

Broken Images: The Traditions of "Blazoning" Women in the *Yü-t'ai Hsin Yung* and *Hohe Minne*

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ABSTRACT

This essay compares two traditions of highly stylized love lyric: the German late medieval *Des Minnesangs Fruehling*, which is in the tradition of the troubadours and related to Renaissance Petrarchism, and Chinese Palace Style Poetry of the Liang Dynasty. In both cases "woman" is taken as the object of the poem and depersonalized into an abstract entity, thus being deprived of her concrete individuality. To this end the technique of "blazoning" is employed, whereby the various parts of the woman's body are described in erotic or lurid detail: this is really a rhetorical taking control of the woman's body by the male speaker (poet). But while the German Minnesang sublimates the feminine qualities into a life-enhancing ideal spiritual essence to be praised (revered) by the male speaker / poet, the Chinese Palace Style Poetry reduces the "woman" to a merely art-enhancing artificial object, a purely aesthetic and erotic object of desire for the decadent pleasure of the male aristocrats at court.

KEY WORDS

blazoning
love lyric
sublimation
eroticism
Petrarchism

objectification
troubadours
artificial
feminine image



The desire of a man for a woman is not directed at her because she is a human being, but because she is a woman. That she is a human being is of no concern to him.

Immanuel Kant.

Although these lines by Immanuel Kant are a bit too harsh and vindictive to represent a generic attitude of men towards women, they sum up a recurring image of woman in poetry, especially in the sub-genre of love-poetry. Having been exhaustively described throughout the centuries, a dominant feature of woman appears to be her *qualitates corporis* which reflect curiously the erotic predilections of the times and the status quo of a woman's existence. Psychologically this speaks of the male's need to define his sex role in gender relationships as well as in society at large. This holds true for the *Minnesang* as well as for Palace Style Poetry, two poetic genres whose images of woman will be compared in this paper. Representative of this theme are two anthologies: *Des Minnesangs Frühling*¹ and the *Yü-t'ai hsin-yung* 玉臺新詠,² or *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*. In the latter the focus is on the poetry of the Liang dynasty, which comprises chapters 7 and 8 of the anthology, as well as large parts of chapters 9 and 10.

I

Des Minnesangs Frühling, a collection of lyrical songs of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D., was compiled by Karl Lachmann (1793-1851) and published by his student Moritz Haupt (1808-1874) in Leipzig in 1857. The sources are, above all, three well-known song manuscripts of Middle High German lyrics, all of which are of South German origin.³ *Des Minnesangs frühling* contains songs and lyrics of over 30 authors as well as some pieces of unknown origin. The time-frame ranges from roughly the beginning of the twelfth century to the middle of the thirteenth century. The poems were possibly read, sung, danced to, or recited at courtly feasts, often by poets of high nobility and occasionally by members of the knightly class of minstrels.

The *Yü-t'ai hsin-yung*, an anthology of love poems compiled around A.D. 545 by Hsü Ling 徐陵 (507-583), was commissioned by Crown Prince Hsiao Kang 蕭綱 (503-551), later known as Emperor Chien-wen 簡文 (reg. 549-551) of the Liang. It contains 656 poems in 10 *chüan* 卷 in a chronological arrangement. The dating ranges from the second century B.C. to the middle of the sixth century A.D., the time the anthology was compiled. Chapters 7 and 8 and parts of chapters 9 and 10 are dedicated to the royal family and the court poets of the Liang dynasty who were sponsored by the royal house under the patronage of Hsiao Kang.

Though centuries and worlds apart there is some important common ground in these two anthologies: both thematize women from a man's point of view; their descriptions lucidly reflect the conventions and aesthetics of the times; and both were composed by men belonging to imperial courts.⁴ In the case of the *Minnesang*, this was the first occurrence of a non-didactic, secular love song, separate from the religious tradition.⁵ As seen from the date range of the poems anthologized in the *Yü-t'ai hsin-yung*, the poets of the Liang

Yü dynasty could look back on a long tradition of both poetry and love-poems. Yet they, too, were among the first to divorce their art from the previous didactic Confucian view that literature had to be a means of improving human nature. Instead they insisted on the theory of 'art for art's sake', and as Hsü Ling himself wrote in his introduction, poetry "has the capacity to relieve distress and fatigue like lily and thyme, subtly displacing melancholy and grief."⁶

In both cases the audience was limited to a close-knit coterie of upper-class families. The subject matter of both was confined to women. In the *Minnesang*, as represented in *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, the objects of depiction were aristocratic women associated with the so-called *Hohe Minne* and, later, initiated by its most famous representative, Walther von der Vogelweide (c. 1170-c. 1230), and also rural women associated with the so-called *Niedere Minne*. The women of Palace Style Poetry are likewise inhabitants of the palace, but are represented in a greater variety, reflecting the various official functions they served in the palatial polygyny of the time.

II

The *Minnesang* is a constituent part of the popular image of the Middle Ages. The tradition sets in under the influence of the provincial troubadour lyric of southern France in the middle of the twelfth century. The etymology of the word *minne* reveals three different aspects of love or love-relationship: *frouwen minne*, love for one's woman, *herren minne*, love for one's superior, and *gotes minne*, or love of God. The German *Minnesang* is primarily concerned with the first kind of love.

In order to comprehend and interpret the image of woman as found in the *Minnesang*, it is beneficial to point out the social and cultural background that led to its emergence. The starting point is the profound cultural, social, and economic innovation that occurred during the twelfth century. Accord-

ing to recent research that focuses on the genesis of the idiosyncratic artifacts of the *Minnesang* rather than on certain mono-causal literary models, two occurrences are fundamental to the origin, emergence, and cultivation of the *Minnesang*: (1) in the secular world a differentiation of the social system evolved and caused a new consciousness of nobility coupled with a new self-consciousness, new forms of emotionalism, and a sensitivity to aesthetic values; (2) in the religious world the battle for investiture led to the split into a religious and a secular sphere. Associated with this crisis is a new understanding of Christian love, eventuating in a new evaluation of woman.⁷ Thus, along with the social changes came a cognitive broadening and a deepening of emotional awareness. Interpersonal relations and gender relations achieved a new status.

The prototypes of the *Minnesang* were the lyrics of the troubadours of southern France and the *trouvère* poets of northern France between c. 1100 and 1350 which dealt with similar topics of courtly love.⁸ Yet the distinctive feature of German *Minnesang*, notably the *Hohe Minne*, lies especially in the epideictic treatment of women.⁹

The content of the *Hohe Minne* is the relationship of a knight to a courtly lady of his choice who has at least the same social status as he. He humbles himself to be her servant and pays homage to her as an idealized counterpart in the form of hyperbolic praise. *Minnesang* is not born of experience, but of a medieval conception of the ideal women. *Hohe Minne* always functions as a lyric of deprivation (*Entbehrungslirik*) as reflected by Friedrich von Hausen's (c. 1150-1190) verse, which is also the *locus classicus* of the term *Hohe Minne*:

Had I not surrendered myself to such lofty love, I might
be cured. I did it without understanding. Now I suffer
constant pain that distresses me. My steadfastness has
bound my heart and won't let go of her.

