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Influence of Jesuit Linguistic Manipulation on Guaraní Gender Norms in Colonial Paraguay

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Introduction

A giant snake dragging a woman downriver to have its way with her because of the tempting scent of menstruation seems incredibly unlikely.[1] Yet this was one of many stories that introduced Jesuit priests to the indigenous Guaraní people of what is now Paraguay and its surrounding regions. The true meaning of such wild tales, however, was likely lost in translation, as Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, the Jesuit missionary who recorded this story, noted that he was told these accounts by natives, likely translators. His 1639 account, *The Spiritual Conquest*, narrates Montoya's journey as he made contact with the Tupí-Guaraní peoples. Throughout are tales of danger, wonder, and the bizarre, but most important is Montoya's overall message that New Spain is a land full of godless souls ready for salvation. His writings were influential in recruiting Jesuit missionaries to the region, as the title indicates. Because of this, it is necessary to read such narratives with a grain of salt and an eye toward Eurocentric misinterpretation and ulterior motives. Moreover, the cultural and linguistic difference between Montoya and the Guaraní impeded understanding of mythical anecdotes like this one, whose meanings rely on cultural symbols. The intertwining of the snake and sexuality was salacious to a celibate priest like Montoya, but the Guaraní tale carried deeper meaning than a scandalous tale. Unfortunately, that meaning is lost through time and imperfect translation. Folklore, as this thesis explores, was not the only way that Spanish Jesuits and Guaraní misunderstood each other during the years of establishment in the region.

Language was just one of the ways that colonizers and natives had to interact in unfamiliar ways post-Columbus. Histories of colonization often emphasize the physically brutal

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[1] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 26-27.

aspects, such as disease, slavery, or warfare, but colonization is a holistically violent process that adversely impacts societies on multiple levels. In particular, this thesis focuses on the link between culture and language, with respect to Jesuit Spanish-Guaraní lexicons, as a framework to understand changes to gender roles and sexuality within the Jesuit missions of the early seventeenth centuries.

Historical Context

For those familiar with North American native history, tragedies like the use of smallpox blankets, the elimination of bison, and forced relocation are all too common. In South America, conquistadors were faced with different geographic and cultural challenges that shaped the process of colonization. In Paraguay, Spaniards found themselves reliant on the labor of indigenous Guaraní women for sustenance. Marriages between conquistadors and Guaraní women contributed to this reliance in a system of *cuñadasgo* explained by Austin in *Colonial Kinship*, wherein the Spaniard owed his in-laws favors in exchange for the labor provided by his wife.[2] However, Jesuit missionaries, being celibate, did not partake in this practice, and this dynamic of dependence informed relations within Jesuit *reducciones*, or missions. Rather than using intimate contact, missionaries had to influence their subjects through other means.

During the colonial period in Paraguay, indigenous Guaraní societies came into contact with Europeans and faced dramatic changes in religion, daily life, and even the treatment of women. The Guaraní people traditionally inhabited lands along the Paraná, Uruguay (Tapé), and Paraguay Rivers as well as the regions of Guayrá, the Río de la Plata, and southern Brazil.[3] They

[2] Shawn Michael Austin, *Colonial Kinship: Guaraní, Spaniards, and Africans in Paraguay*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2020) 19-20.
[3] Barbara Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003) 17.

were a semi-sedentary people, dwelling in villages of two to three hundred people led by a cacique, or *tuvichá*, charged with warfare, diplomacy, and marriage alliances. In addition to *tuvichá* were spiritual leaders called *pajé*, or shamans. These were men (usually, but occasionally also women) who presided over religious festivals, healing, and ceremonies.[4] Their respect derived from their oratory skills and, like *tuvichá*, these shamans often had multiple wives to demonstrate their influence.

The Guaraní hunted and fished to supplement sustenance agriculture. They would move when the soil was exhausted.[5] Labor was divided principally by gender, with women assigned the time-consuming, daily tasks whilst men participated in intermittent hunting, fishing, and warfare. Women's work consisted of intensive planting and harvesting (all by hand), foraging, pottery, weaving and spinning, childcare, and food preparation.

Warfare was a key activity for many Guaraní tribes, wherein a constant cycle of ritualistic revenge and vengeance was established. This practice may have inspired exonym of "Guaraní," meaning war or warrior, as a reflection of conquistadors' perception of these people. The war-wrought rhythm of give and take was a major component of Guaraní cultural concepts of mutual reciprocity, which informed the practice of cannibalism amongst some Guaraní groups, who ate pieces of war captives' bodies, believing that this practice would grant symbolic or mystical powers.[6] Scholars debate over how often this practice occurred, though they generally agree that anthropophagy was not uncommon. Guillermo Wilde in his article, "Toward a Political Anthropology of Mission Sound: Paraguay in the 17th and 18th Centuries ," discusses some of the difficulties Jesuits faced in eliminating cannibalism and other indigenous

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[4] Brian P. Owensby, *New World of Gain: Europeans, Guaraní, and the Global Origins of Modern Economy*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2022) 20.
[5] Phillip Caraman, *Lost Paradise: The Jesuit Republic in South America* (New York: Dorset Press, 1975).
[6] Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 22.

cultural practices.[7] The Jesuits condemned most practices associated with the old ways of life—including evidence of the Guaraní religion. To strengthen their attack on indigenous culture, Jesuits characterized practices like cannibalism as evidence of Guaraní barbarity and their need for spiritual salvation. This was despite other, more practical explanations for the practice of anthropophagy. As Barbara Ganson explains in *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata*, one of the primary motivations behind this was to ward off potential enemies through their reputation as man-eaters.[8] Cannibalism was not as persistent as polygyny, which the Jesuits were much more challenged to eradicate.

Guaraní societies were patrilineal and matrilocal, meaning that when a couple married, they lived with the wife's family. The celibate Jesuits perceived Guaraní marital relations as less strictly codified than their Spanish counterparts. Divorce was fairly straightforward, defined by a couple parting ways. To the Jesuits, this lack of formal bureaucratic process appeared (wrongly) as a marriage without obligations.[9] Furthermore, the *tuvichá* often had multiple wives as a status symbol, meaning they participated in polygyny, which the Jesuits disapproved of.[10]

The Spanish first encountered the Guaraní in the early sixteenth century. After initial skirmishes, conquistadors became dependent on the labor of Guaraní women and married them or took them as concubines in order to take advantage of their skills.[11] The Jesuit order came later than the Franciscans, as the order was founded in 1540, and so Jesuits only arrived in

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[7] Guillermo Wilde, "Toward a Political Anthropology of Mission Sound: Paraguay in the 17th and 18th Centuries," *Music and Politics* 1 (October 1, 2007) §35-37.
[8] Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 23.
[9] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 61.
[10] Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 18-19.
[11] Shawn Michael Austin, *Colonial Kinship: Guaraní, Spaniards, and Africans in Paraguay*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2020) 1.

