



The Sin of Pride in Dressing Bodies in Spanish and Anglo-American Ballads

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Abstract: In her article "The Sin of Pride in Dressing Bodies in Spanish and Anglo-American Ballads" Ana Belén Martínez García argues that trying to decipher the reasons for characters to dress in a certain way may help discover the underlying sociocultural mechanisms that prevail. The author aims to reveal the gender divide associated to clothing through a comparative approach towards popular literature in Spanish and English. She uses Judith Butler's theory of performative acts in order to conduct the text analysis. Clothes-related acts feature prominently in the case of popular balladry. Spanish "romances" and Anglo-American ballads are poems that were and are still meant to be orally performed. Therefore, the audience plays a key role on transmission and retransmission, which in turn shape societal mores. The discussion shows how certain gender-associated topics have been left intact, particularly the bias against women's vanity. The conclusions that are set forward will hopefully be of use to the literary reader-scholar who is interested in new ways of looking at oral traditions of different languages and nations, sharing a common European background.

Ana Belén MARTÍNEZ GARCÍA

The Sin of Pride in Dressing Bodies in Spanish and Anglo-American Ballads

There is a long-standing tradition of comparing European ballads (Ker; Borregaard; Entwistle; Lord; Armistead; Bennett and Green; Díaz-Mas, "Comparatismo"; Ceballos). However, their approach has been rather formalist, analyzing stylistic factors that could define or set the genre apart. Even if Judith Butler's theories have been used in ballad research (Greenhill; Chess; Dugaw), scholars have chosen to compare ballads in English, but not their Spanish counterparts. Thus, Pauline Greenhill applies *Gender Trouble* to Newfoundland cross-dressing ballads (156-77), and Simone Chess chooses *Excitable Speech* as the basis for her study of "speech acts" in what she calls "murderous wife" ballads (131). As for Dianne Dugaw, she has been using Butler's gender theories since 1989 to discuss the role of warrior women in US-American balladry ("Heroines"; *Warrior Women*). At the same time, those theories have been used to talk about the phenomenon of cross-dressing in the Renaissance. Still, these efforts have been concerned with the English stage (Charles; Johnston; López-Peláez et al.; Worthen). Thus, there was room for a different approach, one that would unite the comparative side of oral traditions. To do that, orality is looked at not only through time and place, but also across language barriers. In doing so, the interrelationship of the Spanish and the Anglo-American ballads will be explored from an interdisciplinary angle, addressing questions of identity, the individual, and the socio-cultural context.

The two literary genres I have chosen to compare, share not only common topics, but also stylistic details. The Spanish "romance" (ballad) genre is a kind of oral composition defined by scholar Ramón Menéndez Pidal as epic-lyrical poems sung to the rhythm of musical instruments and meant to play a role in a communal experience such as dance, leisure time, or work (*Romancero* 9). As for ballads, M. J. C. Hodgart says that they are "as hard to define as they are easy to recognize" (*Ballads* 10, qtd. in McKean, *Flowering* 2). Hence, this paper relies on Alan Bold's famous definition in *The Ballad*: "They were made for singing: that is the modern conception of the popular ballad. It is a narrative song whose metrical structure conforms to the exigencies of memorability ... The simple rhymes, the incremental repetitions, the obligatory epithets, the magical numbers, the nuncupative testaments, the commonplace phrases, the reliance on dialogue, the dramatic nature of the narrative: these make the ballad easier to remember, easier to memorize" (14). The most relevant feature that ballads and "romances" share is their oral nature and their connection with popular song and folklore. In order to discuss Anglo-Scottish ballads, I will be referring to Francis J. Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, which "established the canon of traditional balladry" (Rieuwerts, "Preface"). To avoid unnecessary repetition, Child's ballads will be cited by ballad number. In the case of Spanish and Anglo-American ballads, several editions will be used in order to approximate the Child corpus.