Hätte ich mich auf so hohe Minne nie eingelassen, so
 könnte mir Hilfe werden. Ich tat es ohne Verstand.
 Dafürleide ich nun dauernd Not, die mir nahe geht.
 Meine Beständigkeit hat mir nun das Herz gebunden,
 dass sie es nicht frei lässt von ihr-so wie es jetzt steht.¹⁰

The speaker suffers from having allowed himself to be absorbed by 'high love', from which he cannot free himself because of his own loyalty and devotion. Thus the attribute *hohe* refers to a moral challenge implying an ethos of trial (*Bewährungsethos*) that corresponds with the ethical demands that were laid on the heroes of the Arthurian epics of the same time.¹¹

An important factor of the *Hohe Minne* and its entire ideology is the formal focus on one object of magnification without individual recognition. Says Eva Willms:

The starting point of the medieval love poet, however, is not the concrete person from whom he subtracts the real features. It is instead the optimal pattern of the genre that he in turn imposes on the concrete woman, without respect of person.

Der mittelalterliche Liebesdichter geht aber nicht von der konkreten Person aus, von der er die Realien abzieht, sondern vom optimalen Muster der Gattung, das er der konkreten Frau anzieht, sozusagen "ohne Ansehen der Person".¹²

Thus the lady becomes nothing more than the incorporation of Love. She yields to a convention that in turn makes her the agent of the nobleman's self-awareness and self-enhancement. In Eva Willms' words again:

A differentiation of the Minnedamen is hence not

possible. A disassociation of the glorified person from the ideal pattern or even an adoption of the individualizing differences would equal a disparagement.

Eine Differenzierung der Minnedamen, wie man es wünschenswert fand, ist also in der Tat nicht möglich. Ein Abrücken der zu rühmenden Person vom idealen Muster, gar ein Eingehen auf die individuierende Differenz käme einer Herabwürdigung gleich.¹³

It is exactly this undifferentiation that forms a cliché needed to serve as a basis of the traditional *Minneideologie*: the woman of the *Hohe Minne* is a prototype of purity and so inspires the man to spiritual perfection and deeper experience of the self in his battle between *caritas* and *cupiditas*. Since she is an unattainable object, she causes enlightenment through tribulation and the purification of the soul through suffering. As Denis de Rougement explains it in his book *Love in the Western World*:

Suffering and understanding are deeply connected; death and self-awareness are in league; and European romanticism may be compared to a man for whom sufferings, and especially the sufferings of love, are a privileged mode of understanding.¹⁴

Modern criticism does not accept the traditional *Minneideologie* as the only valid interpretation anymore. Even though the didactic influence of the *Minnesang* is by no means dismissed, it is no longer regarded as its only mode of comprehension: it is now possible to assume that love songs were primarily meant for wooing and expressing the explicit desire for sexual union. Time and again the poets have their ladies reveal their fear of discovery, conveying a sense of illicit anxiety.¹⁵ This did not, however, eliminate completely

the occasional seizure of an opportunity as it is seen in the coeval dawn-song.¹⁶ Since marriage was a matter of family policy rather than love, and since adultery and fornication were almost impossible, *Hohe Minne* can also be seen as a surrogate for a suppressed libido in the form of dreams and wishes on the part of the male. Yet, despite the sociological, philosophical and sexual differentiation in the interpretation of the genre, the woman of the *Hohe Minne* serves in only one capacity: as an agent of the man's endeavor. In this fashion *Hohe Minne* leads to the depersonalization (*Entkörperung*) and sublimation of the woman. She loses her concrete individuality in favor of the abstract woman eulogized.

Rhetorically, the minnesingers adapted the female object to the genre. This technique of poetic rhetoric is called 'blazon' and as a literary term "it was used by the followers of Petrarchism to describe verses which dwelt upon and detailed the various parts of a woman's body."¹⁷ Patricia Parker in her book *Literary Fat Ladies* interprets blazon as "the taking control of a woman's body rhetorically through its division into parts."¹⁸ This is found in the *Hohe Minne* and even more in Palace Style Poetry.

The blazoning in the *Hohe Minne* focuses on two areas: female beauty and female virtue. Heinrich von Morungen (d. 1222) writes:

Look at her eyes, pay heed to her chin, behold her white neck and her mouth! She is truly created in the image of Love. Never before have I perceived a loveliness as great as her's.

Seht ihre Augen an, achtet auf das Kinn, schaut ihren weissen Hals an und betrachtet den Mund! Sie ist wahrlich gerade wie die Minne gestaltet. So etwas Liebliches habe ich noch an keiner Frau wahrgenommen.¹⁹

Here female physical beauty is seen in the eyes, the chin, the neck and the mouth. In another song he praises both the virtue and the beauty of his lady:

She has never declared war on me although she has always been and still is causing me harm. I cannot remain silent about it any longer, for she still violates and pillages countries with her beauty and her virtue. And she will continue to hurt many a man. Casting just a glance at her will make a man a prisoner and cause him to live in constant pain.

When I was her servant and her bondsman and I looked at her in faith and goodwill, she attacked me with her love and captured me with friendly greetings and words. Now I am drunk from joy and wounded in heart. Her clear eyes and, alas, her red mouth have robbed my heart.

Sie hat mir nie den Krieg erklären lassen und betrieb trotzdem immer und betreibt immer noch heute meinen Schaden. Darüber kann ich nicht länger schweigen, denn sie will immer noch alle Länder mit Gewalt überziehen und eine Räuberin sein. Das schaffen all ihre Tugenden und ihre Schönheit, die manchem Manne noch weh tun. Wer sie nur ansieht, der muss ihr Gefangener sein und dann immer in Sorgen leben.

Während ich ihr Dienstmann und ihr Leibeigener war, als ich sie aus Treue und im Guten ansah, da griff sie mich an mit ihren Minnen und fesselte mich, indem sie mich freundlich und mit mir sprach. Davon bin ich krank an Freuden und im Herzen sehr verwundet. Und ihre klaren Augen, die haben mich beraubt und, ach, ihr

rosenfarbener, roter Mund.²⁰

This song illustrates several features of the basic male concept of the medieval woman. The absolute idealization, as seen in the examples above, is based on the perfection of virtues such as chastity, goodness, and faithfulness and a unique beauty that forms a nobility of physique and soul. To the medieval aristocratic mind there was no physical beauty without inner virtue and virtue enhanced beauty. This harmony of beauty and moral probity is not a distinctive hallmark of the fair sex, but of their aristocratic status. This is why "the poet's praise of beauty was not concerned with personal features of individual women but with an ideal that manifested itself in a fixed stock of attributes."²¹ The outer appearance of the woman is usually described with 'beauty' (*schön*), sometimes also in a more indirect paraphrase like Hausen's "I see fair well that God can work miracles on a woman's beauty" (*Ich sehe wohl, dass Gott Wunder wirken kann an der Schönheit des Weibes*).²² Aside from the more abstract expressions, the mouth (*Mund*) sometimes appears as an erotic signal. Varieties are found with the more sensual Morungen. In contrast to Hausen the more spiritual Reinmar speaks of the "*sprechenden Munde*" ("the speaking mouth") of the woman.²³ The same formulaic fashion is also employed in praising the eyes: they are called beautiful (*schön*), sweet (*süss*), bright (*hell*), and clear (*klar*).

