

Spring 2022

Not or but And: Tusán Identity in 1920s Chinese-Peruvian Poetry

Zachary Young
Bard College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2022



Part of the [Chinese Studies Commons](#), and the [Latin American Literature Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

Recommended Citation

Young, Zachary, "Not or but And: Tusán Identity in 1920s Chinese-Peruvian Poetry" (2022). *Senior Projects Spring 2022*. 195.

https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2022/195

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Projects Spring 2022 by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@bard.edu.

Not *Or* but *And*:
Tusán Identity in 1920s Chinese-Peruvian Poetry

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature
of Bard College

by
Zachary Young

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2022

Dedication:

To Maddie. I love you always.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to:

Nicole Caso for taking me on as your advisee and supporting me for the last 4 ½ years. It has been an honor and a pleasure to learn from you in your classes, in our meetings, and beyond. Your council has been invaluable and without your help I would not have made it this far.

Kou Laoshi, for your patience, your insights and your encouragement. You helped me begin to learn Chinese and are helping me finish my Senior Project, two endeavors that at one point seemed impossible.

John Burns for serving on my board and inspiring me to think in new ways.

Ignacio López-Calvo for serving on my midway board and for sharing your wisdom. Your depth of knowledge in this field is singular and your feedback has been essential.

Diana Contreras for help with translation questions, Wakako Suzuki & Nate Shockey for organizing the Asian Studies Senior Project Workshop, Malia Du Mont for your mentorship, and Nilo Velarde Chong and John Winzenburg, for graciously sharing your time, energy and resources with me

My professors over the last few years: Ying Laoshi, Denise Minin, Lena Retamoso Urbano, Pete L'Official and Ama Josephine B. Johnstone, to name a few. Your classes and your conversations have changed me for the better over and over.

And last but certainly not least, my family. Mom, Ema, Reed, Sarah, Leah, and too many more to list, I love you all more than you could possibly know. Through everything you've stuck by my side, so thank you.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Historical and Theoretical Context.....	7
Chapter 2: Liminality and Translation in the A. Kuan Veng's <i>Mey Shut: Poemas en Prosa</i>	24
Chapter 3: <i>Peruanidad</i> , Chineseness and Hybridity in Pedro S. Zulen's <i>The Uncertain Elm</i>	38
Conclusion.....	53
Appendix.....	57
Bibliography.....	75

“Keep them, burn them – they are evidence of me”

-Matthew Pearce, nineteenth century surveyor and amateur geologist, referring to his notebooks, in Graham Swift’s *Ever after*, Picador, London, 1992, p52.

“Mi profe de economía: pues hablas perfecto castellano sin acento y todo

Yo: (hablando con acento chino) si plefieles te hablo así

En fin”

Published on Twitter on September 9, 2021 at 5:38 PM by @gatoprochina

Translation:

“My economics professor: I mean you speak Spanish perfectly, you don’t even have an accent

Me: [speaking with a stereotypical Chinese accent]) if you prefer I can talk like this

Anyway”

Published on Twitter on September 9, 2021 at 5:38 PM by @gatoprochina

Introduction

Finding primary sources that discuss the experience of Chinese and Chinese-descended people living in the Hispanophone world is a labor-intensive process. Looking in English leads to a handful of *secondary* scholarly sources, primarily written in the United States and Europe, along with some works in translation. The English language sources are useful in piecing together historical and social context and interesting to read, but they cannot provide the same kind of insights that self-generated cultural production can. Looking in Chinese on the other hand has its own set of challenges. There are methodological questions: Should I look on Google or on Baidu¹? There are sources written in Chinese, but just like in English or Spanish they reflect the ideological slant of their author, with many of these Chinese-language pieces emphasizing the Chinese-Peruvian success story in spite of rampant Sinophobia. Can I use simplified characters or do I have to use traditional ones? Simplified characters are overwhelmingly used in Mainland China, and what I study, but traditional characters are what is used in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and many overseas Chinese communities. Looking in Spanish, however, led me to the kinds of materials I'd been searching for like the tweet transcribed above.

Given that the Chinese diaspora in Latin America has often been absent in the United States' cultural consciousness, self-representation in a project like this one seems paramount. The aforementioned tweet was written by a self-described Chinese person raised in Spain (*Chino criado en España*) per their Twitter bio which also says, "I am Chinese and I love my motherland" (我是中国人而我爱我祖国). I want to quickly note that this person was raised in

¹ Baidu is a search engine commonly used Mainland China

Spain, not in Latin America, but I think that the shared and disparate experiences of “overseas Chinese” (华侨) in the “first-world” context of Spain versus the “third-world” context of Latin America bears examination as well. The tweet alludes to a common occurrence in which phonetic nuances are lost, for example when a native Chinese speaker is speaking Spanish, there are certain sounds blend together in similar ways (“r” and “l” like in the tweet) frequently enough that stereotypes develop and become associated with a certain phenotype.

Scholarship about Chinese diaspora communities in Hispanic communities has only in the last few decades gained traction in academia with work by scholars like Evelyn Hu-Dehart, Kathleen López, Ignacio López-Calvo, and Eugenio Chang-Rodríguez. There are also several scholars engaging in innovative research in this field and adjacent ones like Kyle Shernuk, Long Le-Khac, and Maria Montt Strabucchi. My path toward this topic can be traced to the coursework I have completed in diaspora studies, Latin American literature, linguistic anthropology, and postcolonial studies. The issue that propels this project though, is language. Having studied Spanish and Mandarin intensively in my time at Bard, my fascination with language is at the heart of my research.

The first time I encountered the idea that there was any kind of relationship between China and Latin America was at a talk being given about Chinese foreign policy in Latin America that was forwarded to me by a professor who knew I was studying both Spanish and Chinese. I went to the talk and was fascinated by the notion that these two academic interests could intersect. I am not a Global and International Studies major though, and I knew that my point of entry would not be in the realm of politics and economics, it would be through language and literature. I knew that Latin America as a whole was too broad of a topic, and in my

browsing on the Internet, I stumbled upon the term “*tusán*”, and I had an epiphany. All of a sudden, this nebulous indescribable community that existed had a name, and because *tusán* originated and is primarily used in Peru, that became my area of concentration. As with the rest of this project, language led the way.

Once I had direction, a deeper dive began which led me to the website of the organization *Tusanaje*². According to their website, the term “*tusanaje*”, “Is a combination of the terms *tusán*, *mestizaje* (intermixing), and *linaje* (lineage)”. On the website you can find articles by *tusán* authors, links to community events, and, most significantly to me, a digital library in which I found copies of both of the texts that I am focusing on.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the impact that COVID-19 has had on my Senior Project. I began conceptualizing this project intending to do archival research, or at the very least visiting the communities in which these works were written and take place, but that was well before travel restrictions went into effect and this kind of international travel became unfeasible. As a result of this reality, I have relied heavily on sources and resources that I have found on the Internet. I have connected via Zoom and email with scholars from Peru, California, and Hong Kong, all of whom have been incredibly encouraging and helpful in this journey. In this way, the constraints of Covid precipitated a series of events that would have been unlikely to take place before the normalization of such interactions in these past few years. A project that might have been at its core ethnographic shifted and evolved to rely on cultural production, rather than testimony as a primary source, although, as this project has shown me, the line between these two is more blurry than I anticipated.

² <http://www.tusanaje.org/>

For this project, I have looked to operas, folk tales, short stories, roundtable discussions, and more as examples of *tusán* cultural production and have been inspired and surprised by the multitude of ways that people engage with this identity, an identity that is both longstanding and nascent. I hope to increase awareness of two texts that have historically received very little attention, but also the ways that these texts connect to broader conversations about identity construction, literary scholarship, and cross-cultural influence.

In Chapter 1, I offer a brief overview of the historical context that foregrounds the arrival and dissemination of the Chinese community in Peru. I provide an overview of the theoretical sources that I engage with, drawing from a broad range of disciplines. I introduce the two works that are the subject of the bulk of my analysis in Chapters 2 and 3. I end the chapter by mentioning some of the thematic threads that connect the works to each other and the broader context in which they are situated.

In Chapter 2, I provide an analysis of the first of these two works, *Mey Shut: Poetry in Prose* (*Mey Shut: Poemas en Prosa* 1924) by Augusto Kuan Veng (關景南, 1900-unknown). I engage in a close reading of several of Kuan Veng's poems and examine his inclusion of Chinese cultural references in the context of Spanish language writing. I explore the ways that *Mey Shut* relates to Néstor García Canclini's notion of hybridity, especially as it relates to Kuan Veng's dual identity as both Chinese and Peruvian.

In Chapter 3, I discuss a series of works appearing in *The Uncertain Elm of The Snow* (*El Olmo Incierto de la Nevada* 1930) by Pedro S. Zulen (1889-1925). I explore the ways Zulen's writing is influenced (and not influenced) by his ethnic background as a mixed-race, Chinese-Peruvian author. I examine the looming presence of Western texts as both a literary and

philosophical force in *The Uncertain Elm* drawing on and challenging existing vocabularies developed in fields like Sinophone and diaspora studies.

Language is consequential because it is a manifestation of the dynamic, unsettled ways authors navigate their own identities, their social context, and the world more broadly. In the age of the Internet, there is an unprecedented amount of written material, “language”, available to us in the form of newspaper articles, social media, blogs, books, and more. This boundless archive represents the countless ways that people choose to represent their own unique worldview. Attempts to look farther into the past using language as an entry point, however, rely on a different kind of “evidence”, of which there is far less. In my project, for example, these are two of the only examples of written material that I have found available by *tusán* authors from the first half of the twentieth century. From my perspective, these works allow these authors to “speak” long after their authors’ deaths and nearly a century after their publication. The limitation imposed by the scarcity of available sources makes the surviving texts all the more consequential but places an interpretive burden on those who wish to engage in an analysis of their work. We can no longer ask Kuan Veng or Zulen what their intentions were but by reading closely and leaning into the unruliness of their liminal identities we can find some clues. In the following chapters, I argue that the distinctive positionality held by these two authors, and their use of poetry as a medium helps to expand ingrained, binaristic discourses about hybridity and translation. These works represent strikingly different responses to questions of identity and belonging—with Kuan Veng’s work speaking to the importance of an individual’s ethnic background on their work while Zulen’s work supports an argument that his ethnic identity was not central to the way he chose to express himself through literature.

This project involves materials written in English, Chinese and Spanish, but is written for an English-speaking audience. I believe that these works (and works like them) are worthy of being read and engaged with by a larger audience and I hope that through my ability to bring together these divergent languages and contexts they might become more accessible to a broader audience, whether that means being read in (mostly) Spanish, in translation in English, or someday, maybe even in Chinese.

Chapter 1:

Historical and Theoretical Context

Latin America's history is often told beginning with "first contact", in reference to the arrival of Christopher Columbus in what we now call the Bahamas; but for whom does this mark the beginning of this history? One answer is that this occurrence marks the beginning of European people's history of Latin America. For Indigenous peoples, the history of what is now called Latin America began thousands of years earlier, long before the concept of Latin America even existed. Additionally, neither of these narratives account for the history of African and Afro-descendant people whose presence began with the first enslaved people brought forcibly to the Americas from West Africa. Making sense of these fraught beginnings and the events that have taken place since is a task that continues to occupy scholars around the world.

The history of Asian peoples' presence in this region can be traced back to the arrival of so-called, "*indios chinos*" in Acapulco. According to scholar Evelyn Hu-Dehart, "an estimated 20,000 to as high as 100,000 *indios chinos*, as they were labeled in the documents, disembarked in Acapulco in the late sixteenth through the eighteenth century, spreading out throughout New Spain and southward to Peru"(Hu-Dehart 30). This population was actually made up of several different ethnic groups including Japanese, Filipino and other South East Asians but was collectively known as "*chinos*" (literally meaning Chinese)³. Since the arrival of the first Asian people in Acapulco, millions more Asian people have immigrated to Latin America, and people

³Edward R. Slack Jr. "The Chinos in New Spain: A Corrective Lens for a Distorted Image." *Journal of World History*, vol. 20, no. 1, Mar. 2009, pp. 35.

of Asian⁴ descent can now be found in almost every nation in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Some members of these diaspora populations have achieved prominence like Japanese-Peruvian Alberto Fujimori, President of Peru from 1990 to 2000, and Chinese-Cuban artist Wifredo Lam, among others. The circumstances in which these diasporas take place vary greatly and are informed by the economic, political, and social context of both the country of origin and the destination. The catalyst for the arrival of the first waves of Chinese immigrants in Peru, for example, was intimately tied to Peru's socioeconomic context at the time.

In South America in the early 19th century, more and more countries were beginning to win independence from the colonial powers that had been occupying them, in the case of Peru and many of its neighbors, the Spanish Empire. Peru, which unlike many of the surrounding nations had been principally loyal to Spain, gained independence from the Spanish when Simón Bolívar assumed power on December 9th, 1824. A liberal constitution was put into place in 1828, but over the next years, a succession of military leaders (*caudillos*) fought for power thwarting efforts at a true democracy for the time being.

By 1845, Gen. Ramón Castilla had taken on the role of president, and even though the slave trade had been made illegal in Peru several decades before in 1821, the practice of slavery itself was not made illegal until 1854. Several years before slavery was officially outlawed, however, it had become apparent that the nation's reliance on enslaved people of African descent for labor was not sustainable, and in 1848 the so-called *Ley China* was enacted. This law made legal the immigration of Chinese indentured servants as a means of replenishing the labor

⁴ The term "people of Asian descent" is an ambiguous one, but in this case I use it to refer to all people who can trace their ancestry to the Asian continent.

shortage in the wake of the abolishment of the slave trade, and as a result, the first waves of Chinese emigration to Peru began.