Applying Butler's theory of performativity to what I call "clothing acts" might render fruitful results for the ballad scholar (Martínez, "Los actos"; "Performing"). In her essay "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," Butler mentions phenomenology as the key "to explain the mundane way in which social agents constitute social reality through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social sign" (270). Moreover, in that essay, she goes on to talk about the relationship between the body and its cultural context, and how corporeal acts can help attain a sense of self: "The body is not passively scripted with cultural codes, as if it were a passive recipient of wholly pre-given cultural relations. But neither do embodied selves pre-exist the cultural conventions which essentially signify bodies ... Just as a script may be enacted in various ways, and just as the play requires both text and interpretation, so the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives" (277). Understanding ballad characters to attain a cultural self in this way, performing acts related to dressing their bodies has an influence upon how they are perceived not only inside the ballad plot but outside, by the audience-reader. Thus seen, gender will act as a divide between how characters are treated in the ballad. The way they dress will generate different judgments on the audience-reader depending on their gender. Male pride will be shown to be socially acceptable, whereas female pride will not be tolerated.

By focusing on dress as the acts performed by ballad characters, we may gain a wider understanding of the term: "Dress not only signifies the apparel worn by men and women but also refers to the act of covering the body with clothes and accessories" (Roach and Eicher, *Dress* 1). While looking for meaning, I will pay special attention to connotations (Buchan, *The Ballad* 170), taking into account what Spanish and Anglo-American ballads clearly share and what sets them apart. In particular, I will study how these poems treat male versus female clothing descriptions, and the reasons for the audience either rejecting or welcoming sin. Given the fact that we are dealing with a common European

background, some taboos will affect both poems. In fact, taboos are omnipresent in oral traditions. At times the taboo is deliberately broken by the character, that is, the singer who is recreating the song, which will in turn be a reflection of the context in which it is performed.

Dress can be functional, but it is symbolic quite often. Particular symbolism is attached to characters whose attire is richly depicted. Both in the Spanish and English traditions, clothes can be a marker of the character's inner self. In Díaz-Mas's "Romance del moro de Antequera," the fact that the city is about to fall is eclipsed by the verses providing a physical description of the messenger (*Romancero* 138): "a circlet upon her head, / costly it was, // the Moor that carved it / she had as her friend; // Moorish veil upon her head / with fine silk tassels" ("toca llevaba tocada, / muy grande precio valía, // la mora que la labrara / por su amiga la tenía; // alhaleme en su cabeza / con borlas de seda fina" [verses 6-8]). The Moor's clothes symbolize his ethnicity and high rank, but those clothes play a further role apart from that of social marker (Martínez, "Social Definition" 115-26). Wearing his very best clothes before the king suggests nobility and courtesy, so his intentions are immediately interpreted as well meant. There is a close scene in Child's ballad 29, "The Boy and the Mantle":

A kirtle and a mantle
this child had vpon,
With brauches and ringes
full richelye bedone.

He had a sute of silke,
about his middle drawne;
Without he cold of curtesye,
he thought itt much shame (stanzas 2-3)

These characters are justified in dressing so richly because they are paying homage to a social superior. Thus, the incremental repetition that points to too many accessories and relates to the way they look, instead of contributing to an image of pride, is forgiven in the male character.

Knightly attire, however, may be a pretense. Some ballads show characters that purposefully dress that way so as to deceive others. Such deceit is found in verses 19-22 of the Anglo-American ballad of "Johny Scot" (Leach 307), and in 169A, "Johnie Armstrong" (stanzas 6-7) and 145, "Robin Hood and Queen Katherine," in versions "A" (stanzas 18-19) and "B" (15). This faked identity arguably stems from the performativity of the clothing act itself: "Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 185). The fabrication in these ballads seems to alter the character's identity, because they go undetected. Indeed, their clothes and external appearance are perceived as the truth. Therefore, as in the case of true knights, their too-detailed image, which could be seen as proud, is forgiven.

Creating a good impression thanks to one's looks may serve a different end. Deception disappears from the context and leaves room for another interpretation, where the aim of the characters to wear their very best clothes is to impress their hoped-for future parents-in-law. In this case, the aim is to give the idea that they are rich and so able to take care of their intended wives, as in ballads 231A, "The Earl of Errol" (stanza 3), and 100, "Willie o Winsbury," in versions "A" (9), "B" (8), "F" (10), and "G" (11). In this vein, Spanish ballads echo courtly love poems, focusing on detailed descriptions of a male hero who will be successful in wooing a lady. An example of such an exhaustive description is found in "El conde Claros" (Díaz Roig, *Romancero* 228-33):

