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**Intermediality and Interculturality in  
José Juan Tablada's Poetry:  
East Asian Culture and the 'Visual Turn'**

A thesis submitted by Luyue Wang  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures



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## Abstract

This thesis investigates two key themes in the Mexican writer José Juan Tablada's (1871 - 1945) poetry: intermediality between poetic text and visual art, and interculturality between cultures of East Asia and Mexico. As previous studies have noticed that many of Tablada's poems on visual art are also related to East Asian culture, the study finds this point worthy of further discussion and investigates the potential correlation between interculturality and intermediality in Tablada's poetry.

This thesis explores the chronological evolution in Tablada's poetry collections *El florilegio* (1899, 1904), *Al sol y bajo la luna* (1918), *Un día* (1919), *Li-Po y otros poemas* (1920), and *El jarro de flores* (1922) as regards their poetic texts, typographical arrangements, and illustrations. In the early stage, Tablada's poetry related to East Asian topics shows strong orientalist influence from French translations. Starting from *Al sol y bajo la luna*, Tablada's poems of East Asian themes intertwine with East Asian visual art including prints and seals. In *Un día*, *Li-Po y otros poemas*, and *El jarro de flores*, Tablada's poems use visual presentation such as illustrations and non-linear typographical arrangements to convey extra-textual meaning. Chapter One and Two apply Liliane Louvel's theory of 'pictoriality' and scheme of polarities in ekphrasis to study the intermedial transposition between painting and poetry in Tablada's pictorial writing. Chapter Three and Four adopt approaches and conclusions of cognitive research into the reader's perception of non-linear poetic texts to discuss the verbal visuality in Tablada's visual poetry.

The thesis concludes that, through French and English translations, East Asian culture influenced Tablada's intermedial writing and inspired his 'visual turn' in poetic composition. The poetry-painting hybrid form such as *ehon*, the visual-verbal signifying writing system known as ideograms, as well as the painter-poet tradition in East Asian culture inspired Tablada to pursue 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity' in poetry and prompted his experiment of visual writing.

Through the investigation into Tablada's poetry, this thesis finds that interculturality might lead to the intermedial writing. This thesis contributes to the study of visual poetry with underlying influence from East Asian culture.

## Summary

This thesis explores the influence of East Asian culture on the Mexican writer José Juan Tablada's (1871 - 1945) poetry related to visual art. Studying the confluence of intermediality and intertextuality in Tablada's poetry, this thesis looks into the development of the correlation between these two themes by examining Tablada's poetry collections according to the order of their publication dates.

Chapter One investigates Tablada's poems and essays in the *modernista* stage. It focuses on Tablada's collaboration with the literary magazine *Revista Moderna*, which funded him the journey to Japan in 1900. It also studies the poems related to East Asian themes and plastic art in Tablada's first poetry collection *El florilegio*.

Chapter Two concerns Tablada's reception of Japanese prints through the investigation of his poetry collection *Al sol y bajo la luna*. With the study cases of ekphrasis in 'El poema de Okusai' and visual experiments in 'Luna', this chapter proposes that there was a change of style in Tablada's poetry related to painting before the publication of *Al sol y bajo la luna*.

Chapter Three investigates the factors that prompted this change of style. Focusing on the collection *Li-Po y otros poemas*, it studies the adaptations of the Chinese poet Li-Bai's figure and poetry in Tablada's poem 'Li-Po', with an emphasis on the visual presentation of 'Li-Po'. This chapter also analyses the relationship between image and text in Tablada's visual poems.

Chapter Four studies Tablada's haiku. It examines not only the verbal language but also the illustrations, typography, and page layout of the haiku collections.

This thesis applies theories of intermediality to study Tablada's image-text mixed art and conclusions of cognitive research into readers' perception to discuss Tablada's visual poetry. This investigation mainly refers to primary literature, such as Tablada's poetry and critical essays.

## Abbreviations

'Cantos de Amor y de Otoño'	'Cantos'
'«Utas» Japonesas'	'Utas'
<i>Al sol y bajo la luna</i>	<i>Al sol</i>
'El poema de Okusai'	'Okusai'
<i>Hiroshigué, el pintor de la nieve y de la lluvia, de la noche y de la luna</i>	<i>Hiroshigué</i>
<i>Un día...Poemas sintéticos</i>	<i>Un día</i>
<i>Li-Po y otros poemas.</i>	<i>Li-Po</i>
<i>El jarro de flores. Disociaciones líricas.</i>	<i>El jarro</i>
<i>La feria (Poemas mexicanos).</i>	<i>La feria</i>
<i>José Juan Tablada, letra e imagen: poesía, prosa, obra gráfica y varia documental</i>	<i>Letra e imagen</i>

## INTRODUCTION

The Mexican writer José Juan Tablada (Coyoacán, 1871 – New York, 1945) has been studied for his multiple identities: poet, journalist, art critic and diplomat. Tablada was the leading figure of the Mexican **Modernismo** and Avant-Garde movement, the first poet to introduce Japanese **haiku** into the Spanish language and the major creator of visual poetry in Latin America.<sup>1</sup> As a prolific writer, Tablada published seven poetry collections, nine prose collections, six dramas, as well as more than a thousand essays in over one hundred different journals and newspapers in Spanish and English. Among these writings, two key poetic themes draw our attention. The first theme is interculturality in Tablada's poetry. Most of Tablada's other poetry collections involve either foreign topics or foreign literary forms to varying degrees. Compared to other cultures, his poetry dedicated to East Asian culture stands out in quantity.<sup>2</sup> He has written a series of poems related to Japanese and Chinese society in *El florilegio* (1904), a long poem about Japanese printing art in *Al sol y bajo la luna* (1918), calligraphic poems inspired and adapted from Chinese classical poetry in *Li-Po y otros poemas* (1920), as well as three-lined haiku-like poems in *Un día...Poemas sintéticos* (1919), *El jarro de flores. Disociaciones líricas* (1922) and *La feria. Poemas mexicanos* (1928). The other theme is intermediality, the interaction between verbal text and visual image in particular. Tablada not only composed poems and critical essays regarding visual art such as paintings and prints. He also put effort into the graphical design of the poetry collections by displaying the text in unorthodox typography or adding illustrations to the pages. On each page of *Un día*, the poet-painter put a round illustration on the top corner which matches the haiku lyrics on that page. In *Li-Po*, Tablada arranged poetic verses to present pictures corresponding to the verbal content and even fitted one of the stanzas within the outline of a printed **Chinese character**. On many occasions, these two themes, interculturality and intermediality, coexist in the same poem.

Therefore, this thesis proposes to investigate the potential correlation between East Asian topics and the visual display in Tablada's poetry. Is it possible that the poet's interest in and knowledge of East Asian literature and art gave rise to the visual experiments of the verbal

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<sup>1</sup> Please see glossary for the definition of 'haiku'. Both the singular and the plural form for the word 'haiku' appears the same.

The glossary gives the definition of terms in East Asian culture and terms in Latin American literature. The terms contained in the glossary will appear in bold when they first appear.

<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, the term 'East Asia' refers to Japan and China but does not include Korea because Tablada's writings are not related to Korea in any regard. The term 'culture' is used as a short form of 'literature and visual art', rather than the reference to 'customs and beliefs'.

text? How did East Asian culture influence Tablada's poetic composition, especially the text-image relationship in his poetry?

In addressing these questions, in the introduction of this thesis, we shall first go over the author's biography to understand the context in which interculturality and intermediality have become crucial themes in Tablada's writing. Then we are going to review the related existing studies on Tablada's poetry, in particular the investigations as regards his East Asian knowledge and his visual writing. After that, we will have a summary of the debate about the text-image relationship in both the West and the East to see how Tablada's view and practices of combining the visual art and the verbal art have taken advantage of both traditions. Finally, we will introduce the theories and methods that are going to be applied in this investigation.

### **Japan, France, and the United States: The Mexican Poet's Life Abroad**

José Juan de Aguilar Acuña Tablada y Osuna was born in a middle-class family in Coyoacán, Mexico on 3 April 1871. His interest in painting and East Asian culture is rooted in his childhood experience. At the age of three, Tablada travelled to his mother's hometown, where he learned about the famous Manilla Galleons, the Spanish trading ships that connected the Philippines to Mexico known as 'las Naos de China': 'La diligencia donde con mi madre y un tío voy a Mazatlán hace un alto en medio del camino de Acapulco, el viejo camino real para los mercaderes de las Naos de China.' (Tablada *La feria de la vida* 20) This early memory inspired Tablada's creation of the novel *La nao de China* in 1909, which was never published because the manuscript was destroyed in 1914 (Tablada *La babilonia de hierro* 82).

At the age of 17, Tablada published his first poem in a literary journal. During his twenties and thirties, he collaborated as a journalist, critic, and poet with several different literary magazines such as *El Universal*, *El Mundo Ilustrado*, *Revista de Revistas*, *Revista Azul* and, above all, *Revista Moderna* (Rivas Velázquez 641-2). In 1896 *Revista Moderna* published its first issue, a weekly journal where Tablada, as a co-founder, made his first experiments with incorporating text with image.<sup>3</sup> Many of Tablada's poems in *Revista Moderna* were published with illustrations by artists such as Julio Ruelas, Germán Gedovius, or even Tablada himself in one rare case. In 1899, Tablada published his first poetry collection *El florilegio* which contains 33

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<sup>3</sup> Please see *El modernismo en México a través de cinco revistas* by Clark and Defossé for more information about Tablada's role in the founding of *Revista Moderna*.

poems, most of which were previously published in journals. One year later, in May 1900, Tablada travelled to Yokohama via San Francisco as a correspondent for *Revista Moderna* until he returned in February 1901. In Japan, Tablada wrote a series of articles about Japanese society in the column 'Hacia el país del sol', which were collected and published in the monograph *En el país del sol* in 1919.<sup>4</sup> The trip to Japan had a lifelong influence on Tablada's writing. One direct impact of this journey is the publication of the second edition of *El florilegio* in 1904. The 1904 version added 40 more poems to the previous edition and set up an independent section, *Musa Japónica* especially for the poems on East Asian themes. While several poems in *Musa Japónica* such as 'Japón', 'Crisantema' already existed in the 1899 version, other poems were created during the author's stay in Japan, such as 'La Venus China' and 'Daimio', as well as 'Cantos de Amor y de Otoño' and "'Utas" Japonesas', which are adaptations of Japanese poetry.<sup>5</sup> During his stay in Japan, Tablada made his first attempt to use Japanese literary form in composing a poem in the Spanish language. What transformation did the 1900 Japan journey bring to Tablada's poetic style? Is there any difference between the East Asian related poems composed before the trip and the poetry created later? We shall come to these questions in the close reading of *El florilegio* in Chapter One.

While we study the influence of Tablada's field experience in Japan, we have to discuss the Mexican poet's ability of reading, speaking and writing Japanese or Chinese in order to investigate his knowledge about Sino-Japanese literature. Tablada managed a basic level of reading and writing in Japanese. However, judging from Tablada's manuscripts which contain mostly Japanese *hiragana* with substantial orthographical mistakes, the Mexican poet had an elementary knowledge of Japanese scripts and very limited knowledge of Chinese characters (Pascucci *Entre México y Asia* 382-3). Since Tablada's Japanese or Chinese level was not sufficient for him to read Sino-Japanese literature in their original form, we have to look at the materials in other languages or media that he referred to for creating poetry related to East Asian culture. There was a scarce introduction to East Asian culture in the Spanish language before the 1920s. As a result, Tablada's knowledge about the East Asian literature was heavily

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<sup>4</sup> Although it is generally believed that Tablada's travel to Japan is an established fact, several critics, such as Jorge Rueda de la Serna, doubt whether it ever happened or not. This thesis is convinced that Tablada had been to Japan. Please see page 27 of *José Juan Tablada: su haikú y su japonismo* by Ota Seiko and 'Pasajero 21: Evidencia del viaje de Tablada a Japón' by Martín Camps for more information about the dispute.

<sup>5</sup> In *El florilegio* the poem titles are printed with a mixture of title case and sentence case in the table of contents. For example, in 'Noche de opio' only the first word is capitalised, whereas in 'Cantos de Amor y de Otoño', major words are capitalised as well. This thesis keeps to the original capitalisation and punctuation when referring to the poems.

reliant on the French and English translations: ‘adivino las emociones que va a producirme, las que solo me han producido al descubrir sobre el Japón, los de Goncourt, Lafcadio Hearn y Paul Louis Couchoud’ (*Obras IV* 215). French writer Edmond de Goncourt’s (1822 – 1896) books, *Outamaro: le peintre des maisons vertes* (1881) and *Hokusai: l’art japonais au XVIIe siècle* (1896) about Japanese **ukiyo-e** artists inspired Tablada’s investigation into Japanese prints and led to the publication of his monograph *Hiroshigué, el pintor de la nieve y de la lluvia, de la noche y de la luna* (1914), which introduces the Japanese *ukiyo-e* artist Utagawa Hiroshige (1797 – 1858). Inspiring Tablada’s interest in Japanese supernatural creatures, books in English about Japanese folklore and ghost stories written by the Greece-born writer Lafcadio Hearn (1850 – 1904) came into being in Tablada’s poem ‘El poema de Okusai’ (1910) in *Al sol*, which depicts works of the Japanese *ukiyo-e* artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760 – 1849). *Sages et poètes d’Asie* (1916) by the French poet Paul-Louis Couchoud (1879 – 1959) provided Tablada with much information about Japanese haiku as well as Confucianism in China. In addition, previous investigations confirm that Tablada had referred to the following books about East Asian literature: *The Classical Poetry of the Japanese* (1880) by Basil Hall Chamberlain, *A History of Japanese Literature* (1899) by W.G. Aston, *A History of Chinese Literature* (1901) by Herbert Giles, *Anthologie de la littérature japonaise des origines au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (1910) by Michel Revon, as well as *Chinese Lyrics: From the Book of Jade* (1918) by James Whithall, which is an English translation of Judith Gautier’s *Le livre de jade* (1867) in French (García de Aldridge 110, 113). Aside from the printed text, Tablada also referred to printed pictures. He was an important collector of Japanese prints in Mexico in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose collection is considered one of the oldest collections in Latin America (García Rodríguez n.p.). Tablada’s stay in Japan was restricted to a small, colonised area especially assigned for foreigners in Yokohama, where he could hardly have access to local literary-art events and societies. Therefore, the English and French translations have been an important source of knowledge of Japanese and Chinese culture, which suggests Tablada’s impression of Japan and China could be filtered by occidental interpretation.

As Sei-ichi Taki said in the book *Three Essays on Oriental Painting* (1910), which Tablada had referred to, ‘unlike ordinary speech, painting is universal in its appeal, unlimited by ages, countries, or people’ Tablada acquainted himself with East Asian visual arts to approach Oriental culture (Taki 1). The National Museum of Mexico preserves Tablada’s collection, which contains 225 pieces of prints from different Japanese artists including Kunisada, Hiroshige and Hokusai. Visual materials such as Japanese prints and translations in English and French have been the two main media that Tablada used to bypass the linguistic barriers

and find out about East Asian culture. The East Asian literary texts went through a long transcultural and transmedial process before they were adapted into Spanish poetic text by Tablada. What effect do the French and English translations have on Tablada's understanding of East Asian culture? What role did visual arts such as prints and **calligraphy** play in Tablada's acquaintance with East Asian culture? We shall discuss these questions in the case studies of 'Okusai' and 'Li-Po'.

In contrast, Tablada not only knew about the French and the English-speaking world from books; he also travelled a few times to France and spent considerable time in the United States. In 1911, Tablada travelled to France and stayed in Paris for a year, where he wrote a column for *Revista de Revistas*, which were later collected into the monograph *Los días y las noches de París: crónicas parisienses* (1918). In 1914, Tablada visited the United States for the first time. He stayed in New York until the end of 1918, when he left Washington for Habana, Cuba. After that, Tablada travelled between several places in Latin America such as Bogota, Caracas, and Quito as a diplomat for the Mexican government. He returned to the U.S. and stayed in New York between 1924 and 1933. Tablada revisited New York in 1944 and stayed there until he died in 1945.

During his years in New York, Tablada was active in the circle of Mexican artists. Tablada's close relationship with Mexican artists traces back to his days in Mexico City in 1905, when he attended painting classes in the Academy of San Carlos, the same institute where prominent artists including Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco trained painting skills. Until 1922, Mexican artists had been visitors to Tablada's apartment in Mexico (Cabrera de Tablada 53). The familiarity with artistic circles made Tablada the first art critic to discover and promote the talent of José Clemente Orozco and Miguel Covarrubias, who later became famous muralists (Sandoval 156). In 1923, Tablada started to write the book *Historia del arte en México* with the purpose of promoting Mexican art. Among other artist friends, two figures played important role in Tablada's poetic career. One of them is Mexican artist, art critic and New York art gallery owner Marius de Zayas (1880 – 1961), who not only illustrated the front matter of *Li-Po* but also connected Tablada with the French symbolist poet Guillaume Apollinaire (1880 – 1918). De Zayas collaborated with Apollinaire in Paris and witnessed the creation of *Calligrammes*, a collection of ideographic poems published in 1915, the same year that Tablada's ideographic work was created in New York (Bohn *Apollinaire and the International Avant-Garde* 267). The other significant Mexican artist was José de Torres Palomar (born in about 1874, date of death unclear), who shared the same apartment with Tablada in New York in 1916. Tablada highly valued Palomar's design of individual's initials called the *kalograma*, which literally means

'beautiful letters' in Greek, and he especially noted the similarity between *kalograma* and East Asian seals (Moyssén 496, Tablada 'Crónica semanal' n.p.). A *kalograma* of Tablada's initials, 'J.J.Tablada', designed by Palomar appears on the cover page of the poetry collection *Al sol*, which includes the poem 'Kalograma'. In the haiku collection *Un día*, each page not only contains an illustration by Tablada himself, but also a printed small circular *kalograma* with the initials 'JJT'.

Between 1918 and 1920, three poetry collections, *Al sol*, *Un día*, and *Li-Po*, were published consecutively. The verbal depiction of visual art in *Al sol*, the imagist language, and the visual design in *Un día*, as well as the typographical arrangements of the words in *Li-Po* draw the attention of readers and critics. Thereafter, Tablada's poetry was no longer recognised as *modernista* in style, but rather as characterised by a high degree of visuality. How does this change happen? What are the differences between the poet's earlier works involving paintings and his later poetry involving visual design? What is the role of foreign culture, especially the East Asian culture that went through translations, in Tablada's visual presentation of verbal text?

Tablada's haiku collection *Un día* was published in Caracas in 1919, where Tablada wrote some of the haiku in *El jarro*, although they were not published until 1922. According to Tablada's widow, many haiku poems were written in Colombia, where the picturesque scenery reminded the poet of Japan:

También me decía que en todos aquellos hermosos lugares de Colombia, la naturaleza, la perspectiva de los montes, los apretados bosques, los ruborosos macizos de bambúes le recordaban poderosamente al Japón. (Cabrera de Tablada 26)

Although Tablada travelled to many countries and continents, no other journey could compare to the 1900 trip to Japan in terms of its profound influence on Tablada's poetry. How exactly did the East Asian culture influence Tablada's poetry? How did this influence evolve chronologically? The themes of interculturality and intermediality have continuously played key roles throughout Tablada's writing career, which makes us ask, whether one theme engendered the other, or did the two reinforce each other reciprocally?

In the above review of Tablada's career, we have emphasised the events and experiences related to the writer's interest in East Asian culture and his connections with artistic circles, whereas we have not addressed the other aspect of Tablada's life: his participation in politics.

Tablada's political standpoint affected both his personal life and his writings.<sup>6</sup> In *Diseños asiáticos*, Laura Torres-Rodríguez remarks on Tablada's three major East Asia-related books, *En el país del sol* (1900), *Hiroshigué* (1914) and *Li-Po* (1920) as follows:

Estos libros coinciden con tres momentos claves de la vida del poeta: su viaje al Japón auspiciado por los círculos intelectuales del Porfiriato (1900), la caída de Victoriano Huerta que conllevó el saqueo de su casa en Coyoacán (1914), y el consiguiente exilio a Nueva York, donde se convierte en promotor cultural del nuevo gobierno revolucionario (1920-). (34)

Due to Tablada's support for Porfirio Díaz and opposition to Francisco I. Madero and Emiliano Zapata, his travels abroad after 1910 were also considered exiles by some scholars. In 1909, Tablada published the long poem *La epopeya nacional. Porfirio Díaz* in Mexico. In 1928, the other collection on Mexican themes, which is also his last poetry collection *La feria (Poemas mexicanos)* came out in New York. Since the main research scope of this thesis is the influence of East Asian culture on the visual presentation in Tablada's writing, the social-historical environment of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Mexico and the writer's involvement in politics is of less relevance, though we are still going to mention certain poems written in haiku form in *La feria*.

### Existing Literature on the Topic

Due to José Juan Tablada's crucial position in Mexican literature and art criticism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and his contribution to the popularisation of haiku in Latin America, there is a lot of existing scholarship on this poet. Among the scholars who have studied Tablada, José María González de Mendoza and José Emilio Pacheco are the most prolific ones, whose articles and monographs are key for the establishment of Tablada's position in Mexican literature history as the initiator of Mexican *Modernismo*.

José María González de Mendoza was one of the earliest researchers of Tablada. His published articles include 'José Juan Tablada' in 1937, 'Universidad de la poesía de José Juan Tablada', 'Tablada y López Velarde' in 1951 and 'Trayectoria de José Juan Tablada' in 1965. González de Mendoza collated his writings and published in 1970 *Ensayos selectos*, half of

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<sup>6</sup> Please see Chapter One of *Diseños asiáticos* for more investigation into the influence of Tablada's political position on his preference to oriental culture. Also see *Las veras y las burlas de José Juan Tablada* by Rubén de Lozano Herrera for further information about Tablada's political life.

which are articles on Tablada. Close to the era in which Tablada lived, González de Mendoza's studies are valuable for this research considering their historical value. His article 'Pinturas de Tablada' proves that much of the practice of accompanying the poems with illustrations was frequent in Tablada's writing. José Emilio Pacheco was the next important scholar on Tablada. With his first essay 'Libros, libros. Retrato de un desconocido: José Juan Tablada en el cincuentenario de *Un día*' about Tablada published in 1969, he affirms Tablada's position as a pioneer and one of the most representative figures of Mexican *Modernismo* with the book *Antología del modernismo (1884-1921)* (1978) and *Poesía moderna. Una antología general* (1982). Pacheco himself being a famous poet and writer, his comments and recognition established Tablada's position in the Mexican *Modernismo* movement.

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars have already noticed Tablada's haiku compositions. When mapping the development of the haiku genre in the Spanish language, many academic publications acclaim Tablada as the first haiku writer in Latin America, such as 'El *haikai* mexicano' (1966) by De Kravzov, 'The Japanese Haiku in Hispanic Poetry' (1968) by Brower and 'Remapping Genre: Spanish Jaiku of the Early Twentieth Century' (2010) by Landeira. Tablada's reputation as the first person to introduce Japanese haiku into Latin America was promoted by the Nobel laureate writer Octavio Paz. Since Paz published a series of articles about Tablada in 1973, 1976 and 1978, there started to appear a larger number of studies regarding Tablada since the 1970s. Paz's insightful remarks on Tablada's haiku and appreciation of his contribution as the first person to introduce Japanese poetry and art to Mexico drew more attention to Tablada's identity as a Hispanic expert in East Asian culture, rather than the impression as a *modernista* poet and journalist that people had about him before.

Among the abundant existing research on Tablada's interest in East Asian culture, the following publications are especially helpful for the investigation of the current thesis. Araceli L. Tinajero's *Orientalismo en el modernismo hispanoamericano* (2004) gives an overall discussion on the presence of Oriental themes in *modernista* poems and prose in the Spanish language, with her last chapter concentrating on Tablada's interest in East Asian plastic art. Her monograph provides a thorough background study of the orientalist discourse of the era in which Tablada lived and offers information about the knowledge and writing style towards Oriental topics of his contemporary Spanish American writers such as Rubén Darío and Julián del Casal, Enrique Gómez Carillo and Efrén Rebolledo. Situating Tablada's orientalist poetry in the larger picture of *Modernismo*, Tinajero's book helps to answer the question of why and how East Asian topics came into being in Tablada's writing. On the other hand, Japanese

scholar Atsuko Tanabe's book focuses on organising the primary sources related to Tablada's knowledge about Japanese literature. Her monograph *El japonismo de José Juan Tablada* (1981) was the first study on Tablada's engagement with East Asian culture, which did tremendous work in comparing Tablada's poetry to the original Japanese poetry that he could potentially have referred to for the poetry composition and translation. The book provides background studies of the social-historical association between Japan and Mexico at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and makes clarifications on Tablada's references to the English and French translation and introductory books. Similar to Tanabe's book but specialising in Tablada's knowledge of Chinese literature, Adriana García de Aldridge's article 'Las fuentes chinas de José Juan Tablada' (1983) also traces the translation process from original East Asian texts to Tablada's Spanish verses and examines the Chinese literary references for the collection *Li-Po y otros poemas*. Based on detailed investigations into the bibliographical facts, Tanabe's book and García de Aldridge's essay are extremely helpful references for the current thesis in tracking the translations from Sino-Japanese to French-English and then to Spanish, and in investigating the transcultural adaptations in Tablada's poetry. In addition to Tanabe's research, Laura Torres-Rodríguez's thesis *Diseños asiáticos: orientalismo y modernidad en México, 1900-1968* (2012) puts Tablada's trans-Atlantic intermedial writing into the context of Orientalist poetics in Mexican *Modernismo*. In the first chapter, it discusses *Li-Po* from the perspective of Western ideas about the Chinese ideograms and provides substantial insights into the social background in which Tablada created his East Asian culture-related visual works. Her other publication, the monograph *Orientaciones transpacíficas: la modernidad mexicana y el espectro de Asia* (2019) also takes the perspective of the socio-economic context to study Tablada's interest in Japanese artefacts and applied arts including *ukiyo-e*. Her discussion of Tablada's writings about Japanese art productions provides information about Tablada's methods to know about East Asian culture other than through reading literary texts. Tanabe, García de Aldridge, and Torres-Rodríguez's publications offer comprehensive information of Tablada's acquisition of East Asian culture. However, since they do not aim to discuss intermediality in Tablada's writings, their works only answer the question of which sources inspired Tablada's poetry, without further discussion of how the East Asian culture influenced Tablada's poetry and moulded his unique style of visual writing.

Unlike the researchers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Seiko Ota and Michele Pascucci's works are not only limited to information gathering, but also propose original explanations for how East Asian visual art is presented in Tablada's poetry. In complement to Tanabe's monograph, Seiko Ota's book *José Juan Tablada: su haikú y su japonismo* (2013) studies the intertextual connections

between Tablada's haiku and the Japanese sources and focuses on the influence of Japanese classic haiku masters on Tablada's haiku in *Un día*, *El jarro de flores*, and *Intersecciones*. Ota's book also mentions Tablada's essays which introduce Japanese prints in *Hiroshigué*, arguing that Japanese visual art could have inspired Tablada's poetry composition. Michele M. Pascucci's informative thesis *Entre México y Asia: imagen y poesía en la obra de José Juan Tablada* (2008) is an extensive and in-depth research project about Tablada's poetry related to East Asian influences. Summarising and filling the gaps of the bibliographical information in the former studies about Tablada's East Asian references, Pascucci proposes that the visual-verbal hybrid poetry in *Li-Po* and other collections was inspired by East Asian plastic art, calligraphy, and poetry, among other cultural traditions. Pascucci's other two articles, 'Los "estudios chinos" de José Juan Tablada: revelación y revaluación' (2013) and 'José Juan Tablada y el ideograma *kotobuki*: sus fuentes y su uso en "Li-Po"' (2014) propose the possibility that the Chinese character in *Li-Po* came from a printed fabric that the poet had at hand, which was a random selection of any Chinese character. Since Pascucci studies the same field as the current thesis, her investigations are particularly supportive, especially in terms of her collection and organisation of primary resources. As with Tanabe and Ota's book, Pascucci's research has put more attention on the East Asian cultural elements reflected in Tablada's poetry. In comparison, we shall lay the emphasis on the confluence of intermediality and interculturality by introducing contemporary theories and methods of intermediality into the investigation of Tablada's poetry inspired by East Asian culture.

In addition to those Hispanists who noticed the transculturality in Tablada's poetry, experts in visual poetry also show interest in Tablada's poetry for his excellence in using visual elements in poetry writing. Klaus Meyer-Minnemann's article 'Formas de escritura ideográfica en *Li-Po* y otros poemas de José Juan Tablada' (1988) argues that Tablada's ideographic poetry inherits the European tradition of visual writing that can be traced back to the Greek *technopaignia* in the *Greek Anthology*, a book which Tablada admitted as one of his inspirations for creating visual poetry in *Li-Po*. Meyer-Minnemann notices that another Latin American writer contemporary with Tablada, Vicente Huidobro, also created ideographic poetry in 1917 under the influence of the French Avant-Garde movement (436). In the analysis of 'Li-Po', Meyer-Minnemann observes a similarity between the picture and the object designated in the text and argues that the order of creation was 'primero las adaptaciones de la poesía china en sus fuentes de información. Luego las reescribió y visualizó en su poema' (442, 3). We agree with his assumption of the order of creation of 'Li-Po'; however, we hold a different opinion on his conclusion that Tablada's knowledge of East Asian culture had a limited

influence on the visual writing (450). Limited to the poems in *Li-Po*, Meyer-Minnemann's discussion of Tablada's visual writing has hardly put attention to the chronological development of Tablada's other poetic collections. It also fails to see the text-image interaction in *Al sol* and *Un día*. Moreover, Meyer-Minnemann explains Tablada's term of 'poemas ideográficos' as an imitation of Apollinaire's 'idéogrammes lyriques', whereas we have an alternative explanation of Tablada's 'ideografía', which shall be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

Like Meyer-Minnemann, most other researchers who study the word-image relationship in Tablada's poetry believe the Mexican writer's visual poetry was a result of the French ideographic poetry's influence. Comparing Tablada's poems in *Li-Po* to Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*, Willard Bohn also attributes Tablada's visual experiments to the French precursor, in his book *Modern Visual Poetry* (2001) and the article 'The Visual trajectory of José Juan Tablada' (2001). Although Bohn admits that Tablada's 'familiarity with the Chinese ideograms ... was essentially pictographic', he has not developed further in this regard (207). Likewise, María Inés Fleck's dissertation *The Visual Poetry of Huidobro, Tablada and Paz* (1995) which discusses the ideographic poems in *Li-Po y otros poemas* also associates the Mexican poet's visual creation to the French symbolists by comparing Tablada's poetry to De Zaya's synthesis and Mallarmé's 'Las de l'amer repos'. With their projects, we can confirm that Tablada's use of visual presentation in poetry is to a certain extent influenced by French poetry, but we argue that we still need a further discussion of the East Asian influence in the visual presentation of Tablada's poetry.

Another significant work which connects the East Asian influence with the visual presentation in Tablada's poetry is Rodolfo Mata's project *José Juan Tablada, letra e imagen: poesía, prosa, obra gráfica y varia documental* (2003). Supported by the Centro de Estudios Literarios of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the digital project *Letra e imagen* includes digitalised contents of Tablada's various poetry and prose collections related to East Asian culture such as *Hiroshigué*, *En el país del sol*, *Un día* and *Li-Po*, an archive of Tablada's manuscripts of haiku, illustrations, sketches, and paintings created during his stay in Japan, *Archivo Gráfico José Juan Tablada*, as well as his collection of Japanese prints, *Colección de Estampas de José Juan Tablada en la Biblioteca Nacional*. These graphical materials of Tablada's own visual creations and his collections of Japanese art are vital evidence for studying Tablada's visual writing, especially his visual writing related to East Asia. Moreover, the project contains Mata's article 'José Juan Tablada: la escritura iluminada por la imagen', a comprehensive investigation that covers all Tablada's visual engagements in all related areas including his early collaboration with Julio Ruelas, the art criticism articles, his participation in

Palomar's creation of *kalograma*, as well as his use of Mexican prints, *viñetas* and *portadas* in the book decoration. Mata mentions some of Tablada's poems in *El florilegio* which are related to paintings, such as 'Abraxa' and 'Soneto de Watteau'. Mata points out that the French artists and writers could have a more profound influence on Tablada than scholars previously thought, although he does not go far in this angle. Nonetheless, he brings forward the concept of 'ekphrasis', which means the poetic verbal description of a visual work of art in Greek, and he suggests that Tablada's ekphrasis played a substantial role in the formation of his visual style. We agree with Mata that Tablada's ekphrasis a crucial point in his writing related to the visual presentation and we will follow this line of investigation in later chapters. In addition, Mata also notices that Tablada's haiku in *Un día* come with the poet's own illustrations, which reminds him of the Japanese tradition of accompanying haiku verses with pictures. In 'Poesía visual de José Juan Tablada. Nota del editor', Mata gives brief comments on some of Tablada's visual poems. In his note to Tablada's manuscript of 'En Liliput', a short poem that contains both poetic text (which was published in *El jarro*) and an unpublished pencil sketch, Mata asks the following questions:

¿Qué fue antes, el poema o el dibujo? ¿Surgió primero la imagen plástica plasmada en el dibujo o la sonora vertida en las palabras? Y más específicamente, en relación con "En Liliput", ¿la referencia a la obra de Swift estuvo presente en el momento en que Tablada dibujó la escena de las hormigas sobre el grillo o surgió como derivación de su placer por la observación entomológica y su gusto por el dibujo? ¿De qué manera influye el poema en el dibujo y viceversa? ('Nota de *Hormigas sobre un grillo muerto*' n.p.)

We have the same questions as Mata in reading Tablada's poetry: In a poem that contains both verbal text and visual image, which medium of art was created first? Which medium should readers attend to first? How do the image and the text alter each other's expression? And further to Mata's questions, in what way does the East Asian influence shape Tablada's management of text-image balance in his poetry?

To date, few investigations have explicitly linked the East Asian influence to the intermediality in Tablada's poetry. Most of the existing literature focuses on only one aspect, either discussing the East Asian inspirations in Tablada's poetry or his visual creations. Studying the interculturality in Tablada's poetry, García de Aldridge, and Ota research have partly answered the question 'what sources of East Asian culture influenced Tablada's poetry', focusing mainly on Tablada's poetic texts, with limited attention to the visual presentation involved. On the other hand, Meyer-Minnemann, Bohn and Mata's research focus the intermediality in Tablada's visual writing and answer the question 'how did Tablada's visual poetry come into

being'. However, they have not given adequate credit to the influence of East Asian culture on the visual aspect. Ivan Schulman's book *Painting Modernism* (2014), which especially mentions the influence of *ukiyo-e* on Tablada's poetry, offers some interesting discussion about Tablada's poetry and critique of Japanese art in Chapter Four and Five. Nevertheless, its scope of research only includes the issue of 'poetry about painting' in Tablada's *modernista* stage, hardly reaching his later experimental visual poems. Michele Pascucci's thesis, dealing with both aspects of visual writing and Oriental references, consists of a discussion about the influences of Mexican literary environment, European visual tradition, and potential Japanese culture on Tablada's visual creations. Pascucci's thesis is one of the most important secondary literatures for our investigation, especially in the regard of intertextual influence from the Japanese visual and literary references on Tablada's poetry. Based on Pascucci's investigations, which have made noticeable progress in the contextual research, this thesis hopes to carry on the critical investigation of Tablada's writings, with an emphasis on the chronological evolution of intermediality and interculturality in his poetry.

Believing that East Asian culture specifically had a crucial influence on the visual presentation in Tablada's poetry, this thesis endeavours to find out how interculturality led to intermediality in Tablada's writings. To fill the gaps and connect existing research in the related areas and to solve the question 'how did East Asian culture influence Tablada's visual poetry', we are particularly interested in the following questions: Which specific part of East Asian culture inspired Tablada to compose visual poetry? What techniques from East Asian culture are used in Tablada's visual writings? How do the East Asian culture-inspired visual creations distinguish Tablada from other contemporary visual poets?

### **Silent Poetry and Speaking Paintings: Word-Image Relationship in the East and the West**

Our hypothesis that Tablada's visual writing was primarily influenced by East Asian culture bases on the presumption that the overlap between word and picture/poetry and painting is more common in East Asia than in the European tradition. Therefore, it would be helpful to have a brief review of the text-image relationship in the East and compare it to the historical debate of the relationship between the art of poetry and that of painting in the West.

Some scholars consider the words written on paintings to be one of the most obvious features of Chinese painting (Murck 457). The earliest practice of combining text and image in China can be traced back to 300 BC, as seen in a silk manuscript of an illustrated calendar (458-9). Throughout the history of China, poetry and painting are often presented on the same scroll because both writing Chinese characters and creating Chinese paintings require the same instruments: brush, ink, and paper or silk. Most of the Chinese paintings contain inscriptions. Inscriptions perform the function of designating or explaining the content of the picture and naming the painters on early Chinese paintings, which were mainly composed by professional artisans. Between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> century, although artisan paintings were still the mainstream in Chinese painting, the genre of 'painting-inspired poetry' (题画诗) became popular among Chinese scholars (Liu 15). Since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when the scholar class came into power in the Song dynasty (960 – 1279), the educated elites started to paint and often associated their paintings with poetry to differentiate them from the professional artisans (463). In the Song Dynasty, many scholar-politicians argued that painting and poetry are comparable, promoting painting to a quasi-equal status with poetry (H. Wang). The prominent Chinese poet Su Shi (苏轼 1037 – 1101) argued that poetry and painting essentially comply with the same rule of art in some remarks on the Tang poet-painter Wang Wei, by saying 'There is poetry in his [Wang Wei's] painting and painting in his poetry' (诗中有画, 画中有诗) (qtd. Qi Gong 11). Su Shi also remarked that 'Shaoling's writings are pictures without forms, Han Gan's paintings, unspoken poems' (少陵翰墨无形画, 韩干丹青不语诗) (trans. Murck 463). Su Shi's friend, poet-calligrapher Huang Tingjian (1045 – 1105) praised a painter who was able to create a 'soundless poem with ink' (淡墨写出无声诗): 'Master Li had a phrase he didn't want to express in words, / So with light ink he sketched out a "soundless poem"' (断肠声里无影形, 画出无声亦断肠) (463). The literati painting created by the poet-painters – which usually consists of natural subjects such as flowers, birds, plants and landscapes – has become dominant in Chinese painting ever since the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644), taking the place of the artisan painting, which specialises in figure paintings.

The long-established tradition of reciprocal interaction between painting and poetry is also seen in Japanese culture, although in some cases the poet and the painter are not the same person. From the Heian period (794 – 1185) until the Meiji period (1868 – 1912), there had long been a strong Chinese influence upon Japanese literature and art (Addiss et al., Wong 297). The Japanese artists not only learned from the Chinese the tradition of creating paintings and prints according to poetic texts, as seen both in the 18<sup>th</sup> century *nanga*, the Chinese style

literati paintings, and in the *haiga*, paintings accompanying haiku, characterised by the poet-painter Yosa Buson (Cahill n.p.). Japanese artists also followed Chinese theories regarding the poetry-painting relationships and agreed on the close connection between poetry, calligraphy, and painting (Sorensen 1).

The unique status of calligraphy is perhaps the reason that word and picture, poetry and painting are so tightly connected in East Asia. Since the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the term ‘three perfections’ (三絶) was coined to refer to the three arts that an intellectual should master – poetry, calligraphy, and painting (Sullivan). Confucius scholars in East Asia were trained to write Chinese characters calligraphically with brush and ink from an early age, even before they were able to paint or compose poetry. The calligraphic theory developed earlier than theories of literature or painting, too (Murck 460). Aiming for presenting literary content according to the aesthetics of graphical art, calligraphy is a connecting or balancing point between verbal art and visual art.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to the East Asian word-image tradition that takes the integration of poetry as natural and conventional, there has been an on-going debate between poetry and painting in the West since the time of ancient Greece. Much earlier than the Chinese phrase ‘poetry is a painting with voice, painting a poetry with form’ (诗是有声画, 画是有形诗 c.1065) was written, the Greek poet Simonides of Ceos (c.556 – 468 BC) had made a similar claim, ‘Poema picture loquens, picture poema silens’ (H. Wang 63, qtd. Bull n.p.). The parallel analogy between poetry and painting in Asia and Europe is also seen in Horace’s (65 BC – 8 BC) *Ars Poetica*, which contains the famous phrase ‘ut picture poesis’, translated as ‘as is painting, so is poetry’, an argument that has yielded various important theoretical discussions in later centuries (Horace 361, Bull n.p.). Despite the fact that poets in antiquity had acknowledged the connection between poetry and painting, painting was generally considered as a mechanical art, in contrast to poetry which was counted as a form of liberal art, until the Renaissance when the discussion of painting’s value and the verbal-visual art relationship resumed. Leon Alberti’s work *De Pictura* (1435) brought forward the idea that painting is an ideal form to imitate the natural world, which gives rise to the ‘*paragone*’, a term that refers to the comparison between the verbal art and the visual art.<sup>8</sup> In the fight between the two arts, Leonardo da Vinci valued

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<sup>7</sup> Calligraphy was able to be a connection between word and image in East Asia because both China and Japan use ideographic writing systems, which use pictorial symbols to convey ideas. We shall come back to discuss this assumption in Chapter Three.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Paragone’ also refers to the rivalry of the painting and sculpture. See Clair Farago’s explanation to ‘Paragone’ in the *Grove Dictionary of Art*.

painting over poetry because 'it serves the nobler sense' (qtd. Bull n.p.) In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, French painter and writer Charles-Alphonse du Fresnoy (1611 – 1668) brought the term 'sister arts' to the aesthetic discussion to refer to the kinship between painting and poetry with his Latin poem *De Arte Graphica*: 'Painting and Poesy [sic] are two Sisters, which / are so like in all things' (3). Despite the fact that critics have pointed out the similarities between the two arts, they were always conscious that painting, related to the eyes, and poetry, related to the ears, are collateral yet different, in contradiction of the Eastern idea that poetry and painting have the same 'core' (Qi Gong n.p.). The debate on the relationship between painting and poetry reached a peak at Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766), which controversially argues that poetry 'articulate[s] sounds in time', presenting progressive actions which happened one after another in time, whereas painting presents objects coexisting side by side in space, 'using forms and colors in space' (91). Lessing considered the transgression between time and space to be dangerous, therefore painting and poetry should be 'as two equitable and friendly neighbours' instead of close sisters (91). Lessing's attack on the 'ut pictura poesis' tradition profoundly shaped later perception of word-image relationship in the West.

In East Asia, although the theoretical discussion of the word-image relationship is scarce before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of integrating poetry and painting is plentiful. It is interesting that the opposite happens in the West, where the debate on the poetry-painting relationship happens regularly in history while works that integrate both visual and verbal presentation are rare. The English poet, painter, and printmaker William Blake (1757 – 1827) was the closest figure to the East Asian idea of poet-painter, who combines verbal and pictorial elements in a single work (Bull). Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 1882) was another extraordinary figure who integrated literature with graphical art, producing both poetic and visual versions of his works as well as paintings with literary references. Despite the few cases in which verbal text and visual image coexist, in the West there is a special literary genre of writing that is related to painting: ekphrasis, 'a literary device in which a work of visual art is described' according to the Oxford Dictionary. According to Murray Krieger's critical works in the area in 1967 and 1992, ekphrasis, is 'the imitation in literature of a work of plastic art', in which '[t]he object of imitation, as spatial work, becomes the metaphor for the temporal work which seeks to capture it in that temporality (n.p.). The spatial work freezes the temporal work even as the latter seeks to free it from space.' (107) The 'still moment' that ekphrasis created in the literary text breaks the theory that verbal language is incapable and unsuitable for presenting spatial work, a common perception set up by Lessing (107). Due to its connection

to both word and image, ekphrasis is a crucial topic in contemporary intermedial studies, which we shall discuss in detail in the following parts.

Tablada wrote some impressive verbal representations of visual presentation, such as 'Soneto de Watteau' and 'Okusai'. Is it possible that Tablada's early poetry related to paintings is a continuity of the European ekphrasis tradition? Tablada's later painting-poetry combination experiments in *Un día* and *Li-Po* are no longer merely verbal representations of the visual presentations, but the reverse –they also involve visual display of verbal text. Is his visual representation of words possibly an imitation of the East Asian literati-painting or calligraphy? Did East Asian influence trigger him to change his word-image mindset? Is Tablada's visual poetry a spatial art or a temporal art? How should we understand Tablada's idea of 'simultáneamente lírica y gráfica'?

### Research Theories and Methods in the Text-Image Relationship

In the previous parts of the introduction, we have seen that Tablada's poetry related to visual art can be roughly divided into two categories: poems that use verbal language to represent the content in a piece of visual art, and poems that use techniques of visual art to reinforce the verbal expression.

In the investigation of the former category, we are going to apply the framework of 'pictoriality' and 'transpictoriality' introduced in Liliane Louvel's book *Poetics of the Iconotext* (2011). This thesis will keep to Louvel's definition of the word 'text' as a synonym for literature, and the word 'image' as 'two-dimensional works of art: painting, photography, miniature, engravings... or vision related artefacts: mirrors, optical devices, all kinds of reflection' (15). Using the word 'pictoriality' to indicate 'the presence of the pictorial image in the text', Louvel gives a comprehensive categorisation of each rank of 'pictoriality' in literary texts according to the increase of degrees of pictorial saturation: the painting-effect, the picturesque view, the hypotyposis, the *tableau vivant*, the aesthetic arrangement, the pictorial description, and above all, ekphrasis. (56). Inspired by her terminology of 'pictoriality', we shall call Tablada's verbal presentation of visual presentation, that is to say, a poem or an essay that describes, critiques, or is inspired by a work of visual art, as 'pictorial writing'. The typology of degrees of pictoriality helps to disentangle the various levels and forms of pictoriality that appear in Tablada's travel journals, art critical essays and poems.

Louvel bases the model of *transpictoriality* on Gérard Genette's theory of *transtextuality*, which is set up in *Palimpsests* (1982), and develops *transpictoriality* 'to discuss the insertion of pictorial images in literary texts (55).

We thus propose to use the term *transpictoriality* for the interaction between the two semiotic systems, 'all the general categories and their transcendence,' as well as the types of interferences, modes, and genres; *interpictoriality* when the pictorial image is present in the text as an explicit quotation, a form of plagiarism, an allusion, or even in its iconic form, thus representing a sort of punctual or optional *hypopictoriality* (see below); *parapictoriality* when the pictorial image is to be found in the vicinity of the text, called the paratext (consisting of the title, the preface, the chapter headings, the dust cover, i.e. all the elements of the same volume), and functions in a parapictorial relationship with the text; and *metapictoriality* when one system comments upon the other system, the image (I) commenting on the (T) text or vice versa (I1/T1, T1/I1). Finally, we propose to add to the notion of 'hypertextuality' –when a text A transforms or imitates a text B –the specific notion of *hypopictoriality* since in a iconotext, there is always a text A (the hypertext) originating in an image A (the hypo-icon), which is evoked explicitly or implicitly, and which is part of the very substance of the text without being in a relationship of commentary with the text. (56)

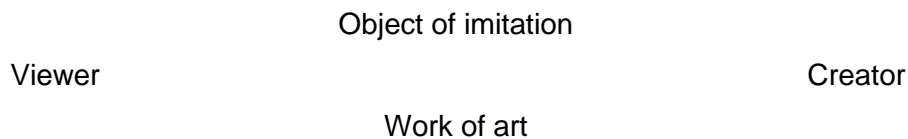
Tablada's poems are good examples of this critical model. In the original version of 'Abraxa' published in *Revista Moderna*, its illustration is a typical case of paratext in Tablada's early poetic career. 'Soneto Watteau' and 'Okusai' explicitly cited the hypo-icons by French and Japanese artists, which were the core inspiration for the poems. And we should not forget to mention *Un día*, where Tablada's illustrations add interpictorial effects to each of their corresponding haiku. The system of paratextuality-parapictoriality outlines a method to deal with the interwoven layers of text-image transformation, which explicitly or implicitly appear in Tablada's poetry. Louvel's theoretical tools make it feasible to distinguish and understand the author's experience of viewing visual art, writing about the picture, and creating a pictorial effect in the text. They also provide the possibility to explore the process of translating a visual image into verbal language.

As Louvel's typography of pictoriality implies, not all verbal presentations of visual presentations are ekphrasis. Ekphrasis is 'the representation of a representation' – if we see plastic art as a representation of nature – and the 'non-natural sign of the natural sign' (Louvel 45). Despite that ekphrasis' high pictoriality differentiates it from other pictorial writing, W.J.T. Mitchell mentions its special position between 'the speaker and the audience or addressee of the ekphrasis':

Ekphrasis is stationed between two "othernesses," and two forms of (apparently) impossible translation and exchange: (1) the conversion of the visual representation into a verbal representation, either by description or ventriloquism; (2) the reconversion

of the verbal representation back into the visual object in the reception of the reader.  
(164)

Ekphrasis is a text that translates an image into words. It provides an opportunity and a perspective for its readers to re-contemplate the referential plastic art. Referring to Murray Kreiger's theories on ekphrasis, Liliane Louvel considers that ekphrasis focuses on the 'description of an image from the viewer's perspective' rather than the creator's perspective (45). Louvel provides a simplified scheme to explain the polarities involved in ekphrasis (46):



Insights of Kreiger, Mitchell, and Louvel reveal that ekphrasis is not simply a faithful verbal duplicate through which the reader can see the referential visual art. Instead, it projects the impression and opinion from the writer of the ekphrasis. Theories of ekphrasis offer us methodological instruments to evaluate Tablada's perception of East Asian culture via his pictorial texts. In Chapter Two, we are going to apply Louvel's scheme to the case study of Tablada's ekphrastic poem 'Okusai' and we will modify the scheme to explain the transmedial exchange that happened in the poem.

For the sake of convenience, we shall call Tablada's other writings that use visual methods to assist verbal presentation 'visual writing'. Visual writing will include all ranges of 'mixed arts' in Mitchell's words, such as illustrated books, and shaped poetry, which is also known as 'ideographic poetry' ('poesía ideográfica' according to Tablada's own words) or 'calligraphic writing', derived from Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*, or concrete poetry. In studying the influence of multiculturalism on the expressiveness of visual poetry, we are going to need the assistance of theories and investigations into the reader's perception of both image and text. Due to the limitation of technological support, literary criticism before the 21<sup>st</sup> century either makes arguments and hypotheses or carries out its study case by case when it comes to the reader's perception of certain texts. By means of interdisciplinary collaboration with neuroscientists, recent research as regards reader perception has made noteworthy progress in discovering patterns of reader's attention distribution to the graphical and verbal features of the work respectively.

Katherine Shingler's article 'Perceiving Text and Image in Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*' (2011) records the reader's eye-movement when perceiving a visual poem and analyses the reader's

cognition using Apollinaire's visual poems as a test example. The article starts with challenging Michel Foucault's theories about visual poetry, which claims that reading and viewing are mutually exclusive. According to Shingler, Foucault proposes that, first, 'viewing the calligramme as a picture involves attention to global features of the poems, whereas reading involves attention to a local level of detail', and second, 'attention to global features of the calligramme involves somehow avoiding any perception of local detail' (71, 80). With the empirical evidence from psychological experiments, Shingler comes to the conclusion that subjects may adopt a variety of different interpretative strategies in relation to the *calligrammes*, which supports her assumption that a single perceptual model will be impossible (73-5). Her research demonstrates that reader's attention on either the pictorial aspect or the lyrical aspect of a visual poem is selective but not exclusive (76-8). This conclusion is a rebuttal of Foucault's second claim that 'as soon as one starts reading, the shape dissolves' (qtd. Shingler 71). Shingler further quotes other experiment results, which indicate that it would be impossible to direct one's attention exclusively to local word forms and be completely unaware of the visual poem's global shape, whereas it is possible for readers to attend to global information without interference from the local level (79).

Shingler's findings are going to be the basis for our discussion of the reader's perception of Tablada's visual poems. Now that we have confirmed that the two actions 'reading the words' and 'seeing the image' do not necessarily take place simultaneously, but it is rather up to the readers' free will to take the order they prefer, we are able to discuss the different expressive effect by taking different reading strategies in perceiving the visual poetry. The reading strategy is especially important in some of Tablada's visual poems such as 'Día nublado' and 'Madrigales Ideográficos', which we shall see in the detailed discussion in Chapter Three. In addition, Shingler's research confirms that the global image can be perceived without awareness of the textual content at the local level but not vice versa, which gives us a clue to the interpretation of certain stanzas in *Li-Po*, such as stanza 9 written in the printed Chinese character. Moreover, Shingler's article gives rise to the approach of applying interdisciplinary technology in literary criticism. In the discussion of the imagist language of Tablada's haiku in Chapter Four, we are going to refer to the results of a research into readers' perception of haiku which also cooperated with neuro-cognitive scientists.

Previous scholarships on Tablada's pictorial writings are few and limited to the transcultural perspective. Taking the intermedial angle, we would like to see how the Western 'ut pictura poesis' tradition is presented in Tablada's early pictorial poetry. With an eye on East Asian influence, we are going to pay extra attention to ekphrastic poems. The modified scheme of

polarities will hopefully reveal how the East Asian calligraphy and prints are converted into verbal language and help us understand how Tablada's poetry evolved from pictorial writing to visual writing. Although Tablada's visual poetry has been well-studied by scholars specialising visual poetry in European languages such as Willard Bohn, who puts Tablada in the context of international Avant-Garde poetry, we are going to analyse the poetic texts with the reader's perception taken into account in line with their studies. With the supporting eye-movement data of haiku perception, the discussion of Tablada's illustrated haiku collections is going to examine how Tablada's concise visual writing learns the techniques of Chinese landscape painting and overcomes Lessing's view that poetry is unable to present objects that coexist side by side in space.

## 1. THE TWO 'FLORILEGIOS': BEGINNING OF TABLADA'S POETRY OF EAST ASIAN THEMES

In December 1888, José Juan Tablada published his first poem 'A...' in the journal *La patria ilustrada*. His first full poetry collection did not come to the public until eleven years later, when the first edition of *El florilegio* was published by Imprenta de Ignacio Escalante in Mexico in 1899. Divided into three parts, *Gotas de Sangre*, *Poemas Exóticos* and *Hostias Negras*, the booklet contains 33 poems in its 96 pages.<sup>9</sup>

In 1904, the second edition of *El florilegio* was published by la Viuda de Charles Bouret in Mexico and in Paris. José María González de Mendoza's article 'Los dos "florilegios"' (1961) considers the second edition a new book, not only because it is different to the previous edition in the method of presentation, but also because it expands greatly in its content. Compared to the first edition, the 1904 version changes the font size from number 12 to number 8 and removes the small sketch portrait by Julio Ruelas on the front page. Variation in content is even more impressive than typographical changes. In addition to the original poems, the later edition consists of 73 compositions in 204 pages,<sup>10</sup> with five more sections: *Sonetos de la Hiedra*, *Poemas*, *Platerescas*, *Dedicatorias* and *Musa Japónica*. Although this version keeps the titles of sections in the 1899 edition, it disrupts the original order of the poems and readjusts some of them. *Hostias Negras*, the section with the obvious *modernista* characteristics, remains almost the same except for adding one poem, 'Plenilunio Erótico'. With the addition

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<sup>9</sup> The normal convention of Spanish title is only to capitalise the first word and proper nouns. However, in *El florilegio*, the titles appear according to the English style of capitalisation. We shall follow the capitalisation in *El florilegio* in this thesis.

<sup>10</sup> José María González de Mendoza claims that the total number is 87, which is not correct.

of five fresh compositions, *Gotas de Sangre* no longer includes 'Augurios', 'Hectombeón', 'Talismán' and 'En Otoño'. The latter two are grouped respectively in *Sonetos de la Hiedra* and *Poémas Exóticos*. *Poémas Exóticos* undergoes a massive change between the editions. In the 1904 version, seven other poems are added. 'Canto de las Gemas' and 'Fuegos Artificiales' are grouped into *Platerescas*, while 'Japón', 'Crisantema' and 'Noche de opio' are transposed to the new selection *Musa Japónica*.

The later edition involves more poems on cosmopolitan themes, especially those new compositions regarding East Asian culture. After the reorganisation in 1904, *Poémas Exóticos* has almost become an exclusive presentation of exoticism from Europe, no longer being a mixture of a series of poems referring to both European topics such as Greek mythological figures and creatures, the mysterious Atlantis and French king Louis XV, and Oriental themes. The 1904 edition of *El florilegio* for the first time explores an independent section for Sino-Japanese themes, which is *Musa Japónica*. The section adds more poems written during the author's stay in Japan in 1900 and even some 'translations' of Japanese folk poetry such as 'Cantos de Amor y de Otoño' and "'Utas" Japonesas', as we have previously mentioned in the introduction.

Except for the East Asian related poems, poems of intermedial themes in the two 'florilegios' are also worth our attention. Among the 'exotic poems' that write about other art forms such as opera, theatre, music and painting, 'Soneto Watteau', which existed in both editions, is an exemplary case of transpictoriality. 'Abraxa' is another interesting case of text-image integration, because it was presented with an impressive illustration when it was first published with the name 'Sonetos de la hiedra' in *Revista Moderna* in 1900, although in the 1904 edition of *El florilegio*, it is printed only with the verbal text. Both cases suggest that Tablada's trajectory of intermediality and interculturality started at the beginning of his poetic career.

In this chapter, we are going to discuss the following questions regarding the initial stage of Tablada's poetry: How did the Latin American *Modernismo* movement influence Tablada's interest in East Asia? How did earlier French transpictorial practices inspire Tablada's understanding of intermediality? What are the differences between the two 'florilegios' in terms of Tablada's reflections on East Asia, especially when we take the 1900 trip to Japan into account?