Paraguayan territory in 1588.[12] During the early seventeenth century, these Jesuits devoted themselves to establishing *reducciones,* or mission towns, which by 1732 boasted a population of 140,000 Guaraní.[13] The term *reducción* carries connotations in Spanish not only of "reduction," but of change, like how a sauce reduces in a pan and changes flavor. The strict regime enforced in the missions aimed to instill Christianity and a sense of Eurocentric civilization. To that end, administration in the *reducciones* (ideally) consisted of one priest and a lower-ranking Jesuit, aided by an educated Guaraní secretary of sorts, who was trained to read and write in Latin, Spanish, and the native language.[14] This last position was crucial because religious instruction in the *reducciones* was in Guaraní—not Spanish or Latin. This was not a unique feature of the missions. Encomenderos, who were like quasi-slave owners who were entitled to indigenous labor in exchange for evangelization, as well as Franciscan priests, both arrived before the Jesuits and were already communicating predominantly in Guaraní.[15] As the Jesuits were leaders (but not alone) in valuing translation of Catholic ideas in order to evangelize, as opposed to imposing their native language upon their subjects, this suited them just fine.

One of the primary reasons for moving into the *reducciones* was the threat of colonial pressures, such as Portuguese slavers, or "*bandeirantes*."[16] That being said, missions did not provide perfect protection and several early *reducciones* were shut down by *bandeirante* raids. This resulted in fleeing from the Guayrá region and resettling downriver.[17] Over time, the

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[12] Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 31.
[13] Guillermo Wilde, "Imagining Guaranis and Jesuits: Yesterday's History, Today's Perspective," *Revista* 14 no. 3 (2015) § 1.
[14] Wilde, "Imagining Guaranis and Jesuits," § 2.
[15] Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 29.
[16] Julia J. S. Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History*, (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2014) 1.
[17] Mary Wilhelmine Williams, "The Treaty of Tordesillas and the Argentine-Brazilian Boundary Settlement," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 5, no. 1 (1922): 9.

reducciones became fortified communities. Efforts such as arming Guaraní troops with guns and military training eventually beat back the majority of slavers by 1641.[18]

Meanwhile, outside of the *reducciones*, other Guaraní found themselves in *encomiendas*. These were entitlements issued to an *encomendero*, or "grantee of Indian tribute,[19]" who exacted labor or personal service from indigenous laborers. In return, the *encomendero* was obligated to provide the natives with religious instruction. Although not technically slavery, as the Spanish crown forbid the enslavement of New World natives, coercion and abuse were not uncommon in the *encomiendas*.[20] That being said, treatment in the *encomiendas* is not the primary focus of this paper.

Much of what is known about the Guaraní during this time period comes through the lens of Spaniards like Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, a Jesuit missionary from the early seventeenth century, who wrote about the Guaraní that he encountered when first establishing missions through Paraguay in his 1639 account titled *The Spiritual Conquest* as well as translatory lexicons to help incoming missionaries communicate with the Guaraní. Additionally, once established, Jesuit missionaries wrote reports back to their superior, called a "provincial," to express the successes of their work and justify the need for more supplies and labor. Although Jesuit accounts like Montoya's are Eurocentric, this bias provides an excellent frame of reference for studying European motives when dealing with the indigenous people. Furthermore, combined with what is known about the Guaraní, through translated indigenous sources as well as by reading in between the lines of European ones, it is possible to glean an educated impression about Guaraní acceptance of evangelization.

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[18] Owensby, *New World of Gain*, 153.
[19] Austin, *Colonial Kinship*, 1.
[20] Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions*, 22.

Language in the Lexicons

One of the first obstacles in converting the Guaraní was the language barrier. Jesuits used translators and diligent study to understand the Guaraní language, but also to use it to their benefit. Montoya wrote his interpretation and adaptation of the Guaraní language in *Tesoro de la lengua Guaraní* as well as the *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua Guaraní*. These served as translatory dictionaries and grammar books for prospective missionaries to convey their sermons in the native tongue. The Jesuit Order placed particular emphasis on learning the local language as a way to more effectively evangelize.[21] Evangelization was central to the order. As such, the Spanish Jesuits evangelizing the New World urgently needed to adapt to their new environment not only for their own gain and benefit, but for the kingdom of God.

In contrast to other such volumes, Montoya's lexicons are unique in their level of cultural observation and commentary. These lexicons not only translate words, but also demonstrate a remarkably profound understanding and manipulation of Guaraní language. Through the strategic use of participles and compounded words, Montoya builds a vocabulary that is more than just functional: it is a conscious injection of Jesuit thought into the Guaraní language. William Hanks' *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross* discusses what linguistic anthropologists call "language ideologies" to describe this phenomenon. Although his work addresses the Maya via Franciscan "lenguas," the basic principles are applicable to the Guaraní under the Jesuits as well. The idea of *reducción*, as stated before, was not only to reduce, but to transform. Montoya saw beauty in the Guaraní language and saw potential in it as a tool of

[21] Liam Matthew Brockey, "Comprehending the World: Jesuits, Language, and Translation,"*Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 88, no. 176 (2019): 391.

reducción.[22] Hanks asserts that *reducción* spread by linguistic practice in that it was replicated in language and restructuring users' understandings.[23] Examples from Montoya's *Tesoro de la lengua Guaraní* and *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua Guaraní* (to be referred to as the *Tesoro* and *Arte*, respectively) show, if not the extent, the ambitions of Jesuit linguistic manipulation and the root of the ideals they intended to portray through idiomatic injection.

It is important to understand what exactly these documents are. They must not be mistaken for mere dictionaries, although they are a related genre. An *arte* "states the regularities immanent in a single language.[24]" Whereas a dictionary is reversible between two languages, an *arte* uses a matrix language (in this case, Spanish) to describe the object language (here, Guaraní). A *tesoro*, or thesaurus, is even more explicit (for English speakers) in its intentions not to give word-for-word meanings, but rather close substitutions in the same vein as the original phrase. It should be mentioned, however, that the *Tesoro* translates from Guaraní to Spanish, whereas the *Arte* translates from Spanish to Guaraní. *Artes* were also explicitly used as tools of language instruction, and, as is still applicable today, tools and settings of education were also conduits to convey ulterior agendas.

However, as Hanks points out, this mode of explanation left gaps between the matrix and object languages.[25] Although there are sections devoted to single-word translations, these *artes* primarily aimed to use Spanish language structures to describe languages that were not just non-Spanish, but distinctly non-European. This holds true for Montoya's *Arte* as well. Sections on

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[22] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *Arte y Bocabvlario de la Lengva Gvaraní,* (Madrid: Juan Sánchez, 1640) xiii-xiv.
[23] William F. Hanks, *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.) 6: 88.
[24] William F. Hanks, *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.) 6: 204.
[25] William F. Hanks, *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.) 6: 207.

tenses like *pretérito*, *imperativo* and *futuro perfecto* attempted to equate unequal grammars.[26] Disparities like this, as well as the fact that Guaraní is an agglutinate language that relies on particles while Spanish is not, left room for error—but also room for interpretation.