When the morning came – that wished to dawn,
he jumped out of bed – as if he was a hawk.
He went shouting through the castle, – calling:
-Rise up, my steward, – give me dress and shoes.
Ready was the steward, – to give him all:
he gave him deep-red underpants, – cordovan shoes;
he gave him a silk doublet – lined in "zarzahán";
he gave him a rich mantle – that was priceless;
three hundred gem stones – around her neck

(Cuando vino la mañana – que quería alborear,
salto diera de la cama – que parece un gavilán.
Voces da por el palacio, – y empezara de llamar:

-Levantá, mi camarero, – dame vestir y calzar.
Presto estaba el camarero – para habérselo de dar:
diérale calzas de grana, – borceguís de cordobán;
diérale jubón de seda – aforrado en zarzahn;
diérale un manto rico – que no se puede apreciar;
trescientas piedras preciosas – al derredor del collar [5-13])

Repetition enhances the relevance of the various items of clothing. The three subsequent "he gave him" ("diérale") in verses 10-12 suggest that "dress and shoes" ("vestir y calzar") are no mere trifle, but a complex affair. Furthermore, not only is this anxiety about clothes reflected in repetition, but also through the character's insistence on ordering his servants to dress him as elegantly as possible, a commonplace that reappears in "La infantina de Francia" (Durán 170): "And he submissively asks, // To whom he went to ask: // That he dresses him, that he adorns him // With very singular grace, // Very handsome and very gentlemanlike // For the girl to please" ("Et le demanda somiso, // A tal le fué á demandare: // Que le vista, que le arree // Con gracia muy singulare, // Muy apuesto é muy gentil // Para á la niña agradare" [verses 7-12]).

The influence of the chivalric romance genre upon the Spanish "romance" (ballad) tradition is further noticed in "La mañana de San Juan..." (Díaz Roig 91), or Díaz-Mas's "Pérdida de Antequera" (*Romancero* 141-43), where the audience listens to a description of knights more appropriate for courting than for battle: On St John's morning / while the day was breaking, // a great party threw the Moors / along Grenada's meadow. // Spurring their horses / and playing with their spears, // rich banners on them / embroidered by their lovers, // rich Moorish smocks / knitted in gold and deep red. // The Moor that in love is / signs of it he was showing, // and the one that no love had / there he had no fight" ("La mañana de San Juan / al tiempo que alboreaba, // gran fiesta hacen los moros / por la vega de Granada. // Revolviendo sus caballos / y jugando de las lanzas, // ricos pendones en ellas / broslados por sus amadas, // ricas marlotas vestidas / tejidas de oro y grana. // El moro que amores tiene / señales de ello mostraba, // y el que no tenía amores / allí no escaramuzaba" [verses 1-7]). This dress-to-impress wish is also present in some Anglo-American ballads: in "Lady Margot and Sweet Willie" (Niles 159, verses 1-4; Pound 40, verses 1-4), to test his intended's true love; in "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" (Moore 52, verses 9-12), with a similar motive in mind; and in "Matthy Groves" (Karpeles 40, verses 6-9), where he tries to seduce a married lady into adultery (dressed in green, as the color of lust).

Instances of parallel description, where the man's handsome looks are matched by the woman's beauty, emphasize their clothing. Interestingly, whenever such a parallelism is established, the connotation of sin seems to vanish, be the song Spanish or Anglo-American. For instance, in Durán's version II of "El conde Claros" (222-23), the emphasis on the count's clothing (verses 13-30) also applies to the lady's attire (67-82), pointing towards the connection between looks and loveliness, and implying that they deserve each other. The idea that lovers are physically made for each other is also found in most Anglo-American versions of Child's ballad 73, "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet."

However, whereas male characters in Anglo-American ballads resort to riches to test their true loves, in English ballads there is a marked contrast. Instead of relying on appearance, the nobleman dresses in more humble clothes so as to test his intended, as the male character of 226B, "Lizie Lindsay": "My coat, mither, sall be o the plaiden, / A tartan kilt oure my knee. / Wi hosens and brogues and the bonnet; / I'll court her wi nae flattrie" (stanza 3). If the lady loves him in common clothes, he will know she does not want riches or titles. Quite tellingly, his disdain of "flatterie" suggests a possible gibe at the aforementioned courtly love tradition, which could be interpreted as the influence of religion on the oral tradition in England.