## 1.1 Tablada and *Modernismo*: Heritage from Latin American Literature

### 1.1.1 Collaboration with *Revista Moderna*

There have been disputes about whether Tablada should be counted as a member of *Modernismo* or any other literary movements. Most studies consider him to be one of the key figures who led the *Modernismo* movement in Mexico. Some proclaim that ***Decadentismo*** should be considered as a separate movement from *Modernismo* and that Tablada was the leading *decadentista* writer.<sup>11</sup> Some other books on the history of Latin American modern literature put him into the category of Avant-Garde or *Vanguardismo*.<sup>12</sup> Despite all the arguments, it is commonly agreed that Tablada's poetic style evolved 'from "ismo" to "ismo', and that the multicultural influences should count for the development of his poetry (Holdsworth 142).<sup>13</sup> In *El signo y el garabato*, Octavio Paz summarises the sources of influence on Tablada's poetry and concludes that there was an evolution from *Modernismo* to Avant-Garde:

Una maestría poco original: primero, las recetas modernistas, en sus dos vertientes, la parnasiana y la simbolista; después, la receta postmodernista de Lugones. Hasta 1918, Tablada fue un adaptador inteligente de las modas y modos de su época. En 1919 publica *Un día* y en 1920 *Li-Po y otros poemas*; en esos libros recoge ciertas tendencias francesas y norte-americanas entonces en boga –poesía japonesa, "imagism", ideogramas de Apollinaire– pero las hace realmente suyas y crea con ellas una obra intensamente personal. Así se adelanta su tiempo: Tablada es uno de los iniciadores de la vanguardia en nuestra lengua. (186-7)

Paz's recognition of the influence of Japanese poetry, Imagist language style and Guillaume Apollinaire's visual poetry is particularly insightful, to which we shall come back in 3.1 and 4.1 when we discuss *Li-Po* and *Un día* in detail. Whilst we agree with Paz that Tablada's use of visual elements and East Asian culture reaches a peak between 1919 to 1920, we are curious about the initiation of Tablada's interest in the text-image integration and East Asian culture in the earlier stage of his poetic career, when the *modernista* style still predominated. Where did Tablada learn about East Asia, except for through reading books? As Max Henríquez Ureña notes, 'José Juan Tablada fue *modernista* desde sus comienzos. Sus primeros poemas,

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<sup>11</sup> Decadentism is an artistic and literary movement in the late 19th century. According to Clark and Defossé, at the end of 19th century in the Hispanic context, the term *Modernismo* and *Decadentismo* were almost synonyms (16). However, Tablada along with some other Spanish writers insisted on calling their literary movement *decadentismo* in their own words, although it is more widely accepted as part of *Modernismo* (Feria 481).

<sup>12</sup> Expert in visual poetry, Willard Bohn, considers Tablada's visual writing as part of the international Avant-Garde movement (*Modern Visual Poetry, Apollinaire and the International Avant-Garde*).

<sup>13</sup> Alfredo Roggiano's article 'José Juan Tablada: Espacialismo y vanguardia' (1980) and Rodrigo Figueroa Obregón's article 'Fuentes y mecanismos de la transición ideo-estética del Modernismo a la poesía sintética de José Juan Tablada' (2015) also discuss the stylistic transition in Tablada's poetry.

recogidos en su libro *El florilegio*, provocaron entusiasmo, sobre todo en el cenáculo de la *Revista Moderna*.' (480) The literary journal *Revista Moderna* is a crucial foundation that cultivated Tablada's enthusiasm for intermedial creation and transcultural writing.

The establishment of *Revista Moderna* in 1893 was a realisation of Tablada's idea.<sup>14</sup> Dominated by the poetry section, the list of authors who worked for *Revista Moderna* includes almost all the important figures in *Modernismo* within and beyond Mexico.<sup>15</sup> In its first year of biweekly publication, *Revista Moderna* bore the subtitle of *Literaria y Artística* and came in 16 pages. Presented in two columns, all the textual pages are printed on matte paper, except for the pictorial page created by Julio Ruelas, which is printed on shiny coated paper. Ruelas illustrated for Tablada's poem 'Musa Japónica' when it was initially published in *Revista Moderna* in 1900 (Figure 1-1). Ruelas was the main illustrator before the journal extended to 32 pages and collaborated with the painter Leandro Izaguirre and Germán Gedovius, who worked for the illustration in the second year of publication (Martínez n.p.). To Tablada, Ruelas was not merely his illustrator, but also a contributor to the composition of poetry: 'Ruelas, en muchos censos, no sólo hacía ilustraciones para los poemas, sino que al lado de una poesía nuestra colocaba una expresión gráfica suya que valía tanto o más que la literaria...' (Tablada *Las sombras largas* 26). Tablada considers the graphical design to be equivalent, if not more than, to the significance of verbal poetry.

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<sup>14</sup> Please see *El modernismo en México a través de cinco revistas* for more discussion of Tablada's contribution in the establishment of *Revista Moderna*.

<sup>15</sup> Mexican writer Efrén Rebolledo (1877-1929) also collaborated with *Revista Moderna*. He travelled to Tokyo, Japan in 1907 and stayed there for six years as secretary of the Mexican delegation representing the government. With his poetry collections of *Rimas japonesas* (1907), *Nikko* (1910), and the novel *Hojas de bambú* (1910), he was considered the next Mexican 'japonista' after Tablada. His poem 'Danza de geishas' in *Rimas japonesas* was dedicated to Tablada. Please see Odile Cisneros' article 'El Oriente de dos mexicanos: Japón en la obra de Tablada y Rebolledo' for more information about Rebolledo's poetry about Japan.

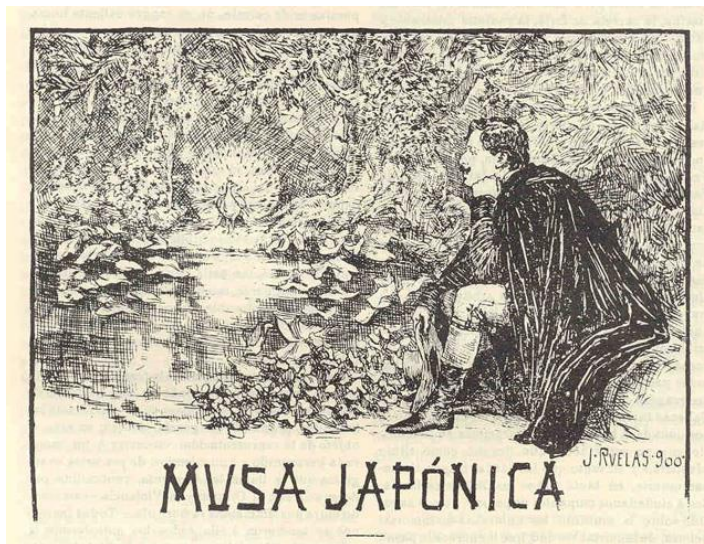


Figure 1-1 Julio Ruelas. Illustration of Tablada's poem 'Musa Japónica'. Place and date as 'Jardines del Bluff. Yokohama, Otoño de 1900'. Published in *Revista Moderna*, III (18) second issue in September 1900, pp. 276-278.

Besides, *Revista Moderna* published photos of Mexican public figures and reproduced famous works of Western art, including Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci to attract readers. *Revista Moderna* was not only a publisher; it also was an important centre of Mexican art. With the critical articles published, it became a platform to introduce arts, including plastic arts, music, theatre, and opera. The office of the journal was always crowded with people from different professions, such as sculptors, singers, musicians, and painters (Martínez n.p.). In such circumstances, Tablada accessed not only the Mexican art circle but also a platform for publishing his art criticism, the majority of which at that period was about Japanese art.

*Revista Moderna* at that time was also a central platform for introducing foreign literature into Spanish-speaking America. Many of the translations were completed as collective work with the mark of 'Trad. de 'Revista Moderna' (Holdsworth 58). Along with José Juan Tablada, Balbino Dávalos and Bernardo Couto were also core translators for the journal. Most of their works were translated from French, presenting prominent writers —especially poets— of the time like Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, Edmond and Jules Goncourt, Théophile Gautier, and Paul Verlaine. In *Japan, France, and East-West Aesthetics*, Hokenson remarks that 'Charles Baudelaire, Paul Verlaine, Emile Zola, the Goncourt brothers, Stéphane Mallarmé, Joris-Karl Huysmans all wrote about this new Japanese art [Japanese prints].' (13) The mentioned names almost completely coincide with the list of French writers that *Revista Moderna* translated. The *chinoserie* and *japonisme* tendency in the works of these French writers was a crucial stimulus for Tablada's interest in East Asian culture.

During his collaboration with *Revista Moderna*, Tablada published 94 original compositions according to Holdsworth: six short stories, eleven proses and chronicles, ten pieces of art criticism including several articles about Japanese art, fifteen literary critical articles, and forty-six poems. He also published eleven translations, including two plays, nine French poems, and several other poems by Japanese writers (Holdsworth 144). Some of the poetry translations are later collected in the 1904 edition of *El florilegio*, which will be discussed in the later section of this chapter. Tablada also published six articles about Japanese prints.<sup>16</sup> The portion of writings involving Japanese culture is already considerable even when poems in *El florilegio* are not counted. In addition to that, Tablada himself had worked as the correspondent of the journal from Japan in his six-month visit in 1900, during which period his articles about Japanese culture and society were published in *Revista Moderna* with vivid illustrations corresponding to the content or photos of local scenes. For example, the article 'Un entierro en el Japón' included a photo of a Japanese funeral in a temple in the November issue (Tablada and Ruedas 103, 109).<sup>17</sup>

This intimate participation in the *Modernismo* movement and the founding of *Revista Moderna* had a substantial influence on the early writing of José Juan Tablada. Thanks to the financial support of the billionaire friend of the 'grupo de la *Revista Moderna*', Jesús Luján, who provided Tablada with both economic assistance, academic resources, Tablada had a chance to travel to Japan, to explore the exotic continent, and to fulfil a long-held dream (Holdsworth 141). The translation and introductory work of world literature published in *Revista Moderna* provided Tablada with first-hand information about the latest literary trends in Spanish and other languages, which opened his mind to techniques in poetic writings in foreign languages. Through the connections of the journal, Tablada became acquainted with Mexican artists such as Palomar. His associations with artists became a crucial inspiration for the later creation of 'ideograms' in *Li-Po y otros poemas*. Moreover, *Revista Moderna* often printed both the illustration and the poetic text on one page, which gave Tablada the platform to exercise text and image integration at the beginning of his visual career.

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<sup>16</sup> Please see Pascucci's thesis *Entre México y Asia* for the list of Tablada's journal articles related to Japanese art (289-91). In fact, *Revista Moderna* could have affected Tablada's investigation of Japanese art and encouraged his orientalist way of seeing and presenting East Asia in the *modernista* stage. Both Torres-Rodríguez and Pineda Franco point out that *Revista Moderna* regards Japanese art as the 'non-occidental' reference of Mexican art ('Japan in the Mind's Eye of Two Mexican Travelers' 167). Tablada's orientalist writing, which we shall discuss in later sections of this chapter, is possibly influenced by the position of this journal.

<sup>17</sup> 'En el país del sol. Un entierro en el Japón' was entitled as 'Los funerals de un noble' when it was collected and published in *En el país del sol* in 1919.

### 1.1.2 Illustrations in *Revista Moderna*: Early Cases of Text-Image Integration

Tablada occasionally worked as an illustrator during his collaboration with *Revista Moderna*, published eight pictorial works. *Archivo Gráfico José Juan Tablada*, part of Rodolfo Mata's project *Letra e imagen*, contains digitalised copies of these illustrations in *Revista Moderna* as well as Tablada's pencil sketches for the journal, including an illustration for the first article of his chronicles in Japan (Figure 1-2).

Tablada set off to Japan in May 1900. He first arrived in San Francisco, where he sent *Revista Moderna* the first article of the series 'Hacia el país del sol', published in the journal's July issue. On 15 June, Tablada boarded the cruise ship *Empress of Japan* towards Yokohama. On the first issue of September 1900 of *Revista Moderna*, Tablada's first article of the series 'En el país del sol' was published on the front page with the title 'Sitios, episodios, impresiones', along with the author's illustration consisting of a rising sun, bamboo leaves as well as two large herons. According to the note of Hernández Valencia for *Archivo Gráfico*, Tablada has deliberately chosen to capture and present the symbols of Japan (36). However, what attracts our attention is the integration of text into the graphical design. In the illustration, the title of the series is presented in handwritten capital letters under the graphical image of the horizontal bamboo stalk and the smaller heron, as if it was part of the illustration. The title of the article, in contrast, is presented in printed letters on top of the rest of the article. The division between the illustration and the article is reinforced by the shaded background of the illustration part, which also suggests that the phrase 'En el país del sol' belongs to the picture rather than the words. Tablada's pencil draft for the illustration (Figure 1-3) again proves that the phrase was created as part of the graphical design.





Figure 1-4 'Los templos de la Shiba.'. *Revista Moderna*, II (20), the second issue in October 1910.



Figure 1-5 Tablada's pencil sketch with scripts saying 'Los templos de la Shiba. Un entierro en el Japón. Cha-no-yu'.

Likewise, the series title is inscribed on the image of hanging lanterns as part of the picture (Figure 1-4, Figure 1-5) in the illustration for another article 'Los templos de la Shiba.' in the same series in the October issue. The title phrase, once again, is presented as part of the

sketch. Both the illustrations for 'Sitios. Episodios. Impresiones' and 'Los templos de la Shiba.' contain a hand-drawn small circular image in the corner containing the writer's initial letter 'JJT'. A more refined version of this image (Figure 1-6) is printed on Tablada's many later works, such as on the top corners of *Hiroshigué* and *Un día*, in an analogous way to the East Asian signature seals.



Figure 1-6 Tablada's seal containing his initials.

The seal-like image of Tablada's initials on the illustrations for *Revista Moderna* reminds us of *kalograma*, a design of initials created by Tablada's friend José de Torres Palomar, who shared a flat with Tablada in New York in 1916. Despite that Tablada attributes the *kalograma*'s birth mainly to the European tradition of 'los *scriptoria*, miniaturistas góticos y ornamentalistas medievales', he also mentions that Palomar has consulted the Japanese seals, 'los tratados sigilares de los maestros japoneses' ('Crónica semanal' n.p.). We shall come back to discuss the *kalograma* in Tablada's poetry collections in the next chapter. In the case of the illustration for *Revista Moderna*, however, should we see Tablada's hand-drawn circular image as a primitive form of *kalograma*? What inspired Tablada to create the circular design of his initials?

Since we do not have any textual record of Tablada's creation of the circular image of JJT, we can only make a hypothesis according to the illustration. Below the circle indicating Tablada's initials, there is a square containing the Japanese *hiragana* 'はふらば' in the illustration for 'Los templos de la Shiba.'. The Japanese script seems to make no sense at all at first sight. However, since Tablada's name could be translated as タブラタ in Japanese *katakana* or たぶらた in Japanese *hiragana*, it is possible that the illustrator-writer intended to present his name in Japanese writing with these *kanas*. Considering Tablada only had a very basic level of Japanese,<sup>18</sup> it was likely that he asked someone with knowledge of Japanese to write down the *kanas* but mistook the character た for は and misplaced the *dakuten* diacritic sign when he transcribed the *kana* onto the illustration. According to Hernández Valencia, the illustration for 'Los templos de la Shiba.' functions as a 'Torri' and a door that opens the way to the exotic

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<sup>18</sup> Please see 3.2 of Pascucci's thesis for further discussion of Tablada's knowledge about Japanese and Chinese.

Oriental world for the readers (35). Therefore, the only possible explanation for the appearance of inscriptions in Japanese in Figure 1-4 is that the illustrator-writer was attempting to imitate the form of Japanese painting, which usually contains an inscription to indicate the content of the picture, as well as a seal to designate the artist's name and to recreate the Japanese art as faithfully as possible in front of the readers in the Hispanic world.

Both the seal-like circles indicating JJT and the frame containing *hiragana* are characteristic components of a Japanese painting, which are not valued for their meaning but for their shape. The use of foreign script as a symbol of foreignness and a decorative quality is also seen in Tablada's visual poem 'Li-Po', which adopted a sizeable Chinese character as the frame for the Spanish poetic text.

Both the words in a Western language, such as the title 'En el país del sol', as well as the words in an Eastern writing system, such as the *hiragana* 'はふらば', coexist in Tablada's illustration as part of the picture. Neither the verbal content nor the visual content of the picture has a significant relation with the meaning and expressiveness of the articles' body text. The sun, bamboo, and herons drawn in the illustration for 'Sitios. Episodios. Impresiones' are hardly relevant to the content of the essay. The Japanese girls in traditional dresses in front of verandas shown in the illustration for 'Los templos de Shiba' are indeed mentioned in the verbal text ('verandah', 'musmés'). However, in both cases, the illustrator put his priority on achieving the ornamental function of the image, and far less attention to the image-text cohesion. Compared to Tablada's illustrated poetry in later collections such as *Un día*, the connection between image and text in the above-illustrated articles in *Revista Moderna* is less close and interactive.

However, in the early stage of Tablada's poetic creation, there is a unique case where the illustration prevails over the poem and intensifies the emotion of the text. In an earlier issue of *Revista Moderna* in 1900, Tablada's poem was published accompanied by Germán Gedovius' illustration under the title of 'Sonetos de la hiedra.' (Figure 1-7). Whilst the text indicating the title is presented in fading shade as a part of the illustration, the entire up-side-down L-shaped illustration in darker shade occupies the major space of the front page and takes precedence over the poetic text. The reader is likely to perceive the picture before entering the verbal text, following the order of looking from left to right, up to down, which means graphical content and style of the picture are likely to affect the reader's impression of the poem. The illustration not only depicts an elegant female character with delicate clothing surrounded by floral decorations

on the right part, on the top of the title and the body text, but it also shows a bat, which is often considered as a symbol of decadence and mystery in the Western context. The hybrid of beauty, delicacy and obscurity reflected in the illustration echoes with the poetic text of *decadentista* style, which expresses the fusion of love and death. This edition of 'Abraxa' could be Tablada's first experiment of using the graphical feature to modify the poetic expression.



Figure 1-7 Tablada's poem with an illustration by Germán Gedovius. Initially published in *Revista Moderna* III (3), the first issue in February 1900, p.33. The poem was titled 'Abraxa' in the series *Sonetos de la hiedra* in *El florilegio* (1904).

Most existing investigations into Tablada's visual writing have not put attention to the text-image integration in Tablada's early writings. The cases of illustrated 'Sonetos de la hiedra.', 'Sitios. Episodios. Impresiones' and 'Los templos de la Shiba' on *Revista Moderna* reveal that the hybrid form of graphical picture and verbal text was not a rare practice for the journal which Tablada worked for. Although in all three illustrations words appear as part of the image, at

this stage text-image integration is still preliminary, and there is a lack of interaction compared to the later visual compositions. Nonetheless, these materials prove that Tablada has learned the method of applying the visual techniques in presenting textual inscriptions from both Western and Japanese cultures.

### 1.1.3 The Orient in Other Hispanic Writers' Works: Rubén Darío and Julián de Casal

In the essay 'José Juan Tablada: espacialismo y vanguardia', Alfredo A. Roggiano makes the following comment on interculturality in Tablada's early poetry: 'Pero ya en "Musa japónica," de *El florilegio*, se insinúan dos notas que serán constantes de su poética: la arquitectura visible, como pintada o dibujada del poema, y la tendencia a desarrollar la imagen sobre una idea unitaria y sintética, de *wit* y de gracia, que son atributos de la poesía japonesa.' (51) He argues that Tablada encountered the 'japonesismo [*sic*] por la vía romántico-modernista', attributing Tablada's *japonisme* to Leopoldo Lugones (1874 – 1938), *Prosas profanas* of Rubén Darío (1867 – 1916) and the exoticism in Julián del Casal's (1863 – 1893) poetry (51). Lugones has a considerable influence on Tablada's use of the imagery 'luna'. Since Hugo Mendez-Ramírez's article 'La afinidad poética de Lugones y Tablada' summarises the correlation between the two writer's poetry, we shall not put too much attention to the influence of Lugones on Tablada. In this section, we are going to explore which aspects in the poetry of Rubén Darío and Julián del Casal inspired Tablada's enthusiasm of writing about oriental themes.

Much admired by Tablada, Rubén Darío, the initiator of *Modernismo*, influenced the Mexican poet's writings in many ways. One of the most important aspects is his orientalist view. Many of Darío's most influential works are about oriental themes, such as 'La muerte de la emperatriz de China' (1890). 'La muerte de la emperatriz de China' was a real innovation because it considers Oriental art to be the original inspiration for an artist for the first time, even it is only a fictional artist (Tinajero 138). Breaking the convention of the Orient's connection to 'lamentable alien' in Western society, the story puts Oriental art on the status of 'muse', making it a symbol of artistic perfection (Said 206). Among other imageries of *chinerías* and *japonerías* that Darío has used, the fine porcelain bust from China in Darío's 'La muerte de la emperatriz de China' repeatedly appears in later verses, including in Tablada's sonnet 'La Venus China': 'Es su rostro ovalado palidece el marfil' (136). Tablada has not only adopted Darío's view of putting the Orient as the muse for artistic creation, as the title of 'Musa Japónica' and 'La Venus China' suggests, he also followed Darío's preference of the word 'princesa' as a personification of Japan in the poem 'Divagación' (1894): seen as 'la princesa Satsuna' in Tablada's 'Noche

de opio, which we shall discuss later in this chapter. Darío's celebrated poem 'Divagación' involves plentiful exoticism and references to art, among which the following stanzas on Sino-Japanese culture draw our attention.

¿Los amares exóticos acaso...?  
Como rosa de Oriente me fascinas:  
me deleitan la seda, el oro, el raso.  
Gautier adoraba a las princesas chinas.  
¡Oh bello amor de mil genuflexiones:  
torres de kaolín, pies imposibles,  
tazas de té, tortugas y dragones,  
y verdes arrozales apacibles!

Ámame en chino, en el sonoro chino  
de Li-Tai-Pe. Yo igualaré a los sabios  
poetas que interpretan el destino;  
madrigalizaré junto a tus labios. (89-104)

.....  
Ámame, japonesa, japonesa  
antigua, que no sepa de naciones  
occidentales: tal una princesa  
con las pupilas llenas de visiones,

que aún ignorase en la sagrada Kioto,  
en su labrado camarín de plata  
ornado al par de crisantemo y loto,  
la civilización de Yamagata. (105-112)

More than two decades before Tablada's poem 'Li-Po' (1920), Darío has already fused the name of the great Chinese poet Li Bai into his verses. The admiring tone in the opening line of Tablada's poem 'Li-Po', 'Lí-Pó [sic], uno de los "Siete Sabios en el vino"', who ended up drowning in the river to chase the reflection of the moon, is such a coincidence with Darío's verse 'Yo igualaré a los sabios / poetas que interpretan el destino' (98-99). Tablada also mentions in this poem the 'torre de kaolín', which is not related to Li Bai except for that the tower also appeared in 'Divagación'. Darío's poem was one of the most important sources of inspiration for Tablada's poetry of Oriental themes.

The Cuban poet Julián del Casal was another main orientalist in Latin America in that period. Casal gained his knowledge of East Asian art directly from foreign paintings and art objects in physical form. He spent a considerable amount of money on Oriental objects such as paintings, photos, pottery, and costumes from shops in Havana, which became an inspiration for his poetry and prose (Tsurumi 36-7). In his diary 'El arte japonés: a vista de pájaro' in *La Discusión* (1890), Casal explains his interest in art as such:

[V]iendo la obra por encima, muchos hombres..., de monstruos terribles que soportan el cuerpo delicado de extrañas mujeres, de casas levantadas a orillas de agua, de tapices de seda, recamados de oro y de mil extravagancias. (qtd. in Chang Shik 51)

These sentences remind us of many well-known *ukiyo-es* by Hokusai, for example, *Kinoe no komatsu* which presents a 'delicate woman's body held by a monster', and *Kanagawa-oki name-ura*, in which the great wave raises small boats. The Cuban poet also composed several works about Japanese visual art, such as 'Kakemono', 'Sourimono' and 'Japonería'.<sup>19</sup> However, Casal's poems about East Asian art are more descriptive than intermedial. Since 'Kakemono' and 'Sourimono' contains more generalised references than specific depictions of the referred paintings' content, readers could hardly infer which exact painting the poet is referring to.

Casal was so fascinated by the *japonaiserie* that he even transformed one of his rooms into Japanese style, decorating it with vermilion cushions and burning sandalwood incense sticks before Buddhist statue (Tinajero, Beebee). The room setting is similar to the description of a 'Japanese home' in Pierre Loti's book *Madame Chrysantheme* (1887):<sup>20</sup>

In our home, all has the appearance of a Japanese picture: we have nothing but little folding-screen, little curiously shaped stools bearing vases full of nosegays, and at the further end of the apartment, in a nook forming an altar, a large gilded Buddha sits enthroned in a lotus. (71)

Like Casal, Tablada also had a room decorated in Japanese style in his home in Coyocan. Moreover, the image of Buddha statue in lotus flower also appears in Tablada's poem 'Japón', written before he visited Japan in 1900: 'Budhas [sic] que duermen en los altares / Entre las áureas flores de loto' (35-6). In the same poem, there are descriptions of interior decorations with typical Oriental style: 'Que hay en tus biombos de seda umbría /Y en el esmalte de tus tibores' (55-6). Casal's enthusiasm for Japanese objects and prints reminds us of Tablada's collection of Japanese prints. Tablada has also written essays about Japanese visual art, paragraphs for *kakemono* in *Hiroshigué* and an essay for *surimono* in English, which we shall discuss in the next chapter. While many previous studies argue that Tablada took over Casal's orientalism, we do not have any correspondence to prove that Tablada was influenced by Casal's *japonaiserie*. (Lozano Herrera 45, Chang Shik n.p.) The coincidence between the two

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<sup>19</sup> Please see more discussion about Orientalism in Casal's poetry and its comparison with Tablada's Orientalism on page 63 to 65 of Schulman's *Painting Modernism*.

<sup>20</sup> Pierre Loti was a French writer who travelled to Japan in 1885 and 1900. Please see 'Pierre Loti y José Juan Tablada en busca del Japón' by Adela Pineda Franco for more discussion about the coincidence of routes in Japan between Tablada and Pierre Loti.

poets' interest in Japanese art and the analogue between Tablada's verses and Casal's room setting maybe because they have referred to the same French book.<sup>21</sup>

Hispanic writers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century gained their knowledge mainly from European literature and exported Oriental objects such as silk, fans, vases, lacquerware, and folding screens. These ornamental objects frequently appear in poems of *modernista* writers, including both Casal, who has dedicated a few poems such as 'Neurosis' of Oriental themes with many lines to describe East Asian treasures, and Darío, whose poem 'Divagación' and 'La muerte de la emperatriz de China' are full of vocabulary about Oriental luxury ornaments. As noted in the verse 'Gautier adoraba a las princesas chinas' (92), Darío credits his knowledge of the Orient to French writers including Théophile Gautier and his daughter Judith Gautier, whose book *Le livre de jade* has also been an important reference for Tablada.

Beebee makes the remark that 'it was not the Orient itself that fascinated Casal, but the 'Orient' from an Occidental eye: as Casal himself puts it, "el Paris que tiene presentado el Oriente en Judith Gautier y en Pierre Loti"' (142). Under the influence of French writers, *japonisme* was wide-spread in Latin America and Oriental themes commonly appeared in *modernista* poetry. The *modernista* poetry of East Asian themes has proven that, except for the French translations, a reason that Hispanic writers learned about East Asian culture mainly from exported ornamental objects and art works is perhaps the lack of direct contact with East Asian people. On the one hand, the *modernistas'* preference for East Asian culture resulted in an abundance of lyrical works about the Orient. On the other hand, due to their lack of first-hand knowledge of the Far East, their works of East Asian themes demonstrate a notable Eurocentric, or more precisely, 'Frenchified' orientalist tendency.

In the first section of this chapter, we have made an additional introduction to Tablada's enthusiasm and knowledge about East Asian culture and visual art at the initial stage of his poetic career. The translations, art criticism articles as well as the illustration tradition of *Revista Moderna* prepared Tablada's knowledge about East Asia and provided him with the opportunity to integrate words with images. The *modernista* precursors' preference of East Asian culture inspired Tablada's poetic creation of the Oriental topic. In the following sections,

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<sup>21</sup> In *Diseños asiáticos*, Torres-Rodríguez argues that another explanation for Latin American *modernista* poets' fascination about Asian objects was probable because the oriental material culture offers an alternative 'other' (52). Please see chapter one of the thesis for more discussion in this regard.

we shall analyse some poems in *El florilegio* and discuss the initiation of intermediality and interculturality in Tablada's poetry.

## 1.2 Tablada and Orientalism: Heritage from French Literature

### 1.2.1 'Soneto Watteau': A Case of Text and Image Conversion

In the previous section, we have discussed Rubén Darío's influence on Tablada's orientalism. Darío's poem 'Marina' in *Prosas profanas* contains the following lines: 'Mi barca era la misma que condujo a Gautier / y que Verlaine un día para Chipre fletó, / y provenía de / el divino astillero del divino Watteau.' (13-16) By mentioning the name of French painter Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684 – 1721), Darío makes an intermedial reference and links the sailing from the mythical birthplace of Aphrodite with Watteau's famous painting, *The Embarkation for Cythera* (1717, Figure 1-8).<sup>22</sup> Tablada also made intermedial references to the same painting in the poem 'Soneto Watteau' in *El florilegio*. In this section, we are going to use Tablada's reference to Watteau as a study case to investigate the Mexican poet's insights into intermediality in the first stage of his pictorial writing.

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<sup>22</sup> 'Watteau y su siglo en Rubén Darío' by Carlos Martínez Rivas considers that Darío uses 'Chipre' to refer to the island of Cythera because they are geographically close, and both are considered to be the possible birthplace of Aphrodite. Martínez Rivas argues that is not Verlaine but Baudelaire who inspired Darío's reference to Watteau, because Baudelaire wrote the poem 'Un voyage a Cythere' to pay tribute to Watteau's painting. (445)

Watteau has painted two versions of *The Embarkation for Cythera*. The first was named *Pèlerinage à l'île de Cythère*, finished in 1717, and the second was named *Embarquement pour Cythère*, finished in 1718. Although these two paintings are slightly different, their distinction does not affect our arguments. We shall use the English title to refer to Watteau's inter pictorial paintings.



Figure 1-8 Jean-Antoine Watteau. *Embarquement pour Cythère*. 1718-19, Berlin. Public domain.

Jean-Antoine Watteau, along with his painting genre *fêtes galantes*, has a notable influence in literature. His name appears in various *modernista* works including Rubén Darío's essay 'Un retrato de Watteau' in *Azul...* (1888) and José Santos Chocano's 'Asunto Watteau' (Max Henríquez Ureña 20). The reason that Hispanic writers favoured Watteau in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is perhaps the influence of French poets. Well-known poets such as Paul Verlaine, the Goncourt brothers, and Arthur Rimbaud have referred to paintings of this great artist.<sup>23</sup> Among other French poets who have alluded Watteau's paintings, Charles Baudelaire's poem 'Un voyage a Cythera' in *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857) and Théodore de Banville's 'Promenade galante' in *Sonnets et eaux-fortes* (1869) are particularly interesting parallels to the Tablada's ekphrasis of Watteau's paintings.

Inspired by the same painting, *The Embarkation for Cythera*, Baudelaire's 'Un voyage a Cythera' and Tablada's 'Soneto Watteau' both adopt the first-person poetic voice to express strong feelings, though Baudelaire's poem is dominated by the emotion of disillusionment, contrary to the delighted ardent pursuit of love expressed in Tablada's sonnet. With the suggestion of the title, it is not difficult to relate 'flecha dorada' and 'galera flordelisada' in the

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<sup>23</sup> See P.D. Edwards' article 'Watteau and the Poets' and Ulrich Finke's book *French 19th Century Painting and Literature* for more information about references to Watteau's paintings in French literature.

last two stanzas to the golden sail of the ship towards the island of Cythera in Watteau's painting (Figure 1-8):

Manón, la de ebúrnea frente,  
la de cabello empolvado  
Y vestidura crujiente  
Tus ojos me han cautivado!

Eco de mi amor ardiente,  
El clavicordio ha cantado  
la serenata doliente  
Y el rondel enamorado...

Ven! El amor que aletea  
Lanza su fleche dorada  
Y en el mar que azul ondea,

Surge ya la empavesada  
Galera flordelisada  
Que conduce á Citerea! (*El florilegio* 45)

The sonnet opens with 'Manón', name of Manon Lescaut, the protagonist of an opera by Giacomo Puccini initially performed in 1893, based on the French novel *L'histoire du chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* (1731) by the Abbé Prévost. However, this poem of love confession depicts the image of a female character which is hardly relevant to the plot of the opera or novel, except for the name 'Manón'. The poem puts the focus on a couple in Watteau's amorous painting. Speaking in a male character's tongue, the poetic voice vividly describes his lover's makeup and costume as if he were facing and talking to her about the journey to Cythera that they were going to begin. Instead of describing the painting, the poem rather attempts to turn an ekphrasis into the narration of a living scene. Tablada's pictorial verses thus remind us of the conventional painting-poetry relationship as presented in Lessing's *Laocoon*, which argues that poetry articulates sounds in time, while painting presents shape and colour in space (91).

In most cases for text generated by image, the word flow is interrupted by the insertion of pictorial reference, and thus a 'freeze-frame' effect is created (Louvel 14-5). Examples of the 'freeze-frame' effect are common in ekphrastic poems, such as Julián de Casal's 'Kakemono' and 'Sourimono'. The referred painting *The Embarkation for Cythera* itself also applies this visual language. If the viewer 'reads' it from right to left, the three pairs of lovers in the foreground of the painting show the three steps of a man paying court to a lady. Adhering to Lessing's opinion that painting should present coexisting projects side by side, the coexisting frozen moments together make up a complete courtship story. 'Soneto Watteau' on the

contrary, unfreezes the moment that *The Embarkation for Cythera* has captured and locked in the frame of the painting, but releases and revitalises this moment with flowing poetic verses. As a verbal representation of a visual art, it applies the operatic and musical vocabulary to add even more elements of temporal mobility. Although the sonnet is motivated by the muted, paused, spatial art of painting, its own characteristics as lyrical art, the eloquence and fluidity, do not fade. Following the ABAB ABAB CDC DDC consonant rhyme, Tablada's narrative poem complies with Lessing's wish that poetry should present progressive actions.

On the other hand, although it is less evident in this poem, Tablada's text-inspired poetry challenges Lessing's opinion that poetry and painting should be neighbours by transgressing the border between media. In Tablada's other poem 'Comedieta' from *El florilegio*, the opening lines also refer to the typical image in Watteau's painting, a *fête galante* that features courtship parties where people are dressed up in ball costumes in park settings: 'En un parquet de Watteau / Que llena de rosas Junio', which also refers to the painting of Watteau (47).<sup>24</sup> These verses remind us of the intermedial transposition in Théodore de Banville's poem.

Inspired by Watteau's painting *Assemblée dans un parc* (1716-7) Banville's poem 'Promenade galante' is presented together with an etching by Edmond Morin on the following page in the book *Sonnets et eaux-fortes* (Figure 1-9). David Scott mentions that Edmond Morin's etching *Promenade galante* 'in "illustrating" Banville's poem *Promenade galante*, based on Watteau's painting, in effect converts an image-based text back into an image' (55). His article brings up the phenomenon that 'Text into Image' was common, yet the reverse, 'Image into Text' was not a trend until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tablada's 'Soneto Watteau' and other later pictorial poems may be inspired by Théodore de Banville and Baudelaire's poetry and theory that articulate and practice the incorporation from image to text (Scott 49). Since Tablada was familiar with poetic writings of Baudelaire and Banville, as well as Burty's art criticism, it is also possible that he has seen Morin's etching in *Sonnets et eaux-fortes*.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Tablada's critical essay 'Japanese New Year's Card' (1924) refers to the Japanese print artist Utamaro as 'the yellow Watteau', because they were both good at painting female characters (283).

<sup>25</sup> According to Lozano Herrera, Tablada has translated various poems of Baudelaire for *Revista Moderna* (130). In *Los mejores poemas*, González Mendoza confirms that Tablada appreciated Banville's poetry from his youth (xvii). In *Hiroshigué*, Tablada mentions that he has consulted Burty's collection of Japanese prints (79).

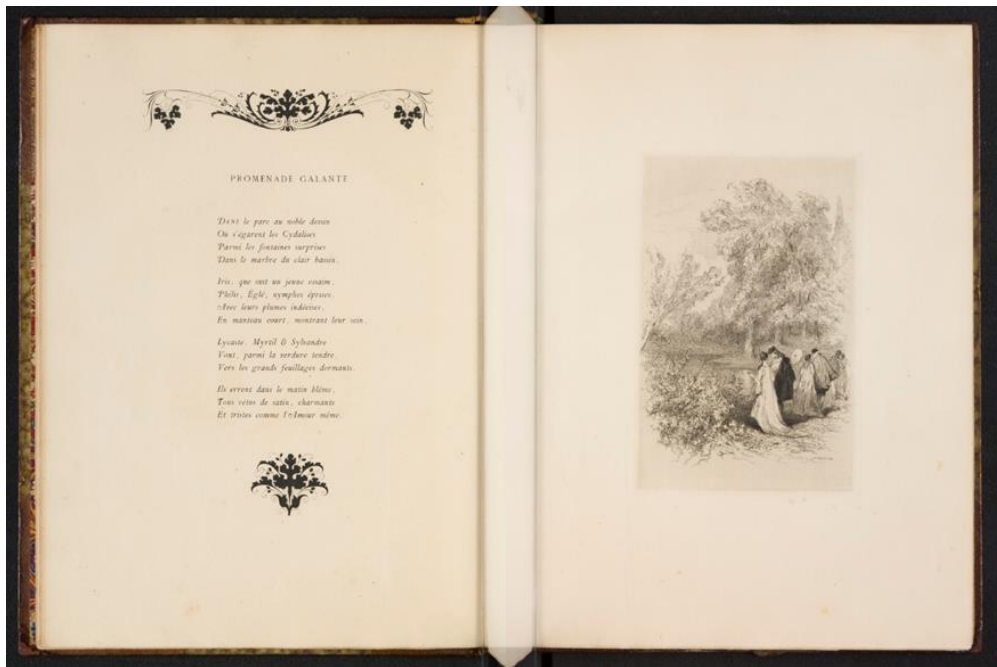


Figure 1-9 Pages in *Sonnets et eaux-fortes*, with Théodore de Banville's poem on the left and Morin's etching on the right page. 1869. Paris.

Watteau is one of those few painters whose works are commonly referred to in literary, especially in poetic works. The fact that Watteau's paintings have inspired so many French symbolist poets grants the painter's name the status of the symbol of visual art presented in poetry. Considering that *The Embarkation for Cythera* was derived from the symbolic meaning of the Greek island Cythera, the birthplace of the goddess of love Aphrodite, the painting is a visual representation of the myth. Tablada's poem in turn presents this pictorial representation in the form of poetry, and in effect translates a text-based image back into text. 'Watteau' in French poetry of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as in Tablada's poetry hence stands for the intermediate in the 'text into image into text' trajectory; and 'Watteau' has become a metapictorial concept beyond its original reference to the French painter, a symbol of visual art which can be presented in/by the verbal language.

In the above review of the text-image transposition related to Watteau, we have referred to previous poets' ekphrasis about *The Embarkation for Cythera*, which suggests Tablada's text-inspired poem 'Soneto Watteau' could be influenced by the 18<sup>th</sup> century French writers. However, is there anything exclusive to Tablada that differs his works from Baudelaire's and Banville's poems? In the following part, we are going to see the French heritage in Tablada's *modernista* poetry and discuss the evolution of intermediality in Tablada's poetic writings.

### 1.2.2 Art Forms and Exotic Themes in *El florilegio*: Frenchified Orientalism in Mexico

If we do a calculation of the poetic themes in *El florilegio*, we will discover that among the poems concerning arts, most involves musical art. 'Mascarada' and 'Comedieta' are based on comedy. 'Soneto morisco' is almost in the form of a lyrical song. 'Abanico Luis XV' is the extension of an anecdote inspired by the main character of an opera. 'La Sonata de Kreutzer', collected in the 1904 version of *Poemas Exóticos*, is an intertextual work that dedicates several stanzas to the description of music through the protagonist of Leo Tolstoy's novella.<sup>26</sup> 'Tríptico' portrays three scenes of an opera in its three sections, adopting the art term that means 'painting of three panels' as its title and the musical term 'la serenata' as the subtitle. Even 'Soneto Watteau', which depicts a painting, involves some theatrical references in two of the four stanzas. In the first stanza of 'Soneto Watteau', the image of Manon from the opera coincides with the image of the woman in the centre of the painting thanks to the vivid description of the actress's makeup and the texture of her costume. The second stanza, using the word 'cantar', 'to sing', to refer to the sound produced by a keyboard instrument, further emphasises the participation of the art of sound. The references to music and theatre strengthen the conventional link between poetry and musical and vocal art, and again, remind us of the word 'lyric' and 'lyricism' is derived from the musical instrument 'lyre'. Whilst the application of musical elements in the poem indicates that the poet is not opting for the belief of *ut pictura poesis* over *ut musica poesis* at this stage of writing, 'Soneto Watteau', blurring the boundary between painting and poetry, suggests that Tablada's pursuit of 'lyrical-graphical simultaneity' started from the beginning of his poetry.

All the above-mentioned poems related to other art forms belong to the section *Poemas Exóticos*. We cannot help but notice that the poems relating to other arts often overlap with reference to foreign countries, which gives rise to this question: is there a correlation between the intermediality and interculturality in Tablada's poetry?

'Soneto Watteau' deals with Italian opera, French painting, and the Greek island of Cythera. Likewise, 'Soneto morisco' is also a hybrid of musical form and exoticism. Right under the title, the phrase 'Leila canta' appears in italics in the centre of the line, occupying the place that is usually used for the subtitle. However, the colons indicate that this phrase is neither a subtitle nor the first line of the sonnet, but rather a voice-over that introduces the following performance, which is a solo of Leila. Leila is a popular name for women in the Arabic language. Longing for

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<sup>26</sup> The *Kreutzer Sonata* (1889) is Leo Tolstoy's novella named after Beethoven's violin sonata of the same title, which was dedicated to the violinist Rudolphe Kreutzer.

her 'amante', the great commander who is away to repress a rebellion, Leila is put into a story of rich Moorish atmosphere, with a vocabulary of Arabic origin like 'Almoravid' 'aljimez', 'zambra', 'jaique', 'Zegrí' and 'Sidi' (*El florilegio* 49).<sup>27</sup> This poem, like so many other *modernista* poems of Tablada and other writers, connects 'the exotic' to luxury and sensuality, which is especially evident in the phrase 'serallo de oro y de rubíes'.

Exoticism and escapism are often discussed next to each other in studies on *Modernismo*. In *Orientalismo en el modernismo hispanoamericano*, Tinajero criticises former studies because they focused on the 'exotismo escapista', mixing the orientalism in Modernismo with its exotic and 'afrancesado' part (14). In fact, the reason why such a mixture between orientalism and exoticism and 'Frenchification' is so commonly accepted is that most of the *modernista* writers indeed obtained their knowledge about the Orient from their French Parnassian and Symbolist predecessors. Luis Urbina refers to Tablada as the person who 'introdujo entre nosotros el Nuevo estremecimiento de Baudelaire', and who was 'el propagandista más avanzado de la actual estética francesa' apart from Darío and Gutiérrez Nájera (305-6). Tablada was also the most direct object of its influence, as he was also one of the most important introducers of French poetry. In the present day, scholars have agreed that during his *modernista* period, Tablada's poetry is dominated primarily by French decadent and symbolist aspects, and at the same time, shows moderate similarity with Parnassianism (Feria 481).

To answer the question that we brought about in the previous part, in his *modernista* stage, Tablada's intermedial poetry is hardly different from other *modernista* poets of his period or the French symbolist poets from whom Tablada learned. However, his later poems about East Asian art are comparatively original, as we shall see in the discussion of *Hiroshigué* and 'Okusai' in the next chapter. Yet still, we are going to find a considerable influence of French literature even on Tablada's insights about Japan. The Mexican poet seems to have perceived the Asian continent through European lenses throughout his entire life. One good example of this is the strong possibility that Pierre Loti's novel, *Madame Chrysanthème* (1888), inspired Tablada's composition of 'Crisantema'. And not to mention the two poems, 'El Daimio' and 'El Samurai', which are direct translations of poems bearing the same title in *Les Trophées* (1893), one of the most significant collections in the French Decadent Movement by the Cuba-born French poet José María de Heredia. As a result, Tablada's poems regarding Oriental,

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<sup>27</sup> 'Los moros' or 'moriscos' in Spanish literature is an extensive and complicated topic due to the inhabitation history of Muslims in Spain during the Middle Ages. Instead of going further into the implications of a 'morisco Sidi' in this poem, we shall only see it as an example of a hybrid between intermediality and interculturality.

especially Japanese topics, show strong Parnassian and Decadent characteristics. However, after all, Tablada's Frenchified Orientalism in this stage is only part of his Frenchified exoticism, insofar as the Orient is only one example of 'exotic places', which refer to scope far beyond merely East Asia.

In terms of geographic extension, the content of *El florilegio* involves Western, Eastern and Central Europe, North Africa, and South, East and Central Asia. Tablada's poems cover almost all the places on the Old Continent, where wealthy and powerful empires had made their legends of incredible civilisations. European writers at that time would consider the Orient as an 'exotic place', whereas Tablada's *El florilegio* putting European related poems into the section *Poemas Exóticos*, considers Europe as alien as the Orient.<sup>28</sup>

However, for a Mexican writer like Tablada, East Asia was still more distant and less familiar compared to Europe. In understanding and presenting the mysterious culture in the Far East, Latin American poets in that period had to seek assistance from another foreign literature, as what Tablada did in writing 'El Daimio' and 'El Samurai' – he translated Heredia's 'exotic poems' about Japan. Therefore, in practice, the relationship between literatures of the three continents are frequently in the following format: Sino-Japanese culture (the object of observation) – translation and literature in French (transcultural intermedia) – orientalist poetry by Mexican or Latin American writers (final work of art in Spanish).<sup>29</sup> In this cultural transmission process, literature in French and other European languages is an essential bridge between East Asia and Mexico. In the following section, we shall discuss how the Frenchified orientalist view of Japan is reflected in Tablada's poems in the 1899 edition of *El florilegio*.

In the meantime, in some cases, the Spanish-American writer can also use oriental art forms to convey Western themes. 'Soneto morisco', 'Cantos de amor y de otoño' and 'Utas japonesas' in the 1904 edition of *El florilegio* are examples of using elements in Oriental culture as the media to achieve *decadentista* themes. In these poems, the Oriental art forms such as songs of Muslim descendants and Japanese folk poetry function as an intermedial tool to suit the *modernista* or *decadentista* poetic aesthetics and an 'Other' to reflect and present the Hispanic

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<sup>28</sup> An interesting contrast is Heredia's *Les Trophées*, which contains a section of seven sonnets with the title of *L'Orient et les Tropiques*, in which there are two poems about Egypt, two about Japan, one about the ocean, and other two on South American sceneries. From Heredia's Eurocentric point of view, Latin America is an exotic place on the other way round.

<sup>29</sup> Many studies confirm that the French influence on *Modernismo* and Mexican literature was tremendous. Hugo Mendez-Ramírez says that Mexico was 'una "pequeña Francia" a finales de siglo' (1067). Ruprecht's article 'Aspects du Baudelairisme mexicaine' and Fera's article 'El canon parnasiano de la poesía modernista mexicana' both make a thorough investigation into this topic.

'Self'. As Laura Torres-Rodríguez remarks, '[t]hese Mexican intellectuals conceived Asia (more specifically Japan, China and India) as a non-European counterpoint for configuring the relation between race and aesthetics in the construction of a modern national identity' (*Diseño asiático* v). At the *modernista* stage of Tablada's poetic career, East Asian topics in *El florilegio* formed a part of his 'cosmopolitan escapism' (Laura Torres-Rodríguez v).

Before his trip to Japan in 1900, poetic compositions of Tablada presented no special status for topics related to East Asian or visual arts. Poems about East Asia stood among other 'exotic poems', receiving the same attention as Greece, France, or Bohemia. Similarly, poems about paintings did not trigger any specific forms of expression. The poet did apply certain terms of art technique when he composed a piece about certain paintings, but he devoted equal efforts to writing in lyrical styles in poems about songs or drama. Despite his enthusiasm for East Asian culture and plastic art, in the poetic album published in 1899, Tablada showed almost an equal treatment to all exotic places and all art forms, in terms of both content and style. Nonetheless, exotic themes and forms of expression involving other art techniques have already mingled in Tablada's early poetry, which is the start of his pictorial and visual writing on East Asian culture in the later stages of his career.

### 1.3 An Imagined Japan: Poems of East Asian Themes in the 1899 Edition

#### 1.3.1 'Japón': Tumultuous Fascination with the Orient

In the previous sections, we have explained the influence of the Latin American *Modernismo* movement on Tablada's interest in East Asian arts. We also discussed the inspiration from the preceding transpictorial French poetry to Tablada's intermedial compositions with the case of 'Soneto Watteau'. In the following parts of this chapter, we are going to compare the poems related to East Asia in the two 'florilegios' to see if the 1900 Japan journey has shifted Tablada's understanding of East Asia. Through close reading and textual analysis, this section will first demonstrate Tablada's filtered and imagined Japan in the 1899 edition of *El florilegio*, before we come to the analysis of Tablada's first attempts of Japanese poetic form in the 1904 edition.

The section *Poemas Exóticos* of *El florilegio*'s first edition includes three poems of East Asian themes: 'Japón', 'Crisantema' and 'Noche de opio'. The poem 'Japón' demonstrates a contradictory feeling that Tablada had about East Asia (33-36). Presented in an organised consonant ABAB rhyme, the poem consists of eleven four-lined stanzas. The poem seems to

be a keen expression of adoration; however, in its essence, it reveals a conflict between prosperity and vanity, fever and indifference. The poetic voice apostrophises to Japan and expresses the worship very explicitly. Stanza 2 and stanza 14, the second to last stanza, use almost the same sentences to convey extravagant zeal.

- Áureo espejismo, sueño de opio, (1)  
 Fuente de todos mis ideales!  
 Jardín que un raro kaleidoscopio [*sic*]  
 Borda en mi mente con sus cristales!
- Tus teogonías me han exaltado (2)  
 Y amo ferviente tus glorias todas;  
 ¡Yo soy el siervo de tu Mikado!  
 ¡Yo soy el bonzo de tus pagodas!
- Por tí [*sic*] mi dicha renace ahora (3)  
 Y en mi alma escéptica se derrama  
 Como los rayos de un sol de aurora  
 Sobre la nieve del Fusiyama [*sic*].<sup>30</sup>
- Tú eres el opio que narcotiza, (4)  
 Y al ver que aduermes todas mis penas  
 Mi sangre – roja sacerdotisa –  
 Tus alabanzas canta [*sic*] en mis venas.
- ¡Canta! En sus cauces corre y se estrella (5)  
 Mi tumultuosa sangre de Oriente,  
 Y ese es el canto de tu epopeya  
 Mágico Imperio del Sol Naciente.
- ... ..
- Rían los blancos con risa vana! (7)  
 Que al fin contemplas indiferente  
 Desde los cielos de tu Nirvana  
 A las Naciones del Occidente.
- ... ..
- Templos grandiosos y seculares (9)  
 Y en su pesado silencio ignoto,  
 Budhas [*sic*] que duermen en los altares  
 Entre las áureas flores de loto.
- De tus princesas y tus señores (10)  
 Pasa el cortejo dorado y rico,  
 Y en ese canto de mil colores  
 Es una estrofa cada abanico.
- Se van abriendo si reverbera (11)  
 El sol y lanza sus tibias olas  
 Los parasoles, cual Primavera  
 De crisantemas [*sic*] y de amapolas.
- Amo tus ríos y tus lagunas, (12)  
 Tus ciervos blancos y tus faisanes

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<sup>30</sup> 'Fusiyama' is a miss-spelling for Fujiyama (富士山), usually called Mount Fuji. The same spelling 'Fusiyama' appears in other Latin American writers' poetry, such as Efrén Rebolledo and Vicente Huidobro. This spelling possibly comes from 'Fuziyama' in the Goncourt brothers' writings. In Tablada's later writings appear both 'Fuziyama' and 'Fuzi Yama'.

Y el ampo triste con que tus lunas  
Bañan la cumbre de tus volcanes.  
Amo tu extraña mitología, (13)

Los raros monstruos, las claras flores  
Que hay en tus biombos de seda umbría  
Y en el esmalte de tus tibores.  
¡Japón! Tus ritos me han exaltado (14)

Y amo ferviente tus glorias todas;  
¡Yo soy el siervo de tu Mikado!  
¡Yo soy el bonzo de tus pagodas!  
Y así quisiera mi ser que te ama, (15)  
Mi loco espíritu que te adora,  
Ser ese astro de viva llama  
Que tierno besa y ardiente dora  
La blanca nieve de Fusiyama [sic] !

In stanza 14, the other three lines remain identical while the first line comes in '¡Japón! Tus ritos me han exaltado'. The emotion is so strong that the poem has to employ two lines of exclamation in parallel, with a vocabulary expressing the absolute and direct indications such as 'exaltar', 'amar', 'siervo', and above all, 'glorias todas'. Nevertheless, the undertone of the poem is not an 'absolute love', but rather an illusion. As the opening sentence of the entire poem suggests, the image of 'Japan' is a mirage, a 'dream of opium', an imaginary ideal. The 'magic empire' that the poetic voice crazes for proves not to be an ultimate remedy but merely a form of narcotics. What immediately follows the line 'Por tí [sic] mi dicha renace ahora' is curiously a 'scepticism overwhelming my soul'. Contradictions that run throughout the poem in turn prove that the fascination for the Orient is 'tumultuous' and 'mad', everything but a rational and feasible future. Reluctant to admit it, the poetic voice is aware that the worship of 'Japan' is the last escape deep inside. Still, it chooses to paralyse itself in an ardent love and 'loco espíritu', only in pursuit of the delusive sacred, the pure white snow of Mount Fuji.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> In fact, according to Ota Seiko, the final line of this poem is possibly inspired by the image of the sun rising upon Mount Fuji in *ukiyo-e* from the famous coloured collection *Fugaku Sanjūrokkei* by the Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai (67). No evidence shows that Tablada possesses any prints from this collection or he has any chance to view it, as Ota also admits. However, since Tablada claims in *Hiroshigué* that its sister black-and-white print collection *Fugaku Hyakkei* is part of his Japanese print collection and mentions Hokusai's prologue to 'Cien vistas del Fuzi-yama', it is certain that he had viewed or acquired volumes from *Fugaku Hyakkei* before 1914 (6). In *Painting Modernism*, Ivan Schulman confirms that Tablada 'collected Japanese prints in reproduction, including *Fugaku Hiakkei* by Hokusai' (65).

Although we cannot identify exactly which works of visual art inspired this poem, unlike in 'Okusai', where the poem gives the clear reference to Hokusai's prints, it is worth mentioning the coincidence between the graphical images in Hokusai's prints and the verbal images depicted by the poem. We can observe certain similarities between the brilliant sun in 'Japón' with the sunshine in the print *Kyōdai no Fuji* from *Fugaku Hyakkei*. Images in the second line of stanza 11 names, the sun and the mild waves, also appear in *Kyōdai no Fuji*, whose title literally means 'Mount Fuji in the mirror stand' corresponding

In search of a non-Western choice, the poetic voice focuses its hope on the unknown Orient. Maybe stanza 7 best shows the overestimated expectation towards 'Japan'. With admiration, the poetic voice narrates how 'you', the great Japanese Empire, looks down to Occident with indifference, laughing at the empty white Europeans. The 'contempt' in stanza 7 echoes with the sleeping Buddha in stanza 9, both belittled from a higher and grander level to the vanity of the West.<sup>32</sup> However, 'Japan' ironically is the biggest vanity in this poem, because it is a mirage, a dream of opium. The 'white snow of Mount Fuji' therefore is vague as well, and so is the mad adoration of 'Japan' and the Orient.

The poem contains a series of orientalist delusionary images, for instance, 'De tus princesas y tus señoras/ Pasa el cortejo dorado y rico' in stanza 10, and 'Que hay en tus biombos de seda umbría/ Y en el esmalte de tus tibores' in stanza 13, both which are similar to Darío's many verses. Objects like silk folding screens and enamel vases, which also appeared in Pierre Loti's narration and Casal's verses, were some of the most popular Japanese exported items in Europe by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, carrying the Occidental imagination of the Orient. 'Biombos' and 'esmalte' are not the only 'hearsay' vocabularies borrowed from other Western sources, but also 'crisantemas' and 'amapolas'. In stanza 11 Tablada associates these two flowers with spring, whereas in Asia chrysanthemums typically blossom in November and poppy flowers blossom in June. By mentioning the 'moon and snow of Mount Fuji' and calling 'Japan' as 'Imperio del Sol Naciente', the poet is clearly manifesting his knowledge of this country. However, the misuses indicate that, instead of an existing entity, 'Japan' in this poem rather plays the role of a conceptual image of the ideal, exotic, and fantastic wonderland.

What this poem glorifies and makes into a cult is the imaginary Japan, the 'fairlylike scene' according to other people's narration, a dreamy place that is distant and different to where the poet stands. 'Japan' could be taken over by any other remote and strange place if expressions such as 'Mikado' 'Fusiyama' and 'Mágico Imperio del Sol Naciente' were replaced. In fact, it would not even make any difference to change words except for the above-mentioned phrases

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'si reverbera' that the previous line says. The following stanza, as if a comprehensive description of Japan's natural features, involves images including rivers, lakes, white horses, and pheasants, all present in *Fugaku Hyakkei*. In addition, the tranquil snow scene where the moonlight that showers the mountain matches the picture *Musashino no Fuji* of the same print collection.

<sup>32</sup> In the study of Tablada's travel journals for *Revista Moderna*, Pineda Franco argues that the Mexican traveller's chronicles are 'displayed as if in a showcase that exhibits imported Japanese and Chinese curiosities', and that for Tablada 'Japan is ultimately the space that enables [him] to envision Mexico, through the archive of occidental Orientalism' ('Japan in the Mind's Eye of Two Mexican Travelers' 167, 170). In *El florilegio*, many poems such as 'Japón' take a similar perspective and uses the imagery of 'Japan' as an example of exotic cultural opposite to the Occident.

if the poem was renamed 'China', 'Korea' or even 'Viet Nam', since the characteristics of the 'Orient' are vague and stereotypical. In this regard, it makes more sense to group this poem in the section of *Poemas Exóticas* as the first edition of *El florilegio* does, rather than in *Musa Japónica*, because the rest of the poems in the latter section clearly make more specific references to Japan after the poet has physically been in the country and directly experienced its culture.

### 1.3.2 'Noche de opio' and 'Crisantema': *Decadentista* Style and Orientalist Gender View

Our analysis of 'Japón' has made the point that Tablada's verbal presentation of Japan was defined by the *modernista* poetic style in his poetry composed before the 1900 trip. In the following part, we are going to see Tablada's understanding of the Japanese people, women and men, which reflects the influence of the *fin-de-siècle* literary fashion, in the poems 'Noche de opio', 'Crisantema', and 'La Venus China'.