Though such images may strike the contemporary reader as somewhat trite, they must be comprehended against the background of a medieval concept of aesthetics. As Jutta Goheen puts it:

In the medieval concept the eye, as a source of light, serves as a mark of bright beauty whose radiance includes a metaphysical implication that springs from a relation to godly light. The lively color of blood illustrates the power of sensuous appeal. Beauty is

described as the impression of the observer who thereby raises a woman's force of attraction aesthetically.

In Übereinstimmung mit mittelalterlicher Konzeption des Auges als Lichtspender ist es Kennzeichen einer lichtvollen Schönheit, deren Glanz eine metaphysische Implikation einschliesst, die aus der Verwandtschaft mit dem göttlichen Licht hervorgeht. Die lebensvolle Farbe des Blutes veranschaulicht die Macht des sinnlichen Reizes. Schönheit ist als Eindruck des Betrachters beschrieben, der die körperliche Anziehungskraft der Frau ästhetisch erhöht.²⁴

The importance lies not only in the eyes as a source of light, it also reflects the medieval concept that the eyes are the gate through which love enters into the soul or the heart. Thus the eye and the mouth are always evoked to give off an intimation of sensuality and spirituality. Physical beauty, however, as can be visualized in every song of the *Hohe Minne*, is always just a reflection of the inner being: concomitant with the antique *Kalokagathia*, virtue and beauty are inseparable. Praised much more frequently than outer appearance, inner qualities, too, are described in clichés, most often in expressions such as virtue (*Tugend*) or goodness (*Güte*), sometimes paired as virtue and honor (*Ehre*), purity (*Reinheit*) and goodness. Also mentioned are chastity (*Keuschheit*), propriety (*Wohlerzogenheit*), and dignity (*Würde*). The lady also appears as pure, happy, honorable, and unwavering. Some poets categorically place inner beauty over physical beauty.²⁵ This sought-after womanly type described in general expressions appears more and more spiritualized in the *Hohe Minne*. It is praised as the absolute ideal, ascending to a hypertrophied unparalleled laudation, where, through metaphors, images, and comparisons, the woman becomes larger than life. Hausen praises the beloved as a divine miracle of God.²⁶

Reinmar and Morungen use religious metaphors such as "Easterday."²⁷ Morungen also lifts her to the level of the emperor,²⁸ comparing woman to the moon²⁹ and the sun.³⁰

In such a manner the woman becomes an embodiment of human values and a secularized *summum bonum* of human perfection. She is an hypostatization of values and problems of existence, and not an image of femininity in flesh and blood. On a deeper level her unattainability and aloofness makes the *Hohe Minne* a metaphor for the primal experience of existential suffering.

In terms of blazoning and its control-taking aspect, the woman of the *Hohe Minne* becomes an epitome of a transcendental state, much like in the *Frauenpreis* of the Virgin Mary. For Joan M. Ferrante, however,

the lyric lady is a kind of super-personification, the source and repository of all good qualities. She is an ideal being the poet adores, but she is also a real woman whom the poet wishes to possess, because his love is both sexual desire that seeks fulfillment in bed and mental yearning that finds its satisfaction in contemplating the image it has found.³¹

III

Palace Style Poetry gained its name during the Liang dynasty, when it was at its peak of popularity among poets. It is reported in the *Liang shu* 梁書 that under the patronage of Emperor Chien-wen a poetry was endorsed that was "excessively light and glamorous, and it was at the time designated as 'palace style'."³² Palace style poetry was both a product of the palatial literary salon under Hsiao Kang and a reflection of palace life.

Palace Style Poetry was in essence a kind of aristocratic literature. Since the emperors of both the Liang and Chen dynasties appreciated literature and lived lives of luxury, prosperity, dissoluteness, and leisure, replete with carnal amusement, literature and reality became a congruent entity, leading in turn to the apex of the palace style manner of composition.³³

It includes various categories of poems such as landscape scenes (*fêng ching* 風景), object-descriptions (*yung wu* 詠物), and palace women (*kung nü* 宮女).³⁴ According to Ronald C. Miao, "the emergence of the 'palace-style' in the Liang was essentially a reaction to the traditional view of poetry as a vehicle for moral instruction."³⁵ Of course—and Miao knows this—the distancing of poetry from moral instruction began earlier, already being a much emphasized attribute of poetic thought during the Chien-an period (196-220). No longer a means of Confucian didacticism, love-poetry obtained a new *raison d'être*. Shedding its former allegorical role it became a medium for erotic and sensual articulation, changing the way in which women were depicted. They were not deified as we can find in the *Hohe Minne* and in the *Chu-tz'u* 楚辭, or adored as in numerous *tz'u-fu* 辭賦.³⁶ In Palace Style Poetry, as in the *Hohe Minne*, the subject matter is not fulfillment or mutual love. But in contrast to the *Hohe Minne*, where the man is the suffering party, in Palace Style Poetry it is rather an unhappy, one-sided love on the part of the women that is depicted. Women of palatial elegance and perfection are the repository of unrequited desire. This is not an essentially new topic in Chinese poetry. The Southern Dynasties (420-589) *yüeh-fu* 樂府 also contain love poems which mainly concentrate on female beauty. These are collectively called *yen-ch'ing-shih* 豔情詩 or 'amorous poems'. The unique feature of Palace Style Poetry, however, lies in its focus on the palace lady and her aristocratic environment as opposed to the more common types

of the 'Western songs' (*hsi-ch'ü ko* 西曲歌) and the 'Songs of Wu' (*Wu-sheng ko-ch'ü* 吳聲歌曲). Its erotic connotations are far less concealed than in any other preceding genre. As J.H. Pryne observed in his review of *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*:

Mostly written by men, this new kind of lyric was projected into the shuttered world of restless, mostly high-born women, with erotic feeling obliquely transferred or partially repressed and thus more or less tacitly acknowledged in the formalism of its displacement.³⁷

The denouement for Palace Style Poetry was highly embellished sensual poems and epigrams, "pointing up the realities of desire within the artificial forms of its restrained and condensed expression."³⁸

The content of Palace Style Poetry is first and foremost the objective description of courtly ladies. Län Wen-yüeh lists six types of women: (1) favorite imperial consorts (*chuan-ch'ung mei-jen* 專寵美人), (2) singing and dancing girls (*ko-chi wu-nü* 歌姬舞女), (3) courtesans and prostitutes (*ch'ing-lou ch'ang-nü* 青樓倡女), (4) those longing for their husbands or lovers inside their boudoirs (*shen kuei szü fu* 深閨思婦), (5) rejected wives and concubines (*ch'i-fu yüan ch'ieh* 棄婦怨妾), and (6) historical beauties (*ku-tai mei-jen* 古代美人).³⁹ Occasionally, there are poems on homosexual themes and poems on mourning husbands.

