia of muted inequalities and horizontal ethnolinguistic communal bonds. The suicide cases and other judicial records demonstrate that sharp social and racialized hierarchies and the violent enforcement of servitude were part and parcel of life under *ñane retã*, endured by and even reproduced among ordinary people. Everyday inhabitants of this frontier society responded to these impositions with numerous tactics of evasion. Suicide—perceived among the living as a gesture of social and religious defiance—was one such tactic. In the face of such perceived defiance, sustaining the gravitational pull of the *ñane retã* thus required hard, ongoing ideological work on the ground. And this work was often done by the likes of the local magistrate, who looked with disgust on the corpse of Pedro Quiñonez.

Routine Violence and *Ñane Retã*

By the mid-nineteenth century in Paraguay, the Guaraní phrase *ñane retã* could encompass a national-like collective identity that evoked visceral attachments to God, family, language, and soil. However, acts of routine violence—especially floggings and beatings but also suicides—tied to the reproduction of power both by the state and within society also contributed to the manufacture of meanings captured in the phrase.

A flogging that took place years before the onset of war and the suicide of Pedro Quiñonez illustrates the bundle of meanings under production. In late 1850, Blas, a Black slave, stood with hands bound to a post in the town plaza of Caapucu ready to be flogged. It was a judicial punishment ordered by the president of the republic himself. Drunk at a cock-fight, Blas had uttered some seditious words later reported to the local judge and subsequently to the president—words, of course, originally spoken in Guaraní. Again, nearly everyone in the territory only spoke Guaraní in their daily interactions; it was the only language that Blas, and most other ordinary folk, knew. But the language of official record keeping of state and church remained Spanish. Legal testimony, for example, given in the vernacular was typically transcribed into the old language of empire. Yet in this particular case, the judge took the extraordinary measure of having the remarks, as Blas' accusers later remembered them in legal testimony, written in their original Guaraní. With coins jingling in his fingers, Blas had said:

. . . *ã tacho, ã aña tachoke, ko tacho omongorre guive ñande retãme, ndiporivei comercio ko añara'y monda ogoberna guive ñande retã este gobierno aġagua . . .*

. . . these fatsos, these fat demons. Ever since that fatso has been running our country there's been no more business. Ever since that thief, son of the devil has been governing our country, this current government . . .

Blas' utterances reveal a telling circulation of politicized language within Guaraní. He used the expression *ñane retã* and did so invoking inclusion in “our

country” of all those within ear-shot. But he also invoked a clear association of this entity with a state. In his words, *ñane retã* was something to be “run” and “governed.” He rebuked the fat “son of the devil” in charge yet recognized that *ñane retã* was fundamentally a political entity and that he and his companions, for better or for worse, shared its fate. Weeks later, as welts formed, blood dripped, and whips indeed snapped flesh, the blows of his flogging told Blas to keep his mouth shut and, by extension, reaffirmed his painful inclusion in the republic.¹⁴

How, may we ask, could a flogging reaffirm to Blas his inclusion in the republic, in *ñane retã*, as he called it? The case of Blas captures mundane realities of nineteenth-century Paraguay that have received only fleeting attention from historians for their sociopolitical significance. These include the ongoing practice of varying forms of coerced labor, the persistence of perceived racial distinctions among Paraguayans—articulated in Guaraní itself—that were born of these practices, and the violent enforcement of such servitude and subordination, usually with beatings and floggings.¹⁵ Blas, a legally defined slave, and derided “negro” by those who turned him in, faced the entire bundle of this subjugation backed by the state. The discourse and practices of both the state and society thus mutually reinforced such patterns of daily life. They were accepted parts of the established social and political order—an order understood within the phrase *ñane retã*.

In fact, another case—this a suicide—specifically manifests the enduring effects of slavery, the slave trade, and corresponding experiences of racialized tension within *ñane retã*. One early morning in November 1853, Joaquim found a secluded wood behind the house of a friend in Ybytími, where he had spent the night with his family and slit his own throat, “from ear to ear,” with a shaving knife. His wife found his blood-soaked corpse shortly thereafter. In testimony given to the local judge, she and other witnesses commented how Joaquim had suffered from a paralyzing sadness in his final days. It emerged that only a few days previous he had tried to hang himself from an orange tree, also in the woods, whereupon his wife had cut him down. The source of his sadness was a string of frustrations encountered in the distant town of Villarica, where he was working. Joaquim was a skilled carpenter unable to get full payment for a job from an influential patron in town. Moreover, the legal time of his stay in Villarica, as dictated by an internal passport required of all people traveling outside their resident villages, had expired, and a new passport failed to list his name. The presiding magistrate of Villarica not only had refused to hear a lawsuit against his patron for the money owed him but, perhaps on behalf of this influential patron, had also used the pretext of the expired passport to throw Joaquim out of town. Joaquim believed that he had lost dozens of pesos on the job. He had taken to getting drunk and languishing in the doorways of houses. It was on a return trip to Asunción when he finally realized the inclination to kill himself.¹⁶

Joaquim’s suicide was both typical and noteworthy. Slitting one’s own throat, or going to the woods to hang oneself, were the two most common methods of suicide in the Paraguayan countryside. Joaquim tried both after tasting more dislocation under the legal regime of the state along with the rebuff of the locally powerful. Joaquim’s suicide was remarkable though for who he was and

where he was from. He was neither native to Paraguay nor to South America but was an “Angola black” and “native of Africa.”¹⁷

A racial subtext accompanied the indignities suffered by Joaquim in Villarica. And the scattered shards and persistent echoes of an African presence in the territory, which Joaquim embodied, were at the heart of the matter. The South Atlantic slave trade had dumped millions of captives from mostly West Central Africa into South American coastal markets during the latter half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. The intensity of the trade peaked during these decades, and the mines, sugar and coffee plantations, ranches, and farms of southern Brazil were the primary consumers of the slave labor the captives represented.¹⁸ Joaquim, for example, apparently survived as a slave in Brazil before making his way to Paraguay to seek life as a free man. The Río de la Plata and its hinterlands had also proved robust markets for captives, both in contraband and in legal trade from Brazil, and, since the sixteenth century, settlements of Paraguay had received thousands of captives in the upland internal trade in African slaves.¹⁹ Religious orders had been the primary slave owners in the province, using enslaved labor to work ranches and estates that supplied their schools and monasteries. A tradition of small-scale domestic slave ownership—in which the enslaved served households, helped manage family plots, produced artisanal goods for sale, or were rented out as itinerant laborers—had also emerged in the territory. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the population of African-descended peoples in the province, both slave and free, was not insignificant. By that time, most were not natives of Africa but had been born in the territory, were intermixed with the rest of the population, and grew up speaking Guaraní. By the 1850s, any native-born Africans in the country were, like Joaquim, fugitives from Brazil. Still, under the ruling López regime, the enslavement of African-descended subjects remained an ongoing institution of the state and society of Paraguay.²⁰