With a lengthy description of a dreamy yet obscure atmosphere, the poem 'Noche de opio' draws the image of a Japanese princess, 'la princesa Sastuna', mourning for death and for love. According to Atsuko Tanabe, the name 'Satsuna' is probably the misspelling of 'Satsuma' that Tablada had inherited from French literary works (35).<sup>33</sup> The Satsuma Domain (薩摩藩 *Satsuma-han*) was a Japanese domain of the Edo period, situated in Kyūshū, in the southwest part of Japan. In *Hiroshigué*, Tablada also mentioned the name 'Satsuma', putting it together with other 'Metrópoli shiogunal' such as the Owari Province and the Geishu Province, which suggests that the poet had some knowledge of the administrative divisions of Japan during the Edo period. In 1867, when Japan took part for the first time in the International Exposition in Paris, the Satsuma Domain also exhibited under the name of 'Government of the Viceroy of Satsuma of Japan', making the region known to the Europeans.

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<sup>33</sup> In the essay 'La ceremonia del té (Cha-no-yú)' originally published in *Revista Moderna* during Tablada's journey to Japan in 1900, the author relates the word 'Satzuma' to precious Japanese products, including porcelain, given the expression 'tazas de satsuma' (168). Mexican poet Efrén Rebolledo's poem also involves 'el té en la taza de Satsuma' in his collection *Rimas japonesas* published in Tokyo in 1907 (10). Nonetheless, we agree with Tanabe's opinion and consider that 'Satsuma' in this poem still most likely refers to the Satsuma Domain.

Torres-Rodríguez notices that Tablada shows more interest in the premodern Japanese art and *samurais* of the feudal society in his chronicles in *En el país del sol*, although Tablada also demonstrated some interest in the modernized Meiji society (*Diseños asiáticos* 61):<sup>34</sup>

En “Los funerales de un noble”, Tablada se interesa por resaltar las relaciones diplomáticas entre ambos países y comentar sobre el proceso de modernización japonés. En la crónica, el escritor hace hincapié en la distinguida concurrencia del funeral entre los que se encontraban: “el Conde Enomoto, lejano amigo de nuestro Presidente Díaz, y por fin, como una gloria eclipsada, el antes poderoso *Shiogun*, supremo jefe militar vencido por el actual Mikado”..... Es importante tener en cuenta que el imaginario estético de Tablada privilegia la época feudal de los samuráis. El interés por la modernización del Japón no excluye, sino que viene acompañado por una exaltación del arte premoderno nipón. Esta producción artística otorga prestigio cultural a la modernidad japonesa. La figura del *daimio* evoca un paraíso artístico perdido a partir del cual se construyen las subjetividades estéticas modernas de 1900. (61).

The poet’s preference to the feudal Japan is a crucial reason that Tablada has created this poem for an oriental figure. The most important factor that makes ‘princess Satsuna’ –rather than any other random Japanese princess– the protagonist of this poem is her celebrity in the West. Also known as Atsuko, Tenshō-in (天璋院, 1836 – 1883) was the wife of the 13th *shōgun*, Tokugawa Iesada, and the adopted daughter of the head of the Satsuma Domain, Shimazu Nariakira.<sup>35</sup> She was also called *Atsu-hime* (meaning Princess Atsu) before her marriage because Shimazu was a *daimyō*, which was likely to be the source for the title ‘princess Satsuna’.<sup>36</sup> Tenshō-in’s husband Iesada accepted the terms of the *Treaty of Kanagawa* with the United States in 1854, which was the end of Japan’s isolationist foreign policy of over two hundred years. Thereafter, Japan opened several ports successively to foreign trade and established specific areas for foreign settlement, including in Yokohama, where Tablada stayed when he visited Japan. The figure of Tenshō-in, a woman who experienced the

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<sup>34</sup> The preference to pre-modern East Asian culture is not occasional among *modernista* and Modernist poets. In *Ideographic Modernism*, Christopher Bush mentions that Modernist – especially Imagist – poets generally conceive Chinese writings as ahistorical: “China” is in many ways an “ideograph” writ large. “China” becomes [...] if history were a series of disconnected events and not a meaningful narrative of progress.’ (7)

<sup>35</sup> *Shōgun* is the highest rank of samurai, which refers to the aristocrats with military education. During the Edo period (1603-1867) *shōgun* was the actual ruler of the country, although the Emperor namely assigned him. In Edo period, *shōgun* was a member of the Tokugawa clan and the head of the military government.

<sup>36</sup> *Daimyō* (大名) is the title for a Japanese feudal lord with certain rank. A *daimyō* has the control over his land and other samurais of lower ranks, therefore having political, military and economic rule over the territory. *Daimyō* is the next rank of samurai lower than *shōgun*. *Daimyō* is spelled as Daimio in Tablada’s writings.

transformation from the Edo period to the Meiji period, illustrates in microcosm the evolution of Japanese society from a mysterious and closed feudal nation to exposure to the Occident.

Although Tenshō-in's life was legendary, this poem borrows the image of 'princess' here only because she was a noble Japanese woman who lost her beloved one. In the second stanza, the poet writes 'Con fúnebres sobresaltos/ Las mariposas nocturnas', which coincides with the actual funerals that took place in 1858, when Tenshō-in's husband and adopted father successively died within ten days. Without pointing out for whom the funeral was held, the poem utilises this death as a background of the obscure atmosphere, creating a gloomy and even gothic touch. The last stanza describes the shadow of a bat over 'la princesa Satsuna' in the following manner:

Y, sintiendo mortal frío,  
Ve despelegarse Satsuna  
El ala vellosa y bruna  
Como abanico sombrío  
Sobre la faz de la luna! (53-57)

This stanza proves that Satsuna plays the role of a Japanese princess who was feeling sorrow and the threat of death. Any further dig into her historical existence would be an over-interpretation because the poem here only values her beauty and nobility, her 'blanca faz de la luna' as an Oriental princess. The poem only describes the dim night and the physical appearance of Satsuna, without reference to other aspects. The sudden death of Tenshō-in's husband and adopted father created a problematic situation for the successors regarding both the position of *shōgun* and the leadership of the Satsuma Domain, which could be a good topic for any work of literature. However, this poem only comments on how princess Satsuna walks down from her 'alto mirador' into the 'vapura neblina', silently bathing her pale face underneath the moonlight. In the poem, clouds are moving, butterflies are circling, bamboos trembling and letting the winds pass by, but Satsuna remains almost still, except for her strange smile: 'Su pintada dentadura/ Luce con negra sonrisa'. A smile in such an atmosphere of death is in itself terrifying, which is reinforced by the mention of the shining teeth painted in black according to the Japanese tradition. The following line immediately explains 'Es que su amor ha soñado/ Libre de angustia y de duelo'. The word 'soñar' is reminiscent of the opening stanza that affirms that 'la princesa Satsuna' was 'ebria de opio y de amor', which again emphasises the nature of hallucination of the entire poem. The combination of female character and death is a common theme in *decadentista* poetry, and the name 'Satsuna' perfectly introduces the topic of death in this poem. The poet adopted the character of 'princesa Satsuna' not because of

the legendary historical background in which she lived, but rather for her perfect match with the image of a *femme fatale*, a foreign royal woman associated with death.

Several details in the text indicate that the poem is composed of a completely Western aesthetic despite that the protagonist is an Oriental woman. For example, in East Asian tradition, bats are always connected with fortune because the pronunciation of 'bat' in Chinese is *fú* (蝠), same as the pronunciation of 福 for 'fortune'. Therefore, in East Asia, image of bats frequently appears as home decoration to pray for longevity for elderly people of the family. To the contrary, bats are often associated with darkness, death, and mystery in the Western tradition. In this poem, bat is apparently the symbol of death. Although the detail of black teeth and red lotus aims to add exoticism to the princess, the poem is essentially a Westernised imagination of a sorrowful young foreign woman. The function of this information is similar to the Arabic vocabulary in 'Soneto morisco', in which the foreign woman herself as a person is not the major concern of the poem. Instead, her image as the incarnation of beauty and mystery as well as her sentimental devotion to love is the essential part that the poet requires.

Another example is 'opio' in the poem. As Tanabe has rightly pointed out, opium was strictly prohibited in Japan both before and after the Meiji period, and at the time Tablada wrote this poem the use of opium could even cause death sentence (35). Therefore, the main character 'princesa Satsuna' in 'Noche de opio' should never be involved with opium. In Tablada's poetry, opium has been a word frequently used to link with East Asia just like 'crisantema' and 'abanico'. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in European and American notion, opium was often related to the Orient, and especially with China (Hickman 79). In a poetic context, opium often appears as a metaphor of 'dream', alluding to the untrue or the unreal, and thus creating a space that does not exist in real life. The association between 'opium' and the Oriental princess enhances the nature of 'fantasy' of Japan and conforms with the *decadentista* style.

In *modernista* poetry including most of Tablada's works, Oriental males seldom appear directly. They either exist through females' words, like the Sidi in 'Soneto morisco' in Leila's lyric, or do not appear at all, as in 'Noche de opio' and 'La Venus China'. According to the well-accepted theory of Orientalism by Edward Said, the Orientalists view Oriental males and females very differently: they treat the males with 'contempt and fear', if they are not neglecting them, but value the females as dolls that manifest 'unlimited sensuality' (207). This stereotype fits most of the *modernista* writings regarding Oriental content, including that of Rubén Darío and Julián de Casal, in which the Oriental woman is the absolute focus of the text.

Quoting Linda Nochlin's words about the imaginary Orient, Tinajero makes the following remarks on Darío's 'La muerte de la emperatriz de china':

'The white man, the Westerner, is of course always implicitly present in Orientalist painting... his gaze is necessarily the controlling gaze, the gaze which brings the Oriental world into being, the gaze for which it is ultimately intended'. En LMEC no se puede negar que la figura de la China es presentada a partir de una mirada masculina heterosexual y desde una 'periferia occidental'. Sin embargo, la estatua presenta una imagen digna de ser apreciada aunque sin duda se enfatiza que se trata de un poder adquisitivo. (137-8)

These comments are also applicable to Tablada's poem 'La Venus China' in the second edition of *El florilegio*, which is supposed to be a dedication to his friend Okada Asatano, composed in 1900 in Yokohama's Chinatown according to Tablada's footnotes. 'La Venus China' is a sonnet that describes a Chinese woman head to toe, from her oval face as pale as ivory to her jewellery, her silk dress, until her bound foot, 'un pie de faunesa de la Venus el pie' that was 'enjuto en la cárcel de cruel borceguí' (12, 11).<sup>37</sup> Presented exactly from the 'masculine heterosexual' point of view, this poem brings an extremely exotic experience and sensual suggestion with the emphasis of the bound foot. In Tablada's celebrated 'Ónix' and 'Misa Negra', verses are describing bliss and sensuality too. In comparison, Tablada's poems on Japanese female are less related to the carnality, but more to innocence, purity, and melancholia, on some occasions, as seen in 'Crisantema' and 'Noche de opio'. Both 'Noche de opio' and 'Crisantema' can be interpreted as a fictional romantic tragedy between a noble couple.<sup>38</sup> Tablada seems to have a fascination with this topic, and his many other poems talk about the love story between a beautiful princess and a heroic highborn man, in which one mourns the loss of the beloved other. In most cases, the 'princess' appears alone, while the male is absent from the text. The male lover is away from the female character either because of war ('Soneto morisco'), or dead ('Noche de opio'), or he does not exist at all in portrait-like

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<sup>37</sup> Foot binding was the custom of applying tight binding to the feet of young girls to achieve the result of small feet. Bound feet were called 'lotus feet' (蓮足) and were considered a symbol of feminine beauty and sexual attraction. This custom existed exclusively in China until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>38</sup> The chrysanthemum flower mentioned in 'Crisantemo' is closely connected to the Emperor or the Imperial Family in Japanese culture because the chrysanthemum blossom is the Japanese Imperial family emblem and one of the Japanese national seals. The third stanza of 'Crisantema' refers to the Daimio's palace as 'el palacio de los tréboles' (21). It is possible that 'tréboles' refers to the Tokugawa clan's family emblem, which is three hollyhock leaves inside a circle. Therefore, the Daimio in this poem is likely to be a member of the Tokugawa clan or even a *shōgun*. Marriages between a female from the Imperial family and a male from the Tokugawa family, especially a *shōgun*, was frequently seen in the Edo period. For example, in 1862 the Princess Kazu was married to the 14th *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemochi, during whose reign Japan re-opened to the West. Although some studies such as Adela Pineda Franco's article, attribute the name Crisantemo in Tablada's poem comes after Pierre Loti, both chrysanthemum and clover, images from seals of eminent Japanese families, appearing in the same poem, bring up the possibility that Tablada was inspired by the real-life Japanese society in composing 'Crisantema'.

poems such as 'La Venus China'. But outside of the poem, another male is always present: the text starts from the perspective of a man, forcing the reader to appreciate the female beauty in the text through his eyes.

In contrast, in 'Crisantema', the male uncommonly shows his presence, and he appears with a positive Oriental image. In 'Crisantema', 'El Daimio' and 'El Samurai', Oriental males, especially Japanese aristocrat men, are mentioned in a tone of appreciation as if they were knights with tragic heroism, which is different from the common way of presentation of Asian males in American writings of that period (Hickman n.p). Despite that 'Crisantema' is the title of this composition, the male character, Daimio, weighs more than his lover Crisantema in the text. In many literary texts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century such as Pierre Loti's *Madame Chrysanthème*, the character of Oriental woman is often the screen for finding and defining the writer himself, who is usually a White male (Szyliowicz). Tablada's poem still contains a controlling gaze from the male, but this time no longer from a white man or any Westerner, but a Japanese. Although the text is essentially *decadentista*, the poet tries every effort to construct the character of Daimio as an Oriental man.

#### 1.4 First Impressions of East Asian Culture: 1904 Edition of *El florilegio*

##### 1.4.1 'Cantos and 'Utas': Translations of Japanese Songs

In addition to 'Japón', 'Noche de opio', and 'Crisantema' which already existed in the 1899 edition of *El florilegio*, the section *Musa Japónica* added seven new poems in the second edition in 1904. Among these seven new poems, 'Cantos de Amor y de Otoño' and '«Utas» Japonesas' call our attention, because for the first time, translations of the Japanese poetic form **waka**, literally meaning 'Japanese song', appear in a Spanish poetry collection.<sup>39</sup>

Composed in 1900 during Tablada's visit to Japan, 'Cantos' consists of six *waka* and 'Utas' contains seven *waka*. Atsuko Tanabe and Seiko Ota have made impressive progress in finding the original texts of Tablada's *waka* translations. They conclude that *waka* in *El florilegio* are second-hand translations based on the English translation, Hall B. Chamberlain's *Classical Poetry of the Japanese* (1880), French translation *Anthologie japonaise* (1871) by León de Rosny, and *Poèmes de la libellule* (1884) by Judith Gautier and Kinmochi Saionji (Tanabe 71, Ota 72). Although neither Tanabe nor Ota mentions this point, *Anthologie japonaise* and

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<sup>39</sup> In Japanese, 'uta' (歌) means 'song'. It is interesting that both 'canto' and 'uta' refers to the same word. The single form and plural form of *waka* is the same.

*Poèmes de la libellule* were published with exquisite pictures with hand-illustrations or woodblock prints, which could have inspired Tablada to add illustrations for his haiku collections *Un día* and *El jarro de flores*.

One of the copies of *Anthologie japonaise* was illustrated by the Japanese painter Goseda Yoshimatsu (Figure 1-10).<sup>40</sup> Goseda illustrated various copies of *Anthologie Japonaise*, the version published in 1871 in Paris, and the illustrations on each copy are unique. Born in Edo, he studied Western painting in Japan before he went to France in 1880. In 1889 he returned to Japan via the United States. Since we do not have any record about which version of *Anthologie japonaise* Tablada referred to, we are not sure if Tablada had ever encountered any of the illustrated copies. However, even if he was never fortunate enough to appreciate the Japanese painter's illustration, the printed version of Rosny's book without any illustrations is impressive enough. In *Anthologie japonaise*, *waka* are presented in *hiragana* in vertical lines first, followed with a transcript of Romanised letters to show their reading, then the translation and references in French (Figure 1-11). In Goseda's illustrated copy, *hiragana* of the *waka* is often surrounded by pictures corresponding to the content of the poem. For instance, in Figure 1-10, the French title 'Sur la lune' with its *hiragana* lyrics is placed in the centre of the picture, as if it were the inscription of the illustration. The graphical moon revealing its light among the clouds of high mountain echoes with the textual content and reinforces the spirit of the *waka*. In many pages, Chinese characters are printed as well, giving a comparatively innovative impression to Western readers. Neither Chamberlain nor Gautier's book includes the original texts in Japanese, therefore *Anthologie japonaise* is one of the few books that Tablada could refer to the original text and the Japanese scripts.

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<sup>40</sup> There are at least two different versions of illustrated copies accomplished by Goseda digitalised by the Bibliothèque nationale de France. The cited picture comes from the following version: [ark:/12148/bpt6k10545349](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:fr:bnf-12148-bpt6k10545349).



Figure 1-10 Page 24 of *Anthologie japonaise* with Goseda's illustration.

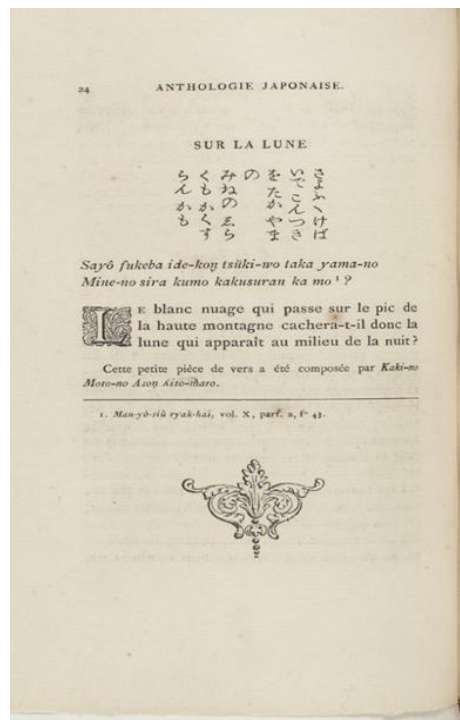


Figure 1-11 Page 24 without Goseda's illustration.

In comparison, in Gautier's *Poèmes de la libellule*, each poem occupies an entire page with illustrations by Yamamoto, although the book only gives the translation in French but no Japanese scripts. Unlike Goseda's illustrations, which seem to be hand-painted on paper, graphical art in *Poèmes de la libellule* is more like woodblock printing rather than painting. Many pages in *Poèmes de la libellule* share the same model of woodblock and have the same pattern in distinct colours as a result. For example, the two pages in Figure 1-12 have almost the same graphical features, except that the left one consists of a lighter khaki tone while the right picture is a darker black shade. Woodblock printing is a familiar technique in East Asian graphical art, which often uses multiple colours with the same set of woodcut in pursuit of a variable visual expression. The lighter shade of print used for Sadaie's *waka* emphasises the image of 'rossignol', whereas the print for the *waka* of Saigio creates a connection between the imageries of the 'lune' and the 'nuit' and the contrast of the almost white moon and the dark shade. Probably due to the popularity of visual-textual coexistence in Japanese *waka*, both Goseda and Yamamoto use the method of visual art to complete the presentation of *waka*'s translation. As we have mentioned in the introduction, the integration of poetry and painting or print is common in Japan. Popular mixed art forms such as *haiga* and illustrated *waka* and haiku collections could have influenced the French translations of Japanese literature, which later inspired Tablada's decoration of his haiku collection.



Figure 1-12 Picture on the left: a page in *Poèmes de la libellule* with Tomono-Kodi's poem (n.p.). The picture on the right: a page in *Poèmes de la libellule* with Sadaie's poem (n.p.).

Despite that Tanabe and Ota's studies overlook the potential intermedial influence of French translations on Tablada's visual creations, their works rightly demonstrate that almost all Tablada's *waka* translations find their correspondent English or French translation pre-existed. Since the original *waka* were from different volumes of *Kokinshu* and *Shin Kokin Wakashu*, it is unlikely that their corresponding stanzas in *El florilegio* have been organised according to their original sequence in Japanese texts. Tablada's arrangement of *waka* is also distinct from the sequence in Chamberlain and Gautier's translations. Therefore, we arrive at the assumption that Tablada intended to create original poems by arranging the *waka* translations in a certain order.

In both 'Cantos' and 'Utas', stanzas are separated from each other, with three-star marks as a divider. Appearing in multiple poems in *El florilegio*, the division with three-star marks is only present between stanzas within the same poem. In the 1898 edition of 'La noche de opio', the same divider appears between the penultimate and the last stanza, whereas in the 1904 version it is absent. As a result, with this method of presentation, 'Cantos' and 'Utas' seem to be two integrated poems where each *waka* plays the role of a stanza, rather than two groups of individual *waka*. For example, in 'Cantos', disregarding the original Japanese authors' names, each *waka* has five lines and forms an alternate rhyme within itself. Therefore, at the same time of being a conjunction of *waka*, 'Cantos' is also in the format of a poem with alternate rhyme in six stanzas.

In this way, the six *waka*-stanzas in 'Cantos' subsequently narrate lovers' farewell scenarios. The first stanza, *waka* by Sandara Toshi, presents a picture of lovers departing each other in the morning bells. The next *waka* by Saigio, with the description of the morning fog, creates a melancholic atmosphere and introduces the previous night when the lovers opened their hearts to each other. Then, the *waka* of Sadaie makes a comparison between the sadness of last night and this morning's adventurous departure. After that, the stanza by Murasaki makes a confession to his lover from a male poetic voice, promising that good news will come to her with the wind. The following *waka* by Saneské depicts the scenario after the departure, in which the sleeves of the poetic voice are wet with tears. Finally, the female poetic voice in Tomono-Kodi's verses completes the story, expressing a sentimentality by complaining of the nightingale that spreads the lovers' pains. To complete the logic and emotion as an integrated poem, Tablada made various changes to the original *waka*, adding information that does not exist in either Japanese verse or French translations. Take the last stanza as an example, the French translations of which is the following:

Toujours renaissants,  
Dans l'air le rossignol sème  
Les mêmes accents;  
Mais moi. Combien je le sens  
Que je ne suis plus la même. (Gautier n.p.)

Gautier's translation is very close to the original verses, the essence of which is also the contrast between the bird's voice the same as before and the different 'me'. However, the translation of Tablada puts less focus on the feeling of 'I am not the same anymore', which is the core self-reflection in both French and Japanese verse.

¡Oh risueño [sic], que el viento  
Siembras tus quejas amantes,  
Al oír tu mismo acento  
He suspirado, pues siento  
Que no soy la misma de antes!

The phrase 'el viento / siembras tus quejas amantes', which is absent in the French translation, is the key sentence to link the last *waka* with previous stanzas in order to maintain the coherence. With the addition of this phrase, 'Cantos' is fused with the classic *decadentista* topic, the separation of lovers. Tablada could have largely changed the language in Sandara Toshí and Saneské's *waka* in a similar way as well, therefore it becomes so difficult to identify the original verses. He could have even composed an original *waka* with the name of a fictional author (Ota 72-3). No matter what the true reason for this adaptation is, it is certain that for translations of *waka* in *El florilegio*, fidelity yields its way to the composition of a coherent, artistic, and *decadentista* poem.

#### 1.4.2 'Musa Japónica': First Attempt at Japanese Haiku?

Except for 'Cantos' and 'Utas', 'Musa Japónica' is another poem in the 1904 edition of *El florilegio* that attracts scholars' attention for its connection to Japanese poetry. Consisting of 19 tercets separated by three-star marks, 'Musa Japónica' is considered by many scholars to be the embryonic form of Tablada's later haiku. In *José Juan Tablada: su haiku y su japonismo*, Ota partly agrees with José María González de Mendoza's viewpoint that 'Musa Japónica' was the precursor of Tablada's later haiku-like 'poemas sintéticos' (69). She especially points out that each of the stanzas from stanza 11 to stanza 13 can be considered as a haiku (69). Gloria Ceide-Echeverría concludes after a thorough analysis that this poem is still more close to the *modernista* and Parnassian style, 'con una fuerte dosis de romanticismo' (35).

A pesar de la brevedad del verso y la estrofa, Tablada no ha podido desprenderse de un exceso de palabras de una subjetividad excesiva envuelta en amores no correspondidos, lágrimas y reclamos que deberá eliminar para adentrarse en el cultivo del haikai. Sin embargo, su uso de las imágenes [*sic*] tomadas de la naturaleza y el intento de concisión, son ya una preparación para las innovaciones que vendrán más adelante. La importancia de “Musa japónica” está en que apunta ya hacia una posible habilidad para el cultivo del haikai, el cual aparecerá por entero quince años más tarde. (35)

Ceide-Echeverría has successfully established the argument that ‘Musa Japónica’ is a preparational practice for Tablada’s more mature haiku compositions in later years. On the one hand, Tablada’s verses in ‘Musa Japónica’ demonstrate concision and briefness of expression, which is essential in haiku composition but far from the sophisticated artistic style that *Decadentismo* or *Modernismo* favoured. On the other hand, the tercets in ‘Musa Japónica’ do not conform to the formal requirements of haiku, which we shall discuss in detail in Chapter Four. In fact, by the time that the second edition of *El florilegio* was published, Paul-Louis Couchoud (1879-1959) –whose haiku collection *Sages et poètes d’Asie* (1916) inspired Tablada greatly– has just started his first travel in Japan and he did not start to compose haiku until 1905. In addition, the first occasion that a haiku poem officially appeared in Tablada’s writing is in ‘El festival de Año Nuevo’ published on *Revista de Revistas* in 1912 according to Ota, which cites the verses of Basho, while the term ‘haikai’ did not appear for the first time until *Hiroshigué* came out in 1914 (40). Therefore, it seems inappropriate to assume that Tablada has already had adequate knowledge about haiku poetics when he composed ‘Musa Japónica’ in 1900. It is perhaps more reliable to attribute the inspiration of this poem to *waka*. If we look closely into its content, ‘Musa Japónica’ again tells the longing of his female lover from a masculine perspective. In Ota’s speculation, the ‘Japanese muse’ in the poem is Tablada’s fiancée in Mexico ‘dressed up’ in Japanese style: ‘Tablada, estando en Japón, no pudo salir de la imagen creada por los occidentales, pensando en su novia que dejó en México.’ (70) Except for the title, this poem hardly contains anything related to Japan. Agreeing with Ceide-Echeverría that the poem is driven by the Western *decadentista* theme, we consider that ‘Musa Japónica’ falls into the cliché of using ‘Orient’ as a symbol of exoticism like many other poems in *El florilegio*.

The most obvious progress in *El florilegio* brought by his trip to Japan is *waka* translations in ‘Cantos’ and ‘Utas’, and possibly the influence on ‘Musa Japónica’, too. However, there is not an obvious change of poetic style between the two ‘florilegios’, in both of which the *modernista* style prevails. The assimilation of Japanese folk lyrics was almost part of the establishment of Tablada’s *decadentista* style, which is especially notable in the last two poems of *Musa*

*Japónica*, 'El Daimio' and 'El Samurai'. Tablada kept Heredia's original sonnet form in the Spanish translation, which makes the two poems an incredible combination of *Modernismo* and Orientalism. 'El Daimio' and 'El Samurai' are not Tablada's first translations from French predecessors regarding East Asian topics. In the same period that *El florilegio* was written, Tablada published various journal articles about Japanese art, most of which are translations or reviews based on existing French publications. In 1891, *El Universal* published his translation of Judith Gautier's article 'Novela japonesa' and Jules Goncourt's essay 'El arte japonés' (Tanabe 30).<sup>41</sup>

The trip to Japan in 1900 significantly aroused Tablada's interest towards Japanese poetry, but it did not essentially change Tablada's attitude about East Asia. Although he had some experiences of Japanese culture in person, the Mexican poet still worships the untouchable 'Japanese muse' from an Occidental perspective, potentially because his stay in Japan was too short and restricted to the foreign settlement, and his travels in Japan followed the steps of preceding European writers such as Pierre Loti. What Tablada searched in Japan 'were the images of Japan that he formed before coming there', and what Tablada learned about the Japanese culture, even after his trip in 1900, was still 'filtered through his Occidental lenses' (Szyloiowics 76). One of the reasons that scholars suspect Tablada could have never made the trip to Japan is that Japan in his journals is very similar to Japan in other existing literature. Since all aspects of Tablada's knowledge regarding East Asian culture are closely connected to essays and poetry in French, Tablada generally holds the same view towards the Orient as French and other European writers.

#### 1.4.3 Conclusion: East Asian Themes and the Influence of French Literature

The section *Musa Japónica* is in many ways unique in *El florilegio*. First, as mentioned before, it highlights the theme of East Asia for the first time and admits its special position – at this stage almost exclusively Japan, considering that 'La Venus China' is also composed in Chinatown of Yokohama. The divorce of *Musa Japónica* from *Poemas exóticos* symbolises that 'East Asia' as a topic in Tablada's poetry stands out from a general exoticism. From this collection, East Asian culture gradually becomes the iconic theme and a unique symbol of Tablada's poetry. This thematic and aesthetic preference develops in *Al sol y bajo la luna*, and

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<sup>41</sup> According to Héctor Valdés, thirty of Tablada's poems are translations of poetry from other languages, more than half of which are French. Please see 'José Juan Tablada: Translator' by Rodolfo Mata and Nicholas Goodbody for more information about these poems and their sources.

reaches its climax around 1920, when *Un día*, *Li-Po*, and *El jarro de flores* came out one after another. And it all begins with the group of *japoniste* poems in *El florilegio*.

Although in *Musa Japónica*, poems of East Asian themes began to catch readers' attention, the *modernista* style was still so predominated in the two 'florilegios' that even the *waka* translations are arranged in a particular order to serve the *decadentista* aesthetics. Tablada's reliance on French literature formed his assumption of Japan and its people, building a Frenchified orientalist view on East Asia. No matter before or after the trip to Japan in 1900, French literature has always been an important source of Tablada's knowledge of East Asian culture and a fundamental inspiration for his visual poetry. The case of 'Soneto Watteau' indicates that the text and image conversion in French Symbolist poetry inspired Tablada's transpictorial creation, while the French translations of Japanese poetry decorated with graphical images, such as *Poèmes de la libellule*, represents the image-text integration in Japanese tradition to Tablada.

However, with all these inspirations for pictorial writing and visual writing, a surprising fact is that pictoriality or visuality in the two 'florilegios' is low. As we have discussed in the case of 'Soneto Watteau', though the poem was inspired by a painting, its poetic language involves much terminology in music and opera. Moreover, intermediality is not yet eminently bonded with East Asian themes in Tablada's poetry. Poems in *Musa Japónica* are almost completely textual. The techniques of employing terms and language typically used in other art forms, such as the theatrical effect in 'Soneto Watteau' and the lyrics in 'Soneto morisco', is never seen in *Musa Japónica*. Even in 'Japón', where stanzas are possibly inspired by Hokusai's prints, the poem refers to the content rather than the artistic techniques of the Oriental prints. Although Tablada's interest and awareness of intermediality were growing in his *modernista* stage, as seen in his illustrations for *Revista Moderna* as well as the collaborations with illustrators and the critical essays about Japanese art, he has not yet started to put visual characteristics into his poetry consciously. Therefore, we might ask: what is the trigger for Tablada's visual and pictorial writing, if it is not the French literature nor the trip to Japan?

Tablada's *modernista* period represented by *El florilegio* is the preparatory stage for his original pictorial and visual writing. The two threads that we look forward to following, intermediality between poetry and graphical art, and interculturality between East Asian culture and Mexican poetry, remain relatively apart from each other in *El florilegio*. In the next chapter, we will look into Tablada's pictorial writing inspired by Japanese prints by studying the collections *Hiroshigué* and *Al sol*. With the analysis of the connection between Tablada's verses and

Hokusai's prints, we are going to find out the turning point between his pictorial writing and visual writing.

## 2. HIROSHIGUÉ AND AL SOL: JAPANESE PRINTS IN TABLADA'S PICTORIAL WRITING

### 2.1 References to Japanese Art in Tablada's Writing

#### 2.1.1 *Japonisme*: The French-Influenced Craze for Japanese Art

In the first chapter, we reviewed the influence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French literature on José Juan Tablada's first poetry collection *El florilegio*. In the discussion of Tablada's translation of Japanese *waka* and the discussion of 'El Daimio' and 'El Samurai', we confirmed that French translations and interpretations were important sources for Tablada to know about Japanese literary texts. In this section, we will find that introductory and critical essays by French writers inspired and channelled Tablada's perception and presentation of Japanese visual art as well.

Tablada's knowledge of Japanese literature and art through French texts is a result of a trend labelled as *japonisme* in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

*Japonisme* refers to the study of the culture, history, and art of Japan. It is also the incorporation of Japanese devices of structure, presentation, and/ or motifs into western art. It is, more simply, japanophilia, usually expressed by the collection of Japanese art and imitation of its style.

*Japonisme* resembles a similar phenomenon called *chinoiserie* which had occurred in eighteenth century France, when Chinese designs were copied by western artists and Chinese tales were written by western writers; artists and writers alike were attracted by the exotic and fantastic qualities of that foreign culture. (Hartman 142).

The *japoniste* fashion influenced a group of French Naturalist and Symbolist writers including Edmund de Goncourt (1822-1896) as well as Pierre Loti and Heredia, who are the most important figures for the development of Tablada's admiration of East Asian culture, as we mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>42</sup> Among all the *japoniste* books, Edmund de Goncourt's two bibliographies of *ukiyo-e* masters, *Outamaro: le peintre des maisons vertes* in 1891 and *Hokusai: l'art japonais au XVIIe siècle* in 1896 were the inspiration for Tablada's monograph

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<sup>42</sup> Please see *Japonisme: Japanese Influence on French Art 1854-1910* for further information in this regard.

*Hiroshigué: el pintor de la nieve y de la lluvia, de la noche y de la luna.*<sup>43</sup> Published in Mexico in 1914, *Hiroshigué* was the first book to introduce Japanese art in Latin America, a product of Western (primarily French) research into the Japanese *ukiyo-e* master presented in the Spanish language. With the first page stating '[a] la venerada memoria de Edmundo de Goncourt', *Hiroshigué* embodies the research of previous *japonistes* including Edmund de Goncourt, Théodore Duret and Louis Gonse:

Hace mucho tiempo, al acabar de leer el libro *Outamaro* de Edmundo de Goncourt, me hice el propósito de escribir, para cuando mis estudios artísticos madurasen, un libro semejante...

...

Edmundo de Goncourt, después de *Outamaro*, sólo alcanzó a escribir *Hokusai*; pero Hiroshigué estaba en la lista de los cinco pintores.

Ahora yo, en este remoto rincón del planeta que tal vez ni sospeché el maestro dilecto, recojo su designio trunco y trato de realizarlo en parte, como un hijo amantísimo cumpliría la póstuma voluntad de un padre venerado. (*Hiroshigué* xi-xii)

Aside from being a continuity of Edmund de Goncourt's unfinished book series, Tablada's *Hiroshigué* was also supposed to be part of the series 'Monografías Japonesas', in which Tablada planned to publish four more works about Japanese culture, *Aztecas y Japoneses*, *La ceremonia del Thé (Tcha no yu)*, *La fiesta del incienso (Ko-Kuai)* and *El arte floral (Hana-iké.)* (*Hiroshigué* ii). Although these books were never actually published in the form of monographs, topics about Japanese society, rituals, lifestyle, and culture appear in essays and journal articles collected in *En el país del sol*, published in 1919. Tablada was so devoted to Japanese culture that he even built up a room in Japanese style at his home in Coyoacán, decorating it with lanterns, a folding screen, and a parasol. In a photo presenting his *washitsu* (Figure 2-1), Tablada sat on the *tatami* mat 'practicando un rito "shintoísta"' according to Francisco Gándara, wearing a robe that resembles *yukata*. *Hiroshigué* also offers an introduction to the Japanese social and cultural tradition in addition to the content on *ukiyo-e*.

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<sup>43</sup> The orthography of names and terms originally in Japanese in Tablada's book is notably influenced by French translations. Mostly based on Hepburn Romanisation, it is a mixture of influence from different French and English translations, with adjustments according to Spanish phonology. In Tablada's romanisation, many weak vowels wear accent marks, for example, 'hiakuzú' and 'zué'. Long vowels do not have any macron marks or circumflex accents. Tablada's romanisation is closest to the romanisation in Tei-San's *Notes sur l'art japonais*, except for that 'Outamaro' is written as 'Utamaro'. Hiroshige's name is written as 'Hiroshigé' in Anderson's book and 'Hiroshigé' in Tei-San's book, both with an accent mark. It is possible that Tablada added the letter 'u' per Spanish phonology.

Sentences about Japanese food ('del blanco y esponjado arroz, de la dorada *tempura*' 20), footnote

s about Japanese clothing ('haori' 27) and all the explanations of cultural references appearing in *ukiyo-e* exhibit Tablada's erudition about Japan.<sup>44</sup>

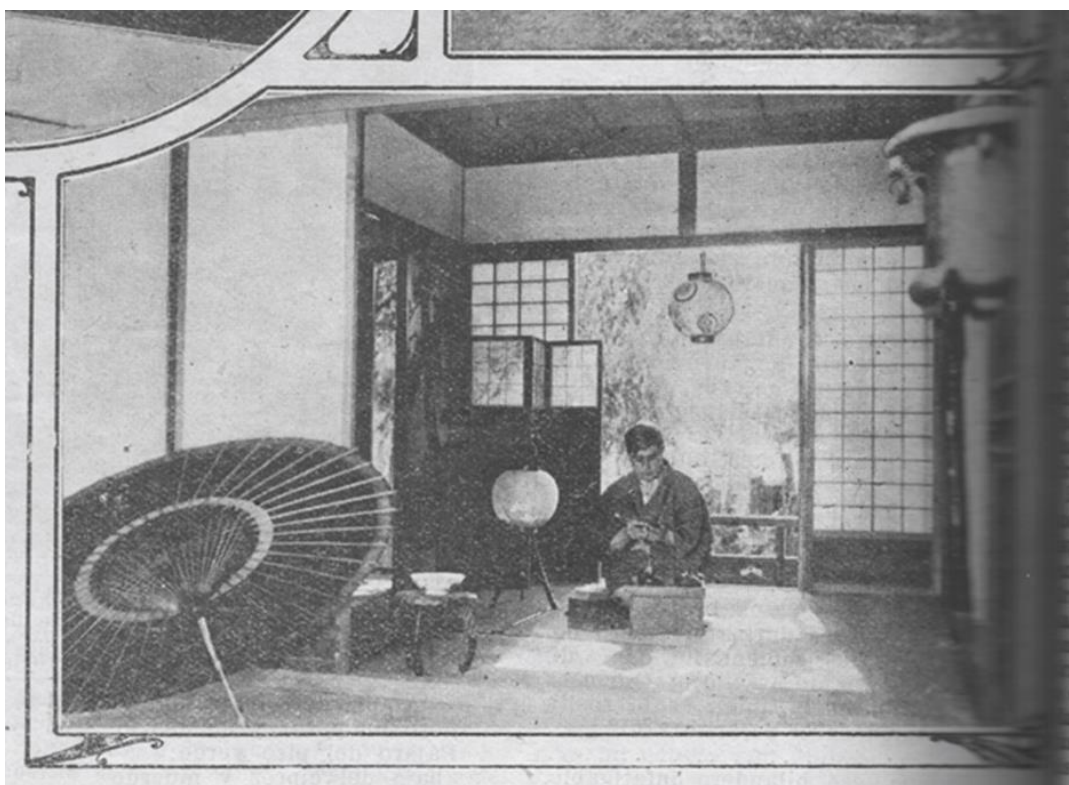


Figure 2-1 Vistas de la casa del poeta José Juan Tablada (1908-1913). Photo originally included in Francisco Gándara's article, 'Tablada' on *Revista de Revistas*, 22 June 1913.

Despite Tablada's great enthusiasm with the introduction of everything relating to Japan, his writings about Japanese prints, among all subjects related to Japanese culture and society, occupy the largest portion and show the most originality and depth of investigation. The essays about Hiroshige's prints are not only crucial for its delicacy of language but also for being one of the earliest introductions to Japanese or East Asian artists published in Spanish America. Moreover, *Hiroshigué* occupies a unique position in the development of Tablada's poetics. In

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<sup>44</sup> Torres-Rodríguez considers that Tablada's strong preference to Japanese aesthetics demonstrates his political escapism. Please see page 36 to 38 of *Orientaciones transpacificas: la modernidad mexicana y el espectro de Asia* for a detailed discussion of Tablada's photo in his 'casa japonesa'. Also see her book chapter 'Escenarios japoneses José Juan Tablada y la modernización transpacificas' for more discussion of Tablada's ekphrasis about Japanese applied art.

the editor's note of the book's digitalised version in the project *Letra e image*, Rodolfo Mata makes the following remarks:

*Hiroshigué* también es un ejemplo notable de prosa poética modernista, pero, sobre todo, es una obra que explica la transformación profunda de la poética de Tablada, la cual se hace evidente en su posterior ejercicio del haikú. ...es una obra clave en la trayectoria literaria de José Juan Tablada. No sólo es el trabajo más elaborado del japonismo del autor sino que constituye el eslabón que explica la transformación de su poética. Tan fuerte es la identificación de Tablada con Hiroshigué que podría decirse que en *Un día. Poemas sintéticos* el poeta, en el paisaje paradisiaco de la estación veraniega La Esperanza, cerca de Bogotá, adopta la personalidad del pintor japonés y se convierte, por medio de las palabras, en el pintor de la naturaleza que alguna vez quiso ser. (n.p.)

Mata's remarks that Tablada adopts the personality of the Japanese painter and transforms it 'by means of words' draw our attention and give rise to several questions: How much did Tablada know about the Japanese prints, in particular those prints that incorporate both word and image? How is the influence of Japanese art reflected in Tablada's poetry and paintings?

In the first essay included in *Hiroshigué*, Tablada cited his poem 'El poema de Okusai' dedicated to Katsushika Hokusai, which was written in 1910 and later collected in the album *Al sol y bajo la luna* (1918). In the next section, we are going to explore the original sources of Japanese prints that Tablada has referred to for his essays and poetry. Before that, in the following part of this section, we will first examine Tablada's own collection of Japanese prints with attention to *ukiyo-es* that combine text and image: how Japanese prints combine the two art forms and whether Tablada is aware of the text-image coexistence in the same print. Then we will look into Tablada's remarks about Japanese prints by examining the ekphrasis in *Hiroshigué*.

### 2.1.2 *Ehon* and *Surimono*: Japanese Poetry-Painting in Tablada's Print Collection

Tablada is famous as a poet in Mexican literature. However, outside academia, the public is less aware of Tablada's contribution as a major collector of Japanese art in Mexico. In fact, Tablada's collection of Japanese prints is considered one of the oldest collections of Japanese art in Latin America (García Rodríguez n.p.).<sup>45</sup> Consisting of 225 pieces from different series

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<sup>45</sup> The CD-Rom *José Juan Tablada: letra e imagen* produced in the year 2003, includes Tablada's 'graphic archive, his four visual books and other works involving the relationship between word and image' (Mata 982). The *Collección de Estampas de José Juan Tablada* and *Archivos de Imágenes de*

and illustrated books, the collection includes works of influential *ukiyo-e* artists such as Kunichika, Kunisada, Chikanobu, Kunisada II, Kuniyoshi, Hiroshige, Kunisada III and Hokusai.

Tablada's enthusiasm and erudition about Japanese prints is well investigated by Tanabe, Ota, Mata, and Pascucci. They have made a great effort to perfect Tablada's profile according to his diaries, journal articles, and interviews with Tablada's acquaintances. Thanks to the previous studies, we now have a comparatively full view of how Tablada became interested in Japanese paintings. Pascucci's thesis *Entre México y Asia*, in particular, includes extensive research into Tablada's knowledge of different varieties of Japanese art, including *ukiyo-e*, *sumi-e*, as well as Zen aesthetics presented in traditional Japanese art (287-313). Their studies demonstrate that Japanese art is an important media through which Tablada learned about East Asian culture and aesthetics. In this section, we are going to concentrate on the Japanese painting-poetry hybrid art in order to investigate Tablada's understanding of image-text integration in East Asian tradition.

The *Colección de Estampas de José Juan Tablada* contains many prints with calligraphic writings besides the picture. Some of these prints are sparse pages from *ehons* (絵本), picture books that provide not only pictorial translations for Japanese poems but also calligraphic writing of the verses or the poems' title as the inscription. Tablada's collection of Japanese prints includes several pieces of prints from *ehons*, including one print by Utagawa Kuniyoshi cooperated by Hiroshige, Kuniyoshi and Kunisada from the Utagawa School.

*Ehons* were so popular in the Edo period that their influence could have reached Europe. In French translations of Japanese poetry, translated *waka* written in European language are accompanied by printed pictures. One of Tablada's main sources of Japanese poetry, Judith Gautier's *Poèmes de la libellule* (Figure 1-12), is in many ways similar to Utamaro's famous album *Ehon Mushi Erami* (画本虫撰, 'Picture Book of Selected Insects'), which is a collection of *kyōka* by different poets. In double page spread, each print from Utamaro's *ehon* depicts two insects on the background of flowers and plants, with two verses in hand-written script corresponding to the insects (Figure 2-2). Likewise, *Poèmes de la libellules* can also be seen

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*José Juan Tablada* in *Letra e imagen* provide physical sources for the investigation of Tablada's relationship with East Asian art.

*Colección de Estampas de José Juan Tablada* in the CD provides information about edition, title, series, illustrator, date, form and technique of each print. Since the CD already gives detailed information about all and each of the prints in both Spanish and Japanese, this thesis is limited to mention a few interesting prints from the collection that are related to poetry.

Please see the collection on <http://www.tablada.unam.mx/ukicol/index1.html>.

as an *ehon* collection, since it contains both inscriptions of poetic texts and printed *kachō-ga*, paintings of flower and birds. On the other hand, Tablada’s haiku collection *Un día* (Figure 2-3), consisting of a similar text and image coexistence on each page, shows a resemblance not only to the visual arrangements in *Poèmes de la libellules*, but a similarity to Japanese *ehon* as well.



Figure 2-2 Kitagawa Utamaro. *Dragonfly and Butterfly. Ehon Mushi Erami*. Kyōka written by Ichifuji Nitaka and Mare na Toshinari. 1788. British Museum.

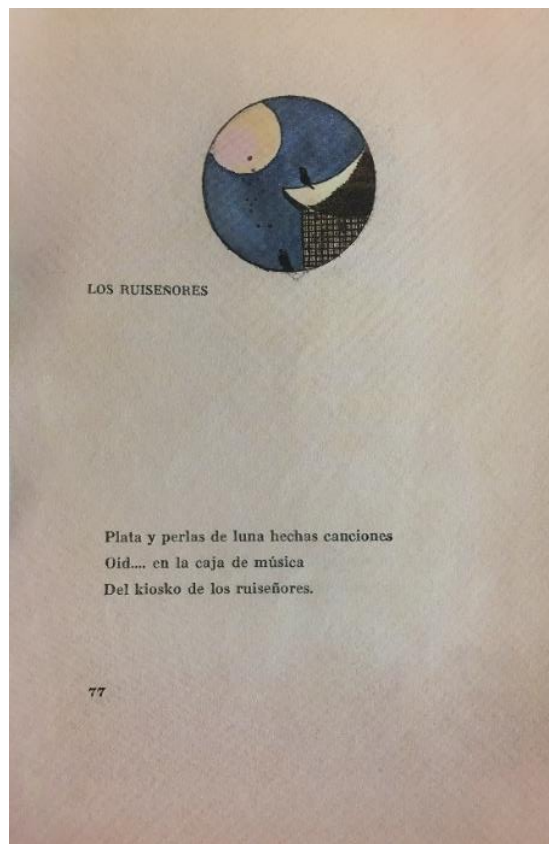


Figure 2-3 Page 77 of Tablada's collection *Un día*.

As we have mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, works that integrate both visual and poetic presentation are rarely seen in Western history. The similar text-image arrangement between Japanese *ehon* and Western translations or imitations of Japanese poetry such as *Poèmes de la libellule* and *Un día* suggests that, when the Western translators and poets introduced Japanese poetry into alphabetic languages, they might have also reproduced the poetry-painting coexistence in their books. Tablada, as well as other Western translators and writers of *waka* and *haiku* such as Judith Gautier, was probably inspired by Japanese prints and paintings and thus represented the East Asian tradition of the text-image hybrid art form.

Tablada showed great interest in Japanese art not only as a collector and art critic but also as a painter. The *Archivos de Imágenes de José Juan Tablada* contains a few sketches, which are copies of different Japanese art forms including *ōkubi-e* (Figure 2-4), 'paintings showing only the head', which is a representative genre of *ukiyo-e*, as well as ink wash paintings, a type of brush painting that only uses black ink. The fact that there are many examples of Tablada's imitation of Japanese art forms adds on the likelihood that the painter-poet imitated – no matter consciously or not – Japanese art forms when he created his text-image integrated works.



Figure 2-4 Retrato oriental. Carpeta II. Archivo Gráfico de José Juan Tablada.

While the *Colección de Estampas de José Juan Tablada* contains a fair number of pages from *ehon* Tablada has hardly made any remarks regarding the text-image coexistence in Japanese art. One of the few cases is *Hiroshigué*, where Tablada briefly mentioned once a *surimono* by Hokusai, although he did not comment on the poetry in the print (32). *Surimono* (摺物, literally meaning ‘printed thing’) usually issued by poetry societies on special occasions or festivals during the late Edo period, contains a short poem with an illustration referring to the poem’s content. Except for *ehon*, *surimono* was the most common form of graphical-textual coherence in traditional Japanese art. We feel it is especially necessary to know Tablada’s perception of *surimono*, because of the unique text-image correlation in this art form: the painting in *surimono* is more than merely a decorative illustration for the poem; it echoes with the poetic content, and in many cases, presents the alternative meaning of the *kakekotoba* (掛詞), the multi-meaning pivot word in the inscribed poem.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Please see *Leaves of Words: The Art of Surimono as a Poetic Practice* by Daniel J. McKee and ‘The Surimono Kyōka’ in *Surimono: prints by elbow* by Polster and Marks for more information about the word-image interplay in *surimono*.

The existence of *surimono* was widely acknowledged among European and American *japonistes*. For example, Théodore Duret (1838-1927) put his album of *surimono* prints made by various *ukiyo-e* artists including Utamaro and Hokusai on exhibition in Paris (Inaga 92-3). The success of this exhibition was recorded in many journals and books which Tablada possibly had read. In addition, most of the books that Tablada had referred to, including works of Louis Gonse, Edmund de Goncourt, and W. von Seidlitz involves introductions to this unique genre of *ukiyo-e*. Among them, Gonse's book of Japanese art and Burty's article 'La Poterie au Japon' in Bing's *Le Japon artistique* (1889) makes explicit remarks about the coexistence of poetic text and visual image in *surimono* (McKee 90-1). Tablada saw, collected, and even imitated many Japanese text-image integrated works. He also had the chance to read about the text-image interaction in *surimono*. However, was he aware of the interaction between painting and poetry in an East Asian hybrid art?

A source material to study Tablada's apprehension of text-image relationship in *surimono* is his English essay 'Japanese New Year Cards', published in the January issue of *International Studios* in 1924, years after the publication of most of Tablada's poetry collections including *Li-Po* and *Un día*. In this introductory article of *surimono*, Tablada addresses the prints' function as greeting cards as a near equivalent to Christmas cards. Defining the *surimono* as 'beautiful prints originated by artists of the Eighteenth Century to express friendly sentiments by symbolism', Tablada raises several examples of New Year's symbol in East Asian culture and introduces the techniques of colour prints in *surimono* (277). However, the article never mentions the poetry inscriptions in the prints, although all the prints cited in the articles come with words. In one of the illustrations for the article, the description says, 'Japanese prints for a New Years' card' (281, Figure 2-5). If Tablada knew more about Japanese culture or Japanese language, he would have recognised that the prints in the picture are *karuta*, a card game played in January with one hundred cards each bearing a classic *waka* from *Hyakunin Isshu*, an anthology that literally means 'one hundred poems by one hundred poets'. 'Japanese New Year Cards' indicates that Tablada considers *surimono* merely as a colour print art, without realising the visual-verbal coherence in *surimono*, not to mention the visual presentation of the pivot word in the inscribed *surimono* poem.



Figure 2-5 'Japanese Print for a New Year's Card.' Illustration on page 281, *International Studio*, 1924.

Another example that suggests Tablada was not aware of the text-image relationship in *surimono* is Tablada's remarks of some fish prints in *Hiroshigué*. In the fourteenth chapter, involving an introduction to Hiroshige's series of fish prints, *Uo zukushi*, Tablada enumerates five examples from the series that his collection contained. Tablada especially mentions that some of these fish prints come with poetic inscriptions: 'esta estampa luce inscritas dos breves poesías o utas de Funématzu y de Toshino mon Haruki', whereas in most editions, all prints in *Uo zukushi* come with *kyōka* verses and poets' name in calligraphic writing (81). In addition, the print Tablada cited as an illustration does not contain any poetic text (Figure 2-6).

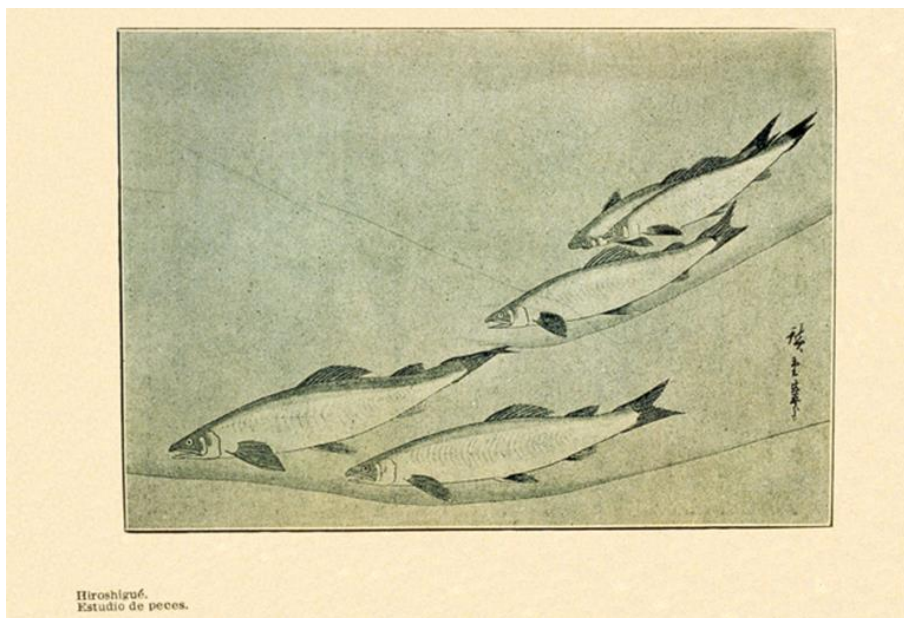


Figure 2-6 Illustration in *Hiroshigū*, with the title of 'Estudio de peces' on page 80.



Figure 2-7 Utagawa Hiroshige. *Ayu. Uo zukushi*. 1832-33. Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

Tablada's information of the poetic inscriptions in the fish prints is only half-right. Tablada misspells the name Hakufune (檜垣百船) as 'Funématzu'. In another case, he wrongly remarks that a print contains only one poem, which actually has two poems inscribed. The inaccuracy of the poetry inscriptions reinforces our theory that Tablada was not aware of the *kyōka*'s content, let alone the interaction between the poetic meaning and pictorial meaning in the

same print. The absence of critical investigation into *waka* in his article in *Hiroshigué* about *Uo zukushi* indicates the unlikelihood of direct inspirations from the transposition of meaning between text and image in *surimono*. It is more likely that *surimono* influences Tablada the same way as any other prints that contain text, such as pages in *ehon*, if such influence really exists.

Tablada's ignorance about the text-image correlation in *surimono* makes an intriguing contrast to the practice of this text-image coherence in his own poems regarding East Asian topics. Many pieces of visual poems in *Li-Po* involve a verbal-visual relationship similar to that in *surimono*: the graphical feature of the work presents a verbal meaning that is not explicitly told in the poetic text or an alternative meaning of the pivot word in the poem. If Tablada's understanding of the word-image relationship in East Asian art is still at the stage of subconscious imitation of the *ehon*-style painting-poetry coexistence, without knowing the common practice of using pictures to express the un(explicitly)told poetic meaning, then, what inspires him to create the *surimono*-style verbal-visual interplay in *Li-Po*? We shall have this question answered in the following sections, before entering the close reading of visual-verbal pun in *Li-Po* in Chapter Three.

## 2.2 Text-Image-Text in 'Okusai': A Case Study of Transpictoriality

### 2.2.1 Pictorial Presentation in Words: Ekphrasis in 'Okusai'

In the previous section of this chapter, we investigated Tablada's knowledge of Japanese text-image hybrid art and have seen the influence of Japanese prints on Tablada's visual creation. In this section, we are going to study the case of 'El poema de Okusai', which involves both interculturality and intermediality, the two key themes of Tablada's poetry that this thesis focuses on.

In the first essay included in *Hiroshigué*, Tablada cites his own poem 'Okusai', which was written in 1910 and dedicated to Katsushika Hokusai. It was published later in the collection *Al sol y bajo la luna* (205-11). Consisting of 38 stanzas, 'Okusai' is one of Tablada's most extended and most difficult compositions. Few scholars have paid attention to this poem, except for the Japanese researchers Atsuko Tanabe and Seiko Ota. Both Tanabe and Ota attribute the lack of research on this poem to the difficulty of understanding it due to the tremendous number of references to Japanese prints that the poem involves. Tanabe

translates and explains the cultural references behind the Japanese terms that are mentioned in 'Okusai', such as 'Mangua', 'Nagoya', and 'kami' (91-102). Ota identifies the original prints that Tablada's verses referred to and provides different versions of the prints in her book (78-89). Tanabe and Ota's studies solve the question of what the exact textual and pictorial sources for composing 'Okusai' were, but we are still curious about how the poem breaches the boundaries of culture and media and adapts visual messages into words. Based on their studies, we are hoping to undertake comprehensive research into the pictorial references in 'Okusai' and analyse the entire transmedia and transcultural process from Japanese prints to Spanish poetry. By means of close reading, we hope to answer these questions: What role do Japanese prints play in Tablada's poetry? How does his poetry present Japanese prints and the literary texts behind the prints?

The initial stanza of 'Okusai' immediately declares its subject, a celebration of Hokusai's talented ability that 'paints everything': 'Desde el Dios hasta el samurái, / Desde el águila hasta el bambú, / Todo lo dibujó Okusai/ En la "Mangua" y en el "Guafú"'. In 1814, Hokusai started to publish a collection of sketches that eventually reached 15 volumes, with the title of *Hokusai Manga* (北斎漫画, 'Random Drawing by Hokusai', written as 'Mangua' in Tablada's poem). In 1849, *Hokusai Gafu* (北斎画譜, written as 'Guafú' in Tablada's poem) came out as a set of three volumes of black-and-white illustrated books. These two collections of illustrated books provide many prints that inspired Tablada's creations. More than a dozen stanzas contain direct or implicit references to Hokusai's prints, not only from 'la "Mangua" y el "Guafú"' as pointed out in the poem itself, but also from other coloured print collections that will be discussed later in detail.