Montoya's contributions in the *Tesoro* provide not only a look into Guaraní linguistics, but also the clash between Guaraní culture and Jesuit ideals. The terms which Montoya chooses to translate, in particular those concerning women, offer insight into what the Jesuits wanted to convey to the Guaraní. One of the top priorities was controlling women's sexuality and, in turn, shaping men's attitudes toward women. However, since the Guaraní practiced polygyny, it makes less sense that women's behavior was so central to Jesuits' concerns about sexuality and multiple marriages. The men were the ones accruing women in ways that were sinful to the Catholic church, but the women only had one spouse as far as they were concerned (records do no indicate that wives had intimate relations with each other, nor that women practiced polyandry). That being said, as aforementioned, sexual and marital practices amongst the Guaraní were relatively liberal, with sex being permitted following first menstruation for women.[27] This explains the practice of early marriages in the missions, starting at age fourteen, in order to avoid pre-marital intimacy.[28]

The *Tesoro* has a particularly detailed entry under the Guaraní word for women, which is *kuñá*. Included in the phrases that Montoya thought relevant for priests to know are "a woman who walks with everyone," "fond of walking (female),[29]" and, under the entry for *atá*, or to walk,

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[26] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *Arte y Bocabvlario de la Lengva Gvaraní,* (Madrid: Juan Sánchez, 1640) 19-21.
[27] Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest*, 63.
[28] Mercedes Avellaneda and Lía Quarleri, "Mujeres guaraníes en las misiones jesuíticas: categorías en tensión, reordenamiento social y resistencias," *Historia Unisinos* 24, no. 3 (Sept/Dec 2020): 370.
[29] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní,* (Asunción: CEPAG, 2011 [1639]) 106 r; Original Spanish (translation my own): "mujer que anda con todos, andariega, callejera mujer.

there is "street woman.[30]" These phrases make use of euphemistic verbiage equating the act of walking with sex. It is likely that Montoya used this language in order to avoid discussing sex openly. The number of variations upon this theme reflect Montoya's belief that female promiscuity and freedom posed a threat to Christian enlightenment and the salvation of the Guaraní souls.

However, when comparing Montoya's walking metaphors to the literal translations in Guaraní, the pieces do not quite line up. The first, "woman who walks with everyone," is translated as *kuña ava papahára*. *Kuña*, as aforementioned, is the word for woman. *Ava* is the word for man, and *papahára* is made of *papa* meaning "numerous" and *hára*, which denotes being. Absent from the Guaraní translation are the root *atá* or *guata*, which would indicate walking. This would suggest that Montoya's replacement of "sex" with "walking" is a euphemism of Spanish linguistic origin which could not be translated into Guaraní, signifying that Montoya started with the idea of a woman who "walks" with everyone and then tried to translate that concept into Guaraní. This idea ties back to Spanish, and more broadly, European, gender roles and the idea that it was inappropriate for a woman to be seen independently walking about in public.[31] A married and housed woman, to the Jesuits, was a safe woman. To the Guaraní, however, this idea was not so easily conveyed, since women's work involved being outside often.

More insight is gained by examining other such phrases in the *Tesoro*. For example, the translation given for "callejera mujer" is *kuña atase oka rupi*.[32] Here again appears the word for woman, followed by *atase*, from *atá* (to walk) and *se* denoting desire. Then, there is the word

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[30] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 70 r.
[31] Mary Elizabeth Perry, "Perfect Wives and Profane Lovers," in *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton University Press, 1990) 53.
[32] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 70 r.

oka, which simply means "outside," but has been coopted to also signify "street," followed lastly by *rupi*, meaning "at, around, to." Again, Montoya attempts to illustrate this idea of the street as a place for men, but this was a solidly European concept. To the Guaraní, the idea of a "street" in the European sense was already foreign, which is obvious from Montoya's clumsy cooption of the native word for "outdoors." But to then also equate the idea of being outside with maleness was not only conceptually difficult but also logistically nonsensical. Diagrams of various mission towns show that the "streets" were large, open, and, most importantly, *publicly visible*. The plaza, the largest outdoor space in the whole community, was also easily seen from most angles.[33] Therefore, to associate illicit sexual activity with the streets would have been difficult to explain in the context of the missions. Nonetheless, Montoya persisted.

Another colorful phrase that Montoya translates is "pecar con mujer,[34]" or to sin with a woman. Tellingly, a male counterpart for this phrase is not given. This is reflective of the ideas of carnal sin, woman as original sin, and women as lustful temptation. Recalling the story of the serpent and the Guaraní woman, one can begin to envision Montoya's evocation of a Guaraní "Eve" of sorts. Again, since Jesuit priests were celibate, these ideas may have been, in part, the result of repressed desires, though a full psychoanalysis of their mindsets would be inappropriate given the scope of this thesis. Montoya also gives the term "loose or easy woman.[35]" It would have been important to the Jesuit mission that priests were able to convey that the Guaraní women must act prudently in regard to guarding their chastity as the Jesuits were used to, thus necessitating the addition of such phrases to the *Tesoro* arsenal. These terms not only indicate

[33] Julia J. S. Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History*, (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2014) 41-43.
[34] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 107 v.
[35] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 106 r; Original Spanish: mujer liviana.

how the Jesuits perceived the Guaraní, but also the ideas and concepts they wished to impose upon the Guaraní.

Another one of those ideas, as Montoya's *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua Guaraní* reveals, was that of virginity and chastity. A woman's chastity is given as "kuña ava rehe tequa rey haba[36]" which, in a clumsy sort of construction, refers to a woman who has not been with a man in a bad way. Montoya uses a similar set up to translate chastity of a man, as "ava kuña rehe tequa rey haba.[37]" This phrase means a man who has not been with a woman (negatively). That Montoya uses parallel phrasing to describe the idea of chastity for both woman and man is telling. Many other entries in the *Tesoro* and *Arte* give examples that only apply negatively to women. However, it is also important to note here that Montoya's interpretations of chastity are strictly heteronormative. Given the Jesuit Order's Catholic ideology, this is not surprising. However, the Jesuits' heteronormative attitudes may have resulted in a gap in the historical record regarding queerness and non-binary individuals amongst the Guaraní.

Another way in which the Jesuits tried to casually shame women through manipulation of language was in the discussion of menstruation, particularly from a European and Catholic viewpoint. There are various translations given for a woman on her period[38] each with differing connotations. *Kuña reco pochī*[39] is the first translation given, and etymologically, it denotes a woman who is bad, dirty, or ill. The indirect phrasing as well as the negative connotations makes it likely that this was a phrase that Montoya came up with in order to avoid directly naming the topic. However, it is also possible that here *pochī* references the unpleasant monthly

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[36] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *Arte y Bocabvlario de la Lengva Gvaraní,* (Madrid: Juan Sánchez, 1640) 241; Original Spanish: castidad de la mujer.
[37] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *Arte y Bocabvlario de la Lengva Gvaraní,* (Madrid: Juan Sánchez, 1640) 241; Original Spanish: castidad del varón.
[38] Original Spanish: mujer con su regla.
[39] Montoya, *Tesoro,* 107 v.

symptoms common to many women. Even more pointedly, however, is the translation given right after the first, which is *kuńa reco angaipa*[40] which is composed of words and particles meaning "a woman who is sin." In addition to the immediately apparent motivations at play, it is highly unlikely that this phrase was native to the Guaraní language. Rather, Montoya probably put these roots together in hopes of conveying the idea of menstruation as dirty and related to the devil. Yet another translation given in this entry is *kuña tugui pochī*,[41] an association of the words for woman, blood, and dirty or bad. Despite this phrase sitting next to a more neutral term, *kuńa ugui* (woman and blood), Montoya felt it necessary to include a more negative phrase in order to emphasize his opinion on menstruation and impose it onto the Guaraní stance.