Joaquim, unlike Blas, was no longer a slave, but his life reflected the impact of the global trade and the institution of chattel slavery. We can only imagine the trajectory from his homeland, perhaps as a war captive, perhaps as an enslaved debtor to a kinsmen, maybe sold for a bundle of Indian calicos and Brazilian rum to a European trader, after trekking for perhaps dozens of leagues across the Angolan hinterland. Did Joaquim understand the Kimbundu dialect widely spoken around him in the Portuguese colonial port of Luanda before crossing the Atlantic? Did he learn the accents of Brazilian Portuguese upon perhaps following a prospector-master from the port of Rio de Janeiro to the frontier lands of, say, Matto Grosso, before furtively escaping into the forests to seek out sanctuary in the territory of Paraguay?²¹ Once there, it is likely that he picked up Paraguayan Guaraní, along with marrying a local woman, smoking the native tobacco, and sipping yerba mate. His social circle though, stretching from Asunción through Ybitimi to Villarica in the interior (this was a man who stayed on the move), was testament to both the free and enslaved African-descended presence embedded throughout Paraguayan society. There were the free pardos Mauricio Baliente and Brigida Aguinagalde, who were his confidants in Villarica. His fellow African countryman José Pintos followed him there from Asunción, where they had lived for a time and where much of the population of color was concentrated. Later, it was in the modest home of his friend Miguel

Colman, the slave and sexton of the parish church of Ybitimi, where he put an end to his melancholy with the shaving knife.²²

Joaquim felt the ideological baggage of slavery in his adopted society. From the perspective of this society, Joaquim fell clearly into the same, interchangeable racial category of *negro*, *pardo*, *mulato*. That was the assessment of the judge investigating his death and the influential patron in Villarica who had once hired him and who let slip, strategically, in his testimony, the gossip that the “negro” did not provide for his family and lost his money on drink and adulterous affairs.²³ But on the street, along ox-cart trails, and within homes, it was a Guaraní term that Joaquim likely heard most often to refer to his status, one that perhaps had a resonant Kimbundu ring to it: *kamba*.²⁴ The spoken Guaraní of the province had long since appropriated the term *kamba* to give common voice to the old linked stigma of blackness and bondage in reference to those of African descent. Used alternately as a slur or a term of endearment, the word served to indicate the status of *pardo*, *mulato*, or slave or even just to describe a dark complexion. Here was a clear connection between standard legal practice and popular discursive usage. In fact, the registering of racial lineage status remained common practice throughout the entire corpus of legal proceedings in the country, including cases of suicide. In all sorts of official documents, government notaries regularly fell back upon the procedural habits of recording for individuals the standard archetypes of caste lineage—*blanco*, *indio*, *pardo/mulato/negro*—as a primary means of state legibility.²⁵ Local militia companies continued to be organized by caste category, and recruitment lists for the national army listed lineage as well.²⁶ The persistence of this practice was ironic given the almost undecipherable biological mixture that characterized the territory since the early days of the colony and the near absence of adopted categories to try to account for that mixture. People held to describing “pure” caste lineages in both legal and informal ways and, as the term *kamba* suggests, took racial status seriously.²⁷

Joaquim’s suicide thus raises another, related problem. This involves the usual dissolution or marginalization of the memory of the Black presence in Paraguay within conventional lore and standard historical accounts.²⁸ Such acts of forgetting were crucial for the construction of the mestizo, Hispanic-Indian ethnic identity assumed for Paraguayans, historically and in the present day, which subsequently contributes to the horizontal flattening of the Paraguayan political community in the historical imagination. But rather than looking at the people living among them and seeing mostly just ethnic commonality, Paraguayans during the mid-nineteenth century could see racialized difference all around. This perception involved distinguishing not just between those claiming the status of *blanco* and those designated *pardo* or *negro* but also those burdened still with an *indio* status as well. Indeed, for centuries, the bulk of population in the province, living in the reduced Indian pueblos of varying religious orders, held this status. There was, however, another irony here. By the 1850s, many Paraguayans—especially after the 1842 suppression of Indian pueblos as legally distinct corporate bodies—whatever their degrees of supposed racial purity or mixture, were increasingly reinforcing their identification with a “white” status.²⁹

Racial categories of *pardo*, *mulato*, *negro*, and *indio* retained their place in the social imagination of Paraguayans. These categories persisted in ways that

extended beyond strict demographic counts or well-defined racial communities. Claims on whiteness necessarily assumed claims of superiority over an integrated presence of presumed inferiors on a hierarchical racial ladder—an undefined smattering of Blacks and Indians living all around. Whiteness, Blackness, and Indianness were all part of a single conceptual package, especially with notable slippage among the terms of inferiority and fluid interaction among people of different categories. In this environment, an undercurrent of racialized tension endured, and it tended toward the personal and situational. Those clearly labeled by others as Black or Indian faced it often in sudden moments of sharp rebuke and physical punishment, or even legal action, in confrontations with patrons, family members, and acquaintances.³⁰ Joaquim likely encountered it upon pleading with the local judge to hear his complaint against his influential patron, only to be told to get out of town on a legal pretext selectively enforced. In such cases, slurs of *kamba*, or *ava* for “savage Indian,” were heard and further gathered their pejorative charge.