When applied to most female characters, this wish to impress is not a socio-cultural instrument. Rather, their use of adornment is purposefully devised so as to make men fall in love with them. It might be argued that the ability to seduce is not inherent to women, but an act: "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very same 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 34). For instance, in "Romance del moro Calafinos" (Díaz Roig 221), princess Sevilla is intent on presenting her best self before Calafinos, who has heard of her unrivalled beauty and fallen in love just by listening to those tales, something that reminds one of the courtly love tradition: "The account being told / Sevilla well listened to: // To a window she's gone, / so beautiful a wonder, // Dressed in rich clothes, / the very best she had. // So beautiful she was, / none could be her rival" ("Las razones que pasaban / Sevilla bien las oía: // púsose a una ventana, / hermosa a maravilla, // con muy ricos atavíos, / los mejores que tenía. // Ella era tan hermosa, / otra su par no la había" [verses 18-21]). Using their beauty as a weapon helps

women achieve their goals. Another example of such feminine wiles is Díaz-Mas's "Juicio de Paris," where a scene from Homer's *Iliad* emerges before the audience, witness to Paris's seduction by goddesses (*Romancero* 336): "sleeping, she dreamed a dream / of a vision that she had // of the three prettiest ladies ever / in the world to be found, // dressed in gold and silk, / pearls and precious stones, // the jewels she was wearing / were unequalled and priceless, // loose blonde hair / that a fine veil covered" ("dormiendo soñaba un sueño / de una visión que veía // de tres damas las más lindas / que en todo el mundo había, // vestidas de oro y de seda, / perlas y gran pedrería, // los joyeles que llevaban / no tienen par ni valía, // rubios cabellos tendidos / que un sutil velo cubrían" [verses 20-24]).

Drawing a parallel to Greek mythology's influence upon the Spanish "romance" genre, English ballads rely on the rich magical tradition of the Celts. Thus, the fairy queen in ballad 37, "Thomas off Erseldoune," is described in much the same way as Aphrodite. She uses costly ornaments and clothes to look so appealing that Thomas forgets about his world and follows her to hers:

Hir selle it was of roelle bone,
Ffull semely was þat syghte to see;
Stefly sett with precyous stones,
And compaste all with crapotee;

Stones of oryente, grete plente.
Hir hare abowte hir hede it hange;
Scho rade ouer þat lange lee;
A whylle scho blewe, a-noþer scho sange.

Hir garthes of nobyll sylke þay were,
The bukylls were of berelle stone,
Hir steraps were of crystalle clere,
And all with perelle ouer-by-gone.

Hir payetrelle was of irale fyne,
Hir cropoure was of orpharè,
And als clere golde hir brydill it schone;
One aythir syde hange bellys three. (stanzas 6-9)

Such detailed description, with the rhythm that would entail on the part of the singer, and the absence of action verbs suggest a cumulative progression that builds up tension in the narrative until the end result is achieved—Thomas falls for the queen.

It is worth noting the effect that all these female characters would have on the audience. Far from feeling drawn to them, the general reaction would be one of rejection. Further, there are ballads in which the woman does not show a clear purpose, but a mere interest in her appearance, refusing to pay attention to anything or anybody else: 253, "Thomas o Yonderdale" (stanza 1); 204A, "Jamie Douglas" (2-3); 232, "Richie Story," in versions "A" (7), "B" (10-11), "E" (8-9), and "F" (5-7). A likely explanation for disliking these characters would have ethical and sociological ramifications. The fact that they are self-centered and vain is associated in the Western world with the Greek myth of Narcissus, first condemning vanity in men. In subsequent centuries, that myth would be permeated by religious beliefs. In that sense, female characters that are described going to mass while seeking attention are breaking a basic conduct code dictated by the Bible (1 Tim. 2.8-10): "in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; ... the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God" (qtd. in Kvam, Schearing, and Ziegler, *Eve & Adam* 446-47). Hence, the main character of Díaz-Mas's version of "La bella en misa" is the epitome of immodesty, particularly in version "B" (*Romancero* 295): "Skirt upon her skirt and high-station 'xiboy' / Holland chemise, golden thread and pearls to boot" ("Saya lleva sobre saya y un xiboy de alta nación, / camisa d'holanda lleva, sirma y perla al cabezón" [verses 3-4]). This lady's dress is in direct contrast to the aforementioned biblical quote. In version "A," the description is not so detailed, but verse 3 is enough to suggest that her behavior is not appropriate for a Christian lady: "Skirt upon skirt she wore / shiny veil upon her head" ("Saya lleva sobre saya / mantilla de un tornasol" [295]). François Boucher claims that there are historical records of Castilian women wearing colorful clothes to mass, behaving as if they were Muslim, for whom similar clothing would not have been taboo (*Historia* 176-77). A close role is enacted by the female character in 81H, "Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard," where she is described as a much too prominent figure, dressed in