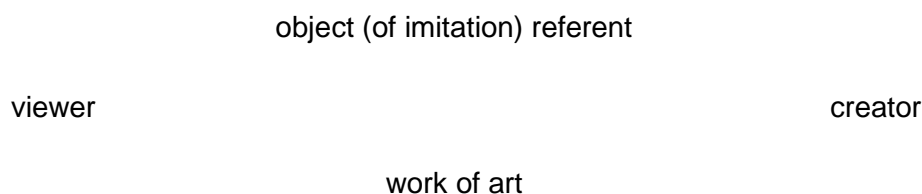
After the first and second stanza which briefly mention a few topics that frequently appear in Hokusai's pictures, stanza three sums up the content of Hokusai's *Fugaku Hyakkei*, which is not only known for the depiction of different 'aspectos de la cumbre' of Mount Fuji, but is also impressive for 'la nube, la ola, la llama'. *Fugaku Hyakkei* (富嶽百景, 'One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji') is a black-and-white landscape print album in three volumes published between 1834 and 1835, which appeared a few years after the famous coloured *ukiyo-e* series, *Fugaku Sanjūrokkei* (富嶽三十六景, 'Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji'). Both *Fugaku Sanjūrokkei* and *Fugaku Hyakkei*, containing a large number of prints in which Mount Fuji appears as the focus or in the background, are dedicated to the highest peak of the Japanese islands that has inspired artists and poets for centuries. The cultural value of Mount Fuji is so significant that although 'Fuji' is usually written in Japanese as 富士, on every title of the prints in *Fugaku*

*Hyakkei*, it is written in characters with the same pronunciation, 不二, which literally means ‘not two’ with the connotation of ‘incomparable’ and ‘unique’ to address the exceptional importance of this mountain. In *Hiroshigué*, Tablada addresses the cultural significance of Mount Fuji in the article ‘El Fuziyama [sic] y su significación mística y estética’, claiming that the beauty of this volcano ‘es loada por los poetas y su imagen reproducida en toda obra de arte, desde los arcaicos kakemonos atesorados en los templos, hasta los frívolos *bibelots* que inundan los mercados extranjeros’ (79).

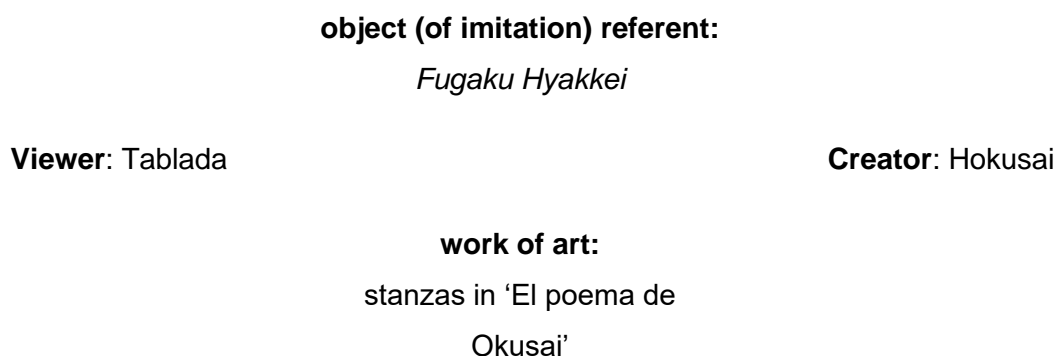
Tablada was not the only admirer of the *ukiyo-es* and *bibelots* delivering Mount Fuji’s beauty and ‘El poema de Okusai’ is not Tablada’s only poem involving Mount Fuji. The early poem ‘Japón’ (121-3) in Tablada’s first poetry collection *El florilegio* already contains a vivid verbal depiction of Mount Fuji that might remind people of Hokusai’s prints. Ota relates the imagery of Japan in Tablada’s stanzas with the descriptions made by the Goncourt brothers and Luis GONSE, and the paintings and prints by Hokusai and Hiroshige (66). However, as we have pointed out in Chapter One, it is more likely that Tablada’s ekphrastic lines in ‘Japón’ was inspired by *Fugaku Hyakkei* rather than *Fugaku Sanjūrokkei* which Ota suggests.

Unlike the vague connection between the verbal images in ‘Japón’ and the graphical images in Hokusai’s prints, which we have mentioned in footnote 31 in ‘Okusai’, we can observe clear poetic allusion to *Fugaku Hyakkei*: ‘Una cigüeña calva y cana’ refers to the white stork in *Sanpaku no Fuji* (三白の不二), while the dragon climbing up the cloud in stanza 33 matches the print *Nobori-ryū no Fuji* (登龍の不二), although the references to the prints are sometimes vague. Readers cannot always be sure if one stanza definitely refers to one picture and not some other picture. We cannot even be sure that it was *Fugaku Hyakkei* that exclusively inspired Tablada’s verses praising Mount Fuji and not *Fugaku Sanjūrokkei* or another print. Finding the connection between the referred original picture and the referential poetic text is almost like a game. If we were not familiar with the prints nor aware that the verses are associated with them before reading the text, we could still have a beautiful poem to read, but the verses about natural scenes appear to be no more than pure descriptions of the Japanese landscape. Otherwise, we might find the prize of the game — that all traces surprisingly point to a pictorial referent. This process of perception might seem familiar if we have viewed *Fugaku Hyakkei*. Mount Fuji is not always at the centre of all prints in this album. However, knowing these volumes are sketches of the mountain from different angles at different times and in different seasons, we will eventually find the mountain even if we do not see it at first glance.

Instead of saying that Tablada's verses depict the scenery of Mount Fuji, it is more accurate to say that his poem presents the image of Mount Fuji as represented in Hokusai's prints. Tablada's description of Hokusai's prints, portraying the content of Hokusai's pictures and providing art criticism verbally, reminds us of the poetic tradition of 'ekphrasis', a Greek word meaning 'the use of detailed description of a work of visual art as a literary device' (Baldick). In *Poetics of the Iconotext*, Liliane Louvel provides a scheme to explain the polarities of ekphrasis according to Murray Kreiger's theory (45-6):



If we apply Louvel's scheme to the ekphrastic stanzas about *Fugaku Hyakkei* in 'El poema de Okusai', we will have the following result:



Louvel uses this scheme and develops several variations to explain the functions of ekphrasis and the viewer-creator interaction (47-8). Louvel asserts that the scheme clearly illustrates the 'relationships between viewer-word-referent, creator-work-referent and work-referent, but it lacks the interaction between creator and viewer' (46). However, in discussing 'El poema de Okusai', we see less need to analyse the direct interaction between Tablada the viewer and Hokusai the creator. When we look at the ekphrastic verses/secondary presentation, what we see is the creator's work instead of the creator himself. Therefore, in the investigation of Tablada's ekphrasis, we can borrow Louvel's scheme and make some modifications based on the above scheme of polarities in order to investigate the relationship between the different stages of forming an ekphrastic relationship.

In the ekphrastic composition process, as in the stanzas in 'El poema de Okusai' and 'Japón', Tablada as the writer/creator of the writing/work of art is at the same time the viewer of the referent/print. Since the referent in the composition process itself is also a work of art, it then involves another set of polarities in which the artist/creator, Hokusai in this case, produced their prints/ works of art referring to nature, the existing Mount Fuji/object of imitation. We shall name this set of polarities scheme 1, and the previous set in which Tablada is the creator as scheme 2. Therefore, we have the following two schemes:

<b>Scheme 1</b>	Mount Fuji/referent (nature)	
Hokusai/viewer of nature		Hokusai/creator of print
	print/work of art (image)	
<b>Scheme 2</b>	Print/referent (image)	
Tablada/viewer of print		Tablada/creator of writing
	ekphrasis/work of art (text)	

It follows, then, that both the ekphrasis and the print are representations of other referents. Louvel calls ekphrasis 'the representation of a representation' and this paper would agree with her remark (45). Since the work of art in scheme 2 is imitating/referring to the work of art in scheme 1, work of art in scheme 2 (ekphrasis) is a secondary presentation (presentation of the print) based on the primary presentation (presentation of nature).<sup>47</sup> In the following sections, we are going to use this two-staged scheme to explain other references to Hokusai's prints in Tablada's 'Okusai'. This model applies to many of Tablada's poems and is not limited to this particular one.

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<sup>47</sup> In fact, French literary theorist Roland Barthes (1915 – 1980) has also proposed the idea of 'representation of a representation', which he refers to as 'myth', a 'second-order semiological system ... [t]hat which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second' (*Mythologies* 114). He comes up with a diagram that explains the relationship within a 'semiological chain', which is very similar to the scheme that we use to discuss Tablada's pictorial writing.

Since our investigation into Tablada's references to visual arts involves both picture and language and Barthes claims that 'myth is a type of speech', to avoid ambiguity, we do not use Barthes' terminology in this thesis (107). In the following chapter, we are going to use the term 'signifier' and 'signified' to refer to the form and meaning of the verbal text.

## 2.2.2 *Kaidans* in 'Okusai': From Folk Tales to Prints, from Prints to Poetry

In many circumstances, understanding an ekphrasis requires readers to know both the primary presentation/the work of art used as the referent for the eventual ekphrasis, and the original object used as the referent for the primary presentation. For readers who know Hokusai's prints, descriptive stanzas about Mount Fuji clearly correspond to Hokusai's prints of the symbolic volcano; readers can recognise both the initial referent and the primary presentation. Even those readers who are not familiar with Hokusai's prints are still able to recognise that these stanzas are illustrating beautiful natural sceneries of mountains and sea, in which case they recognise only the initial referent. In this instance, though the readers may not perceive the full meaning of the verses, the stanzas still make sense.

However, there are cases in which the initial referent for the primary presentation is also a work of art. 'Okusai' contains many stanzas that are almost impossible to understand without knowing the referent for the prints. For instance, stanzas 11 to 19, describing an infernal Oriental scenario where nightmarish creatures walk around, would seem confusing to those readers unfamiliar with the stories behind the primary presentation referred to. Hokusai's prints used as referents for these stanzas are illustrations based on *kaidans*, Japanese folk tales about monsters, spirits and supernatural creatures. Seiko Ota revealed the corresponding *kaidan*-inspired prints mentioned in Tablada's poem (81-5). Verses from stanza 11, 'Como incubaba una faz de momia / El incendio de una linterna', vividly depict the intimidating lantern with the pale face of the ghost in *O-iwa-san* (お岩さん, Figure 2-8), and stanza 12 portrays the sly eyes of the skeleton in *Kohada Koheiji*, which both come from Hokusai's *nishiki-e* collection *Hyaku-monogatari* (百物語, 'One Hundred Ghost Stories').<sup>48</sup> Stanza 14 and 15 sketch the image of the miserable ghosts in *Kikujo-ga-rei* (菊女が灵) and *Kasane no enkon* (累の怨魂) from *Hokusai Manga* (Figure 2-9). The following stanza 16 gives a portrayal of the same ghost Kasane, with the additional remarks 'su rictus y su ojo de pulpo', which correspond to the image in the print *Sara-yashiki* (皿屋敷) from *Hyaku-monogatari*.

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<sup>48</sup> Hokusai was the illustrator of many *kaidan* books. For example, Hokusai's sketches about Kasane are based on the *kaidan* in *Shin Kasane Gedatsu Monogarari* (1807), a widely distributed version drafted by Kyokutei Bakin, with Hokusai's illustrations. Therefore, we can confirm that Hokusai had first-hand access to the *kaidan* texts.

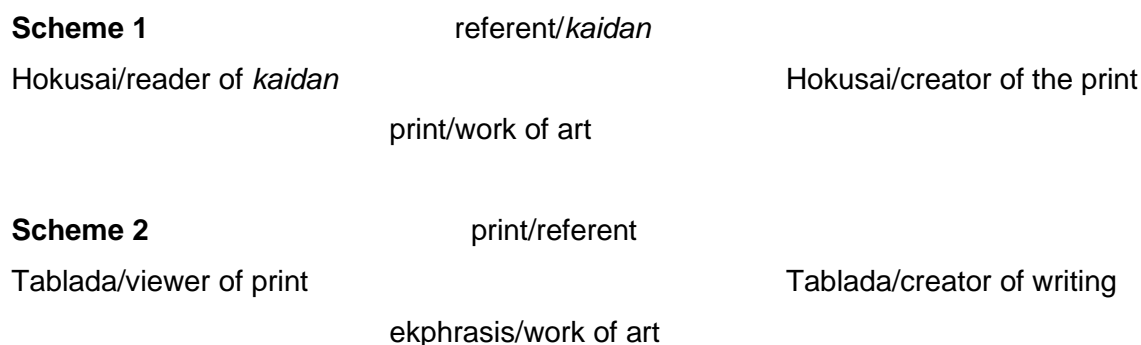


Figure 2-8 Katsushima Hokusai. *Oiwa-San. Hyaku Monogatari*. n.d. British Museum.



Figure 2-9 Katsushika Hokusai. *Kasane no enkon* on the left page, *Kikujo-ga-rei* on the right page. *Hokusai Manga*, vol.10. 1819. British Museum.

Thus, we have the following chart to explain the relationship between the three types of work of art involved in stanzas relating to *kaidan*:



The above chart shows clearly how the eventual secondary ekphrasis comes into being: if we categorise it from the perspective of the form of art, the stanzas form a text inspired by a text-based image.

As we can observe from the figures, Hokusai's prints reveal little information about the *kaidan*'s plot. Therefore, describing the image of ghosts and monsters from Hokusai's prints, Tablada's ekphrasis should have achieved a 'freeze-frame' effect according to Liliane Louvel's words (14-5). However, when 'Okusai' refers to the monsters or spirits, the poem puts these characters into a story, conducting the ekphrasis in a narrative style, rather than a descriptive language. Moreover, it includes many details that is not shown in the print itself. For example, stanza 14 refers to the female characters in Figure 2-9 as 'pobres mujeres muertos', and in the next stanza to the ghost of Okiku as 'la infeliz suicida' while Hokusai's picture does not indicate that Okiku committed suicide. If the poet had only viewed the prints and was not aware of the *kaidan*, he would not have specified these details which do not exist in the pictures. Furthermore, the introduction of *Hiroshigué* names a number of different Japanese monsters:

Habla la Noche con sus mil espectros, *Okikú* que confunde sus largos cabellos junto al brocal del pozo, con las guedejas del saüz llorón; *Kasané* alma en pena de repulsiva carantamaula; *Kitsuné*, la pérfida zorra blanca que para mal del hombre sabe convertirse en fascinadora cortesana; *Rokuro kubi* de cuello desmesurado; *Funá yurei*, descarnada sirena de los naufragios; y lémuers, estrigias, larvas, duendes, gobelinos, tenebriones, espantos y aparecidos; una verdadera ronda de aquelarre que transforma la noche japonesa a la vera de los cementerios, o cabe la umbría de las selvas, en un Sabbat espeluznante... (ix-x)

According to the article 'El monstruo', Tablada was already aware of Utamaro and Hokusai's prints about *kaidan* themes even before the publication of his first poetry collection. Tablada's interest in supernatural creatures is demonstrated in various works: initially in 'Japón', in which

stanza 13 states ‘Amo tu extraña mitología, / los raros monstruos, las claras flores’; then in ‘El monstruo’ published in *Revista Moderna* in 1899 and in the prologue of *Hiroshigué*; and most obviously in ‘El poema de Okusai’, from stanza 11 to stanza 19. One possible source about *kaidans* that Tablada drew on could be the translations by the Greece-born *japoniste* Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904). Many supernatural creatures appearing in Tablada’s writings refer to Hearn’s stories of natural beings, such as ‘*Yuki onna*’ the spirit of snow from Hearn’s *Kwaidan* (Tablada ix). Stanza 18 and 19 of ‘El poema de Okusai’ illustrating a beast yelling ‘Bakú’ refers to the legendary animal *Baku* (貍) illustrated in *Hokusai Manga* (Figure 2-10). Tablada clearly refers to the story in Hearn’s article ‘The eater of dreams’ from *Kottō* (1903) given the fact that ‘El poema de Okusai’ copies Hearn’s words ‘Baku kuraë! Baku kuraë!—“Devour, O Baku! devour my evil dream!”’ and ‘Shirokinakatsukamí’ (Hearn *Kottō* 150):

Y en inmóvil pavor deshecho  
 en la sombra me libérté  
 Sólo al clamar desde mi lecho  
 “Bakú, Bakú, Kuraeé!... [sic]

Shirokinakatsukamí  
 Lkegí [sic], dócil a mis empeños,  
 Y ¡oh brujo! me libró de ti  
 Devorando mis malos sueños.... (208)



Figure 2-10 Katsushika Hokusai. *Baku*. *Hokusai Manga*, vol. 2. 1819. Harvard Art Museum

Except for Lafcadio Hearn's *kaidan* collections, there are other sources that Tablada could have referred to. The influential French *japoniste* Philippe Burty (1830 – 1890), who acquired a large collection of books on Japanese culture and held a widely known collection of Japanese prints and decorative objects, published the magazine *L'Art japonais* that was a source of reference for Tablada (Weisberg *The Independent Critic* 274). Burty's book *Chefs-d'oeuvre des Arts industriels* compares sketches in Hokusai's *Manga* and other collections 'to Watteau in their elegance, to Daumier in their energy, to Goya in their fantasy, and to Eugène Delacroix in their movement' (cited in Inaga 78). By saying 'como esa figura de Goya, / que alza una lápida tumbal', stanza 20 of 'El poema de Okusai' inevitably reminds us of Burty's remark. Instead of emphasising the 'fantasy', the word 'tumbal' implies a sense of mortality. From 'kábala' to 'Belcebú', the mystical atmosphere created by the enumeration of supernatural creatures from Hokusai's pictures comes to a turning point in stanza 20, after which the poem

demonstrates the death of Hokusai with references that are either obscure — such as ‘eras un bodhisava [sic]’ in stanza 23 — or explicit.<sup>49</sup>

In summary, the above analysis reproduces the transmedia trajectory that stanzas 11 to 19 of ‘El poema de Okusai’ have taken from traditional Japanese folk stories through to *decadentista* Mexican poetry. The creator of the primary presentation, Hokusai, designed the prints according to the content of *kaidans*. After viewing the prints, the creator of the secondary presentation, Tablada, went back to trace the inspiration for the pictures, learned the original folklore through translation or introductory essays in French, and recreated them in the ‘ekphrasis’ of Hokusai’s prints.

The reason why the word ‘ekphrasis’ is put in quotation marks here, is because although ‘El poema de Okusai’ appears to write about the prints, it actually describes not only what is in the pictures, but also what is behind the pictures. Some stanzas of the poem retell the literary text represented by the print, a text that is not necessarily the original Japanese folktale but a European adaptation. Stanzas 19 and 20 about ‘Baku’ provide an example where the poem presents more information included in the translation than the content of Hokusai’s print. In contrast to traditional ekphrasis where the chief aim is to present a picture, Tablada’s verses raise doubt: are Japanese prints in the form of pictures a surrogate for literary text and an intermediate means of presenting Japanese cultural tradition?

### 2.2.3 Art Names in ‘Okusai’: From Chinese Characters to Prints, from Prints to Poetry

In addition to the stanzas’ implicit references to textual referents involved in Hokusai’s *kaidan* pictures discussed in the previous section, ‘El poema de Okusai’ also makes explicit citations of the Japanese text involved in Hokusai’s prints. After all, ‘El poema de Okusai’ is a poem dedicated to the *ukiyo-e* master Hokusai and it is inevitably related to the artist’s life. Born with the name Kawamura Tokitarō (川村 時太郎), this *ukiyo-e* master had more than thirty Art

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<sup>49</sup> The lines ‘Te llamaba el dios del infierno / Para pintarle un kakemono’ in stanza 22 might be inspired by the story of Mimi-nashi Hōichi (耳なし芳一, ‘Hoichi the Earless’). Collected and translated into English by Hearn in *Kwaidan*, it relates the story of the blind musician Hōichi who was so talented that ghostly samurai invited him to play for his lord. The phrase ‘eras un bodhisava [sic]’ in stanza 23 also refers to the afterlife. ‘Becoming a Bohdisattva’ in Japanese, ‘成仏’, usually means ‘going to Heaven after death’, which makes an interesting contrast with the ‘infierno’ in the previous stanza. However, I cannot find any print in Hokusai’s collections referring to Mimi-nashi Hōichi’s story. It could also be just a coincidence between Tablada’s verse and the Japanese folk story.

Names during his 88 years.<sup>50</sup> Katsushika, the name of the district where the artist was born, together with Hokusai, a name of his own choice, compose his most well-known name, Katsushika Hokusai.

'El poema de Okusai' manifests Tablada's interest in Chinese characters presented in calligraphic art, in the form of inscriptions and signatures on Japanese prints. Some stanzas of 'El poema de Okusai' put the Japanese pronunciation of Hokusai's Art Name straightly in Latin letters. In stanza 17, "'Guakiojin" si aún abre y dilata' corresponds to Gakyojin (画狂人, which literally means 'crazy man for painting'), an Art Name Hokusai used between 1799 and 1806. The last two lines of stanza 22, 'De tu gran vida, ¡oh Manrojín! / Con los cien siglos de la esvástica...' include the pronunciation Manji Rojin (卍老人, literally meaning 'old man of the Manji symbol'), a reference to the geometric shape of the symbol in the Art Name, and an explanation of the symbol's significance — ten thousand years. 卍 is a symbol commonly used in various Asian religions, including Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. In East Asia, the symbol stands for myriad and eternity, often related to Buddhism, and is considered a variant of the Chinese character 万, meaning 'ten thousand'.<sup>51</sup> The most frequently used name 'Hokusai' (北斎), together with the artist's other names Hokusai Tokimasa (北斎 辰政, Figure 2-11) and Tokisai (辰斎), come from the name of the Northern Star in Japanese, Hokushin (北辰). The Northern Star is the symbol for the Myōken bodhisattva in Japanese Buddhism, which again has a strong religious connotation.

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<sup>50</sup> In many East Asian countries, literati and artists adopted Art Names (written as 号, 'hao' in Chinese, 'gō' in Japanese) for professional purposes. In China Art Names were flexible. They could be derived from the name of the person's residence, his or her well-known verse or painting, or from a matter of his or her own interest. Art Names in China were usually given by the writers themselves when they became adults, in contrast to given names (名) chosen by elders of the family before birth. Art Names are different from courtesy names (字) given by the elder family members when men reached twenty years old and women reached fifteen.

In Japan, if an artist gave himself an Art Name, it could be in any form the artist liked. However, in most cases a senior member of the school chose Art Names for the apprentices. The Art Names given by the school usually consisted of a surname and a given name. All members of the same school shared the surname of the head of the school. For instance, all members of Utagawa School shared the surname of school's founder Utagawa Toyoharu. The most senior member of a generation could inherit the surname and art name of the head of school. For example, one of Hokusai's apprentices inherited the name and became Katsushika Hokusai II. Traditionally, only men were eligible for being professional artists.

<sup>51</sup> In Buddhism the symbol is usually used leftward facing, in contrast to the rightward Nazi swastika. So far, no evidence indicates that the usage of the word 'esvástica' is related to the Nazis.



Figure 2-11 Part of Hokusai's print containing his signature Hokusai Tokimasa and a seal.

When verses of 'El poema de Okusai' refer to Hokusai's names, however, the emphasis is not put on the artist's religious belief. 'El poema de Okusai' treats the 'names' more as linguistic signifiers and focuses on the semiotic meanings of each of these Sino-Japanese characters. Stanza 37 of the poem describes the picture of the Milky Way: 'La vía láctea sus alabastros / Tiende en dócil lluvia de oro, / Y tú subes hasta los astros / Con el vuelo de un meteoro....!'. None of Hokusai's prints depicts the galaxy or meteors. Moreover, this stanza appears not to follow other ekphrastic stanzas about the contents of *Manga*, *Gafu*, or *Fugaku Hyakkei*. Instead, it follows a narrative recall of Hokusai's life. For these reasons, the picture of the Milky Way, stars and the meteor in stanza 37 is very likely to be a literary illustration inspired by 'the Northern Star', the linguistic meaning of one of Hokusai's Art Names.

The last two lines of stanza 10 "Campesino de Katsuchika [sic] / Del "viejo loco de dibujo", correspond respectively to Hokusai's Art Name Katsushika (葛飾, used in ca.1807 – 1824), the name of the district in Tokyo where the artist was born, and Gakyo Rojin (画狂老人, used in 1805 – 1806). As a poet who did not read any Chinese characters, Tablada was able to accurately translate Hokusai's Art Names thanks to the help of French literature. *Hiroshigué* mentions Luis Gonse's book *L'Art japonais* (1883), which gives Hokusai's Art Names in

Chinese characters, a pronunciation of the characters in Latin letters, and a French translation of the characters' literal meanings (Figure 2-12).

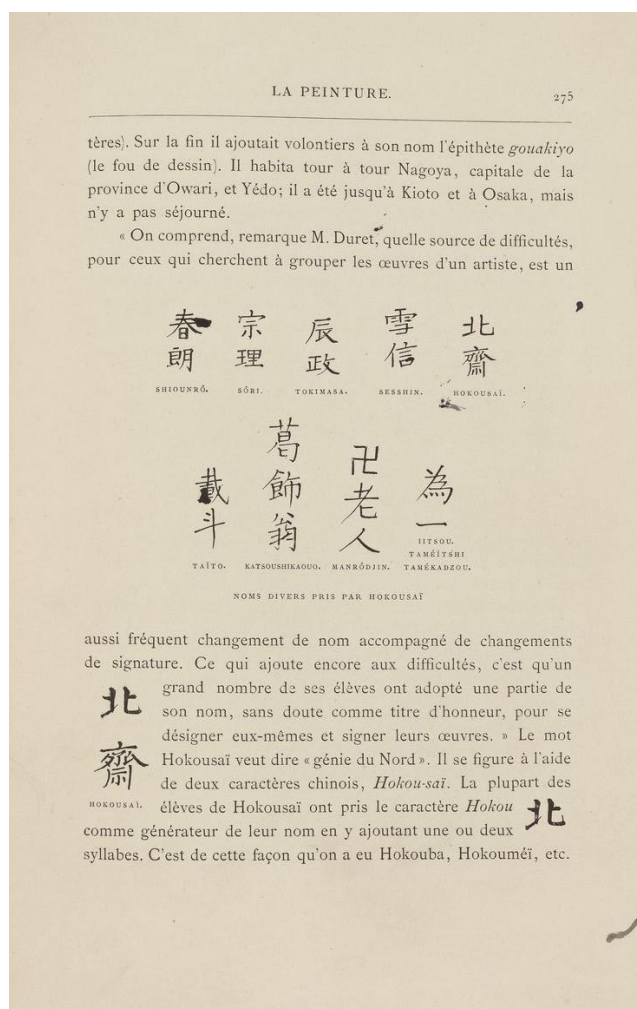


Figure 2-12 A page from *L'Art japonais* (1883) containing explanations to Hokusai's Art Names.

We know *ukiyo-e* artists' Art Names because they leave signatures in their prints. Calligraphers, literati and artists design and create appropriate forms and styles for their signatures carefully according to the linguistic significance and strokes in each Sino-Japanese character. For instance, the signature Hokusai Tokimasa in Figure 2-11 is written in regular script rather than any other fonts probably because regular script is the most common script for Buddhist sutras that would suit its reference to the Myōken bodhisattva. The creation of signatures and seals can be considered as a visual presentation based on the verbal presentation/semiotic meaning of the words. The verses referring to Hokusai's Art Names contain the following scheme:

**Scheme 1**signified of Art Names  
/referent (text)Hokusai/owner of the Art  
NamesHokusai/creator of  
the signature and  
seals

Signatures/work of art

**Scheme 2**Tablada/ viewer of  
Hokusai's signatures and  
seals

Signatures/referent

Tablada/ creator of  
writing

Poetry/work of art (text)

This scheme is especially clear when examining stanza 37. Signatures used for Hokusai's Art Names written in a calligraphic form on the prints are an artistic performance of the meaning of the text. The creator of the primary presentation/signatures chose 'Hokusai', 'Hokusai Tokimasa' and 'Tokisai', Art Names containing the character 北 and 辰 due to their meaning 'the Northern Star'. Seeing these characters, the creator of the secondary presentation/the author of poetry, composed pictorial writings that illustrate the sky where the Northern Star shines among other stars. Tablada's poem provides lyrical translations of the semiotic meaning behind the calligraphic characters and retells the connotations of the Art Names.

In this section, we examined the transpictoriality in Tablada's poem 'Okusai' to study the process that Japanese literary text was presented by visual art and then represented and adapted into a poem in Spanish. We can summarise the function of Japanese prints in Tablada's poetry as being that of a bridge between the referential Japanese text and the eventual Spanish text. With the help of Louvel's scheme regarding ekphrasis, we found that 'Okusai' is a poetic text in Spanish inspired by Hokusai's text-based prints. The secondary presentation, while it presents pictures, translates the original story or semiotic meaning that inspired the creation of the primary presentation into a language suitable for the target culture. 'Okusai' speaks about Hokusai's prints in an ekphrastic voice, making implicit references to folk stories hidden in the pictures and explicit references to the connotations of the artist's seals and signatures, in order to present the Japanese culture behind the prints to its Latin American audiences. Retracing the intermedial transposition in the poem confirms that the knowledge of both the primary presentation (Hokusai's prints) and the textual referent (*kaidan* or meaning of the Chinese characters in seals and signatures) is necessary to fully understand 'Okusai'.

In the schemes of presentations in the previous section analysing *kaidans* in 'El poema de Okusai', we have concluded that Tablada's poetic ekphrasis is a text based on verbal text-inspired images. In the process of intermedial transformation from image to text, the Japanese images constitute a visual method of recording the Japanese source text that can communicate without verbal devices. In other words, prints/images serve as the surrogate for linguistic translation. Regarding cultural transposition from East Asian culture into the Latin American context, the involvement of translations in European languages, such as Hearn's English translation and Gonse's French literature, was instrumental in supplementing the meaning that was not fully conveyed by the images alone.

However, the above scheme does not indicate whether signatures are 'images/pictures' or 'text/words'. In East Asian culture, calligraphy is a type of visual art and calligraphic work is often created and evaluated in a similar method to a text-inspired painting or print. However, does this mean that calligraphic presentations of words should be considered as visual images in the transmedia creation in 'Okusai'? Does the creator of the secondary presentation regard the signatures as images or words? In the next section, we shall look into Tablada's remarks on calligraphic art to tackle the issue of the boundary between image and text.

## 2.3 Visual Presentation in *AI sol*

### 2.3.1 Visual Art of the Words: Japanese Seals and Mexican '*Kalogramas*'

The tenth chapter of *Hiroshigué* gives verbal descriptions of the prints from Hiroshige's famous *ukiyo-e* collection *Meisho Edo Hyakkei* (名所江戸百景, 'One Hundred Famous Views of Edo'). The part referring to 'Obashí', which corresponds to the print *Ōhashi atake no yūdachi* (大はしあたけの夕立), in addition to the description of the picture's content, uses another paragraph to comment on the print's aesthetic expression.

La coloración de esta encantadora estampa es un prodigio de armonía y de simplicidad; es una sinfonía en azul; desde el negro azul de prusia de la sombrosa profundidad, bajo el puente, hasta el azul de plata del canal terso y el azul gris de la velada arboleda y del horizonte brumoso, sólo interrumpida por la ancha faja de ligero ocre del dorso del puente; por la orla de negro bermejo de las nubes que se descuajan, en lo alto, y por los rojos cuadretes de títulos y firma, que arriba y abajo de la estampa hacen dos vivas notas de *rappel* en la general armonía. (58-59)

This paragraph demonstrates Tablada's observation and interpretation of the print. Unlike other paragraphs that only represent the graphical content of a print, the cited paragraph about 'Obashí' goes further with regard to the artistic effect that the print achieves with its lines and

colours and specifies the function of 'los rojos cuadretes de títulos y firma'. The existence of inscriptions of the print's title and artist's signature is often muted in other art criticism. Whereas here, Tablada clearly values the contrast of colours as well as its contribution to the composition.

In the remarks about 'Obashí', the author is more concerned about the visual form of the seals and title – the contrasting effect between the vibrant red of the 'cuadretes de títulos y firma' and the intense dark shade of the pictorial part of the same print, — rather than the meaning of the square containing Japanese scripts. 'Obashí' in *Hiroshigué* refers to the text as a decorative component of the picture, yet 'Okusai' refers to the significance of the words, treating the in-image text as words, and addressing its visual expression. The initial referent (the meaning of the Art Names) and the eventual work of 'Okusai' are both texts in this scheme. Tablada's different approaches of dealing with the artists' signatures in the two cases give rise to the question: How does Tablada understand Chinese characters and the visual art of Chinese characters? Does he see Chinese characters as visual images that carry semiotic meanings? Or does he see the Chinese characters as text, that is to say, verbal signifiers of the signified?

Most of previous scholarships fail to put enough emphasis on Tablada's knowledge and studies of Japanese seals and calligraphy, whereas Pascucci's thesis notices that Tablada started using the decorative 'sello personal' since 1900, when the article 'Álbum del Extremo Oriente: Los pintores japoneses' came out (395, Figure 2-13). Illustrations in this article contain circular images designating Tablada's initial 'JJT' in a similar method as the seal-like images on Tablada's other illustrations for his column 'En el país del sol' in *Revista Moderna*, which we mentioned in Chapter One (Figure 1-6). Identifying that the same seal repeatedly appears on Tablada's other collections such as *Hiroshigué* and *Un día*, Pascucci considers its creation to be under the joint influence of both Japanese *inkan* (seals) and Palomar's *kalograma* (397-403). Further to Pascucci's research, we consider the seal to be a perfect point to discuss Tablada's perception of text-image integrated by studying Tablada's comments on the seals and his practice of designing seals.

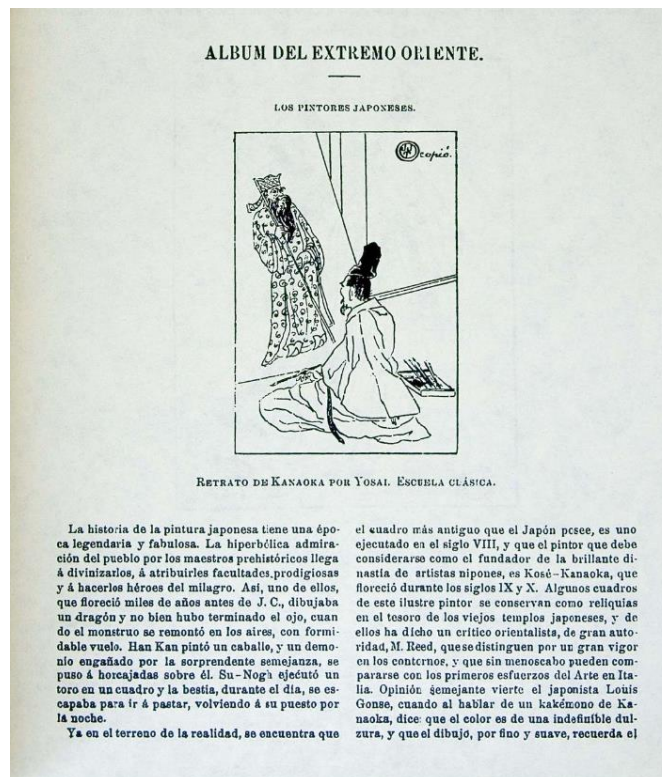


Figure 2-13 Page 139 of *Revista Moderna*, May 1900, which publishes Tablada's article 'Álbum del Extremo Oriente: Los pintores japoneses'. There is a seal-like circle on the right top corner of the illustration, which writes Tablada's initials 'JJT'.

In *Hiroshigué*, Tablada pays much attention to painters' and engraver's signature seals and censor seals. On page 100, Tablada collects some of the most frequently appeared seals on Hiroshige's prints (Figure 2-14), including seals of the publisher (seal 1 in Figure 2-14), engraver (seal 2 and 6), a seal of the engraver's family emblem (seal 5), and a print of Hiroshige's signature (seal 7 and 8). The page also provides an annotation of the seals' meanings, although the information is not completely accurate. The last chapter of *Hiroshigué* is an introduction to the concept of 'sello de censura' and the date that these censor seals stand for (see Figure 2-15 and Figure 2-16, 113-4).<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Despite the fact that square seals are slightly more common, many seals that Tablada quoted in *Hiroshigué* are in round shape. This coincidence suggests a possible connection to the coloured illustrations in a small round circle on the top corner of each page of *Un día* as in Figure 2-3, illustrated by the poet himself. The small animals corresponding to the content of the haiku might have been a hybrid form with reference to Japanese seals. 4.3.1 is going to study the correlation between the haiku and its illustration in *Un día*.



Figure 2-14 Page 100 of *Hiroshigué*, 'Sellos que frecuentemente se hallan en las estampas de Hiroshigué'.



Figure 2-15 Examples of censor seals on page 113 of *Hiroshigué*.

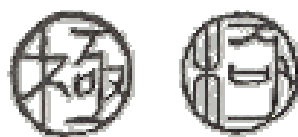


Figure 2-16 Examples of censor seals on page 114 of *Hiroshigué*.

In East Asia, a work of art would be considered ‘unfinished’ without a seal (Guo 56). A seal can be the emblem of some artist’s or publisher’s signature, as Figure 2-14 and Figure 2-15 show, or the concentrated presentation of the owner’s motto or favourite verse. In the fourteenth chapter of *Hiroshigué*, Tablada also mentions two seals in unique shapes, both of which he considers to be Hiroshige’s signatures. One of them is an ‘original sello del maestro que representa esquemática un caballo visto por detrás y un ciervo echado junto a él’ (Figure 2-17, 86). In fact, this seal is also called the ‘seal of fortune and longevity’ (福寿印) by Hiroshige’s admirers and investigators. The horse on the left is simulating the shape of the Chinese character 寿 in cursive writing, and the deer on the right is similar to the character 福. Together they constitute the special seal that had been used on Hiroshige’s many *kachō-gas* finished between 1830 and 1840 (Shikigawa). Tablada’s paragraph is limited to giving a verbal description of the seal’s graphical features. Despite that Tablada knows how to write both the character 寿 and 福, the horse and deer shape are so farfetched from the shape of the Chinese characters that, without due contextual knowledge, it would be difficult to relate the image in the seal with the Chinese characters. Tablada’s explanation of the ‘seal of fortune and longevity’ only mentions the presentation of horse and deer without any comments on the linguistic references, suggesting that the poet sees the content of a seal as a graphical image rather than a word. Still, these images with textual implications could have influenced Tablada’s later visual practices, especially his composition of visual poems in *Li-Po*.



Figure 2-17. ‘Seal of fortune and longevity’. Nakagawa-machi Bato Hiroshige Museum of Art.

Now let us go back to ‘El poema de Okusai’. The eventual secondary presentation indicates the meaning of Hokusai’s Art Names in Spanish translations (such as ‘viejo loco de dibujo’), direct quotations of the Japanese pronunciations (such as ‘Guakiojin’) and literal interpretations of the names’ connotations (such as ‘el vuelo de un meteoro’). The poem transports Hokusai’s Art Names from one language to another language, with little reference to the shape or colour or any pictorial characteristics of the seals and calligraphy, nonetheless. Interestingly, the poem omits the nature of the ‘image’ of the seals. This fact provides further

evidence to our earlier guess that, in certain cases, Japanese prints do not only function as the object of presentation but more importantly as an alternative method of understanding the meaning in Japanese and a platform to present and introduce the linguistic or literary text in the Spanish language. The intermedial presentation promotes the transcultural communication in the poem 'Okusai'.

Tablada fully acknowledges seal's usage as the signature for individual persons and public agencies in the East and the West. When the Mexican artist José de Torres Palomar (1874 – 1920) creates *kalograma*, an artistic design of an individual's initials, it fascinates Tablada so much that the poet not only publishes articles to promote his artist friend's work, and also incorporates this art form into his poetry.

Derived from Greek, the word 'kalograma' means 'beautiful letters' according to Palomar. *Kalograma* is inspired by similar art forms existed in other cultures: 'en la forma tiene algo del arte sigilar babilónico, algo de la inscripción cúfica, algo también del ideograma arcaico de la China y de los sellos japoneses' (Tablada 'Tres artistas mexicanos den Nueva York', n.p.) The connection between *kalograma* and Japanese seals is so close that, according to Tablada, Japanese seal is another form of *kalograma*: 'que los sellos y formas usados desde hace cientos de años por los artistas japoneses son positivos *kalogramas*, aunque en rigor por tratarse de jeroglíficos y no de letras alfabéticas, mejor pudieran llamarse "kalogrifos"' ('Crónica semanal', n.p.)



Figure 2-18 A page of 'Tres artistas mexicanos en Nueva York. Marius de Zayas, Pal-Omar, Juan Olaguíbel', Tablada's illustration for Palomar on the left top.

Tablada maintains a close relationship with Palomar. On *El Mundo Ilustrado* in 1914, Tablada published his first article introducing Palomar's *kalograma*, giving it a literal definition: 'esta palabra, derivada del griego, significa precisamente esas cifras bellas artísticas, combinadas armoniosamente, con armonía de curvaso de rectas, que timbran el papel o marcan los objetos de uso personal de las gentes del buen tono, sustituyendo al antiguo y detestable monograma' ('Crónica semanal', n.p). In 1918, the poem 'Kalograma' of 30 lines with the subtitle 'A Torres Palomar' was published in the section *Caprichos* in *Al sol* (137). This ode to *kalograma* praises the beauty of Palomar's creation from its geometric lines and colour. In 1919, another article of Tablada 'Tres artistas mexicanos de Nueva York. Marius de Zayas, Pal-Omar, Juan Olaguíbel' was published on *El Universal Ilustrado* with an illustration of Palomar painted by Tablada (see Figure 2-18). According to his article 'José Torres Palomar' published on *Excélsior* in 1920, Tablada lives together with Palomar during his stay in New

York and composes the visual poems 'Madrigales ideográficos' in *Li-Po* under the influence of Palomar's *kalograma*: 'aquí viví con Palomar en 1916, el laboratorio de perfumes; la única sopa de ajo, en el lujoso apartamento. *Kalogramas* murales, el cheque por el pollo asado, primeros versos ideográficos. El puñal, Talon rouge...' (qtd. Mata. 'La escritura iluminada por el image', n.p.)

Tablada's books also include various examples of *kalograma*. The first example is the seal on the first illustration of *Hiroshigué* that shows Tablada's initials, the three letters 'JJT' in a larger size and 'ablada' in a smaller size on the left in *inkoku*, used as an *ex-libris* to indicate the ownership (Figure 2-19).<sup>53</sup> Same as most other seals in East Asia, the seal is pressed onto the book page with red paste. This seal presents incredible resemblance in terms of its square shape, red colour, and usage as the signature of the collector. The second example is the *kalograma* on the title page of *Al sol* proved to be the work of Palomar. With the left half in *inkoku* and the right half in *yokoku* showing Tablada's surname in full, this *kalograma* resembles a traditional *ex-libris*, only that it is presented with abstract lines (Figure 2-20). Due to the obvious conformity, the seal on *Hiroshigué* may be also a work of Palomar.

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<sup>53</sup> *Inkoku* (陰刻) is a printing method similar to intaglio. With ink applied to the printing plate, a seal in *inkoku* shows the word in blank and the background coloured with ink.

*Yokoku* (陽刻) is the opposite to *inkoku*, similar to relief printing.

Figure 1-6 is a much simpler form of initial seal in *yokoku*. This seal is probably designed by Tablada himself as an imitation to the engraver's seal on Japanese prints, which often appears in a round shape. Tablada also possesses *ex-libris* with graphical designs related to East Asian culture. Please see this web page for more details: <http://www.tablada.unam.mx/archivovis/tinta/notas/i26-t.html>.

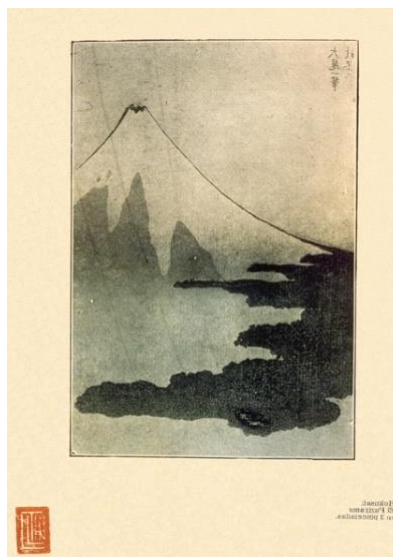


Figure 2-19 *Kalograma* of Tablada's name on the left bottom corner on page 2 of *Hiroshigué*.



Figure 2-20 *Kalograma* of Tablada's name by Torres Palomar printed on the title page of *Al sol*.

Japanese seals and Palomar's *kalograma* could have been the direct inspiration for the composition of the stanza printed in the frame of the Chinese character in 'Li-Po' that shall be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Pascucci attributes the incentive of using the Chinese character to a wrapping cloth that Tablada processed, on which printed that character ('José Juan Tablada y el ideograma *kotobuki*'). Her investigation gives a convincing explanation for choosing this specific character instead of some other characters. However, it does not answer why Tablada would have used a Chinese character when the poet could have

used other East Asian symbols like Manji or family emblems, which are only images, not text. The current thesis believes that the idea of using a printed Chinese character, first and foremost, is a result of the influence of seals and *kalograma*, the visual art of words.

East Asian seals and calligraphy can be a significant reference for the research of Tablada's visual poetry. Seals consisting of Chinese characters have shown up in Tablada's writings and possibly influenced his understanding of the text-image relationship. Combining the art of visual image and verbal text in the same work, seals and calligraphy are examples of the East Asian tradition of reciprocal interaction between painting and poetry. The art of seal-carving is usually considered as a genre of calligraphy because a seal and a work of calligraphy are visual artworks based on words, or more precisely, based on Chinese characters. In East Asia, most calligraphers are simultaneously original authors of the text in the calligraphy. Similar to Western authors of visual poetry like Tablada, East Asian calligraphers are usually considered as writers rather than painters, although many calligraphers also paint. However, their calligraphic works are often considered not as a piece of writing but as a form of visual art. Since the sixteenth century, calligraphers have begun to put more emphasis on the visual aesthetics of performing the script than the linguistic expression of the literary content (Z. Wang 153). In recent centuries, the work of calligraphy is usually evaluated as a work of visual art that explores the formal possibility of the strokes, structure, and space of Chinese characters. A Chinese character in a calligraphic work is therefore simultaneously text – a linguistic signifier of the meaning – and picture, a component in a work of visual art. The special image-text dual nature of calligraphy makes it the balancing point between verbal art and visual art, which intriguingly coincides with Tablada's ambition of achieving graphical-lyrical simultaneity in visual poetry. In Chapter Three, we are going to have a close look into Tablada's opinions towards Chinese characters in the interpretation of Tablada's remarks about 'carácter ideofónico' and 'ideografía' and discuss the underlying influence of calligraphic art based on the East Asian writing system.

Calligraphy, as a type of visual art, can be seen as a visual presentation based on verbal text. Tablada has made a series of experiments regarding using the visual method to present words. This includes the invention of *kalograma* in cooperation with Palomar, as well as using typographical methods to assist the lyrical expression in the collection *Al sol*. In the following parts, we are going to discuss the typographical presentation in *Al sol* to explore Tablada's primitive experiments of using the visual display of words to achieve extra-text meaning.

### 2.3.2 The Presentation of 'Luna': Visual Experiments in *Al sol*

Composed during Tablada's stay in New York between 1914 and 1918, poems in the collection *Al sol y bajo la luna* (1918) consist of various interesting themes. Dominated by the *modernista* style, the album contains poems of pictorial content such as 'Okusai' and 'Kalograma'. Meanwhile, it also reflects the author's humorous observation of modern life in the United States, such as in 'Lawn Tennis' and 'Flirt' from the section *En Nueva York*. Above all, a featured theme in this collection is the presentation of 'luna', the moon. Indicating the theme of 'luna' in its title, this collection includes several poems dedicated to the moon, such as 'Luna sentimental', 'Luna galante', and 'Luna'.

Tablada's 'luna' in *Al sol* is closely connected to the 'luna' of Leopoldo Lugones. The Argentine poet Lugones maintained an intimate friendship with Tablada since they worked together for the first issue of *Revista Moderna*. Tablada and Lugones had a reciprocal influence on each other's poetic writing and wrote numerous poems dedicated to each other. In 'La afinidad poética de Lugones y Tablada', Hugo Méndez-Ramírez summarises the poetic interactions between the two writers on the subject of themes, rhymes and styles. He especially mentioned that the obsession of moon in Lugones' *Lunario Sentimental* (1909) probably stimulated the writing of *Li-Po*, and that Tablada's visual poems in *Li-Po* could have in turn inspired Lugones' poems, with similar boldness between Tablada's 'Luciérnagas' (1920) and Lugones' 'La luciérnaga' (1938) as examples (1060,1063). Lugones not only wrote a poem as the prologue for *Al sol* ('Preliminar de Leopoldo Lugones' 7-8), but his collection *Lunario sentimental* was also the inspiration for Tablada's 'Luna sentimental' as well as a series of other poems in this collection.

The recurrence of 'luna' in *Al sol* arouses Michele Pascucci's attention. Pascucci finds that the theme 'luna' in Tablada's 'pre-ideographic' poems in *Al sol* not only reappears as the 'both semantically and pictorially core image' in the visual poem 'Li-Po' but also appears repeatedly in *Hiroshigué's* subtitle, 'el pintor de la nieve y de la lluvia, de la noche y de la luna', in 'Okusai's' phrase 'fulgor lunar', as well as in the haiku collections. Pascucci proposes that, the fact that Tablada associated East Asian elements with the moon indicates his interest in an artistic manifestation of 'la luna fuera de la tradición occidental' (*Entre México y Asia* 407). Pascucci agrees with Tanabe's remark that the poem 'Okusai' is the start of a period when Tablada shows the most profound influence of Japanese culture and the beginning of his awareness of the clash between poetry and painting. In addition, Pascucci considers the two compositions

in *Al sol*, 'Lawn tennis' and 'Luna' also show Tablada's tendency of blurring the boundary between visual art and verbal art.

['El poema de Okusai'] se inicia la tercera, y más profunda, etapa del japonismo de Tablada; es precisamente en esta composición "donde encontramos la culminación de sus preocupaciones artísticas: la poesía y la pintura" (1981: 91-92). Estas dos preocupaciones también se revelan, aunque de modo menos explícito, en "Lawn tennis" y "Luna". (406)

Unlike 'Okusai', which is directly based on Japanese prints, neither 'Lawn tennis' nor 'Luna' deals with pictorial art. Then, how do 'poetry and painting meet' in these two poems?

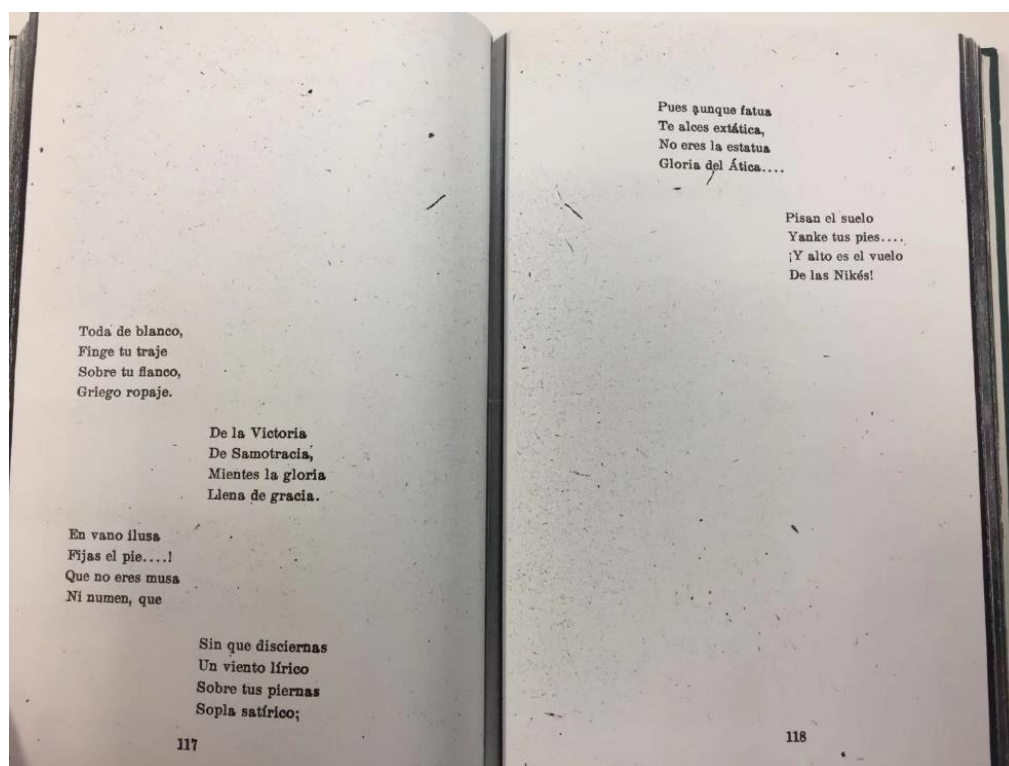


Figure 2-21 Page 117 and 118 of *Al sol* containing body text of 'Lawn tennis'. Title of the poem is printed on page 115.

According to Meyer-Minnemann, 'Lawn tennis' and 'Luna' are Tablada's earliest experiments 'con nuevas formas de disposición tipográfica' (450). Nevertheless, how exactly, does the typographical presentation of the poems affect their expressiveness? We shall start by discussing the poem 'Lawn tennis'. As we can observe from Figure 2-21, in 'Lawn tennis', stanza 1, 3, 5 are aligned to the left of the page while stanza 2, 4, 6 are indented. The use of indention in this poem creates a zigzag effect between stanzas as if each block of text were a tennis court. When reading the poem, the reader's eyes browse one block of text on the left then the other block on the right, moving in the same way as watching serve and receive in a

tennis game. If the poem was not presented with indentation, it would have been an ordinary piece of description of a girl playing tennis. However, the zigzag display of the stanzas creates an effect of jumping, a rhythm of movement, and a vividness that is literally 'visible'. The title of this poem not only indicates the poem's theme but also suggests the intention for the typographical presentation of its text: to mimic the tennis court.

Earlier in the introduction to the methodology, we have agreed with Katherine Shingler's conclusion that readers can simultaneously attend the visual and the visual aspect of a visual poem and it is up to readers' free will to decide where to put their attention. That being said, at first glance of the poem-image, we might presume the jagged stanzas nothing but an innovative way of presenting the text. In the reading process, we gradually identify the zigzagged blocks of text to be an imitation of the tennis serves and returns. After fully understanding the poem's content and form a 'mental vision' of it, we eventually 'see' the image of the poem and recognise its link to the textual content. Through this process of perception, we can conclude that it is the meaning of the text which gives the metaphoric signification of a tennis court to the zigzagged shape of the stanza blocks.

'Lawn tennis' involves certain typographical arrangement that adds additional fun and vividness to the poetic text. Nonetheless, its words are still presented linearly and do not form any picture of independent meaning. 'Luna' is another poem with experimental typographical dispositions in *Al sol*, in which the poet applies many line breaks in the first stanza to interrupt and delay the eye-movement. In the first part (first nine lines) of the poem, line breaks are unusually frequent that an enjambment happens every few words. In comparison, the next two lines are long and syntactically complete, making a contrast between fragmentation and integration. Such typographical arrangement not only plays with the rhyme and rhythm of the poem, 'posing a specific reading problem', but also make it impossible to neglect the typographical arrangement (Louvel 39). The reader can follow the natural linear follow of the text when they read 'Lawn Tennis'. However, when reading 'Luna', the reader reads the text and sees its shape simultaneously. Thus, the reader faces a choice between reading the text first or seeing its image first.

In *Poetics of the Iconotext*, Louvel reviews the effect of 'two activities – that of "reading" and that of "vision" as comprehension' in this way: 'The difference between the two experiences is apparently in the order of the two operations: we first see a painting, then we "read" it; we read a text, and then we "see" it (in the sense of 'understand').' (39) Next Louvel cites Ernest Gilman's sentence: 'The order of experience and in painting (seeing first, then "reading") is

superficially the reverse of the literary experience, except that the final painting which, having been seen and “read” is finally known, is no longer identical with the square of canvas we happened to notice when we first walked into the room.’ (39) Then she makes the following remark.

Let us note, however, that if a text is read, and then “seen” as a mental image, painting, is seen, then “read”, and then seen again. The text is rarely re-read immediately, except if it poses any specific reading problem; or if the textual strategy requires it to be re-read; or else if a professional obligation compels the reader to go through it again. (39)

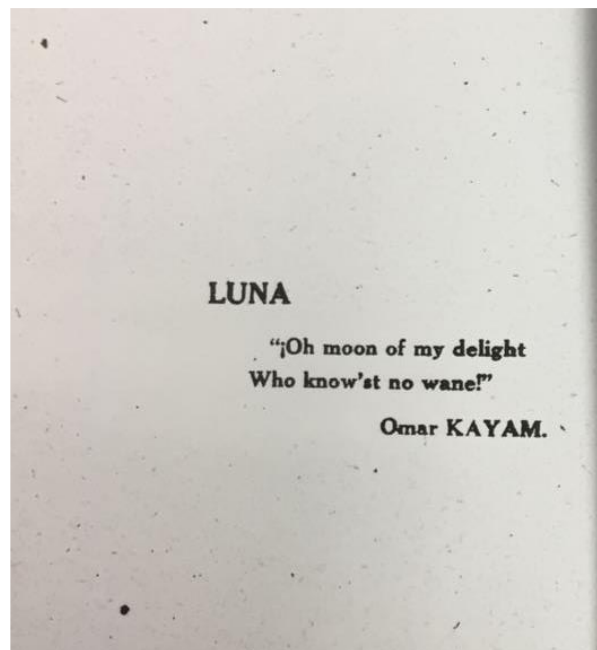


Figure 2-22 Title of 'Luna' and epigraph of Omar Khayyam's verse on page 173 of *Al sol*.