Over time these Chinese indentured servants and their descendants began to leave the plantations where they had been living and settle across Peru, especially after the abolishment of indentured servitude in 1874. As time went on, the Chinese-Peruvian population grew and shifted as intermarriage between Chinese and non-Chinese Peruvians became more common. One factor that contributed to this phenomenon was the gender imbalance among the Chinese population that had been brought to Peru: the vast majority were men. This gave rise to a phenomenon in which many Chinese men would marry and have children with Peruvian women. In fact one example of this pattern can be found in Zulen, one of the two authors being analyzed in this project. Conflicting estimates exist regarding the number of Peruvians of Chinese descent in the present day. These figures range from a little more than 14,000, the number of individuals who identified themselves as “*Tusán*” on the 2017 Peruvian census (INEI) to 1.3 million (OCAC, R.O.C.) but in spite of their substantial population and longstanding presence, the contributions of *tusanes* as cultural producers are often left out of the mainstream Peruvian literary discourse.

There is no straightforward explanation for the omission of *tusán* scholars from Peruvian literary discourse, but one scholar that has made valuable contributions to Latin American literary discourse’s conceptual vocabulary more broadly is Walter D. Mignolo, whose work helps challenge these hegemonic narratives. In the beginning of his book, *The Idea of Latin America*, Mignolo explores the concept of *border thinking*. Mignolo writes:

Europeans, in general, did not have to incorporate Indigenous languages and frameworks of knowledge into their own. For Indigenous people (and for Africans transported to the

New World), the situation was different. They had no choice but to incorporate European languages and frameworks into their own. One of the unavoidable consequences of modern/colonial expansionism is that the conditions for *border thinking* were created. (9)

The ontological and epistemological matrix of Latin America was grounded in a centering of the European at the expense of the Indigenous and the African. Border thinkers, then, challenge hegemonic forms of knowledge and tradition. Accordingly, Chinese-Peruvian authors complicate questions about the Latin American ethnocultural matrix by nature of their nontypical (In Peru) ethnic background. Mignolo succinctly lays out the development of the racial hierarchy in Latin America, as it was created from a European (specifically Spanish and Portuguese) locus of enunciation in which Indigenous and African people were classified as lesser than, if even human at all. Works like these are decisive in the formation of critical theories that push back against the hegemonic, European historiography that populates the literature we read, the history we are taught, and the worldviews we (European-descendant citizens of the Americas) often subconsciously integrate into our belief systems. In this framework, coloniality⁵ serves as a tool to splinter the hegemonic logic of modernity.

In my project, I use coloniality as a way to analyze the culture and circumstance of Peruvians of Asian descent, inhabitants that are often marginalized even in narratives that seek to problematize dominant historical and theoretical understandings of Latin America. The *border thinking* exemplified by Chinese-Peruvian identity presents unusual opportunities, as demonstrated by the two books I will be analyzing in Chapters 2 and 3, both of which display

⁵ Coloniality first appeared in 1965 in the context of “internal colonialism”, referring to “how colonial structures prevailed within formerly colonial societies even after the emergence of the independent state”(De Lissovoy, N., & Bailón, R. O. F. 84). Now it is used more broadly to the ways in which the “political, cultural, epistemological, and symbolic conditions” of colonialism live on in post-independence societies (De Lissovoy, N., & Bailón, R. O. F. 83). For more information see Mignolo and Quijano.

different manifestations of the liminality that is generated by the experiences of *tusanes* in post-colonial Peruvian society. For Kuan Veng, this *border thinking* allows him to tap into both his ancestral, Chinese influences which can be seen in his character, setting and philosophical outlook, and also the Peruvian, Hispanophone milieu in which he lived and worked. This awareness of an “other” outside of the colonality embedded in Peruvian society offers Kuan Veng a unique vantage point from which to approach questions of belonging and identity in his adopted homeland. Zulen, on the other hand, seldom references his ethnic identity in *The Uncertain Elm*. Zulen’s border thinking is evinced by his straddling of Peruvian, Hispanophone identity, the Euro-American canon he draws on, and his strong sense of justice, especially in the context of Indigenous communities in Peru. Although the importance of linguistic identity (either in tandem with or aside from) ethnic identity should not be overlooked, analysis of *Mey Shut* from the perspective of Hispanophone literature deemphasizes the centrality of Sinophone/“Chinese” cultural influence in the work. The language an author chooses to write in does allude to at least one important aspect of the work: the text’s intended audience. By writing (primarily) in Spanish, both Kuan Veng and Zulen obfuscate the significance of any “Chinese” reference that may be included.

It can be perplexing how little attention has been paid to the literature written by members of Chinese diaspora communities in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean given the recent spike in interest in the economic and political relationships between China and the Americas, but some scholars have begun to recognize this omission, and taken on the task of assembling and analyzing works by Chinese-Peruvian thinkers. One such example of this is the book, *Dragons in the Land of the Condor: Writing Tusán in Peru* (2013) by Ignacio

López-Calvo. In *Writing Tusán*, López-Calvo offers a survey of some of the prominent literary works published by Chinese-Peruvian writers and thinkers over roughly the past century. A variety of forms are examined in the book like poetry, novels, short stories, and political theory.

The term “*tusán*” is used in the title of the aforementioned book and refers to Peruvians of Chinese descent and has gained traction both inside and outside the Chinese-Peruvian community. The term *tusán* derives from a Cantonese phrase, “土生” (tou2 saang1) which literally translates to “local born”. In practice, however, it is also used to refer to individuals who have spent formative years in Peru, because as López-Calvo notes, a few of the authors mentioned in his book were born outside of Peru. The works included in *Writing Tusán* represent a wide array of *tusán* experiences ranging from individuals born in China to two Chinese parents, who are in essence “1.5” generation immigrants, to fourth-generation immigrants (and beyond) with varying amounts of Chinese ancestry. In López-Calvo’s book, a substantial amount of time is spent examining the Sinophobia experienced by Chinese and Chinese-descendant people living in Peru. Of course, this marginalization bears exploration but often seems to be offered with little attention given to the positive aspects of the diaspora experience. In examples of cultural production (for example the tweet mentioned in the introduction), marginalization is met with humor and can offer paths to solidarity based on shared experience. This person's expression on social media using Chinese and Spanish alike, expressing fondness for both their ancestral and adopted homelands, epitomizes the expansive possibilities that the merging of Hispano-and-Sinophone worlds can generate.

In this project, I will be focusing on two books of poetry by *tusán* authors who were living and working at roughly the same time: *The Uncertain Elm* by Pedro Zulen, and *Mey Shut*

by Augusto Kuan Veng. There are many parallels in the two works; both are by Chinese-descendant Peruvian authors in the 1920s, written primarily in Spanish, there are also a number of clear differences, specifically the ways that the two authors' *tusán* identity influences their work. For example, Kuan Veng's Chinese ancestry is an explicit influence on his work, while in the case of Zulen, the influence of his Chinese ancestry on his poetry is rather limited.

A few works in particular, like Néstor García Canclini's *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, Johnathan Friedman's "From roots to routes: Tropes for trippers", Long Le-Khac's *Giving Form to an Asian & Latinx America* and Chun's "Fuck Chineseness" help situate the works in a theoretical context (specifically one grounded in post-colonial, cultural studies). These texts represent a range of approaches to questions of hybridity, globalization, and identity, and in some cases even contradict one another. By synthesizing a set of sources that transcend conventional disciplinary boundaries I am uniquely equipped to engage in the kind of analysis necessitated by Kuan Veng and Zulen's writing.

In the first of the theoretical texts I mentioned, *Hybrid Cultures*, García Canclini presents a theory of cultural hybridity that hinges upon the process of hybridization, rather than hybridity in and of itself. In a moment that seems particularly relevant to my own research, García Canclini writes:

We link in this way the question concerning what art and culture can be today to the tasks of translating that which within us and between us remains torn, belligerent, or incomprehensible, or could perhaps be hybridized. This path can liberate musical, literary, and media practices from the "folk" mission of representing a single identity.

Aesthetics can rid itself of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century efforts to turn it into patriotic pedagogy". (xliii)

Interventions like this one help to complicate ideas about the capacity for interlocutors to appropriately "translate" the unruly identities of subjects, and also to move beyond one-size-fits-all analyses of identity that are artificially restrained by categories like nationality. These two books are particularly rich for analysis because of their medium: poetry. Poetry's flexibility as a form allows its authors to combine the abstract with the concrete and places an extra emphasis on the formal and aesthetic choices made by the authors. Looking to a form that is intrinsically personal is a sustained reminder that although these works may contain useful ethnographical details, limiting an analysis to these details would be brushing aside the very qualities that define the medium. Analysis of poetry can reveal insights that are imperceptible to even its authors.

In *Giving Form*, Le-Khac provides useful insights into the parallel and perpendicular histories of Asian and Latinx communities in America(s) and their associated literary production. In the introduction, he writes, "These communities were formed in mutual relation by linked forces. They share an intertwined history that this book traces through a shared aesthetic paradigm, an interlinked yet discontinuous transfictional form that structures many contemporary Asian and Latinx fictions" (5). There is certainly value in drawing parallels between the literary production of two communities with distinct linguistic, cultural, and historical contexts but I would add that it might also be useful to articulate the intersections between these two traditions. *Tusán* writers like Kuan Veng and Zulen embody a kind of liminality, not falling neatly into either of these prescribed groupings. Authors like Le-Khac represent a new wave of theorists that

are beginning to recognize and form connections between Asian and Latinx communities’ writing:

In extending the work on Asian Americans and Latinxs, I believe that the comparison of literatures presents a useful challenge. Linking minority literatures with issues that social science identifies risks reducing ethnic literatures to social and ethnographic content. This approach can perpetuate a historic lack of attention to the aesthetics of ethnic literatures and reinforce a tendency to judge minority works as socially interesting artifacts but not significant artworks. (8)

This intervention is pivotal in the context of my project and reinforces the mentality expressed by García Canclini discussed before. Rather than merely imposing broader categories on individual works of literature, my goal is to engage in a process of close reading that centers on the formal and literary choices of the authors. This analysis centers Kuan Veng and Zulen’s features of the text like metaphor, diction, and allusion, elements that typically guide a literary analysis, but can also illuminate the text’s relationship to a broader socio-cultural context. For my project, statements like these serve as a reminder of the kind of work I hope to engage in.

Returning to *tusanes*, the liminality of their positionality raises important questions about the parameters of conversations being had in disciplines like Asian studies, Latin American studies, and comparative literature. In Chun’s article, “Fuck Chineseness”, we can find yet another complication of any reductive perception of Kuan Veng and Zulen as “Chinese”-Peruvian authors. A salient addition to discussions of these hyphenated identities is Chun’s point that “The notion of multiple identities, while serving to decenter the authority of cultural hegemony does not in itself destroy the boundedness of identity, and in some cases, may

even heighten it by making resistance inherently political” (136). Phrased differently: attempts to classify works by these authors either within or outside of this *tusán* identity brings with it its own set of problems. To conform to this label brings with it a necessary flattening of identity because it goes along with the assumption that there are certain inextricable qualities that can be discerned among the individuals that make up these expansive, amorphous “communities”.

Another lens through which to consider *Mey Shut* and *The Uncertain Elm* is in the context of Hispanophone literature. This category is a useful one given that the language a text is written in can be determinative of its potential audience but given the syncretic nature of identity as a result of *mestizaje*, immigration, and globalization categories like this one present their own challenges. As the prologue suggests in a dialogue to which I will refer to in Chapter 2, Kuan Veng’s choice of Spanish as a working language reflects his adaptation to and participation in, Peruvian Hispanophone written culture, a fact that eschews common patterns of incremental assimilation to countries of settlement over several generations. Although the importance of linguistic identity (either in tandem with or aside from) ethnic identity should not be overlooked, analysis of *Mey Shut* should acknowledge the text as a work of Hispanophone literature while also recognizing the centrality of Sinophone/ “Chinese” cultural influence in the work, with neither one taking precedence over the other, but rather treating them as two different intertwined contexts offering different things, but of equivalent importance.

Even though neither *Mey Shut* nor *El Olmo Incierto* fits into the category of Sinophone literature because they are not written in a Sinitic language, the insights generated in the field of Sinophone studies can provide useful context. In Shu-Mei Shih’s article, “Against Diaspora: The Sinophone as Places of Cultural Production”, she makes a compelling case for the utility of the

Sinophone as a concept and methodology for literature produced in Sinitic languages beyond China, as well as the shortcomings of “Chinese” as a conceptual framework. Shih writes, “‘Chinese,’ in other words, is a national marker passing as an ethnic, cultural, and linguistic marker, a largely Han-centric designation, since, in fact, there are altogether fifty-six official ethnicities in China and far more diverse languages and topolects spoken across the nation” (26). This assertion challenges the use of “Chinese” as a shorthand for the broad range of identities that exist both within and outside Mainland China. In the conclusion of “Against Diaspora”, Shih distills her argument down to two points, the second of which is:

The linguistic community is a community of change and an open community. When the descendants of immigrants no longer speak their ancestors’ languages, they are no longer part of the Sinophone community. The Sinophone community is, therefore, a community of change, occupying a transitional moment (however long in duration) that inevitably integrates further with local communities and becomes constitutive of the local”. (37-38 emphasis in original)

Shih frames the shift from working in the Chinese language to a local language as a decisive shift, one that in turn would position works like *Mey Shut* and *The Uncertain Elm* as “constitutive of the local.” I would contest the notion that works like these are necessarily “constitutive” of the local just because they are written in the language of their adoptive homeland. This does not represent an attempt at contesting the legitimacy of Kuan Veng or Zulens’ Hispanic or Peruvian identities, but an acknowledgment of the fact that the linguistic and symbolic tradition in which an author situates their work is crucial in deciphering the meaning of their work.