It would be misleading to call Palace Style Poetry love lyrics in the sense of the *Hohe Minne*. It is not even women that are depicted, but rather two aspects of women: beauty (*mei* 美) and unrequited love. Unlike the southern *yüeh-fu*, there is little personal feeling involved. The "objective contemplation of female beauty"⁴⁰ features appurtenances such as facial details, make-up, embroidered clothes, boudoir

decoration, jewelry and the like. As in the *Minnesang*, Palace Style Poetry is not empirically drawn. The women described represent a concept of taste with both sensualism and artistic skill. The poets of the *Hohe Minne* focused on spirituality and virtue, avoiding almost completely any direct references that would connote mere eroticism. In Palace Style Poetry, however, "it may be noted that the penchant for erotic and sensuous themes among the poets of this period, particularly from the fifth century onward, was due in part to the particular poetic tastes of the royal houses."⁴¹

One convention that results from the poets' literary and sensual inclinations demands that the lover be absent from the scene in a way that stresses the loneliness of the deserted one. Unlike in the *Minnesang* and earlier Chinese love poetry, there is usually no trace as to his feelings. The total absence of the male persona only enhances the atmosphere of isolation. The only instances in which the husband or lover is present are in poems that illustrate the dichotomy of the male superiority of assertiveness against the female inferiority of receptiveness, as seen in the following poem by Hsiao Yen 蕭衍 (464-549), also known as Emperor Wu 武 of the Liang (reg. 502-49):

In Loyang there's a sinuous path,
 A path so sinuous no post riders pass.
 Suddenly two servant boys meet.
 One pulls his reins and asks, "Where is your home?"
 "My house is west of Han-tan,
 It's easy to remember and worth knowing."

The eldest son's official ribbons intertwine,
 The middle son's pendants are iridescent,
 A younger one still wears blue damask.
 And the twin-tufted boy goes out to play at Nan-p'i.

When all three sons enter the gate,
 Family retainers bow by the gate;
 When all three sons ascend the hall,
 Luscious wine fills a thousand goblets;
 When all three sons go inside,
 The interior has a bright look.

The eldest's wife makes gold and kingfisher ornaments,
 The middle son's wife plies a bodkin.
 The youngest's wife alone has time for leisure.
 She tunes her pipes and tours the Serpentine.
 'Gentlemen, linger for a time,
 The phoenix pipes are about to undulate.'⁴²

Although this poem does not speak of love-sickness and loneliness, it still conveys the image of the lonely woman waiting for the vigorous husband, whose life takes place apart from her. They meet only upon his initiative, which is usually unpredictable and uncertain. In both genres time plays an important conventional role. In the *Hohe Minne* the focus is on daytime, when social events take place. In Palace Style Poetry a recurrent convention is the nocturnal and diurnal time-frame. Mostly, the ladies are waiting inside their boudoirs at the "blossom of dawn" or the "moon of night". It insinuates a more intimate and private aura and excludes the sobering aspects of daily life that would be disrupting to the sensual scheme of the genre.

The innovation that occurs in the poetry under Hsiao Kang's patronage has little to do with figure of speech. The poets of the Liang dynasty work with metaphors, allusions, and puns that are as old as poetry itself, even though their verse "reveals a more conscious exploitation of euphony, diction, and form."⁴³ The most important rhetorical device, not just of Palace Style Poetry but of all Chinese poetry, is the juxtaposition that creates equivocal indirectness, with the

most frequently used juxtapositions or contrasts being drawn from nature. In the *Minnesang* the image of nature has multiple functions. It can introduce the mood of a song and is usually symbolized in the seasons of spring and summer, connoting warmth, activity, and the fullness of nature. In Palace Style Poetry summer is a season seldom mentioned. If the nature image is used as a contrast, it usually implies that the woman is disfavored and the convention is to contrast spring with loneliness.⁴⁴

The lofty terrace stirs spring's hues,⁴⁵
 Pellucid ponds reflect the sun's glory.
 Green sunflowers lean toward the light,
 Emerald willows incline in the wind.
 In the woods are birds to startle my heart;
 In the garden countless eye-catching blooms.
 They, too, all sense the season;
 I sigh that you alone are gone from home.
 If the traveler does not return today,
 Why bother to pick hemp in vain?⁴⁶

The symbolic meaning of spring as the season of love is not unknown in the *Hohe Minne*. In contrast to Palace Style Poetry, however, *Minnesang* is mostly non-symbolic. Nature's elements such as the sun, the moon, stars, flowers, the sky and the like are used to compare to beauty. In Palace Style Poetry nature, or the seasons, are symbols of a state of mind. If, then, the nature image is used in a juxtaposition, it is either coupled as spring and beauty or autumn and loneliness, as seen in the poem below by Hsiao Yi 蕭繹 (507-55), Emperor Yüan 元 (reg. 552-554) of the Liang:

Autumn night, the depths of the palace are forsaken.
 The wanderer brings resentment to her room.
 Lamplight enters damask bed curtains,

The shadow from the window shade is cast upon the
screen.

Gold studs tuned by jade pegs,
Tonight she strums a sound like parting geese.⁴⁷

Thus the lushness of spring is either juxtaposed with sexual fulfillment or contrasted with repressed desire, while the transitoriness of autumn is juxtaposed with withering beauty or frustrated love. Since one cannot but give in to nature's forces and seasons, these conventions also convey a spirit of resignation. The season of love only lasts a short interval for a woman, and it is the man who determines change and ending. In seemingly light-hearted insouciance he leaves an old love for a new one. More than in any other verse the woman of Palace Style Poetry accepts her fate and never goes beyond shedding secret tears.

An old love, though old now, once was new.
A new love, though new now, will grow old, too.⁴⁸

While the woman accepts man's nature as changing and unpredictable, she submits to her own fate without protest or rebellion. The image of nature and its juxtaposition with women carries the image of the suppliant woman dependent on the supreme male. She exists only in relation to him, as seen in the poem "The Weaving" by Hsiao Yen:

If you have not forgotten your love,
my heart will always be content;⁴⁹

and in another poem by Hsiao Kang:

She does not begrudge her river bank girdle gem,
But she is ashamed that her spring boudoir's empty.⁵⁰

Besides having a lover at her side, there is nothing to sustain her life. The loss of his love in turn means the loss of her self-esteem and destiny. Born out of this dependency is a commitment that Birrell calls "obsessiveness".⁵¹ Opposed to this female devotion is male inconstancy. Although the woman is deserted, she continues to long for him and recommit herself to him in such words as

I'll always love you
 However long we're parted.⁵²

The traditional metaphors and allusions are drawn mainly from natural life, female accessories and historical prototypes of femininity or suffering. Animals like nesting birds, the phoenix, mandarin ducks, silkworms, dragons and the like all symbolize togetherness in love and erotic feelings.⁵³ Rivers are obstacles to lovers; spring is the season of sexual desire; the moon can mean reunion of lovers and so forth. The plant that is used most frequently is the lotus (*lien* 蓮), a pun for tenderness (*lien* 憐), while silk (*szu* 絲) rhymes with longing (*szu* 思). Other plants that are repeatedly associated with areas of eroticism include the willow (*liu* 柳), plum blossoms (*mei* 梅), and hibiscus (*fu-jung* 芙蓉). As in the *Ch'u-tzu* tradition, the orchid (*lan* 蘭) stands for loveliness and nobility in general. Algae and vines, however, are negative allusions to the clinging or dependent nature of a woman's love.