Given the vehemence of the Spanish translations regarding menstruation, it is possible that the Guaraní did not view it as negatively as the Jesuits. In turn, missionaries felt it appropriate to enforce their opinions on the matter. One scene from Montoya's *The Spiritual Conquest* supports this idea. Here, Montoya writes about the Guaraní ritual surrounding a girl's first menstruation. He states that it mostly focuses on her initiation into womanhood and the responsibilities it demands. At its core, womanhood in Guaraní society centered around being valiant and hardworking, not chaste and submissive.[42]

In addition to commentary on menstruation, Montoya also felt it necessary to insert his beliefs on women who took reproductive healthcare into their own hands. According to Ganson, Guaraní women knew how to practice abortions, but sources are vague on the specifics.[43] Montoya's *Tesoro* gives a little insight as to how this may have occurred under the entry, *mujer que tomó bebedizo para abortar*, or so, a woman who took a potion in order to abort. Montoya

[40] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 107 v.
[41] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 107 v.
[42] Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest*, 63.
[43] Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 19.

gives the translation as "kuña oñemopohângĭúbae.[44]" Here again is the familiar word for woman, *kuña,* followed by *o,* indicating third person active voice, then *ñe,* indicating reflexive action, then *pohâng ĭú* for medicine (and/or witchcraft) made of water, and finally *bae* which names the agent or actor. All in all, this phrase seems fairly neutral. Of course, immediately following this phrase is "a woman who killed her child in the womb.[45]" Later, the phrase "it is already alive," serves to further ingrain a sense of guilt and shame for wanting an abortion.[46] In comparison, the translation for miscarriage, *membykua*, removes a woman's participation entirely, denoting a distinction between natural and voluntary abortion.[47] Chamorro's *Decir el Cuerpo* (*To Say the Body*) gives insight into the various entries on abortion. In contrast to phrases that invoke personhood of the fetus and murder on behalf of the woman, the more neutral expression for abortion in Guaraní is *membypu*, which does not assign guilt or motive to a woman who has aborted.[48] However, Chamorro notes, this word is also used to denote "being polluted," or so, the female orgasm. This euphemism speaks volumes as to what the Jesuits thought of female pleasure; suffice to say, they did not approve. Furthermore, Chamorro reasons, the association between voluntary abortion and guilt, as well as its differentiation from miscarriage, are mostly likely not native to Guaraní culture. Ganson affirms this, saying that, although abortion was acceptable amongst the Guaraní, infanticide was not, due to the need for children to work the fields.[49] This indicates that the Guaraní differentiated between fetus and infant, even if the Jesuits saw them both as souls in the eyes of God. To what extent Jesuits

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[44] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 107 v.
[45] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 107 v; Original Spanish: mujer que mató en el vientre a su hijo.
[46] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 220 r; Original Spanish: ya está animado.
[47] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 220 r; Original Spanish: mal parir.
[48] Graciela Chamorro, *Decir El Cuerpo : Historia y Etnografía del Cuerpo en los Pueblos Guaraní*, (Asunción Paraguay: Editorial Tiempo de Historia, 2009) 275.
[49] Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 19.

managed to convince the Guaraní that fetuses were souls is unclear, as reproductive healthcare records from the missions are not readily available. But it is known that Guaraní referred to early-term miscarriages as "just blood,[50]" indicating that they did not see fetuses as people, or at least not early trimester fetuses. That being said, a discussion of personhood in Guaraní would merit much further investigation than the scope of this paper, given that these people practiced cannibalism. Suffice to say, the Guaraní and Jesuit visions of reproductive healthcare did not align.

Marriage and Sexuality

Spanish conquistadors largely misunderstood the Guaraní practice of offering and accepting women as a means of forging alliances. This, to some Spanish settlers, including religious officials, appeared scandalous and was likened to the selling of women for trinkets. This was a blatant misconception of Guaraní norms of reciprocity. First of all, the Spaniards offered invaluable metal items like fishhooks or knives, which the Guaraní were unable to make themselves. Second of all, the exchange of women was not meant a singular trade but rather the beginning of relations between Spanish and Guaraní. In Guaraní culture, a groom was supposed to owe service to his in-laws. However, as Austin explains in *Colonial Kinship: Guaraní, Spaniards, and Africans in Paraguay*, since the conquistadors offered such high-value items, they reversed the bride debt and thus reversed the usual dynamic, rendering their in-laws beholden to them instead.[51]

[50] Graciela Chamorro, *Decir El Cuerpo*, 275.
[51] Shawn Michael Austin, *Colonial Kinship: Guaraní, Spaniards, and Africans in Paraguay*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2020) 20.

All of this is to say that the Jesuits, arriving after the initial conquest period, could take advantage of an important insight from the situation. Although they criticized conquistadors for taking advantage of polygamous norms, missionaries learned that they should come equipped with Europeans goods like "rosaries, mirrors, pins, needles, combs, scissors, glass beads, metal fishhooks,[52]" and other such items that the Guaraní valued. They brought these objects not in exchange for female labor, like the *encomenderos* sought, but for social capital. The metal items, especially, were coveted because of their rarity and usefulness. Ganson writes that news of these gifts spread and some *tuvichá* like Cabacamby and Tabacamby even invited the establishment of missions in their areas in order to access these tools. This is not to say that bribery was unique to colonial Paraguay; in North America, indigenous people also traded for European goods like knives or fishhooks, but the way that Jesuits employed the use of high value items a key way in which they curried favor to entice the Guaraní into living in the missions.

In addition to learning from the conquistadors' material advantages, the Jesuits entered the scene with a Eurocentric framework concerning marriage already established. Since the Jesuits arrived after the conquistadors and Franciscans, they did not pioneer understanding of the region. Franciscans arrived in the area by way of Pedro de Mendoza's expedition and spent the 1530s establishing their presence.[53] In contrast, the Jesuits only arrived in 1588. However, not being the first in the area did not obstruct Jesuits from carving out their own spaces of influence in the missions.

Carving out this space of influence, as Sarreal points out, was difficult in that it was not just an ideological endeavor but a physical one, too. Missions had to be built from the ground

[52] Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 35.
[53] Marion A. Habig, "The Franciscans in Paraguay," *Franciscan Studies* 1, no. 1 (1941): 35.

up, and this meant some structures had to be prioritized before others.[54] In turn, this meant that certain goals, like agriculture, had to take precedence over, say, the elimination of polygamy. However, as Sarreal also notes, the Guaraní were less receptive to the dichotomy of gendered indoor and outdoor spaces and men only grudgingly agree to work alongside women in the fields.[55]

In addition to the religious threat posed by the continuation of indigenous rituals, Jesuits also condemned sexual norms amongst the Guaraní. In the *Cartas Anuas,* missionaries discussed the successes of evangelization as well as the downfalls, usually to justify more resources or labor. These documents record the process of changing Guaraní culture in many ways. As Avellaneda and Quarleri note in their article on female resistance in the missions, Jesuits typically separated unmarried women from the men in the missions in an effort to enforce sexual morality. This separation was enforced through segregated housing, wherein unmarried women, elderly women, and orphans were put in *cotyguazú,* conveniently located right next to the priests' quarters.[56] This Guaraní term translates simply to "big house" or "big place," denoting that the women living in these places may have simply considered them a place to sleep, rather than a form of segregation. These houses may have resembled their traditional dwellings, or long houses.[57] In Spanish, however, the priests would have called these dwellings "casas de recogidas" or collection houses. Judging by their Spanish name, the Jesuits probably saw these structures as a method of physical segregation to reduce ungodly activity in the missions. Ganson acknowledges the potential that *cotyguazú* had in terms of limiting female movement,