An author like Kuan Veng, therefore, whose work relies so heavily on a cultural and textual tradition outside of the Peruvian context (a “Chinese” one) was not *treated* as local. After all of the poems, *Mey Shut* contains a section titled, “Brief Commentary” (Breves Comentarios) in which three distinguished Hispanic authors review Kuan Veng’s poetry. All three praise Kuan Veng, and all three spotlight the significance of Kuan Veng’s Asianess in his poetry. In the first write-up, Peruvian poet José Santos Chocano (1875-1934) compares Kuan Veng with Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), and writes that *Mey Shut*, “is of such transcendental ingenuity that it makes one think of deep contacts with the old Chinese and Hindu literatures” (*de tan semejante ingenuidad transcendental que hace pensar en los contactos profundos de las viejas literaturas China e Hindú*). This appraisal conflates “Hindu” literature, specifically Tagore with that of China, reflecting the orientalization encountered by Asian authors in Peru. This treatment, though, is a double-edged sword because the very qualities that pigeonhole Kuan Veng as an exoticized other also attract the attention of prestigious authors like Santos Chocano.

The next review is by Spanish Modernist author Francisco Villaespesa (1877-1936) whose review is glowing, although it is similarly focused on Kuan Veng’s Chineseness. Villaespesa writes, “The author of these enchanting narratives and of these marvelous poems, Chinese by blood, by education, and in spirit, can be incorporated in a place of honor, in the avant-garde of our intellectual youth, not only because of the intensity and breadth of his emotional aesthetic, but also for his miraculous, masterful technique in the conviction and the domain of his adopted language”. This assessment is effusive, and like the prologue it also speaks to how impressed Villaespesa is about Kuan Veng’s skill in the Spanish language. In this quote Villaespesa insinuates that Kuan Veng might even be talented enough to be welcomed into

the Peruvian literary community, but even so the mention of Spanish being his foreign ancestry and tutelage acts as a marker (though necessarily a bad one) of difference between, Kuan Veng and other incipient Peruvian authors. None of the reviewers, nor the writer of the prologue are *tusanes* and given the turn towards a fascination with the “East” among more and more Latino authors, the implication seems to be that this book is written not for *tusanes* themselves, but for fellow Peruvians and Spanish speakers intrigued with distant lands like China, of which Kuan Veng becomes representative.

The fascination with Kuan Veng’s identity is informative about the ways Chinese-Peruvians were perceived in the 1920s, but where do *tusanes* fit into literary discourses in the 21st century? One scholar, Kyle Shernuk, addresses the specific question of literature written by Chinese authors in non-Sinitic languages in his article, “Embracing the Xenophone: Siu Kam Wen and the Possibility of Spanish-Language Chinese Literature.” This article focuses on the unique positionality of non-Sinitic-language “Chinese” literature, particularly Spanish-language literature which is often relegated to a so-called, “literary no-man's land” (Shernuk 501). Shernuk’s research offers a number of interventions that are constructive in making sense of the relationship between “Chineseness” and Chinese literature, arguing that, “literary texts that have been excluded from Chinese studies because of their language of composition should be actively put in dialogue with their Sinitic -language counterparts, with the goal of sketching out the shared stakes common to the globalized experiences of Chineseness in the modern era” (502). In his analysis, Shernuk analyzes two short stories by Chinese Peruvian American writer Siu Kam Wen, arguably the most esteemed Chinese-Peruvian-American author. Siu’s writing has some similarities to the works I will be discussing, but also a few key

distinctions. One palpable difference is that Siu explicitly discusses Chinese identity in his works stating:

Cada cuento debía de comunicar un mensaje particular, pero leídos como conjunto, debían de proporcionar al lector un panorama completo de la vida en el microcosmos de los chinos en el Perú. Insistí en incluir en los cuentos personajes de todas las variedades (niños, jóvenes, adultos, y viejos; Kueis, chinos “netos”, chinos adoptivos como Uei-Koung, tusanés de padres chinos, tusanés de padre chino y madre peruana como Rosa, etc.), y tratar de abarcar en la mayoría de los temas, el espectro humano que a veces es muy peculiar en la colonia china en el Perú, a veces universales. (Siu)

This ethnographic awareness distinguishes him from the writers like Kuan Veng and Zulen, for whom Chinese identity is more context than content. The other notable difference is the date of publication. The two stories Shernuk discusses were published in *El Tramo Final* (2013), many decades after the pieces of writing I am investigating were published. These two differences invite a different kind of research that extrapolates cultural implications according to the thematic content of Siu Kam Wen’s writing, as opposed to my research which is grounded in a process of close reading and literary analysis.

As Shernuk notes, language is the determinative factor in what works are seen as belonging or not belonging to the category of Sinophone. As was previously noted, given that these works are both written in Spanish, neither *Mey Shut* nor *El Olmo Incierto* are considered Sinophone literature but as Shernuk writes, “A point of irony worth noting here is that, if Latin American literary studies used the same standards as Shih’s Sinophone, Siu would be counted among their ranks. This observation, however, reinforces the fact that this problem is a distinctly

disciplinary one that stems from unnecessarily exclusionary literary frameworks” (519). Stated differently, if writing in Spanish was what dictated whether or not a piece of writing fit into the category of “Latin American literature” then Siu’s writing would indisputably belong in that category. Shernuk’s findings challenge the utility of Sinophone as a category to meaningfully encompass writers that fall outside its linguistic realm like Kuan Veng and Zulen and he mentions the “Xenophone” as an alternative to the “Sinophone” encouraging a reassessment of the very nature of what makes Chinese literature, “Chinese”. Determining whether or not *Mey Shut* and *El Olmo Incierto* should be included in the category of Chinese literature, or whether they even aspire to is outside the purview of this project, instead I would rather emphasize the ways in which their exclusion from these categories is illustrative of the border thinking and hybridity that are necessitated to appreciate literature by *tusán* authors.

One text that does address the unique positionality of Chinese Latin Americans is a dissertation by Maria Montt Strabucchi from the University of Manchester titled *Imagining China in Contemporary Latin American Literature* (2017). Although the texts she uses are about representations of China in literature, rather than self-representation by Chinese-descendant authors, Strabucchi delineates a theoretical framework that is also relevant in discussing works by *tusán* authors. In the introduction, Strabucchi identifies a number of thematic threads that guide her analysis. One such topic is the confounding effect that China and Chineseness have on preexisting notions of identity and difference in Latin America, specifically ideas about *mestizaje* and multiculturalism.

Strabucchi argues that the inclusion of Asian-Latin Americans into racial constructs brings with it new ways of thinking about community, with Chineseness often serving as a

“symbol of alterity” (10). Another topic that emerges in the dissertation is China’s shifting positionality on a global scale, especially in a political and economic context, which raises several questions: as China’s stature as a world power has grown, how China and Chineseness are conceptualized, shifted? Is more weight given to the literary and cultural production of the broader Sinophone sphere? How do Chinese-descendant authors writing in Spanish challenge conventional presumptions about “Chinese” identity? Questions like these are generative for both texts.

In an essay titled “Transpacific Subjectivities: ‘Chinese - Latin American Literature after Empire” by Puo-An Wu Fu, a number of useful concepts are put forth regarding translatability, collective representation, and affect. In the work, Fu discusses two works that examine experiences of transpacific migrational, as represented in two books: the Spanish-language *Mudas las garzas* by Selfa Chew (pen name of Selfa Alejandra Chew-Melendez) and the Chinese-language “远在古巴 (*yuǎn zài gǔbā* usually translated to English as *So Far Away in Cuba*) by Louise Kin-sheun (雷竞璇, *léi jìngxuán*). In reference to the two aforementioned works, Fu writes:

If anything, they disprove the assumption of universal translatability, or a world where all languages and cultures connect as perfect equivalents. In other words, they do not seek to build interregional cultural bridges between Latin America and Asia. To the contrary, these are narratives that delve into the very particularities of the ‘Chinese’-Latin American voice-contradictions, conflicts, and disparities included. (13)

I find this quote particularly applicable in my research given the prominent differences in the types of narratives presented in the works of Kuan Veng and Zulen. In this quote Fu gets at the

core of what I hope to underscore: there is not *one* Chinese-Latin American experience. Neither Kuan Veng nor Zulen's work is explicitly autobiographical, but the very act of cultural production from one's unique positionality serves as a reflection of this confluence of identities.

My inclusion of elements from both Sinitic and Spanish language literary traditions allows me to put texts in tandem with one another that have not often been juxtaposed in this way. By identifying the similarities and differences in their engagement with "Chinese" and Peruvian identity, insights can be gained into the limits of language and translation and the unstable nature of identity construction in the context of diaspora. By unearthing the subaltern, obscured and hidden intersections between Chinese cultural identity and Peruvian/Latin American cultural identity that emerge in works by authors like Kuan Veng and Zulen, compelling connections can be made between two identities that are often framed as mutually exclusive. Determining an analytical framework for a collection of works like *Mey Shut* and *The Uncertain Elm* brings many of the implicit theoretical quandaries it raises to the surface, especially given these works can be read as Peruvian literature, Hispanophone literature, Chinese literature, Diaspora literature or something else. All of these frameworks can be used to generate salient insights, but in my analysis, I will be focusing on the ways that these texts transcend conventional linguistic, national, and cultural categorization.

Chapter 2:

Peruanidad, Chineseness and Hybridity in Pedro S. Zulen's *The Uncertain Elm*

In this chapter I will be analyzing several of the works published in Kuan Veng's book *Mey Shut*, which consists of nineteen compositions. *Mey Shut* reads as a series of moralistic fables told in the form of poetic prose along with a series of illustrations drawing upon traditional Chinese imagery. Although the category in which the works in this collection has been contested (López-Calvo), I will refer to individual works as "poems", as a shorthand to reflect the intentions of Kuan Veng who labels them as such in the title of the work. In spite of the contextual similarities between *Mey Shut* and *The Uncertain Elm*, the ways their authors engage with their identity as *tusanes* is quite different. In the case of Kuan Veng, his explorations of filial piety, nature and love stood out to me because of their exploration through distinctively Chinese symbolic and literary elements.

The references in *Mey Shut* to locations in China, Chinese names, and Chinese cultural practices are expressed in transliteration. Efforts to make sense of these references are limited by a few factors. First, it is unclear exactly what dialect of Chinese Kuan Veng even spoke. Kuan Veng includes his name in traditional Chinese characters, but the hispanicized version of his name does not match Cantonese or Mandarin pronunciation as far as I have been able to tell, although perhaps it is Hakka or another dialect with which I am unfamiliar. Secondly, even if it were possible to determine which dialect he spoke, the transliterated Chinese is rendered without tones creating another level of ambiguity in certain instances. In analyses of works published by authors about whom very little is known like Kuan Veng, certain inferences must be made.

Before the content put forth by Kuan Veng even begins, there is a prologue written by Dr. Oscar Miró-Quesada. Miró-Quesada is listed as Professor at the University of San Marcos and the editor of ‘*El Comercio*’, the oldest newspaper in Peru (*Catedrático de la Universidad de San Marcos y Director del diario decano del Perú ‘El Comercio*). In this prologue, Miró-Quesada presents his account of the interaction he had with Kuan Veng when the two of them first met:

“El caso de Kuan Veng es original.

Lo conocí una tarde.

-¿Ud. es Rasco? me preguntó.

-Sí, soy Rasco?.

-¡Oh señor! Yo también quisiera escribir. Tengo un pequeño artículo, si Ud. lo publicara en su diario me sentiría muy contento.

-Déjeme el artículo; veremos. ¿Me permite una indiscreción? ¿Es usted chino?

-Sí señor.

-¿Nacido en China?

-Sí, y de padres chinos. ¡Bien se me conoce la cara!

-En la cara sí, más en el lenguaje no. Habla usted el castellano tan bien que he dudado acerca de su verdadera nacionalidad. Tanto gusto conocerlo.”

(English translation my own)

“The case of Kuan Veng is a unique one.

I met him one afternoon.

-‘Are you Rasco?’, he asked me.

-Yes, I'm Rasco?

-Oh, sir! I too would like to be a writer. I have a little article here. If you were to publish it in your newspaper I would be very happy.

-Leave the article with me; we'll see. May I ask an impolite question? \Are you Chinese?

-Yes sir, I am.

-You were born in China?

-Yes, and my parents are Chinese. You really can see it in my face!

-I can tell from your appearance, but not from your speech. **You speak Spanish so well that I wasn't even certain what nationality you were.** It was a pleasure to meet you." (Emphasis my own)

In this section of the text, Rasco's amazement at Kuan Veng's proficiency in Spanish is apparent. In this interaction, a young Chinese person (Kuan Veng) living in a Spanish-speaking country is having a discussion with an older, Spanish-speaking person (Miró-Quesada), who has some amount of authority over their younger counterpart. This set of circumstances reflects the distinctive experience of East Asian people living in Latin America. Latin American racial identity is primarily understood to be composed of three different racial identities: African, European, and Indigenous, along with the racial identities that emerge as a result of their *mestizaje* or mixing. As a result, even when an individual with a racial background outside of these three identities assimilates to their non-ancestral nation linguistically, the reality of their non-normative appearance remains.

This interaction is written as a way of foregrounding Kuan Veng's subjectivity, a narrative that emphasized his unique positionality. In this case, the marginalized subject proving himself to the hegemonic subject is positioned as an unlikely success story. In spite of this optimistic framing, however, a modern reading might perceive this interaction as motivated by racial bias.

The University of San Marcos, where Rasco is a professor, is a renowned university in Peru. It is the oldest continuously operating university in the Americas, with presidents and Nobel laureates alike having been educated there. *El Comercio*, the paper for which Rasco is the editor, is the oldest newspaper in Peru and one of the most influential sources of news media there. These associations with revered Peruvian institutions offer Miró-Quesada a high level of credibility in the Peruvian context. This "vouching for" (Miró-Quesada's willingness to write a prologue for Kuan Veng's book) also lends Kuan Veng a different kind of credibility that had the potential to introduce his work to a broader audience. It is impossible to know what Kuan Veng thought about this interaction, let alone its immortalization in the prologue of his book, but its presence speaks to the ways language, power and identity were negotiated by *tusanes* in the context of 1920s Peru.

