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Abstract:

Re-presenting La Tapada Limeña: Uncovering Orientalism
In the Gendered, Civic Icon of *Fin-de-Siglo* Peru

The exoticizing imagery that constructed the civic emblem of *la tapada limeña* reveals the influence of nineteenth-century Orientalism in shaping Peruvian national identity. As European countries re-negotiated their own identities with respect to the colonial binaries they fabricated with the “East,” Orientalist currents crossed the Atlantic to set root within the newly independent nations of Latin America. Yet the dynamics of Orientalism within the Latin American discourse functioned differently than that of Europe. The manner in which the iconography of *la tapada limeña* played upon national, foreign, and colonial links is illustrated in an album housed in Rice University’s Woodson Research Center, entitled *Las Mujeres Españolas, Portugesas y Americanas*. As images of *la tapada limeña* became popular within the larger web of international consumption, itinerant artists and modern reproduction technologies impacted the “shape” of *la tapada*. The transformation of *la tapada* from national icon into decontextualized foreign commodity unveils how Orientalist notions and market forces linked to Europe both created and destabilized the national identities of Latin American nations in the nineteenth century.

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“Exciting as an odalisque... her contoured chest, her tiny foot... only comparable with that of the sublime houris Mohammed promised to those who profess the doctrines of the Qur’an.” Rife with exoticizing references to Islam, this excerpt evokes the Orientalist imagery reminiscent of the paintings of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres [Fig.1].¹ Yet this nineteenth-century prose directly refers to the Peruvian female archetype known as *la tapada limeña*.² The text derives from an album housed in Rice University’s Woodson library, entitled *Las Mujeres Españolas, Portugesas y Americanas* by D. Miguel Guijarro—a work which sheds light on the Orientalist currents at play in the gendered national image of *la tapada*. A printed plate accompanying the text for “La Mujer del Perú” features a typical illustration of the “covered” ladies of Lima. Peering enigmatically from beneath their dark *mantos* (veils), the *tapada* women are portrayed caught in a moment of movement, gracing the city streets in their colonial garb [Fig.2].³

This nostalgic image echoes the prolific renderings of *tapadas* circulating in hand-reproduced multiples, print editions and photographs in nineteenth-century Latin

¹ Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres was renowned for his Westernized, sexualized depictions of “Eastern” women in the harem and the bath. For more on the Orientalism in Ingres work, see Adrian Rifkin, *Ingres: Then and Now* (London: Routledge, 2000).

² Quote from the text by, D. Camilo Enrique Estruch, “La Mujer del Perú,” in *Las Mujeres Españolas, Portugesas y Americanas*, printed by D. Miguel Guijarro, *Las Mujeres Españolas, Portugesas y Americanas: Tales Como Son en el Hogar Domestico, en los Campos, en las Cuidades, an el Templo, en Los Spectaculos en el Taller y En Los Salones*, Madrid: Guijarro Empresa, 1870. This work is housed in the Americas Archive of the Woodson Library at Rice University. *Houris* refers to the chaste virgins promised in heaven to the good Muslim in the Qur’an.

³ The term *manto* refers to the veil worn by Andalusian women. *Tapadas* literally means “covered women,” and alludes to any female type who covers her face with a veil in Spain or South America. The *tapada limeña* is a type of veiled woman specifically from Lima who covers her face so only one eye is visible. The figure in Huyets’ print referred to here depicts the costume of the *sayo y manto* and *tapada* separately.

America and international markets. Various images of *tapada* types flooded the southern cone during the nineteenth century, including a “covered lady” of Chile, captured in an engraving by the Peruvian printer, Huyet [Fig. 3]. Yet as a female figure whose origins claimed to be rooted with the capital city of the powerful viceroyalty of Peru, *la tapada limeña* became synonymous with the capital city and nation. I argue that a distinct strain of Orientalism emerging in Latin America influenced the representation of the female figure ultimately adopted as a type of Peruvian national emblem, built upon associations with Arabo-Andalusian Spain. The *costumbrismo* movement, along with travelogues and photographs of the period, allowed Western fantasies of femininity, race, and the exotic “Other” to construct the gendered civic icon of Peru.

Orientalism was most famously discussed by Edward Said in his landmark work of 1978,⁴ and refers to the depiction of Eastern cultures by Western authors and artists. Said critiqued these Western depictions as rooted in false assumptions which essentialized the entire East into a singular generic archetype, establishing an imaginary “ontological and epistemological” binary, in opposition to the West. In Said’s model, the hegemonic culture of the West “created” a subjugated vision of the Orient, generically casting itself as powerfully masculine, while the East was alluringly feminine.⁵ Yet the image of *la tapada limeña* confuses the traditional binary split between the “East” and the “West,” with a detectable slippage in the exaggerated, nostalgic ties to Arab Andalusia, projected upon the body of a Western female figure. The image of *la tapada limeña* reveals the manner in which Peru drew upon the “Orientalist” discourses afoot in Europe to define its own national identity with powerful, gendered mystique.

⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978): 3.

⁵ *Ibid*, 40.

While the costume of the *tapada limeña* was most commonly worn in the colonial era, circulation of *la tapada* in visual culture peaked in the mid-nineteenth-century. During this period, Peru experienced rapid political, technological, and class shifts, linked to industrial modernization. The years between 1845-1879 were profitable due to Peru's flourishing guano industry,⁶ yet instigated dependency on foreign markets and a shift in racial demographics.⁷ The international trade instigated a shift in the Peruvian populace, with an increase in "white" or "mestizo" population at 39%, and decrease in the Indian population at 57 % in 1876.⁸ Industry drew an influx of Europeans to Peru, although many headed first to Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. Regardless, 50,000 immigrants came from Italy, France, Germany, and Portugal, with Spaniards as the largest foreign group. As the nations demographics rapidly shifted, an anxiety among European-descendants concerning their elite *criollo* Peruvian *identidad* emerged.⁹ While costume of *la tapada* had actually had fallen out of fashion by the nineteenth-century, imagery of Peruvian women wearing the costume paradoxically became most popular in visual culture precisely at this time.¹⁰

Early *costumbrista* paintings flaunted the female agency of the *tapadas* in the *limeñan* landscape, and the growing international demand for such picturesque

⁶ Guano refers to the manure of bats, seabirds and seals that is rich in phosphorus and nitrogen, and was recognized as an important source for gunpowder in the nineteenth-century.