Racialized tension also weighed heavily on those making tenuous claims on whiteness. Consider the case of Toribia Añasco’s attempted suicide in mid-1850s Asunción. Toribia lived in a reputedly poor family in the neighborhood of San Roque with her mother and stepfather and, in the course of one deposition in her case, insisted on her white lineage before judicial authorities, saying that “her natural mother Juana Fernandez is white [but] that her stepfather is *pardo*.” Her emphasis on the difference was meant to disparage her stepfather. For it was in defiance of him that Toribia roamed the streets freely and without a shawl for cover, absconded with the clothes of neighbors, lost meat that she was sent to purchase for dinner, and, in one instance, dramatically feigned cutting her own throat as he ran after her with a stick to beat her. Toribia was a remarkably defiant soul. Despite her insistence on a sense of racialized superiority over, as she saw it, her “cruel” stepfather, Toribia’s own field of social interactions was extensively with other people of color. She would borrow money from *pardas* in the street, make conversation with the Black washerwomen in the market, and worked as a domestic alongside slaves in the homes of offering patrons. Later, when she was a fugitive from justice, the legal notary of the capital’s criminal court made it a point to stress in a capture notice that she had “very dark skin despite the fact that she has asserted that she is white.” In the context of Toribia’s social life and mounted defiance—not just against the paternal authority of her *pardo* stepfather but, subsequently, against the state—her public claims on whiteness were melting away.³¹

Other evidence suggests how momentarily fleeting and tense potential claims on whiteness were for certain subjects. A dark complexion, a position of servility, and an afternoon of drinking all could combine to dissipate a reputation of a “clean” racial lineage among peers.³² Officials in the countryside might sneer at the presence of “Hispanicized Blacks” in their towns. Likewise, individual fugitives from the law and escaped slaves, despite their descriptively light complexions, remained burdened with a status of *pardo* or *mulato* in the capture notices that sought their return.³³ Local state officials also found ways to indicate the “Indianness” of residents from the old Indian pueblos, especially those with Guaraní surnames, who might otherwise pretend to assume their status as fully incorporated “white” citizens of the republic.³⁴ In this regard, in the old Indian pueblo of Ypane in 1853, many residents now claimed white status. But

the pretentious choral master for the parish church told a noisy gathering of relatives and fellow residents outside his house to “get up you old Indians and get out of here or else I’ll have you whipped.” His words failed, as his son-in-law later described, to distinguish among the “white persons that were there.”³⁵ Clearly, such claims on whiteness were tenuous indeed.

The indignities of servitude contributed to such racialized tensions in a land where both households and the state exploited coerced labor. The state remained the primary owner and trafficker of slaves in the country. But household ownership of slaves was also still common, despite the enactment of a free-womb law in 1842 that obligated *pardo libertos* to work for their masters into their twenties.³⁶ Households also sustained *encomienda*-like labor arrangements for people labeled as *indios*.³⁷ The state, in turn, exploited the coerced labor of soldiers and convicts, and local judges supplied jailed subjects as servants to prominent households in the interior.³⁸ Beyond the rentier and smallholder peasant class, a substantial underclass of dependent workers populated the Paraguayan countryside. While some were slaves, most were ostensibly free individuals. These dependent workers were a common feature among Paraguayan households on sizeable estates and large yerba camps, as well as on small farms and in modest homes, frequently toiling alongside both slave companions and their patrons. Patrons assumed paternal authority over all such dependent laborers, and state sanction of this authority was always close at hand.³⁹ In fact, a single Guaraní expression encompassed the entire spectrum of dependent laborers, from the contracted field hand, to the house servant, to the purchased slave—*tembiguái*. All were potentially *tembiguái* of patrons, who saw themselves as benevolent paternal figures, fulfilling patriarchal obligation. Meanwhile the expression also captured a connotation of servility, which, from the perspective of patrons, seemed as essential to the natural order of things as anthills and beehives.⁴⁰

Patrons and masters accordingly assumed the social prerogative to beat their *tembiguái*. The prerogative paralleled customary practices of state discipline. The ruling López regime granted this entitlement to state officials in the countryside, who made regular use of floggings and other physical punishments. Low-level military officers, for example, beat common soldiers with sticks for meager offenses like the breaking of tools.⁴¹ Overseers on state ranches took to the whip to punish peons and slaves for other perceived infringements, as did the bosses of work gangs in the yerba encampments of both government and private ventures. Horse thieves, cattle rustlers, drunken brawlers, and other perpetrators faced similar punishment from militia commandants and local judges.⁴² One man even defended the alleged “moderate punishment” of his dependent as exercising the same authority “that state overseers have over peons of their charge.”⁴³ In another case, an escaped convict from the northern penal settlement of Salvador—described in an 1850 capture notice as “blonde” and of “white lineage” and “with scars on [his] legs and buttocks from the many whippings for crimes”—later claimed in a deposition after his capture that he was, in fact, a “free pardo.” Perhaps the scars convinced him to accept a servile racial status, which was only further reinforced by a presidential order for 130 lashes more on the town whipping post.⁴⁴

The frequent resort to beatings and floggings by husbands against wives reveals how such routine violence lay at the heart of exacting servility in a

household—again paralleling state-sanctioned customs. Defiance of labor demands often provoked the violent rage of men against wives and lovers.⁴⁵ Impulsive reactions included smacking, punching, and the pulling of hair. But men were also methodical and inclined to use the lash in ways that reflected the punitive practices of the state.⁴⁶ Whips for horses and other livestock were common enough items in rural households, hanging from pegs on the walls or slung over ceiling beams, which made for ready access in the deliberate exercise of domestic torture. In their absence, leather straps to tie firewood or a braided branch served the purposes of a flogging nearly as well. Men bound their victims' hands above their heads using doors or beams, just as convicts were tied to posts for their lashings. Some men preferred to take their partners to the woods to do the job there, binding them to tree branches or just pinning them to the ground. They stripped women naked to whip them. The cracks of their whips resounded with clarity for distances around, awaking relatives in the night and inspiring neighbors to comment with dark sarcasm "that someone is riding a tired horse."⁴⁷ Revealingly, when a wife protested in court or even in the home against beatings and excessive demands on her labor, she often pleaded that she was her husband's "companion, not his slave."⁴⁸ For the humiliation of a flogging was the clearest demonstration of a woman—even the wife in a modest peasant household looking for a shred of dignity—being reduced to the status of a degraded, servile *tembiguái*.

Such routine violence flowed from undercurrents of sharp inequalities and degrading servitude that were part and parcel of life under *ñane retã*. Acts of suicide at times correlated closely with the routine. The sanctioned beatings of a slave, a peon, a wife, a convict, or a soldier could provoke a range of reactions among those on the receiving end of blows. Cases of suicide suggest how they also broke peoples' spirits. Beatings humiliated victims. Numerous women attempted suicide after such humiliation from husbands and lovers.⁴⁹ Likewise numerous slaves and servants of households hung themselves in the woods after whippings by patrons and owners.⁵⁰ In 1852, Blas Figueredo, a convict peon, even confided to a friend the pain of humiliation from a beating suffered while working on an estate near Villarica. He then described his intention to hang himself in the woods as a result—all done just before actually going through with it.⁵¹ In 20 percent of the dozens of suicide cases examined here, the victim was beaten before deciding to take his or her life.