Of more importance for the image of woman, however, are those allusions that refer directly to the woman herself. Her appearance is always described in an impersonal manner and in order to be accepted she has to meet certain standards of taste. The following poem by Hsiao Kang reveals stock features that are dwelled on repeatedly:

Her waist and limbs are beyond compare,
 Her eyebrows and eyes so captivating!

She considers herself matchless,
As though the Lo goddess had returned.⁵⁴

Yet her beauty comes not purely from her individual features, but also from the make-up that is applied perfectly in accordance with the current fashion. This is also reflected in a poem by the wife of Wang Shu-ying's 王叔英:

Cosmetic powder, a touch of kohl, and light rouge.
With jingling bracelets and swinging pendants she
leaves her room.
Looking at a plum and then a willow tree,
Tears gather on her spring attire.⁵⁵

The lack of individual recognition coupled with repetitive allusions and metaphors "suggest a desperate ennui, totally at odds with the adeptly uninvolved vicariousness of the practiced poet."⁵⁶ The woman is portrayed as a cosmetic being in a constricted and stifling world, a being filled with sexual desire. As Prynne correctly observes, "there is no doubt that as the range of theme and style contracts to the palace boudoir the skill at allusion counteracts this contraction and adroitly multiplies the tense paradoxes of absence and desire."⁵⁷

Countless poems depict the woman in an unsolved dilemma: she meets all conventions and makes herself up appropriately, but still ends up being rejected. It is a dilemma of the depersonalized picture-perfect beauty, who has to become a stereotype to be attractive and yet, ironically, this very cosmetic depersonalization makes her interchangeable. Wang Hsün's 王訓 (511-36) poem is a good illustration:

The many divine girls in the palace
Have long been beyond compare.
But there is none like the beauty at the window,
with make-up so endearing.

She learned to dance better than Fei-yen,
 The powder she applies humbles Nan-yang's.⁵⁸
 Yellow blush divides the kohl,
 She perfumes her clothes with a blend of jujube scents,
 Selects a hairpin of newly pressed kingfisher plumes.

Although all the features ascribed to her are not really
 natural parts of her,

The whole morning she devotes to her looks,
 Lest she's alone in her bedroom again.⁵⁹

In the *Hohe Minne* the ladies were appreciated for their natural beauty, like blue eyes, curly hair, white skin. Attractiveness did not originate in their make-up or adornment, but in their wholesome personality as it was perceived by the poet. Thus, "the diction used to describe the outer appearance of a woman was rather limited; what mattered to the minnesingers was the inner perfection of a woman."⁶⁰ In Palace Style Poetry it is the 'decorated' beauty that is seen as a means of seduction. Thus she becomes a part of the palatial decor. In truth, "woman is adored when adorned."⁶¹ This is the same blazoning strategy as found in the *Hohe Minne*, yet woman's aspect as an objectified nonentity is much stronger in the Chinese instance, partly due to the cultural background and partly to the mode of itemizing. On the other hand, the inventory or "blazoning" impulse of women in the Western tradition, as interpreted by Patricia Parker,

would seem to be part of the motif of taking control of a woman's body by making it, precisely, the engaging "matter" of male discourse, a passive commodity in a homosocial discourse or male exchange in which the woman herself, traditionally absent, does not speak. The "inventory" of parts becomes a way of taking possession

by the very act of naming or accounting.⁶²

In the case of Palace Style Poetry, it is not only the woman's body that is taken into account, but also her boudoir, the most private place of her existence. It is made a place of loneliness and languishment and, as such, an image of her state of mind, where emotions other than loneliness and longing are very seldom given any consideration. Few poems allow the woman to express anger, hate, or hopelessness directly. It is more convincing and somewhat comforting to read that "harboring grudges, she sobs when she is alone"⁶³ or "imbued with grief and resentment, I've decided not to die. Repressing my feelings and enduring my desires, I'll wait for the following year."⁶⁴ The sorrow of these women is indeed effective, thought, as John Marney reminds us,

there may be inherent hypocrisy in such verse; after all it is the poet himself and his class who are responsible for the predicament of which the girl is complaining, and the poet may only observe or guess at the feelings he writes about.⁶⁵

Curiously enough, few women described do not love their husbands in the first place. Since marriage was a matter of family policy just as in medieval Europe, it is almost inconceivable that no woman is seen rejecting her man. This lends credence to the argument that the image the poets create is of a woman whose role is "to provide sexual pleasure for a man at his whim: man proposes, man disposes."⁶⁶ On her part, the woman is a willing object subjugated to the physiological urge of male sexuality, while her own erotic desire is displaced into the form of displacement itself.

The quest for individuality is a Western notion that seldom commands comparable importance for the Chinese, at least in the case of poetry. Perhaps Robert Herrick's

(1591-1674) "Delight in Disorder" may provide some notion of where the difference in the two poetic traditions lie. It is written in a blazoning mode similar to the blazoning of Palace Style Poetry:

A sweet disorder in the dresse
 Kindles in cloathes a wantonnesse:
 A Lawn about the shoulders thrown
 Into a fine distraction;
 An erring Lace, which here and there
 Enthralls the Crimson Stomacher:
 A Cuffe neglectfull, and thereby
 Ribbands to flow confusedly:
 A winning wave (deserving Note)
 In the tempestuous petticoat:
 A careless shoe-string, in whose type
 I see a wild civility:
 Doe more bewitch me, then when Art
 Is too precise in every part.⁶⁷

The object of description is not a person made known to us, yet it strikes us as "particularistic" in its focus on disorder as a personal mark of this woman. Such particularisms can occasionally be found in Chinese history and literature, notably in the lives or legends of the rather eccentric knights-errant (*hsia* 俠). But the conflict between duty and selfhood, which is the stuff great works of Western literature are made of, is not necessarily viewed as a conflict in the Chinese tradition. In the absence of a concept like the Western notion of selfhood, it is understandable that the women of Palace Style Poetry show what Lionel Trilling calls a "morality of inertia":

It knows that duties are done for no reason than they
 are said to be duties; for no other reason, sometimes,

than that the doer has not really been able to conceive any other course, has perhaps been afraid to think of any other course.⁶⁸

Yet, if we consider other sources, the limitations that lead to inertia in the image of the palace lady as a result of seclusion are somewhat surprising. In her article "The Education of Women in China during the Southern Dynasties," Beatrice Spade cites several examples of women who received education, educated their children in turn and socialized with men. According to the *Liang shu* Shih Ling-ying 石令羸 (477-543) of the Liang, the mother of Emperor Yüan 元 (508-555) as well as Hsi Huei 希徽, the wife of Emperor Wu of the Liang, both enjoyed calligraphy and reading historical biographies.⁶⁹ In the judgment of Spade, "By the sixth century women may no longer have gadded about so ostentatiously in the countryside and in the towns, but a number of them still moved about quite freely."⁷⁰ Even if it is true that the higher the rank, the less mobility women enjoyed, Palace Style Poetry still does not reflect the actual reality of choices or even the inclinations and aptitudes of the woman of the time. Spade further asserts that

unquestionably, the image of the ideal woman in elite society had changed markedly since the Han dynasty when the Confucian ideals of purity, obedience, filial piety, humility, and virtuousness reigned unchallenged. While such values still found adherents, new criteria assumed increasing significance in the South. The model woman in the Southern dynasties possessed both scholarship and erudition. She was intelligent and capable. She could even be strong-willed.⁷¹

One may disagree with Spade's blanket assessment of the Han situation, but it may well be that the confinement

suffered by the women in Palace Style Poetry is one imposed by the poets.