⁷ David Werlich, *Peru: A Short History*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978: 79, 98, 103. Werlich correlates the shift in the guano trade, to a rise in the "white" or "mestizo" population, and fall in the Indian population in 1876.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁹ In Latin America, the term "criollo" refers to a person born of "white" or Caucasian race in the colonies. See Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity*, 93. "Identidad" refers to a sense of nation-specific identity in Latin America.

¹⁰ Laura Bass and Amanda Wunder, "The Veiled Ladies of the Early Modern Spanish World: Seduction and Scandal in Seville, Madrid and Lima," *Hispanic Review*, Vol.77 (No. 1, Winter 2009),133.

illustrations promoted the reproduction of this imagery in prints and albums.¹¹ In the commercial studios of expatriate French photographers, such as the Courret Hermanos, *la tapada limeña* was further removed from her local urban context. In the studio portraits and *cartes-de-visite* of these photographers, the representation of *la tapada* was further transformed into a gendered cultural “Other.” Thus, Orientalism can be seen in Latin America as paradoxically both shaping and essentializing the image of Peru’s *tapada*.¹² Cast as a nostalgic national icon within early *costumbrismo*, the *limeñan* lady also became an exotic visual “collectible” for the European market through new media modes of modern mass- production.

La Tapada’s Morisca Roots

The trademark *tapada limeña* was depicted as a white, veiled woman, who moved freely throughout the city in her effulgent *sayo* (traditional skirt) and elegant *manto* (veil). Defined by her myopic gaze, *la tapada* characteristically gathered her embroidered veil tightly around her face, leaving only one eye exposed to the world. As seen in the nineteenth-century watercolors of Francisco “Pancho” Fierro (1807-1879) [Fig. 4], the shawl and veil of *la tapada* masterfully exaggerated her femininity. The wrapping of the veil accented the slenderness of the woman’s neck and waist, while the cinched fabric bolstered the shape of shoulders and bustle. While men notably adopted European modes of dress in Peru during this time, women maintained the colonial garments that tradition claimed arrived with the *morisca* (lower-class Spanish women of Muslim descent)

¹¹ Gabriela Rangel, *Reproducing nations: types and costumes in Asia and Latin America, ca. 1800-1860*. (New York: The Americas Society, 2006).

¹²*Carte-de-visite* refers to a format of photo portraiture approximately 6x10 cm, which was handed out as a social calling card. See Carlos Masotta, *Album Postal*, (Buenos Aires, La Marca Editora, 2008), 100.

escorts of conquistadors.¹³ The Arabesque qualities associated with *la tapada*'s Andalusian origins are reflected in the work of *costumbrista* artist Juan Mauricio Rugendas (1802-1858) [Fig.2] and author Ricardo Palma (1833-1919). Yet how closely tied to a “Moorish” past was *la tapada*, historically speaking?

The *conquistadors* arrived in Peru in the 16th century, crushing the Incan empire under Pizarro with capture of their last ruler, Atahualpa, in 1532.¹⁴ A series of viceroyalties were established in 1543 under the Holy Roman Emperor King Charles V of Spain, which instituted courtly culture within the city of Lima. The Inquisition was brought to Lima in 1570 by Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, notorious for his obsessive laws and reforms.¹⁵ The Viceroy himself was notably from Oropesa, Spain, within the region of Castile La Mancha, an area that can be traced to the Muslim *Taifa* of Toledo and principality of Andalusia.¹⁶ Thus, leadership within the later period of the viceroyalty continued to carry historical links to Muslim Spain.

According to a 1641 treatise by Don Antonio de Leon Pinelo (1595-1660), the *tapadas*' origins are tied to Andalusia.¹⁷ Pinelo himself was born in Spain, but fled with

¹³ Luis Martin, *Daughters of the Conquistadores: Women of the Viceroyalty of Peru* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983) 14-5. See also Henry Dobyns and Paul Dougherty. *Peru: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976),175.

¹⁴ Ceasar Ferreira and Eduardo Dargent-Chamot, *Culture and Customs of Peru*, (London: Greenwood Press, 2003), 18, 20-1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁶ Arthur Franklin Zimmerman, *Francisco de Toledo: Fifth Viceroy of Peru 1566-1881* (Caldwell, Ida: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1938). A *taifa* is defined as Muslim medieval kingdom. For more on the Ummayyad Caliphate in Spain, see L. P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain: 1250 to 1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); and, “Regnal Chronologies of Al-Andalus,” Online at <http://web.raex.com/~obsidian/taifa.html>, Accessed 12/05/2011.

¹⁷ Pinelo, *Velos Antiguos y Modernos en Los Rostros de las Mujeres: Sus Conveniencias y Danos: Ilustración de la Real Premática de las Tapadas*. Madrid: Juan Sanchez, 1641. Reprint available online, http://barre.uv.es/Lemir/Revista/Revista13/3_Texto_VelosMujeres.pdf. Accessed 10/01/2011.

his Jewish family to Peru due to the increased persecution of the Inquisition in 1604.¹⁸ The treatise is entitled, *Velos Antiguos y Modernos en Los Rostros de las Mujeres: Sus Conveniencias y Daños: Ilustración de la Real Premática de las Tapadas*, published in 1641.¹⁹ The work defends the veil to the Count of Castillo, and is dedicated to the count's wife, in a brilliant political maneuver. Notably, the Count of Castillo was recognized for petitioning King Phillip of Spain to outlaw the use of the *manto*, resulting in a series of regulations prohibiting veil use in 1590, 1594, 1600 and 1639.²⁰ In this text, Pinelo presents an exhaustive twenty-eight chapters dedicated to the history of veiling in both Arab and Christian traditions, and argues that the veil can be used respectfully, despite the cases of inappropriate usage and prohibitions related in the text.²¹

Pinelo attributes the origins of the *tapada* to the fall of Andalusia and Muslim expulsion from Spain in 1492, when “Islamic veils” were outlawed by the staunchly Catholic monarchy.²² Pinelo claims the costume of the *saya y manto* was adopted by *morisca* women of Muslim descent in response to regulations against veiling.²³ As the Castillian shawl was mandated within Spanish sumptuary laws, *moriscas* uniquely adapted the garment to completely cover their faces, leaving only one eye exposed. In this way, *moriscas* could superficially adhere to sumptuary laws while upholding the

¹⁸ “Antonio de Leon Pinelo (historiador),” Online article, Accessed 12/ 05/2011. [http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_de_León_Pinelo_\(historiador\)](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_de_León_Pinelo_(historiador)).

