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Fondren Award Submission
Research Strategies Essay

**Accessing the *Americas* Collection: Primary Source Investigations on *La Tapada*
Limeña at the Fondren Library’s Woodson Research Center**

An extraordinary Latin American primary source available through Fondren Library’s Woodson Research Center vigorously shaped my recent study on Orientalism in the nation-building program of Peru. Access to a rare nineteenth-century print album housed in the Special Collections of the Woodson Center, entitled *Las Mujeres Españolas, Portugesas y Americanas* by D. Miguel Guijarro, enabled me to directly examine the visual content surrounding the *tapada limeña*— the popular icon of a veiled woman, emblematic of Peru’s capital city [Fig. 1]. By investigating this primary source for exoticizing and gendered discourses within the images and texts, I developed an original argument for my graduate special studies paper this past fall of 2011.¹ The greater corpus of electronic documents available through Rice’s *Americas* Collection repository allowed me to additionally analyze related, contemporaneous travelogues by authors in the affiliated collections of the *Instituto Mora* in Spain. My multi-faceted investigation of the *tapada limeña* at the Fondren Library enabled me to gain not only a strong familiarity with the Woodson Research Center’s Special Collections and *Americas*

¹ Guijarro, Miguel Ed. *Las Mujeres Españolas Portugesas y Americanas, Tales como son en el hogar doméstico, en los campos, en las ciudades, en el templo, en los espectáculos, en el taller y en los salones: descripción y pintura del carácter, costumbres, trajes, usos, religiosidad, belleza, defectos, preocupaciones y excelencias de la mujer de cada una de las provincias de España, Portugal y América Españolas*. Books. Madrid: Miguel Guijarro, 1876. From Woodson Research Center, Rice University, *Americas* collection, 1811-1920, MS 518. <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9251>.

Archive, but also with Interlibrary loan, online image resources, and catalog systems as a first year graduate student at Rice.

My study of the enigmatic civic icon of *la tapada limeña* was first shaped by a departmental orientation to the Brown Fine Arts Library generously led by Art and Architecture Librarian, Jet Prendeville. During this helpful information session, I was introduced to the resources available to historians of art and visual culture at the Brown Fine Arts Collection at Fondren, which includes Online Art Indexes and bibliographies like *Dyabola*, EBSCO, and the “America: History and Life” index. A large variety of image resources, such as ARTStor and the Smithsonian Institution Image Gallery, was discussed in conjunction with an overview of the types of materials housed in Fondren’s Woodson Research Center, including the *Americas* Archive.

Shortly after this introduction, I visited the Woodson Research Center and encountered first-hand the nineteenth-century text, *Las Mujeres Españolas, Portugesas y Americanas*, printed by Spanish editor D. Miguel Guijarro in 1876. With its lavishly illustrated oleographs and striking *costumbrista* literary texts, the Orientalist undertones imbued in this text inspired the topic of my Latin American Art History Special Studies paper. Within this work, I discovered a frontispiece featuring enigmatic women dressed in the traditional garb of *la tapada limeña*, coyly wrapped in “Moorish” veils with only one eye exposed. Responding to this compelling image, I began to develop the central focus of my in-depth research investigation.

After taking careful notes and photographs of the book directly from *in-situ* observation at the Woodson Research Center, I accessed the electronic notes and texts related to this source from the Rice Digital Scholarship Archive (RSDA) online. In

particular, I accessed the electronic collections of the *Americas* archive. Here, the full text of Guijarro's *Las Mujeres* was reproduced, along with full color scans of the illustrations. Furthermore, the "Community Collections" associated with the *Americas* online archive allowed me to browse uploaded lectures and visual resources on the primary sources of the Woodson Research Center by other Rice scholars. A colloquium lecture by Lorena Gauthereau-Bryson, entitled "Global linking through archival digitization: The Our Americas Archive Partnership and *Las Mujeres Españolas, Portuguesas y Americanas*,"² introduced me to issues of nineteenth century plagiarism that plagued Guijarro's text, and helped establish a direction for related sources early on.

After brief exploration of the associated nationalist and gendered elements at play in *Las Mujeres*, I quickly began compiling secondary sources. Utilizing WorldCat and online journal databases such as JSTOR, I began developing my selected bibliography. Rice's Interlibrary Loan system allowed me to request access to a variety of secondary sources not directly available at the Fondren, which I received within a matter of days. This enabled me to acquire sources on Orientalist influence in Latin America, as well as travelogues by nineteenth century women such as Flora Tristan. The materials of the *Americas* Archive Partnership also provided me with access to Baronessa Wilson's travel journals, available in full text along with scanned etchings from the *Instituto Moro*. I was able to access several dissertations through Rice's Electronic Theses and Dissertations database, which traced the use of the veil in Andalusian Spain and Moorish influences in the viceroyalty. From this array of research material, I developed an annotated

² Gauthereau-Bryson, Lorena. "Global linking through Archival Digitization: The *Our Americas* Archive Partnership and "Las Mujeres Españolas, Portuguesas y Americanas" (1876)." Accessed 2009. <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27614>.

bibliography, establishing a careful research record which I could quickly reference as I developed my paper.

Merging my background research on Orientalism with the historical context I garnered from primary and secondary sources, I developed my synthesized, central thesis. In my final paper, I argue that the depiction of the *tapada limeña* icon in painting, print, and photography was rooted in post-colonial European sentiments of racial superiority and political anxieties. The content I gathered at the Fondren, utilizing resources gathered from the Woodson to the affiliated Instituto Moro, allowed me to develop a solid research paper that I could potentially expand into my qualifying paper. The inspiration for my paper was certainly directed by the visually rich primary source material housed in the Woodson Research Center, yet the myriad information systems in place at Fondren provided me with the secondary source muscle needed to strongly support my argument.

IMAGES REFERENCED:



FIG. 1: *Oleograph* paste print credited to M. Pujades / R.Marti in (ed.) D. Miguel Guijarro in his *Las Mujeres Españolas, Portugesas y Americanas: Tales Como Son en el Hogar Domestico, en los Campos, en las Ciudades, an el Templo, en Los Spectaculos en el Taller y En Los Salones*, 1870.