Many a poem alludes to a historical beauty, one of whom is the renowned Lady Pan 班 (fl. c. 48-46 B.C.). One such example is attributed to Liu Ling-hsien 劉令嫺 (a woman of the late fifth to early sixth century A.D.) and entitled "Lady Pan's Regret":

Ying Gate closes at sunset,
 And a hundred bits of sad thoughts arise.
 All the more with Chao-yang near,
 And the wind carrying over the sounds of songs and
 flutes.
 It is not his fickleness she hates,
 But the malicious slander so heartless.
 She just says she aspires to different ideals,
 And does not envy the lightness of the dancer's waist.⁷⁹

Lady Pan was a high-ranking woman in Han times. She had the title Beautiful Companion (*chieh-yü* 婕妤) and was a favorite concubine of Emperor Cheng 成 (r. 33-7 B.C.). In due time she was ousted by the dancing girl Chao Fei-yen 趙飛燕 (d. 6 B.C.) and lost her status as the emperor's favorite. Besides composing verse, she had endowments that were of a different nature than *qualitates corporis*. In the *Lieh-nü-chuan* account Favorite Beauty Pan is described in these terms: "talented, had good understanding, and was able to reason well."⁷⁹ She was highly educated in the classics and wrote poetry as well. Yet in poems where her name is mentioned, she is not praised for her virtues or her knowledge. It is always her rejection by the emperor in favor of Chao Fei-yen that is alluded to. And she is almost pitied by the poets for her knowledge and lack of physical charm. Kung Weng-kuei 孔翁歸 (fl. ca. A.D. 539) muses:

Who does not admire powder and glamor?

A man's desire cannot sustain itself.⁷⁴

And Ho Szu-ch'eng 何思澄 (481-?534), in a poem on the same theme, creates an image of seclusion, concluding:

Lovingly, lovingly, she watches the sun set,
and returns to dust her empty bed.⁷⁵

Thus, even a woman as educated and spirited as Lady Pan cannot keep her man. Perhaps it can be argued that erudition was not an indispensable quality that made a woman appear attractive to the poets of Palace Style Poetry. In light of the rather decadent life-style prevalent during the Liang dynasty, it seems reasonable to speculate that the poets preferred to dwell on the aspects of carnal pleasure they experienced and the frustrated erotic passion they were attracted to.

IV

How beautiful your sandaled feet,
O prince's daughter!
Your graceful legs are like jewels,
the work of a craftsman's hands.
Your navel is a rounded goblet
that never lacks blended wine.
Your waist is a mount of wheat
encircled by lilies.
Your breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle.
Your neck is like an ivory tower.
Your eyes are the pools of Heshbon
by the gate of Bath Rabbim.
Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
looking toward Damascus.
Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel.

Your hair is like royal tapestry;
the king is held captive by its tresses.
How beautiful you are and how pleasing,
O love, with your delights !⁶

The above verses from the Song of Songs ascribed to King Solomon (10th century B.C.) show a comparable itemizing and descriptive approach to the woman as found in the *Hohe Minne* and Palace Style Poetry. Although seemingly more indulgent in exploring taboo-areas, it too is studded with clichés and conventions of imagery and metaphors. What is noticeably different from the general contents of both *Hohe Minne* and Palace Style Poetry, however, is the following part of the same song:

My lover is radiant and ruddy,
outstanding among ten thousand.
His head is purest gold;
his hair is wavy
and black as a raven.
His eyes are like doves
by the water streams,
washed in milk,
mounted like jewels.
His cheeks are like beds of spice
yielding perfume.
His lips are like lilies
dripping with myrrh.
His arms are rods of gold
set with chrysolite.
His body is like polished ivory
decorated with sapphires.
His legs are pillars of marble
set on bases of pure gold.
His appearance is like Lebanon,

choice as its cedars.
His mouth is sweetness itself;
he is altogether lovely.
This is my lover, this my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.⁷⁷

It is not only the man, but also the woman who, full of self-confidence, praises her lover and takes possession of him in the same way that he has taken possession of her. The sense of parity implicit in "I am my lover's and my lover is mine"⁷⁸ radiates an aura of freedom that is totally absent in the woman of Palace Style Poetry. The attribution of the same desire and sense of fulfillment to women and men is precisely the missing factor in both *Hohe Minne* and Palace Style Poetry. This lack of reciprocity results in an image of woman as a mere object of self-enhancing praise and wooing, and as an object of art-enhancing still-life and eroticism, respectively, in the *Hohe Minne* and in Palace Style Poetry. The blazoning of the female body in both instances arrives at the same conclusion: female beauty is synchronic, and, similarity outweighs any difference.

As can be seen in the excerpts from the Song of Songs, there can be an equilibrium between male and female beyond convention and blazoning. It is not necessary for rhetoric to create an image of lopsided possessiveness. Instead, in both cases, it is the male concept of femaleness that creates the image of woman as basically passive and dependent. For even if we read *Hohe Minne* as songs of wooing and as a desire for sexual rather than spiritual fulfillment, the image does not escape the imprisonment of the woman in the imagination of the men. Her own possible libido and its physical or emotional expressions are not taken account of. Ultimately, the minne-singers present themselves as narcissists who encounter their own selves through the medium of the *minne*, in the image of the woman they imagine. They have found the perfect lyrical

means of expressing their emotional and sexual desire, while at the same time accepting the limits that were set by the courtly rules, etiquette, and decorum. According to Eva Willms, the hyperbolic panegyric

does not initiate a 'new esteem' for the woman or grant her new positions. Instead it praises her as the 'ideal woman' in the functional purpose she has for the man; this displays honesty and at the same time limits her to this position. He summarizes her function as an 'object of lust' and the reduction to this 'object-being' in the pleasing presentation of the lyrical wooing song and constantly calls to mind the limits that are put on the realization of this function.

... eröffnet keine *neue Wertschätzung* der Frau und räumt ihr keine neuen Positionen ein, sondern preist sie als *wip ze wunsche*, in der Zweckbestimmung und Funktion, die sie für den Mann hat, und dies durchaus aufrichtig, aber beschränkt sie zugleich auf diese Position. Er fasst die Bestätigung ihrer Funktion als, wenn man so will, *Lustobjekt* und die Reduzierung auf dieses Objektsein in der gleichen wohlgefälligen Präsentation des lyrischen Werbungsliedes zusammen und erinnert zugleich und stets an Schranken, die der Verwirklichung dieser Funktion im allgemeinen gesetzt sind.⁷⁹

Although the woman of both *Hohe Minne* and Palace Style Poetry has to deal with the same dilemma of 'objectification' and limitation, the woman of Palace Style Poetry, compared to the lady of the *Hohe Minne*, appears to be far less esteemed by her male counterpart. As Birrell points out:

Southern Dynasties poets are concerned to show in their love lyrics the debilitating effects of love on a woman.