¹⁹ The title of this work roughly translates to *Veils in Ancient and Modern Faces of Women: Their Conveniences and Harm: Illustration of the Royal Decree of the Covered Ladies*.

²⁰ Laura Bass and Amanda Wunder, “The Veiled Ladies of the Early Modern Spanish World: Seduction and Scandal in Seville, Madrid and Lima,” *Hispanic Review*, Vol.77, No. 1, Winter 2009: 98-9.

²¹ Pinello, *Velos Antiguos y Modernos en Los Rostros de las Mujeres*, 245-6, 271-387.

²² *Ibid*, 279-80.

²³ Early modern cities with notably large Muslim populations effected by the regulations were Cordoba and Seville. In 1525, Charles V increased pressure on *moriscos* to convert to Christianity.

Islamic tradition of veiling. As women were less severely punished than *morisco* men, they played a large role in keeping Islamic traditions alive in Spain subversively.²⁴

Scholars have noted *moriscas* were exoticized by European Christians in early modern Spain because of their unusual clothing, song and dance traditions.²⁵ While initially a form of cultural resistance, the *manto* of the *tapada* later became fashionable throughout Spain, spreading across Grenada, to Seville and Madrid.²⁶ The gendered garb was carried into the colonies, along with its arabesque associations.²⁷ The presence of *morisca* women in Lima is recorded as early as Pizarro's arrival, as many Spanish women followed the conquistadors as mistresses and servants.²⁸ *La Morisca* Beatriz is widely recognized as the first Spanish woman of Muslim descent in Lima.²⁹ The height of *tapada* fashion hit its apex in both Lima and Spain at the same time, from 1580-1640, although it remained in use to a lesser extent until the nineteenth century.³⁰

Regulating the Early Modern Tapada

Pinelo's defense of the veil is written in response to multiple prohibitions against the use of the *manto* in both the Iberian Peninsula and New Spain, revealing the *la tapada*'s controversial aspects.³¹ When the costume arrived with the *moriscas* in early modern colonial Peru, the Spanish courts perceived the costume as a threat for three

²⁴ Perry, 44.

²⁵ Mary Elizabeth Perry. "Behind the Veil: *Moriscas* and the Politics of Resistance and Survival," in *Spanish Women in the Golden Ages: Images and Realities*, ed. Magdalena S. Sanchez and Alain Saint-Saëns, (London: Greenwood Press, 1996), 37.

²⁶ Bass and Wunder, "The Veiled Ladies of the Early Modern Spanish World," 112-131.

²⁷ Martin, 300; Pinelo, 2: 245-6).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14, 20-9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁰ Bass and Wunder, "The Veiled Ladies of the Early Modern Spanish World," 132.

³¹ Isabelle Therriault, "Oh! La Que Su Rostro Tapa/ no Deber Valer Gran Cosa": Identidad y Critica Social En La Cultura Transatlantica Hispanica ,1520-1860 (Doctoral Dissertation 2010, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Hispanic Literatures and Languages) viii.

reasons. First, the *manto* allowed women to go throughout the city as they pleased, granting them “freedom, time and place of their own.”³² This liberating anonymity was thought to provoke female infidelity.³³ The obscuring veil was also believed to encourage men to take improper liberties with the *tapadas*, citing “major offenses against God and notable damage to the Republic, because the father does not know daughter from the wife or the husband's brother . . .”³⁴ The courts also declared that “men were adopting the female dress to commit great sins and sacrileges,” because they could not be recognized as males underneath the weighty *manto*.³⁵ These regulations unveil the viceroyalty’s anxieties regarding blurred sexual and gender lines, with men apparently donning the veil to masquerade as women. At the core of all these concerns, issues of gender and class are detected.

The repetitive re-issuing of these laws suggests the prohibitions against the *manto* were largely disregarded.³⁶ While royal officials protested, the viceroy ultimately decided to leave the policing of the costume to “fathers, husbands, confessors and preachers.”³⁷ Later attempts at law enforcement are related, but the travel accounts recording the prevalence of *la tapada* on the streets of Peru demonstrate these regulations failed.³⁸ Overall, women ignored the laws and their fines, and continued to wear their veils until they fell out of fashion around the nineteenth-century, in favor of new European modes of dress.³⁹

³² Pinelo, 2: 345-6.

³³ Bass and Wunder, “The Veiled Ladies of the Early Modern Spanish World,” 115.

³⁴ Pinelo, 2: 245-6. The original regulations can be found in the *Actas de las Cortes de Castilla*, 440-41.

³⁵ Martin, 301. Pinelo 2: 345-6.

³⁶ Martin, 302.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 302.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 304-6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 303-9.

La Tapada in Nineteenth-Century Costumbrismo

Interestingly, it is exactly during the period of racial and industrial change that *la tapada* emerges as a national emblem through the *costumbrismo* movement.

Costumbrismo was a literary and artistic movement that depicted the vernacular customs of everyday life of Latin America and Spain, with its origins in the late eighteenth century.⁴⁰ As the domain of visual description left the realms of botany and science during this period, illustration instead became the domain of the market.⁴¹

Popular literature included travel accounts and prose by authors such as Ricardo Palma.⁴² These works played a critical role in casting *la tapada* as leading lady within the Peruvian nationalist narrative. These literary depictions lauded *la tapada's* agency and ties to Arab Andalusia, but also reveal anxieties regarding gender, class and race. The qualities heralded in the literary portrayals of *la tapada* are mirrored in material culture, from the colorful illustrations of *costumbrista* artists to the studio portraits of the Courret Hermanos. In addition to ascribing similar qualities to the nationalist portrait of *la tapada*, the art and literature of the era catered to a European audience and were often constructed by Europeans themselves.