Slippery Ambivalence

Acts of suicide also point to the slippery ambivalence that people could muster in the face of pressures from state and society. Certain suicidal acts took on clear patterns in the Paraguayan countryside. Suicide victims in Paraguay hung themselves in their own homes on occasion. They also tended to slit their own throats, mimicking the standard slaughter of livestock. One victim was even seen sharpening his blades and heard commenting that he wanted to butcher a cow days before passing the knife across his own neck.⁵² But the most common way to kill oneself in the Paraguayan countryside was to go into the woods, the *monte*, to find a tree branch from which to hang. Of the sixty-four total cases of suicide examined here, 50 percent involved victims hanging

themselves in the monte. Pedro Quiñonez, we recall, chose this means as well before also cutting his throat.

Hanging oneself in the monte had defiant implications in a frontier context. It suggested the literal crossing from the boundaries and strictures of Christian civilization into the ever-encroaching “savage” wilderness of unsettled forests and peoples. It occasionally proceeded along with other suggestive actions: the deliberate removal of clothes and religious pendants, usually a rosary. Everyday items were generally used as length—a horse rein, a leather strap, or a rope tied around the waist as a belt. There was the careful search for a strong branch, sufficiently high, where the feet would not touch the ground, and the appropriate tying of the rope, with the knot closing on the throat.⁵³ In all, it was likely understood that a defiant act of sin and “savagery” was underway. One slave woman who killed herself this way in 1853 seemed to recognize as much. After repeated slaps and beatings from her owner, she had apparently chided her mistress beforehand: “For me it’s nothing to lose my soul, since you would also lose your money.”⁵⁴

The encroaching wilderness of the Paraguayan countryside invited such daring perdition. The presumed territorial sovereignty of the state was never what it seemed in the province, and the halting, shattering process of Hispanic-creole settlement was hardly finished business, even by the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁵ Even within the heart of the territory claimed by the postcolonial Paraguayan state, autonomous indigenous peoples maintained their own domains among forests and hillsides.⁵⁶ Many people exploited such open breeches and liminal spaces of state sovereignty, moving in and out of the fold to run contraband, to escape a patron, to abandon a wife, to desert the army, or to forge a passport. Being caught merely exposed the constant fluctuation of people through the expansive margins.

Projected boundaries between Christian civilization under state rule and the wilderness beyond were permeable and unstable at best. For the wilderness was known to swallow back lands and people. Folk tales told of dreadful, hairy humanoids descending from hillsides to kidnap children and young women. Other stories spoke of the forests taking back Christianized Indians and converting them into man-eating jaguars.⁵⁷ The landscape of outlying villages throughout the countryside bore the marks of the uneven, tenuous footing of state rule. The central plaza announced a focus of order, but churches and government houses could be in disrepair. Beyond the more prominent residences lining the plaza, thatch and adobe houses grew steadily more scattered and interspersed with woods. Roads and footpaths became more winding, reflecting, if not following, the twists and turns of cattle trails. Familial agricultural plots, called *kokue* in Guaraní, necessarily occupied small clearings off such paths surrounded by the tangled green of forests.⁵⁸ The *monte*, the *ka’aguy* in Guaraní, was usually just a step or two away.

Many tasted the danger and exhilaration of traversing this blurred boundary between the plaza and the *monte*, always with sprightly movements and options best kept open.⁵⁹ It was common in Paraguay to contract the labor of free indigenous people, if for only fleeting periods before they “returned to their tribes.”⁶⁰ The wilderness always proved a potential refuge. Escaped slaves made frequent attempts to flee to the forests and incorporate themselves into the kinship societies of autonomous indigenous groups, some finding success, others being

captured and returned for a ransom.⁶¹ Vagrants and troublemakers, military deserters, and especially exhausted workers in the yerba fields, often executed similar defections.⁶² In this environment of fluid crossover, determinations of who really belonged where could prove counterintuitive—as when a peon with a Guaraní surname, Torribio Porandorí, abandoned his encampment near Concepción for the refuge of free indigenous acquaintances nearby or when an *indio montés* with the Hispanic name Saturnino Gacete accepted work as an overseer of a creole work detail near Villarica.⁶³

The subterfuge and disorientation of the borderlands spread into the system of internal passports that attempted to regulate the movement of people and labor. The passports cost money for paper and official stamps, so the incentive to avoid them was also strong. Local officials were prone to look the other way if the papers of their own workers or those of influential friends were not all in order.⁶⁴ The locally astute, in turn, knew from whom to get protection, to what officials to show their faces, and how far they could travel without any papers in hand and any questions being asked, even if in the company of strangers. Many had acquaintances with some knowledge of writing forge their passes altogether. Unsure hands traced shaky letters and ran words together on these intriguing relics of subversion that might even reproduce the formulaic patriotic statements—“Independence or Death”—that graced nearly all official papers of the state. Meanwhile shadowy aliases replaced legal names on the papers.⁶⁵ In sum, these cases leave the impression of a constant flow of illicit movement throughout the Paraguayan countryside.

Social and political conformity proved fluid, contingent postures in this environment. Certain acts of suicide only echoed the changes of mind and inclination. Fugitives from the law already traversing the margins might make hanging themselves from a beam or cutting their throats on the run the ultimate displays of resistance at the moment of their capture by local authorities.⁶⁶ But hesitancy and ambivalence seemed to mark the last strides of many. This seems the case with Pedro Quinonez, whose walk into the wilderness and seeming gesture of suicidal defiance in the early months of war guide our reflections. In the legal testimony taken from friends and family members that followed his suicide, it is revealed that Pedro’s wife had inquired about his persistent, pensive sadness during the weeks before his death; she reported his lamentations to the investigating magistrate. Intriguingly, Pedro had bemoaned to his wife “that in his old age he could not offer the proper fulfillment of his obligations to his Superior.”⁶⁷ He was referring here to his obligations to serve the state. His reported words suggest that he had still felt a burden to serve *ñane retã*, a burden that weighed on him and may have factored into his decision to kill himself. His suicidal act, as well as those of others, followed a life full of militia service sustained, labor obligations fulfilled, sacraments observed, and patriarchal duties satisfied.⁶⁸ Even so, in a countryside familiar with state-sanctioned, Catholic notions of mortal sin and the encroaching allure of the *monte*, the hint of defiance in any suicidal act often hung in the air like the stench of a rotting corpse. And under the López regimes in Paraguay, an encounter with the corpse of any apparent suicide left local officials with the question of how to restore and extend the bluster of state sovereignty over the dead in the eyes of the living.

