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Crafting Spanish Female Identity: Silk Lace Mantillas at the Crossroads of Tradition and Fashion

Résumé

Vers 1800, la mantille de dentelle incarnait au plus haut point l'identité espagnole d'une femme en raison de ses liens avec l'habillement traditionnel populaire des femmes des villes, les majas. Les mantilles de dentelles étaient fabriquées par les femmes, car la production de dentelle se faisait en dehors des guildes dominées par les hommes. Les dentelles fabriquées dans toute la nation nourrissaient un sentiment patriotique, en particulier la dentelle que l'on appelait « blonde de soie », qui était presque exclusivement réservée aux mantilles. En tant que parure que l'on pouvait voir dans les portraits, les albums de costumes et les gravures de mode, la mantille de dentelle mettait en valeur l'ingéniosité des femmes, leur production nationale et leur sens de la mode. La mantille se portait avec des associations coutumières de vêtements, mais sa remise au goût du jour a contribué à générer une image de la féminité espagnole moderne.

Abstract

By 1800, the lace mantilla epitomized a woman's identity as Spanish via its link to traditional dress worn by the popular urban woman—the maja. Lace mantillas were crafted by women since lace production occurred outside male-dominated guilds. Nationally produced lace fostered a patriotic sentiment, particularly the silk lace known as “Blonde,” which was made almost exclusively for mantillas. As a garment seen in portraits, costume albums and fashion plates, the lace mantilla showcased women's ingenuity, national production and fashionableness. The mantilla carried with it customary associations, but its updated styling helped to generate an image of modern Spanish femininity.

Arguably the most fashionable portrait artist in Madrid at the turn of the century, Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) painted numerous elite, bourgeois and celebrity clients, including Antonia Zárate Aguirre y Murguía, a famed Spanish actress who performed in Madrid's theatres and was born in Barcelona in 1775 to a family of actors (Fig. 1). In an 1805–1806 painting, in standard portraiture format, the actress sits in a muted interior with only the luminous yellow settee offering a hint of colour to contrast her mostly black ensemble, the most captivating element being the black lace mantilla that descends from her head and falls gracefully over her shoulders.

In addition to providing Zárate with appropriate coverage and modern fashionableness, the lace mantilla endows her outfit with a specific set of gendered and national references, which I discuss below. Goya may have composed the portrait, but Zárate was a well-known actress who mingled in artistic and noble circles and was thus familiar with current fashions—in her choice of dress and in her choice of artist—suggesting her active involvement in the construction of her persona as a modern Spanish woman.

In the late 1790s and early 1800s, the black lace mantilla was a key component to such identity crafting in countless visual examples. As

Aileen Ribeiro suggests, Goya found the mantilla, or veil, “one of the most engaging aspects of Spanish dress, an accessory that could tantalize the male viewer by simultaneously hiding and revealing the face and torso” (2002: 84). She proposes that in the portrait of Zárate, Goya painted the “most subtle and beautiful mantilla of all” (84). Goya highlights the lace’s sheer quality and intricate patterning, which reveal pink flesh tones underneath. The mantilla enhances the soft curls that frame her face, creating a sophisticated and sensual style that identifies her as a modern Spanish woman. In fact, unlike images of actors in character, Goya depicts her as a stylish woman whose garments epitomize her Spanish heritage and her interest in cosmopolitan fashions, such as the empire waist, a pan-European silhouette. The combination of European styles and national garments provides a variation of the customary Spanish outfit typically worn by the *maja*—the popular, urban and plebeian type who championed customary dress like mantillas and participated in traditional practices, such as dancing the *seguidilla*. In pictorial works, artists often romanticized the *maja*, making her the embodiment of quintessential Spanish femininity, although she was sometimes represented as bewitching and feisty. Thus, the mantilla in Zárate’s portrait positions the actress between tradition and modernity, between the local and the fashionable.

First donned only by noble women in the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, by the 17th century, women of all social ranks wore this veil, popularizing the object as distinctly Spanish (Bernis 1979: 102). From the 17th through the 19th centuries, women sported the mantilla for promenading, horseback riding, social visits and as a sign of respect when in mourning and attending church or religious processions (Puerta 2006: 198). The mantilla was not the only type of mantle worn by women. The *manto* (a longer and heavier shawl) was in greater vogue prior to 1700. As Laura Bass and Amanda Wunder state, “The *mantilla* would rise in popularity after 1700, ultimately replacing the mantle and becoming a symbol of Spanish femininity and national identity” (2009: 108).

As the most archetypal of all Spanish female garb, the mantilla was manufactured in different styles, lengths and fabrics, including silk lace.

Mantillas could be worn in distinct ways to conceal more or less of a woman’s face and body. The garment only generated controversy when it obscured the wearer’s individual or social identity, thereby disguising the wearer in a seductive way. Sartorial legislation from the 16th through the 18th centuries criticized the manner in which the mantilla was worn—not the mantilla itself—and enforced (not very successfully) a decorous mode in which to wear the veil.¹ Mantillas constructed completely of lace were not in widespread use in Spain until the second half of the 18th century, like the one featured in Goya’s portrait of Zárate, although earlier examples exist. Because lace garments circulating in Madrid included both those produced in Spain and those imported from various countries, such as the famed lace-making centres in France, Holland and Italy, it would be difficult to know the origin of Zárate’s mantilla or how faithfully the artist replicated the material. As a native of Cataluña, one could speculate that she chose a locally fabricated Blonde for her

Fig. 1
Portrait of Doña Antonia Zárate, Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, Spanish, 19th century, ca. 1805-1806. (Photo © National Gallery of Ireland, oil on canvas, unframed, 103.5 x 82 cm.)



mantilla since that region was one of the primary centres of silk lace manufacturing, and Blonde was made almost exclusively for mantillas (Fig. 2). It could alternatively be an example of French Chantilly (Fig. 3)—both types were fashionable silk laces at the turn of the century. In addition, Blonde and Chantilly laces generally use a single mesh for the background and are worked with continuous threads (Baumeister-Jonker 1999: 50-51). These characteristics can make identification difficult. Spanish women often owned both native and foreign laces, pointing to the international market for this textile. By the late 1700s, lace was the most prevalent openwork fabric for mantillas. Emblematically and fashionably, the lace mantilla epitomized a woman's identity as Spanish.

Lace mantillas were predominately manufactured by women since lace-making production in Spain occurred outside the strictly guarded and male-dominated guilds. Silk lace was the most desirable and costly, making silk lace mantillas treasured items in a woman's wardrobe for their sumptuous material and hand-crafted fabrication. Although women's lace-making practices existed apart from guild organizations, the Spanish Bourbon government, which came to power in 1700 and marked a dynastic change from the

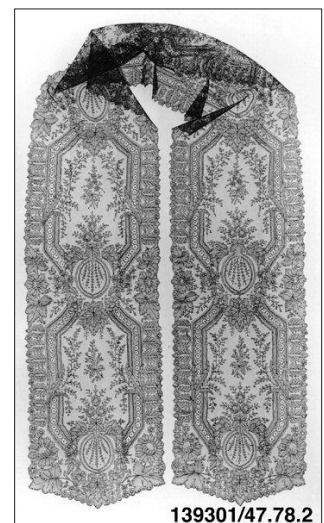
Hapsburgs (after Charles II died childless and heirless), sought measures to support women's labour, especially that which was deemed gender appropriate. Any lace object nationally produced fostered a patriotic sentiment fuelled by the court's desire to ameliorate Spain's industries. As a garment frequently seen in late-18th- and early 19th-century portraits, costume albums, fashion plates and popular prints, the lace mantilla was a loaded and culturally significant object that showcased women's ingenuity, national production and stylish Spanish femininity.