As Peru became the home to a growing number of foreign industrialists, it also became a popular travel destination. British, French, and Spanish visitors to Lima all record the figure of *la tapada* in travel accounts brimming with Orientalist undertones.

⁴⁰ Rangel, 8.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴² Jorge Cornejo Polar, *El Costumbrismo en el Perú: Estudio y Antlogiá de Cuadros de Costumbres*, (Ediciones Copé, Lima: 2001) 11-17, 391.

All the authors express their fascination with the unique costume of Peru, noting the freedom caused by the costume's anonymity.

The nineteenth-century travelogues of proto-feminist Flora Tristan (1803-1844) emphasize the notion of a Limeñan "feminotopia" – a vision of an ideal world in which women's collective autonomy and empowerment is embraced within society at large.⁴³ In her travel writing on Peru, *Peregrinations of a Pariah*, Tristan credits the *manto* of *la tapada* for granting women the freedom to traverse the city and engage in leisure, such as flirtation or attending public entertainment events.⁴⁴ In her description of the *manto*, Tristan draws a parallel with the veil of Islam, stating,

"The *saya y manto*...is the national costume, all women wear it whatever their rank, and it is respected as part of the culture of the *country just as a Muslim woman's veil is in the Orient*...It is accepted that *every woman may go out alone*...These ladies go out alone to the theatre, to bullfights, to public gatherings...they remain free and independent in the midst of the crowd, far more so than the men...beneath their *sayas* the women of Lima are *free*...Freedom of action characterizes everything she does."⁴⁵

The Spanish woman writer, Baronesa Emilia Serrano Wilson (1843-1922), echoes the impressed sentiments of Tristan. She discusses the *la tapadas* as a "sisterhood," as she travelled Latin America recording the flora and fauna of the region.⁴⁶ Wilson's travelogues, also part of Rice University's *Americas* collection, applauds the freedom and fame instigated by the *manto*. She notes the *manto* as part of a "cult of womanhood," stating,

⁴³ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, New York: Routledge, 1992. See also Flora Tristan, *Flora Tristan, Utopian Feminist: Her Travel Diaries and Personal Crusade*. Indiana University Press, 1993.

⁴⁴ *Feminotopia* refers to a utopian vision of women's collective autonomy and empowerment within society at large. Pratt discusses this concept in *Imperial Eyes*, 167. This term contrasts with *femtopia*, which was coined by Kingsley Widmer to mean an imagined utopia society of only women. For more on these concepts, see Jan Relf, "Women in Retreat: the Politics of Separatism in Women's Literary Utopias," *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1/2 (1991), 131-146.

⁴⁵ Flora Tristan, *Peregrinations of a Pariah, 1833-34*. London: Virago, 1986, 268-9.

⁴⁶ Baronesa Emilia Serrano Wilson. *America y Sus Mujeres, 1843-1922*. (Barcelona: Fidel Giro, 1890),142.

“What important role played by customs Limeñan *manta*!...And what most special grace bears the women of the Rimac! ...Their sassy humor stems from a girlhood very accustomed to exercising a kind of sovereignty... instigating a cult worship in Peru that surrounds the woman.”⁴⁷

These feminotopic travelogues have precedent in the writing of Lady Montagu Wortley to the Turkish baths, drawing yet another parallel with European Orientalism.⁴⁸ In the accounts of Flora Tristan and Baronessa Wilson, this agency is described in feminist idealism.⁴⁹

Other authors, like French expatriate Maximilian Radiquet, found the freedom wielded by the *tapadas* dangerously akin to that of the *femme fatale*. Radiquet declared that the “*saya* and *manto*...originally destined to serve the ideals of chastity and jealousy, have thus ended in protecting habits that are diametrically opposed [to these ideas].”⁵⁰

Another itinerant Frenchman, the graphic artist Leonce Angrand called the *tapadas* “shameless aggressors” (*agresoras desvergonzadas*), describing them as, “driven by their whims... they chose the victim whom they wish to sacrifice or enchain.”⁵¹ Such literary accounts cast the *tapadas* as powerful seductresses who have mastered the art of charm.

Another anxiety regarding the veil of *la tapada* recorded in the literature of the era was that of race. Various accounts of visitors to the city during the period voiced the concern that the female image of “white” veiled perfection was not actually so white underneath the veil and the white-gloves. Radiquet described the *tapadas*’ garb as bearing, “a long sleeve goes just up to the glove in such a way that it does not allow [one]

⁴⁷ Ibid., 149. The text in the original Spanish reads, “*¡Qué papel tan importante juega la manta en las costumbres limeñas!...Y ¡qué gracia especialísima tiene la mujer del Rimac!...Son chistosas y desde muy niñas se acostumbran á ejercer una especie de soberanía... sobre sus padres y hermanos, exigiendo ese culto que en el Perú se rinde á la mujer.*” 149.

⁴⁸ Platt, *Imperial Eyes*, 167.

⁴⁹ Tristan, Platt.

⁵⁰ Maximilian Radiquet, *Souvenirs de l’Amérique Espagnole: Chili, Pérou, Brésil*. (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1874) 84; See also, Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity*, 90.

⁵¹ Leonce Angrand in C. Milla Batres (ed.) *Imagen del Perú en el Siglo XIX*. (Lima: Milla Bartes: 1972), 172. See also. Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity*, 90.

to guess the color of the skin. Have no doubt, the treacherous shawl conceals an African, black as the night [and] flat-nosed as death...As one can see, the *saya* and *manto* has afforded women only advantages [and] men only with discomforts.”⁵² Considering that only a small percent of the total population was white,⁵³ the veil could be used to hide race as much as it concealed individual female identities about the busy city streets.