Condemning the Soul of Pedro Quiñonez

The hard ideological work of sustaining the gravitational pull of *ñane retã* often consisted of local legal proceedings—such as ruling on a suicide. The local judge presiding over the suicide of Pedro Quiñonez was exercising a curious juridical authority when he had Pedro's corpse lowered into a meager grave near the spot where it was found. By the mid-nineteenth century, the legal systems of Western European states, for example, had long been decriminalizing suicide, leaving behind traditional punishments that expropriated victims' property and desecrated their corpses.⁶⁹ Even within medieval-based judicial practices though, matters of burial—particularly in colonial Spanish America where dramatic civil prosecutions of suicides seemed less of a concern—had typically remained in the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical officials.⁷⁰ An 1845 presidential decree adjudicating suicide in Paraguay reinforced the criminalization of the act but made local civil judges primarily concerned with where to bury perpetrators. It was a measure closely aligned with the state's appropriation of provincial ecclesiastical institutions.⁷¹ For the Paraguayan state was effectively managing diocesan institutions, with all the presumptions of the church-state monolith and its claims on sanctity still in place; this was no forced liberal secularization. It was also overseeing the construction of dozens of new public cemeteries, to gradually abolish the traditional practice of burying the dead inside churches. Parish priests still collected fees and performed the ecclesiastical rituals to bury corpses within their precincts.⁷² The public cemeteries were still designated sacred grounds, and local judges ruling on suicides had to determine whether to grant perpetrators ecclesiastical burial within them. They were effectively ruling on the fates of souls.

The occasional news of an apparent suicide in any Paraguayan town brought forth its own series of calculations for a presiding magistrate. It required that the judge go with a local doctor to document the position of the body and the size and shape of the wounds. He then was to have the corpse buried on the site of its discovery, especially those found in the woods, marking the place with a makeshift cross driven into the ground while more deliberations were made.⁷³ Testimony had to be taken about states of mind, motives, and piety of the deceased. The eventual formation of a local tribunal with the judge and two other men of supposed good standing had to subsequently weigh evidence, decide a verdict, and then send the relevant documentation to be ratified by a higher criminal magistrate in Asunción. Ignorance and shortcuts, though, sometimes led to agreeably quick proceedings. Careful discretion might have allowed magistrates to elide them altogether, especially for a victim who was a relative of a friend or that of a village notable. The moral calculations of the local judge informed any decision to pursue a case and inject the prerogatives of state sovereignty into the intimacy of local memory and death.⁷⁴

In the case of Pedro Quiñonez, it was perhaps the incoherence of the act that made it so mystifying and infuriating to the judge of Tobati's case. Testimony taken from relatives and neighbors confirmed what the judge already knew about Pedro's reputation as a good family man and pious Christian, who fulfilled and taught the laws of God, increasingly the standards by which the state itself defined the loyal and obedient citizen of the republic. The testimony also confirmed that Pedro did not suffer from insanity—the one widely recognized legal justification for ecclesiastical burial in the case of suicide.⁷⁵ In other cases of suicide, victims were well known to have suffered from mental

disturbances. Judges and witnesses alike often collaborated to document the piety of the deceased with testimony emphasizing the fulfillment of sacraments and patriarchal duty. Here all sorts of justification, legal and moral, were found for the magistrate to grant ecclesiastical burial.⁷⁶ Likewise local judges often used their inquiry into the religious lives of perpetrators to confirm the lack of piety among those already considered to be insolent souls. The failures to attend mass and visibly say one's prayers seemed consistent with abandoning work obligations, talking back to superiors, or living as a loner. In these cases, the reasons to deny ecclesiastical burial seemed just as clear cut.⁷⁷ The puzzling cases for judges were those that involved perpetrators of lucid minds who had also lived reputedly faithful, moral lives, like Pedro, who had also spent a lifetime serving the patria loyally as a soldier.⁷⁸

Perhaps for the presiding magistrate in Tobatí's case, moral indignation was all he had to make sense of the incoherence, particularly in a time of war. By 1865, the judge was working at the center of local mobilization efforts in preparation for what would become a titanic conflict with Brazil and Argentina. He helped to organize the civic-religious festivities that whipped up enthusiasm and accompanied the recruitment of young men into the national army. From the parish pulpit, he helped to oversee the countless sermons and pronouncements in Guaraní that depicted the coming war as a "holy cause" to sustain national liberty.⁷⁹ In this flurry of activity, the proceedings to rule on the suicide of Pedro Quiñonez initially made quick work of the case. The magistrate took testimony from Pedro's wife and sister-in-law and formed the tribunal that swiftly and without much additional comment ruled that Pedro deserved to remain where he was buried, in the *monte*, on profane grounds. In a notarized act, the judge then had the provisional cross marking the spot plucked from the ground.

More ideological work was nonetheless required. A legal protocol inquiry from the higher criminal magistrate in Asunción insisted that more testimony be taken, and a new tribunal convened. In response, the judge in Tobatí's case made clear the moral foundations of his original ruling. Here he harped on the "deplorable cowardice" and "horrible crime" of Pedro. Furthermore, the judge acknowledged the sergeant's piety in life but amended that "he lacked within him a decided will to lend his services to the Patria in the Holy Cause that we sustain and . . . preferred a notorious, criminal death, so perhaps he was not favored by God with the recommendations that he had in life after all." The second local tribunal confirmed the ruling of the first, denying Pedro the rites of ecclesiastical burial. It effectively condemned his soul as being beyond the grace of God for rejecting *ñane retã*. The higher court in Asunción, and eventually the president himself, necessarily concurred.⁸⁰