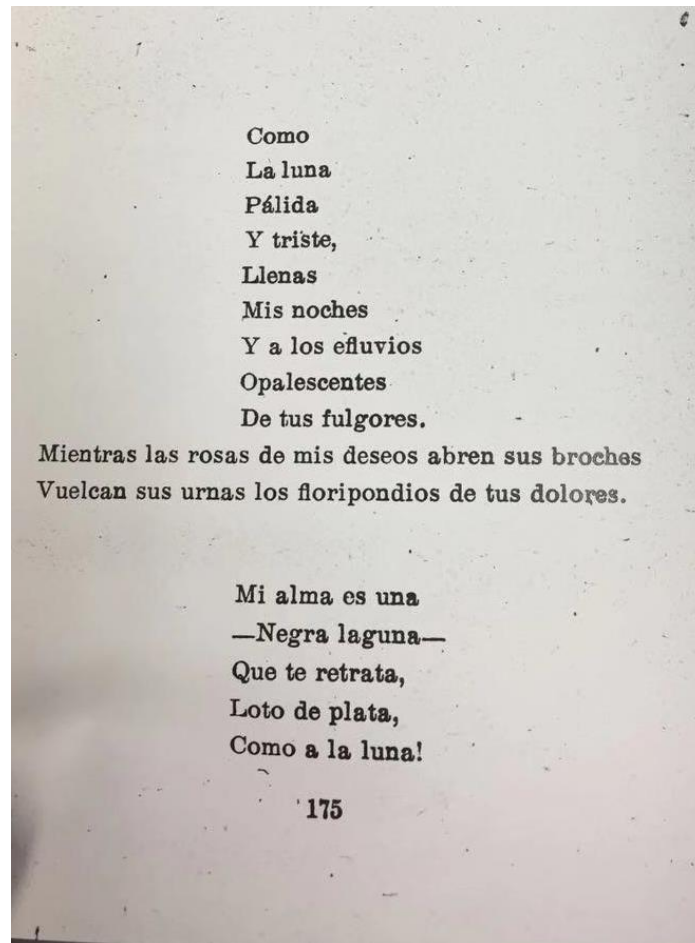


Figure 2-23 Complete poem of 'Luna' on page 175 of *Al sol*.

In the case of 'Luna'(Figure 2-22 Figure 2-23), ormal arrangement of the text compels the reader to see the shape of the poem, at least at the same time of reading the words if not before. Here is a possible process of perceiving the poem: First of all, we see the poem that comes with a title in capital letters. Then we see an epigraph of poetic verse in English. On the next page, we see the body of the poem, which begins with short lines with few letters, and then the lines gradually grow longer with more syllables. After two lengthy and intense lines, we see a blank line, followed by a group of lines that almost forms a square. Our first impression of 'Luna' would be about its graphical features.

After 'seeing' it, we can start 'reading' the poem by removing the enjambments. Then the first stanza or the first eleven lines can be transcribed into four fifteen-syllable verses in ABAB rhyme:

Como la luna pálida y triste, llenas mis noches (line1/ row1-6)  
Y a los efluvios opalescentes de tus fulgores. (line 2/ row7-9)

Mientras las rosas de mis deseos abren sus broches (line 3/ row10)  
Vuelcan sus urnas los floripondios de tus dolores. (line 4/ row11)

The square block of words below the blank line is actually a stanza consisting of five five-syllable lines in CCDDC rhyme with no enjambments. By this time, we already know the textual content of the poem and the reason that the author makes such a formal arrangement. The key lies in the last stanza. When the poem says 'que te retrata', we finally recognise that the last stanza is the projection or reflection of the first line/ first nine rows. Line 1 and 2 presents the moon in the night sky, while the last stanza is a secondary presentation, a textual reflection of verse 1 and 2. The last line 'como a la luna' – the lotus-like moon's reflection in the water – also echoes with the initial two lines, 'como/ la luna' – the real moon in the night sky. The two relatively long rows, line 3 and 4, resembles the horizon or the reflecting surface, presenting the concretised 'negra laguna' that presents the 'loto de plata'.

Therefore, when we 'read' the poem 'Luna', we first see the 'image' of text, then read the content of the text, and finally go back to understand the image based on its textual meaning. Now, if we read the epigraph again, it is not difficult to relate the body text of 'Luna' with Khayyam's verse. The complete version of the citation is an untitled poem by Persian poet Omar Khayyam, translated by Edward Fitzgerald in *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, first published in 1859:

Ah, Moon of my Delight who know'st no wane,  
The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again:  
How oft hereafter rising shall she look  
Through this same Garden after me — in vain! (LXXIV n.p.)

Tablada's 'luna', 'la luna pálida y triste', is an inverse 'reflection' of Khayyam's moon, the mood of Delight that does not wane. Unlike Khayyam's perpetual moon, Tablada's 'luna' is transient and unease, as words such as 'los efluvios', 'volcar' and 'dolores' indicate.

In addition to the visual effect, we should also notice the verbal effect achieved by the typographical display. As we have previously mentioned, the whole poem can be transcribed into a four-lined version in ABAB rhyme, while the last five lines, in its original typography, reads a CCDDC rhyme. The unorthodox way of presenting words makes it possible to interpret the poem in multiple ways. Furthermore, concealing the rhyme in line 1, the fragmented first nine rows not only increase the difficulty and playfulness for the reader, but also encourage the reader to articulate the verses (aloud or silently) in order to discover the hidden rhyme. In this way, the poem also emphasises the nature of verbal art through visual presentation.

Strictly speaking, ‘Luna’ does not qualify to be a ‘*calligramme*’ or ‘*technopaignia*’, which uses words to shape patterns. Visual presentation of ‘Luna’ and ‘Lawn tennis’ involves only methods of typography such as line break and indentation, which still belongs to the domain of text rather than graphical art. However, poems in unusual typographical display in *Al sol* such as ‘Luna’ and ‘Lawn tennis’ are precursors for more mature and innovative visual poetry in *Li-Po*. Deliberately designed in correspondence to the textual content, the typography substantially increases the complexity of the poems. The subsidiary non-textual devices force the reader to ‘see’ and ‘re-read’ the poem. The experience of reading a poem contains both the process of conventional ‘reading’ as verbal utterance and visual perception. In this sense, poetry and painting indeed meet in these poems.

### 2.3.3 Conclusion: A Visual Turn from Pictorial Writing towards Visual Writing

In the previous part, we discussed ‘Lawn tennis’ and ‘Luna’, two poems in *Al sol* that use the typographical presentation of the text to deliver extra-textual meaning. We can notice that these two poems present a certain difference from Tablada’s previous transpictorial poetry such as ‘Soneto Watteau’ and ‘Okusai’.

In both ‘Soneto Watteau’ and ‘Okusai’, Tablada’s poetic text describes the pictorial content of the inspirational painting/print and retells the literary text behind the works of the visual art. In other words, Tablada’s ekphrastic poems such as ‘Okusai’ are poetic text based on visual presentation, which we call ‘pictorial writing’. The chart below demonstrates several transpictorial cases that we encountered in Chapter One and Two, according to our theory of ‘secondary presentation’ in pictorial writing:

<b>Referent:</b> <i>Textual</i>	<b>Primary presentation:</b> <i>Visual</i>	<b>Secondary presentation:</b> <i>Textual</i>
<b>Symbolic meaning of the Cythera Island in Greek myth</b>	Watteau’s painting that <i>The Embarkation for Cythera</i>	Tablada’s poem ‘Soneto Watteau’
<b>Japanese <i>kaidan</i></b>	Hokusai’s prints from <i>Hyaku-monogatari</i> and <i>Hokusai Manga</i>	Tablada’s verses about Japanese creatures and spirits in ‘Okusai’
<b>Semiotic meaning of Hokusai’s Art Names</b>	Hokusai’s signatures and seals	Tablada’s verses about Hokusai’s names in ‘Okusai’

However, when it comes to 'Lawn tennis' and 'Luna', the poems are no longer based on pictorial art. Instead, they utilise the visual display of the text to signify in a visual way. On the contrary to the pictorial writing, in which poetic text is inspired by the visual presentation, it works the other way round in 'Lawn tennis' and 'Luna'. The typographical arrangement of the poems is created after the poem was written, and the visual display is arranged in accordance with the verbal meaning of the text. In primitive visual poems such as 'Lawn tennis' and 'Luna', the conversion between text and image (graphical arrangement presents text) is a reversal to that in pictorial writing (poetic text presents graphical art). We recognise that 'Lawn tennis' and 'Luna' as 'primitive visual poems' because their visual arrangements only enhance the meaning of the verbal text without carrying their own separate visual message. Although they are less 'visual' compared to later poems in *Li-Po*, these two poems in *Al sol* should be treated as 'visual poems' because they are indeed poems 'meant to be seen' (Bohn *Aesthetics of Visual Poetry 2*).

To make a comparison with the chart for pictorial writing, we now have another chart to demonstrate the 'referent – primary presentation – secondary presentation' scheme in Tablada's visual writing, including some visual poems to be analysed in detail in the following chapters, to make a comparison with the chart for pictorial writing:

<b>Referent:</b> <i>Textual</i>	<b>Primary presentation:</b> <i>Textual</i>	<b>Secondary presentation:</b> <i>Visual</i>
<b>Omar Khayyam's verses about the moon</b>	Tablada's poem 'Luna'	Typography of Tablada's poem 'Luna'
<b>Li-Bai's poems</b>	Tablada's adaption of Li-Bai's poems in 'Li-Po'	Typography and visual display of 'Li-Po'
<b>Potentially inspired by Japanese haiku</b>	Tablada's haiku poems in <i>Un día</i>	Tablada's circular illustrations and seals on each page of <i>Un día</i>
<b>Potentially inspired by Japanese haiku</b>	Tablada's haiku poems in <i>El jarro</i>	Best-Maugard's illustrations for each section in <i>El jarro</i>

The juxtaposition of the two charts clearly illustrates the most notable difference between Tablada's pictorial writing and his visual writing. In visual poetry, Tablada's poetry in textual form is no longer the final and only version of the composition process. His typographical arrangements and illustrations based on his own poetic text fulfil the creation process of an intermedial work by adding extra-textual expressiveness into the visual poetry. Through the

above charts, we may also notice that Tablada turned from pictorial writing to visual writing in terms of intermedial poetic composition at a certain time point. Approximately between the creation of *Hiroshigué*, when 'Okusai' was written, and the publication of *Al sol*, when 'Lawn tennis' and 'Luna' were created, visual writing began to prevail in his poetry related to visual art, which we shall call a 'visual turn'.

All these visual poems are more or less related to the oriental referential text. This point reinforces our observation in Chapter One, that intermediality in Tablada's poetry is entangled with the theme of exoticism and interculturality, among which the influence of East Asian culture prevails. Now we need to briefly review the evolution of Tablada's intermedial writing again to find out how the 'visual turn' took place and its correlation with the intercultural influences.

As we have concluded in Chapter One, Tablada had already shown obvious interest and awareness of intermediality before he created *Al sol*. Earlier in his *modernista* stage, Tablada has added many visual elements in his poetic text, especially in 'Soneto Watteau', a comparatively exceptional piece of ekphrasis in Tablada's intermedial poetry because it involves Western cultural tradition solely. Tablada has also incorporated graphical art to decorate his *modernista* poetry and his correspondences from Japan in *Revista Moderna*. When it comes to 1924, in *Hiroshigué*, Tablada exhibited significant enthusiasm in Japanese prints. More importantly, his interest and knowledge of Japanese prints brought about the creation of the ekphrastic poem 'Okusai', an often neglected yet crucial piece of work in Tablada's career of pictorial and visual writing. This voluminous poem inspired by Japanese graphical art 'donde encontramos la culminación de sus preocupaciones artísticas: la poesía y la pintura', is the initial point where the intermediality meets interculturality in Tablada's poetry (Tanabe 91-2). 'Okusai' opens up Tablada's next stage of interculturality: visual writing of East Asian inspirations. One year after *Al sol* was published, Tablada's first haiku collection *Un día* came out in 1919. *Un día* is an exemplary case in which Tablada successfully integrated graphical decoration with laconic poems of East Asian linguistic style. We shall come back to discuss *Un día* in detail in Chapter Four. A year after *Un día*, in 1920, Tablada's other crucial collection – perhaps his signature collection – *Li-Po* was published. Intermediality and interculturality fully unify in the poem 'Li-Po' from this collection. Stanzas in 'Li-Po' are arranged in both type-written and hand-written styles in non-linear ways to present shapes and images related to the meaning of the verses. One of the stanzas is even located in a printed Chinese character, which exclaims the reader's attention, and reinforces the poem's connection to the inspirations from East Asian culture. Compared to the visual poems in *Al sol*, Tablada's visual

works in *Li-Po* are more mature and creative. In addition to the enhanced verbal expressiveness and enriched playfulness, visual presentation in *Li-Po* alters or complements the meaning of the verbal text compares to primitive visual poems such as 'Lawn tennis' and 'Luna'.

Now that we already established an overall idea about the formation of Tablada's visual poetry, we might ask, what factors gave rise to Tablada's composition of visual poetry of East Asian themes? This question then can be divided into a series of sub-questions. First, why did the visual turn take place between the publication of *Hiroshigué* and *Al sol*? Second, what exactly prompted Tablada's 'visual turn'?

Tablada's pictorial writing follows the Western tradition of ekphrasis while his visual writing is probably inspired by the East Asian tradition of painting-poetry hybrid art. Apart from the potential influence of *ehon*, which we have discussed earlier, have certain aspects or traits in East Asian art or poetry inspired Tablada's experiment to integrate painting and poetry? Was it seals, *kalogramas*, or something else? Can we attribute the visual turn to Tablada's fascination for East Asian literature, more specifically, to Sino-Japanese poetry? Why was it not Spanish art, Greek art, or culture from any other region but rather East Asian culture that inspired Tablada's visual writing?

In addition to the 'when' and 'what', we are also curious about the 'how' in Tablada's visual poetry: How does visual poetry appeal to its readers? How does the visual presentation present and modify the meaning of the verbal text? What is the relationship between the visual and the verbal aspect within a visual poem?

In the following chapter, we are going to discuss how poetry and painting are integrated into Tablada's visual poetry by taking a close look into the collection *Li-Po*. In answering the questions raised above, we shall start from studying the three inspirations for his visual poetry admitted by himself and analyse the connection between Tablada's aspiration of achieving 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity' and ideograms.

### 3. 'LI-PO' AND OTHER IDEOGRAPHIC POEMS: TABLADA'S VISUAL POETRY

#### 3.1 Inspirations for 'Poemas Ideográficos': According to Tablada's Own Words

At the end of the previous chapter, we raised a series of questions regarding Tablada's 'visual turn' from pictorial writing to visual writing. In this chapter, we endeavour to answer those questions with a focus on the collection *Li-Po*. We will start with exploring the possible factors that gave rise to Tablada's 'visual turn' and discussing the potential influence of East Asian culture on Tablada's intermedial poetry.<sup>54</sup>

On page 23 of *Li-Po*, Tablada presents an index of 'other ideographic poems' in this collection aside from the long poem 'Li-Po' (Figure 3-1). The index demonstrates that at least two poems, 'Madrigales Ideográficos' and 'Impresión de Adolescencia', were written before the publication of *Al sol*.

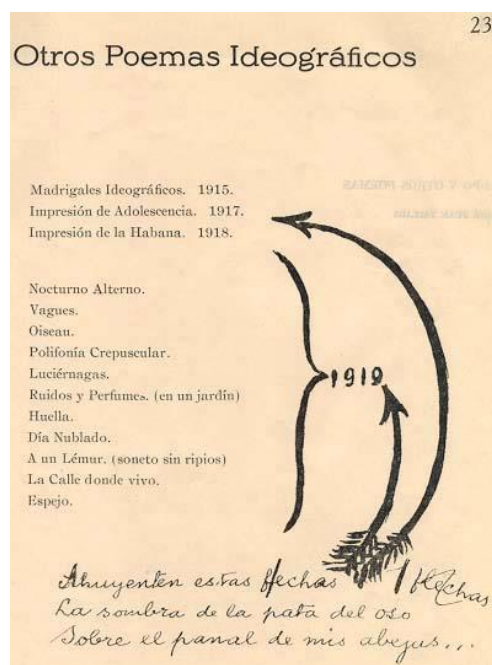


Figure 3-1 Index of the section 'Otros Poemas Ideográficos' on page 23 of *Li-Po*.

'Madrigales Ideográficos' consist of two pieces of visual compositions, 'Talon rouge' published on the Colombian journal *Voces* in 1918, and 'El puñal' published on the Cuban journal *Social* in 1919 (Bohn 'Trajectory of Tablada' 194). Shortly after 'Madrigales', 'Impresión de

<sup>54</sup> For abbreviation, this chapter will refer to the collection *Li-Po y otros poemas* as *Li-Po* in italics so as to distinguish it from the poem 'Li-Po' in quotation marks.

Adolescencia', and 'Impresión de la Habana' came out, Tablada published a letter to his friend, Mexican poet Ramón López Velarde (1888-1921) in *El Universal Ilustrado* in 1919 to clarify the sources of his inspirations for visual poetry:

¿Vio usted en *Social* de la Habana unos poemas míos que llamo 'ideográficos', dos madrigales y una 'Impresión de la Habana'? Pues bien, ellos son los *avant coureurs* de toda una obra, más de treinta poemas que integrarán mi próximo volumen: *Los ojos de la máscara*. Hace muchos años leí en la *Antología griega*, de Panude, que un poeta heleno había escrito un poema en forma de 'ala' y otro en forma de 'altar'. Supe por mis estudios chinos que en el templo de Confucio se canta cierto himno cuyos caracteres escriben el movimiento de su danza, los coreógrafos, sobre el pavimento. Por fin vi aquellos de Jules Renard: *Les formis* [sic], *elles sont: 3333333333:...* con lo que sugiere tan admirablemente la inquieta fila de hormigas... En New York hace cinco años hice los Madrigales ideográficos. Luego vi algunos intentos semejantes de pintores cubistas y algún poeta modernista. Pero no eran más que un balbutir [sic]. Mis poemas actuales son un franco lenguaje; algunos no son simplemente gráficos sino arquitectónicos: 'La calle en que vivo' es una calle con casas, iglesias, crímenes y almas en pena. Como la 'Impresión de la Habana', es ya todo un paisaje. Y todo es sintético, discontinuo y por tanto dinámico; lo explicativo y lo retórico están eliminados para siempre; es una sucesión de estados sustantivos; creo que es poesía pura... ('La nueva lírica de Tablada', n.p.)

This letter to Velarde is probably Tablada's most important and direct remark about the origination of his visual writing. According to the poet's statement in the letter, his visual poetry was inspired by the following pre-existing literature: (1) visual epigrams from the *Greek Anthology*, (2) visual poem 'Les Fourmis' by the French poet Jules Renard (1864-1910), and (3) 'song in the Confucius temple'. In this section, we shall investigate these three aspects and discuss their respective contribution to Tablada's 'visual turn'.

### 3.1.1 *Technopaignia* and Tautology: Western Tradition

Although word-painting integration is more common in East Asia, there has also been a long history of using typography to mimic the object mentioned in the poem of the West. The *Greek Anthology*, collections of manuscripts of the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, include several epigrams that present shapes and patterns with words. In the article 'Formas de escritura ideográfica en *Li-Po y otros poemas* de José Juan Tablada', Klaus Meyer-Minnemann considers 'Wings of Love' by Simias and 'The Altar' by Besantinus and Dosiadas (Figure 3-2) in the Book XV of the *Greek Anthology* to be the two poems that Tablada refers to in his letter (436). Meyer-Minnemann also brings up the notion of '*technopaignia*, (by τέχνη = art and παίγνια = game, joke)', which, according to Oxford Classical Dictionary, 'are poems whose varying verse-lengths produce a pattern mimicking the shape of an object' (Meyer-Minnemann 435, Goldberg).

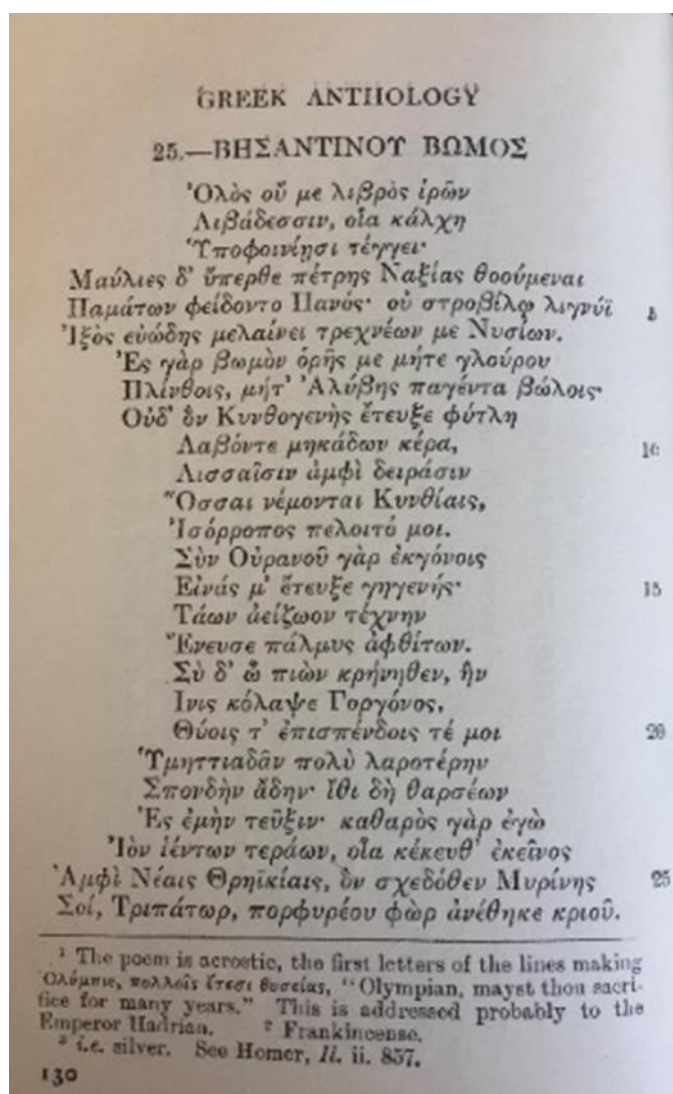


Figure 3-2 'The Altar' in *The Greek Anthology: Sources and Ascription*, page 130.

One of the most essential characteristics of *technopaignia* is the repetition between denotation of the poem and signification of its shape, or in Michel Foucault's words, a tautology. Foucault remarks that visual poetry – calligram in his words – is tautological because one of its roles is 'to repeat something without the aid of rhetoric' (20). The content of the poem or the object of representation of the text is meanwhile the object of representation for the image produced by the textual arrangement. A piece of work of *technopaignia* consists of both verbal signifiers (words that complete the poem) and a visual signifier (shape formed by the words) which designates the identical signified. The tautology of the same referent with visual and semiotic presentations invites a comparison to ideograms such as Chinese characters, which will be examined again in the later discussion in 3.1.3.

*Technopaignia* are widely applied in Tablada's poetry. For example, a few stanzas in 'Li-Po' presents the visual image of the object referred to by the text with handwritten or typed letters. Outlining the object presented in the verses, the three stanzas below respectively repeat 'sapo' (Figure 3-3), 'la torre de Kaolín de Nankín' (Figure 3-4) and 'copa de vino' (Figure 3-5) with both visual and linguistic signifiers of the same signified.<sup>55</sup>

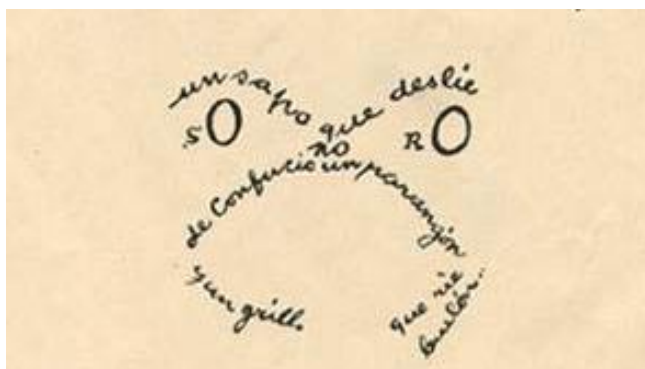


Figure 3-3 Stanza 6 of 'Li-Po' on page 9 mimicking the shape of a frog.



Figure 3-4 Stanza 8 of 'Li-Po' on page 11 mimicking the shape of a Chinese tower.

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<sup>55</sup> One thing that we need to make clear now is that, in the above *technopaignia* cases in 'Li-Po', the shape of the text repeats only one object denoted by a concrete word or phrase present in the text, rather than an idea expressed the whole stanza which forms the shape. There are other cases in 'Li-Po' where the visual presentation and verbal text connotes the same concept, while that concept is not explicitly named by any word of the poem. We shall discuss those cases in 3.3.1. Please see glossary 2 for a transcription of 'Li-Po' in standard typeface. The transcription gives a numbering of the stanza-images.

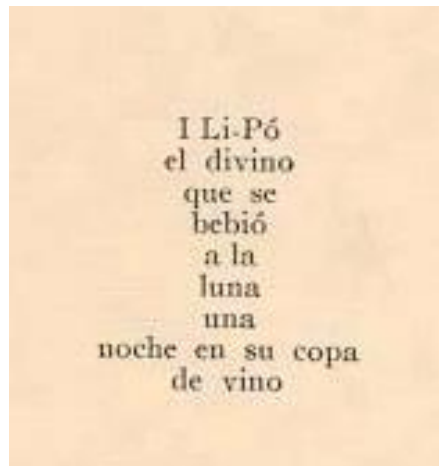


Figure 3-5 Stanza 12 of 'Li-Po' on page 15 mimicking the shape of an antique wine glass.

Tablada's primitive visual poems in *Al sol* and 'Luna' also fit into the definition of *technopaignia*. The indented stanzas in 'Lawn tennis' obviously mimick the tennis courts, and the typography of 'Luna' imitates the reflection of the moon. The shape of both poems repeats exactly their titles. Likewise, his 'Madrigales Ideográficos' are also *technopaignia*, since the text of 'Talon rouge' forms the shape of a heeled shoe, and the text of 'El puñal' presents the silhouette of a dagger. While Tablada's earlier visual poems all appear in the form of *technopaignia*, visual presentations in his later compositions such as 'Vagues', 'Día nublado', and 'A un Lémur' are not restricted to mimicking a particular object. Instead, the 'other ideographic poems' composed in 1919 apply a variety of visual methods including hand-written text, which presents more complicated ideas, and typographical experiments, which enrich the reading experiences.

Compared to modern visual poems which often use bolder visual presentation, *technopaignia* is easier to accept and understand for all readers, and perhaps is hence a more manageable form to take the first step in creating visual poetry. Following the tradition of *technopaignia*, Tablada started his visual writing by playing with the typography of linear verses. In comparison to his earlier *techopaignia*, Tablada's 'Impresión de la Habana' (1918) and 'La calle donde vivo' (1919) employ the lines of words to draw pictures and present images with more possibilities for interpretation than that in a *technopaignia*. This is probably influenced by French *calligrammes* published shortly before *Li-Po*. In the next section, we are going to discuss the influence of French precursors' visual poetry as well as Tablada's efforts to defend his originality.

### 3.1.2 French *Calligrammes*: Tablada's Poetry as Part of International Avant-Garde

While we use the phrase 'visual poetry' to refer to Tablada's poems with unconventional visual presentation, the poet himself chose to use the term 'poema ideográfico'. During the period when Tablada's visual poetry was produced, there were several distinct names for these innovative text-image experiments: ideogram, ideographic poem, concrete poem, and *calligramme* or calligram. It is interesting that out of the many alternatives, Tablada opted for 'poema ideográfico' and 'ideografía'.

One widely accepted opinion is that Tablada's terminology derives from French poet Guillaume Apollinaire's (1880 – 1918) 'idéogrammes lyriques', the subtitle for his visual poems were subsequently collected into *Calligrammes* (1918) after they were originally published in journals around 1914. Bohn remarks that 'whereas he [Apollinaire] could have called them lyrical hieroglyphics or lyrical pictograms, he chose to associate them with Chinese characters' (*Modern Visual Poetry* 38). And he raises three reasons for this decision: first, Apollinaire mentioned 'idéogrammes' in an early poem; second, ideograms attracted so much attention that a comment on *Pan* in 1913 extolls ideographic language in comparison to the 'pauvre et faible moyen qu'est le langage phonétique'; and third, Apollinaire's inclination to the Cubism (38-9). Apollinaire has also explained his theories on the 'pictorial and musical simultaneity' of a poem in the article 'Simultanisme-librettisme', published together with some of the first *calligrammes* on *Les Soirées de Paris* in June 1914. He declared that 'the processes of reading and viewing should not merely be conjoined, but combined' (Shingler 'Perceiving Text and Image' 67). Apollinaire started visual writing with similar motives to Tablada: inspiration from ideographic language, collaboration with visual artists, and the pursuit of graphical-lyrical simultaneity. Bohn puts the name of Tablada in the list of Avant-Garde poets inspired by Apollinaire, declaring Tablada to be 'the first person to refer to Apollinaire in print in Mexico' (*Apollinaire and International Avant-Garde* 266). He believes that Tablada has received the influence through his childhood friend, the Mexican poet and artist Marius de Zayas, who produced the painting on *Li-Po's* cover. According to Bohn, de Zayas collaborated with Apollinaire in Paris and witnessed the creation of *Calligrammes* ('Trajectory of Tablada' 191).

Nonetheless, in the letter to Velarde, Tablada has denied the imitation, saying that 'aunque semejante en su principio a la de Apollinaire, es hoy totalmente distinta' ('La nueva lírica de Tablada' n.p.). According to Bohn, this remark is 'extremely suspect [*sic*] and suggested the author was trying to conceal his debt to the individuals associated with 291', a New York art gallery which de Zayas worked for (Bohn *Apollinaire and International Avant-Garde* 270). As

we have previously mentioned, the only French visual poem that Tablada admitted to be his inspiration is 'Les Fourmis' in *Histoires Naturelles* (1896), a collection of short stories on natural objects by the French novelist Jules Renard. Renard's book is especially crucial for French visual literature, because it was one of the first attempts to combine literary writing with paintings, which influenced Apollinaire's *Le bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée* (1911) ('Escritura iluminada' n.p.). Bohn also suspects that the precursors in Tablada's statement 'vi algunos intentos semejantes de pintores cubistas y algún poeta modernista' could be Marius de Zayas, Francis Picabia, and Vicente Huidobro (*Apollinaire and International Avant-Garde* 270). Holding a similar attitude, Meyer-Minnemann explains that by attributing the origin of his 'poesía ideográfica' to *the Greek Anthology*, Chinese hymn with dance and Jules Renard's 'Les fourmis', Tablada intends to establish 'a priority and independence' from Apollinaire and Huidobro's poem *Voyage* published in 1917 (436). Regarding the date that Tablada created his first visual pieces, Rodolfo Mata discovers that 'Madrigales Ideográficos' were written not on any other dates but in 1916 when Tablada was staying with the *kalograma* artist Torres Palomar in New York, based on Tablada's diaries and essays ('Escritura iluminada' n.p.). Mata's research thus proves that Tablada could have read Apollinaire's *Calligrammes* before writing his visual poetry.

With the above literature review regarding Tablada's association with Apollinaire's *calligrammes*, we agree with Meyer-Minnemann and Bohn's view that Apollinaire and cubist artists' works could have been a significant motivation for Tablada to turn from pictorial writing to visual writing. Given the similarity between the visual presentation of Tablada's 'Impresión de la Habana' (1918) and Apollinaire's 'Lettre océan' (1914), the conformity between Tablada's terms 'poema ideográfico' (1920) and Apollinaire's 'idéogrammes lyriques' (1918), and the dates of publication of their visual poetry, we can confirm that Apollinaire's visual creations definitely inspired certain poems in *Li-Po*. In fact, as Bohn has rightly noted, the publication of Apollinaire's visual poem in 1914 is probably the reason that Tablada's 'visual turn' took place between 1914 and 1918.

However, although we admit that French visual poetry, especially Apollinaire's *calligrammes*, constitute a significant inspiration that stimulated Tablada's visual creation in *Li-Po*, Tablada was more than an imitator. The influence of *calligrammes* mainly performs in the collection *Li-Po*, especially its latter half, categorised as 'otros poemas ideográficos', which even includes two poems written in French. The principal poem of the collection, 'Li-Po', which exhibits considerable originality, is an interesting re-translation of Chinese poet Li-Bai's poems. The refined poems in the latter part of *Li-Po* show a considerable resemblance to haiku, such as

'A un Lémur (Soneto sin ripios)', 'Vagues', 'Oiseau' and demonstrate the high creativeness of Tablada's visual composition, 'A un Lémur' in particular, as its 'visual rhyme' achieved by monosyllabism is potentially inspired by the Japanese monosyllabic linguistic system.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Tablada's other visual collections such as *Un día* and *El jarro* hardly show any similarity to Apollinaire's existing works. In this sense, Tablada's statement 'aunque semejante en su principio a la de Apollinaire, es hoy totalmente distinta', is more than an attempt to 'conceal his debt' to Apollinaire and de Zayas, but rather a genuine confession and a defence for his own authenticity. (Tablada 'La nueva lírica de Tablada' n.p, Bohn *Apollinaire and International Avant-Garde* 270.)

Besides, Michele Pascucci's research reveals that Japanese haiku had a more significant impact than French pre-existing visual experiments on Tablada's visual collection *Li-Po*. In particular, Pascucci argues that the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé (1842 – 1898) had a limited influence on Tablada ("Estudios chinos" de Tablada'). Tablada cited a stanza in French from Mallarmé's 'Las de l'amer...' as the epigraph for *Li-Po* and repeatedly mentioned the concept of 'pure poetry' promoted by Mallarmé. Supposedly a follower of Mallarmé, Tablada should have read Mallarmé's works in original French. Curiously, Tablada has never mentioned Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés* (1897), whose radical typographical design should be a good reason to raise Tablada's attention. Pascucci notices this issue and attributes Tablada's knowledge of Mallarmé to the French writer Paul-Louis Couchoud (1879 – 1959), whose book *Sages et poètes d'Asie* (1916) is confirmed to be a key reference for Tablada's writings related to East Asian culture:

Sin embargo, es notable que Tablada, pese a sus repetidas referencias a la poesía pura y su invocación a Mallarmé, no menciona directamente los efectos gráficos y espaciales de *Un coup de dés*. En cambio, sus alusiones y disertaciones teóricas siguen más bien las ideas y el language de Couchoud. ("Estudios chinos" de Tablada' 488)

Pascucci finds out that Couchoud's *Sages et poètes d'Asie* quotes precisely the same stanza from 'Las de l'amer...' in the prologue, relating Mallarmé with Japanese haiku in place of Chinese painting or Calligraphy ("Estudios chinos" de Tablada' 488). Therefore, Pascucci concludes that the same citation by Tablada and Couchoud and the close date of publication

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<sup>56</sup> Michele Pascucci's thesis includes a thorough analysis of the haiku elements in Tablada's visual collection *Li-Po*. In 3.4.1 of this chapter, we are going to discuss the Japanese influence in the typographical presentation of 'A un Lémur' in detail.

between *Un día* and *Li-Po* suggest a connection between Tablada's visual poetry and haiku (489).

Pascucci's findings provide more information to assist in answering the questions raised in the previous chapter. We can confirm that, whilst the publication of Apollinaire's *calligrammes* in 1914 triggered the happening of Tablada's 'visual turn' between 1914 and 1918, his switch from pictorial writing to visual writing is a result of the consecutive influence of various factors including the *technopaignia* tradition and the poet's involvement in *kalograma* design. Among these factors, the influence of East Asian culture is most substantial. In the following part, we are going to look into Tablada's remarks and discuss his awareness of the East Asian influence on his visual poetry.

### 3.1.3 Ideograms and Chinese Characters: Key to 'Lyrical-Graphical Simultaneity'

At the beginning of this chapter, we mentioned that according to Tablada's own statement, his visual poetry was inspired by three existing literary texts (1) visual epigrams from the *Greek Anthology*, (2) visual poem 'Les Fourmis' by the French poet Jules Renard and (3) 'song in the Confucius temple'. In the previous two parts of this section, we have respectively dealt with the contribution of *technopaignia* from the *Greek Anthology* and French visual poems in Tablada's 'visual turn'. In the following paragraphs, we are going to focus on 'Chinese characters written by the dance movements' and discuss their correlation with Tablada's 'poemas ideográficos'.

In the previous part, we mentioned that Michele Pascucci attributes Tablada's epigraph of Mallarmé's 'Las de l'amer...' to by Paul-Louis Couchoud, who quoted Mallarmé's same stanza. In the article 'Los "Estudios chinos" de José Juan Tablada', Pascucci confirms that the 'hymns in the Confucius temple' mentioned by Tablada also appears in Couchoud's book *Sages et poètes d'Asie*. According to Pascucci, Tablada's version, 'en el templo de Confucio se canta cierto himno cuyos caracteres [*sic*] escriben el movimiento de su danza, los coreógrafos, sobre el pavimento', is almost identical to the narration that Paul-Louis Couchoud has used to describe his experience of a ceremony in the Confucius temple in China: 'The hymn is not only sung; it is traced, as it were, on the ground by two groups of dancers who hold long pens and short flutes and who follow, by their movements, the caligraphic [*sic*] character of each syllable as it is sung, and thus embellish the spiritual idea.' (486) She also points out that Couchoud's comment of the ceremony having a 'simultaneous appeal to the eye and the ear' (qtd. Pascucci 487). Following this description, it could have inspired Tablada's expression 'simultáneamente lírica y gráfica'.

In 1919, in response to Velarde, who considered Tablada's 'poemas ideográficos' published posterior of Apollinaire's visual poems to be 'conventional', Tablada justified the advantage of his invention in this way:

Lo que me dice de la ideografía me interesa y me preocupa. Le parece a usted convencional... ¿más convencional que seguir expresándose en odas pindáricas, y en sonetos, como Petrarca?... La ideografía tiene, a mi modo de ver, la fuerza de una expresión 'simultáneamente lírica y gráfica', a reserva de conservar el secular carácter ideofónico. Además, la parte gráfica sustituye ventajosamente la discursiva o la explicativa de la antigua poesía, dejando los temas literarios en calidad de 'poesía pura', como lo quería Mallarmé. ('La nueva lírica de Tablada', n.p.)

Pascucci proposes the possibility that Tablada puts a quotation mark to suggest that the expression is derived from Couchoud's text (487). If that was the case, it supports the interpretation of Tablada's intention to create 'ideogram' as a substitute, a more advanced form that would link aural and visual sensation, for the 'conventional' poetry which mainly provides audio appeal.<sup>57</sup> The phrases 'simultaneously lyric and graphical' or 'cooperation of the text and image' have been repeated many times in this thesis. The discussion of such simultaneity and intermediality, the centre of the current research, requests us to re-examine Tablada's self-contradictory sentence: 'La ideografía tiene, a mi modo de ver, la fuerza de una expresión "simultáneamente lírica y gráfica", a reserva de conservar el secular carácter ideofónico'. How could the ideogram have 'ideophonic' character?

Both ideophone and ideogram are direct symbolic presentations of the idea, independent of other symbolic systems.<sup>58</sup> An ideophone is a word or expression whose sound is related to a certain idea or concept, often used together with the term 'sound symbolism' (Matthews 'ideophone'). On the other hand, an ideogram or ideograph, with numerals and Chinese characters being examples, is a character symbolising the idea of a thing without indicating the sounds used to say it ('ideograph'). In certain ways, an ideogram is a miniature of

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<sup>57</sup> There exist the phenomena of 'visual rhyme' in English poetry, where two words are spelled in a way that appears to rhyme but are pronounced differently. Visual rhyme usually exists because the two words were originally full rhyme, but not any longer for modern readers due to the change of pronunciation. Visual rhyme is seldomly seen in Spanish poetry, but common in traditional Chinese poetry. We are going to discuss visual rhyme in Tablada's 'A un Lémur' in 3.4.1.

<sup>58</sup> Contemporary linguistics regard Chinese characters as logograms, which are characters that represent a word as a whole, rather than ideograms (Matthews 'logogram'). Please see Frellesvig's article 'On the Misconception That *Kanji* Are Ideograms' for discussion of logographic writing in Japanese. However, in the last century, the literary field generally considers Chinese characters as ideograms, probably due to the great influence of Ernest Fenollosa's (1853 – 1908) essay *Chinese Characters as a Medium for Poetry*, originally published in 1920. To comply with Tablada's term, this thesis shall refer to Chinese characters as ideograms and focus on their ideographic function.

*technopaignia*, because both are at the same time a picture and a sign that carries meaning. The ideographic nature of Chinese characters has a profound influence on East Asian literature and art. One of its fruits is the frequent use of juxtaposition of nominal phrases in poetry, which gives Tablada inspiration for creating verbal images in haiku. We shall discuss this in detail in 4.1. Another product due to the ideography is the development of the image-text integrated tradition as well as a variety of hybrid arts including calligraphy and seal-carving in East Asia. Such image-text hybridity is a strong contradiction to the Western tradition, in which poetry is less often associated with graphical art, as we have mentioned in the introduction.

Many scholars and writers contemporary with Tablada have noticed the ideographic characteristic of Chinese characters and put this nature into their practice of visual writing, one example is Apollinaire's 'idéogrammes lyriques' that we mentioned before. Another outstanding figure is American poet Ezra Pound (1885 – 1972) who produced a considerable amount of poetry regarding East Asian culture, including the collection *Cathay* and *The Cantos* that involve many translations of Chinese poetry with various Chinese characters inserted.<sup>59</sup> Pound practised poetry composition with his ideogrammic method based on American scholar Ernest Fenollosa's essay *Chinese Characters as a Medium for Poetry*, which considers that Chinese characters represent image rather than sound, different to the phonemic writing systems used by Western alphabetic languages. Pound and Fenollosa demonstrated some common misconceptions about the nature of Chinese characters. For example, they hardly mentioned the phonetic aspect of Chinese characters, whereas most Chinese characters are phono-semantic compound characters that consist of both a phonetic component to demonstrate the pronunciation and a semantic component to give a general designation for the character's meaning (Sampson and Chen 256).

By emphasising their misunderstandings about Chinese characters, we wish to explore the reason why the idea of 'ideogram' seems to be fascinating for those writers who are more familiar with phonetic writing. Since different visual poets who write in English, French, and Spanish all find the particular nature of 'created to present image' of ideographic Chinese characters enlightening, we think that an analysis of the remarks about Chinese characters by

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<sup>59</sup> Pound shares many similarities with Tablada in terms of their translation/rewriting of Chinese poetry and composition of modern haiku in the Western language. No existing evidence shows that the two poets had any personal acquaintance despite that they had several mutual friends in New York. The primary reason is that Pound was not in the United States during Tablada's several stays in New York.

other visual poets such as Pound could shed light on the investigation of Tablada's theories and practices of ideograms.<sup>60</sup>

One of the most important reasons for visual poets to use Chinese characters is that the ideogram can present the referent directly without the aid of another sign system. In an analysis of ideograms in Pound's writings, Bruce Fleming raises the following argument:

Thus for both Pound and Eisenstein, at any rate, the ideogram represented a sort of language that did not deform or do violence to the nature of reality. Yet this was not because it depicted an external world more correctly than another language, rather because in a sense the ideogram bridged the gap between the Saussurian signifier and signified without producing merely another sign as a result; the result was instead part of the world rather than merely a part of language. The first criteria for Imagist poetry... was 'Direct treatment of the "thing"'. (Fleming 90-1)

To present the object of presentation (signified/reality), conventional poetry written in Western languages has to seek aid from another sign system, which are letters from the alphabet, in order to convey a grapheme (signifier/concept), the minimal significant unit in writing. Since alphabetical writing systems are based on spoken languages, the perception of the written signified in Western languages inevitably invites the participation of spoken language, which is what Fleming puts as 'producing another sign that is part of the language. In contrast, ideographic languages develop their writing systems differently: poetry written in ideographic languages is 'a vivid shorthand picture of the operation of nature' (Fenollosa qtd. Fleming 91).

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<sup>60</sup> Some existing investigations have already noticed that many Western visual poets shared a similar interest in Chinese characters. For example, Rodica Frentiu's conference proceeding 'Beyond Linguistic Borders: Visual Poetry at The Confluence Between the West and the Far East' gives a panoramic review of how visual poetry in alphabetic language encounters with the ideographic language used in East Asia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Chapter One of Christopher Bush's book *Ideographic Modernism: China, Writing, Media* also discusses the Chinese characters in the poetics of Fenollosa, Pound, and Imagism. Bush notices that the development of Modernist poetry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century English language literature, especially Imagism, is closely related with an Orientalist study on Chinese characters and Chinese writings, which exemplifies the 'visual immediacy' that is rare to see in Western literary tradition. Agreeing with Bush's opinion that the Imagist's imagination of China and Chinese poetics is subject to the historical context, we think his critiques on Modernism could be a valuable reference for understanding China and Chinese literature in Hispanic *modernista* writings, although we must be mindful that the Hispanic *Modernismo* is different from Modernism in English literature.

Christopher Bush also rightly points out that, in the Western convention, ideograph was 'a way of thinking about language as writing', a common misunderstanding among the Modernist poets. (3) Whether Tablada considered Chinese characters as writing is debatable, since his commentary on the Chinese language is inadequate to discuss this topic. However, Tablada clearly mentioned the phonetic side of an ideogram, which leads to our discussion of utterance in visual poetry in 3.3.3.

Conventionally, visual appeal and aural appeal are realized by two different media: image and text. The poetic text is responsible for the verbal effect, while the visual effect is accomplished by an illustration or graphical decoration, as we can see from cases like Tablada's 'Sonetos de la hiedra' in 1.1.2. However, in an 'ideographic poem', the poem itself is its illustration. Tablada, as well as other visual poets, intends to achieve both visual appeal and aural appeal with one single visual poem, that is to say, to imitate the ideographic nature of Chinese characters. The visual poem is not only meant to be heard but also to be seen.

With that sorted out, Tablada's self-contradictory sentence can be interpreted as 'visual poetry referring to characteristics of ideogram and literature in ideographic languages has the ability to achieve aural beauty and graphical beauty simultaneously, given it is based on alphabetic language system, in which phonetic features are fundamental.' We then have the chart below illustrating the relationship of mentioned elements participated in the visual poetry:

<b>Purposes to achieve:</b>	Visual appeal	Aural appeal
<b>Means of presentation in visual poetry:</b>	Graphical features perceived by seeing the image	Lyrical features perceived by uttering the text

With the above discussion, we can conclude that the third inspiration for Tablada's visual poetry, admitted by the poet himself, is the ideographic nature of Chinese characters. Despite that the inspiration of ideograms on Tablada's visual poetry is less explicit compared to *technopaignia* and Apollinaire's *calligrammes*, the imperceptible yet constant influence of ideograms could have profoundly changed Tablada's understanding of language and poetry, thus making it possible for him to take the 'visual turn'.

Previous researchers including Mata and Pascucci also noticed the influence of East Asian culture in Tablada's writing, but they seldom discuss the specific question 'which part of East Asian culture' attracts the visual poet. Although there are a few investigations that study the use of the Chinese character 寿 in 'Li-Po', they generally treat it as a solitary case where the East Asian linguistic system inspired Tablada's visual writing. With our discussion of the ideographic nature of Chinese characters, we can conclude that the ideographic characteristics are a crucial inspiration for visual poetry and answer the question 'why it was East Asian culture rather than other foreign cultures that influenced Tablada's visual turn': among the foreign cultures that Tablada knew of, East Asian culture is the only one that

adopted ideographic writing system and developed exceptional poetics and text-image hybrid art based on the ideographic language.

In the following discussions, we shall keep tracking the influence of Chinese characters' ideographic nature on Tablada's poetry. We are going to discuss the use of 寿 from the perspective of the author in 3.2.2, and from the perspective of multi-lingual readers' perception in 3.3.3. In 3.4.2, we are going to discuss the 'visual rhyme' achieved in the poem 'A un Lémur', inspired by the Japanese monosyllabic writing system. In Chapter Four, we are going to see how the East Asian ideographic languages cultivated the poetics based on verbal images and discuss Tablada's adoption of such poetics in his haiku.

### **3.2 Re-Presenting Li Bai: Translation and Visual Presentation in 'Li-Po'**

In the previous section, we discuss the three factors that led to Tablada's 'visual turn' from pictorial writing, among which, we find that the imperceptible influence of Chinese characters was a key inspiration.

In this section, we are going to continue to discuss the East Asian influences in Tablada's visual poetry, putting the focus on the poet's presentation – both verbally and visually – of Chinese literature with a case study of the principal poem in the collection *Li-Po*. Occupying nearly half of the book, the long poem 'Li-Po' is an important work in Tablada's poetic career and a crucial example of the introduction of East Asian literature in 20<sup>th</sup> century Latin America. This section will start by discussing the construction of the figure 'Li-Po' from the perspective of the 'loss and gain' in the re-translation of the original Chinese poetry. Then we shall move to the visual instruments used to complement the 'untranslatable' part of the translations in 'Li-Po'.

#### **3.2.1 Textual Presentation: Re-Presentation of Li Bai and Re-Translation of Li Bai's Poem**

Li Bai (李白 701 – 762) was one of the greatest and most influential Chinese poets in Chinese literature and East Asian culture. Li Bai has not only been a representative classic poet inspiring later East Asian – and in the latest few centuries, even European and American – literary composition, but also an iconic figure in various forms of visual arts, who is often associated with the companionship with the moon, or with drunkenness (Liscomb 331). Tablada's 'Li-Po' is one of the poems that represent this historic and legendary personage of

a talented Chinese poet, along with some re-telling of Li Bai's poems.<sup>61</sup> We shall first look into the textual aspect of the representation in 'Li-Po' before dealing with its visual features.

'Li-Po' starts with a brief prologue which sets forth the position of the Chinese poet as one of the 'Siete Sabios en el vino',<sup>62</sup> as well as a description of the imaginary childhood and youth of Li-Po in stanza 2.<sup>63</sup> Following another six stanzas (stanza 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10) dedicated to the description of the natural environment, the remaining stanzas of the poem fabricates the story of Li-Po writing a poem regarding the moon in the Chinese court (stanza 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15). Next, the poem comes to its climax. The drunken poet Li-Po wrote his immortal verses under the spring moonlight (stanza 16 to 22). Inspired by Li Bai's poem *Drinking Alone by Moonlight* (月下独酌, ca.744), Tablada rewrites this Chinese Tang poem in his method based on Herbert Giles' English translation.<sup>64</sup> The two closing stanzas tell the death and the grand funeral of Li-Po imagined by the poet. In this way, the writing subject finishes the narration of the mysterious Chinese poet Li-Po, highlighting his romanticism and obsession with wine. With the youth and death of Li Bai only briefly mentioned, the poem puts the emphasis on the episode of Li Bai composing *Drinking Alone by Moonlight*.

But why did Tablada choose to present the scenario of *Drinking Alone by Moonlight* among all the poems that Li Bai composed, especially considering the fact that 'Li-Po' has fused quite a few other Chinese poems into the narration of Li-Po's life? In fact, García de Aldridge's article 'Las fuentes chinas de Tablada' finds out that Tablada's re-translation of Li Bai's poetry mainly referring to two books, Herbert Giles' book *A History of Chinese Literature* (1901) and James Whitall's book *Chinese Lyrics from the Book of Jade* (1918), an English translation based on Judith Gautier's French translation *Le livre de jade* (1867). This article also notes that stanza

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<sup>61</sup> Li Bai is also known as Li Bo, Li Po, or Rihaku in English translations due to the different Romanization systems of Chinese and different sources used by translators. This chapter refers to the Chinese poet who existed in the East Asian context as 'Li Bai' and refers to the re-invented poetic character in Tablada's verses as 'Li-Po' without quotation marks.

<sup>62</sup> The 'siete sabios de vino' is probably a mistaken reference to 'the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove' (竹林七贤), a group of Chinese scholars and writers allegedly active in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, who were also known for drunkenness and bohemian lifestyle. Tablada's reference to 'los sabios' could also be inspired by Rubén Darío's reference to Li Bai in 'Divagación', which we mentioned earlier in 1.1.2.

<sup>63</sup> This thesis regards one unit of the visual poem as one separate stanza and therefore divides 'Li-Po' into 24 stanzas. Please see the appendix for the transcript of the poem in plain text.

<sup>64</sup> Li Bai's original poem was a series of four separate pieces. The text included in Tablada's poem is the first of the series. Tablada referred to the English translation by Herbert Giles' in the book *A History of Chinese Literature* (1901). Since Giles' translation did not provide titles for the poems, we shall refer to the titles translated by Arthur Waley in *More Translations from the Chinese* (1919) for convenience. Waley translated three of the four poems by Li Bai under the same title.

10 of Tablada's poem is an adaptation in Spanish based on the poem 'The Cormorant' in Whittall's book, which is a translation of Su Shi's poem, rather than Li Bai (114-5).

The fuse of Su Shi's poem in 'Li-Po' calls our attention to the possibility that Tablada's re-translation of Li Bai's poetry does not intend for a faithful recreation of the Chinese poet and his poetry, but rather attempt to tell a story of a legendary poet from the Far East in the name of Li-Po. This possibility can be further proven by Tablada's recreation of the scenario where Li-Po composes his verses about the moon, presented from pages 17 to 21 of the *Li-Po*. Tablada's poetic narration is a rearrangement of the materials provided by Herbert Giles' *A History of Chinese Literature*. Giles' book tells the story of Li Bai writing a poem with ink and brush on a silkscreen in the court under the command of the emperor, before introducing one of Li Bai's poems from the series *Lyrics of the Pleasures in Palace* (宫中行乐词, 152).<sup>65</sup> Then, on the next page, Giles sets forth the legendary death of the Chinese poet according to the Chinese literary lore: 'After more wanderings and much adventure, he was drowned one night on a journey, from leaning too far over the edge of a boat in a drunken effort to embrace the reflection of the moon', (153). After that, Giles gives a translation of *Drinking Alone by the Moonlight*.

Tablada makes an interesting change of the order of events when he transplants Giles' paragraphs into 'Li-Po': he removes *Lyrics of the Pleasures in Palace* and puts the translation of *Drinking Alone by the Moonlight* in the former poem's place, following by a representation of Li-Po's death faithful to Giles' story. Therefore the order becomes 'Li-Po writing in the court under the emperor's command' (stanza 14 and 15) – 'text of *Drinking Alone by the Moonlight*' (stanza 16 to 22) – 'Li-Po drowning in the water to embrace the reflection of the moon' (stanza 23). The characters of 'Emperador' and 'concubina', objects like 'tinta de China' and 'seda fina' remind us of the Japanese princess and Daimio which appeared in the poet's earlier collection *El florilegio* (124, 143). Thus, it is likely that these *modernista* orientalist references are added in order to bring the unfamiliar foreign character Li-Po back to the indulgent Oriental court scene which is more recognizable for the poem's Western readers.

Now let us come back to the discussion of mixing Su Shi's poem in 'Li-Po'. Inspired by the lines 'when the moon shines upon the waves,/ the cormorant meditates' in Whittall's translation, Tablada's adaptation of 'The Cormorant' depicts the scenario where the character of Li-Po

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<sup>65</sup> Translation of this title is mine. Giles' book does not give titles to any of Li Bai's poems including *Drinking Alone by Moonlight*.

watching the cormorants chasing the moon's reflection in the water (qtd. García de Aldridge 114). Tablada's stanza 10 shows consistency with the romantic legend of Li Bai died of chasing the moon's reflection in the river in stanza 23. It is possible that, by integrating Su Shi's poem, Tablada attempts to lay extra emphasis on the connection between the moon and poetic character Li-Po. The transplantation of another poet's work in a poem supposedly dedicated to Li Bai again suggests that Li-Po is a constructed figure rather than an attempt of faithful biographical rendering. It is even possible that Li-Po has become the metonymic representation of East Asian poets.

We can summarise the construction of Li-Po from its original East Asian text to its eventual reincarnation in Tablada's verses as followed:

- *Li Bai (A)* in history as a historic character: the 'real' Li Bai;
- *Li Bai (B)* in later East Asian lore: the iconic poet existed in the lore coined by later Chinese poets, the symbol of a rebellious and romantic writer who never bent his knee to flatter the powerful, yet the emperor still recognized his talent (whose figure is slightly different from the Li-Po in Tablada's verses, who would delightedly write under the emperor's command);
- *Li Bai (C)* in Western French or English translation: an unorthodox genius and an Oriental poetic icon related to drunkenness; a character recreated through Western orientalist lenses based on Li Bai (B).<sup>66</sup>

The poem 'Li-Po' to a certain extent is a poetic synthesis of other English translations and introductions of Li Bai, and the figure of 'Li-Po' featured in Tablada's poem is a version of Li Bai (C) in Latin American writing. Similar to Tablada's previous poems on East Asian topics, this poem is also a representation of existing Western translation rather than a retelling of Li Bai from Li Bai's native culture. Tablada's 'Li-Po' / Spanish Li Bai (C) is distinct and distant from the 'original' Li Bai that exists in Sino-Japanese literature, whether been modified by later Oriental narratives (B) or not (A).

Even though Tablada makes significant alterations regarding the order of events that happened in Li-Po's life, the poetic presentation of *Drinking Alone by the Moonlight* in 'Li-Po' is loyal to Giles' English translation. Tablada's Spanish version keeps the first-person narrative,

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<sup>66</sup> Please see Fusheng Wu's article 'Translations of Chinese Poetry by Herbert A. Giles and Arthur Waley' (2014) and Huaizhi Chen's article 'Translation, Spreading and Influence of Li Bai's Poetry in the United States' (2013, in Chinese) for more discussion of the recreation of Li Bai's character and translations of Li's poetry in Giles' *A History of Chinese Literature*.

the personalization of 'moon' and 'shadow', as well as most of the syntactic structure of Giles' translation. Same as Giles, Tablada adopts the domestication method to conform to the poetics of the target language. A likely reason for taking this translation strategy is that both Tablada and Giles' translations are retelling Li Bai's works as part of the larger narrative of the Chinese poet's legendary life. Reproductions of Li Bai's poem in target languages in Giles and Tablada's writings do not aim to assimilate the source text, but rather serve to incarnate the character of Li-Po. Such 're-translation' and 're-figuration' of Chinese poetry also happens in Modernist poetry in the English language. In *Chinese Dreams: Pound, Brecht, Tel Quel*, Hayot makes the following remarks on reader's perception of Ezra Pound's annotated translation of a Chinese poem: 'The reader, untrained in new English or ancient Chinese poetry, uses the annotation to "translate" the poem's two strangeness – its cultural Chineseness, and its Imagist poetic' (25). We think a similar 'two strangeness' also appears in 'Li-Po' – a cultural Orientalness, and a visualness in terms of media of presentation. We shall discuss the latter strangeness in detail in the following part of this section.

Giles' *A History of Chinese Literature* could have already lost certain information due to the domestication translation strategy. Therefore, based on Giles' book, Tablada's representation of Li Bai's figure and Li's poetry is even further from Li Bai in the Chinese text. However, if we take the visual elements of 'Li-Po' into account, some of the meanings lost during the Chinese-English-Spanish re-translation and adaptation are compensated in another form. In the following section, we are not only going to study how the typographical arrangement of Tablada's adaptation to Li Bai's poem unintentionally recreates the meaning lost in translation, but also discuss the Mexican poet's purpose of adding a Chinese character into his visual poem.