The Covered Lady in the Leisurely Landscape

Working in the 1840s, *costumbrismo* painter Johann Moritz Rugendas, or Juan Mauricio Rugendas (1802-1858), imbued his images of the *tapada* with feminotopic flair. Notably, Rugendas was a European himself, German-born and trained in Munich. In seeking additional artistic training in Italy and France, Rugendas notably befriended the famed French Orientalist artist, Eugene Delacroix.⁵⁴ It is possible the exoticizing nature and subject matter of Delacroix’s work influenced the art of Rugendas. As a foreign expatriate artist active within Latin America, Rugendas was intimately aware of the tastes of European clientele in Peru and abroad. He produced of his travels to Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Brazil and Peru, which serve as a source of visual documentation of the mid-nineteenth century Latin America.⁵⁵

Like the literature penned by European female travellers, Rugendas consistently crafted an image of the veiled women as alluring, socially active agents engaged within the

⁵² Maximillian Radiquet, *Souvenirs de l’Amerique Espagnole: Chili, Pérou, Bresil*. (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1874), 86.

⁵³ Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 94.

⁵⁴ “Latin American art: Postindependence, Nation building, c.1820–c.1900; Romanticism, Foreign travelers,” Accessed 12/08/2011. http://www.britannica.com/hispanic_heritage/article-253334.

⁵⁵ Gertrud Richert, *Johann Moritz Rugendas, Ein Deutscher Maler des XIX*. (Berlin: Rembrant-Verlag, 1959) 7-72.

social landscape of Lima. In his oil painting, *Caballeros y Tapadas del Rio Rimac* [Fig. 5], circa 1843, the artist creates a pastoral scene of flirtation. The foreground features a coy cluster of myopically veiled *tapadas*, engaged in conversation with attentive men who strike confident *contraposto*. The bodies of women and men connect in a network of glances and rapt conversation. While the men sport an array of garb, from European suits to ponchos, the women are uniformly dressed in the *sayo y manta*. In a stream of socialization at the right of the canvas, the clustered silhouettes of a crowd of veiled *tapadas* line the riverfront. Painted from the front or back, seated and standing, the multiplicity of female forms in the scene grants the voyeur a privileged, panoptic gaze. Clustered together, *las tapadas* are portrayed as a tight knit feminotopic community, freely and actively engaged in public life and space.

Landscape and leisure are critical elements within Rugendas representation of *las tapadas*. The lushly painted fauna and soft waves of the lake behind the figures heighten the sense of idle relaxation. The warm palette of soft earthen tones and fascination with naturalism is typical of Romantic painting, stylistically employed here by Rugendas to shroud the city in the background in a haze of rosy nostalgia. The harmony of color and light heighten the visual parallels established between *las tapadas*' femininity and the fertility of the landscape. This same naturalistic imagery and color palette is applied to the oil on paper piece, *Tapadas en la Alameda* [Fig. 6], also dated to the 1860s. The scene is set with a group of four *tapadas* seated together in the similar natural landscape, in the park setting of the *alameda*. Within the image, the body of the land and the body of *la tapada* are symbolically fused to embody the Peruvian nation. In this landscape of leisure, the *tapadas* are portrayed as a harmonizing force, at ease both in nature and society, with freedom to indulge in leisure. The emphasis on a woman at leisure is yet another critical aspect of the iconography of *la tapada*. Connotations of class were deeply encoded

within scenes of leisure in Latin America and Europe, as those who enjoyed its privilege were free from the demands of labor.⁵⁶ In other words, the Peruvian *tapada* in her exotic Arab-Andalusian *manto* was not a working woman.

Imagery of *la tapada* at leisure in the natural landscape was echoed by representations of her figure actively engaged within the city. In the prolific work of Peruvian *costumbrista* artist, Francisco “Pancho” Fierro (1807- 1879), the *tapada* was shown roaming colonial streets, typically shown with her non-white servant in tow [Fig. 7].⁵⁷ The differentiation in racial depiction between the *tapada* and her servant again serves to accent the elite “whiteness” of the national icon. These images became an internationally popular, and were initially rendered by Fierro in hand-drawn multiples between the 1830s-1860s. Fierro’s illustrations were later reproduced in watercolor-tinted lithographs, which were then widely imitated by waves of copyists including image reproduction studios as far away as China.⁵⁸ Seeking to assuage the nineteenth-century appetite for the foreign, the market for such illustrations boomed and the hand-drawn replicas of *las tapadas* paved the way for those of the printing press. Through the mechanism of the press, popular Peruvian albums were produced and circulated abroad, which combined *costumbrista* illustration and text to further enhance the Oriental, race and class attributes ascribed to the *tapada* in the Peruvian national imagination.

Reproducing La Tapada in Print Albums

The Rice University Woodson Library album demonstrates the transformation of

⁵⁶ Alain Corbin, *L’Avenement des Loisirs, 1850-1960*. Paris: Flammarion, 1995, 56-117.

⁵⁷ Rangel, *Reproducing Nations*, 42-44.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 37-42. The author cites the studio of Tingqua in Canton, China, as specializing in this work, and producing an album of Peruvian subjects, dated ca. 1855, housed in the Library of Congress. Another such album is housed in the Lilly Library of Indiana University.

la tapada within the modern mechanism of press. *Las Mujeres Españolas, Portugesas y Americanas: Tales Como Son en el Hogar Domestico, en los Campos, en las Cuidades, an el Templo, en Los Spectaculos en el Taller y En Los Salones*, was published by the Spanish editor, D. Miguel Guijarro in 1870.⁵⁹ Mentioned previously, the album boasts a series of rich oleographs— a type of print created by a multi-color process and applied to cloth in imitation of oil painting.⁶⁰ The anthology features the work of a variety of authors, comprised of twenty chapters. Each section is complete with a paste-print frontispiece, and categorically introduces Latin American female “types,” country by country.⁶¹ Notably, this album was written, illustrated and printed in Spain, again designed for a European audience. The titlepage are simply and generically acknowledges the album as the product of Spanish and Portugese authors and illustrators, stating the “*obra escrita por los primeros literatos de españa, portugal y américa é ilustrada por los más notables artistas españoles y portugueses.*”