While not specifically evaluating the mantilla, Susan Hiner suggests that although the fashion accessory was often "trivialized," it was actually fraught with complex meanings (2010: 1) and was one of the accessories that "became primary sites for the ideological work of modernity" (2). In wearing veils, Spanish women may have felt certain "cultural pressures to possess certain accessories" (3) and to follow courtly fashions, but they were also crafting new modes to proclaim their identity. Along these lines, Marni Reva Kessler looks to artistic depictions of the veil in Paris during the late 1800s. She argues that veils shed light on debates such as public health, imperialism and modernist art practices surrounding the ways in which modern life was constructed (2006: xviii-xix). In addition, she demonstrates that the veil and its representations are "always politically, socially, and culturally determined" (xxx). Hiner's and Kessler's work offer useful methodological models for the study of the mantilla and its modernity in Spanish

Fig. 2
Blonde Mantilla, silk, third quarter of 19th century, European. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of the Brooklyn Museum, 2009; gift of Charlotte R. Stillman, 195, 188 cm, accession number 2009.300.2770.)



Fig. 3
Scarf, French (Chantilly), bobbin lace, ca. 1870. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Henry S. Redmond, to mark the Diamond Jubilee Year, 1947, L. 157.5 x 19.1 cm, accession number 47.78.2.)



portraiture. Through its relationship to images of women in costume albums and fashion plates, the mantilla was indeed fraught with multiple meanings—positioned between regional dress and fashion—that relate to women’s shifting societal and political roles in 18th-century Spain, meanings which I address below.

No longer viewed as simply a garment of customary value or quotidian use, the mantilla took on heightened associations as a means to foreground a Spanish woman’s modern identity. Because the mantilla could be worn in distinct ways, it offered the wearer a means of expressing her individuality. At the same time, it tied her to her local and national communities. In this capacity I am interested in how artistic representations of the veil not only comment on the individual’s taste, but also place the individual in a community of Spanish women in which the mantilla acquires broader meanings about a common heritage.

Dror Wahrman argues that the 18th century witnessed tension between two complementary impulses: identity as individual and identity as shared (Wahrman 2006: xii). In donning the mantilla, women participated in the latter form of identity formation: they became part of wider local, regional and national contexts. For one, the mantilla’s size, style, colour and material were partly determined by regional preferences, class differences and purpose for wearing the garment. Most labourers could not afford silk lace veils for daily use, nor would it be practical for the majority of artisanal employment. Certain styles, especially those made of costly fabrics or with decorative embellishments, were often saved for special occasions, such as holidays and festivals held locally or across Spain, including Holy Week processions. In this rich sartorial context, the silk lace mantilla held strong ties to its varied veiled brethren, but its use in pictorial examples of contemporary subject matter, like women dancing or attending the bullfight, made it definitively modern and a vital component in constructing a Spanish woman’s persona.

Visual representations of women dressed in mantillas fuelled a sense of a shared cultural patrimony in a similar way that Highland dress (e.g., the kilt) “supplied a distinctive feature by which Scots ... could identify each other and be identified” (Trevor-Roper 2008: xxi). In Scotland, the kilt held greater political resonance

vis-à-vis the nation’s often tense relationship with England. In Spain, the mantilla was not worn as an act of defiance against an imperialist country; however, the mantilla could still carry a political message, especially when worn by the queen (see below). In addition, by the late 18th century, while the mantilla could claim a lengthy heritage, the kilt could not: the Scottish garment was not invented until the mid-1700s. Despite their differences, both the kilt and the mantilla could be used to engender specific national identities and to provide a sense of cultural (or political) unity.

As Kessler posits, the veil possesses complex political, social and cultural meanings. In Spain, the incorporation of mantillas and other typical garments in female portraits is significant and relates to broader enlightenment trends of appreciating autochthonous practices and clothing in a highly political climate after the French Revolution and subsequent upheavals. Prior to the late 1790s, noblewomen customarily sported European, mostly French, fashions in portraits. The shift to including Spanish objects or the fusion of Spanish and European garments created new styles and indicates the mutability of the mantilla; it embodied both tradition and current fashions. Thus, the mantilla took on more explicit political, social and cultural implications when worn by elite women in portraits. Although all the artists I discuss are men, many of the women represented, such as Queen María Luisa, played an active role in their image creation and were often the main producers of engendering their Spanish persona. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the mantilla was recast as current and made paramount to a woman’s image as Spanish.

Spanish Lace: History, Production and Gender

Many European countries possess a notable lace-making history, particularly Italy, France and Flanders. Each of these lace-making locales contributed to the large quantities of lace flooding the European marketplace, fostering a vibrant international trade. From Chantilly and Alençon to Genoa and Venice to Mechlin and Brussels, each site was known for particular kinds of lace styles and techniques that fostered and shaped fashion throughout the centuries.

Spain participated in this network, contributing to the rich production of lace and other textiles. As Anne Kraatz states, in the 1700s Spaniards produced and consumed not only huge amounts of Blonde for mantillas, but also laces typically associated with other regions, including Venetian laces (1989: 184). Thus, individual lace styles were both purchased and produced across borders, creating an intricate web of textile commerce.

Although lace-making existed in a rudimentary form in antiquity, its more recognizable techniques can be dated to the early modern period. Lace is an openwork fabric that uses thread from materials like cotton or flax. Lace-making can be traced to *passementerie* (elaborate trimmings) and embroidery. In Spain, *pasamanería* involves several types of trimming and edging and consists of twisting, braiding and interlacing threads (May 1936: vii). These simple methods advanced into and alongside needle (*punto de aguja*) and bobbin (*punto de bolillos*) laces. By the 17th century, members of European courts wore lace as essential ornamentation on ruffs, collars and sleeves. These adornments enriched men's and women's garments, and often celebrated and promoted local lace-making traditions.

Pasamanería's development coincided with that of lace-making, although the labourers of the former practised under the protection of the official guild system. In early modern Madrid, guilds bestowed on its male members "civic identity" denied to many female and immigrant workers, allowing for a distinctly "corporate" professionalism to emerge for the select associates (López Barahona and Nieto Sánchez 2010: 149-50). López Barahona and Nieto Sánchez argue that the division between guild and non-guild workers created "social polarization" and an unequal system in labour practices, opportunities and benefits. The elite status granted to guild members included the benefit of royal privilege and the support of the municipal authorities (Haidt 2011: 215). Guild practitioners of *pasamanería* made fringe, cords and tassels primarily for clothing and furniture, sometimes employing opulent silver and gold thread. By Charles II's reign (1661-1700), Spanish production of *pasamanería* had dwindled at an alarming rate in part because of the entrance of foreign laces and embellishments. Despite the trend of importation, Spanish lace

was still exported and worn in various European courts (González Mena 1994: 86-87). To reverse the decline of *pasamanería* made in Spain, the first two Bourbon kings, Philip V (1700-1746) and Ferdinand VI (1746-1759), advanced local artisanal practices by forbidding foreign laces and silks (1723), establishing local guilds (e.g., in Salamanca, 1739), and restoring factories for such production (e.g., the silk factory in Talavera, 1748; Puerta 2011: 121-22). Charles III (1759-1788) continued this course, passing various royal decrees in 1777 and 1786 that protected the arts of *pasamanería* and lace (Puerta 2011: 124), and Charles IV dictated further decrees supporting lace production in Spain (Puerta, *Curso de historia y técnica*). Although Bourbon reform sought to champion native industries and ban foreign materials, Spaniards still consumed imports.