### 3.2.2 Visual Presentation: The Use of Chinese Character in Alphabetic Visual Poetry

The previous paragraphs evaluated the transcultural adaptation of Li Bai's legend and his poetry from the source language to the target language from the perspective of verbal text. The information lost in the translation, on the one hand, is an inevitable result of both the untranslatability and domestication strategy chosen by the English translator Giles and the Spanish adapter Tablada. However, is it possible to bring the lost information back to the target text with an alternative method such as the aid of typographical arrangement?

Adaption of *Drinking Alone by Moonlight* in 'Li-Po' actually provides a scenario where the visual display not only is designed as a deliberate imitation of the target text's content, but also

unintentional responses to the content of the source text. In the images corresponding to stanzas 16 to 17 in the lower part of Figure 3-6, the visual presentation of the verses is obviously different from their English STs. Here I shall quote the first two stanzas of *Drinking Alone by Moonlight* from Giles' translation and the corresponding Spanish version in plain text:

Translation in English by Giles	Translation in Spanish by Tablada
An arbour of flowers and a kettle of wine: Alas! in the bowers no companion is mine.	Solo estoy con mi frasco de vino bajo un árbol en flor (stanza 16)
Then the moon sheds her rays on my goblet and me, And my shadow betrays we're a party of three. (153)	asoma la luna y dice su rayo que ya somos DOS y mi propia sombra anuncia después que ya somos TRES (stanza 17)

Except for the cited stanzas and stanza 21 of 'Li-Po', the rest of *Drinking Alone by Moonlight's* Spanish adaptation in 'Li-Po' follows Giles' rhyme scheme and almost duplicates the syntax and sentence length of the English ST. However, in the case of the above-quoted stanzas, the verses of stanza 16 in 'Li-Po' are less sophisticated, with the sentence completely rewritten into a short line carrying only the most necessary words. Stanza 17, retaining the person and voice in English ST, capitalises 'dos' and 'tres' at the end of the line, contrasting with 'solo' cut into halves and split into two lines at the beginning of stanza 16. The image of stanza 16 is mimicking a wine glass and the image of stanza 17 is creating steps. The shape and visual presentation of stanzas deliver information that is not provided by either Chinese or the English ST. The ascendance in numbers from 'solo' to 'dos', 'tres' and the descending arrangement of stanzas reinforce the effect of the personified moon and shadow joining the company one by one. Moreover, the contrast between the upward and downward movement unexpectedly represents the action of looking up to the moon and looking down at the shadow suggested in the original Chinese source text that was lost in the English translation. This coincidental recovery of information would not be possible without the visual presentation. Comparing to the image of stanza 16, a *technopaignia* that repeats the object mentioned in the text in a visual way, the visual message delivered by the typographical arrangement of stanza 17 is richer and more independent from the text.

Dónde está Lí-Pó? que lo llamen  
Manda el Emperador desde su Yámen

17

Algo ébrio por fin  
entre un femenino tropel,  
llega el Poeta y se inclina;  
una concubina  
le alarga el pincel  
cargado de tinta de China,  
otra una seda fina  
por papel,  
y Lí  
escribe así:

So  
lo  
estoy  
con mi  
frasco  
de vino  
bajo un  
árbol en flor

asoma  
la luna  
y dice  
su rayo

que ya  
somos dos

y mi propia sombra  
anuncia después

que ya  
somos  
TRES

Figure 3-6 Page 17 of *Li-Po* containing stanzas 14 to 17.

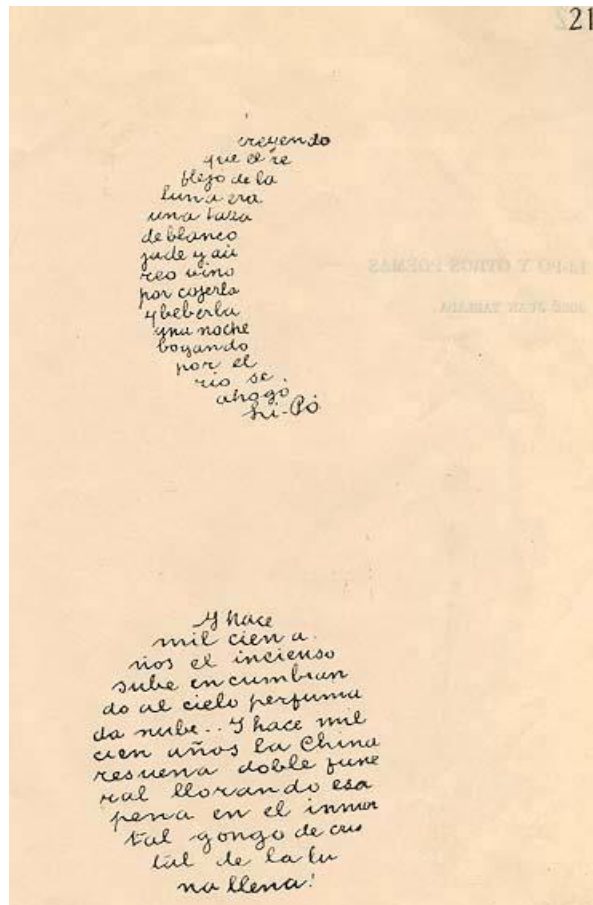


Figure 3-7 Page 21 of *Li-Po* containing stanzas 23 and 24

Other stanzas of 'Li-Po' also involve some presumably unintentional visual messages. On the last page of 'Li-Po', stanza 23 (Figure 3-7), occupying the upper part of the page, presents the shape of a moon, and stanza 24 in the lower part forms a round figure as if it was the sun (or a full moon). The moon and the sun together call to mind the Chinese character 明, which is composed of the sun (日) and the moon (月), meaning brightness, and future. The conformity between the typographical arrangement of stanza 17 and the action of poetic voice suggested in the corresponding Chinese lines would not be captured unless the reader has read the original verses by Li Bai. Similarly, the reaction of associating the *technopaignia* of stanza 23 and 24 in the shape of the sun and the moon to the character 明 would only occur to a reader who knows Chinese characters. Since Tablada does not read any Chinese characters, it is hardly possible that he intentionally arranged the shape of text in the target language according to the meaning of the Chinese character. However, such coincidence indeed enriches the interpretation of a reader who is familiar with the source language and source text. The unexpected meaning and interpretation could have been generated thanks to the difference

between the Chinese source text and Spanish target text and the distinction between writing systems of the source language and the target language.

Stanza 9 of 'Li-Po' presented in the frame of the Chinese character 寿 is possibly the most original and exceptional piece of work among Tablada's visual poems (Figure 3-8). This character is most likely to be a reproduction of the pattern from a wrapping cloth that the poet possesses as part of his Japanese collection in his studio (Figure 3-9), according to a photo of Tablada published in 1919 that shows the cloth in the background (Pascucci 'Tablada y el ideograma *kotobuki*' 62).

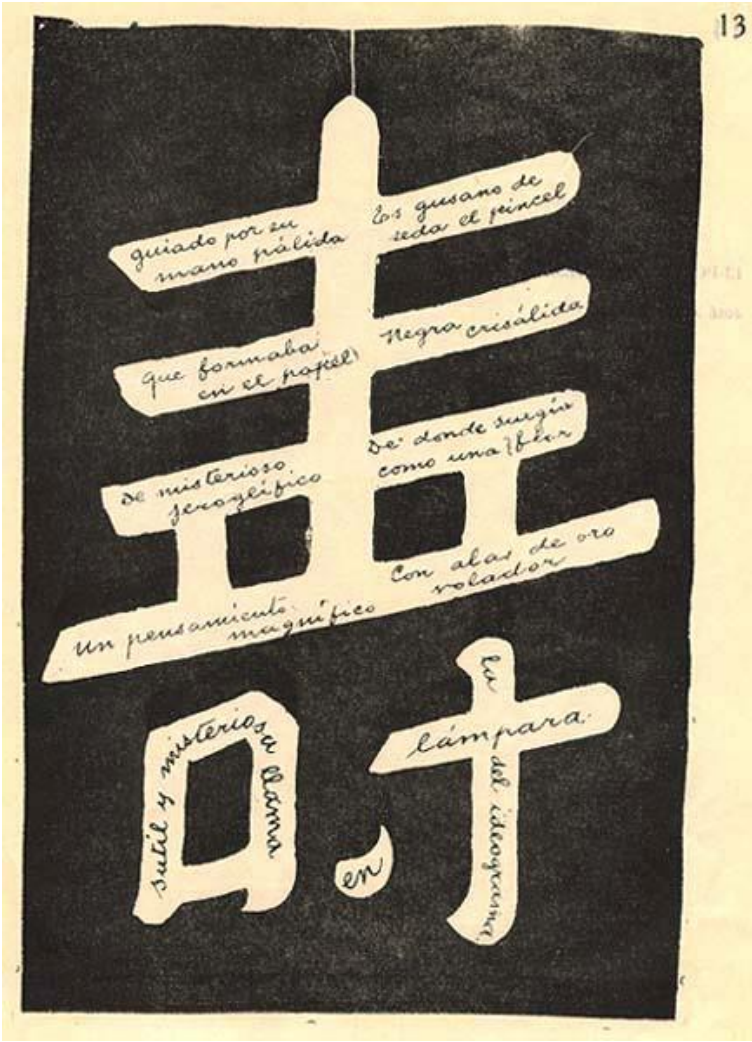


Figure 3-8 Page 21 of *Li-Po* containing stanza 9.



Figure 3-9 *José Juan Tablada en su estudio japonés. Actualidades*, III, No.36, 7 September 1919.

Since the poem 'Li-Po' relates the story of a Chinese poet, readers may naturally consider 寿 was a character that Tablada picked from the Chinese language. However, according to Michele Pascucci's article, Tablada learned about the meaning of the Chinese character in Figure 3-8 from the Japanese language: it carries both the meaning of 'longevity' and 'congratulations' in Japanese, whereas in Chinese it means 'longevity' or 'age'. Pascucci considers that stanza 9 makes the metaphorical parallel between the fatal love of Poetry and the moth flying towards the flame on the textual level. She thinks that framing these verses into a character with the meaning of 'longevity' expresses 'congratulations' to the immortal poetic talent of Li-Po (56-7). She therefore believes that the presence of this character 'responde a una decisión consciente' and cannot be substituted by a random character (64). Pascucci's opinion of 'conscious decision' is a rebuttal to Atsuko Tanabe: 'Si el poeta intentó la simultaneidad de efectos gráficos y efectos líricos, en este caso no existe ninguna relación entre el significante y el significado. Por otra parte, si se usó esa caligrafía como ilustración

para que acompañarse al poema, cuyo título sería “Caligrafía”, el experimento no es nada novedoso’ (Tanabe 125, qtd. Pascucci). The contrasting opinions between Pascucci and Tanabe reflect two different perspectives of perceiving this Chinese character in a poem written in alphabetical language: viewing the character as word and text and focusing on its meaning, which is the ground where Pascucci based her interpretation, or, as an image or visual art, which is Tanabe’s opinion given her statement that ‘lo que le atrajo a Tablada con un magnetismo irresistible fueron las características y función gráfica del ideograma, las mismas que tiene una pintura’ (125).

In the case of ‘Li-Po’, this thesis prefers to see the Chinese character 寿 as an image before reading its meaning as a word, because the character 寿 is present in this poem as the frame for stanza 9. The primary function of the Chinese character is to decorate the text and shape the text into its frame, similar to the crescent and circle framing stanza 23 and 24 on page 21. Page 13/stanza 9 of ‘Li-Po’ can be a ‘simultaneously lyrical and graphical’ ideogram only under the condition that its reader processes it by uttering the letters of the Spanish text and seeing the image of the Sino-Japanese character at the same time. In this circumstance, the character provides visual appeal, and the alphabetical letters provide the aural appeal. Therefore, the pronunciation of 寿 to be either ‘kotobuki’, ‘kotobuku’, ‘ju’, ‘shū’, or ‘shòu’ is not important in this poem because it is not required to be pronounced, as long as it is presented in the way which suits the arrangement of alphabets. The rhyme and rhythm of the Spanish text, however, are important, and we shall discuss this in the last section of this chapter.

Tanabe has rightly pointed out the graphical function of the character 寿. In fact, it is the graphical ( more precisely, ideographical) nature of Sino-Japanese characters such as 寿 that makes it possible to perceive and present 寿 as a graphical component in ‘Li-Po’ and the frame for stanza 9. Although Tanabe considers the character is written in a way that lacks creativity and aesthetic value according to the standard of Japanese calligraphy, and that the ideographical experiment is a failure, we do not think that whether Tablada’s experiment of using a Chinese character in the visual poem is successful should be judged the Chinese character’s calligraphic value (125). Instead, the occurrences of a Chinese character in this poem should be interpreted as a symbol of foreignization, an indication to the reader that although written in Spanish, the poem is essentially constructing a foreign poetic figure from China. In this regard, 寿 can be substituted by any other character as long as it is a Chinese ideogram obviously divergent from the writing system of the target language, in order to give

the viewers an impression of the language used by the character Li-Po. The signified of the character is outweighed by its symbolic existence as a typical ideogram, and 寿 was the character that Tablada had in hand. The use of a Chinese character has thus become a visual method to assist the accomplishment of the 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity'.

Taking the double meaning of the character into consideration, Pascucci's analysis of stanza 9 offers an innovative interpretation, but it is limited to readers who know the Chinese character, and so is my previous interpretation of stanza 17, 23, and 24. In contrast, for readers who do not read Chinese or Japanese, the descending arrangement of lines on page 17 would still reinforce the ascending number of persons; the crescent shape of stanza 23 would still make the tautological reference to the legend of Li Bai jumping into the water chasing for the reflection of the moon. The typographical arrangements of the texts still produce graphical appeal. For these readers who do not understand the meaning of 寿 but recognize it to be a Chinese character, the graphical function of inserting the character –the visual impact of a printed Chinese character and its synecdochical allusion to Chinese literature– will not be undermined by the lack of knowledge about its meaning. These readers could distinguish the nature of 寿 being a Chinese character, a linguistic unit from an 'ideophonic' language that is also 'graphical', distinct to Western languages which are only 'lyrical' and appreciate the virtue of the ideogram as a signifier.

In comparison, readers who understand the character's meaning would naturally and irresistibly perceive the meaning of the character as a word and thus skip the process of treating it as an image. Reader's preconceived knowledge about the meaning of 寿, in this case, could reduce the visual effect of using the character. In this regard, the use of Chinese character/ideogram as a visual device to assist poetic expression has become a symbolic act beyond the signified of the character itself. The straightforward presentation of the ideogram without additional annotation brings the source language back to sight and realizes a foreignizing translation strategy in the visual approach.<sup>67</sup>

In 'Li-Po', some cases of visual display of the text are consciously designed as a response, repetition, or imitation of the textual content, such as the wine glass shape of stanza 16 (Figure 3-5), and the hollow in stanza 10 mimicking 'la perla de la luna'. Some cases of typographical

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<sup>67</sup> Francisco Y. Chen-López argues that Tablada uses the Chinese character to prove his originality, the 'YOmISMO' in Tablada's own words (13). Agreeing with his opinion, we also think that one of the reasons for Tablada to use a Chinese character in 'Li-Po' is to differentiate his visual poem from pre-existing *calligrammes*.

arrangement unintentionally deliver a visual message that endows the text with extra interpretation, such as the terraced line arrangement of stanza 17 (Figure 3-6) and the moon and sun shape of stanza 23 and 24 (Figure 3-7). This latter type only exists in poems like ‘Li-Po’ that involves the representation of texts from other languages. The difference between the source text and target text and the distinction between writing systems of source the language and the target language is the ground in which the unexpected meaning/interpretation could possibly grow. In the case of stanza 9 framed in the Chinese character, the poet takes advantage of this difference between ideographic language and phonetic language and utilises the ideogram as the form and vehicle to present the text.

In Chapter Two, we applied the ‘referent – primary presentation – secondary presentation’ formula to Tablada’s visual writing and had the following scheme in the case of ‘Li-Po’:

Li Bai and his poem – stanzas in Tablada’s poem ‘Li-Po’ – visual display of Tablada’s poem

In the process of primary presentation, ‘Li-Po’ realises the transplantation of Li Bai’s image and his poem from the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese context into Tablada’s post-*modernista* poetic writing, with the support of other Western translations. In the process of secondary presentation, visual images created by the text as well as the visual image framing the text replenish some of the information and effect lost during the translation and transplantation. The figure of Li-Po and the translation of Li Bai’s poems are not necessarily faithful to the ‘real’ Li Bai and the source text, as ‘Li-Po’ is not introductory writing of Chinese literature history but an original literary work that pursues lyrical and graphical simultaneity.

### 3.3 Reading and Viewing: The Two-Fold Experience of Perceiving a Visual Poem

In the previous section, we have put our focus on the principal poem of the collection *Li-Po*. We reproduced the construction of the poetic figure Li-Po as a metonymic legendary Oriental poet and discussed the use of the ideogram 寿 in stanza 9 as a reminder of foreignization. In our discussion of ‘Li-Po’, we focussed on the transculturality in Tablada’s poetry by analysing the results achieved by both textual adaptation and visual arrangement. We mentioned that in stanza 14 to 17, the typographical arrangement of Tablada’s re-translation of Li Bai’s *Drinking Alone by Moonlight* compensates the message lost in translation with visual messages. In this section, we shall take a forward step to investigate the relationship between image and text within the same visual poem, taking the poems in the latter half of *Li-Po* as the study material.

In this section, we will focus on the intermediality in Tablada's visual poetry, aiming to solve the question 'how visual poetry attracts its readers'. We shall first discuss readers' order of perception to explore the unique reading pleasure of visual poetry. Then, we are going to look into the different types of visual-verbal interrelationship that appeared in *Li-Po* to study the methods that visual presentation enhances or modifies the verbal meaning.

### 3.3.1 Order of Perception: Double Cipher in Visual Poetry

In the introduction to this thesis, we have mentioned that Katherine Shingler's article 'Perceiving text and image in Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*' proves that visual poetry can successfully achieve verbal-visual simultaneity. The article starts from a critical analysis of the theories about *calligrammes* by Michel Foucault, who claims that, first, 'viewing the *calligramme* as a picture involves attention to global features of the poem whereas reading involves attention to a local level of detail', and second, 'attention to global features of the local features involves somehow avoiding any perception of local detail'. (71, 80). Supported by evidence from psychological experiments, Shingler agrees with Foucault's first point and rebuts his second claim that 'as soon as one starts reading, the shape dissolves' (qtd. Shingler 71). Shingler further quotes other research results, which indicate that it would be impossible to direct one's attention exclusively to the local-textual aspect of the poem and be completely unaware of the *calligramme*'s global-spatial features (79). Shingler's research also proves that the attention of the reader is selective: 'readers are free to approach Apollinaire's *calligrammes* in any number of different ways, and although the poems may contain cues prompting the reader to scan its various elements in a certain order [...], neither order of scanning nor attention to visual and verbal elements can be fully determined by the poem itself' (74-5). Shingler's empirical investigation provides grounds for our presumption that despite that graphical and lyrical appeal can be simultaneously achieved by visual poetry, the two actions, 'reading the words' and 'seeing the image', do not necessarily take place simultaneously when reading a visual poem. The order of the two actions is up to the readers' free will.

In the last section of Chapter Two, when we discussed Tablada's early visual poems *in Al sol y bajo la luna*, we have applied different strategies in the close reading. In discussing 'Lawn tennis', we prioritised the verbal aspect to the visual, whereas in attending 'Luna', we prioritised the visual aspect to the verbal. In the following paragraphs, we are going to examine if the author's visual design would orient readers' order of perception and distribution of attention and hence achieve a specific visual effect. First, we shall refer to Willard Bohn's analysis of 'El puñal' as an example to show a potential sequence of word-image perception.

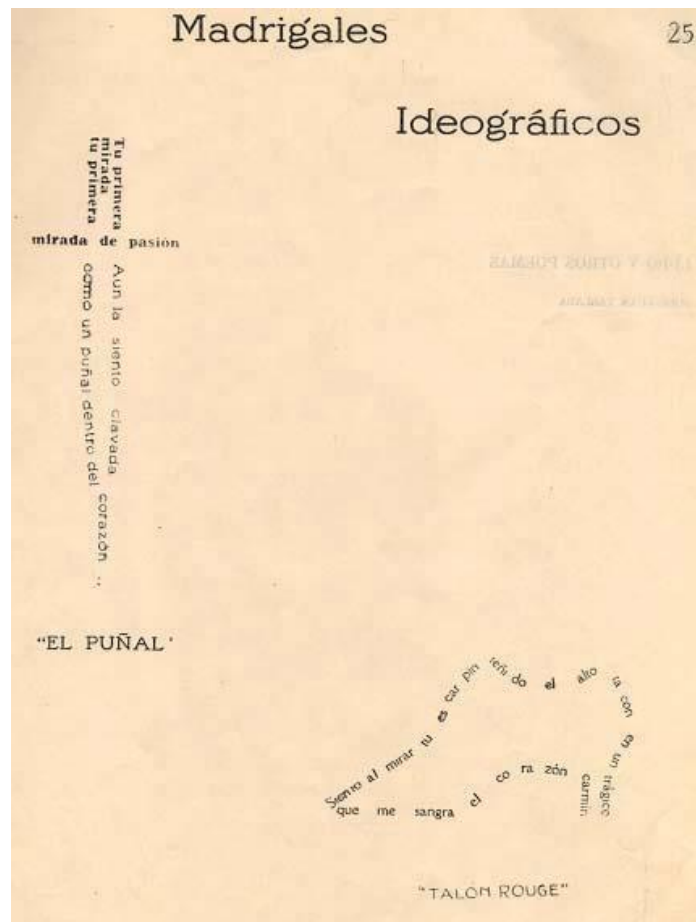


Figure 3-10 'Madrigales Ideográficos' on page 25 of *Li-Po*.

In the article 'The Visual Trajectory of José Juan Tablada', Willard Bohn confirming the tautological nature of 'Madrigales Ideográficos':

'Like many of the French poems, they ['Talon rouge' and 'El puñal'] were both portrayed in outline form and were essentially tautological. In both cases, the picture illustrates an object named in the text, which simultaneously evokes this object and depicts it visually.' (192)

From these words, we cannot yet confirm whether the name of the object in the text and the picture of the object are perceived simultaneously or not. It seems that Bohn has already located the name of the object in the lines when he 'sees' the picture so that the remark of tautology could be detected. Comments on 'El puñal' in the following paragraph puts the process of 'reading the picture' in this way:

... [T]he dagger's hilt appears to be outlined in boldface letters.... In order to decipher the text, one must turn it counter clockwise 90 degrees and begin at the upper left. In

order to read the crosspiece, the poem must be rotated to the right momentarily. This procedure produces the following reading:

Tu primera mirada  
tu primera mirada de pasión  
Aún la siento clavada  
como un puñal dentro del corazón (192)

Judging from the first sentence, it seems that Bohn first 'sees' the dagger and its hilt, then 'reads' and 'deciphers' the text that outlines the image, and finally arrives to produce the four lines of the poem in ABAB rhyme. The cited paragraph overall reveals that the experience to perceive this visual poem is similar to that of a painting, as what has been described by Louvel in *Poetics of the Iconotext* (39). Bohn first 'sees' it as a dagger from the global level, and then 'reads' the local details and deciphers the text into plain text. Next, Bohn understands the link between the verbal text and the image created by the text is 'the visual presentation of a verbal metaphor':

This does not seem to be a madrigal so much as a *piropo*, that is, a flirtatious compliment addressed to an attractive woman passing by. Tablada has simply taken the verbal metaphor (or simile), which has a lengthy history in Western literature, and raised it to the visual level.' ('Trajectory of Tablada' 192).

Having been 'seen', 'read', and 'understood', the final 'dagger' is no longer identical with the original 'dagger'. Instead, it now has a story of passion attached to it. After 'seeing' the shape, 'reading' its text, processing both textual and pictorial information, the reader is eventually able to contemplate the reason that the word 'corazón' is arranged at the pointed edge of the dagger shape. Although the secondary visual presentation does not offer any new information that has not been provided in the verbal presentation, the application of a tautological visual presentation itself is an action to compel the reader to spend more time on the poem. In this way, certain message (in this case, 'a dagger pointing to the heart') is repeated without using verbal tautology. The pleasure of reading a poem like 'El puñal' lies in finding the connection between the picture formed by text and the very word or concept that evoked the poet to arrange the text in such a way.

Most visual poems do not require a specific reading order. Nonetheless, there are a few instances that the poem must be 'seen' before 'reading' its words but not vice versa. *Día nublado* is an example of this category (Figure 3-11). Unlike most poems in Li-Po, in *Día nublado*, the text does not form any shape or pattern. Text in this poem is put in horizontal lines, in a resembling manner to conventional poetry. However, except for its title, each of its

letters is printed in disordered capital letters, requiring its readers to transcribe the text into normal writing before reading the content.

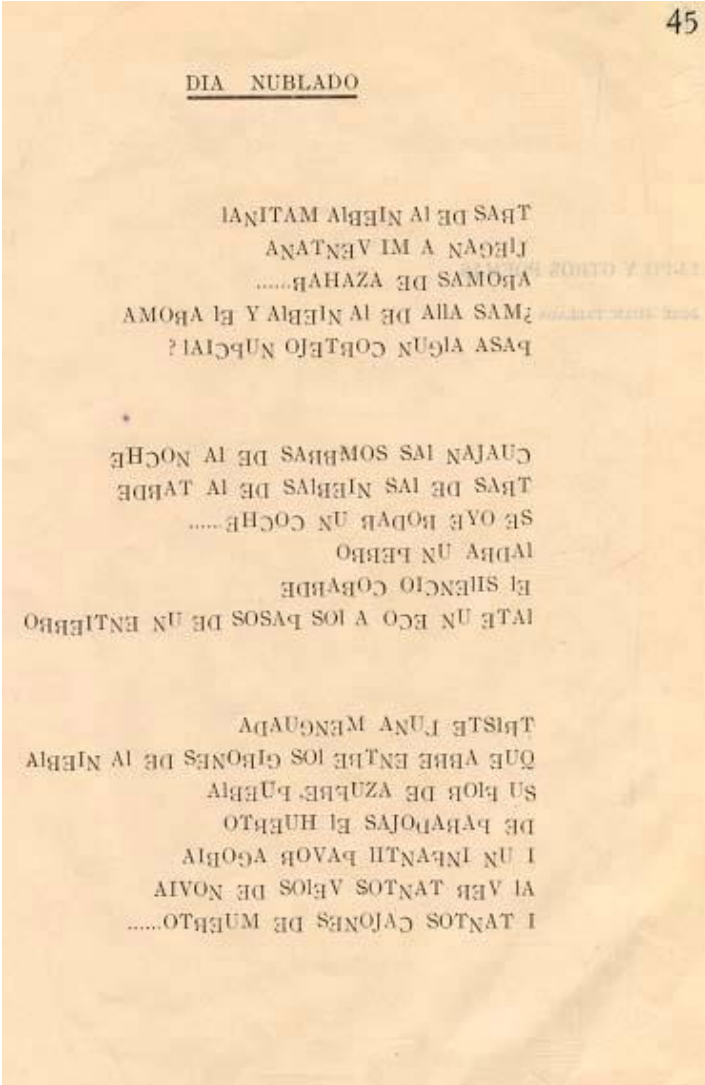


Figure 3-11 'Día nublado'. Page 45 of *Li-Po*.

Therefore, the order of perceiving 'Día nublado' could be the following process. First, readers are forced to see the overall text. Realizing that the text is aligned to the right and letters are reversed, readers will try to discover what to do with the body of this poem made up of three stanzas: to flip it horizontally, or to invert it upside down? Some previous critical research about this poem intuitively considers the problem can be solved easily by using a mirror (Mitres 677, Kobiela-Kwaśniewska 88). However, after attempting in both ways, readers would realise that neither way could reveal a readable sequence of text: the reversed letters hardly show a pattern. Some letters such as A, M, and S remain in their standard form; some are horizontally

reversed, such as D and R; some are vertically reversed such as G; some are both horizontally and vertically reversed, such as C, E and H; and some letters appear in multiple ways of reversion at different positions. While most letters are capitalised, letters P and L appear in both horizontally reversed lowercase and uppercase, and the L in lowercase causes confusion with I in uppercase. To make the deciphering work more difficult, serifs of letters in each word – or even in a single letter such as R – are not on the same level within one line, creating a wave effect and increasing the sense of disorder. The mixed way of reversing letters hence causes disorientation and could lead to multiple transcriptions. Judging from the left alignment and punctuations, the text should be read from right to left. Yet readers still cannot tell if the poem is entirely upside down and that the line at the bottom should actually be the first line in reading order, or only each line is reversed and that the poem starts from the line at the top. At this stage at least two possible transcriptions co-exist. Next, when the text has been transcribed into the normal form of presentation, readers read the text in two versions.

Judging from the syntax, only one logical version of transcription remains: the poems should be read from the line at the top to the bottom. In this order, readers can scan and understand the content of the three stanzas sequentially: the first stanza presents a wedding ‘tras de la niebla matinal’; the second presents a funeral ‘tras de las nieblas de la tarde’; the third, putting both the wedding and the funeral in one sentence and shared moonlight ‘entre los girones de la niebla’ to indicate that these all happen in the same day, creates a strong sense of ‘paradojas’. On the one hand, the wedding, a symbolic scene of the establishment of a new family and the start of a new life, makes a mirror image to the funeral, a ceremony to the end of life. On the other hand, the first stanza relates the wedding to ‘aromas de azahar’, the smell of orange blossom, traditionally used at Spanish weddings. However, the second stanza relates the wedding’s counterpart, burial, to hearing, to dog barks and funereal silence. When readers see the nuanced treatment between the two stanzas, they might find the reason for the mixed pattern of reversing the letters. Although life and death are a pair of antitheses, subjective experiences, subtle emotions, and sophisticated differences exist and make life-death something more than a simple opposition or reversion, but rather a cyclic rotation of death and rebirth, *yin* and *yang*.<sup>68</sup>

The full reading process therefore includes a series of actions: seeing the image containing the poem’s body text, decoding the pattern of inversed letters, transcribing the letters into the

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<sup>68</sup> Tablada’s haiku poem ‘El chirimoyo’ also refers to the concept of *yin-yang* in both the verbal text and the illustration created by the poet himself. We shall discuss this poem in detail in 4.2.2.

normal readable format, interpreting the meaning of the text, and finally understanding the relationship between the textual meaning and the typographical arrangement. For 'Día nublado', the order of these actions is almost fixed. The reading experience recalls Liliane Louvel's opinion of 'two activities – that of "reading" and that of "seeing"' that we have mentioned in Chapter Two. For paintings, people first 'see' it then 'read' it, and for text, it is the reverse, that people get a mental image after reading the text. This poem is first 'seen' as a picture titled 'Día nublado' and then 'read' as a poem.

However, the typography of 'Día nublado's body text is not an actual picture and does not form an independent visual image. In perceiving this poem, although readers start by 'seeing', looking at it at a global level does not help. When readers transcribe the letters, they look at each of the individual letters as small independent pictures from the local detail. When the transcription is done, they then read the entire text from a global level – that the letters now form words and sentences and are no longer perceived as independent printed signs. The process of transcribing the text and looking for the typographical pattern of letters constitutes part of the poem's artistic effect. The readers/viewers who actively participate in deciphering and transcribing the text take over the task from the author and complete the full effect of the visual poem. 'Día nublado' is an example of visual poems that destroy the conventional reading order. The significance of 'reading', as in 'look at the words', is maximized. In contrast, the privilege of rhyme, rhythm, meter, and intonation, all key features related to the utterance of a poem in the Western tradition, is challenged by the prioritised visual presentation.

To conclude, the above two case studies of readers' perception of visual poetry indicate that visual arrangement of verbal text delays reader's immediate access to the textual content of the poem and produces extra-textual expressiveness during this 'understanding' process. In 'El puñal', by assigning a particular position to specific words, the poet is able to orient readers' attention to specific text. In 'Día nublado', by reversing the letters, the poet reproduces the sense of paradox delivered by the contradiction of wedding and funeral in the verbal text. On the other hand, by presenting the entire body text full of disordered letters that are difficult to recognize, the poet makes a visual allusion to the scenarios veiled by the fog. In either poem, the visual display of the words enhances the emotion expressed in the text.

The analysis of the order of perception explains the uniqueness of achieving visual effect through the arrangement of words in comparison to using illustrations: when reading a poem with illustration, we can skip the illustration, yet we cannot skip the visual presentation of a visual poem because seeing its graphical feature is part of our reading process. The perception

of a visual poem requires two extra steps: 'seeing the picture drawn by words' and 'finding the connection between visual presentation and verbal text'. The difference between reading a conventional poem and a visual poem is that visual poems offer the exclusive experience of deciphering the 'double cypher' in the graphical-lyrical hybridity.

### 3.3.2 Visual-Verbal Relationship in a Poem: Tautology, Metaphor, and Punning

In the previous part, we have answered the question 'what is the difference between visual poetry and conventional poetry'. In this section, we hope to carry on our investigation into the question 'how does visual poetry appeal to its readers' by answering the question 'what is the relationship between the visual aspect and the verbal aspect in a visual poem'. In the first section of this chapter, we discussed the tradition of *technopaignia*, one of the three inspirations of visual poetry admitted by Tablada himself. In *technopaignia* poems, the image/visual presentation of the poem imitates the word or concept included in the text.

As we have mentioned in 3.1.1 and 3.1.3, *technopaignia* is perhaps the closest form of visual poetry to Tablada's ideal condition of 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity'. In *technopaignia* cases like the stanza 12 of 'Li-Po' mimicking the shape of a wine glass (Figure 3-5) and "Madrigales Ideográficos" which we analysed in the previous part (Figure 3-10), the visual pattern formed by the verbal text repeats the core concept appeared in the text, hence highlights and reinforces the idea delivered by the text without the aid of rhetoric, achieving a certain degree of visual immediacy. Some other poems in *Li-Po* also demonstrate similar ideographic characteristics. The poem 'Huellas', for example, places its body text in a printed sole that graphically repeats the phrase 'pie de la bailarina'.

In tautological poems, the visual-global shape of the text usually has a definite denotation and is hence able to hint at readers before they start getting into the local textual details. However, there are more cases in *Li-Po* in which the visual pattern formed by the text do not exhibit a clear clue to the verbal content and 'Día nublado' belongs to this category. Unlike the experience of perceiving a tautological poem, in visual poems like 'Día nublado', readers may not be able to realize the connection between verbal meaning and visual shape immediately after browsing the text. In 'Formas de escritura ideográficos en Tablada', Meyer-Minnemann's interpretation of stanza 21 and 22 of 'Li-Po' exemplifies the process of deciphering poems of this type.

[S]e representa una connotación (concretamente una metáfora, lingüísticamente no expresada) de la disolución de la compañía entre el poeta, su sombra, y la luna,

mediante la silueta de un zapapico. Más complicado es el caso de la ideografía del dibujo adjunto. Puede identificarse como un sector de círculo que visualiza metafóricamente una expresión hipotética como 'la inmensidad del cielo', connotado del verso 'en el inmenso júbilo del azul firmamento más allá'. (441)

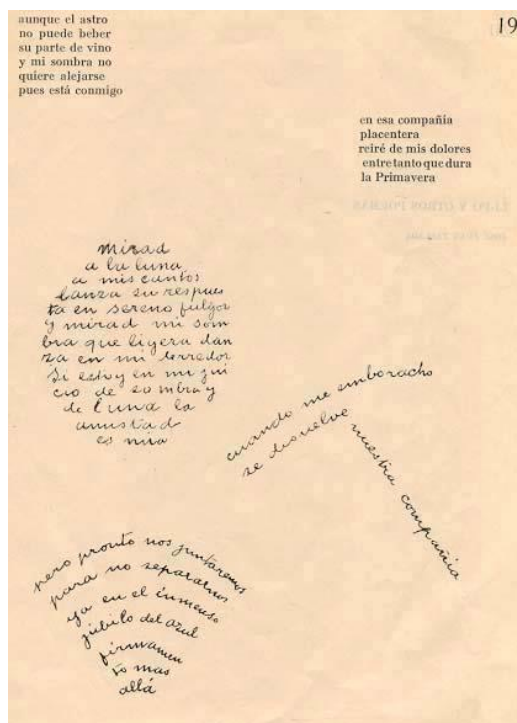


Figure 3-12 Page 19 of *Li-Po* containing stanza 18-22.

Meyer-Minnemann's explication of these two stanzas demonstrates an interesting process of the reader's perception of a visual composition. When readers finish both the action of 'seeing' and 'reading', they have already understood both the signified of the verbal text and the visual image. Yet they have not found a link between the two media of presentation in the poem itself. Readers must bridge the visual presentation with the verbal meaning with their creativity. For instance, in the analysis of 'Li-Po', Meyer-Minnemann proposes that the T-shaped arrangement of stanza 21 (Figure 3-12) is an unspoken visual metaphor that implies the disintegration of 'nuestra compañía' between the poet Li-Po, his shadow and the moon in the verbal content. In the case of 'Día nublado', we regard the use of reversed typeface as a metaphorical reference to the oppositional relationship between life and death.

Most poems in Tablada's *Li-Po* involve visual metaphors. In cases like 'Impresion de la Habana' and 'Ruidos y perfumes', visual image does not directly repeat what is already said in the poetry. Instead, it shows a similar feeling in a graphical way. Unlike visually tautological poems such as 'El puñal', in which the fixed denotation of the visual presentation gives a univocal reference to the verbal text, in visually metaphorical poems, the ambiguity of the visual

meaning endows readers a higher degree of autonomy in apprehending visual-verbal interconnection. Again, we can take 'Día nublado' as an example since we have made a comprehensive analysis of it in the previous part. The typographical design of mixing vertical and horizontally reversed letters as well as the standard typefaces in the same poem can also be understood as a symbolic figure to the paradoxical relationship between the negative and positive energy, a cyclicity of life. Additionally, it can also be explained as a visual obstacle designed deliberately to slow down the reading speed in order to mimic the vision through thick fog. The inconclusive visual presentation hence encourages multiple interpretations of the visual poem as image-text hybridity. Visually metaphorical poems, therefore, coincidentally accomplishes a 'layered signification' result which is also the artistic pursuit in the Japanese hybrid art form *surimono*:

In the most interesting *surimono*, as we have seen, there is an interconnection between the poetry and the picture that fundamentally redefines the meaning of both, so that although text and image in these works could stand alone and function independently, together they produce a layered kind of signification impossible to achieve in either form alone. (McKee 549).

In Chapter Two 2.1.2, we concluded that although Tablada has heard about and viewed *surimono* works, he was not aware of the text-image interaction in them. However, we can observe that the similar text-image mutual embellishment happens in *Li-Po* (and in *Un día* as well, which we shall see in 4.3). This parallel between *surimono* and Tablada's poetry does not mean that Tablada necessarily received underlying influence from this Japanese art. Instead, it is probably due to the nature of visual writing: when the creator is familiar with creating visual poetry, he or she might transfer the accustomed techniques and habits of verbal writing into visual-verbal creation, hence uses the graphical presentation as a non-linguistic figure of speech to enrich the literary-graphical expressiveness.

Apart from visual tautology and visual metaphor, in both of which the visual message conforms with the signified of the verbal text, there is a third variety of verbal-visual relationship in visual poetry. In some stanzas of 'Li-Po', visual images formed by the texts can express more than one meaning. In 3.2.2, we mentioned that the round shape formed by stanza 24 (Figure 3-7) could be seen as either a sun or a full moon. Both ways of understanding the visual signifier make sense, yet they could result in different interpretations of its signified: the juxtaposition of stanza 23's crescent shape and stanza 24's round shape presents a hieroglyph version of Chinese character 明, meaning 'brightness' and 'future', only when we see the round shape of stanza 24 as a sun. Similarly, the Chinese character used as a frame for stanza 9 can be

understood differently by different audiences. Moreover, even it is seen as a word in Japanese, it carries more than one meaning, which would lead to a different perception of the Spanish text in its frame.

In comparison to visual metaphors, which only enhance the implications that already appeared in the textual content, this third type of visual presentation produces its meaning independently from the verbal text. When the visual meaning is layered onto the verbal meaning, readers could have a more comprehensive understanding of the visual-verbal hybrid work. Katherine Shingler also notices the visual-verbal disconformity in her investigation into Apollinaire's *calligrammes* and names it 'visual punning'. She summarizes that the most crucial result of punning is that it 'plays into Apollinaire's pursuit of simultaneity':

The pun undoes the one-to-one matching of signifier to signified .... That is, punning runs counter to the construction of language as a linear, univocal succession of meanings, and suggests instead a language in which meanings are allowed to co-exist, overlap and proliferate without constraint... ('Punning in Apollinaire's Calligrammes' 25)

Whilst Shingler's study attributes Apollinaire's pursuit of simultaneity to the desire of directly representing the human mind, our investigation finds that Tablada's pursuit of simultaneity is more bound up with the inspiration of Chinese characters. In both Chinese and Japanese languages, homographic, or even homonymic Chinese characters are very common. That is to say, a Chinese character not only can correspond to multiple meanings, but it can also be pronounced differently when it forms part of different phrases. According to Pascucci's investigation that we referred to in 3.2.2, Tablada was very likely to be aware of the homograph in Chinese characters before adopting the character 寿 into his visual writing. In 3.3.3, we are going to make a further discussion about the use of homonym, a character of multiple pronunciations and multiple meanings, in a Spanish poem.

In summary, we can categorize the text-image relationship in Tablada's ideographic poetry in the collection *Li-Po* roughly in three types:

1. Visual tautology represented by 'Madrigales Ideográficos', 'La calle donde vivo', and 'Impresión de la Habana'.

In visually tautological poems, signified of the visual image is a pure repetition of signified of the verbal text. It accentuates a specific word but does not add any new meaning to the poem.

2. Visual metaphor represented by 'Día nublado', stanza 21 and 22 of 'Li-Po'.

In a visually metaphorical poem, signified of the visual image is the metaphorical vehicle, while the signified of the verbal text is the tenor. Visual and verbal aspect of the poem is bond by a figure of speech. The visual image presents or enhances certain underlying meaning implicitly suggested by the text. The vagueness of visual message sometimes encourages multiple interpretations of the verbal connotation.

3. Visual pun, represented by stanza 9, stanza 12 to 17, and stanza 23 to 24 of 'Li-Po'.  
In a visually punning poem, signified of the image is not directly related to the meaning of the text. Sometimes it is even contradictory to the meaning of the text.  
Image either complements the text by providing untold supplementary information to the text, or it calls for extra contemplation of the extra-textual meaning.

With the above review of the three main types of visual-verbal relationships in *Li-Po*, we can tell that there is a general pattern: the greater the disconformity between visual denotation and verbal denotation, the longer the time needed for 'deciphering' the image-text relationship, the stronger the 'layered signification' achieved.

There are a few cases that do not fit into the above categorization. For example, the visual presentation in 'A un Lémur', carrying no meaning and creating no graphical shape, is not designed to accomplish graphical appeal but to achieve an 'audio' effect. We shall discuss this in section 3.4.1. *Li-Po* also includes 'Vagues' and 'Oiseau', two poems written in French, with illustrations printed next to the text. We do not regard 'Vagues' and 'Oiseau' as 'ideographic poetry', a term that we used in the above categorization, because the perception of these two poems can be different to other poems in *Li-Po*, which all exclusively use words (either alphabet or Chinese character) to form an image without introducing a non-textual signifying system. Considering the similarity between 'Vagues', 'Oiseau', and Tablada's illustrated haiku, we regard them the same category of visual writing as with haiku in *Un día* and *El jarro* in Chapter Four. In the next part of this section, we shall discuss the use of Chinese character in stanza 9, with an emphasis on the perspective of a multi-lingual reader.

### 3.3.3 Chinese Character in Spanish Poem: Homonym from Multilingual Readers' View

In Chapter Two, by analysing Tablada's remarks about Hiroshige's seals, we confirmed that Tablada sees seals and calligraphic works as images instead of words. In section two of this chapter, we concluded that the Chinese character 寿 is chosen to be the frame for stanza 9

(Figure 3-8) of 'Li-Po' in an arbitrary manner, which could be substituted by other Chinese characters because the poem does not necessarily need its meaning. It rather needs the character's symbolic existence as a typical Chinese character to bring the source language into sight and to accomplish a foreignization translation strategy visually. Having that said, from the readers' perception of this stanza, it is still necessary to consider this character's meaning and discuss the interpretation of this particular piece of visual writing. As it is, on the one hand, a stanza constituting part of a longer poem hand-written in alphabetic language, and on the other hand, alphabetic text framed in a printed Chinese character. Using a word/text as image/frame gives rise to many consequential questions in the readers, especially when they are able to read Chinese characters: Would the meaning of the image/frame change the meaning of the Spanish verses in the frame? How would the practice of 'using a word as image' alter our understanding of Tablada's remarks on 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity'? For bilingual and multilingual readers, how should they 'read' and put this stanza-image into speech and sound? Would the adding of a foreign language interrupt the reading order of the alphabetic language? In this section, we are going to analyse the stanza bearing the Chinese character's identity as 'text' in mind.

Occupying an entire page, stanza 9 of 'Li-Po' is longer than other stanzas of the same poem. Stanza 9 continues the narrative of 'hacer un poema sin fin' in the previous stanza and depicts how the Chinese poet presents and preserves his ideas with the 'mysterious' medium of ideogram. For readers who are familiar with the East Asian languages, they will immediately recognise the character when they see the stanza-image. Recalling the meaning of the character before going to local-textual details of the Spanish text, they might feel obliged to bear the character/frame's Sino-Japanese meaning in mind to decipher the alphabetical text and conceive the stanza's Spanish meaning. Readers are prompted to relate the meaning of the Chinese character with the content of the Spanish verses, but they will find it difficult: the meaning of the Spanish verses in stanza 9 is not explicitly related to the meanings of the character – 'longevity' nor 'congratulations'.

In 3.2.2, we have mentioned Michele Pascucci's study about Tablada's usage of this Chinese character 'Tablada y el ideograma *kotobuki*'. Pascucci remarks that 寿 was chosen because of its specific meaning, confronting the earlier comments by Tanabe and Meyer-Minnenmann, who both think the character was chosen merely for being a Chinese ideogram. In this section, we shall refer to Pascucci's article as a sample of interpretation by a multilingual reader who

perceives the printed character as a word in Japanese and understands the Spanish verses taking the signified of 寿 into account.

Contemplating the signified of the character with the idea embodied in the verses, Pascucci produces the interpretation that Tablada is using the character to imply 'congratulations' to the Chinese poet's 'ever-lasting' writing in ideograms and to his incomparable talent ('Tablada y el ideograma *kotobuki*' 56-7). Pascucci's interpretation fuses both the meanings of the character together and associates the Chinese character with the poetic figure *Li-Po* in the poem. In addition to her explanation, we propose an alternative way of understanding the use of the specific character 寿 in 'Li-Po'. We would like to emphasise the way that the alphabets are arranged: they are not displayed in the same way as other 'ideographic' stanzas or poems in *Li-Po*, which is to outline a shape with the letters. On the contrary, the letters are filled in the printed character as if they are framed and trapped by the Chinese character. As we have mentioned in the introduction, Lessing considers that: 'Objects which succeed each other, or whose parts succeed each other in time, are actions. Consequently, actions are the peculiar subjects of poetry' (91). Stanza 9's content tells exactly the action of a poet writing down his verses. However, the image containing this stanza is a word from a writing system known for 'placing objects side by side in space', the characteristics of painting, according to Lessing (91).<sup>69</sup> Moreover, since the character contains the meaning of 'longevity', using this specific word as the medium to contain and freeze the narrative verses implies that poetry can be fossilized by its linguistic form. Thus, the use of 寿 as a frame to visually 'contain' and 'freeze' the Spanish text can also be seen as a symbolic act in opposition to a Western tradition of regarding poetry as an art of 'time'.

While we appreciate the experimental act of introducing signifiers from a foreign writing system into poetry in Spanish, we also have to mention a few issues caused by this confluence of languages. The previous paragraphs indicate that using a Chinese character could enrich the multi-layered interpretation of the stanza. Whereas the visual experiment could also invite confusion, such as the manner of uttering the 'text' that consists of more than one language. Pascucci's article argues that the verses in the ideogram give rise to two possible transcriptions:

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<sup>69</sup> Many Western scholars such as Sergei Eisenstein have noticed that a large portion of Chinese characters are made by juxtaposing simpler pictograms or ideograms called 'radicals' side by side. We shall discuss the juxtaposition of images in detail in 4.1.

one following the horizontal reading order, the other following the vertical reading order in two columns, as the chart below shows.

Horizontal transcription	Vertical transcription
Guiado por su mano pálida Es gusano de seda el pincel Que formaba en el papel Negra crisálida De misterioso jeroglífico De donde surgía como una flor Un pensamiento magnifico Con alas de oro volador Sutil y misteriosa llama En la lámpara del ideograma	Guiado por su mano pálida Que formaba en el papel De misterioso jeroglífico Un pensamiento magnifico Es gusano de seda el pincel Negra crisálida De donde surgía como una flor Con alas de oro volador Sutil y misteriosa llama En la lámpara del ideograma

In

In addition to the above two readings, since the verses are presented in a Chinese character, readers who are familiar with East Asian calligraphy might follow the stroke order when they try to transcribe the letters in the character, which leads to a third reading. In writing 寿, people will start from the three horizontal lines from the top, follow with the slash and end with the radical 寸.<sup>70</sup> In writing 寸, the horizontal line as a whole writes first, then the hook, and last the dot. Therefore, these readers may not naturally read the verses in horizontal columns. They would read the stanza basically the same way as the horizontal reading, only that the last line would come out as ‘en lámpara la del ideograma’. This version of transcription in fact makes no sense, and it could be an accidental result provoked by the unexpected reading habit of Sino-Japanese readers. Thus, we shall not count it as a feasible option.

Regardless of the character 寿’s meaning, the readers have the following options to perceive the stanza/image:

- To see 寿 as an image (which achieves the visual appeal of this visual poetic fragment), readers could interpret the image as (1) an example of the source language; or (2) the symbol of the ‘lyrical-graphical simultaneity’. In either case, any other character can substitute the character because the meaning is not essential; only the form of the character is needed.

<sup>70</sup> A Chinese radical (部首) is a graphical component of a Chinese character. A radical can be a semantic indicator (similar to a root word) or a phonetic indicator of the character.

**Phonetical result:**

To read the Spanish verse (which achieves the aural appeal of the stanza), readers could follow either the horizontal reading that rhymes in ABBACDCDEE pattern or the vertical reading that rhymes in ABCCBADDEE pattern.

- To see 寿 as a word from the East Asian language.

Readers could interpret the character (3) as an attribute to the poetic figure Li-Po, or (4) a metaphoric counterpart of the Western concept of poetry as an art of time. In both cases, the meaning of the character affects the understanding of the relationship between the character-frame and the text inside the frame. The meaning 'longevity' of 寿 is especially essential.

**Phonetical result:**

Since the stanza/image involves a word from another language other than Spanish, except for the option of uttering the stanza/character in Spanish, readers can pronounce it alternatively in Chinese or Japanese. For instance, Pascucci pronounces it as 'kotobuki', one of the readings of this character in Japanese. The Chinese character 寿 can also be pronounced as either 'kotobuki', 'hisashii', and 'kotohogu' in native Japanese reading, or 'ju', 'jū', 'su', or 'shū' adopting the Sino-Japanese reading, 'shòu' in Mandarin, 'sau' in Cantonese, and 'siū' in Southern Min Chinese. It contains the meaning of 'longevity' in all languages and dialects mentioned above, but it does not mean 'congratulations' in these languages except for Japanese.

The above summary of various possibilities of interpreting and articulating stanza 9 of 'Li-Po' reminds us of Shingler's remarks of 'punning' that we quoted in the previous part. The multi-meaningness of the visual signifier (as an image and as a word, as 'longevity' or as 'congratulations') used in this stanza-image highlights the alternative approach of understanding language as 'a linear, univocal succession of meanings' and poetry as an expression of 'consecutive signs' that 'succeed each other in time' (Shingler 'Punning in Apollinaire's Calligrammes' 25, Lessing 91).

In the above analysis, we have interpreted the reference to 寿, an ideogram that contains the meaning of 'longevity', as a symbolic gesture to freeze and frame verses in the alphabetic language. However, we cannot be sure if that was the poet's original intention. According to Tablada's own words which we have analysed in 3.1.3, in the visual-verbal co-structure of stanza 9 in Chinese character, the character should provide visual appeal and the alphabetical letters should provide auditory appeal. This model of 'simultaneity' functions well in all other

visual poems or other stanzas of 'Li-Po'. In those creations, the picture, which is not a symbol of definite meaning, provides visual appeal, while the verses provide aural appeal and denote the picture formed by the text. Tablada's idealistic 'simultaneity' works because it only takes the dualistic relationship between image and sound into consideration, disregarding the third element in language: meaning. However, using a word from another language as the pictorial platform for poetic presentation is risky. While it augments the richness of the poem, it might also cause confusion and even misunderstandings. In stanza 9, both the image and the text carry different meanings, therefore the lyrical-graphical balance becomes unsteady. The addition of a Chinese character not only produces different results in different audience. Moreover, the double meaning of this character encourages its Sino-Japanese speaking readers to discover diversified interpretations.

Poems in *Li-Po* were probably designed for audiences who only use alphabetic languages. Nonetheless, when it comes to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the poem has now reached a wider audience. International readers like Tanabe, Pascucci and myself who understand both Spanish and East Asian languages could have interpretations different from the author's original intention. It is also very interesting that with the meaning and pronunciation of the character-frame 寿 taken into account, the previously stable lyrical-graphical relationship becomes less balanced.

The exceptional use of 寿 in 'Li-Po' which stands out from this collection and from all visual poems is a bold attempt. Considering that 'Li-Po' is not only a visual poem but also an introduction of Li Bai and his poem, the insertion of a Chinese character seems to be an appropriate visual means. Before 'Li-Po' was published, there has never existed such a tight and direct connection between Chinese characters and alphabetic writing in one poem. In this sense, 'Li-Po' brings an entirely original experience for readers of visual poetry. The addition of visual arrangement to the translation/adaptation provides more possible interpretations for readers who know Li Bai's original verses, as we have seen in the examples of stanzas referring to *Drinking Alone by Moonlight*. The simultaneous existence of two different writing systems in stanza 9 asks the readers to take the meanings of present words in both languages into consideration and to reconsider the triangular relationship among lyricality, graphically, and meaning of a poetic work.

### 3.4 Speaking Image: Ideographic Characteristic of Visual Poetry

#### 3.4.1 Visual Rhyme: Monosyllabic Presentation Inspired by Japanese Writing

In the previous section, we have seen visual effects in visual poetry. Through our analysis of readers' order of perceiving visual poetry, we found that the pleasure of reading visual poetry consists of deciphering the link between the verbal content and the visual form. Since visual poetry uses visual arrangement to produce a double-cypher, it involves multi-layered verbal-visual signification which differs it from conventional linear textual poetry. We also discussed several varieties of visual-verbal relationships in the collection *Li-Po* and found that a less explicit connection between visual signifier and verbal meaning would lead to a stronger effect of 'layered signification'. With the example of stanza 9 written in the Chinese character 寿 as a case study, we studied the possible interpretations caused by the multiple meanings of the visual signifier.

In this section, we shall move our emphasis to the phonetic feature of visual poetry and explore the 'lyrical' aspect of Tablada's pursuit of 'lyrical-graphical simultaneity'. The unorthodox visual arrangement of the text often also results in unconventional line breaks, which could affect the metrical performance of the poem. In the following part, we shall discuss rhyme and rhythm in *Li-Po* concerning the visual display of the text. We will study the case of 'A un Lémur', a poem with 'visual rhyme' inspired by the Japanese language.

As Pascucci and other scholars have already pointed out, *Al sol* presents more *modernista* characteristics in terms of metrics, while *Li-Po* presents more characteristics of *Avant-Garde*, which means the metrical form in *Li-Po* is less strict. In Chapter Two, when we presented the process of deciphering the text of 'Luna' from *Al sol*, we mentioned that if the enjambments are removed, the first 11 rows of the text can be transcribed into four fifteen-syllable verses in ABAB rhyme. In that poem, typographical presentation functions as a visual code that conceals the rhyme scheme. However, even though the line breaks are arranged to prioritise the visual effect and put the audio effect in second place, readers are still able to discover the rhyme and rhythm of the verses. Because as soon as readers 'read', or in other words, utter the text, they will notice the recurrence of the phonetic pattern. In *Li-Po*, many poems still follow the traditional form of rhyme, such as 'Madrigales Ideográficos', in which both pieces of madrigals consist of four lines of ABAB rhyme. In these poems, the location of the text outlines the shape, creating the 'visual appeal, while the pronunciation of the text determines the rhyme and metre, generating the 'aural appeal'. On the other hand, some longer and more complex poems in *Li-*

Po such as 'Li-Po' and 'Impresión de la Habana' are compounded by various visual units, which consist of a mixture of free verse and rhymed stanzas.

Disregarding the visual arrangement, the line length of 'Li-Po's verbal text varies from less than six syllables to more than fifteen syllables. Some of the stanzas are unrhymed, but more stanzas are rhymed, with varied syllable counts. Poems containing mixed rhyming patterns are rare since most poems are either rhymed or unrhymed consistently from the beginning to the end. In 'Li-Po', we can notice a few rhymed stanzas that use enjambments to accentuate the sound pattern. For example, in stanza 11 and stanza 13 shown in Figure 3-12, the four lines in each stanza present ABAB consonant rhyme. When the text is pronounced, the phonetic pattern seems less explicit: although there is a sound linkage between the ending word, each line contains different numbers of syllables. By using the typographical method of line breaks, the poem highlights the end rhymes.