As mentioned earlier, the chapter on Peru displays the oleograph of two *tapada limeñas* posed within a colonial Peruvian cityscape [Fig. 2]. In the foreground, a youthful white woman opens her *manto*, paused for a moment amidst the cobblestone street. The indiscernible act of concealing or revealing her face beneath the veil, performed here, designates the figure as a *destapada* within the firm categorizes of veiled Latin American female “types.” Behind her, a traditionally veiled *tapada* ducks behind the architecture of

⁵⁹ Guijarro, D. Miguel. *Las Mujeres Españolas, Portugesas y Americanas: Tales Como Son en el Hogar Domestico, en los Campos, en las Cuidades, an el Templo, en Los Spectaculos en el Taller y En Los Salones*, Madrid: Guijarro Empresa, 1870. This work is also fully scanned and available for viewing online by way of the Americas Archive, at <http://scholarship.rice.edu/jsp/xml/1911/9251/1/aa00030.tei.html#div2008>. Accessed 10/20/2011.

⁶⁰ Oleographs are also known as chromolithographs.

⁶¹ Interestingly, this publication has been identified as an early case of textual print plagiarism, as the chapter dedicated to “The Woman from Ecuador” was copied from Gaspard-Théodore Mollien’s “Voyage dans la République de Colombia en 1823.” Lorena Gauthereau-Bryson, “Plagiarism in Historical Texts,” <http://cnx.org/content/m34768/latest>. Accessed 12/07/2011.

the “picantería” (a restaurant of spicy dishes) with an air of intrigue. Peering mysteriously out of the “o”-shaped gathering of her veil, this *tapada* bears a strong resemblance to the figures popularized by Pancho Fierro. The white skin of these *tapadas* is augmented by their contrast with the dark-skinned mestizo figure atop a burro, receding into the urban background. The paste print bears two signatures, placed in opposing bottom corners of the image, displaying the names *M. Pujades* and *R. Marti*. No further credit is given to the artists anywhere in the publication.

The texts accompanying this image highlight the natural beauty, conquistador lineage, and “Moorish” associations of the city of Lima. Ethnic and gendered elements are at play in this description of the *urbs*, describing the city as nourishing “a multitude of races.” The text reads,

“Under the influence of a delightful climate, the banks of the Rimac and surrounded by picturesque scented gardens, there is a charming and beautiful city of Lima, founded in 1535 by the conquistador Pizarro... So powerful attractions are the cause of that opulent capital, breast feeding multitude of races, invigorating, varying and beautify the human species, among which abounds with arrogant beauty that comes from the homeland of *El Cid*.”⁶²

Andalusian heritage surfaces in the literary reference to the Moorish kingdom of El Cid.

In many ways, the description of the city parallels the description of *la tapada*, rife with Orientalist references and allusions to the “whiteness” of these women.⁶³ A translation of this text reads,

“The *Limeñan* woman had enthusiasm for the oriental customs of her ancestors, settled in the Andalusian city of the Kings, and adopted with remarkable ease peculiar idioms and habits that are seen in people who lived in thrall to the

⁶² Guijarro, 125. The original Spanish text reads, “Bajo la influencia de un clima delicioso, á orillas del pintoresco Rimac y rodeada de perfumados jardines, existe la coqueta y hermosísima ciudad de Lima, fundada en 1535 por el conquistador Pizarro... Tan poderosos atractivos son la causa de que esa opulenta capital alimente en su seno multitud de razas que vigorizan, varían y hermocean la especie humana, entre las cuales campea con arrogante belleza la que procede de la patria del Cid.”

⁶³ Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity*, 93-7.

monarchs of pride Córdoba. So, the poor girl, the original dance of her country, looked voluptuous and exciting as a odalisque, and under the prestige of entertained, animated eyes jets the timid, temperate lady, capable of cheering the brave and sad. The variety of diverting movements, her cheeks rosy, her angelic smile, the agitation of her contoured chest, her tiny foot, and finally the whole set full of beauty, poetry and love, was only comparable with that of the sublime *houris* Muhammad promised to those who profess the doctrines of the Koran... All these many and varied qualities were accompanied by a refined elegance in dress, in addition to *its* fascinating power. Such was the *Limeña* of yesterday.”⁶⁴

The transition of the *tapada* from local figure to a national icon becomes apparent in this publication. The print medium of this work allows for the consumption and dissemination of *la tapada* within a foreign market, romantically exoticizing and lamenting the loss of a nostalgic “type” of woman that can no longer be found. As this album was written and printed in nineteenth-century Spain, it is interesting to consider that the visual parade of Latin American female women displayed within the publication may have been designed to appeal to foreign men contemplating travel or relocation to the New World.

Re-picturing La Tapada in Photography

Just as the mechanical reproduction of *la tapada* in print albums played an important role in the visual program of Peruvian national identity, the medium of photography reasserted and disseminated the image of the gendered national emblem. Photography allowed the exotic “Other” of *la tapada* to become available for facile consumption by Westerners at home.⁶⁵ Parallel imagery of national types in photography

⁶⁴ Guijarro, 125-7.

⁶⁵ Andermann, Jens. *The Optic of the State: Visuality and Power in Argentina and Brazil* Pittsburg, University of Pittsburg Press, 2007, 185.

can be found in the work of Cristiano Junior in Brazil, in the same *carte-de-visite*, format that became ubiquitous during the nineteenth century in Latin America.⁶⁶

Historian Keith McElroy relates that studio photography in nineteenth-century Peru emerged in various phases, marked by the use of the daguerreotype and the *carte-de-visite*.⁶⁷ In the years between 1839-1842, Peru gained information regarding the invention of photography through the press, but did not yet have direct access to the technology. In 1842, expatriate French photographers beginning with Maximiliano Danti arrived in Lima to set up their own daguerreotype shops.⁶⁸ At this time, *costumbrista* graphic artists such as Rugendas were also active, and are noted to have experimented with new cameras. According to Danti's biographer, Rugendas used "an optical instrument" to capture the street views for the scenes he painted.⁶⁹ Thus, both itinerant graphic artists and photographers of the era can be seen as savvy with modern reproduction technology, while catering to both a national and tourist clientele.