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[54] Julia J. S. Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History*, (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2014) 40-42.
[55] Julia J. S Sarreal, "Revisiting Cultivated Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Daily Life in the Guaraní Missions," in *Ethnohistory* 60, no. 1 (2013): 105.
[56] Barbara Ganson, "4. A Patriarchal Society in the Rio de la Plata: Adultery and the Double Standard at Mission Jesús de Tavarangue, 1782," in *Cultural Worlds of the Jesuits in Colonial Latin America* 38 (2008): 94.
[57] Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 19.

but finds it unclear whether these buildings were used for confinement on levels similar to imprisonment.[58] The practice of maintaining *cotyguazú* began in full in the 1700s, after the missions had been established for decades.[59] Their establishment was a reflection of the control that Jesuits sought to maintain over mission life, but, just like the missions themselves, were more permeable than the Jesuits intended.

The seclusion of tempting women included widows, who, if deemed old and morally responsible enough, were charged with the task of controlling the younger women both in the collection houses as well as during communal festivities outside of domestic spaces.[60] The Jesuits saw it as their duty "cultivar los indios de tierra,[61]" and as such, regulated social behavior such as mixed-gender interaction to limit pre- and extramarital affairs as if pruning dead leaves from a tree. Nonetheless, as supported by the findings of scholars like Avellaneda and Quarleri, these activities likely continued surreptitiously. Tribaldos Soriano compares these collection houses to sixteenth-century "casas de arrepentidas" in Spain, or houses of the repentant.[62] She describes women's lives in the collection houses as convent-like, involved all day in tasks like spinning and weaving, which limited their mobility, something Guaraní women had to adapt to in order to meet the Jesuits' feminine ideal—and yet, they still worked outside in agriculture, which Jesuits deemed men's work.

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[58] Ganson, *Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 78.

[59] Mercedes Avellaneda and Lía Quarleri, "Mujeres guaraníes en las misiones jesuíticas: categorías en tensión, reordenamiento social y resistencias," *Historia Unisinos* 24, no. 3 (Sept/Dec 2020): 374.

[60] Mercedes Avellaneda and Lía Quarleri, "Mujeres guaraníes en las misiones jesuíticas: categorías en tensión, reordenamiento social y resistencias," *Historia Unisinos* 24, no. 3 (Sept/Dec 2020): 368.

[61] Primera carta, del Padre Diego de Torres en el 1609; Emilio Ravignani and Carlos Leonhardt, eds., *Iglesia; Cartas Anuas de la provincia del Paraguay, Chile y Tucumán, de la Compañía de Jesús*, (Buenos Aires: Talleres S.A. Casa Jacobo Peuser ltda. 1927) 25.

[62] Rosa Tribaldos Soriano, "Imagen y representación de las mujeres guaraníes: Conflictos y resistencias en las misiones jesuitas (siglos XVII-XVIII)," In *Conflicto, negciación y resistencia en las Américas*, ed. Izaskun Álvarez Cuartero (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2018) 202-203.

In addition to keeping single women away from mixed company, the *cotyguazú* also aimed to decrease Guaraní women's impact on culture. Since the Guaraní culture was one of oral tradition, and women were usually the main caregivers of children, by removing some women from social settings, the Jesuits wanted to limit their ability to pass on history, traditions, and laws.[63] This, in theory, helped the Jesuits maximize their impact on the younger generations in the missions. However, Avellaneda and Quarleri question the efficacy of *cotyguazú* in aligning social practices with the Jesuits' moral aspirations.[64] Enforcement of women's day-to-day lives would have been difficult, given their vital roles in the mission economy and essential, quotidian tasks.

In addition to secluding unmarried women, the Jesuits also structured the mission towns in a way that fostered openness and community—but it also discouraged suspicious behavior. The mission centered around the central plaza, and there was usually one main road,[65] keeping the center area easily visible to Jesuits or prospective tattletales. The large plaza was also used for public punishment, which Jesuits hoped would deter unfavorable behavior. But roads, in the European sense, were a foreign concept to the Guaraní, as evidenced by Montoya's clumsy use of the word *oka*, or outside, to signify street. So, too, were the gendered Spanish connotations associated with outdoors and indoors. For the Guaraní, women's work often involved being outside to plant or harvest crops. In contrast, Spanish women were discouraged from going outdoors without at least covering their heads. This separation of belonging indoors versus outdoors "contributed to the notion of "good" women—whose honor was protected by her house

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[63] Rosa Tribaldos Soriano, "Imagen y representación de las mujeres guaraníes: Conflictos y resistencias en las misiones jesuitas (siglos XVII-XVIII)," In *Conflicto, negciación y resistencia en las Américas*, ed. Izaskun Álvarez Cuartero (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2018) 204.
[64] Mercedes Avellaneda, and Lía Quarleri, "Mujeres guaraníes en las misiones jesuíticas: categorías en tensión, reordenamiento social y resistencias," *Historia Unisinos* 24, no. 3 (Sept/Dec 2020): 375.
[65] Julia J. S. Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History*,)Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2014) 41.

walls—versus "bad" women, who were free to roam the streets.[66]" It was with these expectations that the Jesuits strove to convert and acculturate the Guaraní. However, as Sarreal points out, very rarely were rules as rigid in the missions as the Jesuits might have hoped. Legal restrictions on the movement of Guaraní residents, such as requiring written permission to leave the mission, were impossible to enforce completely. After all, there were only two priests for each mission, and relying on Guaraní to tattle on each other, especially their relatives, was not a perfect system. Thus, the missions and their rules were more permeable than officials would have preferred.[67]

The *Cartas Anuas* cover a broad range of topics, though they are mostly focused on religious aspects of mission life. One theme is that of the conversion of children. One *Carta Anua* relates the instance of baptizing a girl who died shortly afterward, as well as another girl of twelve years, whose mother expressed joy that her daughter would become a Christian.[68] Another instance describes an occasion wherein a Guaraní mother presented her ill infant girl, and the priest baptized her baby before the baby died.[69] Yet another recounts the dramatic scene of a mother carrying a two-day old infant gasping for breath to the Jesuits, begging them to baptize her daughter, but no water was nearby.[70] The letter goes on to say that God, having predestined everything, would look after the infant's soul. Montoya's *Spiritual Conquest* also

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[66] Brian M. Phillips and Emily Colbert, eds., *Confined Women: The Walls of Female Space in Early Modern Spain* in Hispanic Issues On Line, no. 25, 2020 p. 253.

[67] Julia J. S. Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History*, (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2014) 46.

[68] Primera carta, del Padre Diego de Torres en el 1609; Emilio Ravignani and Carlos Leonhardt, eds., Iglesia; *Cartas Anuas de la provincia del Paraguay, Chile y Tucumán, de la Compañía de Jesús*, (Buenos Aires: Talleres S.A. Casa Jacobo Peuser ltda. 1927) 28.