bright colors, in stark contrast to other women who are dressed in brown and black, showing respect both to their families and to the Church (stanza 1).

The extent to which these acts demonstrate willingness on the part of the character is important for considering them as sinful. In 47B, "Proud Lady Margaret," the lady receives the visit of her deceased brother's ghost, who warns her that she should stop being a coquette: "When ye're in the gude church set, / The gowd pins in your hair, / Ye take mair delight in your feckless dress / Than ye do in your morning prayer. // And when ye walk in the church-yard, / And in your dress are seen, / There is nae lady that sees your face / But wishes your grave were green" (stanzas 28-29). Similar warnings are found in versions "C" (stanzas 19-20), "D" (13-14), and "E" (9-10). Coquetry is sinful in so far as it leads to sin. On the one hand, men are led to sinful thoughts, and may even succumb to fornication or adultery. On the other hand, women are led to feel envy, another deadly sin.

As for Anglo-American balladry, female pride is inexorably punished when it falls outside marriage. Historically, Puritan ideology saw pride as the most terrible of female sins (Karlsen, *Devil* 149). This is why the detailed description of female attire forebodes a fatal end for the eloping character, as if her outward appearance was a symbol that stood for her inward immorality, receiving death as rightful punishment by the end of the ballad. Such is the sequence of events in verses 21-24 of "The House Carpenter" (Pound, *American* 44). Death can be hinted at by the mere mention of a character's getting dressed. In that case, the woman who is about to die gets dressed in a sober, unhurried fashion, as in 196A, "The Fire of Frendraught" (stanzas 6-8), and the Anglo-American "Adam Gorman" (Flanders, *Ballads* 135): "She had no sooner decked herself // In silken scarf and gown, // Than Adam Gorman, and his men, // Had close beset the town" (verses 17-20). The emphasis on the action of getting dressed is remarkable. It might be interpreted as punishment for a previous sin of pride. Even more immoral is the main character in Virginia's "Bonny Barbara Allen" (Leach, *Ballad* 279), but she is not the one who dies: "So slowly she put on clothes; // So slowly she went walking; // So slowly, as she crossed the field, // She met the corpse a-coming" (verses 21-24). The fact that she gets dressed too slowly suggests how little she cares for her lover, who dies before she meets him. Barbara's taking too long is symbolic of female pride and cold-heartedness, and contributes to the audience's rejection of female cruelty.

Nonetheless, the very same description would have a different impact if the character was morally entitled to seduction; that is, if she is already married to the person whom she is trying to please. In 194C, "The Laird of Wariston," she uses appealing attire so as to avoid the bigger sin, which would be his committing adultery (stanza 4). Ballad 235, "The Earl of Aboyne," speaks of much the same quandary. Version "A" provides the most detailed account:

Her shoes was of the small cordain,
Her stockings silken twisting;
Cambrick so clear was the pretty lady's smock,
And her stays o the braided sattin.

Her coat was of the white sarsenet,
Set out wi silver quiltin,
And her gown was o the silk damask,
Set about wi red gold walting.

Her hair was like the threads of gold,
Wi the silk and sarsanet shining,
Wi her fingers sae white, and the gold rings sae grite,
To welcome her lord from London. (stanzas 7-9)

This detailed description, which would imply rejection if the character was single, is here interpreted as the epitome of the good wife. Such a wife reappears in "El conde Dirlos," where the countess asks to be dressed to receive her husband after a long absence. However, no details are given. It is implied that, by demanding her servants' help, she will be dressed elaborately (Díaz Roig 204). Thus, her husband's love is recovered. Excess is not sinful because it prevents much bigger sins.