They present a gallery of pathetic portraits: hundreds of women are described as lost, abandoned, neglected, suffering, wounded, and so forth. To the predominantly male poets the image of woman is one of weakness. She is ungoverned by reason or discipline or moderation. She is subjugated by her desire for her lover, lacking any destiny or purpose in life outside love. She is idle, vain, and self-absorbed.²⁰

It can be said that Palace Style Poetry is largely concerned with the id and its subsequent suppression and displacement, while the woman of the *Hohe Minne* embodies the male superego in its hagiographical design.

It is hoped that our reading of both *Hohe Minne* and Palace Style Poetry has testified to the essential veracity of Kant's statement in regard to the image of a woman projected in the lyrics of these two lyrical genres! it is an image of certified femininity reflecting the taste and whims of the male societies in medieval Germany and early China, an imaging of a feminine type at the expense of feeling respect for a human being.

Notes

¹ *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, with consultation of the editions by Karl Lachmann and Moritz Haupt, Friedrich Vogt and Carl von Kraus, revised by Hugo Moser and Helmut Tervooren (Stuttgart: Hirzel, 1977). Hereafter MF. All poems are taken from this edition unless indicated otherwise.

² Wu Chao-yi 吳兆宜, ed., *Yü-t'ai hsün-yung chien-chu* 玉臺新詠箋注 (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü, 1967). Henceforth *Ythy*. References to the original Chinese text are all from this edition.

³ Middle High German lyrics have been transmitted in approximately 40 handwritten manuscripts, half of which are only fragmentary. The tradition sets in shortly before the thirteenth century and

reaches into the fifteenth century. Besides some independent lyrical manuscripts like the so-called *A*, *B*, and *C* manuscripts, there are other minor entries of *Minnesang* in epic and didactic collections, sporadic entries in Latin script, as well as collections of individual authors. The *A*, *B*, and *C* manuscripts are the main documents used to create *Des Minnesangs Frühling*. *A* denotes the *Kleine Heidelberger Liederhandschrift* which originates in the Elsass. It contains works from 30 different authors with a time period from A.D. 1180 to A.D. 1240. *B* denotes the *Weingartner* or *Stuttgarter Liederhandschrift*, originating around Konstanz and containing lyrics of 31 poets. *C* denotes the *Grosse Heidelberger Liederhandschrift* or *Manessische Handschrift* which probably originated in Zürich and contains 140 poets by name. Manuscript *C* also contains lyrics of genres other than *Minnesang*. For more information and an overview over other minor manuscripts and editions see Günther Schweikle, *Minnesange* (Stuttgart: Metzler; Collection Metzler; Vol, 244, 1989) 1-33.

⁴ The term *kung-t'i* 宮體 refers in part to the Eastern Palace, the official residence of Crown Prince Hsiao Kang. The main courts of the German minnesingers of the middle of the 12th century were the courts of the Hohenstaufen.

⁵ This new development is not merely a literary one, but it also had to do with a change in the mentality of love. There is an interesting article about the various stages of the mentality and social change of love by Peter Dinzelbacher, "Sozial-und Mentalitätsgeschichte der Liebe im Mittelalter," in Ulrich Müllerm, ed., *Minne ist ein swarerez Spiel: Neue Untersuchungen zum Minnesang und zur Geschichte der Liebe im Mittelalter* (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1986) 75-110.

⁶ *Ythy* 2. (preface). I have adopted the variant reading *hsüan* (a kind of lily). As Hightower observes in the notes to his translation of the *Ythy* preface, "*Hsüan* and *su* are two kinds of plants reputed to be effective anodynes." See James Robert Hightower, "Some Characteristics of Parallel Prose," in *Studies in Chinese Literature*, ed. John L. Bishop (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), 132. *Su* is

perilla, a relative of thyme. Unless indicated otherwise, all translations from Chinese as well as from German are my own. In my translations of the *Ythy*, I have benefited from *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, translated by Anne M. Birrell (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982). I would also like to express my gratitude to Professor Robert Joe Cutter and Professor Joseph S.M. Lau for many helpful corrections and suggestions.

⁷ See Günther Schweikle, *Minnesang*, p. 73 for more information.

⁸ While most minnesingers exclusively composed poems of courtly love, the troubadours, who were generally acknowledged to be responsible for the phenomenon of courtly love lyrics, also wrote satirical and political lyrics in five main genres: the *chanson*, the *pastourelle*, the *aubade*, the *jeu parti*, and the *sirventes*. The *trouvères* also wrote *chansons de gestes* and *romans bretons*. See J.A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3rd. rev. ed. (1991; Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 1007.

⁹ In the French troubadour lyrics of courtly love the *Frauenpreis* ('praise of woman') was missing. Instead, they wrote mock-songs about women, a phenomenon that does not occur in the German *Minnesang* until Walther von der Vogelweide, who also marked the end of the *Hohe Minne*. It was also French tradition to let women express themselves as actively wooing and longing for the male in the same way the male does for the female.

¹⁰ *MF* 52.7-16. For more translations of the German *Minnesang*, see for example Frank C. Nicholson, *Old German Love Songs. Translated from the Minnesingers of the Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907); Frederick Goldin, *German and Italian Lyrics of the Middle Ages: An Anthology and a History* (New York: Anchor Press, 1973); Jethro Bithell, *The Minnesingers* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909).

¹¹ I am thinking here of Hartmann von Aue's *Erec* and *Iwein*, both written after the example of Chrétien de Troyes and Eschenbach's *Parzival*.

¹² Eva Willms, *Liebesleid und Sangeshlust: Untersuchungen zur deutschen Liebeslyrik des späten 12 und frühen 13 Jahrhunderts*

(München: Artemis, 1990) 117.

¹³ Willms, *Liebesleid und Sangeslust*, 117.

¹⁴ Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, translated by Montgomery Belgion (New York: Pantheon, 1956) 45.

¹⁵ This appears only in the *Frauenlied* or *Frauenstrophe*, where the poet composed lyrics that were sung alternately by a man and a woman or a woman only. The poet projects his own desire to be desirable for a woman into these verses. The women sometimes appear to be actively wooing, but more often than not they shy away from the man's courtship, in fear that it might compromise their status as a honorable woman. This kind of song, however, is written in the French tradition and rarely appears in the *Hohe Minne*. Nevertheless, it also reflects the social obstacles for a woman of the *Minnesang* to having a sexual relationship outside of marriage.

¹⁶ The topic of the almost universal dawn-song is the parting of two lovers after a night of love-making. Although in these songs the goal of wooing is achieved, the often elegiac situation of parting and secrecy still remains within the bounds of the melancholy mood of the *Hohe Minne*.

¹⁷ J. A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 97.

¹⁸ Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies. Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (New York: Methuen) 126.

¹⁹ MF 140.32-141.3.

²⁰ MF 130.9-130.30.