[69] Seguna carta del Padre Diego de Torres, 1610, misión de calchaquí ; Emilio Ravignani and Carlos Leonhardt, eds., Iglesia; *Cartas Anuas de la provincia del Paraguay, Chile y Tucumán, de la Compañía de Jesús*, (Buenos Aires: Talleres S.A. Casa Jacobo Peuser ltda. 1927) 81.

[70] Tercera carta del Padra Diego de Torres, 1611, residencia de Santa Fe; Emilio Ravignani and Carlos Leonhardt, eds., Iglesia; *Cartas Anuas de la provincia del Paraguay, Chile y Tucumán, de la Compañía de Jesús*, (Buenos Aires: Talleres S.A. Casa Jacobo Peuser ltda. 1927) 92.

recounts the baptism of eight children before they perished, referring to them as "this year's yield.[71]" That the Jesuits targeted children and even babies for conversion is unsurprising, as their young minds are more malleable to indoctrination and they hold influence on their parents, or, in the case of babies, they were unable to refuse baptism. The baptism of dying children can be explained by a quantity over quality mindset, especially in the early years when Jesuits were just encountering the indigenous. There is an unusual focus on female children, despite the fact that young boys, in Guaraní culture, had a much greater probability of growing up to be influential political or spiritual leaders. Perhaps girls were easier to influence than boys. More likely is that the Jesuits recognized the importance of keeping women in the missions because they were such a valuable source of labor, and, given how outnumbered the missionaries were, it was easier to maintain religious bonds than physical restraints. Of course, it may also be that the cartas examined for this thesis coincidentally recorded more female babies' baptisms.

Similarly, when describing mass and confession attendance, the Jesuits often made note to say that "indios e indias"[72] were present. In Spanish, the plural masculine (in this case, *indios*) also refers to a group of mixed gender individuals, so to say both the plural masculine and plural feminine forms is redundant and indicates extra emphasis on the female subjects. This attention to the gender of attendees at mass and confession offers insight into Jesuit goals in terms of religious participation.

Avellaneda and Quarleri argue that Jesuits sought control over social structures not only through physical seclusion, but also reclassification of women. The category of "widow" grew

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[71] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 69.

[72] Tercera carta del Padre Diego de Torres, 1611, misión Arauco; Emilio Ravignani and Carlos Leonhardt, eds., Iglesia; *Cartas Anuas de la provincia del Paraguay, Chile y Tucumán, de la Compañía de Jesús*, (Buenos Aires: Talleres S.A. Casa Jacobo Peuser ltda. 1927) 61; 114; 122.

disproportionately according to census counts, and Avellaneda and Quarleri posit that this reflected a change in the "widow" status to accommodate changing social structures. Specifically, this category grew to include women whose husbands fled the mission or who were unmarried for extenuating circumstances.[73] In effect, this rendered those women "single" and available for remarriage. However, Avellaneda and Quarleri also point out that men were much more likely to remarry than women. Although this may have been a result of preexisting social norms, Avellaneda and Quarleri theorize that Jesuits may have also allowed men, especially caciques, to remarry more easily than women.

Additionally, as Tribaldos Soriano illustrates, Guaraní women were traditionally in charge of practices that had to do with growing up, such as birth and funerary rites.[74] This meant that women had substantial amounts of influence over growing children, so, if Jesuits could indoctrinate young girls, then those girls would grow up to be mothers who would acculturate the next generation accordingly. Indeed, Tribaldos Soriano describes a vocal role for women in traditional Guaraní culture, including heavy involvement in greeting visitors and sending off the deceased. The publicity of their roles probably clashed with Spanish ideas of propriety for women. Making women's existence private was not something the Jesuits managed to impose entirely, however, as indicated by women's continued work in agriculture. In the end, what mattered more was that the mission was able to eat, not who made the food.

Women's role in agriculture was not the Jesuits' only concern. Given the limited personnel in the missions, Jesuits chose to focus their efforts on polygamy and sexuality as a way

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[73] Mercedes Avellaneda, and Lía Quarleri, "Mujeres guaraníes en las misiones jesuíticas: categorías en tensión, reordenamiento social y resistencias," *Historia Unisinos* 24, no. 3 (Sept/Dec 2020): 372.

[74] Rosa Tribaldos Soriano, "Imagen y representación de las mujeres guaraníes: Conflictos y resistencias en las misiones jesuitas (siglos XVII-XVIII)," in *Conflicto, negciación y resistencia en las Américas*, edited by Izaskun Álvarez Cuartero, (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2018) 199.

to morally correct what they saw as a sinful way of life. The *Cartas Anuas* speak approvingly of men who came to the service to "get rid of [their] women[75]" whilst condemning other, more reluctant men who had to have their women "taken away.[76]" The variety of differing responses to the imposition of monogamy is a reminder of the fact that the Guaraní were not a monolith, but rather individuals in diverse circumstances. Even those living in missions cannot all be said to have been in equal conditions, as some missions had greater difficulties with slave raids than others.

Regardless, some Guaraní did show significant resistance to becoming monogamous. *The Spiritual Conquest* describes a prominent cacique who rejected his legal wife in favor of a noble Guaraní woman, "claiming she had the legitimate title of being his wife,[77]" much to the chagrin of the missionaries. He went on to have multiple relations with other women, with the consent of his unbothered wife, who was in charge of many servants. Another cacique named Miguel Atiguaye disparaged the missionaries for imposing a burden upon the formerly free Guaraní by tying them to a single woman.[78] Montoya is careful to assert that Miguel came to a bad end, despite later repenting, because he led a bad life.[79] Another example from *The Spiritual Conquest*, Taubici was a cacique who had four wives, despite being described as "extremely

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[75] Segunda carta del Padre Diego de Torres, 1610, misión de Arauco; Emilio Ravignani and Carlos Leonhardt, eds., Iglesia; *Cartas Anuas de la provincia del Paraguay, Chile y Tucumán, de la Compañía de Jesús*, (Buenos Aires: Talleres S.A. Casa Jacobo Peuser ltda. 1927) 58.
[76] Primera carta del Padra Diego de Torres, 1609; Emilio Ravignani and Carlos Leonhardt, eds., Iglesia; *Cartas Anuas de la provincia del Paraguay, Chile y Tucumán, de la Compañía de Jesús*, (Buenos Aires: Talleres S.A. Casa Jacobo Peuser ltda. 1927) 31.
[77] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 69.
[78] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 69.
[79] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 75.

cruel." His wives (whom Montoya refers to as "concubines") were involved in his religious rituals, seemingly without coercion. This account is heavily colored by Montoya's perception of Guaraní religion as demonic. From the stated facts, it is clear that these women cared for Taubici, and Taubici was fond of his "beloved" women.[80] The women in these stories, although not the central characters, (either due to the Jesuits' focus on interviewing men only or their failure to include women as primary actors) seem to have had respect and a degree of free will. Although individual marriages may not have been entirely their choice, the women in these marriages had the right to consent and within the marriage they sometimes held positions of power.