Assembling sources from both Chinese and Latino traditions enables a deeper understanding of poems that incorporate elements of both cultures. One such example is the first poem in *Mey Shut*, "Maternal Voices/Be Unassuming". In "Maternal Voices", Kuan Veng mentions the Goddess of Mercy⁶ (*la diosa de la Misericordia*), a reference to the Buddhist bodhisattva, Guan Yin (also known as Kuan-Yin or 觀音). Guan Yin has been a prominent figure

⁶ The term "Goddess of Mercy" being used in reference to Guan Yin, in fact, originated with the Jesuits (Overmyer 420)

in East Asian Buddhist cultures for centuries and, “is believed to combine universal salvation with immediate practical aid” (Overmyer 418). Incorporating a figure like Guan Yin grounds the poem in the East Asian canon and indicates the intertextuality of Kuan Veng’s work with traditional Chinese artistic and literary practices.

In addition to Kuan-Yin, there is another reference in “Maternal Voices” with related symbolic significance: the lotus flower. In “Maternal Voices” Kuan Veng writes, “Be modest: always remember that your inheritance is one of a lotus growing serenely: they are born white, they remain unblemished even as they fully blossom, and they maintain that same milky color in their decline” (*Sé modesto: recuerda siempre los lotos que crecen plácidamente en tu heredad: nacen blancos no se contaminan en su floración plena y conservan la misma blancura en su decadencia*). By using a metaphor that relies on a distinctively non-Peruvian symbol, the lotus, Kuan Veng is able to express the uniquely *tusán* quality of an inheritance between mother and son.

The lotus flower itself has been written about countless times, but a direct parallel can be found between the metaphorical significance of the lotus in Kuan Veng’s poem and in “On Loving the Lotus”(爱莲记), a poem written in the 11th-century by Chinese Confucian scholar Zhou Dun Yi (周敦颐). About the lotus, Zhou writes, “growing out of silt yet spotless; bathing in crystal clear water without being seductive; its sweet scent can be smelled far away, and it stands clean and erect” (Yuan 229). Using the lotus as a marker of purity reflects the lasting influence of culturally specific symbols, as well as the values that accompany them. In the Buddhist tradition the lotus has long served as a symbol of purity, and lotus flowers are also considered sacred in

several “Eastern” cultures like India and China.⁷ There are also a number of connections that exist between Guan Yin and the lotus flower. The allusion to the ancestry as being Chinese is further supported by the use of the lotus as a symbol of purity, with lotus being native to the warm, tropical climates in several Asian nations like China and Japan (MISIN). Details like these support an argument that an awareness of both Chinese and Peruvian traditions are consequential in a thorough interpretation of poems like “Maternal Voices”.

The second poem in the book, “Contrast” (*Contraste*), exemplifies the centrality of Chinese philosophy in Kuan Veng’s work. A fable of sorts, “Contrast” (*Contraste*) details a day of celebration in a park. The park, given an ostensibly Chinese name (Shai-fa) in the first sentence of the work immediately situates the piece in a Chinese cultural context. In the following sentence, the phrase “according to custom” (*siguiendo la costumbre*) is used. By including another reference to tradition Kuan Veng drives home the integral nature of his heritage in his work.

Next, Kuan Veng details the various activities that occupy the individuals present on this holiday: the mystics (*místicos*) go to pray at a nearby Buddhist temple, the “troublemakers” (*traviesos*) climb the stairs of porcelain tower (“*torre de porcelana*”, likely referencing a real historical site that can be found in Nanjing, China), while the pragmatic ones utilize the nearby lake to keep them cool. By providing details like these, Kuan Veng is providing not just a cultural context, but also a spatial and temporal one. In most cases, a Spanish-speaking Peruvian reader would have never been to the locations alluded to, but the naturalistic, cultural and architectural details delineate a setting that is expressly different from their own.

⁷ William E. Ward, The Lotus Symbol: Its Meaning in Buddhist Art and Philosophy, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Volume 11, Issue 2, December 1952, Pages 135–146,

The narrator then hones in on an elderly bearded man, and a smooth-faced teenager (*un anciano de luengas barbas y un imberbe adolescente*). In the “contrast” between two characters we start to get at the thematic core of the work: duality. Duality (or dualism) has been an element of different strands of Chinese philosophy like Taoism and Confucianism for centuries (Lagerway 193-194). Near the end of the story, the narrator poses the same question to the old man and the youngster in two different ways: what do you think about the festivities today? The question is posed to the elder in a very formal way, “Good sir, would you give me the pleasure of hearing your opinion on today’s magnificent festivities?” (*Noble señor, ¿puedo tener el placer de oír su opinión sobre la magnífica fiesta de hoy?*). To which he answers that it would have been better to never have been born.

This question, and the response it garners from the young man is quite different. Posed to the young man, the narrator asks, “Young lad, how do you like the party?” (*Mozuelo, ¿qué tal te parece la fiesta?*). The youngster’s response is jovial and optimistic, a stark contrast from the cynicism of the old man: “It’s splendid, sir, splendid: life is so joyous...” (*Espléndida, señor, espléndida: que alegre es la vida...*). Ending the stories is the take away, as noted by philosopher Luy Sen Cum⁸: Life is a permanent contrast (*la vida es un contraste permanente*). The message of this story is relatively straightforward, and seems to mirror the duality that can be found in various strands of Chinese philosophy, as exemplified by the notion of Yin and Yang. In works like this by Kuan Veng, the use of Spanish language and Peruvian ethos intersect with the work’s insistently Chinese intertextuality. The structure of the story itself is reminiscent of works by ancient Chinese authors like Confucius, whose short, poignant fables convey an observation

⁸ Kuan Veng includes a “quote” that he attributes to a philosopher, Luy Sen Cum. I have made attempts to discern who this philosopher might be by searching both the quote itself, and trying to identify what characters the name might correlate to but have been unsuccessful.

about the nature of the world according to their author. Different philosophical movements like Taoism and Confucianism overlap and contradict with one another. The rhetorical strategy of directly quoting one's intellectual ancestors is prominent in the Chinese tradition (and to a certain extent the western one), but its inclusion in lieu of an independent thesis seems distinctly tied to the philosophical tradition Kuan Veng is drawing on.

Another piece that locates itself in a distinctly culturally Chinese context is “The First Kiss” (“*El Primer Beso*”). The work, as its name might suggest, is about love. The story is tender and sentimental, much less didactic than some of the other works in the collection. In the first sentence the narrator states that it was a joyous and rowdy night, the night of the Mid Autumn Festival (in Spanish, “*la fiesta de la Luna*” lit. the Moon Festival and in Mandarin, 中秋节, zhōng qiū jié). This yearly celebration is a preeminent one in Chinese culture and throughout much of Asia and the Chinese diaspora (Botero Castrillón 133). In the next paragraphs, Kuan Veng includes several other details that emphasize his cultural background like the name of his lover, Jhoy Zin. Given that there was much less standardization for the romanization (much less hispanicization) of Chinese names, it would be difficult to discern what characters the name is based off of, but it is apparent that the name is not a traditionally Hispanic one. In the next paragraph there is a reference to a Sang Li Fu pavilion, another ostensibly sinitic name. Their rendering in Spanish, however, makes them illegible to a Chinese-language audience.

The work is filled with naturalistic imagery with several references to the moon, the sky and trees amongst others. This romantic imagery parallels the intense lustfulness and sensuality of the narrator with his lover. By the end of the poem, they “join their burning lips together and seal their everlasting affection with a prolonged kiss” (*juntamos nuestros ardientes labios y*

sellamos nuestro cariño infinito con un prolongado beso de amor). This section is quite a tonal shift from the detached, philosophical ambiance of “Contrast”. This work also relies on the connotations and feelings associated with the words to create an emotional reaction for the reader, rather than the more cerebral effect of the writing in “Contrast”. Both stories, however, build up to the end, in which the thematic content of the stories comes together, as opposed to having an earlier “climax” and then a trailing off.

In one of the pieces, “Childish” (*Infantil*), Kuan Veng writes that, “the others, more artistic, imitated the voice and gestures of the great actors, or recited the serious and profound sayings that they learned in the Four Sacred Books” (*Los otros, más artistas, imitan la voz y los gestos de los grandes actores, o recitan las graves y profundas sentencias que aprendieron en LOS CUATRO LIBROS SAGRADOS...*). In this case the Four Sacred Books is likely a reference to the Four Books and Five Classics (四书五经), “The basis of civil examination in Imperial China and can be considered the Confucian canon”. The four books consist of *The Great Learning* (大学) which is said to have been written by Zengzi (曾子)(505-435 BCE), a philosopher who studied with Confucius. The second of the four is the *Analects* (论语), an anthology of sayings that are attributed to Confucius, although the accuracy of this attribution is dubious at best given that the elements of the text were likely assembled in the two to three centuries after Confucius’s death in 479 BCE. The third of these texts is *Mencius* (孟子), named after its author, Mencius (372-289 BCE). The book brings together conversations that allegedly took place between himself and Confucius, along with stories and dialogues (probably both real and imagined). The fourth book is *The Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸), a text written by Zisi (子思) (481-402 BCE), the grandson of Confucius.

These four books have been read by countless people of the last millennia and they form the basis of Confucian philosophy, a belief system that is in many ways still deeply ingrained in Chinese society today. In the sentence immediately following a mention of the Four Books, a second reference is made to the Buddha, in this case spelled Buhda, yet another different spelling than the previously used Buda. These references to traditional aspects of Chinese culture raise an important question for me: who is the intended audience for *Mey Shut*? Clearly it's a Hisaphone audience rather than a Sinophone one, but what significance would these references hold to a typical Peruvian audience in the 1920s and 1930s?

In Kuan Veng's "Prayer" (*Plegaria*), the narrator makes a plea to the "Omnipotent lord of the celestial domain" (*Omnipotente señor de los celestes dominios*) to cure his ailing mother of her illness. This direct address goes on for most of the poem and culminates with the narrator's offer to do whatever it takes to save his mother's life, even sacrificing his own if necessary. This earnest, vulnerable plea represents a striking departure in tone from earlier poems like the contemplative "Contrast" and the amorous "The First Kiss".

The appeal that is made to god in the poem seems to reflect the unique syncretism prompted by Kuan Veng's hybrid identity, given that elements of both Christian and Chinese philosophical and spiritual traditions appear in this poem. Following the prior mentioned first line, the narrator tells god to, "kindly listen to what I am going to tell you" (*escucha benigno cuanto voy a decirte*).

The dynamic represented between the person praying, and god is customary in Christianity, but the phrasing used also gestures toward another set of influences as well. One specific phrase, "lord of the celestial domain", is reminiscent of phrases like "天" (*tiān*) and "皇

帝”(huángdì). The word “tian” means heaven, or “the heavens” and has been a central concept in Chinese religion and philosophy for many centuries. The term “地”(dì), meaning earth, is often used in relation to “tian” in Confucian and Taoist contexts. This delineation between “heaven” and “earth” is a parallel between traditional Chinese cosmology and Judeo-Christian theology.

Analysis like this brings the issue of translation front and center. Negotiating the thorniness of translating the semantic, cultural, philosophical and literary significance of language across three languages requires nuance and sensitivity. Take for example the word “*señor*”. Generally speaking the word “señor” can be translated as man or sir. When it is capitalized, however, it typically means “Lord” or “God”. In this poem it is *not* capitalized, but is still referring to God. Translating not just the literal meaning of the word, but the intention of the author into a new socio-linguistic context inherently requires a transformation of meaning. Whether the term “*señor*” is translated into English as god, or lord (or something else), none of these words has the same connotations as the word does in the language of origin.

In “The Peacock” (*El Pavo Real*), Kuan Veng offers an allegory on the importance of humility. In the piece, the narrator describes an interaction with his wise philosophy teacher. As the narrator notes, the two of them sit and study, and the philosopher would, “draw transcendental conclusions from insignificant things” (*de una cosa nimia sacaba trascendentales consecuencias*). After they finished studying, the two would retire to the garden where they would chat. One day as they were discussing the “flaws that commonly afflicted talented men” (*los defectos que comunmente aquejan a los hombre de talento*), a peacock approached them. As they stared at the peacock in silence, the peacock let out a monstrous cluck back at them. The philosopher, upon witnessing this display of pride told the narrator, “There you have it,

confirmation of what I was just telling you. If the peacock had not had the audacity to be so arrogant, our admiration would have been absolute”.

There are several species of peacock, none of which originated in the Americas, although peacocks have appeared in a myriad of cultural contexts. In the case of “The Peacock”, the birds are used as a metaphor for the virtue of humility. The philosopher in the story interprets the noises made by the peacock as contradicting the physical beauty the peacock displays, seeming to imply the value of meekness, in a similar vein to the purity advocated in poems like “Maternal Voices”. In the case of a human being, this might mean letting one's actions or appearance speak for itself and being shrewd in the cases in which one is outwardly vocal.

In one of the last poems in the book, “Nighttime” (*Nocturno*), Kuan Veng focuses on the beauty of the moon, (which is also central to the previously mentioned poem, “The First Kiss”) through personification and metaphor. In the first lines, Kuan Veng writes, “In the distance, the Moon is already creeping out. It's pale, like a lady that has just gotten up; but as she walks, color returns to her face” (*En la lejanía ya se asoma la Luná. Está pálida como una dama que recién se levanta, pero a medida que camina, su rostro se colora*). In these first lines I notice several things. The first is that moon (*Luna*) is written with a capital L, a choice that can serve as a way of personifying the moon. This distinction works in tandem with the other formal choices that are being made in this section: a simile. This simile attributes an aliveness and humanness to the moon, a characterization that continues with references to the moon, “whose steps are quiet, like that of a loving mother watching over her sleeping child of her womb” (*Sus pasos son quedos, cual los pasos de una tierna madre que vigila el sueño del hijo de sus entrañas*). The particular

ways in which symbols like the moon are invoked, I would argue, are informed by their author's cultural context, even if the invocation of these allusions is subconscious.