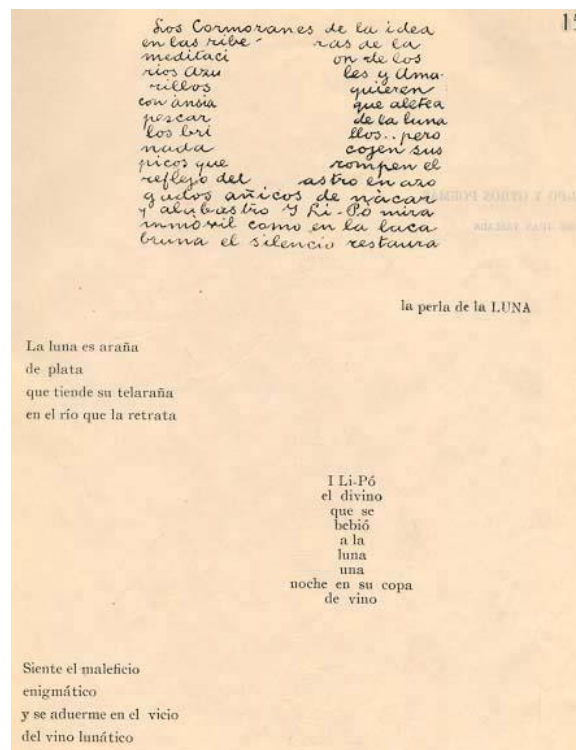


Figure 3-13 Page 15 of *Li-Po* containing stanzas 10 to 13 of 'Li-Po'.

The above example shows an instance in which the visual form of the poem strengthens its phonetic attractiveness. If we remove the enjambments, the phonetic pattern diminishes but still exists. In most cases, 'sound is the primary stratum' for poetry, and 'rhymes are based on

sound correspondence' (Allen et al. 1189).<sup>71</sup> However, we find one exception in *Li-Po*, where the 'phonetic pattern' of the poem is indivisible from its visual presentation. In the concise poem 'A un Lémur', the rhyme only exists when it is presented in the determined form as Figure 3-14 shows. Containing only nine words, the poem breaks the words into syllables and arranges the fourteen syllables each in a separate line. The two quatrains and two tercets in the ABBA BAAB CDC DCD rhyming scheme, as the poem's subtitle in brackets points out, mimics the form of a sonnet without any unnecessary words. The way of arranging line breaks in 'A un Lémur', different from most other poems in *Li-Po*, does not aim to transfer the visual message through the typography. It instead aims to create a 'visual rhyme' that is not based on sound correspondence but on visual resemblance.

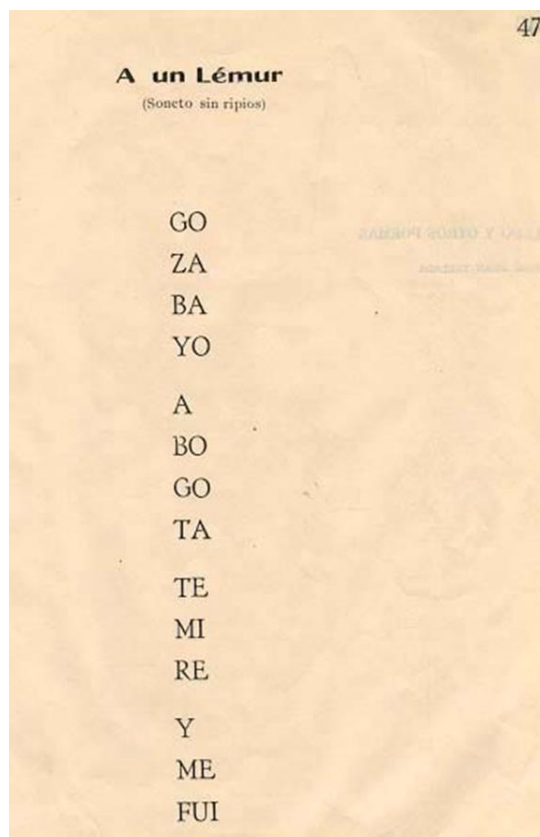


Figure 3-14 Page 47 from *Li-Po* containing the poem 'A un Lémur (Soneto sin rípios)'

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<sup>71</sup> *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* mentions the visual presentation of the text would affect rhyming. It raises the fact that due to the historical change of pronunciations, 'words that formerly rhymed and were spelled similarly now retain only the orthographic similarity', which is commonly known as an eye-rhyme (1184). It also mentions the fact that 'some poets have exploited the visual forms of words to create visual analogues of aural rhyme', which is what Tablada did in 'A un Lémur'.

Poems of *arte menor* of two or three syllables still exist, however few they are, whereas there are hardly any monosyllable poems let alone sonnets. A better-known example of monosyllable poetry in Spanish is José Hierro's *sonetillo*: 'Di / fe / de / mí, // y / sé / que / fui. // No / sé / hoy /// lo / que / soy.' (86) With the instance of Hierro's poem, we can easily see the distinction between 'A un Lémur' and a 'real' monosyllable poem: the latter contains an intact word in each line, while 'A un Lémur' breaks the words and arranges the syllables in separate lines in order to achieve the visual effect of a monosyllabic sonnet. It is perhaps due to the limited number of monosyllabic words in Spanish vocabulary, which restricts the combinations of these words. As soon as the spectators of 'A un Lémur' 'read' the text and put the syllables back into words, the spaces between the syllables diminish. Considering the meaning of the words, readers of the poem could remove the space and read the words fluently, and the verses might result in this way: 'GOZABA / YO // A / BOGOTA /// TE / MIRE// Y / ME/ FUI'. By transcribing the visual poem into linear language, readers might unintentionally remove pauses that existed in the visual version and add pauses according to the grammar of the sentence where a comma and period should exist. In this way, once this poem is uttered, the monosyllabic-like rhythm dissolves, and the rhyme no longer exists – or rather readers might realise the 'rhyme' never fully existed, because by definition it should be the repetition of sounds in the final stressed syllable, and now the 'final' syllables have been changed.

Traditionally, readers perceive the rhyme and rhythm of a poem by uttering the text and turning it into vocal sound. In 'A un Lémur', the rhyme can only be realised by seeing the letters on the paper. Therefore, the rhyme, conventionally supposed to be phonetical, becomes purely visual. 'A un Lémur' subverts the established experience of reading a sonnet. When readers who know what a sonnet is begin reading, having seen the title and the subtitle, they would naturally look for a rhyme pattern in the body text and find the rhyme in the last letter, which is the vowel in each line. If, however, they take out the line breaks and pronounce the verses aloud, they would find that the poem does not contain a 'rhyme' as per the usual understanding of the concept 'rhyme'. Alternatively, they can recognise a 'conceptual' rhyme and rhythm, which is realised on the visual level. The eye replaces the ear to become the organ to perceive the phonetic pattern in this poem. The visual arrangement of letters is not only a subsidiary method of expression in addition to the standard verbal language. In addition to a playful and humorous effect, the reading experience in 'A un Lémur' tells its readers that visual arrangement is deeply involved in uttering the poem and that the phonetic feature of a poem is not only decided by the verbal text alone but also by the visual presentation of that text. The unorthodox visual presentation of a poem, moreover, becomes an irreplaceable means to

achieve effects that verbal language alone cannot achieve, and present forms that conventional writing and printing cannot present.

'A un Lémur' is the only poem in Tablada's works to use the visual arrangement to achieve a conceptual rhyme, and it probably is one of the few poems in Spanish language poetry to do so. When previous studies mention 'A un Lémur', they did not put attention on the formation of the 'rhyme scheme' but focused only on its conciseness and 'minimalism' (Bohn *Modern Visual Poetry* 177). Some investigators such as Meyer-Minnemann, attribute the disruption of horizontal linear presentation in 'A un Lémur', as well as in 'Luciérnagas' and 'Ruidos y perfumees [sic]', to the influence of Futurist poetics, in particular to Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés* (Meyer-Minnemann 447-8). We agree that Tablada's method of presenting poetic texts in scattered letters in 'Luciérnagas' and 'Ruidos y perfumees' might be influenced by European visual poetry from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, we regard Tablada's experiment of dividing words into syllables in 'A un Lémur' as a bolder and more radical approach because it rebels against the customary practice in modern alphabetic languages of using spaces as the marker of word boundaries. In fact, 'A un Lémur' is probably inspired by both the Japanese haiku form and the Japanese syllabic language.

'A un Lémur' resembles Japanese haiku in many ways. The poem reminds us of Japanese haiku because it creates a humorous tone with the interaction between the poetic voice and nature. Also, its condensed sentences leave much space for interpretation. Although the poem does not contain any punctuation marks, its syntactic structure suggests that there is a pause or 'cut' between the two sentences, a signature technique of in haiku which we shall discuss in detail in the next chapter. Since Tablada had composed plenty of haiku before *Li-Po* came out, it is possible that the creation of 'A un Lémur' was influenced by Japanese poetry.

'A un Lémur' is original and unique not only because it contains only one syllable in each line. More importantly, it does not conform to the frequent practice in alphabetic languages of using space to separate words. Tablada's innovative action of dividing words into smaller phonetic (and visual) units leads to Bohn's remark that the lines 'plummet towards the bottom of the page like a meteor' and 'represent pure verticality' (*Modern Visual Poetry* 177). This vertical presentation rather reminds us of East Asian writing, which traditionally presents each of the units of pronunciation vertically without space as an indicator of word boundary nor any punctuation.

Spaces as a mark of word boundaries assist the progress of reading by ‘providing the reader with explicit visual markers of word beginnings and endings’ (Li et al., 1). ‘A un Lémur’, in contrast, chooses not to comply with the traditional spelling regulations. Each line of the poem, consisting of no more than three letters, is presented in a consonant + vowel (CV) pattern except for the fifth and the twelfth line where the consonant is absent, and the last line which contains two vowels. The unique way that this poem splits its words and presents the letters in syllabic units shows an interesting similarity to the syllabic writing system of the Japanese language. Japanese *kanas*, which are characters/symbols derived from Chinese characters, each corresponds to one only phonetic syllable. In Japanese, one word could be formed of one or more *kanas*/syllables, as opposed to Chinese, in which one character is pronounced in only one syllable. When a sentence is written in *kanas*, the reader must decide if the *kana* stands on its own or belongs to another word. Since spaces are not used to indicate word boundaries in Japanese (and Chinese) writing, readers judge the word borders according to their knowledge in the same way as in ‘A un Lémur’.

In Tablada’s poem, each syllable/CV combination in each line could theoretically be transcribed into Japanese *kana*, and we would have the following result: ゴサバヨ アボゴタ テミレ イメフイ. Although the Japanese transcription of ‘A un Lémur’ does not make any sense, the monosyllabic pattern of the poem is very likely to be inspired by Japanese *kana*. Rodolfo Mata’s project *Letra e Image* includes a document to support this hypothesis, an article by Luis G. Sepúlveda published in 1929, which features the episode that Tablada composed the poem:

Un día el poeta bogotano Eduardo Castillo le dijo a Tablada que la perfección en la poesía era un soneto sin ripios. Pronto el autor de *Li-Po*, aplicando sus fórmulas japonesas escribió el siguiente [‘A un Lémur’]. (‘El poeta Castillo’ n.p.)

Sepúlveda’s article provides essential evidence for our theory that the composition of ‘A un Lémur’ is not only an innovative experiment of ‘conceptual rhyme’ but also an invention related to East Asian verbal art. Pascucci considers that the ‘fórmulas japonesas’ refers to the concise language of haiku as well as the syllabic nature and the vertical writing of the Japanese language. With Tablada’s illustration of Eduardo Castillo, which is exactly the object of presentation of the poem, she further argues that the creation of this poem is closely related to calligraphic art. (*Entre México y Asia* 447). Pascucci especially mentions that Tablada has adopted the vertical writing out of deliberate imitation of the Japanese language, which could be proven by the vertical arrangement of alphabets in Tablada’s *kalograma* printed in *Al sol* as well as the vertical hand-written Japanese *hiraganas* on one of Tablada’s sketches (447).

Agreeing with Pascucci's remarks, we recognise the vertical monosyllabic presentation in 'A un Lémur' and Tablada's personal seals as experimental imitations of East Asian vertical writing in alphabetic form. On the visual level, 'A un Lémur' recreates the concept of Japanese syllabary and vertical writing. On the verbal level, it produces a 'conceptual rhyme' with laconic haiku-like verses.

'A un Lémur' is an important composition in studying Tablada's understanding of the key topics of this thesis, intermediality and interculturality. This poem is a significant example to demonstrate the relationship between the visual aspect and phonetic aspect of the same visual poem. Its monosyllabic presentation also exhibits the confluence of the East Asian writing system and Western alphabetical linguistic form. In the above discussion, we especially noticed the lack of marker for word boundaries in Sino-Japanese languages could have inspired the arrangement of line breaks in 'A un Lémur'. In the next chapter, we shall continue the investigation of the different ways of marking word and sentence boundaries between Sino-Japanese languages and alphabetic languages and discuss the influence of this difference on Tablada's strategy of adapting the alphabetic languages to the haiku format.

### 3.4.2 Conclusion: Visual Poetry Inspired by East Asian Linguistic Systems

In the previous section, we mentioned that *Al sol y bajo la luna* published in 1918 consists of majorly rhymed poems of evident *modernista* style. In *Un día* published in 1919, the first line rhymes with the third line of the haiku. In comparison, the collection *Li-Po* shows a transitional characteristic from *Modernismo* to *Avant-Garde* in terms of metrics. This transition of musical and stylistic preference coincides with the author's 'visual turn'. In the *modernista* stage, Tablada's poems were textual, involving minimal typographical challenges until the later primitive poems like 'Luna'. Most poems such as 'Soneto Watteau' and 'El poema de Okusai' rely on verbal language to depict the pictorial content. When it comes to *Li-Po*, the visual feature of the poem occupies the dominant position. In many cases, the text yields to the visual form for a more striking result. Accommodating to the visual presentation, the author disobeys the traditional standard of word boundaries and splits a word into two or more lines. In 'Luciérnagas', the word 'lágrimas' is written in three lines with an increased indent to present the fall of teardrops. The poet also uses hand-written letters to fit the desired shapes. 'El espejo' uses printed type to show the hard rectangular mirror frame and uses handwritten letters to adapt to the curve of the heart shape. In ideographic poems in *Li-Po*, word and image do not co-exist side by side. The words form the image and live in the image.

Since Tablada's visual poetry offers us a way of exploring the possible non-linear writing, it is a valuable material for the investigation of the '*paragone*' – the historical debate of the relationship between painting and poetry in the West which we have brought about in the Introduction. Although Apollinaire's *calligrammes* have already set up an example of integrating visual art with verbal language, Tablada's visual compositions, showing a more direct influence from East Asian image-text hybrid culture, exhibit considerable innovation in cooperating image and text. In this chapter, we have examined many poems that contravenes the conventional linear poetry formality. Stanza 9 of 'Li-Po' asks the readers to re-consider their previous reading habits and to review their previous understanding of the linearity of alphabetic language with reference to the ideographic and logographic nature of Chinese characters by showing both Chinese characters and Latin alphabets on the same page. 'Día nublado' creates a visual metaphor and accomplishes 'layered significations' by reversing the alphabetic letters. 'A un Lémur' challenges the convention that the rhyme is based on sound by producing a conceptual phonetic pattern with visual presentation. It also deconstructs and resets the boundaries between words and sentences. In the process of answering the question 'how does the verbal and visual aspect interact within a visual poem', we paid additional attention to the underlying East Asian influence on the image-text relationship in Tablada's visual writing.

In the previous chapters, we have witnessed the influence of East Asian plastic arts, including *ukiyo-e*, seal carving and calligraphy on Tablada's poetry. When dealing with the text-image relationship, we focused on the interaction between painting and poetry. In this chapter, we concentrated on the relationship between lyricality and graphicality in visual poetry, as well as the connection between visuality and vocality in different language systems. A critical discovery in this chapter is that Tablada's 'visual turn' along with the poet's pursuit of 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity' is very likely to be inspired by the East Asian writing systems. In the close reading of Tablada's visual poetry, we paid special attention to Tablada's poems that demonstrate the influence of the ideographic nature of Chinese characters and of the lack of marker for word boundary in Sino-Japanese languages. These features of Sino-Japanese writing systems engendered the unique aesthetics in both Sino-Japanese verbal art and plastic art and hence inspired Tablada's writing. In the next chapter, we will keep tracking the influences of linguistic differences between the Sino-Japanese writing system and the Spanish language, in order to see how the East Asian language and poetics shaped Tablada's visual writing.

## 4. UN DÍA AND EL JARRO: HAIKU AS VISUAL WRITING

### 4.1 Juxtaposition of Verbal Images: Influence of Sino-Japanese Languages and Poetics

Tablada's haiku compositions started to gain more attention from critics and scholars since the Nobel Prize winner Octavio Paz remarked in 1978 that Tablada was an underrated haiku poet who had been the first to introduce Japanese poetry into Mexico ('Estela de José Juan Tablada'). There is a reasonable body of academic literature in Spanish, English, and Japanese regarding Tablada's haiku. To name a few, Gloria Ceide-Echevarría's thesis *El haikai en la lírica mexicana* (1965) provides insights from the perspective of metrics and vocabulary, putting Tablada's haiku in the context of Hispanic American literary history. Atsuko Tanabe's book *El japonismo de Tablada* (1981) reviews Tablada's haiku trajectory from the manuscript of *La nao de China*, his haiku translations in *Hiroshigué*, to his original haiku collections *Un día* and *El jarro*. The fifth chapter Michele Pascucci's thesis *Entre México y Asia* (2008) includes an analysis of traits particular to the haiku genre demonstrated by verses from the ideographic poem 'Li-Po'. Seiko Ota's book *José Juan Tablada: su haiku y su japonismo* (2014) contains a detailed investigation into the original Japanese classic haiku that possibly inspired Tablada's haiku, comparing English and French translations of Japanese haiku with Tablada's Spanish texts. Previous studies have well documented East Asian references that appeared in Tablada's haiku. Rather than pursuing influence studies, this thesis will discuss the Sino-Japanese language and poetics that shaped Tablada's visual writing in his two haiku collections. The first section of this chapter will take Tablada's brief collection *Un día* published in Caracas as an example of how the 'imagist' characteristics of Sino-Japanese poetics have crossed the linguistic boundary and entered Tablada's Spanish haiku.

Although *Un día* and *El jarro* are generally considered as haiku collections, the poet himself adopted the term 'poema sintético' or 'disociación lírica' instead of 'haiku'. Ota's book as well as other research papers and books on Tablada's haiku has already speculated at length as to why Tablada refused to use the term 'haiku' or 'haikai' to call his own works. However, most of the existing investigations do not explain sufficiently why they still regard Tablada's minimalist poems in *Un día* and *El jarro* as 'haiku'. In fact, John Page's article 'José Juan Tablada y el anti-haiku' in 1992 radically challenges Octavio Paz's commentary about the metaphors in Tablada's haiku, declaring that Tablada's poems 'son metáforas ingeniosas pero no *haiku*' (512). Thus, we have the question: do Tablada's short poems actually qualify as 'haiku'? If so, what makes them haiku?

Traditionally, a Japanese haiku does not have a title. Written in seventeen syllables in three unrhymed lines of five, seven, five syllables, a Japanese haiku must contain a particular 'season word' (*kigo*) and a verbal punctuation 'cutting word' (*kireji*) (Baldick 'Haiku'). Tablada's poems in *Un día* and *El jarro* do not seem to meet this criterion. Most of the compositions in *Un día* contain three lines of different lengths, except for one two-lined piece. Besides, each poem has a title, and the first line rhymes with the last line in full rhyme or half rhyme. From this, it would appear that Tablada's poems are not haiku in a traditional sense.

Nevertheless, the definition of modern haiku in languages other than Japanese has become much more flexible. According to the definition of 'haiku' by the Haiku Society of America (HSA), a haiku 'is a short poem that uses imagistic language to convey the essence of an experience of nature or the season intuitively linked to the human condition'.<sup>72</sup> HSA notes that, though modern haiku written in English may omit the 'season word' and substitute the 'cutting word' for punctuation, space, or line-break, it continues to focus on 'experience captured in clear images' and commonly uses the technique of 'juxtaposing two images or ideas'. (Haiku Society of America).

In accordance with the definition of HSA, we agree with most of the existing studies that Tablada's minimalist poems under four lines do qualify as haiku in a broader sense and that *Un día* deserves the reputation as the first haiku collection in the Spanish language, because Tablada's 'synthetic poems' capture the spirit of haiku. Previous studies including 'Tablada y el anti-haiku' all admit that Tablada's poems indeed capture nuanced feelings of the human-nature interaction in instants. Works by Japanese researchers such as Tanabe's *El japonismo de Tablada* and Kayoko Ijiri's 'International Haiku and Season Words: Concerning Argentine Haiku' have enlisted the seasonal references in Tablada's haiku and other modern Spanish haiku. Pascucci's thesis sums up the influence of Zen philosophy and the *sabi*, *wabi* and *shibumi* aesthetics as presented in Tablada's haiku. Given that there are already various academic publications regarding the extensive topic of the 'essence' of modern non-Japanese

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<sup>72</sup> Modern English-language haiku has already become a commonly accepted poetic form in English-language literature. In comparison, haiku written in the Spanish language is still not customary in Hispanic literature. Most publications regarding haiku in the Spanish language mainly explore works of individual poets such as Antonio Machado (1879-1939) and Mario Benedetti (1920-2009). One of the few comprehensive works about Spanish-language haiku is *El jaiku en España* (1985) by Pedro Aullón de Haro, which puts the discussion of the development of Spanish-language haiku in the context of 20<sup>th</sup> century Spanish poetry.

Since the critical theories for Japanese haiku do not suit the discussion of Tablada's Spanish haiku and the theories for Spanish-language haiku is comparatively underdeveloped, we think that the English-language haiku is representative of modern Western haiku and theoretical frameworks of English-language haiku could be helpful in discussing Tablada's haiku written in the alphabetic language.

haiku, this thesis does not aim to lay emphasis on the poet's thoughts about time, nature, or Zen philosophy.

Since our particular research question is the text-image relationship as influenced by East Asian culture, we are particularly interested in the verbal images in Tablada's haiku text and the text's visual display. In this chapter, our textual analysis will focus on, firstly, the juxtaposition of verbal images, presented on the textual level as the omission of verbs and the juxtaposition of nominal phrases, and secondly, the 'cut' of the verse realised by line breaks and punctuation marks. In discussing these two aspects, we hope to establish evidence for the influence of the Sino-Japanese language on Tablada's poetic language and how Tablada accommodated the difference between the two writing systems.

When commenting on Tablada's haiku, other critics also frequently mention that his verses 'present a vivid image' or show the characteristic of 'high visuality' (Ota 108). One of the examples from *Un día* that Ota considers to be highly visual is the following:

**LAS AVISPAS**

Como en el blanco las flechas  
Se clavan en el avispero  
Las avispas que regresan.<sup>73</sup>

Ota remarks that these expressions present 'a clear image of the wasp nest before our eyes', which could be a common experience shared by other readers of this haiku (108). But how does the 'vivid image' come into being in a verbal text? How do the images interact, if there is more than one image in the same poem?

Here are several other haiku from *Un día* as further examples of different types of image-coexistence.

**LUCIÉRNAGAS**

Luciérnagas en un árbol...  
¿Navidad en verano?...

**EL SAÚZ**

Tierno saúz [*sic*]  
Casi oro, casi ámber  
Casi luz...<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> In the 1919 version of *Un día*, all the haiku titles are printed in bold uppercase, and the first letter of each line is capitalised. This thesis shall follow the original typography in citing the haiku. The following section of this chapter will talk about titles in Tablada's haiku.

<sup>74</sup> The word for 'willow' in Spanish is usually spelled as 'sauce'. It is possible that Tablada used the spelling 'saúz' to rhyme with 'luz'.

In the example of 'Las avispas', two images are involved: arrows in a target presented in the first line (L1), and the wasps returning to their nest in the second line (L2) and the third line (L3). With the word 'como' as a clear indicator of simile, the image in L1 is connected to the image in L2L3 because the wasps and the arrows share the similarity of high velocity and the same directions. In the example of 'Luciérnagas', there is a hidden metaphor within the text that bonds the different images in the haiku. By merely putting the image of fireflies in a tree and the word 'navidad' one next to the other, the readers would have the mental image of a Christmas tree decorated with lights in mind and recognise the link between fireflies and Christmas. Likewise, 'El saúz' only consists of a few nouns, not applying any literary devices. However, it repeatedly uses the word 'casi' to specify the potential similarity, suggesting its readers find a connection between willow, gold, amber, and light.

In the latter two examples, the poems are so minimalistic that they only involve nominal phrases to depict the verbal images. A few previous studies notice the phenomenon of juxtaposing verbal images in Tablada's poetry. Gloria Ceide-Echevarría mentions that 'las imágenes yuxtapuestas son empleadas frecuentemente' when she summarises the imageries in Tablada's haiku (49). Ricardo de la Fuentes Ballesteros also remarks that 'El saúz' and 'El pavo real' '[s]on buenos ejemplos de la importancia de la preeminencia de las imágenes; la yuxtaposición de las mismas ... es una técnica habitual de mimesis *haikuista*' (73). Indeed, the simultaneous presence of multiple objects reminds us of the juxtaposition technique to show similarities or differences in Chinese and Japanese poetry. Why do we say that the juxtaposition of images is a unique technique in Sino-Japanese poetry? Why would Tablada be interested in this technique? What result does the juxtaposition of images achieve in Tablada's visual writing?

Various theorists and critics have noticed the juxtaposition of visual objects in Japanese haiku and other poetry written in Chinese characters. In the article 'The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram', Sergei Eisenstein identifies 'the principle of montage' as the 'basic element of Japanese culture' (28). Starting from showing the ideograms used in Japanese writing, Eisenstein regards the formulation of an ideogram analogous to the montage practice in cinema: combining two 'depictables' in order to achieve 'intellectual contexts and series' (30). He also confirms that the same process has happened when the ideograms form poetic phrases.

Similarly, in 'Translating Chinese Poetry: The Convergence of Languages and Poetics', Wai-Lim Yip observes the same 'montage: juxtaposition of two visual events to create a third that

is different from both' when he introduces the linguistic root that formulates Chinese poetry and makes a comparison between Chinese poetics to Western poetics (18). Yip gives many typical cases of Chinese lines of poetry along with their word-for-word annotation and finds that: 'Much of the art of Chinese poetry lies in the way in which the poet captures the visual events as they emerge and act themselves out before us, releasing them from the restrictive concept of time and space, letting them leap out directly from the undifferentiated mode of existence instead of standing between the reader and the events explaining them, analysing them' (7). According to Eisenstein and Yip, the juxtaposition of Chinese radicals forms Chinese characters;<sup>75</sup> the juxtaposition of ideographic Chinese characters forms phrases denoting visual objects or events; the juxtaposition of visual events forms poetry. The reason that technique of juxtaposing image becomes a signature of Sino-Japanese poetry is probably due to the ideographic nature of Chinese characters: it cultivates the East Asian convention of seeing a character in a similar way to seeing a picture and contemplating the poem in an analogous way of reading a painting. In accordance with this aesthetic tradition generated from ideographic writing systems, East Asian literature developed the use of verbal image, verbal painting, and verbal panorama.

Therefore, we are not surprised to see Tablada apply the same technique considering he is profoundly influenced by Chinese and Japanese culture. Juxtaposing verbal images and letting them explain themselves is exactly what Tablada does in poems like 'El saúz'. The logic of the verses or the bonding point between the juxtaposed visual objects lies in the resemblance of their characteristics: the vividness of new life embodied by the tender spring willow reminds us of the preciousness of rare stone, valuable metal, and the light. The poet captures these sophisticated traits of different objects, yet he does not name them directly. Instead, the haiku enumerates the objects bearing these qualities and puts them in the text one by one. Without explaining the reason for the juxtaposition, the poet leaves the interpretation open to his readers. Readers would have a mental image of the objects after reading the three lines consisting of one adjective, four nouns, several functional words, and punctuation. Via the action of scanning these nouns and processing the corresponding verbal images in mind, this series of images becomes a montage, a 'conflict within the frame' in Eisenstein's words that will later constitute a story (38).

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<sup>75</sup> See footnote 70 for the definition of 'Chinese radical'.

In 'Luciérnagas' and 'El saúz', we can notice that the verses are not grammatically complete sentences due to the lack of verbs. Another haiku, 'El caballo del diablo', is purely combined by nominal phrases, except for the punctuation used at the end of L1:<sup>76</sup>

### **EL CABALLO DEL DIABLO**

Caballo del diablo:

Clavo de vidrio

Con alas de talco.

Ota has traced the influence of Japanese haiku on Tablada's 'El caballo del diablo' and exhibited several possible French translations that could have reached Tablada, including Couchoud's translation of Basho and Kikaku's poems and Revon's translation of Kikaku's haiku. Curiously, although Ota does not specify this fact in her study, all these French translations are syntactically perfect sentences with conjugated verbs. When Tablada adapted the translated Japanese haiku into Spanish, he took away the verbs, making the laconic three-lined haiku a collage of images of objects. Pascucci, on the other hand, discerns the juxtaposition of nouns in Tablada's poetry. She mentions that the poem 'Ruidos y perfumes (en un jardín)' in *Li-Po* contains almost only nouns and scarcely any verbs or adjectives. Instead, the poem adopts the form 'de + noun' as a substitute to adjectives, which is analogous to the linguistic structure of Japanese: 'este tipo de adjetivación es muy parecido a la forma japonesa frecuentemente empleada para el haiku, "sustantivo + no + sustantivo", como en las frases "aki no kure" y "neko no koi" en algunos de los haiku citados anteriormente' (543). This 'de + noun' structure is widely applied in *Un día*, too, as 'El caballo del diablo' demonstrates. Considering Tablada's knowledge about the Japanese language was limited, we are not sure if he deliberately uses the 'de + noun' structure to imitate Japanese syntax. Nonetheless, it is still an interesting parallel between the customary pattern of the Japanese language and Tablada's phrases in haiku written with the Spanish language.

Among the 37 haiku in *Un día*, three poems do not contain any verb at all; one poem only contains a participle; 18 of the remaining 33 haiku are simple sentences that contain one conjugated verb. Haiku in this collection show little reliance on the verbs. In contrast, they are primarily made up of nominal phrases. The scarce presence of verbs plus the limited importance of functional words again demonstrates that Tablada's haiku are 'poetry of nouns' (Müller qtd. Kacian 23).<sup>77</sup> This phenomenon coincides with Yip's finding that Chinese poetry

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<sup>76</sup> The use of punctuation marks can set a particular relationship between two lines. We are going to inspect the use of punctuation marks in Tablada's haiku in the next section.

<sup>77</sup> Cognitive research has proven that readers of English haiku tend to skip reading the functional words and spend more time looking at the content words. (Müller)

forms ideas by means of nouns, a method significantly different from the 'syllogistic procedures of Western poetry' (26).

As a matter of fact, Tablada has personally mentioned the juxtaposition of nouns in his poetry. In his letter to Velarde published in *El Universal Ilustrado* in 1919, which we quoted at the beginning of Chapter Three, Tablada makes the following remarks:

Mis poemas actuales son un franco lenguaje; algunos no son simplemente gráficos sino arquitectónicos: 'La calle en que vivo' es una calle con casas, iglesias, crímenes y almas en pena. Como la 'Impresión de la Habana', es ya todo un paisaje. Y todo es sintético, discontinuo y por tanto dinámico; lo explicativo y lo retórico están eliminados para siempre; es una sucesión de estados sustantivos; creo que es poesía pura...

Although the remarks were made in response to questions about his ideographic poetry collection *Li-Po*, we can observe that the Mexican poet was consciously using the 'succession of nominal phrases' to create his 'pure poetry', which is restrained and concise. In addition to that, the terms 'disociación lírica' in the subtitle of *El jarro* also implies the fact that the poet intentionally applied the fragmented grammatical structure.

Thanks to the nominal phrases, Tablada's haiku could easily use verbal language to refer to an image. However, the use of verbal images in Tablada's haiku is different from the pictorial writing in his previous *modernista* collections. Tablada's earlier ekphrastic poems also use verbal language to depict pictures, but those pictures are 'real' paintings or prints. More precisely, those paintings and prints are narrative-based pictures: Watteau's painting presented in Tablada's 'Soneto Watteau' is inspired by the myth of Cythera, and 'El poema de Okusai' is inspired by Hokusai's *kaidan*-inspired prints. In depicting Watteau's painting and Hokusai's prints via a verbal method, Tablada's poetic secondary presentation refers to the original storylines that inspired the visual primary presentation and re-narrates the stories. Consequently, the ekphrastic poems have a complete syntactic structure. The author of the poems plays the narrator's role outside the picture frame, telling the sequential story to his readers. On the other hand, having perceived the plot, readers recreate the painting or print in their mind according to the narratives presented in the poem.

Compared to Tablada's previous pictorial writing, his haiku often consist of 'partly fragmentary or elliptical syntax' due to the dominance of nominal phrases (Müller 23). Each of the nominal phrases seems to be a separate verbal image, which 'coexists in spatial relationships' in a haiku. (Yip 6). In Yip's Chinese-Western poetics comparison, he mentions that Chinese poems often operate 'pictorially', but in a different sense to Tablada's narrative pictorial writing:

The successive shots do not constitute a linear development (such as how this leads to that). Rather the objects coexist, as in a painting, and yet the mobile point of view has made it possible to temporalise the spatial units. (12)

Although Tablada's haiku are written in an alphabetic language, they do not 'narrate' a story, but rather 'depict' a picture. An interesting fact is that, haiku in *Un día* are organised in four groups, 'La mañana', 'La tarde', 'Crepúsculo', and 'La noche', unlike traditional Japanese haiku or modern English language haiku which seldom come out in series or collection. As if different snapshots, the multiple haiku poems in the collection in whole present the entire scene of 'A Day' as the title of the collection indicates. The action of reading the haiku from the book's beginning to end following the chronological order of presentation is therefore taking a 'mobile point of view', which 'temporalises' the different visual/spatial pictures presented in the haiku collection (Yip 12).

Yip also mentions that many Chinese poems tend to give a bird's-eye view of the depicted scene and presents all the visual moments simultaneously, a technique that should be credited to Chinese landscape painting (12-3). We can notice that Tablada's *Un día* takes the same bird-eye perspective. The collection is able to give a panoramic perspective to the total scene of 'A Day' from a larger scale and from different angles, because each haiku depicts an individual micro-world as if a zoomed-in shot. The method of juxtaposing verbal images (nominal nouns) in a poem and juxtaposing verbal shots (haiku in the collection) makes it possible for readers to attend to haiku in *Un día* in an analogous way to attending a Chinese poem or even an East Asian landscape painting, in which the visual objects or visual moments coexist side by side. Therefore, the haiku poems in *Un día* are still highly visual rather than pictorial even disregarding the graphical design: the haiku do not aim to present any other pictorial art; the poetic text – to be more specific, the signified of the haiku constructed by juxtaposed nominal phrases – is the pictorial presentation itself.

In this section, we have observed that Tablada's laconic visual writing in the haiku collections is established by juxtaposing verbal images. Relying on the use of nominal phrases, the juxtaposition technique is a result influenced by the ideographic nature of Chinese characters and the syntactical fragmentation in poetic verses written with Sino-Japanese languages. Aside from inspirations from the Sino-Japanese linguistic features, Tablada's Spanish-language haiku also manifest a potential influence of East Asian aesthetics: the poetic expression in Tablada's haiku generate lyrical meaning from the juxtaposition of visual events, rather than the narrative tone that is commonly adopted in the poet's previous *modernista* poetry such as 'Soneto Watteau' and 'Okusai'. In addition, the experience of reading *Un día* is

similar to viewing an East Asian landscape painting that adopts the panoramic bird-eye view, which indicates that the Mexican poet could have also taken inspiration from the techniques of Sino-Japanese plastic art. Therefore, we can conclude that the influence of East Asian languages, poetry, and visual art provokes Tablada's use of visual language in his haiku compositions.

#### 4.2 Cut-Marker and Visual Sign: Punctuation Marks in Tablada's Haiku

In the previous section, we argued that although Tablada's haiku are written in an alphabetic language, they do not 'narrate' a story but rather 'depict' a picture with a Sino-Japanese ideographic logic. However, unlike the Sino-Japanese languages, the Spanish syntax does not allow free juxtaposition of nouns. The grammatical difference between the East Asian languages and the alphabetic languages requires Western haiku poets to adopt different strategies in composing haiku, which often involve localisation of the haiku according to the characteristics of the alphabetic languages. In this section, we are going to discuss Tablada's use of punctuation marks – the unique visual symbols used to aid the expression of words in the Western alphabetic writing systems.

As many critics and theorists have pointed out, the fragmentation of language and absent syntactic elements in haiku could lead to readers' act of 'misreading'; by manipulating the fragmentation of language, haiku poets can take advantage of the 'misreading' and in turn create multiple possibilities of interpretation (Gilbert 236-9). Critics realise that the gap between the image of fragment line (the shorter portion) and the image of phrase lines (the longer portion), called the 'cut' (*kire*), is crucial in writing haiku of any language (Kasegawa, Ramesh, Reichhold). It is the silent moment in the 'cut' that invites haiku readers to be involved and to generate meanings. At the beginning of this chapter, we have mentioned that traditional haiku requires the presence of a cutting word (*kireji*), which is often substituted by a punctuation mark when it is translated in an alphabetic language. In the following paragraphs, we are going to discuss the 'cut' and the cut-marker in Tablada's haiku in order to examine the visual effect produced by the different types and locations of line breaks and punctuation marks. In the following paragraphs, we shall first investigate the use of punctuation marks in the body text of Tablada's haiku to see their effect in altering the textual expression. Later, we shall discuss the punctuation marks used in haiku titles and analyse the relationship between the title and the body text in Tablada's haiku.

#### 4.2.1 The Cut and Cut Markers: Punctuation in the Body text

Before discussing Tablada's haiku, first, we have to revisit the Japanese haiku tradition and the Japanese language to understand why line breaks and punctuation marks are required in non-Japanese haiku. The previous chapter mentioned that a significant difference between the East Asian writing system and the Western alphabetic system is that the East Asian languages do not use space to identify the boundary between words. In addition to the lack of marker of word boundary, traditional Chinese poetry and Japanese haiku do not use punctuation. Written in one line with no punctuation, how do Japanese haiku convey disambiguation and emphasis?

Unlike Chinese, which is composed solely of ideograms, the Japanese language contains both ideographic characters, *kanji*, and syllabic characters, *kana*.<sup>78</sup> *Kanji* are always content words, whereas *kana* are often used as function words. When a *kana* is used as the suffix to a *kanji*, it inflects the *kanji* and identifies the type of the word (noun or adjective), as well as the tense, person, and mood of the verb. *Kana* can be used to show the inflection (*okurigana*) as the suffix to *kanji*. It can also play the role of a particle (*joshi*) to demonstrate the relationship between words and phrases (Seeley 53). When readers view and read haiku in Japanese, they naturally process two different codes simultaneously. To a certain extent, *kana* acts as punctuation to alert the readers of the separation of clauses or phrases in one sentence or poem. When haiku is translated from Japanese, the difference between *kanji* and *kana* is erased as both types of characters are adapted into the alphabet. Consequently, haiku written in alphabetical languages requires alternative methods to mark the 'cut'. Thus, Western poets have the option to adopt visual methods such as typographical design or linguistic methods such as using spaces, line breaks, and punctuation marks to imitate the 'cutting word'.

Pascucci finds out that in *Li-Po*, many poems present characteristics of haiku, such as typographic design as a visual alternative to the 'cutting word' in Japanese haiku. Raising the example of 'Nocturno alterno', Pascucci argues that the contrast between regular fonts and bold fonts which indicates the theme of 'contradiction yet uniformity' is a typographical equivalent to the 'cutting word', which connects the phrases that are semantically less relevant yet metaphorically associated (*Entre México y Asia* 540-1). In *Un día* and *El jarro*, Tablada does not use a graphical design but rather punctuation marks, the conventional signs in

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<sup>78</sup> In traditional Japanese poetry, only *hiragana* is used; *katakana* is not used. Please see the glossary for the script used in the Japanese writing system.

alphabetic writing systems. Now the question is, how do punctuation marks help achieve the 'cut' of a haiku?

A recent investigation into the reader's perception of 'cut' in haiku shows that explicit punctuation as cut-marker modifies the reader's eye-movement (Pierides et al.). With empirical experiments cooperated by neuro-cognitive scientists, the research discovers a 'cut effect' in the haiku's first reading. Readers spend more reading time per word on the fragment line than on the phrase line. They spend an even longer time when the fragment line is the last line. In addition, 'the greater the gap between the two images/parts, the more time is spent on working out the meaning implications of the fragment'. The studies indicate that readers treat the fragment line as containing the decisive information and that the 'cut effect' can be reinforced by punctuation (Müller et al. 20, Pierides et al. n.p.). We have the following three examples from *Un día* to demonstrate respectively the 'cut effect' realised by the use of word and punctuation marks as cut markers.

#### **LAS AVISPAS**

Como en el blanco las flechas  
Se clavan en el avispero  
Las avispas que regresan

#### **LA PAJARERA**

Distintos cantos a la vez;  
La pajarera musical  
Es una torre de Babel.

#### **FLOR DE TORONJA**

De los enjambres es  
Predilecta la flor de la toronja  
(Huele a cera y a miel).

In 'Las avispas', the 'cut' is located between L1 and L2 with no punctuation marks as cut-markers. Since the poem uses the word 'como' as an explicit indicator of the relationship between images in fragment and phrase, readers would actively look for the connection between the image of 'las flechas' and 'las avispas' with anticipation and efficiently work out the connotation of the fragment. Thus, the textual indicator 'como' decreases readers' understanding time and reduces the 'cut effect' in 'Las avispas'. In 'La pajarera', the semicolon at the end of L1 almost provides the same effect as a conjunctive word. It alerts readers of the cut before their eyes move from L1 to the following phrase lines. Since a semicolon connects two related yet independent clauses, readers would anticipate that the fragment and the phrase are associated, but they have to find the connection by themselves. In 'Flor de toronja', L3 in the parentheses serves as a supplementary explanation to the phrase lines. Before

reaching L3, readers of 'Flor de toronja' expect to tackle why the wasps are attracted to the flower in the line after the cut, as this haiku does not include words like 'como' as a conjunction. Once they see the parentheses, they deliberately slow down the reading speed to look for the linkage and experience the 'aha' feeling when the tension between the phrase lines and the fragment line is finally released (Pierides et al.). Since parentheses are not commonly used in poetry, using this specific punctuation mark can produce an even stronger sense of unexpectedness. The comparison between 'Las avispas', in which word is used to indicate the connection between fragment and phrase, and 'La parajera' and 'Flor de toronja', in which punctuation marks are used to mark the 'cut', demonstrates that punctuation marks can diminish the ambiguity yet still allow open interpretations.

Due to their conventional denotation, punctuation marks can aid the division and disambiguation of sentences. In this sense, their function is to a certain extent similar to the typographical arrangement in *Li-Po*: to express without words and to signify without introducing another signifying system such as illustration. In haiku, punctuation marks orient readers' attention, eliminate unintended ambiguity, and enhance the accuracy of textual meaning. Meanwhile, punctuation marks also intensify the juxtaposition of images between fragment line and phrase lines and hint at readers that the juxtaposed images are relevant, reminding readers to spend a longer time at this specific location and generate their own interpretations. More importantly, punctuation marks accomplish these functions with neither the use of words nor graphical design. In other words, by using punctuation marks in sentences, the poem avoids verbal or visual tautology and remains concise.

Another thing worth mentioning is that, unlike traditional Japanese haiku, which are free verses, Tablada's haiku contain rhyme. As we can see from the above examples, assonant rhyme is found in all three poems between L1 and L3, while in a few other poems such as 'El saúz', full rhyme can be found. The phonetic repetition in haiku and in ideographic poems in *Li-Po* as we have mentioned in 3.4.1, is probably a residual characteristic of *modernista* style. *Un día* shows several adjustments in accordance with the rhyme, such as the spelling of 'saúz' instead of 'sauce' to rhyme with 'luz', as we have said in footnote 74. The collection also uses line breaks to achieve the phonetic harmony of the verbal text. In the above-cited 'La pajarera' and 'Flore de toronja', the verb 'es' in italic in the two haiku are respectively placed at the beginning of L3 at and the end of L1. Although 'Flor de toronja' could have located the 'es' at the beginning of L2 in the same way as 'La pajarera' does, the line break in 'Flor de toronja' occurs before the verb to achieve the assonant rhyme between 'es' and 'miel'. The different arrangements of the

same word in the two haiku suggest that lines in Tablada's haiku not only break at the 'cut' between verbal images. The phonetic appeal of the haiku is also taken into consideration.

Now we can summarise some patterns of punctuation usage in Tablada's haiku. Punctuation marks in Tablada's haiku, first and foremost, comply with the conventional rules of punctuation usage in the Spanish language so that they can disambiguate the meaning and designate the relationship between fragment and phrase as a substitute for word indicators. Second, typographical methods such as line breaks and punctuation in *Un día*, as a Western adaptation of the Japanese cutting words written in *kana*, generally fit the common pattern of modern haiku written in alphabetical languages. Despite the linguistic difference between Japanese and Spanish, Tablada's 'synthetic poetry' resembles Japanese haiku closely by juxtaposing verbal images and creating 'cuts' in the text.

On the other hand, we can also observe some exceptions from the pattern, which create very interesting expressive results. For example, in 'Las nubes', the use of vertical bars makes open interpretation possible:

#### **LAS NUBES**

Las nubes	de los Andes van veloces,   de montaña en montaña,   en alas de los cóndores.
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Followed by the nominal phrase 'las nubes', which is arranged at the very left side in the second line, the poem provides two possible readings. First, readers of this poem could read from left to right in the following sequence:

Las nubes de los Andes van veloces,  
de montaña en montaña,  
en alas de los cóndores.

In this sequence, the poem is a complete sentence that describes a single image of Andes clouds moving fast together with the birds. However, as we have mentioned before, haiku in *Un día* have their first letter of each line capitalised. In 'Las nubes', none of the letters immediately after the vertical bars is capitalised, which gives rise to the second reading:

Las nubes de los Andes van veloces,  
Las nubes de montaña en montaña,  
Las nubes en alas de los cóndores.

In this version, the haiku juxtaposes three images: the fast-moving clouds of the Andes in L1, the clouds immersing in the valleys in L2, and the clouds under the condors' wings in L3. Since readers of haiku tend to read a composition more than once, they are very likely to experience both versions. Moreover, both the readings are relatable, as what Richard Gilbert would put as 'misreading as meaning': 'because haiku resist easy solutions as to meaning, resisting reader attempts to ferret out singular meanings or messages, scenes, worlds, or any singular, "true" interpretation' (236). 'Las nubes' demonstrates that punctuation marks and the typographical location of the words could have a similar effect as the visual shape formed by words in ideographic poetry: it allows multiple readings and interpretations to coexist simultaneously.

The above examples indicate that haiku's perception is analogous to the perception of ideographic poetry as we demonstrated in 3.3.3. The pleasure of reading an ideographic poem consists of deciphering the connection between the verbal meaning of the text and the visual shape that the text forms. Similarly, the pleasure of reading a haiku is the 'aha' experience of finding the connection between different verbal images juxtaposed in the text.

#### 4.2.2 Punctuation Marks in Haiku Titles: Linguistic Code and Graphical Symbol

Now that we have clarified the issue of 'cut', it is easier to discuss the relationship between the body text of a haiku and its paratext, including the title and the illustration. The previous paragraphs of this section took the collection *Un día* as the study case. In the following paragraphs, we are also looking into its 'brother album', *El jarro de flores. Disociaciones líricas*, published in 1922 in New York (Tablada 'Hokku' n.p.). Given the fact that Tablada's haiku in *Un día* and *El jarro* bear titles, whilst traditional haiku and other non-Japanese haiku are not usually titled, we are particularly interested in these haiku titles: Are the titles indispensable for the entire haiku? What is the connection between the haiku title, body text, and illustration?

In *Un día*, all the haiku titles are nominal phrases taken from the body text, as if they were an abstract of the already brief poems.<sup>79</sup> Repeating and highlighting the object of presentation which appears in the body text, the haiku titles in *Un día* are performing nothing beyond their mandatory function, 'designation or identification' (Genette and Crampe 28). If we only look at the textual part of the haiku, disregarding their illustrations for now, we might conclude that the effect of the titles is very limited. Redundancy is not desirable for haiku verses in *Un día*, which, like the title-less Japanese haiku, pursue a restrained yet sophisticated expression in minimal

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<sup>79</sup> The nominal phrases are taken from both the fragment line and the phrase line. There is no significant relation to the position of the cut.

words. However, the titles could be important signs when the illustrations are introduced to the viewing-reading progress, which we are going to discuss in the next section.

In comparison to *Un día*, when it comes to the collection *El jarro*, many titles directly make contributions to the verbal expression of the whole poem. About half of the haiku in *El jarro* choose phrases that do not appear directly in the body text as titles. Among them, some haiku are titled by nominal phrases synonymous with the designated object in the body text, such as 'Tucuso montanero', in which the word 'tucuso' is another word for 'colibri' in the last line. Some titles are linked to the core object in the body text by metaphors or metonymy. For example, in 'Guanabana', the breast of the lover in the text is a metaphorical expression associated with the white flesh of the fruit in the title. Though not essential to the poem's meaning, titles of these haiku contribute to a more exact and nuanced effect of expression.

In some other cases of *El jarro*, titles play a decisive role. In the section *El reloj de sombra*, each haiku is titled by specific time points in chronological order, such as '6 p.m.', '7 p.m.', '8 p.m.'. Not only all the haiku titles contain 'p.m.'; instead of 'reloj de sol', the common reference to sundial, using 'el reloj de sombra' as the section title also implies that this section deals with scenarios at night. References to the night-time in haiku body texts, haiku titles and the section title correspond to the section's illustration (Figure 4-1), which depicts a clock on the background of the night sky with stars and moon. In addition, the haiku body text sketches an episode that occurs in the garden at the corresponding moment of nightfall. These timestamp titles, on the one hand explain the meaning of the section title, on the other hand provide the background for the episodes described in the body text. Their sequential order also ties the individual haiku together, suggesting to the reader a connection between poems and an association between the text and the illustration.



Figure 4-1 Illustration by Adolfo Best-Maugard for the section *El reló de sombra* in *El jarro*.

Unlike *Un día*, in which the haiku titles are printed in capital letters without any punctuation, all the titles in *El jarro* are presented in lower case (apart from initial capital), including the title of the collection and titles of each group of haiku. In addition, most haiku titles in *El jarro* have a full stop at the end, with a few exceptions. No punctuation marks appear after the titles of 'Libélula' and 'La insomnio';<sup>80</sup> In other poems, punctuation marks contribute to the meaning of the verbal text, such as in 'Día de sol:' and 'Día lluvioso:'.

**Día de sol:**

Hay una mariposa  
En cada flor...

**Día lluvioso:**

Cada flor es un vaso  
Lacrimatorio....

Presented one after the other in the section *En el jardín*, both these poems refer to flowers and present a similar structure between the title and body text. Nevertheless, the most outstanding feature of these two poems is that, instead of full stops, colons appear at the end of the title

<sup>80</sup> In 'Nota de editor', Rodolfo Mata mentions that the omission of full stops in the haiku titles could lead to another reading of the poem, which is to consider the title as the first line of the poem. (n.p.)

phrase. A colon's existence usually indicates that the sentence is to be continued and that there is related content following the mark. In *El jarro*, colons in the titles convey a much stronger connotation of continuity than the omission of a full stop because the latter is common in other publications and could be an error in printing. A colon also suggests a subsequential pause that is briefer than the pause after a full stop. By placing colons after the titles, the titles' unorthodox presentation invites readers to perceive the phrase in the title and the following two lines in the body text as one sentence. In fact, if we were to remove the colons, the title phrase could still provide supplementary information for the body lines. The titles 'Día del sol' and 'Día lluvioso' would perform a similar function to the timestamp titles in the section *El reló de sombra*, serving as an introduction that provides necessary information for the event that is going to happen in the body text.

Readers usually consider the title as paratext, the supplementary information that appears before the 'real' main text. Nonetheless, with the colons in place, the existence of these punctuation marks blurs the boundary between paratext and body text, emphasising the significance of the content of the titles by implying to readers that the phrases in the titles not only function as a name but also contribute to the verbal meaning of the remaining text. With the colons in these two poems, the phrases 'sunny day' and 'rainy day' become the modifiers of the following clauses, providing the conditional description of weather so that the scenario presented in the body text is reasonable. Butterflies can stop on the flowers only on sunny days, and the flowers would look like vessels of tears only on rainy days when the raindrops would fall into the flowers like tears into vessels. If the titles were not printed in double space from the body text nor in bold typeface, both the poems could make a three-lined title-less haiku, in which the cut is marked by the colon that intensifies the 'aha' effect between L1 and the last two lines.

Except for using colons in titles, *El jarro* even includes haiku which use no words but only punctuation marks as the titles; the following poem is an example of this:

... ? ...

Doble fulgor apenas móvil  
En la senda nocturna. ¿Acaso un búho?  
¿Acaso un automóvil...?

The body text of this poem describes a picture of two illuminating objects in the darkness. The use of question marks, as well as the word 'acaso', expresses the speaker's unsureness about the source of light. Such uncertainty, reflected in the title, is symbolised by the question mark.

Consisting of a question mark and three dots on both sides, the punctuation marks in the title as a whole could be seen as a graphical image of two beams of light, which is precisely the verbal image presented in the body text. In this poem, the punctuation marks in the title no longer perform grammatical functions. Instead, their identity as graphical symbols is brought back into play.

In *El jarro*, the visual punctuation marks in the titles polish the expression of a haiku by supplementing extra-linguistic details. Within the scope of the verbal text, 'Día del sol' and 'Día lluvioso' use the colon to make a subtle adjustment to the rhythm of the text and intensify the 'cut effect'. '...?...?' on the other hand, is an example where punctuation marks can be treated as visual signs. The visuality of the title, echoing with the meaning of the body text, makes the description of an ordinary image fun and novel and turns it into a visual pun that carries double meanings.

However, in '...?...?', we notice a repetition between the visual presentation (the punctuation marks mimicking the two illuminating objects in the night path) and the verbal presentation (the nominal phrase 'Doble fulgor apenas móvil en la senda nocturna'). We believe that both the visual image and the verbal text present the same referent, the uncertain object that could either be an owl or a car. In this case, the title of the poem written in linguistic-graphical signs is tautological to the content of the body text, as if a *calligramme* or a miniature *technopaignia* that simultaneously shows and names, imitates and signifies in Foucault's words (21).

In this section, we discussed the two scenarios where punctuation marks are used in Tablada's haiku: in the body text and in the title. In the body text, punctuation marks are used as a Western substitute for the Japanese cutting word. In titles, punctuation marks, diminishing the titles' identity of designation and emphasising their function as 'word' and 'text', connect the title with body text and function as a cut-marker, turning the title into the fragment line of a haiku. On the other hand, in the case of '...?...?', punctuation marks are again seen as 'symbols' and pictures, creating a visual tautology to the content of the body text. The discussion of punctuation marks in Tablada's haiku exhibits the localisation strategy of writing haiku in Western alphabetic languages. Taking advantage of punctuation marks' double identity – as linguistic codes and as graphical signs, Tablada's Spanish-language haiku solve the problem of syntactical fragmentation caused by the heavy use of nominal phrases.

In the previous section and this section, we discussed the verbal text of Tablada's haiku, which consists of alphabets, punctuation marks and typographical spaces. In the next section, we

are going to continue the topic of visibility and materiality of haiku, putting the focus on the illustrations on each page of the collection.

### 4.3 Graphical Design in *Un día*: Illustrations and the Painter-Poet Tradition

In our previous discussion of Tablada's haiku collections, in order to see how the poetic texts in *Un día* present verbal images, we looked into the grammatical features and the use of punctuation marks in Tablada's haiku and analysed the adoption and adaptation of Sino-Japanese poetics in Tablada's Spanish language visual writing. In this section, we are going to carry on and discuss the paratext of his haiku – everything else that are printed on the page surrounding the haiku body text, including title, typographical layout, illustration, and other graphical decorations. In discussing the paratext of haiku, we hope to tackle the following questions: In what way does the visual elements of the published haiku collections interfere (add to the meaning or alter the meaning) with the expression of the verbal poem? Is there any influence from East Asian art on the graphical design of the haiku collections?

#### 4.3.1 Relationship between the Haiku Title and the Illustration

In the previous section, we have argued that in terms of the verbal text, the haiku titles in *Un día* are performing the function of designation. If the titles do not contain any punctuation marks, they make a limited difference to the literary result of the body text. Now, taking the illustrations beside each poem on the top corner of the page into consideration, we are going to discuss the correlation between the haiku and its graphical decoration.

In *Un día*, we can observe a pattern between the title and the designated content. The nominal phrase in the title (we shall call it verbal image 1) is always the literal name of the object in the visual presentation, which is the round-shaped graphical decoration. The body text, on the other hand, usually contains a figure of speech, in which the vehicle phrase (verbal image 2) refers to the object of presentation in a connotative way. That is to say, the visual image and the verbal image 1 present the same signified, which is different from the denotation of the verbal image 2.

With the examples of 'La pajarera' and 'Las avispas', we have the following chart to set out the different visual/verbal signs on each printed page that contains a haiku.



Figure 4-2 The haiku 'Las avispas' and its illustration

Haiku title	'Las avispas'	'La pajarera'
Referent / signified	Wasps	Aviary
Visual image	The picture of wasps and their nest	The picture of four birds behind the bars
Verbal image 1: tenor phrase in the title and the body text	'las avispas'	'la pajarera'
Verbal image 2: figure of speech in the body text	'las flechas', bonded to verbal image 1 with simile	'torre de Babel', bonded to verbal image 1 with metaphor

In the analysis of 'Las avispas' as shown in Figure 4-2, we consider the words in the title as the verbal signifier referring to the wasps in the poet's mind, and the illustration as the graphical signifier of the same referent, presuming that both the verbal image 'las avispas' and the graphical image of the wasps are created simultaneously. However, is it possible that the visual image is the visual presentation of verbal image 1 instead of the referent? In other words, what is the order of creation? Is the illustration created before or after the haiku was written? Which was created first, the picture or the word? In those haiku that fit the above pattern and presumptions the order of creation is less significant in the interpretation of the haiku text because the figure of speech in the body text is explicit enough, even disregarding the content

of the picture. However, we do have two exceptions to the pattern, in which the order of creation is critical in the perception of the haiku's verbal meaning.

The first is 'El chirimoyo' in *Un día*. On page 23 of the book, the illustration shows two parrots, which correspond to verbal image 2 in L3, rather than verbal image 1 in the title, which means the chirimoya tree (Figure 4-3).