When the *pasamanería* guild was established in Madrid in 1600, women were forbidden from practising this skill, firmly dividing labour along gendered lines (Baroja de Caro 1933: 80) since they could not participate in any guild profession. Theresa Ann Smith affirms the gendering of textile work in 18th-century Spain. She proposes that as women came to make much of the lace and embroidery—two practices not under guild control and thus acceptable for women—the value of these objects as luxury items prized for their exquisite detail declined. While the 16th and 17th centuries heralded embroidery as a male domain, including the labours of Spanish Hapsburg kings like Philip II and Philip III, by the 1700s, women increasingly took over this trade. As Smith states, the feminization of these tasks translated into lower wages and the "de-skilling" of practices like embroidery and lace making, which were regarded more as "crafts" than as "art" (Smith 2006: 169). Rebecca Haidt looks to the Spanish author Josefa Amar y Borbón's (1749-1833) call to sew and to embroider in order to elevate the image of the industrious woman and to counter the devaluing of female efforts in the 18th century (Haidt 2011: 47). Amar y Borbón's desire to raise the status of women's work and skills to the level of art coincided with the impulse to strengthen the national economy by employing female labourers and the appreciation of lace mantillas as highly coveted objects by elite women.

In the 1700s, unlike *pasamanería*, lace manufacture occurred in less formalized spaces, dominated by artisanal workshops, which were typically family-operated (López Barahona and Nieto Sánchez 2010: 149). Men could participate in different aspects of lace fabrication and retail, but women generally directed its production, from pattern construction to design execution. María Ángeles González Mena argues that the majority of female lace makers worked on a semi-professional level and that these women came from all social backgrounds (González Mena 1994: 84). Despite its marginalized status, the lace industry flourished in a less conventional capacity, free from the guild system of apprenticeship. Matriarchs of families often organized workshops around the household, employing both family and non-family members. González Mena suggests that lace production was associated with domestic manufacture, and Carmen Baroja de Caro asserts that as women appropriated lace production in the early modern period, it took on a familial character (Baroja de Caro 1933: 75).

As a home operation coordinated by women, lace-making combined domestic and commercial spheres. Textile fabrication (including lace) and other fashion-related work became more closely associated with women's labour in the second half of the 18th century as part of the gendering of fashion (on the gendering of fashion in 18th-century France, see Jones 2004). Haidt considers textiles a vital component of women's work in the 1700s regardless of social status, and challenges the notion that women's upkeep of the household or any domestic employment implied their relegation to a strictly private existence. She views the home as a "place of liminality, of traffic between inside and outside, public and private, with women's work, activities, and decisions impossible to confine solely to the interior" (Haidt 2009: 118). Haidt's proposal is applicable to the consideration of female lace makers whose professional efforts may have taken place inside one's residence or a family-run business. As Haidt proposes, women's work encompassed all aspects of textile-related labour, from sewing in the home to selling fabrics on the street. María Victoria López-Cordón Cortezo explains that the textile industry employed large numbers of women throughout Europe—this phenomenon was not limited to Spain (López-Cordón Cortezo 1982: 66).

As Haidt and López-Cordón have shown, scholarship has highlighted women's employment in the 18th century, emphasizing their considerable efforts in various aspects of textile production, including their chief role in readying the raw materials used in the manufacture of clothing or fabrics. While women of all social strata learned to sew and spin as part of their upbringing, spinning fibers into thread was a gruelling vocation in high demand, practised generally by the lower classes, orphaned children and incarcerated women (Haidt 2011: 105). As Haidt states, in Madrid's prisons and reformatories, "women and girls were set forcibly to spinning and materials-preparation labors that would feed the workshops and merchants of Madrid and other regions" (2011: 18). The association between spinning, female labour and the textile sector is seen in Goya's tondo-shaped painting, *Industry* (ca. 1801-1805; Fig. 4), one of four allegories commissioned by the statesman Manuel Godoy, Prince of Peace (1767-1851) for his Madrid palace. *Commerce, Science and Agriculture* complete the series of emblematic enlightenment subjects to evidence the minister's learning and his support for these various divisions of Spain's economy. While it was a common trope to use

Fig. 4
La Industria,
 Francisco de Goya y
 Lucientes, 1801-1805.
 (© Madrid, Museo
 Nacional del Prado,
 tempera on canvas,
 catalogue number
 P02548.)



female figures as personifications, in *Industry*, the women shown are spinning in a tapestry workshop, emphasizing their crucial role in bolstering the country's production of textiles. As the performers of this necessary but demanding task, their efforts make it possible for the weaving of tapestries, objects that would have been held in high regard by elite patrons. As a contributor to the design of many tapestries, Goya was aware of the process. His familiarity with Velázquez's *Las hilanderas* (1657) makes for comparisons in terms of their subject—that of female labour or “craft,” supplying the material for the fabrication of “fine art” by men.

As a major figure in the scholarly revision of women's labour practices in 18th-century Spain, José Nieto Sánchez examines the fundamental relationship between the capital's urban centre and its rural surroundings, primarily Castille-La Mancha, which formed a vital mercantile network, including the spinning of thread or the manufacture of textiles like lace. These outskirts or *nebulosas industriales* fed Madrid's powerhouse industries and were dominated by small-scale artisan communities, many of which were directed by women (Nieto Sánchez 2000: 90). Although the association between urban and rural locales existed prior to 1700, Nieto proposes that this relationship was enriched in the second half of the 18th century as rural producers worked more efficiently with the city's expansive production, like the establishment of factories outside of the capital. Madrid's guilds and merchants benefited from the rural labourers, especially since they often obtained the products and materials at a discounted rate. According to Nieto, women governed much of the artisanal manufacture, and lace-making was exclusively female driven. The two most fruitful zones for lace production were Daimiel and Almagro, small towns south of Madrid and part of the Castille-La Mancha's province, Ciudad Real. The locally made objects were disseminated throughout central and southern Spain (2000: 96).

Although lace-making had been relegated to the category of “craft,” it was a key ingredient in Spain's total textile industry and increasingly promoted as a highly valuable skill for the creation of elite women's wardrobes, including mantillas. Because of the workshop component of lace-making, few treatises on its process and

techniques exist. While archival information records the names of royal lace makers for the court, names are not generally assigned to individual objects. Guilds, like the powerful *Cinco Gremios Mayores de Madrid*, may have controlled much of the production of goods in the 1700s, but non-guild labourers often competed for work through unregulated channels, creating tension between official and unofficial workers. As Nieto has shown, not all affiliations produced conflict—some were mutually beneficial.

Women's undertakings in national industries were vital to economic reforms, fostered by many including the economist Pedro Rodríguez, count of Campomanes (1723-1802) and the statesman Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos (1744-1811), among others. Campomanes was an ardent supporter of both male and female contributions to national industries, and his *Discourse on the Promotion of Popular Industry* (1774) and *Discourse on the Popular Education of Artisans and their Promotion* (1775) encouraged domestic industry and agriculture. He saw agriculture and factory employment, particularly in textile industries, as important places for men and women to work and as crucial to the betterment of the Spanish economy. In a speech given to the Economic Society in 1785, Jovellanos praised Charles III's efforts to remove guild restrictions affecting women's freedom to participate in the manufacture of goods (Smith 2006: 77-78). Under Charles III, the government sought various measures to improve the nation's industries, like the founding of the *Sociedades Económicas de Amigos del País* throughout Spain. In 1779, the king passed a Royal Decree directed at the guilds instructing them to allow women to perform gender-appropriate labour. As part of this general impulse, the Bourbons encouraged female labour, which corresponded with enlightenment reform ideals.