Conclusions

The dozens of suicide rulings during the 1840s through 1860s proved a telling, curious accretion of postcolonial sovereignty projected over the fates of souls. In all, most such rulings denied victims and perpetrators the same grace forbidden to Pedro. Corpses remained rotting in meager graves, usually in the woods; provisional religious markers were sometimes formally removed.⁸¹ Only later did parish priests receive notice of the rulings. Upon assuming the jurisdiction to decide on the "compassion and clemency" of the church, local civil

magistrates typically wanted to confirm what they already perceived as acts of defiance against what was still considered the conjoined domains of God and state, the *ñane retã* itself. Occasionally though, judgments did grant the clemency of ecclesiastical burial in public cemeteries, especially to those pious individuals determined to have suffered from insanity. Remains then had to be exhumed from their provisional graves, taken in religious procession to the cemetery, while parish priests were notified to perform the burial rites. And more than once, due to bureaucratic hiccups and other delays, these acts occurred months, sometimes years, after the original death.⁸² The judgments of suicide cases thereby manifested projections of sovereignty by the postcolonial republic beyond the grave and onto the mysterious, tangled planes of cosmological time and local memory.

Crucially such manifestations took shape on the local level, among the material realities of distraught families and watchful neighbors, within the intimacy of death itself. Ordinary people in Paraguay were hardly encountering *ñane retã* as some innocuous cultural entity with a fixed gravitational pull over their lives. Incorporation into *ñane retã* often meant enduring cruel burdens, racialized denigration, and painful outbursts of violence tied to the daily exercise of state power and domestic servitude. Many sought the cover of wilderness for at least a temporary escape, to move along the margins, shifting sprightly in and out of the fold. Others sought to make their escape more permanent and ended up hung by their necks with a rope tied to a tree branch. The daily measures taken to recover the gravitational pull of *ñane retã* proved constant and laborious, necessarily repeated within intimate contexts of local village life, where the *monte* was often just a step or two away. Ceremonial flag raisings, patriotic serenades, prayers for the republic, circulations of passports, and brands seared onto cattle joined occasional rulings on the souls of suicide victims to at least anchor the burdens and hierarchies of *ñane retã* in some divinely ordained social and political order. Paraguay was one of many places in Latin America at the time where postcolonial state sovereignty and the imagined frameworks of modern nationhood remained simultaneously tenuous, partially fragmented, and legibly reproduced within familiar temporal and spiritual orders.

Endnotes

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14. The documentation of the case features three separate recorded testimonies of Blas’s words in Guaraní that differed slightly. The one cited above is from the first stated witness of the scene. The Guaraní expressions of Spanish root verbs were *omongorre* and *ogoberna*. Proceso al esclavo Blas por proferir palabras insultantes contra el Presidente, Caapucu, 1850, ANA-SCJ 1392, n.1, foja 1–8. The difference between *ñande retã* and *ñane retã* lies with how the Guaraní speaker carries the nasalized sound.

15. Zachary R. Morgan, *Legacy of the Lash: Race and Corporal Punishment in the Brazilian Navy* (Bloomington, IN, 2014).

16. Sumario sobre el suicidio del negro Joaquim Miranda, ANA-SCJ 1455, no. 7, foja 123–52.

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22. Sumario sobre el suicidio de negro Joaquim Miranda, foja 124–27, 134–48.

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30. Causa de Marcos Presentado contra el pretense matrimonio de José Villalva y María Rosa Presentado, Archivo Nacional de Asunción-Sección Nueva Encuadernación (hereafter ANA-SNE) 2188.

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41. Proceso al soldado Cornelio González por desertor, 1864, Concepción, ANA-SCJ 1715, no. 1.
42. Informe de José de Carmen Urbietta, December 31, 1854, Ypane, ANA-SH 312, no. 8, foja 23; Informe de Justo Godoy, December 31, 1854, Arroyos, ANA-SH 312, no. 8, foja 39–40; Informe de José de la Cruz Amarilla, June 30, 1854, Atyra, ANA-SH 312, no. 8, foja 150; Informe de José de la Cruz Céspedes, December 30, 1854, Laureles, ANA-SH 312, no. 8, foja 223; Informe de Juan Pablo Gorostiaga, June 30, 1854, Villa Rica, ANA-SH 312, no. 8, foja 260.
43. Queja de Pedro Lizardo Orue contra el comandante de Villa Franca, 1853, Villa Franca, ANA-SCJ 1749, no. 21, foja 158–71.
44. Proceso a Ignacio Mongé por desertor (Vila del Salvador), 1850, ANA-SCJ 1515, no. 6, foja 1–4; Zachary R. Morgan, *Legacy of the Lash*.
45. Sarah Chambers, "'To the Company of a Man Like My Husband, No Law Can Compel Me': The Limits of Sanctions against Wife Beating in Arequipa, Peru, 1780–1850," *Journal of Women's History* 11, no.1 (Spring 1999): 31–52.
46. Querrela de Pedro Antonio Canteros contra Manuel Paredes, Paraguari, 1853, ANA-SCJ 1749, no. 22, foja 173–80. Querrela entre Jacinto Benítez y su mujer Silveria González, 1852, ANA-SCJ, foja 1–9; Proceso al pardo Manuel Fabio por maltratos y golpes a su mujer, Carapegua, 1855, ANA-SCJ 1755, no. 3, foja 132–86; Proceso a Dorotea Fariña y Buenaventura López por adulterio, Barrero Grande, 1853, ANA-SCJ 1761, no. 2, foja 1–61.
47. Proceso a Felipe Quintana por maltratar a su mujer, San Cosme, 1850, ANA-SCJ 1616, no. 2, foja 22–48; Proceso contra el esclavo Carlos Mencia por castigos dado a su mujer, Estancia del estado Tavapy, 1850, ANA-SCJ 1392, no. 5, foja 63–70; Proceso contra José Mariano Valenzuela por haber maltratado a una mujer, Yuty, 1855–57, ANA-

SCJ 1505, no. 1, foja 1–59; Sumaria información sobre el suicidio de Gregoria Avalos, Valenzuela, 1850–51, ANA-SCJ 1524, no. 1, foja 1–50; Proceso a Rafaela Funes por intento de suicidio y a su marido José Domingo Nandutí, San Ignacio, 1858–60, ANA-SCJ 1648, no. 2, foja 1–42; Proceso a Roque Elizeche por maltrato a su mujer, Quindy, 1850, ANA-SCJ 1611, no. 5, foja 1–28; Proceso a Francisco Jara y Josefa Jara por castigo del primero a la segunda e intento de suicidio de esta, Emboscada, 1856, ANA-SCJ 1703, no. 11, fojas 149–66.