Later in the poem a reference is made to, "the Moon goddess" (*la diosa Luna*). This phrasing specifically conjures up Chang'e (嫦娥), a figure in Chinese mythology that is known as the goddess of the moon. Having been the subject of children's movies (*Over the Moon* 2020), the inspiration for a fantasy novel (*Daughters of the Moon Goddess* 2022) and even the namesake for the Chinese Lunar Exploration Program (中国探月 or 嫦娥工程), among countless other examples, she has been cemented as a crucial folk figure in much of the Sinophone world's cultural consciousness. The simile in the poem involves a comparison between the moon and a woman, a comparison that coincides with the personification that takes place in other parts of the poem.

The influence of his "Chineseness" on his poetry and his Peruvian nationality support Kuan Veng's characterization as a Chinese-Peruvian author, but by positing that authors like him inherently inhabit a hyphenated identity, theorists like Chun and Friedman might argue we are ironically reinforcing and even naturalizing bounded categories like Chineseness and Peruvianness that have not developed organically, but have been constitutively by hegemonic forces in the context of reinforcing the modern nation-state. In my own framing of the work I think of Kuan Veng as not only Chinese-Peruvian, but also Chineseperuvian, without a hyphen, much in the way that Donna Haraway merges two concepts treated as separate with her "Natureculture" (5). This is not to say that existing categories like Chinese should be discarded wholesale, but rather that putting them in dialogue with new labels enables readers to get a sense of the cultural and literary contexts that are advantageous is recognizing the idiosyncrasies that

result from the hybridity and border thinking epitomized by poems like *Nighttime*, in which without cultural context the nuances of Kuan Veng's symbolic vocabulary are lost.

Authors like Kuan Veng also serve as salient examples for the function of literature in making sense of broader socio-cultural trends. Hybridity is both specific and ambiguous with theorists like García Canclini stating that, "The emphasis on hybridization not only puts an end to the pretense of establishing 'pure' or 'authentic' identities; in addition, it demonstrates the risk of delimiting local, self-contained identities or those that attempt to assert themselves as radically opposed to national society or globalization" (xxviii). Kuan Veng's writing is fundamentally global in the transnational nature of both its author's identity and the textual traditions it draws upon, but paradoxically for these same reasons it is innately local. The subaltern, parochial character of Kuan Veng's identity, in fact, is central to its aesthetic and cultural implications. Kuan Veng's employment of Chinese cultural references and the Spanish language represents the position of border thinking that he inhabits as he traverses his multifaceted ethnic and cultural identity in a literary context.

Chapter 3:

Peruanidad, Chineseness and Hybridity in The Uncertain Elm

The previous chapter focused on *Mey Shut*, by Augusto Kuan Veng, while this chapter will focus on *The Uncertain Elm* by Pedro S. Zulen, a poet, librarian, philosopher, and social activist who lived and worked in Peru at roughly the same time as Kuan Veng. Zulen was a trailblazer among *tusanes*, publishing two books and many articles before he passed away at the age of 35. Born in Lima to a Peruvian *mestiza* mother and a Chinese father, Zulen's full name was Pedro Salvino Zulen Aymar. Zulen, in fact, is a hispanicization of his Chinese surname which was originally written as either Zun Leng or Su Leng (López-Calvo 189). Zulen was best known for his work as an activist and political theorist and an ardent supporter of indigenous Peruvian rights even going as far as to state, "The indigenous problem is Peru's only problem" (López-Calvo 60). *The Uncertain Elm*, which was published in 1930, five years after his death. Containing 27 poems, the pieces reflect Zulen's philosophical and aesthetic sensibilities. Notably, there is an absence of discussions surrounding his own identity as a mixed-race *tusán* writer. Zulen was educated at National University of San Marcos (NUSM), and briefly Harvard, in a wide range of subjects including mathematics, law, philosophy, and library science. Eventually Zulen would serve as director of the NUSM library and, for a few months, a professor of psychology until his death. Many of the theories and ideas that Zulen engaged with were drawn from European and American thinkers like Herbert Spencer, Williams James, Henri Bergeson, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. This expressly "western" frame of reference is a

key difference in the cultural and intellectual orientation of Zulen, and that of Kuan Veng, who was discussed in Chapter 2.

The influence of his Chinese heritage on Zulen's work is subtle, but his treatment of one theme, filial piety, can be seen as being influenced by his cultural background. Zulen's treatment of this topic parallels Kuan Veng's treatment of it. López-Calvo notes this in *Writing Túsán*, stating that Zulen, "initiates the tradition-shared by *túsán* and Nikkei authors- of paying homage to one's parents and grandparents" (49). In spite of their similarities, Zulen's poem, "Filial", and Kuan Veng's, "Maternal Voices/Be Unassuming (*Voces maternas/Sé sencillo*) diverge in a few key ways. Kuan Veng's "Maternal Voices" is a poem written from the perspective of a mother to her son. The speaker gives her son advice that is both pragmatic and tender. She advises him to keep a healthy skepticism about money, to be modest, and to remain uncorrupted.

Zulen's "Filial" is written from the inverse perspective: the narrator writes with their mother as the audience. This poem, like that of Kuan Veng, utilizes the style of poetic prose. In it the narrator expresses reverence for their mother, but unlike "Maternal Voices" is about expressing gratitude rather than giving advice. Each of the stanzas begin addressed to "mother" (*madre*), and are written in the second person, addressing the "mother" directly. The title of the poem, "Filial" refers to the relationship between parent and child, and is often discussed in the context of "filial piety", referring to respect for one's parents and ancestors. This concept exists in a western context but is also often used as a translation for the concept of "孝" (pronounced *xiào* in Mandarin), used to describe filial piety in several Chinese philosophical contexts like Confucianism. The use of the term filial therefore is ambiguous: potentially an allusion to the Confucian signification of the word, but left ambiguous for the reader, given that the cultural

emphasis placed on reverence for ancestors exists in a variety of cultural and spiritual belief systems.

The third stanza of “Filial” begins, “One day you prayed/And your faith cured my ailments, it made me strong;/desire arose in me/and changed my destiny,/I came back to life!” (*Oraste un día/y tu fe curó mi mal, me hizo fuerte;/surgió el anhelo,/cambió mi suerte,/¡me devolvió a la vida*” 17). In these lines, the narrator is thanking their mother for praying for them, which made them strong and changed their life. Although the work is one of fiction, it is also conceivable that there are autobiographical elements to a work like this, especially given that the work was brought into the public eye not by Zulen himself, but by someone else. Analyzing the work as autobiographical, it is written from the perspective of Zulen to his mother, who is not of Chinese descent. Although a similar process occurs by different means (both authors write works that emphasize the relationship between child and mother, although the perspectives are different), the two different filial relationships described are almost antithetical. In Zulen’s poem, the mother helps make the child “strong” (*fuerte*), with her prayers, a point of view that prioritizes ambition and drive with its use of language like “desire/ambition” (*anhelo*), compared to the maternal narrator in Kuan Veng’s poem whose refrain is to, “be unassuming”. By isolating differences in the linguistic choices made in the texts regarding analogous topics, we can gain insights into the way that subjectivity and agency are represented and reproduced in works of literature.

A juxtaposition can be made between Kuan Veng, whose writing draws on Chinese cultural traditions (as discussed in both Chapter 2 and the preceding paragraphs), and Zulen, whose writing draws inspiration from the Western literary and philosophical world. One obvious

example is the poem “Invocation to Poe” (*Invocación a Poe*). The “Poe” in the title references Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1949), an American writer. Zulen’s poem is clearly inspired by works of Poe’s, namely “The Raven”. There are several references to “Leonore” (*Leonora* in Zulen’s poem) and “the Raven” (*el cuervo*). Much of the poem is written in the second person and functions as a dialogue with the (deceased) Poe. Zulen writes, “You explore death” (*exploras a la muerte*) a tone that corresponds to that of the macabre Poe. This meta-awareness makes the people feel like a tribute to Poe, with Zulen using this literary homage as a means of invoking the memory and spirit of Poe.

Throughout the poem there is use of non-standard vocabulary. This language could have been more common when the work was written, the result of poetic license on behalf of the author, or perhaps something else, but the opacity of meaning of this lexicon adds another level of intrigue and challenge in efforts at translation. One example of this is the word “*do*”, an uncommon, anachronistic word in the Spanish language used to indicate place in literary contexts. This information gives context to the lines, “Let the singer/with the pronounced forehead/indulge the terror” (*¡Irrumpa el cantor/do la rotunda frente/ do mimara al terror*”). Even with the clarification, however, the exact implication of these three lines is ambiguous. “*Frente*” can refer to either a forehead or a “front”, and the idea of “pampering terror” is symbolically rich, if vague.

Insistent recollections of Western, occidental, even Greco-Roman society begin with the first lines that read, “Humanity, ancient bacchanal” (*Humanidad, bacanal antigua*). *Humanidad* is a word of Latin origin and often connotes European, post-Enlightenment thought. In the next line, the phrase ancient bacchanal recalls Bacchus (appearing in Greek mythology as Dionysus),

the god of wine and fertility who has come to represent the debaucherous character of ancient Greco-Roman culture.

Another one of Zulen's poems, "Walt Whitman at the Bacchanals" (*Walt Whitman en las bacanales*) also reflects an inclination toward the Greco-Roman. In the work there are four "characters" mentioned: Walt Whitman (in the title), Bacchus (*Baco*), Shakespeare, and Pan. This grouping represents a sampling of cultural elements of the Western canon dating from Ancient Greece to near-modern United States. Walt Whiman (1819-1892), ostensibly the narrator of this story, recounts a moment in time in this fictional merriment. In the first line of the poem, the narrator cries out to an unspecified other (seemingly Shakespeare from the context a few lines later) "Give me the nectar, give me the nectar" (*denme el néctar, denme el néctar*). Nectar (along with ambrosia) is considered in Greek mythology to be the food of the gods, with eating and drinking being a requirement for the maintenance of life among gods and mortals alike. In this context there is a flattening of the boundary between god and mortal, with both Shakespeare and Walt Whitman being elevated to the realm of the divine with their consumption of nectar and their fraternization with Pan and Bacchus, two gods.

The aforementioned Pan is a figure originating in Greek mythology. Often depicted with a human torso and the horns and hindquarters of a goat, he is the god of Nature. In the second line of "Walt Whitman", the narrator finishes his cry out saying, "Bacchus has broken Pan's flute" (*ha roto Baco la flauta de Pan!*). This brings up another motif in depictions of Pan: his flute. In many artistic renderings of Pan he is seen holding a specific kind of flute, a flute that has become so synonymous with Pan that is where it gets its name, the pan flute.

aquí os doy una emoción). This awareness of the form in which the text itself is being written is illustrative of the meta-awareness Zulen has regarding his poetic work. Not only is he cognizant of the relationship between reader and writer, but also acknowledges the subjectivity of the reader, and mentions the role of affect in the dynamic.

Zulen continues, “and then, laughing, he will bang on his tambourine until his last rites!” (*y entonces risueño batirá su pandereta hasta la extremaunción!*). Zulen mentions that the poet is playing an instrument, a tambourine. The word tambourine, however, is a translation of the Spanish *pandereta*. The word originated as a diminutive for *pandera* (or *panadera*) which in turn is derived either Greek or Latin (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA). It should also be noted that a tambourine like instrument (the tympanum) was placed in ceremonies in celebration of gods like Dionysus, who has been mentioned several times. Examples like these reflect not just Zulen’s own association with “the Western canon”, but also speak to the fact that a treatment of Peruvian (or Hispanophone) literature as a separate entity from the Anglo-American is flawed. It also raises questions about the challenges of translation. Even if one is able to *literally* translate a word from one language to another, it is much more complicated to create a translation that carries the same cultural connotations like the roots of words, or the implicit cultural context that can be taken for granted. I may read this work under the guise of hybridity, or as a work of Chinese literature, but the bespoke significance of influence writer to writer or even text to text create limitations on what these categories offer as analytical tools in the case of Zulen.

As I mentioned in the first chapter, the case study Shernuk uses to support his application of the Xenophone is dissimilar from Zulen’s work, even though both Siu Kam Wen and Zulen are Chinese-Peruvian writers. Siu’s work, *The Final Stretch* (*El tramo final*), is a collection of

short stories. The use of narrative necessitates the use of characters, many of whom Siu uses to articulate different identities or even cultural tensions he has observed in the Chinese community in Peru. For Shernuk, the dynamics rendered between these characters are a primary source of evidence in the argument that works written in non-Sinitic-languages can also be considered “Chinese” literature. Works like Zulen’s, then, present a different challenge. How can an argument be made that *The Uncertain Elm* belongs in the category of “Chinese” literature, when Chineseness is not central to the literary or thematic significance of his works?

One poem that reflects the significance of hybridity, though not necessarily in the way one might expect is “Don’t call them soulless” (*No les llameis soulless*). Unlike many of his poems which are written in Spanish, or “To Ireland” which is written in English, “Don’t call them soulless” includes both Spanish and English. The title itself features the word “soulless”, a word that could easily have been included in Spanish (*desalmado*). Which raises the question: why include multiple languages in the same poem? What does the inclusion of the English word contribute to “To Ireland”? The phrase in which this word can be found is also a refrain in the poem, appearing at both the beginning and the end. Considering the period of time in which this poem was written (August of 1922) the inclusion of English is unsurprising given that this was around the same time that Zulen was in the United States studying at Harvard before he returned to Peru. In this sense, the process of hybridity that Zulen experiences can be seen taking place between his Peruvian, hispanic identity and the American, Anglophone surroundings he found himself in.

The other English word used in the poem is “heart”. The first instance is a moment when Zulen is describing women from “rotund climates”, whose “lives are a long, jovial winter” (*estas*

mujeres de climas rotundos la vida es un largo, risueño invernar). He writes that, “Thusly, in the summer they store their hearts in the fridge-they know how to love more” (*por eso en verano es en la nievera que guardan su heart-más saben amar*). Perhaps referring to the women he is encountering in the United States, hence the “rotund climate”, the narrator employs a playful metaphor to describe his observations on romance.