Family-run operations dominated much of the lace construction in the 18th century, but other, often government-sponsored venues existed that sought to unite a female workforce to revamp Spain's industrial sector. The *Sociedades Económicas* created numerous *escuelas patrióticas* (patriotic schools) beginning in 1776 to encourage female participation in textile vocations. These schools were especially geared toward orphans and other marginalized girls from the

lower classes (Capella Martínez 1962-1963: 15-17). The schools provided an education system for male and female masters to teach young girls to read and learn trades like embroidery and lace-making. The Society's lace-making school was opened to encourage work in all kinds of thread lace to compete with imported products (Smith 2006: 163). The *Junta de Damas* (the women's council), an all-female branch of Madrid's *Sociedades Económicas de Amigos del País*, founded in 1787, took charge of the *escuelas patrióticas* that same year as part of their mission to involve women in the promotion of Spain's industries and to better lower-class women's opportunities of meaningful employment through education and vocational training (Smith 2006: 149). As administrators of the patriotic schools and as members of the larger network of the Economic Societies, the *junta* made a significant impact on women's participation in textile sectors.

The establishment of schools and factories helped Castille-La Mancha's struggling economy, enhancing the region's lace production and making it a fundamental component of its industry. González Mena looks to the 18th-century economist and archivist Eugenio Larruga and his multi-volume treatise *Political and Economic Report about the Products, Commerce, Factories, and Mines of Spain* (1787-1800) for an account of Manuel Fernández and his wife, Rita Lambert, residents of Madrid who established a silk lace factory in 1766 in Almagro. According to the account, the pair taught lace-making to the town's women and girls. By 1769, the number of students increased from 140 to 417, and, because of their efforts, Almagro was transformed into a principal site of professional lace production (González Mena 1994: 84-85). By the late 18th century, Almagro became a major supplier of lace for Spain, predominately the silk lace known as Blonde (*blonda*).

Silk Lace, Blonde and the Spanish Mantilla

Lace mantillas gained popularity in part because of changing taste for more translucent or airy materials. The desire for gauzy textiles like tulle and muslin existed across Europe, and caused a shift in female dress from heavier brocaded silks to lighter fabrics that were often tailored close

to the body. E. Claire Cage discusses the French demand for such styles in the 1790s, as part of an overall trend that favoured classicizing styles and design in architecture, painting and clothing. In addition to sheer fabrics and empire waist dresses, draped cashmere shawls, Greek sandals and more natural hairstyles without wigs or powder were in vogue (Cage 2009). Spanish women took part in this fashion, but also looked to incorporate lace mantillas in their outfits because of the greater appreciation of regional dress in courtly and intellectual circles (González Mena 1997: 114).

In noting the delicacy of mantillas made of fashionable lightweight materials during his sojourn to Spain in the 1780s, the British traveller Joseph Townsend observed, "In the Spanish women the mantilla appears to have no weight. Lighter than air, it seems to supply the place of wings." Townsend also discerned that only Spanish women could flaunt the mantilla, associating the garment directly with Spanish femininity: "No foreigner can ever attain their ease, or elegance, in putting on this simple dress" (Townsend 1792: 335). While he does not identify the mantilla as an object worn solely by *majas*, he does foster the connection between mantillas and Spanish women in general, solidifying the accessory as vital to cultivating a woman's national identity.

Townsend may have offered a romanticized description of the Spanish woman, but he was not the only foreigner in the 18th century to comment on the prevalence of mantillas worn by Spanish women and to propose their significance as objects that attract. Joseph Baretti notes that mantillas were generally made of cotton or muslin, were essential garments for attending church, and had the power to conceal a woman's identity, making them the ideal disguise (1770: 58 and 315). Jean-François Bourgoing links the mantilla to coquetry, calling it a "seducing" article of dress that favours "half-concealment" to encourage "stolen glances of love" (1789: 285). Both travellers, like Townsend, connect the accessory specifically to a Spanish woman's identity, both in a practical and symbolic sense.

Regardless of Townsend's (and others') view that the mantilla should be worn only by Spaniards, both foreign and native laces circulated in Spain that were used to construct veils. Several of the imports were exported to Spain's American

colonies (Levey 1983: 55). A considerable portion of the lace mantillas manufactured in Spain was made specifically for export to the Americas in part to supply the demand for Spanish garments abroad. The most common types of bobbin lace to produce the fashionable gauzy styles, to which Townsend alludes, include Chantilly and Blonde, which employ silk thread, and *ret-fi catalá* (*Punta d'Arenys*), which uses flax or cotton thread. Spaniards esteemed Chantilly lace for its intricate patterning, subtlety and lightweight appearance; it became increasingly prevalent in the 19th century.

Blonde lace was valued for its large floral or geometric designs and contrast in tones between the solid patterns and the sheer net background. It took its name from the natural, toasted ivory shade of the silk thread. Mantillas made from Blonde generally came in this off-white colour or were dyed a silvery white or black. Although hand-crafted since the mid-17th century, it was “promoted as a fashionable lace by the lace-makers and dealers of the Paris region” throughout Europe by the first half of the 1700s (Levey 1983: 56). According to Santina Levey, Blonde’s appeal lay in its “light delicacy” and in “the luster of its thread,” qualities that gained in appreciation by the mid- and late 18th century (56). Silk lace, whether Chantilly, Blonde, or another type, became a popular option for rendering diaphanous mantillas optimal for enhancing a woman’s face. They were the most coveted and viewed as characteristically Spanish, though Spaniards greatly valued net laces and tulle as well. Some net laces featured point lace or embroidery for added flair, as seen in Goya’s *Duchess of Alba as a Maja* (1797). The net lace mantilla creates a mesh effect with elegant point lace to embellish the edges.

Many European countries, particularly France, manufactured Blonde lace. In Spain, Blonde (*blonda*) was made primarily in Cataluña, Castille-La Mancha (Almagro) and Castille-León (e.g., Tordesillas). Some scholars argue that *blonda* originated in Spain (Puerta 2006: 125 and González Mena 1976: 480), particularly Cataluña (May 1936: 211); some suggest that French lace makers emigrated to Cataluña where local women were already manufacturing Blondes (Villoldo Díaz 2009: 10); while others propose that Spanish Blondes were not only crafted in

Spain but also exported to France to compete with French lace—enriching the debate about Blonde’s beginnings and the various locations in which it prospered (González Mena 1976: 186). Regardless of Blonde’s origin, in Spain it was almost exclusively fabricated for mantillas. Blonde employs different techniques with two types of silk thread (with corresponding distinct thicknesses) in its construction (González Mena 1997: 116). The use of two threads generates a distinguishable contrast between the vaporous netted background (*punto de tul*) and the solid areas of decorative motifs, which are created by silk floss (a thick thread that is not spun). These dense areas are opaque and create a vibrant matte sheen (González Mena 1976: 187).² As González Mena proposes, Blonde is a lace of great “plasticity” (1976: 187), or the two-tone effect of different types of thread incorporated into the same object, since it emphasizes tonal variety.