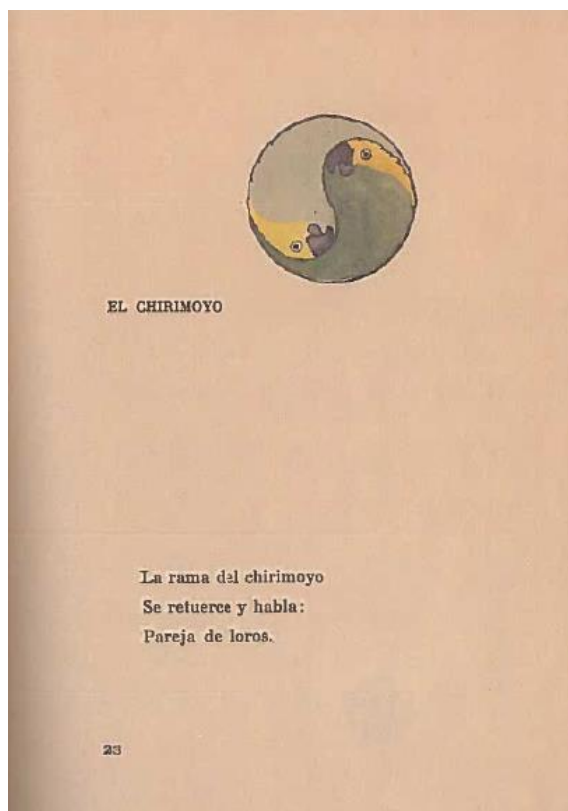


Figure 4-3 Page 23 in *Un día* containing the haiku 'El chirimoyo' and an illustration

Since it is not a verb but a colon that connects the juxtaposed verbal image of the cherimoya tree and the nominal phrase of parrots, at the first time of reading the haiku, we cannot decide what exactly is the relationship between the two verbal images. The tree branch is more likely to twist, whereas parrots are more likely to talk. Although there are two verbs in the poem, neither of them determines the relationship between the cherimoya tree and the parrots. Instead, since the colon at the end of L2 arbitrates the relationship between verbal image 1 and 2, we cannot easily tell which is the subject that conducts the actions in L2. In addition, the *yin-yang* fish shape of the illustration alludes to that there is possibly a dualism in the content of haiku body text. The *yin-yang* shape implies that the three lines of the haiku can be

read reversely, suggesting an interrelationship between the tenor and vehicle in the figure of speech. Therefore, we list both the possibilities below to compare the differences:

<b>Referent/signified</b>	<b>Cherimoya tree in the text</b>
Verbal image 1	'Chirimoyo' in the title
Verbal image 2	'pareja de loros', figurative reference to the cherimoya tree
Visual image	A pair of parrots, graphical presentation of the denotation of verbal image 2

<b>Referent</b>	<b>Parrots in the picture</b>
Verbal image 1	'pareja de loros'
Visual image	A pair of parrots, graphical presentation of the referent/tenor
Verbal image 2	'la rama de chirimoyo', figurative reference to the parrots

In order to tackle the question of 'which is the object of presentation of the illustration, the tenor or the vehicle in the text', we have to refer to the other exceptional case, 'En Liliput' in *El jarro*. Although *El jarro* is decorated with illustrations by Adolfo Best-Maugard on the title page of each section, it does not contain illustrations on every page beside each haiku. However, Tablada's manuscript of 'El Liliput' in Figure 4-4 shows that this haiku was written with the author's sketch in coloured pencil by the side in September 1919, a few months after he wrote *Un día* (between February and May 1919). The picture occupies the centre of the page in the manuscript while the haiku text without a title is in the right-bottom corner. This layout suggests that the picture was probably the priority when the layout was designed, and it gives rise to the possibility that the illustration was created, if not before, at least simultaneously to the poetic text.



Figure 4-4 *Hormigas sobre un grillo muerto*. Tablada's manuscript of the poem 'En Liliput', with a sketch of coloured pencils

In addition, the text itself indicates that the image of 'cricket and ants' – either the verbal or the visual image of this content – exists prior to the verbal image in L3. Both the phrase 'recuerdo de' and the full stop before this phrase demonstrates the sequence of the verbal images.<sup>81</sup> With all this information from the manuscript and the published collection, we have the following chart:

<b>Order of creation:</b>	<i>Referent</i>	<i>A cricket and several ants</i>
<b>0</b>		
<b>1</b>	Verbal image 1 in the body text	'Hormigas sobre un grillo inerte'
<b>1</b>	Visual image	Colour pencil sketch of cricket and ants
<b>2</b>	Verbal image 2 in the body text	The reference to 'Guliver en Liliput'
<b>3</b>	Title of the haiku	'En Liliput'

The case of 'En Liliput' is incredibly inspiring for the interpretation of haiku in *Un día*. First, it reaffirms that the absence of a verb can result in the ambiguity of meaning. Although the word 'recuerdo' is also a noun in Spanish, which means 'souvenir' or 'memory' in English, this

<sup>81</sup> The punctuation mark which appears before 'recuerdo de' is not likely to be a dash due to the capitalization of the following letter R.

meaning does not make much sense in the context. The two verbal images in the two sentences can only be connected when 'recuerdo' is understood as the present tense conjugation of 'recordar', which can be translated into 'I remember' in English. In this way, the relationship between the verbal images can be interpreted as a simile: the impotent large cricket surrounded by smaller insects reminds the poet of Gulliver as the prisoner in Lilliput, the country of tiny people. The clear statement with the verb 'recuerdo' indicates with certainty that verbal image 1 is 'hormigas sobre un grillo' and verbal image 2 is L3.

In comparison, the verbal images in 'El chirimoyo' are juxtaposed before and after a colon. Due to the absence of a verb, the poem does not offer an explicit explanation of the relationship between verbal images in L1 and L3. Therefore, an exchange of position implied by the *yin-yang* shape of the illustration between the tenor and vehicle of the metaphor makes sense. In cases like 'El chirimoyo', juxtaposing the verbal images and using punctuation marks rather than verbs leads to an open interpretation of the haiku content.

Second, the manuscript of 'En Lilliput' sheds light on the order of creation for an illustrated haiku. In most cases, the illustrations for haiku are likely to be created based on the textual meaning after the text is finished. However, the sketch of *Hormigas sobre un grillo muerto* confirms that at least some of Tablada's illustrations are created roughly at the same time as the haiku body text, and the titles are possibly decided last for those haiku whose titles are extracted from the body text.

Third, it proves that the illustration could essentially determine the interpretation of the verbal text. If the collection *Un día* did not contain any illustration, following the pattern that 'nominal phrase appeared in the title is both the referent of presentation and the tenor in a figure of speech in the body text', we could easily take the cherimoya tree as the referent for granted. Now with the illustration as a reminder, when the readers notice that the title does not correspond to the illustration in 'El chirimoyo', they would have a second thought of the possibility that the object in the picture to be the referent and the object referred by the title to be the vehicle.

Regarding the visual presentation in *Un día*, another thing worth mentioning is the position of the haiku title on the page. The capitalised title is placed closely alongside the illustration but comparatively far from the body text. This arrangement gives rise to the interpretation of treating the title as an explanation of the image. The capitalised words are not necessarily the title of the haiku text. Instead, they could be the title of the illustration. In most other cases, to

which the capitalised text refers does not matter, because both the visual image and the verbal haiku represent the same referent. Nevertheless, in the case of 'El chirimoyo', the contradiction between the name and content of the picture forces the readers to distinguish which media of presentation comes first in representing the referent. Often seen as an optional ornament to the text, the round illustration in the top right corner of the page recaptures the viewer's attention due to its contradiction to the capitalised title by its side. The title-illustration disconformity between the cherimoya tree and the parrots strongly suggests the concept of complementarity and interchangeability between two seemingly unrelated or confronted ideas. The presence of the *yin-yang* shaped further asserts this concept delivered by the haiku text.

In the introduction of this thesis, we mentioned that Rodolfo Mata raised several questions about the illustrated manuscript of 'En Liliput' as well as all the haiku in *Un día*: '¿Qué se gestó primero, el dibujo o el poema? ¿Surgió primero la imagen plástica plasmada en el dibujo o la sonora vertida en las palabras? ¿De qué manera influye un tipo de composición en el otro?' ('La escritura iluminada por la imagen' n.p.) And now we can at least answer some of his questions. Although in most cases, the visual design is created based on the poetic text, some paintings could have been composed at the same time or before the poem was written. In some instances, the structure of the poetic verse coordinates with the shape of the picture, as we shall see in later discussion.

#### 4.3.2 The Sino-Japanese Influence on Tablada's Painter-Poet Dual Identity

As we have previously mentioned, *El jarro* does not include illustrations for every haiku.<sup>82</sup> However, according to Mata, Tablada intended to illustrate for *El jarro* himself, although he did not end up doing so ('La escritura iluminada por la imagen'). Tablada's drafts collected in the *Archivo Gráfico* such as Figure 4-5 also implies that the author initially planned to present *El jarro* with round coloured illustrations for each haiku in the similar style of *Un día*. Mata comments about the potential correspondence between these sketches and the haiku in *El jarro* with contextual details of the paintings' creation in the notes to the pictures in the *Archivo Gráfico*. All these materials provide more evidence to confirm again that Tablada's poetry composition is tightly related to his plastic art practices, as previous scholars such as Rodolfo

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<sup>82</sup> It is worth mentioning that in the *modernista* poetry collection *Rimas japonesas* published in Tokyo in 1907 by the Mexican poet Efrén Rebolledo, an illustration appears next to each poem. In contrast to *Un día*, in which the illustrations are painted by the poet himself, illustrations in *Rimas japonesas* are created by a Japanese artist as a graphical decoration for the book. Many *modernista* poetry collections contain illustrations, such as Rubén Darío's *Cantos de vida y esperanza*. However, it is rare to see the poet to do the illustration themselves.

Mata and Ota Seiko have noted. Further to Tablada's 'painter-poet' dual identity, we would like to discuss this with particular attention to the underlying influence of East Asian art.

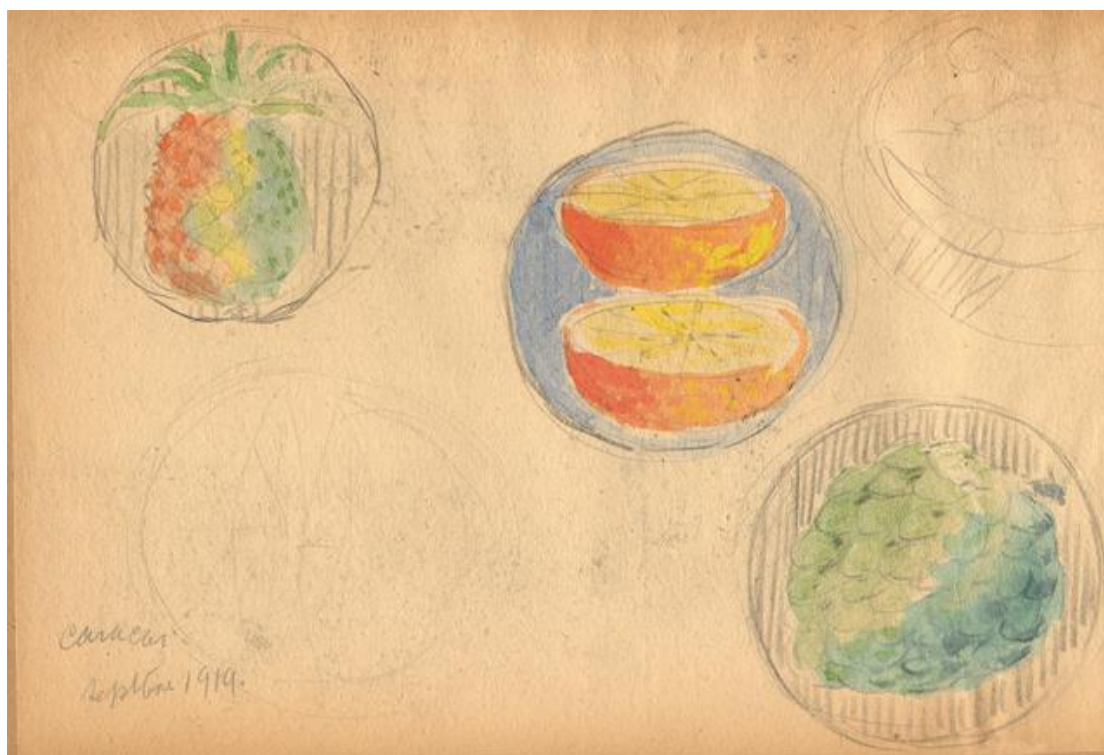


Figure 4-5 Tablada's draft of illustrations about fruits from *Archivos Gráficos*.

To the end of achieving 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity', Tablada must play the dual role of both the painter and the writer in the creation process of many collections. The formation of this dual identity, before anything else, is the result of his interest in painting as well as other forms of plastic art. Besides, it could also be a result of the influence by the East Asian tradition of 'literati-painting'. Since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, literati-painting has taken the place of the professional 'artisan-painting' to be the dominant genre of Chinese brush painting (Murck 470). Scholar-artists particularly favoured natural subjects such as trees, flowers, birds, and insects because these imageries are familiar in the literary convention and convenient to provoke specific poetic references (S. Bush 513). The painters, who were often simultaneously a poet, aimed to create 'poetic' paintings by depicting visual objects with literary allusions. Viewers of the painting, on the other hand, are expected to decode the picture and 'read it as literature' (S. Bush 514).<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> In Chinese, the action of creating a painting or sketch is sometimes called '写', which literally means 'to write', as seen in words like '写意' (freehand brush painting), '写实' (realistic painting), and '速写'.

Chinese 'literati-painting' was introduced and localised to Japan and reached its peak of popularity in the Edo Period (Graham 268). During the same period, another genre of painting closely related to literature flourished in Japan: *haiga*, literally meaning 'haiku painting' or 'illustrated haiku', with Yosa Buson (与谢芜村 1716 – 1784) as a representative poet-painter (Graham). According to Ota, one of Buson's haiku provided the inspiration for Tablada's '6 p.m.' in *El jarro*, only that Tablada was more likely to have referred to Couchoud's French translation in *Sages et Poètes d'Asie* than the original verses in Japanese (142). Rodolfo Mata also mentions that 'the practice of the haiku accompanied with a painting' is frequently seen in Japanese tradition, yet he does not make a clear statement whether Tablada had seen the *haiga* or not ('La escritura iluminada por la imagen' n.p.). Although we do not have evidence to confirm Tablada was aware of or consciously imitated the Sino-Japanese tradition of 'literati-painting' or the Japanese *haiga*, with all his visual poetry and works of graphic art, he has been a *de facto* 'literati-painter' who illustrated his own *haiga* of birds and insects.

The identity of painter/illustrator enables the poet to apply techniques of graphical art into the creation of the textual aspect of his graphical-lyrical work. For example, employing the 'bird-view perspective' from traditional Chinese landscape painting, the collection *Un día* realises the panoramic presentation of individual visual episodes by juxtaposing haiku in an organised order, as we have argued in the previous section of this chapter.

Being the poet and the illustrator at the same time also gives the creator more flexibility to achieve a formal coherence between the visual presentation and the verbal presentation. Taken the example of 'La luna' in Figure 4-6, the illustration presents a blueish-grey circle inside another white circle, both in a black ring. The haiku text, on the other hand, incorporating three unusually complete sentences, explains that the grey circle in the middle should be the pearl/moon lying on the white part that stands for the shell/cloud; and that the dark circle on the outer edge indicates the sea/night. Rather than a very abstract picture of the moon in the cloudy night sky, the illustration is more comfortable to be understood as three closed circuits at first glance, which constitutes a concord to the grammatical completeness of the three haiku lines. In the composition, the painter-writer has taken care of the painting and the writing

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(sketch). Please see Susan Bush's 'Poetry and Pictorial Expression in Chinese Painting' for more discussion on the 'idea-writing (写意)' in traditional painting (507).

Literary conventions can be presented in paintings by depicting the homophonic concept of the textual word, according to Bush. Thus, literati painting is similar to the *kakekotoba* in Japanese *surimono* in which the poetic text and painting are bound by a pun. Except for that in literati painting, the text does not directly appear. We discussed *kakekotoba* in *surimono* in 2.1.2, and verbal pun in 3.3.2.

simultaneously, so that these two media of presentations could be thematically and formally identical.

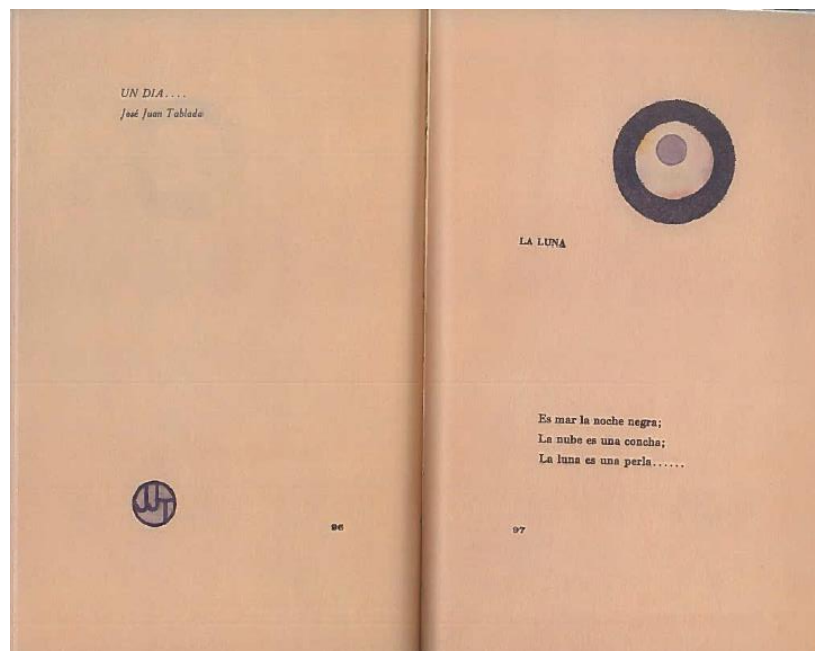


Figure 4-6 Page 96 and 97 of *Un día*, with Tablada's seal on page 96 and the haiku 'La luna' accompanied by an illustration on page 97.

In addition, the layout of the pages is presumably designed by the poet himself too, because the copyright page states 'se han hecho de esta obra 200 ejemplares sobre papel verge, iluminados a mano, con sello del autor'. All haiku in *Un día* are printed on the odd-numbered pages on the right side. Whereas the left even-numbered pages only contain the title of the collection and the author's name on the top and a seal with the initials of 'JJT' on the bottom. The two-page layout resembles the traditional Japanese style of haiku written on a decorated letter paper, except the text is printed horizontally. Presenting an illustration at the corner, the two-page layout reads sequentially the haiku text, the signature of the poet and his seal from the right to the left top to the bottom.

All three aspects in the visual collection *Un día*, including the graphical design, the linguistic structure, and the object of presentation, show the profound influence of East Asian culture. For this reason, *Un día* is considered as the peak of Tablada's *japonisme*. After this album, his haiku works started to show more characteristics of Mexican tradition. In *El jarro*, more haiku concern things in modern Latin American life, especially in the section *Dramas mínimos* [sic] that includes haiku such as 'Heroísmo', 'Kindergarten', 'A un crítico', and 'Coyocán'. After 1920, Tablada no longer designed the graphical arrangements of this poetic text. The illustrations in

*El jarro*, as well as in his later collection *La feria*, show traits of Mexican engravings.<sup>84</sup> This transition of visual style coincides with the transition from East Asian themes to Mexican themes in Tablada's poetry. It again indicates that, intermediality in Tablada's poetic writing is linked to the intercultural presentation, and that the poet's aim of visual-verbal simultaneity is inspired by East Asian culture.

#### 4.4 Conclusion: Visual Writing in Haiku Collections

To conclude this chapter about Tablada's haiku, we are going to briefly mention his last poetry collection *La feria* and summarise the evolution of his East Asia related poetic texts. In 1928, a year after the monograph *Historia del arte en México* came out, Tablada's poetry collection *La feria. Poemas mexicanos* was published in New York. As with Tablada's previous poetry collections, this book was decorated with plenty of graphical images: its cover consists of a papercutting-style illustration by the Mexican artist Miguel Covarrubias (1904 – 1957), and it contains various illustrations by the Mexican illustrator Matías Santoyo (1905 – 1975) and the American painter George (Pop) Hart (1868 – 1933). Even though Rodolfo Mata considers *La feria* along with *Un día*, *Li-Po* and *El jarro* to be Tablada's four visual poetry collections, he makes solid points that *La feria* has the 'most moderate visual characteristics' of the four collections ('Nota del editor' n.p.). In *La feria*, the illustrations are not located on the same page as the poetic text, which suggests that the picture and the text are unlikely to be perceived simultaneously. The pictures are not related to the verbal meanings either, in contrast to the content-related illustrations in *El jarro*. For these reasons, graphical decoration in *La feria* is surprisingly independent of the verbal text.

As we said in the last section, Tablada's later poetry collections including *El jarro* and *La feria* show more characteristics of Mexican tradition in comparison to the other two visual collections which are significantly influenced by East Asian culture. As the subtitle of *La feria* 'poemas mexicanos' already tells, this collection involves mostly Mexican topics. Nonetheless, we can still observe the Japanese influence on it, especially in the poems 'Jaikáis de la feria' and 'Jaikáis del circo', which use the form of haiku as the means to express images that could only exist in Latin American context. For example, the haiku 'Microcosmos', one of the four poems

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<sup>84</sup> Mata has made brief introductions to the Mexican plastic art involved in the visual design of Tablada's collections ('La escritura iluminada por la imagen' 'Nota del editor'). We shall not focus on this point as it is less related to the topic of this thesis.

in the series of 'Jaikáis de la feria', consists of three lines containing no verbs but almost only nominal phrases:

Aviadoras abejas arriba;  
Abajo, el hormiguero:  
Cuartel de infantería.

Not only the haiku title but also the body text indicates the classic haiku topic of a metaphorical relation between the natural world and the human world. Moreover, the haiku shows a pair of juxtaposed images: one image 'above' in L1 – the bees personified as pilots, and another image 'beneath' in the last two lines, the anthill that looks like barracks. Although the haiku is presented in traditional typography without any graphical decoration, it successfully presents verbal images with a pictorial language. 'Microcosmos' uses punctuation marks in substitution for a cutting word. It also adopts the technique of juxtaposing verbal images presented by nominal phrases. Both the use of punctuation marks to remind the 'cut' and the fragmented verbless syntax are the outcome of imitating the linguistic features of Japanese haiku, as we have previously found out. However, the military vocabularies in 'Microcosmos' such as 'aviador' and 'infantería', which is never commonly seen in Japanese tradition or haiku of any other languages, are most likely to be a presentation of the author's own experience during the Revolution.<sup>85</sup> Haiku collected in *Dramas mínimos*, the last section of *El jarro*, as well the 'jaikais' in *La feria*, are three-lined poems that are a cross-fertilisation of the concise form of Japanese poetry and themes of Mexican or American modern life.

The use of Oriental literary form to demonstrate Western society in Tablada's poetry is especially evident in the series 'Jaikáis de Brummel', a group of eleven short poems between two lines and four lines first published in *Letras de México* in 1937. According to Seiko Ota, Tablada uses the haiku as an instrument to criticise the Mexicans who introduced French fashion during Porfirio Díaz's (1830 – 1915) rule by satirising the British political figure George Bryan Brummell (1778 – 1840) (155-6). In addition to Ota's remarks, we should say that 'Jaikáis de Brummel' is only borrowing the name of 'haiku' as a designation of short poems but it is complying with haiku's style. These poems hardly conform to the definition of haiku because many are verses not only grammatically complete sentences but also include

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<sup>85</sup> In fact, Tablada's monograph *Hiroshigué* was created in the turbulent period of Mexican Revolution (1910 -1920). In his diaries Tablada confessed that he returned to Coyoacán, where he owned a Japanese style garden, to escape from the war in pursuit of peacefulness from Japanese art: 'Cansado del bombardeo, me voy a viajar con el pintor Hiroshigué por el Tokiado' (qtd. Gutiérrez Silva 306). For more information about Tablada's life during the Revolution, please see *Las veras y las burlas de José Juan Tablada* by Rubén Lozano Herrera and 'Escenarios japoneses José Juan Tablada y la modernización transpacífica' by Laura Torres-Rodríguez.

excessive functional words and even interjections and exclamation marks. They directly contradict the principle of precision and greatly diminish the effect of the silent moment in the 'cut' of haiku. In terms of visuality, the series 'Jaikáis de Brumel' involves even less visual element since it is published without illustrations and is hardly reliant on verbal images.

In the above examples of haiku in *El jarro* and *La feria*, the East Asian related poems are about Mexican or American themes in the form (or in the name) of haiku, using the laconic characteristic and its reference to the Orient to achieve a novel expressive effect. These creations at the last stage of Tablada's poetic career make an interesting contrast to his early translations of Japanese *waka*. The 'cantos' and 'uta's in *El florilegio* in 1904, are compositions full of East Asian imageries, such as 'tear-wet sleeves' ('la manga de mi vestido / que el llanto llegó á[sic] emparar') and 'autumnal dew' ('los rocíos de Otoño') (Kristeva 161, Tablada *El florilegio* 138, 140). Written in the form of *modernista* poetry with alternate rhyme, these translations of Japanese poetry do not faithfully represent the unrhymed original Japanese poems corresponding to each stanza. In comparison to the post-1920 haiku, in which the Oriental haiku form serves as the presentation of Western themes, 'Cantos' and 'Utas' appreciate the content of Japanese poetry more than the Oriental poetic style.

With these cases, we can observe that the evolution of Tablada's poetry regarding East Asian literary tradition has experienced the following process. In the first stage, in *El florilegio* and 'El poema de Okusai', Tablada's poetry written in the Western style showed specific interest in East Asian themes. In the second stage, the presentation of visual language and graphical form entangled with the Sino-Japanese elements in both form and content in *Un día* and *Li-Po*. Eventually, in the scarcely visual post-1920 haiku compositions, Tablada's poetry in haiku form is mostly related to Western themes. The poetry collections which involve the most radical visual experiments, *Li-Po* and *Un día*, are also the collections that are most deeply immersed in East Asian culture.

Tablada may not be the first poet to write haiku in the Spanish language, but he is the true introducer of the haiku form to the Latin American literary circle. In the 1920s, many Hispanic poets began writing poems in the Japanese genre, including Rafael Lozano and Carlos Gutiérrez Cruz, who were mentioned in the prologue of *El jarro*. Previous scholars have done works about Tablada-inspired haiku poets in the Hispanic world, such as the last chapter of Ota's *José Juan Tablada: su haiku y su japonismo*, Landeira's essay 'Remapping Genre: Spanish Jaiku of the Early Twentieth Century' and De Kravzov's article 'El *haikai* mexicano'. Therefore, we shall not develop further on this extensive topic. However, we need to point out

that among all the Spanish language haiku, or perhaps all the non-Japanese haiku, Tablada's compositions in *Un día* and *El jarro*, especially in the former, are exceptional for their high visuality and the remarkable harmony between the graphical designs and the lyrical text.<sup>86</sup>

In this chapter, we have studied the visual techniques that Tablada employed in his haiku collections. Tablada's haiku poems, especially those in *Un día*, are visual writings in terms of both verbal text and visual design. On the visual level, these visual haiku use illustration to complement and emphasise the meaning of the poetic text. On the verbal level, they use nominal phrases to create verbal images and generate vividness. East Asian culture was a significant inspiration for the development of Tablada's visual haiku. Inspired by the syntactic structure of Sino-Japanese languages, Tablada's haiku deploy an imagistic language by the juxtaposition of nominal phrases. The collage of verbal images in his haiku poetry demonstrates a considerable similarity to the East Asian poetic tradition. To make the 'poetry of nouns' compatible with the alphabetic language, Tablada's haiku incorporate the use of both textual and graphical devices, including punctuation marks and illustrations. In the graphical designs of *Un día*, Tablada in effect practised the poet-painter tradition in East Asia and turned his illustrated poems into *haiga*. In conclusion, Tablada's visual haiku collections are prominent examples of Western poets' performance of East Asian visual writing and poetry-painting hybrid art.

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<sup>86</sup> Many poems in *Li-Po* also demonstrate the linguistic features of haiku. Since the last chapter of Pascucci's thesis engages with the haiku elements in Tablada's visual collection *Li-Po*, we did not take *Li-Po* as the example of visual haiku, except for 'A un Lémur', which we have already talked about in 3.4.1.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis investigated the two key themes and perspectives in José Juan Tablada's writings, the influence of East Asian culture and the visual presentation employed in the poetry. Through the discussion of the chronological development of Tablada's poetry collections, we have found that the two themes are intertwined in Tablada's poetry. Intermediality of the East Asian literary and visual references inspired Tablada to create pictorial and visual writings and led to the 'visual turn' in his poetic career.

In this project, we have thus seen the chronological evolution of East Asian culture's influence on Tablada's poetry related to visual art. In terms of the East Asia-Europe-Hispanic America intercultural transposition, Tablada's knowledge of Japanese and Chinese literature was determined by reading French and English translations at the beginning of his career, when *decadentismo* and orientalism dominated his poetic style. From the essay collection *Hiroshigué* onwards, Tablada's writings started to present the East Asian visual art objects and the literary text presented by the art, with less – although still considerable – dependence on the European translation. From the collection *Al sol* to *Un día* and *Li-Po*, the presence of East Asian culture keeps increasing, until his final poetic monograph *La feria*, which returns to focus on Mexican topics, applying the form of haiku. On the other hand, in terms of the visual presentation in Tablada's poetry, in his earlier works, the poet composed ekphrastic pictorial writings. His poems involving visual art present text-based pictorial images through verbal language. From the collection *Al sol* onwards, the poet started his experiment of visual writing. In pursuit of 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity' in poetry, he undertook the visual display to convey meanings. Influenced by the East Asian painter-poet tradition, Tablada brought the illustrations into *Un día* to decorate the graphical presentations and to enhance the poetic expression of the *haiga* collection. Inspired by the ideograms, the visual-verbal signifiers used in Sino-Japanese writing systems, the poet formed ideographic patterns with letters to create visual effects in the collection *Li-Po*. In his composition of visual poetry, Tablada applied techniques from Japanese *ehon*, seals and haiku, which distinguishes him from other poets who were inspired by East Asian culture, such as Guillaume Apollinaire, Efrén Rebolledo, and Ezra Pound.

This thesis began with a review of Tablada's initial interest in East Asian culture and visual art. We first investigated Tablada's collaboration with the Mexican literary magazine *Revista Moderna*, which was an important foundation for Tablada's exploration into both visual art and East Asian culture. The journal funded Tablada's six-month trip to Japan, where he wrote the

column 'En el país del sol' about his life experience in Japan. During his partnership with the journal, Tablada created many original compositions as well as translations of foreign literature with several pieces from Japanese. A substantial portion of these works was published alongside pictures by other artists. The collaboration offered the opportunity for Tablada to establish friendships with other Mexican artists, who later resumed the collaboration in other publications including *Al sol* and *La feria*. Taking the initial edition of 'Sonetos de la hiedra' published in *Revista Moderna* as an early case of the text-image interaction before the poet's 'visual turn', we have witnessed how the illustration penetrates into the space of the printed body text and modifies the textual expressiveness of the poem. We also noticed that Tablada was accustomed to creating verbal text and visual pictures approximately at the same time at the beginning of his literary career. After an examination of the illustrations that the poet composed for *Revista Moderna*, we recognised that Tablada grew the interest in Japanese scripts and seals and began his imitation of the East Asian calligraphic art much earlier than the publication of *Li-Po* and *Un día*.

Then we compared the two editions of Tablada's first poetry collection *El florilegio*. Unlike Tablada's later collections, the first edition of *El florilegio* involves relatively little reference to East Asian culture. In the 1899 edition of *El florilegio*, the few poems related to Japan and China were grouped in the section *Poemas Exóticos* along with poems of European or Arabian topics. This indicates that at that moment East Asia was nothing more than a symbol of mystery and exoticism. With a close reading of 'Soneto de Watteau', a transmedial poem that depicts a text-based painting, we applied Liliane Louvel's typography and established the 'text-image-text' scheme to analyse Tablada's pictorial writings. From the 1898 edition of *El florilegio*, we noticed that the exoticism mingled with the use of other art techniques since the beginning of Tablada's poetic composition. In the 1904 edition of *El florilegio*, the content related to Japan increased significantly. *Musa Japónica*, a section especially devoted to East Asia, gained its independence from 'Poemas Exóticos', suggesting that the East Asian theme has since been separated from the general exoticism in Tablada's poetry. The close reading into three poems, 'Japón', 'Noche de opio' and 'Crisantemo' reveals that at this period, although the writer had already travelled to Japan and showed knowledge about its culture in his poetry, his impression about Japan and China was still primarily shaped by the orientalist translations and literature. In Tablada's translations of *waka* included in this edition of *El florilegio*, fidelity yields to the coherent *decadentista* aesthetics of the collection, which demonstrates that before the 'visual turn', East Asian content in Tablada's poetry remained masked by Western literary styles.

Next, we focused on pictorial writings involving East Asian culture. In the discussion of the case 'El poema de Okusai', we examined the transpictorial trajectory from the textual reference to the graphical primary presentation, applying the 'referent – primary presentation – secondary presentation' scheme based on Louvel and Murray's theory of ekphrasis. 'Okusai' involves two exemplary types of text-based prints that had been the inspiration for the poem: prints from *Hokusai Sketches* based on Japanese *kaidan*, which are graphical presentations of narratives; and seals of Hokusai's signatures for his various Art Names, which are calligraphic presentations of linguistic text. Tablada's secondary poetic presentation goes beyond merely depicting the Japanese visual primary presentation. It also retells the verbal text that the print or seal referred to. The ekphrastic verses in 'Okusai' not only describe the images of Japanese supernatural creatures which appeared in *Hokusai Sketches* but also provide background stories for the creatures that the prints do not directly show. Likewise, the poem refers to the semiotic meaning of Hokusai's Art Names, suggesting that the poet was aware of the referential Japanese text and its link to the graphical prints. While the graphical primary presentation – Hokusai's prints – constituted an intermedial channel for the Mexican poet to learn about the original Japanese source text, the English translation to the *kaidan* and French introduction to the Japanese print-maker provided an alternative channel and supplementary information for Tablada as well. In this case, intercultural communication stimulated transmedial creation.

Until 'Okusai', Tablada's poetry related to graphical art was mainly pictorial text which used verbal language to present paintings and prints. Most of these pictorial poems have experienced an intermedial transposition from text to image and back to text. After that, Tablada undertook the experiments of creating visual writing between the composition of *Hiroshigué* and the publication of *Al sol*, probably during the period that he lived together with the Mexican artist Palomar who created the *kalogramas* in cooperation with Tablada. *Al sol* contains several primitive visual poems that use unorthodox typographical arrangements to add flavour to the reading experience. In visual writing such as 'Luna', the visual design and the typographical arrangement of the text enhance or alter the verbal expression.

What made the 'visual turn' took place in Tablada's career? First, we managed to rule out several hypotheses. After the discussion about Tablada's 'The New Year's Card' and critical essays in *Hiroshigué*, we found an interesting fact that Tablada was oblivious to the existence of poetry in plastic art. Since incorporating verbal text in graphical art is popular in East Asia and Tablada possessed an extensive collection of East Asian art works, Tablada should have become familiar with the poetic inscriptions in Sino-Japanese graphical arts. However, his

essays demonstrate limited acknowledgement about the verbal-visual interrelationship in Japanese prints, probably because his elementary ability to read Chinese characters have restricted his reading of East Asian poetry in their source language. Therefore, we argued that visual-verbal puns in Tablada's visual poetry are not a deliberate imitation but rather a coincidental or subliminal parallel to the Japanese *surimono*.

Afterwards, we also examined Tablada's own words about the three sources of inspiration for his visual compositions in the letter to the fellow poet Ramón López Velarde: visual epigrams from the *Greek Anthology*, the visual poem 'Les Fourmis' by Jules Renard, and the 'song in the Confucius temple' ('La nueva lírica de Tablada', n.p.). Western visual poetic tradition including the *technopaignia* in the *Greek Anthology* had a profound influence on Tablada's early ideographic poems such as 'El puñal' and 'Talon rouge'. The French 'lyrical ideograms', with Guillaume Apollinaire's *calligrammes* published in magazines between 1913 and 1914 as the most outstanding example, prompted Tablada's visual turn to take place between 1914 and 1918. Although Western text-image hybrid art directly provoked the 'visual turn' in Tablada's poetry, we discovered that the underlying influences of East Asian mixed art were fundamental. Through the discussion of Tablada's remarks about 'ideograms', we concluded that it is the 'calligraphic character that embellishes the idea' which 'simultaneously appeals to the eye and the ear' in the 'hymn of the Confucius temple' that formed the most significant incentive for Tablada's visual writing ('La nueva lírica de Tablada', n.p.). The unique understanding and application of the ideographic characteristics, in turn, made him stand out from other Western poets who composed visual writing, such as Apollinaire and Vicente Huidobro. Therefore, we have proposed that the key inspiration to visual writing is most likely to be the ideograms and seals – in other words, calligraphic art related to the Sino-Japanese ideographic writing systems.

Although Tablada's interest in seals is rarely mentioned in previous academic research, this thesis has found it pivotal in Tablada's 'visual turn'. His remarks on the 'seal of fortune and longevity' in *Hiroshigué* indicate that he perceived the seal essentially as a graphical image rather than a word. Meanwhile, his comments on *kalograma*, the seal consisting of initials, demonstrate that he was aware of seals' function of presenting words and designating names. In other words, Tablada's critical writing implies that he regarded the seal as a variation of ideogram, a graphical image that symbolises the idea. Further to that, Tablada referred to his visual compositions as 'ideografía', which should ideally achieve a 'simultaneously lyrical and graphical' expressivity yet still preserving the 'ideophonic' characteristics. Unlike the ideographic writing systems such as Chinese and Japanese which use Chinese characters,

the Spanish writing system is an alphabetic language that relies fundamentally on phonic features. In order to reach the aim of 'lyrical and graphical simultaneity' and to find a balancing point between the visual appeal and the aural appeal of poetry written in Spanish, Tablada chose to add interactive graphical illustrations to the poetic texts, as seen in *Un día*, or present visual images with alphabets, as seen in *Li-Po*.

In the third chapter, we discussed the efforts Tablada had made to achieve this desired 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity', especially in a transcultural text. In the case of the visual poem 'Li-Po', we have seen Tablada's visual experiments in the presentation of a Chinese poetic source text with the alphabetic language. In terms of verbal text, the poem constructed the character of Li-Po, an unorthodox genius given to drunkenness and a metonymic representation of East Asian poets. Li-Po has become a figure recreated from a Western perspective probably because Tablada did not know Li Bai's poetry by its original Chinese text but through the medium of translations, in which the translators chose to adopt the domestication strategy. In addition, the English version he referred to went through a translation process involving two languages – from Chinese to French to English. With Tablada's adaptation, selection, and reorganisation, the text is finally presented in Spanish in 'Li-Po'. The multiple steps of translation from the source language to the target language inevitably resulted in a severe loss of information, especially when the final target text attempted to create visual images with the words. Nonetheless, the final Spanish translation unintendedly echoes with the meaning of the original Chinese text that was lost during the translation thanks to the visual presentation. In the case of stanza 17 of 'Li-Po', the ascendance in numbers from 'solo' to 'dos' and 'tres' contrasts with the descending typographical arrangement of the word blocks. Such typographical display unintentionally conforms with the action of looking upward and downward in the original Chinese poem, which was lost in the English translation that Tablada referred to. Similarly, the shape of a crescent and the sun of the text for stanzas 23 and 24 coincides with the Chinese character 明, which enriches the interpretation of readers who are familiar with the source language and the source poem. The visual display of the text also refers to the original Chinese source text as a secondary presentation of Tablada's Spanish textual adaptation. From this perspective, by applying an intermedial approach and paying attention to the visual design of the text, 'Li-Po' gives an unexpected yet unique solution to retrieve the lost information in the transcultural adaptation of the text.

Stanza 9 of 'Li-Po' presented in the frame of the Chinese character is possibly the most original and exceptional piece of work among Tablada's visual poems. This thesis agrees with Atsuko

Tanabe's explanation of the question of why the author chose the character 寿 in particular: Tablada perceived and employed the character first and foremost as a graphical image. Nevertheless, unlike Tanabe who evaluated the visual expressiveness from the standard of calligraphy, we believe that the use of the Chinese character was designed as a symbol of foreignness. This symbolic character not only gives the viewers an impression of the language used by the character Li-Po but also reminds the readers of the ideographic nature of the oriental writing system. The signified of the character is not essential because the poem only needs its symbolic existence as a typical ideogram and 寿 was the character that Tablada had in hand. The use of the Chinese character has thus become a visual method to assist the accomplishment of the 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity'.

On the other hand, although Tablada's poetry was not intended to have a broad readership that read Chinese characters, with the expansion of its readership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, multilingual readers might have more options to interpret the stanza framed in 寿. A reader who recognises the character might immediately associate the shape of the stanza with 'longevity' before closely reading the Spanish verses. The bold adoption of a word from another language interrupts the conventional linear mode of reading a poem in alphabetic language and alters the interpretation of the visual poem. Meanwhile, the divergence between the signified of the framing Chinese character and the framed Spanish verses could unsettle the delicate vocal-graphical balance.

'Día nublado' is another case that Tablada played with the order of perception. The reversed letters in the poem force the readers to decode and transcribe it into regular typography before they were able to carry on reading the text. The readers/viewers first pay attention to the global information of the visual poem, 'seeing' it as a picture, and then look at the local details and 'read' each of the transcribed letters. The unorthodox typography of the poem requires its readers to change their normal order of perception and to contemplate the intermedial relationship between the textual content and the visual form. In the case of 'A un Lémur', the monosyllabic presentation challenges the conventional word boundary and changes the final syllable of each line, making it possible to create a 'conceptual rhyme' realised on the visual level. The reading experience of 'A un Lémur' indicates that the visual presentation of the verbal text could also decide the phonetic features of a poem. Moreover, 'A un Lémur' demonstrates a strong connection with Japanese verbal art. The humorous yet concise sentences in 'A un Lémur' imply an intertextual relation with Japanese haiku tradition; meanwhile, the vertical presentation of syllables suggests that the poet was possibly inspired by the Japanese writing system.

On the one hand, the difference between Sino-Japanese writing systems (which employ ideographic characters) and the Spanish language (which uses alphabetic writing systems) inspired Tablada's seek of 'lyrical-graphical simultaneity' in visual poetry. The different syntax of East Asian languages, on the other hand, shaped Tablada's poetic language in his haiku composition. Imitating the syntactical structure of Japanese haiku, the 'poetry of nouns', Tablada's haiku in *Un día* and *El jarro* create vivid imageries of nature by avoiding verbs and juxtaposing nominal phrases. His visual haiku in *Un día* are characterised by the collage of verbal images. Each verbal image is a depiction of a detail of the larger panorama and a scene in the handscroll painting, as if the 'bird-eye view' technique of Chinese landscape painting were applied.

To accommodate the Japanese literary genre into the Spanish language, Tablada had to compromise on certain essential features of the haiku and realise them in alternative ways. Among these, we observed two aspects in Tablada's haiku: the use of punctuation marks as a substitute for the 'cutting word' in Japanese and the naming method of the haiku titles. The case of '...?...?' in *El jarro* offered an example where the punctuation marks in the title echo the verbal image presented in the body text. In '...?...?', both the title and the body text, the graphical design and the lyrical verses refer to the same referent. Tautological to the textual content, the linguistic-graphical signs in the title make the visual haiku a miniature *technopaignia* that can show and name simultaneously. In 'El chirimoyo', we encountered the situation where the title and the illustration refer to two different objects: cherimoya tree in the title and parrots in the illustration. The inconsistency between the title and the illustration suggests that there is not a univocal interpretation and invites readers to question which was the initial referent. In the meantime, the *yin-yang* shaped pair of parrots in the illustration implies the answer, that the referent is interchangeable.

Tablada's haiku compositions use pictorial language to create verbal images, a style that was influenced by East Asian linguistics and poetics. The East Asian painter-poet tradition potentially inspired the visual display of the *Un día*'s paratext, the material surrounding the body text, such as the illustrations and the display of the pages. The layout of *Un día* with Tablada's illustrations and seals resembles the traditional layout of the Japanese haiku written on a decorated letter page. It is also similar to the illustrated French translations of *waka*, such as *Poèmes de la libellule*, which Tablada referred to for his *waka* adaptations in *El florilegio*. This fact again indicates that the European intermediate translations are crucial for Tablada's East Asian knowledge in regard of both literary text and visual arrangement.

In his last poetry collection *La feria* as well as other uncollected poems composed in the later years, Tablada returned to the Mexican theme, with little reference to East Asian culture except for borrowing the name of haiku to compose some three-lined brief poems. In the meantime, the usage of graphical elements in the later stage of his poetic career significantly decreased. From *El jarro* onwards, Tablada's poetic creations hardly contained any graphical design except for a few illustrations to decorate the book that scarcely interplay with the text.

In the chronological development of Tablada's poetic career, we can observe the visible correlation between the influence of East Asian culture and the development of poetic writing related to visual presentation. In the *modernista* stage when Tablada wrote about East Asian themes in Western format, he created pictorial poetry in *El florilegio* and 'El poema de Okusai', using verbal language to depict text-based paintings. With the 'visual turn', Tablada managed to give poetic texts graphical shapes to accomplish visual-verbal harmony. Thereafter, both intermediality and interculturality reached the peak in Tablada's poetic creation. Works in this stage such as *Un día* and *Li-Po* show an impressive level of visibility and originality as well as a strong relevance to East Asian literary and linguistic traditions. After *El jarro*, the preference towards either East Asian topics or plastic art declined. The evolution of intermediality is in synchrony with the degree of interculturality in Tablada's poetry.

This research into the crossing point of interculturality and intermediality could be valuable for other investigations into visual writing. Due to the different fields that the research involved, the thesis has referred to various theories of literary criticism and linguistics in building the scheme of presentation. It has also adopted approaches and conclusions from cognitive science as well as some secondary literature in the interdisciplinary area between neuroscience and literature. In the analysis of readers' perception of visual poetry, as well as the reader's attention when reading haiku, the cognitive research into eye-movement helped to reveal a general pattern of the reader's response to certain texts. Future critical studies of literary texts or visual writing might find scientific tools such as eye-movement tracking helpful in showing different interpretations among different readerships. Since the research area of this research is restrained to the poetry of José Juan Tablada, it did not reach the intriguing parallel between Tablada's poetry and the poetry of his contemporary English writer Ezra Pound, which was also characterised by the juxtaposition of verbal images influenced by East Asian culture. By bringing the intermedial approach to the studies of interculturality, this thesis hopes to shed light on future studies into visual writings in the modern alphabetic language, such as the visual poetry of Vicente Huidobro and Ezra Pound. We believe that the theories of

intermediality would be especially constructive in studying visual writing with underlying influence from East Asian culture.

Most previous literature either investigated Tablada's poetry from the perspective of Mexican *Modernismo* or examined his visual poetry in *Li-Po* as part of global modern visual poetry. Some scholars such as Araceli Tinajero, Atsuko Tanabe and Seiko Ota studied the generation and development of Tablada's orientalism and haiku. Rodolfo Mata's digital project 'Letra e imagen', which provided elementary yet valuable context and documents for the current thesis, brought about the question of image-text relationship in Tablada's visual writing: 'Does the plastic image exist first or the verbal text? How does one medium of composition influence the other?' Although Mata's work briefly mentioned the potential influence of Japanese art forms that combine poetry and painting, such as *haiga* and *surimono*, it did not elaborate on this subject in detail. Michele Pascucci's thesis *Entre México y Asia*, which focuses on the visual collection *Li-Po*, explored three categories of Sino-Japanese influences on Tablada's visual writing, 'la pintura, la caligrafía ideográfica y la poesía haiku' (545). Her investigations put the emphasis on Tablada's visual writing, with less attention on the chronological development from pictorial writing to visual writing in Tablada's poetry. Therefore, endeavoured to conduct a critical analysis regarding the confluence of intermediality and interculturality in Tablada's poetry, the current project answered Mata's questions and examined the visual evolution in Tablada's poetic career.

This thesis has answered the key research question 'how did the East Asian culture influence Tablada's poetry'. It has investigated the knowledge sources that Tablada referred to regarding Japan and China: French and English translations of Sino-Japanese literature provided him with adequate information about East Asia; his collection of plastic art such as *ukiyo-e* and *ehon* gave him the visual materials to learn the transmedial tradition in Sino-Japanese context. The second and third chapter of this thesis have proven that *ehon* and seals were important in the formation of Tablada's visual writing. *Ehon* inspired the illustrations in *Un día*, and seals led to the creation of *kalograma* and the use of the Chinese character in 'Li-Po'. In comparison, the poet did not have the intention to imitate *surimono* due to the lack of recognition of its visual-verbal pun. One of the most original findings of this research is that the ideographic Chinese characters as visual-verbal signifiers inspired Tablada to pursue 'graphical-lyrical simultaneity' and prompted his experiment of visual poetry. Aside from the ideograms, the painter-poet tradition in East Asia could also have a subliminal effect on Tablada, arousing his attention to the word-image interaction as well as the participation in the graphical design of the paratext. This thesis finds that the causation between the influence of East Asian culture

and the composition of visual writing is reciprocal in José Juan Tablada's poetry by establishing a link between Tablada's two identities, the identity of *japoniste* – enthusiast and expert in Sino-Japanese literature, major *ukiyo-e* collector in Mexico, introducer of haiku genre into Latin American literature – and the identity of 'visual poet' – pioneer to compose visual writing in Spanish and to challenge the boundary between image and the text.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1. Glossary

#### Calligraphy

Calligraphy is an important form of visual-verbal hybrid art in East Asia. Dependent on Chinese characters, calligraphic works are traditionally presented in the form of the manuscript of poetry or correspondences. Calligraphy in Chinese is written as ‘書法’, which literally means ‘the law of writing’. In Japanese it is written as ‘書道’ (*shodō*), literally meaning ‘the principle of writing’. The performance of calligraphy is related both to its textual content and to the graphical expression, and is usually considered an art form between literature and visual art.

Although calligraphy is most commonly practised with brush, ink, and paper, a calligraphic work can be preserved by carving the characters onto wood or stone.

#### Chinese characters

Chinese characters are logograms primarily used in the writing of Chinese and Japanese languages. They are also used in Korean, Vietnamese and some other Asian languages sometimes.

In Chinese, they are written as ‘漢字’ in traditional Chinese, and ‘汉字’ in simplified Chinese, literally meaning ‘Han characters’. This thesis will use traditional Chinese writing when citing them in Chinese. In Japanese, they are written as ‘漢字’, or *kanji* in the Romanised script.

In this thesis, ‘Chinese character’ refers both to the characters in the Chinese language and in the Japanese language.

#### *Decadentismo*

Decadentism was an artistic and literary movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Started in France, it spread to Europe, influencing the English and German-speaking world as well. The Decadent Movement can be traced back to the writings of Théophile Gautier and Edgar Allan Poe in the 1830s, but it only became a significant presence after the publication of Charles Baudelaire’s influential collection of poems, *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857). The movement arrived at its prime in the *fin-de-siècle* atmosphere between the 1880s and 1890s.

In Latin America, there was hardly a ‘Decadentism’ on large scale. According to Clark and Defossé, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term *Modernismo* and *Decadentismo* were almost synonyms (16). Despite the fact that *Decadentismo* was the alternative name or *Modernismo* before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, José Juan Tablada, along with some other Hispanic writers, insisted on calling their literary movement *decadentismo*. (Clark and Defossé 58).

Tablada himself later gave up the nomination of ‘Decadentismo’, declaring his acceptance of the vocable ‘Modernismo’ in an article published on *El Nacional* on January 16, 1898, entitled ‘Los modernistas mexicanos y monsieur Prudhomme’: ‘Desde que se nos ha llamado decadents se ha cometido el más vulgar de los errores’. Nonetheless, on another occasion, Tablada expressed his different opinion of the affirmation ‘los modernistas mexicanos somos todos decadentes’ despite that he never clarified the differences between the two (Feria 481).

This thesis will adopt both the term *Decadentismo* and *Modernismo*, since their aims are slightly different from the opinion of Tablada. *Decadentismo* refers to the style with French

Decadent influence, whereas *Modernismo* refers to the literary movement about formal experiments.

### **Haiku**

Haiku is a form of concise poetry that originated in Japanese. Traditional Japanese haiku consists of three lines in a 5-7-5 syllabic pattern. It also includes a *kireji* (切れ字, 'cutting word') and a *kigo* (季語, 'season word'). Modern haiku in other languages can be more flexible regarding the phonetic pattern. Both the single form and plural form of the word is 'haiku'.

### **Hiragana**

*Hiragana* (平仮名 or ひらがな, literally meaning 'ordinary *kana*') are a form of the Japanese syllabary. Derived from the cursive writing of Chinese characters, *hiragana* are used to write inflectional endings and words with grammatical meanings (Matthews 'Japanese.'). They are also used as a reading aid to show the pronunciation of *kanji*.

### **Kana**

Japanese scripts consist of a mixture of Chinese characters (*kanji*) and two forms of syllabary (*kana*). *Kana* is a phonetic system that can be written in either *hiragana* form or *katakana* form. Each kana represents a syllable.

### **Kanji**

*Kanji* (漢字 literally meaning 'Chinese characters') are the adopted Chinese characters used in the Japanese language. The orthography of *kanji* in Japanese can be different from the Chinese characters in Chinese. In Japanese, *kanji* are used mainly for lexical words. (Matthews "Japanese.")

Compared to the ideographic nature of Chinese characters in both Chinese and Japanese, the characters' orthography is less essential for our investigation. Therefore, we mainly use the word 'Chinese character' or 'Sino-Japanese character' in this thesis.

### **Katakana**

*Katakana* (片仮名 or カタカナ, literally meaning 'fragmented kana') are a form of syllabary used in the Japanese language. *Katakana* are usually used for Western names and loan words from alphabetic languages. (Matthews 'Japanese')

### **Kyōka**

*Kyōka* (狂歌 'mad poem') is a genre of parodic *tanka*, popular during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

### **Modernismo**

Modernismo is a movement in Spanish-language poetry between the 1880s and the 1920s inaugurated by the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío. Influenced by the French Parnassian and Symbolist Movements, the *modernista* poets 'were dedicated to formal experiment, rhythmic flexibility, and ideals of artistic purity' (Baldick 'modernismo').

Modernismo is different from Modernism, which refers to a range of literary trends mainly in English in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Ukiyo-e**

*Ukiyo-e* (‘浮世絵’, literally meaning ‘pictures of the floating world’) is a form of Japanese art that flourished from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Usually presented in the form of woodblock printing, sometimes brush painting, *ukiyo-e* presents scenes from everyday life. Its conventional themes include female beauties, landscapes and travel scenes, scenes from history or folk tales, as well as flora and fauna.

## **Waka**

*Waka*, written as ‘和歌’, literally meaning ‘Japanese song’, is a form of Japanese poetry in classical Japanese literature. Composed in Japanese, it contrasts with *kanshi* (漢詩), poetry composed by Japanese in Chinese. *Waka* originally comes in different forms, including *tanka* (短歌 ‘short poem’) and *chōka* (長歌, ‘long poem’). In the modern period, *waka* usually refers to *tanka*, consisting of five lines in 5-7-5-7-7 meter. Both the single form and the plural form of the word is ‘waka’.

## Appendix 2. Transcription of 'Li-Po' in plain text

Note: The transcription is numbered by myself for the convenience of text analysis. This transcription keeps the capitalisation as in the original version. This transcription also reproduces the line breaks in those stanzas originally presented in printed letters and omits line breaks and spaces in the handwritten stanzas.

Lí-Pó [*sic*], uno de los "Siete Sabios en el vino" (1)

Fué [*sic*] un rutilante brocado de oro.....

como una taza de jade sonoro (2)

su infancia fue de porcelana  
su loca juventud un rumoroso  
bosque de bambús garzas y de misterios

rOstrOs de mujeres en la laguna (3)

ruiseñores encantados por la luna  
en las jaulas de los salterios

luciérnagas alternas (4)

que enmarañaban el camino  
del poeta ebrio de vino  
con el zigzag de sus linternas

Hasta que el poeta (5)

cae como pesado tabor  
y el viento le deshoja  
el pensamiento como una flor

un sapo que deslíe sonoro (6)

de Confucio un parangón  
y un grillo que ríe burlón...

un pájaro que trina (7)

musical y breve  
como una ocarina  
en un almendro florido de nieve

mejor viajar en palanquín (8)

y hacer un poema sin fin  
en la torre de Kaolín de Nankín.....

Guiado por su mano pálida (9)

Es gusano de seda el pincel  
que formaba en el papel  
negra crisálida  
de misterioso jeroglífico  
de donde surgía como una flor  
un pensamiento magnifico  
con alas de oro volador

- sutil y misteriosa llama  
en la lámpara del ideograma
- Los cormoranes de la idea (10)  
en las riberas de la meditación  
de los ríos azules y amarillos  
9quieren con ansia que aletea  
9 pescar de la luna los brillos...  
Pero nada cogen sus picos  
que romper el reflejo del astro  
en azogados añicos de nácar y alabastro  
y Li-Po mira inmóvil como en la laca bruna  
el silencio la perla de la Luna
- La luna es araña (11)  
de plata  
que tiende su telaraña  
en el río que la retrata
- I [*sic*] Li-Po el divino que se bebió a la luna una noche en su copa de vino (12)
- Siente el maleficio (13)  
enigmático  
y se aduerme en el vicio  
del vino lunático
- ¿Dónde está Lí-Pó [*sic*] que lo llaman (14)  
Manda el Emperador desde su Yámen
- Algo ébrio [*sic*] por fin (15)  
entre un femenino tropel,  
llega el Poeta y se inclina;  
una concubina  
le alarga el pincel  
cargado de tinta de China,  
otra una seda fina  
por papel,  
y Li  
escribí así:
- Solo estoy con mi frasco de vino bajo un árbol en flor (16)
- asoma la luna y dice su rayo (17)  
que ya somos DOS  
y mi propia sombra anuncia después  
que ya somos TRES
- aunque el astro (18)  
no puede beber  
su parte de vino  
y mi sombra no  
quiere alejarse

- pues está conmigo
- en esa compañía (19)  
placentera  
reiré de mis dolores  
entretanto que dura  
la Primavera
- mirad a la luna a mis cantos lanza (20)  
sus respuestas en sereno fulgor  
y mirad mi sombra que ligera danza  
en mi derredor  
Si estoy en mi juicio  
de sombra y de luna la amistad es mía
- cuando me emboracho [*sic*] (21)  
se disuelve nuestra compañía
- pero pronto nos justaremos para no repararnos (22)  
ya en el inmenso júbilo del azul firmamento más allá
- creyendo que el reflejo de la luna era (23)  
una taza de blanco jade y áureo vino  
por cogerla y beberla una noche  
boyando por el río se ahogó Li-Po
- y hace mil cien años el incienso sube (24)  
encumbrando al cielo perfumada nube...  
y hace mil cien años la China resuena  
doble funeral llorando esa pena  
en el gongo de cristal de la luna llena!

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