The repeated use of negation, the imperative form, and the phrase “know to offer them intense eyes” (*sabed ofrendarles los ojos intensos*) in “Don’t call them soulless” all contribute to a sense of closeness between the narrator/writer and the reader. In addition to the personal nature of the subject matter at hand, the formal choices support an interpretation of the poem as lighthearted but sincere. Thematically the poem focuses on love, offering “advice” in the second person to the reader about how to engage with women romantically and the challenges one might encounter in the process. Ultimately “Don’t call them soulless” offers a different look into Zulen’s worldview, one that is more personal, while also giving insights into Zulen’s engagement with the Hispanic literary tradition and his intended audience: a Spanish speaking one, perhaps with even some awareness of English.

In an article titled, “*Pedro Zulen: diligente político en la sociedad peruana de inicios del siglo XXI*”, Saby Evelyn Lazarte Oyague discusses Zulen’s attitude regarding the oppression of subjugation of indigenous people by the Peruvian government. A parallel is drawn between the period in which Zulen was writing (the early 20th century) and a series of transformative events occurring in the same time period like the Russian Revolution, the Mexican revolution and World War I. Peruvian intellectuals reflect on these external circumstances as well as the economic and social conditions within Peru (Lazarte Oyague 151). Accordingly, while poems

take on a more lighthearted tone, other works like “To Ireland” have a more solemn one and by far the most blatantly political piece in *The Uncertain Elm*.

In the first stanza of “To Ireland”, the narrator praises the strength and persistence of the Irish: “Ever rebellious! Ever proud! Ever the same! Blessed bezou oh Ireland! For you struggle for freedom; your attitude is a thing of beauty. And every man who loves justice for its own sake, without fear or compromise, must make your cause his own” (27). Zulen uses the specific example of the Irish, but he also positions their plight to efforts for liberation as a universal one with language like “every man”. This line is also a “call to arms”, of sorts. The reader is encouraged not just to be passive, but to make the Irish’s struggle for freedom “his own”. This text is also written in the second person, as an apostrophe to “Ireland”, which serves as an explanation for another notable difference between this poem and the other ones in the collection: it is written in English.

This shift in language also corresponds to the use of non-standard spelling in “To Ireland” several times. These might be errors on the part of the printer, antiquated spellings of words that have fallen out of usage in the last century, stylistic choices, or errors on the part of the author. Regardless of the cause, however, they introduce a certain amount of semantic ambiguity. In several cases (“*governments*” rather than governments, “*olien*” instead of alien), a single letter in a word is changed in a way that does not seem to interfere with the intended diction. In other cases though, the author’s intentions become ambiguous as a result of these spellings. In the second line of the poem Zulen writes, “Blessed *bezou* oh Ireland!” (27). I am unfamiliar with any usage of the word “bezou” in either the English or the Spanish language, a quandary that I was

unable to resolve even with further investigation. The only word that seemed like a possibility is the French *bisou*, meaning a kiss, but even this interpretation has little basis in this context.

The other ambiguous diction is the inclusion of the word, “*epresoners*” in the last paragraph of the poem. On first glance the word seems to bear some resemblance to either the word “prisoners” or contextually, “impresoners”. Even so, both of these words has not just one, but several letters different from the alternate possibility. English was not Zulen’s native language, and even so he demonstrated remarkable facility in utilizing it to write this poem, but it entirely possible that this was merely a typo on his behalf. Moments like these correspond to the sense of untranslatability Wu Fu describes in her article. The two pieces that Wu Fu puts in dialogue are, “defined by the consequences of transpacific movement after Empire” (13). Like the texts chosen by Shernuk, “So Far Away in Cuba” and “*Mudas las garzas*” are narrative texts written with the overt intention of telling “transpacific” stories. On the other hand, in poems like “To Ireland”, we see Chinese-Latin American authors discoursing across the Atlantic and the Americas. By using English, a language beyond either of the languages associated with his ethnic background, specifically English with ambiguities in spelling and meaning, Zulen becomes literally “untranslatable”.

This text attests to Zulen’s concerns with the plight of marginalized people in the face of oppression, using the maltreatment of Irish people by the English as an illustration. In the second stanza, Zulen makes clear the ubiquitousness of the plight of the disenfranchised stating, “For your cause is that of all peoples who suffer alien laws, olien governments and write beneath the tyranny of brute force” (27). This passage is critical of a specific kind of injustice: state-sponsored violence, and given the activist work that Zulen participated in support of

indigenous people in Peru, it does not seem farfetched to observe the parallel maltreatment of the two groups (the Irish and indigenous Peruvians). Returning to Lagarte Oyague, she wrote that, “Pedro Zulen dedicated himself to observing the reality of Peruvians and to interpreting it with a profoundly social and political concern, under the rigor of philosophical analysis” (153). This framing emphasizes both Zulen’s role as an intellectual and his strong sense of morality, qualities that carry over into his poetic work.

In the last line of the poem, Zulen alludes to a common source of inspiration, William Shakespeare, writing “Cross, heavy-footed Caliban will vanish before the shadow of divine Ariel!” (27). These two characters, Caliban and Ariel, are from *The Tempest*, a play that has increasingly been analyzed through the lens of post-colonial theory. *The Tempest* tells the story of the protagonist, Prospero, his daughter Miranda, the enslaved Caliban, Ariel, who is also bound to serve Prospero and several other characters on an island (however they are less relevant to understanding the significance of Zulen’s reference. As Deborah Willis argues in her article, although *The Tempest* does not explicitly condemn the enterprise of colonialism, its ambivalent attitude toward the subject reflects the deficiencies in Prospero’s colonial mentality. Willis also states that, “the play’s true threatening ‘other’ is not Caliban, but Antonio” (280). Zulen wrote “To Ireland” many decades before academics like Willis and Brown (who Willis is referencing in the aforementioned quote) published their scholarship on the matter.

With its poetic language and use of literary allusion this final line about Caliban and Ariel is a clear-cut departure from from the rest of the poem which is written in a more direct, prosaic style. This juxtaposition makes the line a generative starting point for analysis. In this line, Caliban is characterized as “cross” and “heavy-footed”, neither of which are positive attributes.

Ariel, on the other hand, is designated as “divine”. This binary, in fact, is nearly identical to an interpretation of *The Tempest* layed out in an essay written by Uruguayan essayist José Enrique Rodó in 1900 titled “Ariel”. The essay is written as an imaginary lecture being given by Prospero to a group of pupils. In the first few pages Rodó lays out his interpretation of Ariel and Caliban’s symbolic value:

Shakespeare’s ethereal Ariel symbolizes the noble, soaring aspect of the human spirit. He represents the superiority of reason and feeling over the base impulses of irrationality. He is generous enthusiasm, elevated and unselfish motivation in all actions, spirituality in culture, vivacity and grace in intelligence. Ariel is the ideal toward which human selection ascends, the force that wields life’s eternal chisel, effacing from aspiring mankind the clinging vestiges of Caliban, the play’s symbol of brutal sensuality. (31)

This quote is one that is also cited in a 1971 lecture that was given by Rod Marsh in which he discusses the representation of Ariel and Caliban in the work of Rodó, as well as the Cuban writer Roberto Fernández Retamar. Marsh outlines the political concerns about modernity and nationalism in the context of Latin America and its relationship to the United States. This discourse is an expansive one, and not the focus of this project, but is meant to illustrate that Zulen’s reference to *The Tempest* represents how situated he was in the Latin American literary community at the time, that was in a deep moment of contemplation about what the future were to hold for the young nations of Latin America and how they would relate economically, politically, and intellectually to the Euro-American world.

The confluence of factors that influence Zulen is illustrative of a type of hybridity that García Canclini discusses, “I understand for hybridization socio- cultural processes in which

discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices” (xxv). Zulen’s hybridity, in a sense, is most evident in his sensibility as a Peuvian man who is aware of European geopolitics and is educated (at least partially) in the United States. These are the strands of his identity that Zulen emphasizes in his own self-expression, with him making almost no mentions (as far as I am aware) to the influence of his Chinese ancestry on work. This is perhaps not the kind of hybridity García Canclini anticipates in his theorization, but the mercurial nature of diaspora identity, especially that of individuals whose identities fall outside traditional notions of legibility encourage unorthodox applications of existing categories and frameworks.

The concept of hybridity is operative in my analysis of “To Ireland”, but it can be useful to bring in the work of scholars like Friedman that take a more skeptical attitude toward hybridity as a tool for analysis. In his article Friedman writes in response to Clifford’s routes,

“viewing the object from his own cultural perspective, its hybridity is evident, combining as it does forms from different worlds. *But, hybrid for whom, one might ask?* Without a deeper ethnographic investigation into how people actually engage with such apparently hybrid objects, how the latter figure in their lives, there is a tendency to conflate our own emics with those of the people we are attempting to understand”. (23, emphasis my own)

From the vantage point of a reader working from a different cultural perspective nearly a century later, the Zulen’s use of the English language and Ireland as subject matter may be unexpected. Who is to say though, that when he was engaged in the process of writing Zulen was cognizant of the process of hybridity that is being retroactively identified? It is now common to acknowledge that framing hybridity as the mixture of two disparate cultures but I would argue

that the array of identities that Zulen inhabits, and the way that these identities manifest in his writing complicate arguments both for and against hybridity.

The “Chineseness” being imposed on Zulen is In Chun’s “Fuck Chineseness” he broaches theoretical questions applicable in the case of writers like Zulen, asking “How does one invoke the ‘real’ consciousness of ethnic realities that are the imaginative creations and deliberate distortions of local, institutional nexuses of power?” (131). Zulen was a mixed-race, Chinese-Peruvian author, but a close reading of his work shows that the significance of this identity on his work is rather limited. Observations about mythologized connections between East Asians and the indigenous peoples of the America’s can be put forth and references to his Chinese ancestry can be seen in contemporaneous analyses of his work, but these observations are not grounded in a *literary* analysis of the work so for the most part they fall outside of the research I am pursuing. None of the poems by Zulen make any explicit references to his *tusán* identity, instead they contain a myriad of Greco-Roman, British and American references. In the context of a writer like Zulen then, scholars more skeptical of notions of categories like “Chineseness” and “hybridity” provide a persuasive counterpoint to an analysis of authors like Kuan Veng whose writing actively incorporates aspects of his Chinese and Peruvian identities.

Conclusion

The field of Chinese-Peruvian and Asian-Latin American literature in general is teeming with possibilities, with Kuan Veng and Zulen representing only two of the myriad of authors that write from this positionality. In this project I chose to focus on two texts that were written in a different historical moment in which they were two of the only *tusán* writers publishing in Peru, but in recent years, a rapid rise in the amount of cultural production by *tusanes* in the public sphere like writers, artists, activists and composers like Julia Wong Kcomt Miguel Ángel Sanz Chung, Carlos Chong Rodríguez, Rodrigo Campos and Nilo Augusto Velarde, to name a few.

My goal is not to draw a conclusion about the nature of *tusán* identity or to make sweeping statements about this vibrant, enduring community, but rather to spark conversation and provide some of my observations about the reciprocal relationship between the sociohistorical experience of these authors (and by proxy author authors with overlapping experiences) and the their literary production. Looking to individuals, especially through their self-representation in literature we can look to language to provide clues about the stated and subliminal beliefs about an author, context that is operative to fully appreciate texts on an aesthetic and creative level.

One key point of reference has been *Hybrid Cultures* by García Canclini which explores hybridity as a *process* that centers the way that hybridization takes place, rather than its “outcome”. This framing is useful in comparing two authors who relate to the similar aspects of their identity in such different ways, as represented by the choices they make in style and subject matter of their writing. García Canclini’s work is often read in a Latin American studies context,

but bringing it into dialogue with authors like Shuh-mei Shih, highlighting the unique liminality these authors occupy.

Shuh-mei Shih and her conception of the Sinophone illustrates the conundrums posed by the use of language as a means of literary categorization. The field of Sinophone studies has been incredibly influential in shifting the way China and Chinese literature are studied, making room in the conversation for all kinds of writers in, like those in diaspora, but only if they wrote in Chinese. These discussions connect to more recent texts by scholars like Kyle Shernuk, who offers the “Xenophone” as a way of framing works of literature by “Chinese” authors who do not fit under the label of “Sinophone”. While Shernuk discusses short stories by Chinese-Peruvian-American author Siu Kam Wen, I opted to focus my research on two writers whose work has received less attention. One author, however, who has taken notice of these works, is Ignacio López-Calvo. López-Calvo’s book *Writing Tusán* has been an invaluable touchstone for me to refer back to as it offers unparalleled insight into the field of *tusán* literature as it provides a survey of the most prominent Chinese-Peruvian authors from Zulen onward.

This research was also shaped by Puo-An Wu Fu’s essay “Transpacific Subjectivities,” which employs a process of close reading quite similar to my own. Fu’s theoretical interventions regarding inaccurate notions of translatability and the utility of literature as a way of making sense of broader societal issues concerning diaspora and post-imperial society.

In a project that combines two disciplines that usually are not considered in tandem, Latin American and Asian Studies, Le-Khac’s book *Giving Form to an Asian and Latinx America* has provided a compelling model for approaching the intersections of these two distinct fields. Although the subject matter she discusses and her methodology is slightly different from my

own, her propensity for finding unexpected patterns and connections has been influential in my own work.

Le-Khac's work is reminiscent of another piece that overlaps with my own work, a dissertation by Maria Montt Strabucchi titled *Imagining China in Contemporary Latin American Literature*. Strabucchi examines the way that China is represented in modern Latin American literature and makes astute observations about the way that Chineseness is employed in these works. In some ways it acts as a foil to the conventional racial hierarchy of mestizaje and raises important questions about the reality of so-called multiculturalism in Latin American society.

All of these sources have been operative in my reading of both Kuan Veng and Zulen. Kuan Veng's writing represents some of the creative possibilities presented by the liminality of his identity. Although he writes in Spanish, his use of Chinese cultural sources adds a unique element to his poetry seldom found in Peruvian literature, especially at the time. The themes Kuan Veng broaches like love, familial ties and the natural world, however, are universal ones.