48. Demanda de Simeona Abezada contra Pedro Doncel, 1852–54, AAA, foja 25–27.

49. Sumaria información sobre el suicidio de Gregoria Avalos, Valenzuela, 1850–51, foja 1–50; Proceso a Rafaela Funes por intento de suicidio y a su marido José Domingo Nandutí, San Ignacio, 1858–60, foja 1–42; Proceso a Francisco Jara y Josefa Jara, 1856, foja 149–66.

50. Sumario sobre el suicidio de Barbara Ortiz, 1865, San Juan Bautista, ANA-SCJ 1509; Causa de suicidio del indio libre José Dolores Contreras, Santiago, December 1863, ANA-SNE 1636; Sumario del suicidio del esclavo-liberto Juan, Trinidad (Asunción), 1860, ANA-SCJ 1487, no. 3, foja 25–29; Alfredo Viola, *Cárceles y otras penas: Época de Carlos Antonio López* (Asunción, 2004), 120–21.

51. Sumario sobre el suicidio de Blás Figueredo, San Cosme, 1852, ANA-SCJ 1647, no. 4, fojas 36–25.

52. Proceso sobre el suicidio de Rosa Catalina Yegros, Itagua, 1858, ANA-SCJ 1624 (II), no. 18, fojas 122–33; Sumario sobre el suicidio del pardo Nicolas, Lambare, 1866, ANA-SCJ 1624 (II) no. 3, foja 1–7; Sumario sobre el suicidio de José María Aleman, Villleta, 1860, ANA-SCJ 1552, no. 1, foja 1–11.

53. Proceso a Rafaela Funes por intento de suicidio, 1858–60, fojas 1–42; Proceso a Magdalena y Patricia López por el suicidio de Benedicto López, San Lorenzo, 1856, ANA-SCJ 1430, n.5, fojas 90–92; Sumario sobre el suicidio del indio Carlos Gamarra, Villa del Rosario, 1865, ANA-SCJ 1752, no. 1, fojas 2–10; Sumario sobre el suicidio del soldado Ramon Galeano, Pilar, 1849–50, ANA-SCJ 1837, no. 4, fojas 1–18; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Juana Inés Blanco, Santa María, 1858, ANA-SCJ 1466, no. 3, fojas 64–72; Sumario sobre el suicidio del esclavo Máximo Santa Cruz, Caacupe, 1866, ANA-SCJ 1488, no. 1, fojas 1–17; Sumario sobre el suicidio del esclavo Blas Antonio, Caapucu, 1851, ANA-SCJ 1619, no. 10, fojas 123–30.

54. Sumario sobre el suicidio de la esclava Plácida, 1853, Piraju, ANA-SCJ 1807, no. 2, foja 1–13.

55. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*. Hal Langfur, *Forbidden Lands: Colonial Identity, Frontier Violence, and the Persistence of Brazil's Eastern Indians, 1750–1830* (Stanford, CA, 2006); Cynthia Radding, *Landscapes of Power and Identity: Comparative Histories in the Sonoran Desert and the Forests of Amazonia from Colony to Republic* (Durham, NC, 2005).

56. Susnik, *Una vision socio-antropológica del Paraguay del siglo XVIII*, 9–16, 36–38, 60–72; Whigham, *The Politics of River Trade*, 117–20; Cooney, “North to the Yerbales: Exploitation of the Paraguayan Frontier, 1776–1810,” *Contested Ground: Comparative Frontiers on the Northern and Southern Edges of the Spanish Empire*, eds. Donna J. Guy and Thomas E. Sheridan (Tucson, 1998), 135–49; Telesca, *Tras los expulsos*, 215–56.

57. Dionsio M. González Torres, *Folklore del Paraguay* (Asunción, 2003), 78; Susnik, *Los aborígenes del Paraguay: Etnohistoria de los guaraníes, época colonial* (Asunción, 1979), 167; Capucine Boidin Caravias, “Guerre et Métissage au Paraguay: Deux companies rurales de San Ignacio Guasú (Misiones 2001–1767),” Thèse de doctorat de Sociologie, Université Paris X Nanterre, 2004, 305–29.

58. Jan Kleinpenning, *Paraguay 1515–1870: A Thematic Geography of Its Development* 1 (Madrid, 2003), 495–99, 974.
59. Informe de Eugenio Lopez a CAL, May 1, 1858, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH 368, no. 1, foja 1072.
60. Informe del comandante Resquin a Francisco Solano López, July 18, 1863, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH 369, no. 1, foja 1300–2.
61. Informe de Cornelio Zarate, October 15, 1849, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH 368, no. 1, foja 733; Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 30 October 1851, ANA-SH 409, no. 1, foja 411–13; Informe de Candia, 7 June 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH 409, n.1, foja 444–49.
62. Informe de Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 30 March 1861, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH 369, no. 1, foja 1238; Informe de Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, February 27, 1861, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH 369, no. 1, foja 1227–28; Informe del oficial Jose Carmelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 5 September 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH 404, no. 1, foja 547–48.
63. Informe de Jose Caramelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, September 29, 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH 404, no. 1, foja 553–54. For the crossover of Porandorí and Gacete, see Informe de Eugenio López a Carlos Antonio López, July 19, 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción and Informe de Jose Caramelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, September 15, 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH 404, no. 1, foja 551–52; Informe de Francisco Pereyra a Carlos Antonio López, June 30, 1858, Correspondencia de Villa Rica.
64. ANA-SH 328 (microfilm, Univeristy of Texas at Austin); Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 1 January 1861, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH 369, no. 1, foja 1218.
65. Consulta judicial del juez de Jesús, 1850, ANA-SH 295, no. 10; Proceso contra el pardo esclavo Manuel de Jesús por fuga, vagancia y falsificación de pasaportes, 1853, ANA-SCJ 1566, no. 4, foja 54–77; Proceso a Dionicio Tacuari e Indalecio Curahí por falsos, 1853, ANA-SCJ 1566, no. 10, foja 183–206. Proceso contra José Mariano Recalde con pase falso y conducir animales ajenas, 1848, ANA-SCJ 1152, no. 2, foja 11–57; Causa contra Pedro González, Abelino Toledo, e Ignacio José González por falsificación de pasaporte, 1849, ANA-SCJ 1546, no. 8, foja 115–60.
66. Suicidio de Vicente Benítez, Acahay, 1856, ANA-SCJ 1442, no. 7, fojas 118–27; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Salvador Garay, San Juan Bautista, 1859, ANA-SCJ 1487, no. 2, fojas 15–24; Proceso a Francisco Javier por robo, resistiendo autoridad e intento de suicidio, Carapegua, 1849–50, ANA-SCJ 1820, no. 5, fojas 132–205.
67. Sumario sobre el suicidio del sargento retirado Pedro Quiñonez, 1865, ANA-SCJ, foja 49–53.
68. Sumaria sobre el suicidio de Valentín Centurión, Paraguari, 1864, ANA-SCJ 1756, no. 5, foja 209–16.
69. Georges Minois, *History of Suicide: Voluntary Death in Western Culture*, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore, MD, 1999). Morrissey, *Suicide and the Body Politic*, ch. 5; MacDonald, “The Secularization of Suicide in England 1660–1800.”
70. The late-colonial Spanish American legal compilation *La recopilacion de leyes de los reynos de las indias* was not concerned with regulating suicide. See *La recopilacion de leyes de los reynos de las indias*, v. 1–3 (Madrid, 1943). The Spanish medieval legal code *Las siete partidas* does discuss suicide and the circumstances that might have produced it. But it