The years of 1846-1852 saw a continued stream of itinerant photographers who now had to compete with established local Peruvian shops and styles. The new itinerants now included the British as well as "Yankees" from the north.⁷⁰ While the early phases of Peruvian photography can be seen as largely shaped by foreigners, the second half saw the rise of Peruvian artists active in the trade.

The introduction of paper and the negative-positive process in photography contributed to the accessibility and popularity of the medium, as well as the new

⁶⁶ Robert Levine, *Images of History: Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Latin American Photographs as Documents*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 147-151. Cristiano Junior is particularly known for his photographs of African slaves within the *carte-de-visite* format in Brazil.

⁶⁷ Keith McElroy, *Early Peruvian Photography: a Critical Case Study* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, UMI Research Press, 1985) 1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 5-7

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

international *carte-de-visite* format. The popularity of these photographic calling cards took on new dimensions in the context of an independent Peru that had now become a touristic hot spot. The European fantasies so eagerly projected into the imagery of the *costumbrista* artists were now manipulated as photographic national “types,” conveniently available for tourists on paper. Within this format, indigenous and nostalgic “types of yesteryear” emerged.⁷¹ These included the *mercahifle* or street merchant [Fig. 8], the *conquistadore*, [Fig. 9] and of course, la *tapada limena* [FIG. 10].⁷²

The expatriate fraternal photography duo of the Courret Hermanos played upon the nostalgic imagery of *costumbrista* painters. The Courrets purchased their studio in Lima from another Frenchman, Eugene Maunoury. The Courrets drew upon the repertoire of stock nostalgic imagery developed by Maunoury and other expatriate photographers for tourists in this period. However, the Courrets were more diligent in imprinting their studio’s name on their photographs, leaving behind a solid record of their work.⁷³ Furthermore, the Courrets avidly produced large format Lima-centric albums titled, *Recuerdos de Perú*, some of which are currently housed in the Archivo Courret in the Peruvian National Library, as well as the Getty Institute. The title overtly announces the souvenir market forces fuelling their studio production.⁷⁴

The *carte-de-visite* images produced by the Courret Hermanos both echo and depart from the renderings of *costumbrista* painters like Rugendas in a number of significant ways. Translated into a commercial medium through market forces and the limits of developing technology, the nostalgic *tapada* image was reshaped under the lens

⁷¹ McElroy, 27.

⁷² Ibid., 29.

⁷³ Ibid., 21-9, 42-52.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 30-2.

of ex-patriot photographers. Orientalist elements bubble to the surface of the posed *tapada* portraits the Courrets produced, suggesting a marketable exoticism heightened by the reproductive nature of the modern camera.

In a trademark example of the Courret's *carte-de-visites* of *la tapada* [Fig. 10], two veiled women are captured in the photographer's studio. On the right, a traditional depiction of the *tapada* is presented, with *manta* gathered in one hand around her singular gaze directed out at the viewer. A strident foot emerges from below her effulgent *sayo*, suggesting mobility. While the *tapada*'s right hand clutches her *manta*, her left grasps and extends her ornate shawl in a subtle gesture of display. At her left, another veiled woman perches from behind an artificial balcony construction, whose decoration suggests arabesque motifs. Both eyes of this woman are exposed, peering from behind an ornate fan. The proximity of the two veiled women, posed beside the *faux* moorish balcony, provides them with an air of conspiratorial spectatorship. Thus, the image nostalgically re-presents an image of bygone colonial Peru, enlivened by the coquettish intrigues of *las tapadas*. These images can be seen as designed and marketed to foreigners, while simultaneously merging with constructs of national memory and further shaping local identity.

Another image of a *tapada* by the Courrets [Fig. 11], further reduces the background elements. A mere suggestion remains of the moorish balcony and rug, as the lens creates a singular portrait of a constructed *tapada* type. The lack of background heightens the artificiality of the historically costumed woman, presenting the nostalgic icon removed from context, as if in a museum. Within this image, *la tapada* is no presented in the company of her "sisterhood," as in the *feminotopic* writings of Tristan or

the paintings of Rugendas. Rather, the isolated *tapada* is presented as a passive souvenir of a past Peru.

Within this *carte-de-visite*, *la tapada* functions as a “pro-trait,” a image produced and abstracted by artistic manipulation. The notion of the “pro-trait” was defined by theorist Louis Marin in his discussion of the city map as a dualistic image. Marin argues that the map functions as both a constructed representation of the *urbs*, while serving as a “pro-trait”— a vision actively put forward, produced then reproduced, and abstracted.⁷⁵ This “pro-trait” refers back to an original “trace,” signifying a vestige or “ruin” of a residual past image, exacerbated by the act of mechanical reproduction. The Courretts’ portrait of the singular *tapada* in many senses freezes the female figure into a realm of static nostalgia, removed from direct experience and rendered static. Thus, the portrait reinforces the notion of the lack, and casts the viewer as a sort of *panopticon*, reasserting the visual hierarchy between the active, viewing agent and the passive, viewed subject.⁷⁶

La Destapada: Unveiling Under the Lens

The isolation of the iconic *tapada* from the Limenan landscape within photography suggests a shift in the national image of the “covered lady” and re-produced for consumption through modern print technology. Instead of emphasizing the agency of the nostalgic archetype, *la tapada* became increasingly essentialized in the *carte-de-visite* format. Staged within the studio, the *tapada* can be seen as evolving into a de-contextualized gendered commodity, even transforming into the more scandalous image of the *destapada*.

⁷⁵ Louis Marin, *On Representation*. Translated by Catherine Porter. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 200.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 210.