Zulen, on the other hand, provides a useful counterpoint to Kuan Veng. As a mixed-race *tusán* who successfully incorporated himself into positions of prestige in Peruvian society, he demonstrates that while analyzing works of literature with their author's cultural or ethnic background can be informative, it should never be limiting. Analysis of Zulen's poetry points for the most part to his fascination with Euro-American literature and philosophy, not the Chinese tradition. In the same way that my knowledge of several languages allows me to traverse several different linguistic worlds, and their associated culture, Zulen's use of both English and Spanish enables him to both engage with theorists on a philosophical level but also to incorporate the intellectual and literary elements of these traditions into his work in unexpected ways. Zulen's

quotidian poetry is not what made him famous, but his ability to establish himself as a member of the Peruvian intelligentsia corresponds to the referentiality and floweriness of his poetry, along with his thematic concerns which are concurrent with the other writers and thinkers with whom he engaged.

Research on the literature of the Chinese diaspora in Latin America is on the rise, but in recent years it has begun to receive more and more attention from scholars. In fact, several of the works that I refer to in this project had not even been published when this project began. Before I settled on *Mey Shut* and *The Uncertain Elm* as the primary texts I would be analyzing, I found a numerous other fascinating sources like social media posts by young, nationalistic Chinese-Spainards (which I mentioned) and surrealist novels by Chinese-Cuban writers like Severo Sarduy, so although a project like this one required a narrowing of scope there are countless other exciting projects to be undertaken in this field. Only a few weeks before I handed this project in, I was made aware that a class titled “The Chinese in Latin America” is being taught at a large, research university in the United States. As awareness increases and more scholarship on the subject is published, I am confident that soon books like *Mey Shut* and *The Uncertain Elm*, authors like Augusto Kuan Veng and Pedro S. Zulen, and the *tusán* community itself will be on all of our minds, not just mine.

Appendix

Works mentioned from *Mey Shut: Poemas en Prosa* by Augusto Kuan Veng. All translations are my own. *Mey Shut* does not include page numbers, so page numbers cannot be listed.

PROLOGO

“El caso de Kuan Veng es original.

Lo conocí una tarde.

-¿Ud. es Rasco? me preguntó.

-Sí, soy Rasco?.

-¡Oh señor! Yo también quisiera escribir. Tengo un pequeño artículo, si Ud. lo publicara en su diario me sentiría muy contento.

-Déjeme el artículo; veremos. ¿Me permite una indiscreción?

¿Es usted Chino?

-Sí señor.

-¿Nacido en China?

-Sí, y de padres chinos. ¡Bien se me conoce en la cara!

-En la cara si, más en el lenguaje no. Habla usted el castellano tan bien que he dudado acerca de su verdadera nacionalidad. Tanto gusto conocerlo.”

Prologue

“The case of Kuan Veng is an original one.

I met him one afternoon.

-‘Are you Rasco?’, he asked me.

-Yes, i’m Rasco?

-(Oh, sir! I too would like to be a writer. I have a little article here. If you were to publish it in your newspaper I would be very happy.

-Leave the article with me; we’ll see. ¿May I ask an impolite question? ¿Are you Chinese?

-Yes sir, I am.

-You were born in China?

-Yes, and my parents are Chinese. I guess it shows in my face!

-I can tell from your appearance, but not from your speech. *You speak Spanish so well that I was uncertain about your true nationality.* It was a pleasure to meet you.”

“VOCES MATERNALES: SÉ SENCILLO”

Sé sencillo, hijo mío, que jamás la soberbia domine tu corazón.

Por inteligente que fueras, habrá siempre alguien que te supere.

Es prudente que seas modesto, porque aun el talento es voluble: hoy te acompaña como una cualidad inherente, y mañana se alejará de tí cual si jamás te hiciera halagado; entonces, si en tu lucidez fuiste soberbio, la ironía y el desprecio de tus conocidos aumentarán el dolor profundo de la pérdida del talento....

No te fies ni te envanezcas del dinero: quien no adora más que el oro, de clara muestra de que no ha nacido sino para cosas viles.

Sé modesto: recuerda siempre los lotos que crecen plácidamente en tu heredad: nacen blancos no se contaminan en su floración plena y conservan la misma blancura en su decadencia. Y tú bien sabes que por esta sencillez y pureza, la diosa de la Misericordia los declara su flor predilecta.

Sé sencillo, porque la sencillez impresiona más gratamente que el oro, que el talento y que la misma hermosura, tan ponderada y tan tristemente vana.

Sé sencillo, hijo mío, la sencillez es el único adorno digno y capaz de realzar la personalidad del hombre superior.....

English translation my own, title translation from Ignacio López-Calvo

“Maternal Voices: Be Unassuming”

By unassuming, my son, so pride may never dominate your heart.

No matter how intelligent you are, there will always be someone that outdoes you.

It is judicious for you to be modest, because even talent is fickle: today it is inherent to your very being, and tomorrow it will disappear as if it had never flattered you; so if you were prideful in your lucidity, the irony and disdain of those around you will only increase the deep pain caused by your loss of talent....

Don't place too much importance on or be conceited about money: those who cherish wealth more than anything make clear that their life's only purpose is to engage in hateful behavior.

Be modest: always remember that your inheritance is one of a lotus growing serenely: they are born white, they remain unblemished even as they fully blossom, and they maintain that same milky color in their decline.

You know well that the goddess of Mercy declares them as her favorite because of this simplicity and purity.

Be unassuming, because your meekness leaves a better impression than gold, talent, or even beauty itself, so valued and so tragically futile.

Be unassuming, my son, simplicity is the only adornment worthy and capable of producing the ideal man....

“CONTRASTE”

Era un día de fiesta. Casi todos los vecinos se habían congregado en el parque Shai-Fa. Siguiendo la costumbre, los hombres, las mujeres y los niños formaban grupos aparte, divirtiéndose cada cual según sus caprichos.

Los místicos iban a orar en el templo cercano de BUDA, los traviesos escalaban la interminable escalera de la torre de porcelana, y los más prácticos aprovechaban las clara aguas del lago para refrescar su cálido cuerpo.

El inmenso gentío invadía el parque entero, y animadas charlas con regocijantes risas daban la grata sensación de una feria de alegría. ...En una pequeña distancia se aislaban dos personas: era un anciano de luengas barbas y un imberbe adolescente. Ambos guardan una quietud serena.

El anciano miraba con majestuosa indolencia el bullicioso destile de los concurrentes; el joven entusiasta tenía una mirada ávida de sensaciones, no perdía un solo detalle, y si alguna doncella pasaba a su lado, agrandaba sus ojos y un suave carmín invadía su rostro, mientras su ser entero se transformaba, dando clara muestra de haber descubierto una extraña y deleitosa emoción....; pero el anciano para todos tenía la misma fría indiferencia....

El sol obscurecía y la concurrencia lentamente se alejaba.

Antes de retirarme y con suma reverencia, interrogué al grave anciano:

-Noble señor, ¿puedo tener el placer de oír su opinión sobre la magnífica fiesta de hoy?

-Quimera, hijo, quimera, vanidad: más vale no haber nacido....

Pregunté también al joven:

-Mozuelo: ¿qué tal te parece la fiesta?

-Espléndida, señor, espléndida: que alegre es la vida....

Bien decía el filósofo Luy Sen Cum: la vida es un contraste permanente. Una misma cosa hará reír y llorar al mismo tiempo: mientras uno se entristece, otro se alegra: mientras uno goza., otro sufre: mientras uno nace lozano para la vida, otro tristemente camina hacia la muerte.....

“Contrast”

It was a holiday. Almost everyone in the neighborhood had gathered in Shai-Fa park. As was customary, the men, the women, and the children each split off into their own group, enjoying themselves however they saw fit.

The mystics went to pray in the nearby Buddhist temple, the hooligans climbed the unending stairs of the porcelain tower, and the most practical ones took advantage of the lake's clear waters to cool off their warm bodies.

The huge crowd took up the entire park, and animated chats with ecstatic laughter created the pleasant sensation of a joyous fair....At a short distance, two people stood apart: an elderly man with a bushy beard, and a clean shaven youngster. Together they shared a harmonious silence.

With majestic indifference, the old man watched the bustling trickle of the attendees; the enthusiastic young man had a gaze eager for sensation, not missing a single detail, and if any lady passed by him, his eyes widened and a soft carmine crept into his face, while his entire being transformed, making obvious that he had discovered a strange and delightful emotion....; but the old man had a detached indifference for everything...

The sun was setting, and the crowd was starting to disperse.

Before leaving and with the utmost reserve, I asked the solemn elder:

-Honorable sir, ¿May I have the pleasure of hearing your opinion on today's magnificent festivities?

-Illusion, son, illusion, vanity: it would be better to never have been born....

I also asked the younger man:

-Son, what did you think about the celebration?

-It was splendid, sir, splendid: what a joy life is....

The philosopher Luy Sen Cum said it well: life is always changing. One thing can make you laugh and cry at the same time: while someone gets sad, someone else is happy: while one person is having fun, another suffers: while one is born primed for life, another marches sadly toward death.....

“NOCTURNO”

En la lejanía ya asoma la Luná. Está pálida como una dama que recién se levanta; pero a medida que camina, su rostro se colora.

Sus pasos son quedos, cual los pasos de una tierna madre que vigila el sueño del hijo de sus entrañas.

Camina en silencio, y sonrío a todo cuanto en su paso encuentra, y los rayos de su sonrisa penetran hasta en los más oscuros rincones.

Todos la miran encantados y hasta los grillos, las ranas y los sapos (de fealdad reconocida), se atreven a salir de sus escondrijos, y al ver tan espléndidamente bella a la diosa Luna, se entusiasman, prorumpen en gritos de admiración y cantan un himno interminable con sus voces monótonas y salvajes.....

En el umbral de mi aposento se pára la Diosa, como si me pidiera permiso para penetrar. Yo abro galantemente todas las puertas y apago con gusto todas las luces, para que ella pueda lucir toda su brillantez argentina....

La Luna me mira plácidamente, y yo al contemplarla, descifro muchos enigmas de la vida y del amor....

Y al considerarla tan serena, tan buena, yo siento todo el prestigio, todo el secreto poderío de la bondad que sólo un arma invencible tiene:

LA ETERNA SONRISA....

La Luna nota mi comprensión. Sonríe complacida, y lentamente de mi estancia se aleja....

“Nighttime”

In the distance the Moon is already beginning to appear. It is pale, like a lady that has just woken up; but as she walks, the color returns to her face.

Her footsteps are quiet, like those of a loving mother that watches over the child that came from her own womb.

She walks silently, and smiles at everything she finds in her path, and her beaming smiles penetrate even the darkest corners.

Everyone looks at her with enchantment and even the crickets, the frogs and the toads (known for their homeliness), dare to come out from their hiding places, and upon seeing the remarkably beautiful Moon goddess, they are filled with excitement, they burst out in shouts of admiration and sing an endless hymn with their tedious, wild voices....

The Goddess stands in the threshold of my room, as if she were asking my permission to enter. I politely open all of the doors and gladly switch off the lights, so that she can show off her silvery radiance.

The Moon looks at me assuredly, and when I gaze at her, I begin to understand many of life and love’s mysteries....

And when I consider how serene she is, how great she is, I can feel the prestige, all of the hidden power of the goodness that only an invincible weapon has:

THE ETERNAL SMILE....

The Moon recognizes my understanding. She smiles with satisfaction, and slowly, she withdraws from my room....

“EL PRIMER BESO”

Era una noche de regocijo, era una bulliciosa fiesta infantil: era la fiesta de la Luna....

En un diminuto y engalanado kiosco, estaba la amada de mi alma. Yo absorto la contemplaba, descubriendo no soñadas bellezas.... Ella me percibe y con disimulo se aparta silenciosamente del animado festín, prefiriendo la ideal dulzura de mis palabras a los vulgares dulces materiales....

¡Oh, qué linda estaba mi Jhoy Zin! Sus ojos artísticamente rasgados me miraban tiernamente, mientras su perfumado cuerpo con timidez encantadora, buscaba en mí un apoyo.

Alternando la locuacidad con el silencio, llegamos solos hasta el lindo pabellón Sang Li Fu que no recuerdo qué enamorado mandarín hizo construir para sus románticas horas....

El paisaje era espléndido, el pabellón lucía sus múltiples colores, y la Luna, cual si estuviera emocionada por los homenajes, enviaba a la tierra toda su brillantez argentina.

Pero la claridad de la diosa nos estorbaba, necesitábamos la obscuridad propicia, que ningún ser humano divisarnos pudiera en lontananza.

Contrariada levanta Jhoy Zin sus ojos al cielo y yo, sin quererlo, la sigo; ella parece murmurar una plegaria, y yo, sin comprenderlo, la acompaño....

Y ¡oh poder de la apasionada plegaria! La Luna, siempre discreta y siempre propicia para los enamorados, nos escuchaba, y con disimulo de una condescendiente abuela, tápase con un denso paño su radiante rostro....

En esa deseada penumbra, y en medio del susurro cadencioso de los árboles y el canto ténue y lejano de los ruiseñores, juntamos nuestros ardientes labios y sellamos nuestro cariño infinito con un prolongado beso de amor....

“First Kiss”

It was a night of celebration, a bustling, childish holiday: it was the Moon Festival

In a tiny, deceptive kiosco was the love of my life. I gazed at her with amazement, discovering unimaginable beauty.... She noticed me, and stealthily and silently removed from the lively feat, preferring the sweet idea of my conversation to the cloying sweetness at hand....

Oh, how beautiful Jhoy Zin was! Her artful, almond-shaped eyes watched me tenderly, while her fragrant body looked to me for support with charming timidity.

Alternating between verbosity and silence, the two of us alone arrived at the lovely Sang Li Fu pavilion that a sinic man whose name I can't remember had built for his romantic moments....

The landscape was splendid, the pavilion's multiple colors shined, and the Moon, as if touched by these tributes, directed all of its silvery brilliance to the earth.

But the goddess's clarity disrupted us, we needed a suitable darkness, in which no human being could spot us in the distance.