does not seem to discuss penalties for the act, see *Las siete partidas* (Santa Fe, Argentina, 2000), 349–50. Spanish American cannon law stated clearly that suicide victims were not to be buried in a holy cemetery unless it could be determined that the victim suffered from a “mental delirium,” D. Justo Donoso, *Instituciones de derecho canónico Americano*, v. 3 (Paris, 1897), 101–2.

71. Carlos Heyn Schup, *Iglesia y estado en el Paraguay durante el gobierno del Carlos Antonio López, 1841–1862*, *Estudio jurido-canónico* (Asunción, 1982) and Cooney, “La reconstrucción de la iglesia paraguaya, 1841–1850,” *El Paraguay bajo los López: algunos ensayos de historia social y política*, eds. Jerry Cooney and Thomas Whigham, (Asunción, 1994).

72. On the regulation of cemeteries, see Juan F. Pérez Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López “Obrero máximo” Labor administrativa y constructiva* (Asunción, 1948), 586–87, and Cooney, “La reconstrucción de la iglesia paraguaya,” 56. Parish churches still collected on ecclesiastical burial fees (1–2 pesos). They also paid from their ledgers expenses for sacistrans of cemeteries; see, for example, Informes de mayordomos de iglesia, Villa Occidental, Paraguari, and Capiata in ANA-SNE 1696, as well as the 1857 ledger for burial payments for the parish of Laureles in ANA-SNE 3161.

73. Sumario del suicidio de Antonio Esteche, Yabebiri, 1855, ANA-SCJ 1430, no. 1, foja 5–6; Suicidio de Vicente Benítez, Acahay, 1856, ANA-SCJ 1442, no. 7, fojas 118–27; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Valentín Centurion, Paraguari, 1864, ANA-SCJ 1756, no. 5, foja 209–16; Denuncia sobre el suicidio de Vicente Ibarrola, Luque, 1865, ANA-SCJ 1590, no. 3, foja 26–27.

74. The work of Brian Owensby on the sociopolitical legal culture of colonial New Spain informs the analysis here. See Brian P. Owensby, *Empire of Law and Indian Justice in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA, 2008) and “How Juan and Leonor Won Their Freedom: Litigation and Liberty in Seventeenth-century Mexico,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 85, no. 1 (2005): 39–79.

75. Sumario sobre el suicidio del sargento retirado Pedro Quiñonez, 1865, ANA-SCJ. The discourse of medical insanity, in fact, coincided with more traditional religious judgments in other early modern contexts; see Deschrijver “From Sin to Insanity? Suicide Trials in the Spanish Netherlands, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” 981–84.

76. Sumario sobre el suicidio de Benigna Ortellado, Santa María, 1850, ANA-SCJ 1619, no. 7, foja 76–92; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Rosa Isabel Veron, Ita, 1864–65, ANA-SCJ 1590, no. 1, foja 1–8; Proceso sobre el suicidio de Rosa Catalina Yegros, Itagua, 1858, ANA-SCJ 1624 (II) no. 18, foja 122–33; Sumario sobre el suicidio del José María Aleman, 1860, ANA-SCJ, foja 2–3, 4–5.

77. Sumario sobre el suicidio de Lino Gíminez, Villa del Rosario, 1857, ANA-SNE 2755, no. 44–47; Sumario sobre el suicidio del indio Carlos Gamarra, 1865, ANA-SCJ; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Salvador Garay, San Juan Bautista, 1859, ANA-SCJ 1487, no. 2, fojas 15–24; Informe de Daniel Chuna a Carlos Antonio López, 2 September 1854, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH 409, no. 1 II, foja 582–83 on the suicide of Castor Caballo.

78. Sumario sobre el suicidio de Vicente Britez, Ita, 1861, ANA-SCJ 1457, no. 2, foja 23–30; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Barbara Ortiz, 1865, ANA-SCJ, foja 122–28, 134.

79. Huner, “Sacred Cause, Divine Republic: A History of Nationhood, Religion, and War in Nineteenth-Century Paraguay, 1850–1870” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2011), ch. 5.

80. Sumario sobre el suicidio del sargento retirado Pedro Quiñonez, 1865, ANA-SCJ.

81. Murray describes how profane burials for suicides in Europe during the Middle Ages were intended to demonstrate expulsion from both social community and Christian salvation. He also notes how suicides were often given profane burial along the boundaries of woods and wilderness; see Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages* 2, 41–51. Pérez briefly notes the punishment doled out on the bodies of slave suicides in nineteenth-century Cuba in *To Die in Cuba*, 42–45. For the removal of crosses, see, for example, Sumario sobre el suicidio de Rufino Meza, peon de la chacra del president, Norte de la Recoleta (Asunción), 1854, ANA-SCJ 1608, no. 8, foja 122–28; Sumario del suicidio del esclavo-liberto Juan, 1860, foja 29; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Vicente Britez, 1861, foja 24–29.

82. Sumario sobre el suicidio del José María Aleman, foja 8–9; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Rosa Isabel Veron, foja 8.