Condemnation sometimes comes not from female dress, but from the lack of it. Those are instances where heroines are terribly punished for displaying provocative behavior that entails nudity or near nudity. In both Díaz-Mas's "Melisenda insomne" (*Romancero* 189-92) and "La morilla burlada" (288-89), the main character is woken up by a sudden noise and, not able to find her clothes, rushes to the door and opens it, whereupon she is raped. Therefore, it seems that, even if paying too much attention to one's looks is a symbol of one's pride, not paying enough attention to it is also to be punished.

The underlying reason is that such carelessness connotes yet another deadly sin on the part of the woman, sloth.

In some cases, although the woman unintentionally catches her suitor's eye, the situation is brought about by her having used too many rich accessories, which leads back to the dangerous power of clothes as a weapon of seduction. For example, in 10B, "The Twa Sisters": "You couldna see her middle sma / For gouden girdle that was sae brow. // You couldna see her fingers white, / For gouden rings that was sae gryte" (stanzas 21-22). The exaggeration of these ornaments echoes Phillip Stubbes's diatribe: "this sinne of excesse in Apparell, remayneth as an Example of euyl before our eyes, and as a prouocative to sinne" (B6-B7v, qtd. in Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance* 3). Sin is in fact emphasized in Díaz-Mas's version of "Don Bueso y su hermana" (*Romancero* 226-27), where the lady is unaware that her beauty will make her own brother fall in love with her: "From the high seas / they bring the girl, // covered they bring her / in gold and pearls; // upon her head she wears / a sapphire stone // that lights up at night / more than at noon" ("De las altas mares / traen a la niña, // cubierta la traen / d'oro y perlería; // en su cabeza lleva / una piedra zafira // qu'arrelumbra de noche / más que al mediodía" [verses 1-4]). The implicit terrible sin of incest casts an ominous shadow upon these characters, but the audience excuses the lady, as her meek behavior suggests she uses clothes and adornment that way because her family has told her to do so.

Finally, it may be worth mentioning parental and societal pressures, which would account for some female seductiveness. Parents were well aware of the importance of gaining prestige and titles, land, and property through marriage, so they forced daughters to appear as attractive as possible to impress their suitors—the richer and nobler, the better. This motivation is recurrent, for instance, in 252A, "The Kitchie-Boy": "Gae busk ye, my dochter, / G[a]e busk ye unco fine, / An I'll gae down to yon shore-side, / To invite the squar to dine; / I wad gie a' my rents / To hae ye married to him" (stanza 27). Such a father is also portrayed in ballads 64, "Fair Janet," in versions "A" (16-19), "B" (10-12), "C" (11), "E" (4), and "G" (7-9); 226F, "Lizie Lindsay" (23); and 239B, "Lord Saltoun and Auchanachie" (4-5). As for ballad 91E, "Fair Mary of Wallington," the mother is the one that forces her daughter to dress in a fashion conducive to seducing a husband: "Ye shall not be drest in black, / Nor sall ye be in broun; / But ye'se be drest in shining gowd, / To gae glittering thro the town" (4). The more the girl is "shining" and "glittering," the more chances she will have at attracting male gazes and suitors.

Apart from the pursuit of social or financial gain, the reason for seduction could be that a military goal is in sight. In "El moro que reta a Valencia" (Díaz Roig 185-86), the hero resorts to using her daughter's good looks as a distraction before attacking the Moor, thereby catching him by surprise: "Come here, my daughter, / my daughter lady Urraca, // leave your common clothes / and dress in Easter clothes, // that son of a dog Moor / make him wait with words // while I saddle Babieca / and gird on my sword" ("Venid vos acá, mi hija, / mi hija doña Urraca, // dexad las ropas continas / e vestid ropas de pascua, // aquel moro hi de perro / detenémelo en palabras // mientras yo ensillo a Babieca / y me ciño la mi espada" [verses 14-17]).