Upset, Jhoy Zin got up with her eyes to the sky and I, unintentionally, followed her; she seemed to murmur a prayer, and I, without understanding, joined her....

And oh, the power of passionate prayer! The Moon, always discreet and always favorable for lovers, heard us, and with the craftiness of a patronizing grandmother, covered her radiant face with a thick cloth....

In this coveted twilight, and amidst the rhythmic whispers of the trees and the faint, faraway song of the nightingales, we brought our burning lips together and sealed our infinite affection with a lengthy, loving kiss....

Works mentioned from *El Olmo Incierto de la Nevada* by Pedro S. Zulen. All translations are my own.

“Filial” (p.17)

Madre:

Bajo otro cielo,
desde un país lejano,
quiero decirte
una plegaria de ensueño.

Porque tu puro corazón ha vertido
en mi alma gallardías,
puesto lumbre en mi camino,
fervores y púrpuras en mi mente.

Oraste un día
y tu fé curó mi mal, me hizo fuerte;
surgió el anhelo,
cambió mi suerte,
¡me devolvió a la vida!

Madre:

¿Qué miras en lontananza?
¡si la niebla es grata!
¡si los hielos son suaves!
¡si los aires son tiernos!

Madre:

¡mécame en tu esperanza!

Filial (p. 17)

Mother:

Under another sky,

From a far away land,
I want to recite
an enchanting prayer to you

Because your pure heart has
imbued my soul with gallantry,
you lit the flames that guided me,
my mind filled with fervor and purple

One day you prayed
And your faith cured my ailments, it made me strong;
desire arose,
my luck changed,
I came back to life!

Mother:

What draws you to the horizon?
When the fog is so delightful!
When the ice is so smooth!
When the breeze is so gentle!

Mother:

Cradle me in your hopes!

“To Ireland” (p. 27)

Ever rebellious! Ever proud! Ever the same! Blessed be you oh Ireland! For you struggle for freedom; your attitude is a thing of beauty. And every man who loves justice for its own sake, without fear or compromise, must make your cause his own.

For your cause is that of all peoples who suffer alien laws, alien governments and writhe beneath the tyranny of brute force.

All the peoples oppressed by the goad of bayonets are filled with new hope at sight of your unbreakable faith. Peoples who battle like you must sooner or later conquer their oppressors, however powerful and implacable they may be.

And you shall conquer, for your forehead and your spirit, proudly erect, will confound your oppressors. Cross, heavy-footed Caliban will vanish before the shadow of divine Ariel!

“Invocación a Poe” (p.33-36)

Humanidad,

bacanal antigua,
¿qué remilga tu libar?
Satánico reguero
de escorpiones dolientes
venciendo el acueducto
retintas el sendero
-exploras a la muerte,-
y palpita un ruiseñor.

¡Que se hinchen los geranios
y retumben los chirridos;
surja el alma de los goznes,
viejo moho cubra el sol!

¡Irrumpa el cantor
de la rotunda frente
do mimara al terror;
el ceño rugiente;
beodo el cabello de noche y de alcohol;
tempestades reviente
su mirar,
de la cumbre al valle que fué su rondar.

¡Prostérnese la angustia,
revuélquese el afán;
filósofos barbudos
los cuerpos en las camas
comiencen a achiar.

Soñador!
cabellera de amargor!
una sombra se acordaba,
cual si la vida
arrepintiera bajo la nube de un enervor.
¡Es un eco! Me advierte el ave dormida.
En vano busco la cicatriz.
Esa pasión rayana
fué un ardid;
porque Leonora y el cuervo

fueron al acerbo más allá;
 y el escarabajo, la humana morbidez.
 ¡Entonces!, y ¿ahora?
 -Leonora,
 la última semicadencia de una incertidum
 (bre;
 el cuervo, la mueca perdida en el por qué;
 el escarabajo un eructo del ayer.
 De la sonrisa solitaria
 sólo arruga.
 -El misterio diseñaba
 en su fuga.
 ¿Qué es de la pupila?
 ¡Ahogó! ¡Tan adentro del crepúsculo se
 (hacia!
 Se ha manchado tu sien. ¿Un tumbo tras
 (de la escarcha?
 -Acaso el molusco al parar.
 No hay tormentas en tu ceño.
 ¿Desde cuando se mendiga al vendabal?
 Y ¿esa emoción que oprimió al leño?
 ¿Has visto el pétalo moribundo de un al-
 (borar?

¡Rechinen dentaduras,
 repélase el batán;
 ratones comensales,
 hormigas alocadas,
 perplejen el pensar!

¿Qué se agita en el armario?
 La flauta se yergue como para tocar.
 ¿Quién la puerta desquicia?
 El herraje forcejea por saltar.
 ¡Rumor de voces en la rendija!
 Es la nieve que congela en el zaguán.
 ¡Bermejo extraño al andabon!
 La llama bronce del dinten.
 Por la grieta de la torda calavera preña

(orquestración.
 En las cuerdas de la hamaca la reventa-
 (zón.

 Bron!.....
 Bron!.....
 Bron!.....
 Bron!.....

¿Qué mira la Eternidad?
 La polilla entumecida;
 el tedio enrubia su faz.
 ¡Tristecilla!
 En la flama de lascivia se remoza el esco
 (zor,
 y en el hueco de la llave estertores la ilu
 (sión.

“Invocation to Poe” (p. 33-36)

Humanity,
 ancient bacchanal
 what’s stopping you from drinking?
 Satanic trail
 of sorrowful scorpions
 overtaking the aqueduct
 retintas el sendero
 -you explore death-
 and a nightingale throbs.

Let the geraniums swell
 and chirps echo;
 the soul springs forth from the hinges,
 old mildew covers the sun!

Let the singer
 with the pronounced forehead
 indulge the terror;
 brow roaring;
 hair drunk from nightfall and liquor;

No les llaméis soulless, no les llaméis soul
(less,

que saben amar!

No les llameis soulless, no les llaméis soul-
(less,

os van a alocar!

Para estas mujeres de climas rotundos
la vida es un largo, risueño invernarse,
por eso en verano es en la nievera que
(guardan su heart—
más saben amar!

No les tañéis la música flébil, el aria mis-
(terio, la ténue caricia,
y ya ni al verlas la murria suspira,
más saben amar!

Sabed ofrendarles
los ojos intensos,
el tosco ademán,
los negros cabellos:
su heart latirá.
El hielo se encrespa,
la ruta sucumbe,
el brazo de un olmo Os puede aplastar,
y entre las peñas
surge un romance.....
¡Lo váis a llorar!

No les llaméis soulless, no les llaméis soul-
(less,

que saben amar!

No les llaméis soulless, no les llaméis soul-
(less,

os van a alocar!

“Más allá del crepúsculo”

—¿Quién doró tus cabellos?

—Me soñó la nube una mañana de sol.

—¿Quién puso misterio en tu mirada?

—Un rayo de luna se extravió en mi sér.

—¿Quién humedeció tus labios de rocío?

—Estuve durmiendo bajo una flor.

—¿Es tu sonrisa el eco de una aurora?

—Una nostalgia de la Eternidad.

“Don’t Call Them Soulless” (p. 33-34)

Don’t call them soulless, don’t call them soul

(less,

they know how to love!

Don’t call them soulless, don’t call them soul

(less,

they’ll drive you crazy!

For these women from rotund climates,

life is a long, jovial hibernation,

that’s why in the summer it is in the fridge

(where they store their hearts-

that’s how much they know about loving!

Do not strum them a mournful tune, the mys(

(terious aria, the faint caress,

and when you see them, don’t even let out a depressed sigh

that’s how much they know about loving!

Know how to offer them

intense eyes

rough gestures
 hairs:
 their heart will throb.
 The ice curls
 the road gives in,
 the branch of an elm can crush You,
 and between the rocks
 a romance appears.....
 You will shed tears!

Don't call them soulless, don't call them soul-
 (less,
 they know how to love!
 Don't call them soulless, don't call them soul-
 (less,
 they'll drive you crazy!

“WALT WHITMAN EN LAS BACCANALES” (p. 48)

Denme el néctar, denme el néctar,
 ha roto Baco la flauta de Pan!
 Denme el néctar, denme el néctar,
 muero de sed!
 Shakespeare, Shakespeare,
 camarada! ¿cómo puedes dormir?
 La risa, el ruido, gritos de bacantes: te-
 (rrible almohada—
 y puedes dormir!
 Camarada despierta!
 Está rota la flauta, llora Pan!
 Denme el néctar, denme el néctar,
 puedo morir!

Walt Whitman at the Bacchanals (p. 48)

Give me the nectar, give me the nectar,
 Bacchus has broken Pan's flute!
 Give me the nectar, give me the nectar,
 I'm dying of thirst!
 Shakespeare, Shakespeare,

Tell the poet
here I offer you an emotion
and then, laughing, he will bang on his
tambourine
until his last rites

Bibliography

- A., Kuan Veng. *Mey Shut: Poemas En Prosa*. Imp, "Lux" De E. L. Castro, 1924.
- Botero Castrillón, S. . (2021). Mid-Autumn Festival . *Online Journal Mundo Asia Pacifico*, 10(19), 133–134.
- Canclini Néstor García. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Chun, Allen. “Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity.” *Boundary 2*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1996, pp. 111–138., <https://doi.org/10.2307/303809>.
- De Lissovoy, N., & Bailón, R. O. F. (2019). "Chapter 7 Coloniality". In *Keywords in Radical Philosophy and Education*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
- Friedman, Jonathan. “From Roots to Routes: Tropes for Trippers.” *Anthropological Theory*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1 Mar. 2002, pp. 21–36., <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499602002001286>.
- Fu, Puo-An Wu. "Transpacific Subjectivities: 'Chinese'--Latin American Literature after Empire." *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, annual 2018, pp. 13+. *Gale Academic OneFile*.
- Haraway, Donna. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003.
- Hu-Dehart, Evelyn. *Dossier: The China-Latin America and Caribbean Relation*. Latin American Studies Association Forum, 2021.
- INEI Difunde Base De Datos De Los Censos Nacionales 2017 y El Perfil Sociodemográfico Del Perú*. Instituto Nacional De Estadística e Informática, [http://m.inei.gob.pe/prensa/noticias/inei-difunde-base-de-datos-de-los-censos-nacionales-2017-y-el-perfil-sociodemografico-del-peru-10935/#:~:text=Los%20resultados%20de%20los%20Censos%20Nacionales%202017%3A%20XII%20de%20Poblaci%C3%B3n,%25\)%20en%20el%20%C3%A1rea%20rural](http://m.inei.gob.pe/prensa/noticias/inei-difunde-base-de-datos-de-los-censos-nacionales-2017-y-el-perfil-sociodemografico-del-peru-10935/#:~:text=Los%20resultados%20de%20los%20Censos%20Nacionales%202017%3A%20XII%20de%20Poblaci%C3%B3n,%25)%20en%20el%20%C3%A1rea%20rural).
- Kyle Shernuk; Embracing the Xenophone: Siu Kam Wen and the Possibility of Spanish-Language Chinese Literature. *Prism* 1 October 2021; 18 (2): 501–525. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/25783491-9290696>

- Lagerwey, John. "Chinese Dualism Revisited". *“At the Shores of the Sky”*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020.
- Lazarte Oyague, S. E. (2019). Pedro Zulen: diligente político en la sociedad peruana de inicios del siglo XX. *Tradicón, Segunda época*, (19), 151-159.
<https://doi.org/10.31381/tradicion.v0i19.2640>
- Le-Khac, Long. *Giving Form to an Asian and Latinx America*. Stanford University Press, 2020.
- López-Calvo Ignacio. *Dragons in the Land of the Condor: Writing Tusán in Peru*. Univ. of Arizona Press, 2014.
- Marsh, Rod. “Lecture on Ariel (1900) and Calibán (1971).” University of Cambridge, University.
- “Sacred Lotus (Nelumbo Nucifera).” *MISIN (Midwest Invasive Species Information Network)*, <http://www.misin.msu.edu/facts/detail/?project=misin&id=219&cname=Sacred#databases>.
- OCAC, R.O.C., (2005). (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20131123193905/http://www.ocac.gov.tw/english/public/public.asp?selno=1163&no=1163&level=B>
- Overmyer, Daniel L. “Kuan-Yin: The Development and Transformation of a Chinese Goddess.” *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 82, no. 3, 2002, pp. 418–23,
- Quijano, Anibal, and Michael Ennis. “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America.” *Nepantla: Views from South*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2000, pp. 533–580.
- REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 23.^a ed., [versión 23.5 en línea]. <<https://dle.rae.es>>
- Rodó, José Enrique. *Ariel*. Translated by Margaret Sayers Peden, University of Texas Press, 1988.
- Shih, Shu-mei, et al. “Against Diaspora: The Sinophone as Places of Cultural Production.” *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2013, pp. 25–42.
- Siu, Kam Wen. “Siu Kam Wen: Así Escribí ‘El Tramo Final.’” *Círculo De Lectores*, 10 Mar. 2022, <https://circulodelectores.pe/siu-kam-wen-el-tramo-final-2022/>.

- Slack, Edward R. "The Chinos in New Spain: A Corrective Lens for a Distorted Image." *Journal of World History*, vol. 20, no. 1, Mar. 2009, pp. 35–67.
- Strabucchi, Maria Montt. "Imagining China in Contemporary Latin American Literature." The University of Manchester, ProQuest LLC, 2019, pp. 1–23.
- Thompson, John. "Zhou Dunyi (Chou Tun-i, 1017-1073)." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://iep.utm.edu/zhou-dun/>.
- Willis, Deborah. "Shakespeare's *Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1989, pp. 277–89, <https://doi.org/10.2307/450475>.
- Yuan, Naiying, Tang, Hai-tao and Geiss, James. "On the Love of Lotus". *Readings in Classical Chinese Poetry and Prose: Glossaries, Analyses*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018, pp. 229.
- Zulen, Pedro S. *El Olmo Incierto De La Nevada*. 1930.