Blonde is a form of bobbin lace, which is made by twisting thread wound on bobbins. The desired pattern is set by pins tacked on a pillow, and the lace-maker twists and crosses the bobbins to create the design. By the 17th century, bobbin lace-making was established throughout Europe as a professional industry (Levey 1983: 29). Because of the size of most mantillas, it is necessary to construct the garment in lace strips. The pattern is applied to the individual bands that are then unified to form the complete piece—a process called *punto de entolar* (González Mena 1997: 117). Because of the delicate nature of handmade silk lace, there are few extant examples of mantillas from the late 18th or beginning of the 19th centuries. Many attempted to duplicate handmade lace beginning in the late 18th century to create a more accessible and potentially durable product. After much experimentation, John Heathcoate succeeded in making high-quality machine-made lace with his bobbin net machine, first patented in 1808 and then again in 1809 after some improvements (Halls 1973: 15). Heathcoate’s invention provided the catalyst for a huge industry; his net lace was used for a variety of items, including veils. Women not only supplied much of the labour for working the machines; they also contributed with handmade embellishments, making the final product a combination of handmade and

machine-made processes (Halls 1973: 17). Although different kinds of bobbin lace could be replicated by machine, “the imitation of Spanish lace belongs to the latter part of the 19th century” (Halls 1973: 44).³

The Hispanic Society of America in New York conserves several handmade and machine made mantillas from the 19th and early 20th centuries.⁴ The mantilla provides the ideal garment to showcase the Blonde lace maker’s technique. One such example includes a large floral design, a fashionable choice for Blonde veils. The scalloped edge creates a dynamic effect for framing a woman’s face since it is this edge that would fall across a woman’s neck, hairline and shoulders. It doubles as part of the leafy vegetation pattern. The pattern includes bold flowers and delicate leaves with curving stems connecting the flora. This design is made using silk floss, which is complemented by a translucent net lace for the background. Each of the scalloped edges with large leaves and some of the other vegetation include a lighter floss or embroidery to generate contrasting textures, typical of Blonde’s plasticity. The flowers and leaves are also delineated by outlines to emphasize their form. Such craftsmanship reinforces the mantilla’s esteem as an object of immense personal and national value.

In addition to Blonde’s material or physical plasticity, when used to construct mantillas that are featured in art, the silk lace’s properties take on metaphoric meanings and lend symbolic value to the individual, making her part of a larger community. Its ability to mould modern personas that correspond to the shifting and expanding nature of women’s roles in the late 18th century is complemented by its historic ties to veils donned by Spanish noble women in the early modern period and to the diversity of veil styles worn across Spain. That is, as women gained greater access to political and social spheres (e.g., the Women’s Council as part of the Economic Societies established by the Bourbon government across Spain; see below) and participated in cultural activities, such as hosting Salons (*tertulias*), where individuals considered different literary, artistic and popular culture topics, they played a more active role in crafting their own identities as modern Spanish women. Elite women especially could model their donning of mantillas as a nod to past

noble women as part of continuing this sartorial tradition but in an updated fashion. The Blonde mantilla, thus, is an ideal accessory that bridges the “crossroads” of tradition and modernity from which new identities are shaped. Spanish women produce and wear Blonde mantillas, making them agents in their own identity fashioning.

Mantillas: Popular Pride and Fashionable Splendour

The fabrication of the mantilla—lace or otherwise—helped to bolster native industries. The garment itself also played a significant part in the crafting of an image of Spanish femininity to curb excess consumption, particularly of foreign clothing and objects. *The Political and Economic Treatise on Women’s Luxury and the Project for a National Dress Code* (1788) targeted women, in part because they were considered the main offenders of purchasing foreign luxuries. Although the *Treatise* was published anonymously, it was supposedly written by a lady of the court named “M.O.” (though it was possibly penned by statesman Jovellanos himself). M.O. offered a plan for a national dress code for all Spanish women to promote discernible class differences and to counter luxury spending of primarily foreign fabrics and garments. This plan was sent to the prime minister, José Moñino y Redondo, count of Floridablanca (1728-1808). The prime minister, who, having received M.O.’s suggestions, wrote to the secretary of the *Junta* (the countess of Montijo) to solicit the council’s opinion on the project. The council disapproved it. Despite Floridablanca’s intentions to rid Spain of foreign imports, cultivate native factories, and advance the Spanish economy by promoting a national dress code, the council made alternative recommendations. It requested better programs to foster female education so that women would have more opportunities to use their skills and knowledge, rather than focus on fashion and other “vanities.” Amelia Leira Sánchez views Floridablanca’s project as representing the culmination of the century’s tensions between moralists who deemed luxury to be the origin of excess and sin, and modern economists who regarded expenditures related to fashions as facilitating humanity’s progress and improving

the world's industries and commercial interests (Leira Sánchez 1993: 237).

To negate the criticism that women were solely responsible for Spain's problems with luxury, Beatriz Cienfuegos discussed the ef-feminization of Spanish men and their part in the promotion of foreign items and excessive spending in *The Cadiz Thinker* (1763). The men to whom she refers were called *petimetres*. Cienfuegos calls them "half men, half women" because they are equally subject to the desires of luxury and fashion and to the rituals of the *toilette* as women. *Petimetres* were the source of satire in literary and artistic works and characterized by their affected elegance and their lack of "manly" bearing. They exemplified the anti-male model, characters who indulged in narcissistic practices and weakened the country. Thus, that the *Treatise* for a national dress code was directly solely at women struck a chord for many women who did not see themselves as the only gender consuming luxury objects and garments. With their new roles as policy makers on the women's council, too, Spanish women could claim they had interests outside of fashion.

Mónica Bolufer Peruga argues the women's council voted against this plan to dictate feminine fashion because of its insistence upon uniformity (Bolufer Peruga 1998: 172). The text specified a detailed dress code based on social rank, with distinct outfits for different occasions. This particular plan only offered suggestions and models for female dress—there was no similar project for men despite the general uniformity in men's clothing and the connection between menswear and military dress in the 18th and 19th centuries.⁵ Accompanying the text were prints with figures who model the new dress code. Engraved by José Ximeno (1757-1797), the prints feature three categories of Spanish female dress based on social class: the Española, the Carolina and the Borbonesa/Madrileña. The women in each group would have three separate outfits, one for special occasions, one for less formal events, and one for the street, while each of the women would carry an insignia to identify her social status. Ironically, the images used to illustrate the new dress code were most likely designed by a French couturier, despite the pamphlet's nationalistic intentions. Regardless of the design, the clothing items

would have been produced in Spain (Fernández-Quintanilla 1981: 120).

Ximeno's prints reveal what constituted patriotic Spanish dress. He places each of the models in a full-length format with little background in order to highlight the outfits. Although the *Discurso* included a description of each group's three ensembles, Ximeno only made one print for each, none of which includes a mantilla. The clothing is made to look appealing and contemporary, while the artist limits the use of jewellery to emphasize restraint. Produced in an artistic context of costume albums, Ximeno's engravings also relate to fashion prints (Leira Sánchez 1997: 165). While costume albums generally emphasize regional types and street criers (vendors) accompanied by corresponding dress and accessories, fashion plates "represented current dress," oriented "viewers toward the purchase of new types of cloth and innovative textile patterns and treatments," and "were produced and construed within European networks of designers, workshop and factory owners, engravers ... clothing producers and consumers, who used these images for disparate purposes" (Haidt 2011: 6). That Ximeno's garments are meant to set an example of moderation (e.g., in their lack of jewellery or other embellishments); make use of Spanish materials and industries; maintain the same design; and still be fashionable seems to indicate an almost impossible situation. How could the garments remain current by responding to fashion changes and simultaneously keep the same design? Would new models be generated each year, and, if so, how would this curb elite enthusiasm for stylish products?