Apart from brute force, Sarreal asserts that Jesuits also discouraged pre- and extramarital affairs through a vigorous workday schedule. Based on the writings of Jesuits like Cardiel and Escandón, Sarreal describes a kind of dawn-to-dusk routine, starting at four or five in the morning and filled with backbreaking labor like spinning thread, planting crops, or religious activities.[81] Yet even with days so devoid of free time, the Jesuits could not fully succeed. Men contributed to the traditionally female work of agriculture, sure, but Sarreal posits that the Guaraní did not work nearly as hard as the missionaries intended. Ganson backs this, stating that relatives would refuse to tattle on each other for not working hard, and the Jesuits served corporal punishment to as much as three quarters of the mission Guaraní.[82] Guaraní society was not one built around the idea of surplus and stockpiling, but rather one that valued leisure. Brian Owensby contrasts this with the harsh realities of the European landscape, which sees seasons of

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[80] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 55.
[81] Julia J. S Sarreal, "Revisiting Cultivated Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Daily Life in the Guaraní Missions," in *Ethnohistory* 60, no. 1 (2013): 107-110.
[82] Ganson, *Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 78.

want and of plenty.[83] This attitude, combined with a reluctance to perform what men saw as "women's work," probably resulted not in reversed gender labor roles, but rather in a greater burden on the women and token participation from the men, much like a modern Thanksgiving dinner. In this, the Jesuits both overloaded the women and failed to eliminate all instances of free time. But for a system run by two people, this was probably the most that could have been done.

To help further limit opportunities to engage in extramarital affairs as well as encourage bonding between a singular husband and wife, Jesuits tried to impose the nuclear family structure in the missions. Sarreal draws from missionary accounts which claim that households were divided by family units, except when a new wife did not yet know how to run the household. Yet Sarreal also posits that it took nearly a century to fully realize the nuclear family structure in the missions, as even at the end of the seventeenth century this arrangement was not universal.[84] It is not known how much Guaraní resistance to these changes constituted the delay; rather, the logistical difficulties of establishing separate housing for every family likely account for this.

In addition to control over sexual relations, Jesuits also sought to rein in reproductive care, such as abortions, amongst the Guaraní. Ganson affirms that Guaraní women practiced abortions, and Jesuit texts also confirm this,[85] but frequency and motives are lacking in the historical records.[86] Tentative explanations for why Guaraní women might have used abortion

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[83]Brian P. Owensby, *New World of Gain: Europeans, Guaraní, and the Global Origins of Modern Economy*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2022) 19-21.
[84] Julia J. S. Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History*, (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2014) 45.
[85] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *Arte y Bocabvlario de la Lengva Gvaraní*, (Madrid: Juan Sánchez, 1640) 108.
[86] Barbara Anne Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata*, (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003) 19.

include having children already or unfavorable circumstances to childrearing such as warfare. Tribaldos Soriano states that reproductive care and abortions especially were associated with the devil, from the Jesuits' perspective.[87] To this end, modesty was a common theme in sermons.

Tribaldos Soriano later quotes from a mid-17th century carta anua the praise a missionary lavishes upon a young girl who valiantly defends her "purity.[88]" It is unclear whether the Guaraní had a notion of chastity in the European sense, though they did have rituals of womanhood and the beginning of sexual activity was associated with puberty.[89] Manhood, on the other hand, was intertwined with virility. For example, Montoya describes two instances that demonstrate how important this was to Guaraní men. Firstly, Montoya recounts a cacique who was widowed and tried to remarry, but was refused, resulting in his humiliation and self-imposed exile. Another man was a "eunuch" and, when this became public knowledge, he was chased by boys into the forest. But Montoya also asserts that Christianized Guaraní men learned the value of chastity, and married men confessed for having intimate relations before receiving Communion, whilst unmarried men consecrated themselves to celibacy.[90] The same source also gives an anecdote of a young Guaraní man, who, being captured, was tempted with an attractive young woman by his captors, but he "refused even to look at her […] since sin entered the soul

[87] Rosa Tribaldos Soriano, "Imagen y representación de las mujeres guaraníes: Conflictos y resistencias en las misiones jesuitas (siglos XVII-XVIII)," in *Conflicto, negciación y resistencia en las Américas*, ed. Izaskun Álvarez Cuartero (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2018) 202.
[88] Rosa Tribaldos Soriano, "Imagen y representación de las mujeres guaraníes: Conflictos y resistencias en las misiones jesuitas (siglos XVII-XVIII)," in *Conflicto, negciación y resistencia en las Américas*, ed. Izaskun Álvarez Cuartero (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2018) 202.
[89] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 63.
[90] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 112-113.

through one's eyes.[91]" Clearly, for some, this idea eventually took hold. That being said, the resistance to conform to monogamy suggests that not all were on board with the idea of sexual restraint.

The devout attitude which these anecdotes hold so highly, however, must be viewed through a critical lens. First of all, as Ganson makes clear, adultery was recognized in Guaraní society—indeed, it was a crime punishable by death for women (but not for men).[92] But extramarital activity in Guaraní culture looked different from its European counterpart. For one, marriage was different because of the practice of polygamy—though it should be noted that having multiple wives was a sign of prestige and mostly reserved for *tuvichá* and *pajé*. For another, divorce was relatively simple to obtain in that a couple could separate without any grand ceremony or bureaucracy, as was often required in European societies.[93] The latter point is especially relevant to the missions, since Jesuit priests strongly valued marriage as an institution and unbreakable bond between man and woman.

In contrast, Guaraní marriages seemed to have no obligations to the Jesuits.[94] But although the legal bonds were less distinct than in European societies, the emotional and social bonds between husbands and wives were clear. Men most obviously benefitted from the domestic labor that women were expected to perform. Women, on the other hand, were emotionally close with their husbands, as evident from a passage from Montoya's *Spiritual*

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[91] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 107.

[92] Barbara Anne Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003) 19.

[93] Barbara Anne Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata*, (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003) 19.

[94] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 61.

Conquest which details the distressing self-harm many widows engaged in after their husband's death.[95]

From the evidence, it seemed that Jesuits successfully reframed the idea of marriage in a way that Guaraní understood, even if not all agreed with it. As exemplified above, even outside of strictly religious contexts, Jesuits invoked and manipulated Guaraní conceptions of reciprocity in order to achieve their goals. Similar to Montoya's artificial linguistic conglomerations, missionaries successfully manipulated cultural concepts to suit their interests. This is all the more impressive because these missionaries were doing so in Guaraní and not their native Spanish, since, again, the indigenous language dominated in the missions. It is not out of the realm of possibility, then, to suppose that they may have had similar success with conveying their opinions on sexuality, marriage, and gender roles through language.

Gender Roles and Substantive Mutuality

The missionaries' feelings on women and sexuality are abundantly clear from the *Tesoro* and its carefully curated collection of phrases. However, Guaraní reception of these ideas was less straightforward. Jesuits efforts to stop the practice of polygyny, for example, faced hindrances for the fact that the Jesuits did not fully understand the rationale behind the practice. Not only was the practice of polygyny normalized in Guaraní, and not only did the male leaders undoubtably enjoy access to multiple women, but women must have had something to gain from their role. These factors made polygyny harder to erase through good old fashioned religious shaming.

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[95] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 63.