An image snapped by an anonymous photographer, now housed in the Dammert collection of Lima,⁷⁷ serves as an example of the essentialized, sexualized *tapada* that evolved in studio representations [Fig. 12]. Here, a modern twist on the unveiled *destapada* of yesteryear is presented to the viewer. Where as the term *destapada* originally referred to the more innocent gesture of a *tapada* opening or unveiling her face, here one finds legs and intimate undergarments uncovered. The print displays all the markings of a Courret photograph, with its singular focus on the isolated *tapada* female, and lack of any background except the soft-focus ornamental rug. In this image, modern elements of sexual and racial anxiety rise to the fore. The seated *tapada* completely covers her face and turns away from the camera, while scandalously lifting up her petticoat to expose her gartered legs with a dark-skinned hand. The black skin of the hand contrasts with the whiteness of the ruffled skirt fabrics, and wears a gleaming wedding band. The previously mentioned social apprehensions regarding the skin-color of the “covered lady” beneath the veil indicate strong racial tensions at play in the image. The wedding band further heightens the photograph’s charge, suggesting infidelity in the midst of the sexual gesture.

While the scandalous objectification of the *tapada* here is shocking, drawing the viewer’s eye directly to the sitter’s crotch, further sexual dimensions may be at play. Recalling the *costumbrista* lauding of the *tapada*’s tiny, elegant feet, one notes a disjuncture with the photograph. The slippered feet of the sitter here are awkwardly wide, with stockier legs and body type than the normal *tapada* prototype. As a whole, the sitter’s stature and physical attributes, along with muscular hand, suggest masculinity. Recalling the history of regulations against veiling partly rooted in concerns regarding

⁷⁷ McElroy, 162.

male-cross dressing, perhaps this image drew upon on the non-normative, sexually deviant *tapada* of historical accounts. The gendered and racial ambiguity of the photograph, along with its aggressive sexual content, suggests pornographic and possibly transvestite dimensions. Gender, race and class merge under the *manto* in this image, unconventionally ascribed upon the nostalgic, national icon.

It is interesting to consider this *destapada* image with respect to modern pornography's origins in photography. Scholar Lisa Sigel noted the emergence of photographic pornography in non-European postcards of foreign or colonial subjects around the 1880s. Sigel argues that the cheap mass production of the imagery made their consumption available to all classes, genders and races.⁷⁸ While the content of some cards was deemed too scandalous to be sent through the male, the criteria did not apply to foreign or non-white subjects. The act of buying a postcard of an unrobed exotic woman, then, provided the consumer with access to the sexuality of the foreign "Other." The semi-pornographic postcards circulating in Europe in the nineteenth century bear a blatantly sexual parallel to the *carte-de-visite* image of the *destapada*. The postcards, too, were labeled as "types," not seen as individuals. "Arab," "Moorish" and "Algerian" types [Fig. 13] circulated widely among the public.⁷⁹ The act of "unveiling" in these images theatrically heightened the sexual content, as well as re-emphasized the foreign nature of the female "type." While the act of uncovering in the *destapada carte-de-visite* focuses on the lower body zones, the Algerian "type" postcard focuses on revealing the breasts.

⁷⁸ Lisa Sigel, "Filth in the Wrong People's Hands: Postcards and the Expansion of Pornography in Britain and the Atlantic World, 1880-1914." *Journal of Social History* 33.4 (2000) 859-885.

⁷⁹ Lisa Sigel, "Filth in the Wrong People's Hands: Postcards and the Expansion of Pornography in Britain and the Atlantic World, 1880-1914." *Journal of Social History* 33.4 (2000) 859-885.

However, the same pornographic display of a non-white “Other” is shared by these two commercial images.

Uncovering Orientalism in La Tapada

The exoticizing image and text that constructed the civic emblem of *la tapada limena* reveals the influence of nineteenth-century Orientalism in shaping Peruvian national identity. As European countries re-negotiated their own identities with respect to the colonial binaries they fabricated with the “East”, Orientalist currents crossed the Atlantic to set root within the newly independent nations of Latin America. Yet the dynamics of Orientalism within the Latin American discourse functioned differently than that of Europe, due to the hegemonic ambiguity of the newly independent state. As a country struggling to assert its own identity, and yet still dependent on Spanish and foreign markets, Peru paradoxically ascribed its own gendered national emblem of *tapada* with Arab-Andalusian attributes, which played upon ambiguous national, foreign, and colonial links. As these images became popular within the larger web of international consumption, itinerant artists and modern reproduction technologies impacted the “shape” of *la tapada*. The transformation of *la tapada* from national icon into decontextualized foreign commodity unveils how Orientalist notions and market forces linked to Europe both created and destabilized the national identities of Latin American nations in the nineteenth century.

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IMAGES:



FIG.1: *Odalisque with a Slave*, 1842, oil on canvas painting by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), Walters Art Museum, Mount Vernon Baltimore, Maryland, USA



FIG. 2: *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 Cuidades, an el Templo, en Los Spectaculos en el Taller y En Los Salones*, 1870.



FIG. 3: Huyet, *Costumbres Nacionales*. From *El Correo del Perú*, Año 2, No. XXIII, 19.



FIG. 4: Pancho Fierro, *Tapadas*, watercolor, circa 1860s.



FIG. 5: Juan Mauricio Rugendas, *Caballeros y Tapadas del Rio Rimac*. circa 1860s.



FIG. 6: Juan Mauricio Rugendas, *Tapadas en la Alameda*, oil on paper, circa 1860s.



FIG. 7: Pancho Fierro, “Peruvian woman with attendant,” watercolor-tinted lithograph, housed in New York Public Library.



FIG. 8: Courret Hermanos, *carte-de-visite* image of “El mercachilfe”, 1874.



FIG. 9: Francisco Laso, Photographic study of *conquistadore* image, Museo de Arte, Lima.



FIG. 10: Courret Hermanos, *Tapadas*, carte-de-visite, 19th century.



FIG. 11: Courret Hermanos, *Tapada*, carte-de-visite, 19th century.



FIG. 12: Anonymous Photographer, *Destapada*, photographic print, circa 19th century.



FIG. 13: Anonymous Photographer, “L’Algérie Pittoresque/ The Algerian Exotic,” Algerian “national type” postcards, (Paris: ca. 19th century).