Ximeno's outfits feature standard, almost generic, garments based on primarily French examples, and so they are neither distinctly Spanish (since they do not feature particular local garments) nor modern. By looking to a French designer to provide the prevailing female outfit, Ximeno neglects to engage with the *Treatise's* nationalistic emphasis and call to promote Spanish industry, despite their local production. Ximeno may have opted to showcase their French design in part because France had set the tone for fashion beginning with Louis XIV (1643-1715), making the ensembles seemingly more appealing even in their fairly restrained styles. But Ximeno

did not respond to the increasing vogue for folkloric or popular traditions and subjects, and this neglect may have also contributed to the plan's hasty demise.

Despite the lack of mantillas in Ximeno's images, the text of the *Treatise* heralded the Spanish lace mantilla and the *basquiña* (petticoat over the skirt) as objects to be worn as part of the national uniform. The proposal not only promoted the mantilla to symbolize decorous Spanish femininity, but also specified nationally produced lace as its emblematic material. For example, the treatise firmly discouraged the purchasing of foreign "chiffons" and "laces," and instead advocated Catalan Blonde (Rodríguez 1788: 42-45).⁶ Women dressed in lace mantillas in public venues like bullfights or in portraits embodied their sensible fashion acumen and their pride in a garment manufactured by Spanish lace makers. The *Treatise* endowed both the mantilla and the *basquiña*, as staple items in popular dress, with patriotic pride and viewed them as appropriate for all social classes. While the *Treatise's* text included lengthy descriptions of the clothing recommended, the three prints could not visualize all the suggestions. Perhaps if Ximeno had depicted more examples based on the *Treatise's* proposal, a Catalan Blonde mantilla would have been rendered to reinforce the text's insistence on promoting national products. With the limitation in visualizing the different outfits based on social class, Ximeno ultimately failed to produce the imagery necessary for encouraging women to wear the national dress code.

Ximeno composed the official images for the *Treatise* the same year that Juan de la Cruz Cano included two related prints in his *Collection of Spanish Dress* (1788). Cruz's collection (1777-1788) is a series of masculine and feminine people wearing different regional dress with corresponding accessories. He visualizes the *maja* (Fig. 5) as a refined woman with customary garments. She sports a white mantilla with a lace band that accentuates her face. Underneath the veil, the woman wears a bow, which provides additional stature and embellishment. The viewer's capacity to see the bow implies the mantilla's sheer fabric—perhaps a popular net lace or tulle—a fabric commonly represented in Goya's drawings of *majas* in which the transparent effect heightens the erotic allure of the woman underneath. As a

sartorial staple in visual imagery of the *maja*, who was associated with the artisanal or labouring class, the mantilla endows the working woman with dignity as a model of Spanish femininity. Her overall tidy appearance and pleasing garments make her a presentable example. As Haidt proposes, literary and visual depictions of *majos* and *majas* that imagine them as respectable and clean point to the pressure urban labourers felt in Madrid to "represent decency," since any hint of vagrancy carried the potential for police interference (Haidt 2011: 203). Cruz Cano's *maja* bears little connection to a "real" soiled street vendor, and seems ill-suited for hard labour. Rather, he visualizes the *maja* with a focus on fashion, suggesting her (and her garments') potential as a style model for bourgeois and upper-class Spanish women.

In Cruz Cano's series, the *maja* represents pride in her traditional garments, including the mantilla. The artist's print of the *maja* relates to his interpretation of the *Treatise's* requirements

Fig. 5
Maja, Juan de la Cruz Cano y Holmedilla, from *Colección de Trajes de España, Tanto Antiguos como Modernos, 1777*. (Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America, New York.)



in two images that counter Ximeno's three versions. Both of Cruz Cano's prints feature lengthy descriptions. In the combined *Carolina Dress For All, and Dress a la Borbonesa*, he shows the model surrounded by children who resemble their mother in dress (although they do not wear veils), crafting a harmonious vision of maternal femininity. This detail ties dress to behaviour: the good female citizen not only wears modest clothing by obeying the dictates of the proposal, but she also provides an ideal example for her children. Cruz Cano foregrounds simplicity in the design and incorporates national elements, such as a *basquiña* and a *mantilla* (over a hat with feathers), as dictated by the *Treatise*. In the description, the artist proposes that the outfit is for attending church and walking in public, which, according to 18th-century tradition, would call for *mantillas* and *basquiñas*. The *mantilla* drapes delicately over the woman's hat but does not conceal her face, making clear her virtue and conformity to sartorial decrees about veils. The artist renders the *mantilla* in generic terms, but the garment's somewhat transparent feature alludes to net lace. Álvaro Molina and

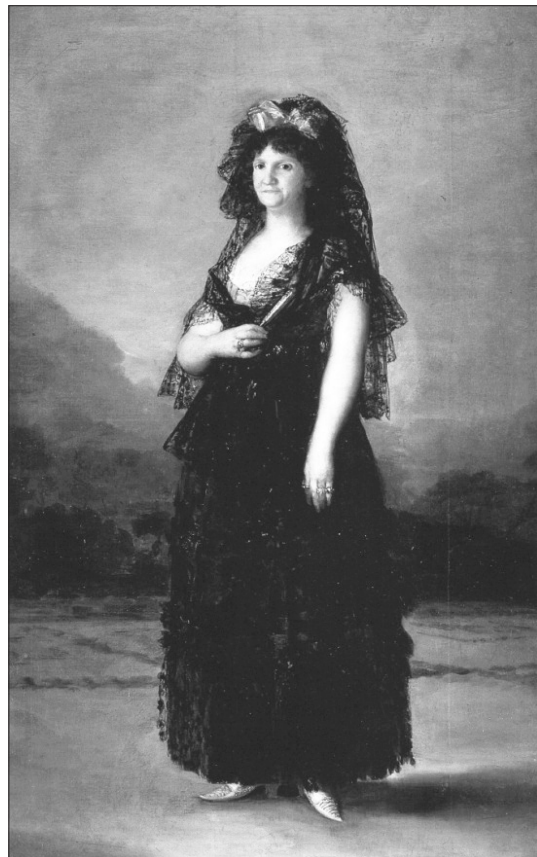
Jesusa Vega note that with Cruz Cano's use of such garments, he establishes a national model with Spanish components, which they view as a criticism of the original *Treatise* designs (Molina and Vega 2004: 154).

Cruz Cano's prints seem to call into question the Spanishness of Ximeno's images—how can the fashions as depicted by Ximeno embody Spanishness if they do not incorporate any customary garments? While Ximeno created his images specifically to accompany the *Treatise*, Cruz Cano's two prints enjoyed a wider circulation as part of a large collection of works featuring indigenous, colonial and antique clothing in which several figures wear popular garments like *mantillas*. Cruz Cano's images correspond to an overall appreciation for local and regional customs, dress and peoples. In addition, as an artist trained both in Madrid and Paris, Cruz Cano's series promotes a more cosmopolitan interpretation of the *Treatise's* plan, combining traditional Spanish with standard European garments to generate a new style, which would become increasingly popular in female fashions in the 1790s and early 1800s.