Austin examines the life of a pajé named Juan Cuaraçí who challenged priestly authorities and aimed to establish a kind of "antireducción" or anti-mission. His influence was so strong that caciques within the missions offered Cuaraçí their daughters in marriage. These wives accompanied Cuaraçí in his efforts to recruit the masses and restore Guaraní society. Austin goes on to theorize that, although direct accounts from Guaraní women at the time on polygyny are not available, they may have found prestige in the association with powerful men or believed in the benefits of polygyny for society at large.[96] Moreover, this example implies that women had some degree of agency within the practice of polygyny. Although Cuaraçí's wives were "given" to him by their fathers, the women still chose to follow Cuaraçí around to various missions while he preached his ideology. Certainly, Cuaraçí, as a pajé on the run, was in no position to stop these women from returning to the mission, so it is likely they chose to follow him. Perhaps they believed in his message, or perhaps they enjoyed being adjacent to his influence. This intangible exchange points to a mutual, consent-based style of polygyny rather than a system of men hoarding women harem-style.

Mutuality amongst the Guaraní, like any system of social interaction, was not perfect. Owensby explains that gifts could disincentivize work, suggesting that "the Guaraní understood there would be shirkers and malingerers" who were wont to contribute to communal work.[97] Furthermore, reciprocity was just one side of a coin, with the other being vengeance, or *tepî*. Owensby's analysis of these closely intertwined exchanges focuses mostly on economic aspects, as well as on the cycle of war and ritualistic cannibalism amongst the Guaraní. But his argument

[96] Shawn Michael Austin, *Colonial Kinship: Guaraní, Spaniards, and Africans in Paraguay* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2020) 140.
[97] Brian P. Owensby, *New World of Gain: Europeans, Guaraní, and the Global Origins of Modern Economy*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2022) 25.

still yields an important framework through which Guaraní ideas of gender and marriage can be understood.

Reciprocity, according to Owensby, consisted of much more than a back-and-forth retribution. The cycle considered more than just giving action, but also taking—particularly taking without intent to return, which "had to be converted back into a gift in order to restore the balance.[98]" Owensby illustrates this idea using the example of captive Guaraní living within and even integrating into the hostage community, sometimes for years, before giving up their life. In this way, the captive was not just a sacrificial lamb to atone for former wrongs, but a communal sacrifice who gift of life could be appreciated by future generations. This thesis posits that a similar cycle of reciprocity took place through the marriage system and gendered divisions of labor.

Warfare was predominantly a male activity in Guaraní society, along with other intermittent activities like hunting or burning and clearing out fields.[99] In contrast, women, who were not expected to fight, filled the gaps by performing essential, everyday activities. This constitutes the first exchange between men and women. Secondly, although Guaraní society was less hierarchical than some native societies, like the Incans, there were still distinctions according to Montoya; noble women were preferable to a cacique looking for multiple wives.[100] In this way, women imparted prestige unto their husbands by bolstering his status as a high-ranking male, while the cacique or *pajé* could extend part of his influence unto his wives, who were granted positions of power within a household or community. It is also important to note that

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[98] Brian P. Owensby, *New World of Gain: Europeans, Guaraní, and the Global Origins of Modern Economy*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2022) 27.
[99] Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 18.
[100] Antonio Ruíz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest: Early Years of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay = La Conquista Espiritual: Los Primeros Años de las Misiones Jesuíticas en Paraguay*, trans. Barbara Anne Ganson and Clinia M. Saffi (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 1639 [2017]) 69.

leadership in Guaraní society was expressed not through exertion of authority but earned through generosity and elocution.[101] The former of these attributes was achieved primarily through the loaning of a cacique's extra labor, available to him because of polygyny. Presumably, women did not have much say in this matter, but their role is still integral to the practice. Their sacrifice and labor were key to forging political alliances and strengthening their husband's position.

In the missions, Guaraní women took on slightly modified roles—though they continued to contribute to a sense of mutuality. Given that the Jesuits forbade polygamy and tried to segregate housing into nuclear families, Guaraní women's role in a cacique's shows of generosity diminished. Their role in agriculture, however, became more relevant, especially since missions relied on their success for sustenance. Communal planting and harvests, labor traditionally done by women, (though men were coerced into joining as well) were a point of contention between Jesuits and Guaraní. Jesuits, who were accustomed to stocking up during times of plenty and stockpiling for the future, found they could not demand surplus from the Guaraní, as they would simply up and leave.[102] This aligns with traditional Guaraní concepts of leadership and reciprocity. Here, Guaraní women controlled the give and take. Their labor, which the Jesuits needed, came with a price in that austerity would not be tolerated.

Conclusion

The "spiritual conquest" of the Guaraní, as often is the case, was more complex than Jesuits might have hoped for. Far from early explorers' accounts of the Guaraní as being godless

[101] Brian P. Owensby, *New World of Gain: Europeans, Guaraní, and the Global Origins of Modern Economy*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2022) 19.
[102] Julia J. S. Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History*, (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2014) 66.

and "worshipping nothing,[103]" the Guaraní had rich oral history and cultural traditions that did not cease the moment they entered into European relations. Likewise, the gender ideals of Jesuit-Catholic religious ideology were not so easily applicable to Guaraní culture because of the vital role that women's labor played. Furthermore, it is important to remember that the Jesuit missionaries were especially fervent and pious believers whose ideals might not have strictly aligned with reality. It is more appropriate to frame their ideas of gender as aspirations, rather than hard goals.

Nor would it be appropriate to conclude without alluding to other ways in which the Jesuits sought to change Guaraní gender relations. Men, too, received entries in the *Tesoro* and *Arte* which speak to Montoya's views, with terms like "valiant/honest man" and "well-born and well-formed[104]" to emphasize the positive aspects of men, while the negative terms have to do with cannibalism or being woman-like. Montoya's choices here indicate a conflation of men with virtue, in contrast to his view of women as sin. Even when portraying men's negative sides, these have to do with choices or represent yet another way to put down women, rather than having to do with inherent characteristics. That is not to say that the entirety of Montoya's lexicons were devoted to promoting a sexist agenda. As aforementioned, terms like *kuña ugui*, meaning "woman and blood," carry more neutral connotations and likely resulted from interactions with and observation of the Guaraní language, rather than being a neologism.

The strategic inclusions in the lexicons, as well as their intended purpose in sermons and everyday life in the missions, influenced and reflected Jesuit thought. Guaraní resistance to these and other ideas limited the Jesuits' ability to evangelize, as pushing the Guaraní too far would

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[103] Barbara Anne Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata*, (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003) 20.
[104] Montoya, *Tesoro*, 8 r; Original Spanish: valiente, honrado; bien nacido, y bien formado.

prompt them to up and leave the missions. For lack of a captive audience, the Jesuits had to compromise on enforcement in some areas, and not only in terms of gender and sexuality.

Colonization is a holistic process whose progress is not always linear, and in this case, there was substantial back and forth. The Jesuits' disadvantages of being in unfamiliar terrain and having limited resources impacted their missionary tactics. Nonetheless, they set the bar high in terms of changes they aimed to make upon the natives of Paraguay. Their determination, in part, was successful, with the growth of the missions to house thousands of Guaraní, but Guaraní also had demands and limits. The tug of war over how far the Jesuits could push the Guaraní and vice versa, then, was less a spiritual conquest and more a spiritual conversation.

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