In sum, clothes play an important part in both the Spanish and the Anglo-American oral traditions. Sociologically, clothes have different functions. They may be "utilitarian" or "instrumental," as part of "goal-directed behavior," but also symbolic, meaningful, "expressive" (Roach and Eicher 6). In oral traditions, as the present study has shown, these functions are so interrelated as to be nearly impossible to separate. Therefore, witnessing descriptions of rich attire, for example, will not simply lead the reader and/or listener to think that the characters are also rich. Sometimes, in fact, it will be quite the opposite. Examples of fake clothes are to be found in "Johny Scot" (Leach, *Ballad* 307), and in Child's 169A, "Johnie Armstrong" and 145, "Robin Hood and Queen Katherine." In that sense, clothing acts are not only symbolic but also a signal of suspense, an element in the narrative that suggests one should pay attention to what comes next, just in case our expectations are suddenly reversed.

Characters are judged depending on their gender. Thus, elaborate clothing in men is never negative. On the contrary, wearing rich clothes and pieces of adornment suggests nobility and courtesy, both character traits that are welcome. Appearances do matter, and, even if at times they can be deceiving, they grant access to royalty, for example, as good looks symbolize not just high breeding but a good nature. This is precisely the case in "Romance del moro de Antequera" and "The Boy and the Mantle." Further, marrying prospects are bettered thanks to the suitor's looks, as in "The Earl of Errol," "Willie o Winsbury," and "Will Stewart and John." The way men are physically described reminds the audience of a possible connection between the ballad genre and the medieval chivalric romance, featuring most prominently in the Spanish "romances." Thus, knights are depicted as chivalric characters in "El conde Claros," "La infantina de Francia," and "La mañana de San Juan..." or "Pérdida de Antequera." Similarly, three Anglo-American ballads portray those character types: "Lady Margot and

Sweet Willie," "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet," and "Matthy Groves," even if more indirectly in the latter's case. Sometimes, as the "Lizie Lindsay" example above seems to suggest, this relationship between the romance and ballad traditions is parodied on British soil, maybe because of the geographical, historical divide, in stark opposition to both the Spanish Catholic Church and the American Puritans, more rigid in their tenets.

Men are generally forgiven for their seeming vanity inside the ballad universe. However, elaborate clothing in women is usually rejected because it symbolizes the sin of pride. As argued throughout this article, it seems that these two oral traditions, Spanish "romances" and Anglo-American ballads, have been influenced by Christian beliefs. Pope Gregory the Great insisted pride and luxurious dress, particularly those of women, "were at the root of all evil" (Lyman 136-37; qtd. in Rubinstein 127). This interpretation helps to explain why in ballads and "romances" the audience is witness to connections between female clothes and various sorts of sin: immodesty and pride, epitomized by "La bella en misa" and "Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard," even causing others to fall into envy, as in "Proud Lady Margaret"; self-centeredness and vanity, as in "Thomas o Yonderdale," "Jamie Douglas" and "Richie Story"; lust, as in "Romance del moro Caláinos," "Juicio de Paris" and "Thomas off Ersseldoune"; sloth, as in "Melisenda insomne" and "La morilla burlada," with the further consequence of rape; and pride resulting in adultery and subsequently punished by death, as in "The House Carpenter." Only when the female character dresses elaborately in order to avoid a bigger sin (e.g. adultery or bigamy) are her acts seen as the lesser evil, and so forgiven. Indeed, married women in these oral traditions are entitled to seduction when intent on recovering their husbands' love, as in "The Earl of Aboyne" and "El Conde Dirlos." Surprisingly, these female characters are considered to be paradigmatic good wives. Also rather safe from blame are the characters that dress themselves elaborately while following their family's wishes, as in "The Twa Sisters," "Don Bueso y su hermana," "The Kitchie-Boy," "Fair Janet," "Lizie Lindsay," "Lord Saltoun and Auchanachie," and "Fair Mary of Wallington." In these latter cases, the main sin is their parents' greed, prior to the dressing act itself.

To conclude, clothing acts across Spanish and Anglo-American balladry seem to be interrelated. A certain pan-European substrate and heritage has perpetuated certain topics and tropes. In looking at the possible reactions physical description provokes, the observer finds a substantial gender barrier has hardly disappeared from these oral traditions. All in all, in trying to strike a balance between what is morally good and bad, oral traditions manage to mirror the cultures from which they emerge.

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