Cruz Cano's prints point to a contentious facet of the *Treatise's* dress code. In his examples, the use of recognizable Spanish items, like the *mantilla*, grants authenticity to the proposal and provides a better visual justification for the standardization of female clothing, since veils and other customary garments were already viewed, especially by foreigners, as the prevailing clothing items for all Spanish women. Although Cruz Cano includes the *mantilla* and *basquiña* in the *Carolina Dress*, he does not portray the woman as licentious or assertive, despite the garments' associations with *majas*. Nor does the woman's outfit intimate that she is a street vendor or labourer of any kind, connecting her to Cruz Cano's refined *maja*. By striking a balance between fashionable moderation and traditional assertions, Cruz Cano creates a model who takes pride in her Spanishness.

Cruz Cano consciously rendered the images in *Carolina Dress* nationalistic in order to reinforce the garments' association with feminine patriotism and industriousness. His *Carolina Dress* in many ways exemplifies the complex negotiation between Spanish garments and women of different social status and places

Fig. 6
Queen Maria Luisa
Wearing a Mantilla,
Francisco de Goya,
1799; Palacio Real,
Madrid, Spain. (Photo
Credit: Album / Art
Resource, NY, 209 x 125
cm, oil on canvas.)



of origin in Spain. The project's undertaking points to the seriousness of governmental hopes to regulate female conduct and appearances as one way to include them as participants in the nation's progress, along with their role in the women's council as Salon hostesses or as textile labourers. That the council voted against the proposal suggests that the women viewed fashion as a vehicle to express individuality. Despite the *Treatise's* failure, the lace mantilla—as an object viewed in the plan as acceptable for the promotion of fashionable reservation and traditional pride—was increasingly incorporated into the styling of women in portraits, popular prints and drawings. The veil's prominent place in these images as a means of enhancing a woman's beauty and identifying her as Spanish foregrounds the garment's popularity as a highly coveted object among the upper and middle classes.

Lace mantillas were worn by elite Spanish women, including Queen María Luisa (1751–1819). At court, María Luisa would have access to both native and foreign artisans, including lace makers. In an inventory of her wardrobe of “ropa blanca” and “vestidos” from 1808, the extensive list includes various lace products, such as mantillas and basquiñas “de Punto,” “blonda” or simply “mantillas blancas de encaje” (AG Legajo 770 Ex. 96 1808).⁷ The variety of pieces—from point lace to silk lace to white lace mantillas—and the quantities she possessed (in one trunk, forty-seven mantillas), suggest the variety of laces circulating in Spain and the large sums she spent on luxury materials—quantities most women could not afford. The inventory sometimes indicates the location or origin of the mantillas, some foreign and others local, which would be typical of courtly consumption. The queen's fondness for lace is seen in *Maria Luisa in a Mantilla* of 1799 by Goya (Fig. 6). The black lace mantilla cascades down her back, frames her face, and delicately touches her arms. Complementing her mantilla, the sheer basquiña features floral motifs that create a richly textured surface. Peeking beneath the mantilla, scalloped white lace discreetly covers her cleavage. Such sumptuous garments craft an image of Spanish femininity appropriate for elite women that distinguishes them from their European counterparts. As queen, she sets a decorous example by displaying customary garments that illustrate

Fig. 7

Portrait of a Lady with a Fan, *Zacarias González Velázquez*, ca. 1805–1810, oil on canvas. (Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, 55.3 cm x 45 cm. Museum Purchase Thanks to a Gift from J Ann Geurin Thetford in Honor of her Sons, Garrett and Wyatt Pettus, MM.2010.03.

Photography by Michael Bodycomb.)



Fig. 8

Portrait of a Lady with a Fan, detail, *Zacarias González Velázquez*, ca. 1805–1810. (Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, oil on canvas, 55.3 cm x 45 cm. Museum Purchase Thanks to a Gift from J Ann Geurin Thetford in Honor of her Sons, Garrett and Wyatt Pettus, MM.2010.03.

Photography by Michael Bodycomb.)



her support for traditional clothing. She apparently loved to show off her arms and so does not wear a short jacket or gloves. In this regard, she expresses personal taste by opting for a variation of the traditional dress. At the same time, she participates in a collective appreciation for such accessories. María Luisa acts as an arbiter of taste and a promoter of Spanishness, an appropriate position as “mother” of her citizens.

The queen’s ensemble is almost exclusively black. While the wearing of black has typically been associated with mourning, its use in Spain has a different historic significance. The Renaissance author Baldasare Castiglione praised the Spanish preference for black as a courtly example to emulate. He noted the colour’s relationship to the characterization of Spaniards as dignified and solemn, traits personified in Hapsburg masculine

dress. As John Harvey notes, the wearing of black is associated with men’s standing, authority and power (1995: 10). Charles I of Spain (1516-1556) helped to popularize the colour black at court, but it was his son, Philip II (1556-1598), who became the “pivotal man in black in Europe’s history” (Harvey 1995: 72). Philip’s preference for black dictated courtly uniform, not just in Spain but also in its possessions, and this penchant was officially codified by Philip IV (1621-1640), who made black the standard court dress in 1623 (76-80). Early modern travellers to Spain commented on the “ubiquity of black,” including in women’s veils (80).

In 18th-century Spain, the Spanish Bourbon kings did not follow Philip IV’s mandate; instead, they opted for international styles and a broader colour palette. It was the queen and elite women who epitomized the former grandeur of the Spanish past by recalling Hapsburg styles through the adaptation of maja dress. Moreover, María Luisa had specific reasons to be painted in customary garments and in all black. On March 16, 1799, the King, Charles IV (1789-1808), passed an official decree that black would be the only acceptable colour for the Spanish *basquiña* and that silver and gold adornments were to be prohibited to placate the lower class’s anger at the display of diverse colours worn during Holy Week celebrations in 1798, which they felt should be observed in a solemn manner (Mitchel 1991: 61). Thus, the queen stands in the portrait in order to promote the royal union with the populace.⁸

Elite women often looked to the queen and other ladies of court for setting trends. The lace mantilla became a standard garment in portraits for fashioning a modern image of Spanish femininity. One such example, *Portrait of a Lady with a Fan* (ca. 1805-1810; Fig. 7) by Zacarías González Velázquez (1763-1834), a court artist and academician who held prestigious posts, includes a mantilla painted with meticulous execution and calculated brushwork (Fig. 8). Small floral motifs (almost fleur-de-lys in appearance) are spaced throughout the net lace mantilla, while the edges showcase leaf designs. The botanical patterns are made using the floss featured in either Blonde lace or embroidery, but most likely it is a Blonde mantilla since the motifs emphasize the matte sheen typical of Blonde lace. González Velázquez is careful to depict the lace with great

Fig. 9
Mi espera mi amiga,
Antonio Rodríguez,
from Colección general
de los trages que en la
actualidad se usan en
España: principiada
en el año en 1801 en
Madrid. (Courtesy of
The Hispanic Society of
America, New York.)



delicacy, unlike Goya's more suggestive rendering, highlighting the coral earring and the ornamental hair comb seen underneath the sheer veil. He also articulates the mantilla's shape, which includes a centre oblong portion and attached sections that produce an almost ruffled effect around the shoulders and the face. Such precise detailing foregrounds the mantilla's significant place in the portrait as an object of veneration. Not only does the mantilla's exquisite craftsmanship showcase the woman's Spanish femininity, it also celebrates the women who produced the garment.