²¹ Joachim Bumke, *Courtly Culture: Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages*, translated by Thomas Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) 325.

²² MF 49.37f.

²³ MF 159.38.

²⁴ Jutta Goheen, *Mittelalterliche Liebeslyrik von Neidhart von Reuental bis zu Oswald von Wolkenstein. Eine Stilkritik*. (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1984) 144.

²⁵ See Heinrich von Rugge in MF 107.27.

²⁶ MF 44.22ff.

²⁷ MF 140.16 and 170.19.

²⁶ MF 122.11ff.

²⁷ MF 134.36.

²⁸ MF 136.25ff.

²⁹ Joan M. Ferrante, *Woman as Image in Medieval Literature from the 12th Century to Dante* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975; Durham: Labyrinth Press, 1985) 66-67.

³⁰ *Liang shu* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1973) 4:109.

³¹ Lin Wen-yüeh 林文月 "Nan-ch'ao kung-t'i-shih yen-chiu" 南朝宮體詩研究, *Wen shih ch'ê hsüeh-pao* 文史哲學報 15 (August 1966) 408.

³² According to Lin Wen-yüeh, landscape scenes and object descriptions are part and parcel of Palace Style Poetry in the "wider sense" (*kuang yi* 廣義). In a "narrow sense" it is the "blazoning" of palace women in Palace Style Poetry that is the concern of this paper. See Lin Wen-yüeh, "Nan-ch'ao kung-t'i shih yen-chiu," 409.

³³ Ronald Miao, "Palace-style Poetry: The Courtly Treatment of Glamour and Love," Ronald Miao, ed., *Studies in Chinese Poetry and Poetics*, vol. I (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1978) 8.

³⁴ Yang Ming 楊明 lists several examples for descriptions of women in the *Chu-tz'u* and the *tz'u-fu* in his article "Kung-t'i shih p'ing-chieh wen-t'i" 宮體詩評解問題, *Fu-tan hsüeh-pao* 復旦學報 5 (1988) 48-49.

³⁵ J. H. Prynne, "Review of *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*," by Anne M. Birrell, *Modern Asian Studies* 17 (April 1983) 673.

³⁶ Prynne, Review, 687.

³⁷ See Lin Wen-yüeh, "Nan-ch'ao kung-t'i-shih yen-chiu", 424-430.

³⁸ Kang-i Sun Chang, *Six Dynasties Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) 149.

³⁹ Miao, "Palace-Style Poetry," 18.

⁴⁰ Ythy 7.1b-2a. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 182-83.

⁴¹ Miao, "Palace-Style Poetry", 13.

⁴² Spring (*ch'un* 春) is the symbol most frequently used to alluding to erotic feelings. According to Wolfram Eberhard, spring "is the season in which the male element (*yang* 陽) is in the ascendant," Wolfram Eberhard, *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols*, trans.

⁴³ "Spring's flush" (*ch'un se* 春色) is a pun for sexual (*se* 色)

feelings.

⁴⁶ *Ythy* 8.16a. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 225. The poem is by Wen-jen Ch'ien.

⁴⁷ *Ythy* 7.22b. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 204.

⁴⁸ *Ythy* 9.25b. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 256. The poem is by Hsiao Kang.

⁴⁹ *Ythy* 7.4b. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 186.

⁵⁰ *Ythy* 7.15a. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 195. These two lines refer to the legend of Cheng Chiao-fu 鄭交甫, who encountered two young women and asked for their girdle gems. They gave them to him, but after he had gone a few paces, the gems disappeared, and when he turned to look for the women, they, too, were gone. See the commentary of Li Shan 李善 (d. 689) in *Wen hsüan* 文選 (Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü) 12.21b-22a.

⁵¹ Anne M. Birrell, "The Dusty Mirror: Courtly Portraits of Women in Southern Dynasties Love Poetry," Robert E. Hegel and Richard C. Hessney, eds., *Expressions of Self in Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) 50.

⁵² The translation is from Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 252, 253. See *Ythy* 9.22a. There are two poems by Chang Shuai 張率 there that use these lines.

⁵³ The mandarin ducks (*yüan-yang* 鴛鴦), who live in pairs for life, are a symbol for marital happiness. The phoenix (*fêng-huang* 鳳凰) sometimes refers to sexual union. Together with its counterpart, the dragon, it stands for husband and wife. The silkworm (*ch'ung* 虫), is a reference to the season of spring. Breeding begins in early spring and the crops are usually brought in April. Sericulture then starts with activities like spinning and weaving. The dragon (*lung* 龍) is a very complex symbol. In the context of Palace Style Poetry it is most often used to allude to male vigor and fertility.

⁵⁴ *Ythy* 10.20a. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 288. "Lo goddess" is a reference to Fu-fei 宓妃, the beautiful deity made famous through Ts'ao Chih's 曹植(192-232) rhapsody "Lo shen fu" 洛神賦.

⁵⁵ *Ythy* 9.30a-b. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 262.

- ⁶⁶ Prynne, *Review of New Songs*, 686.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 685-86.
- ⁶⁸ Nanyang was famous for its production of a very fine cosmetic powder.
- ⁶⁹ *Ythy* 8.6b-7a. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 214.
- ⁷⁰ Laila Salem, *Die Frau in den Liedern des "Hohen Minnesangs"*: *Forschungskritik und Textanalyse* (Frankfurt/Main, Bern, Cirencester: Lang, 1980) 231.
- ⁷¹ Birrell, "The Dusty Mirror", 10.
- ⁷² Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies*, 131.
- ⁷³ *Ythy* 9.26a. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 257.
- ⁷⁴ *Ythy* 9.29a. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 260.
- ⁷⁵ John Marney, *Liang Chien-wen ti* (Boston: Twayne, 1976) 113.
- ⁷⁶ Birrell, "The Dusty Mirror", 47.
- ⁷⁷ L.C. Martin, ed., *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) 28.
- ⁷⁸ Lionel Trilling, *A Gathering of Fugitives* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956) 38.
- ⁷⁹ *Liang shu* 7.157. (Chung-hua shu-chü edition).
- ⁸⁰ Beatrice Spade, "The Education of Women in China during the Southern Dynasties," *Journal of Asian History*, 13 (1979) 33.
- ⁸¹ Spade, "The Education of Women," 34-35.
- ⁸² *Ythy* 8.18b. Cf. Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, 228. For a discussion of the attribution and the identity of Liu Ling-hsien, see pp. 356-57 of Birrell's book.
- ⁸³ Albert Richard O'Hara, trans., *The Position of Woman in Early China According to the Lieh-nü-chuan, The Biographies of Chinese Women* (Taipei: Mei Ya Publications, 1971) 230.
- ⁸⁴ *Ythy* 6.16a.
- ⁸⁵ *Ythy* 6.17b.
- ⁸⁶ *Song of Songs* 7:1-6. (New International Version)
- ⁸⁷ *Song of Songs* 5:10-16.
- ⁸⁸ *Song of Songs* 6:3a.
- ⁸⁹ Willms, *Liebesleid und Sangeslust*, 234.
- ⁹⁰ Birrell, "The Dusty Mirror", 66.