Portraits of Spanish elites convey a modern sensibility in part because of their visual relationship to widely circulated popular prints of contemporary fads. Antonio Rodríguez's (1765–ca. 1823) *Collection of Spanish Dress in the Year of 1801 in Madrid* was originally published periodically. The 112 images were later placed in a complete volume that includes four additional prints that make up *Madrid Fashions from 1804*, favouring the Spanish capital as the central location for new fashions. Madrid was also the hub of domestic commerce. The shops of Calle Mayor in central Madrid served as sites of distribution and commercial activity where national and foreign items like laces and silks were sold (Haidt 2011: 174–77). In Rodríguez's *Collection*, the sartorial variety exhibited in the figures' attire, from capes and hats to veils, dresses and shawls, relates to the nature of consumption in Madrid at the turn of the century, suggesting endless possibilities.

In the *Collection*, the majority of the figures are set in the exterior and tower over their landscapes, reinforcing their corporeal display and styles as the principal actors in the series. Rodríguez's *Collection* incorporates prints that resemble fashion plates with others that recall costume albums. The inclusion of regional outfits fosters a relationship between traditional and modern garments, especially when they are combined to form new styles in many of the prints. With the conflation and pairing of national and European styles, Rodríguez makes visual links to portraits of elites and the bourgeoisie in which women like Antonia Zárate sport such combinations. In his *Collection*, several women wear mantillas or other kinds of shawls or veils. The mantillas featured show a vast assortment in textiles, styles and embellishment—from net lace to fringed borders. The captions at the bottom

of each print often contain valuable information about the fashions exhibited, including the types of mantillas worn. From descriptions like “flannel mantilla with checkered ribbon,” “satin mantilla with velvet trim,” “chiffon mantilla” and “transparent mantilla,” Rodríguez inundates the viewer with ample choices for styling the national veil.

While some of the prints identify the types as *majas*, the majority of the women shown are labelled *petimetras*. The *petimetra* was more directly associated with current fashions and was the source of satire as one that falsified a high social status and feigned cosmopolitan airs. In one example without a description of the clothing, *Yo Petimetra!*, the artist portrays a lace mantilla, most likely Blonde with its scalloped edges surrounding the centre segment and geometric patterning. The woman wears the diaphanous veil crossed over her torso and gestures with elbow-length gloves and a fan. She is the height of elegance and fashion. As Haidt states, in many of the prints of women wearing mantillas, the “petimetra's openness to flirtation and to the play of her own desires are conveyed through the mantilla and its prominent sinuosity within the image's frame” (2011: 254). The beguiling potential of the mantilla is seen vividly in another print of a *petimetra* (Fig. 9). In the caption, the veil is identified as a “black transparent Blonde mantilla.” The net lace ground creates a provocative translucency, and the tiny motifs generate the tonal contrast for which Blonde was so cherished. Although the sheer component of the lace allows the viewer to discern the woman underneath, her identity is somewhat obscured, making the mantilla an alluring garment and the woman mysteriously intriguing.

Although Rodríguez often highlights the seductive quality of the veil in his series, the mantilla is foremost a garment of fashion, mixed and matched with different clothes to create new styles. The mantilla-clad women offer a modern vision of Spanish femininity as multifarious—tied to tradition via the link to the *maja* and tied to contemporary fashion via the link to the *petimetra*. At the end of the 18th century, traditional dress still maintained its associations with masquerades and native practices, but in portraits of elite and bourgeois women from the 1790s and early 1800s, it has been removed from such celebratory contexts and treated as

fashion—not costume—so that it can be altered for the individual wearer’s own purposes and given its own stylistic flourishes. The connection to current trends is made explicit in the fashion plates in which women model myriad mantillas that come in a vast number of materials, sizes and shapes. In a series that also channels the mantilla’s customary roots to lend authenticity to the garment as signifier of Spanishness, Rodríguez’s prints bridge the traditional and the fashionable, the popular and the elite. In both portraits and in fashion plates, the mantilla grants the sitter or model a distinct Spanishness outside of the customary circumstances in which it was typically worn.

Unlike the mixed portrait common to 18th-century imagery in which artists infused historical components into portraiture to elevate the lower genre to the level of history and to blur the standard hierarchy of the genres established by royal academies, the women wearing their veils in portraits and in fashion plates are not represented as a *maja* or outfitted for a masked ball. Instead, the women depicted utilize the

mantilla for its modern, fashionable potential, and artists, in turn, showcase the veils as part of the construction of an updated, urban image of Spanish femininity that lauded female labour and native lace production. Moreover, the mantilla, particularly the lace mantilla, commends the industriousness of native manufacture and the Spanish craftswomen responsible. In the 19th century, the lace mantilla continued to be worn and fabricated by Spanish women, whether hand-made or machine made. As fashion trends shifted and Spanish women incorporated different local and pan-European styles into their wardrobe, the lace mantilla provided a fixed point to assert their identity as definitively Spanish. The inclusion of the lace mantilla in the overall ensemble differentiated Spanish women’s dress from other European women’s garb, marking their national and gendered persona. It was, however, the visual depictions, primarily portraits, of ca. 1800 that first highlighted this garment’s pivotal role in claiming an “authentic” Spanish femininity that updated the traditional to a modern fashion.

Notes

1. For more information on the mantilla’s potential for scandal and its conflicting associations, see Zanardi (forthcoming).
2. The Lace Study Editor for *The Bulletin of the International Organization of Lace*, Devon Thein, provided me with a helpful discussion of Blonde lace.
3. For more information on machine-made lace, see Mason (1994).
4. Devon Thein, lace consultant at the Ratti Center (Metropolitan Museum of Art) indicated that often the specific technique used is difficult to determine. Most of the mantillas in the Ratti’s collection are from the late 19th and early 20th centuries and are machine made, though whether they are Blonde or Chantilly was not always easily discernible.
5. The impact of military uniforms on menswear has received significant scholarly scrutiny. See, for example, Daniel Roche’s chapter “The Discipline of Appearances: The Prestige of Uniform” (1994) and Richard Sennett (1977).
6. According to the *Treatise*, “The materials or types of dress have to be made in Spain, where they will be of the utmost importance for our factories.” (“*Las materias o géneros de estos vestidos han de ser de las que se fabrican en España, y será de suma importancia que los cabos sean también de nuestras manufacturas.*”) As for specific textiles, the author proposes, “It is of singular importance that the embellishments of the dresses avoid the introduction of the gauzes, Blondes, and laces of foreign countries, substituting them with those from our factories, such as those of good quality and taste, including Catalan Blondes; these will be perfected with the motivation of our own factories’ interests.” (“*Es de mucha importancia que en las guarniciones de estos trajes se evite la introducción de las gasas, blondas y encajes extranjeros, supliéndolos con cintas de nuestras Fábricas, que las hay de bastante primor y gusto, agregándoles algunas blondas Catalanas; las cuales se irán perfeccionando con este motivo por el propio interés de los Fabricantes.*”) See Rodríguez (1788: 42-45).
7. Because the date of the inventory (1808) is the same year as the beginning of the French occupation of Spain, I assume the inventory records the belongings of María Luisa and not that of Ferdinand VII’s or Joseph Bonaparte’s wives. The inventory does not specify the name of the queen.
8. In a similar manner, elite Scots made the kilt, typically associated with ruffian Highlanders, fashionable once Parliament lifted the ban on the garment in 1782. See Trevor-Roper (2008).

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