

Rereading Pa-ta Shan-jen's Poetry: The Textual and the Visual, and the Determinacy of Interpretation

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ABSTRACT

Reading Pa-ta Shan-jen's poetry is akin to the pleasure of "reading" his painting—for both concern the unraveling of the play of symbolism, the ambiguous, unbounded symbolism which contains allusions within allusions, memories within memories, and lines that change meanings with continual reimagining and reexperiencing. In reading Pa-ta's poetry, the critical focus is on the *text*, although in reading his painting the power of sight is inevitably dominant. In studying Pa-ta's paintings and almost all Chinese painting, there is the constant demand to be involved with two powerful but opposed forces — the textual and the visual. In fact, today the "textual" dimension of Chinese painting has been forgotten by some modern art historians. From this stand point, deconstruction in literary criticism insists upon interdisciplinary approaches that erase boundaries that traditionally separate disciplines from one another. Even with interdisciplinary work, scholars in poetry and criticism tend to conceive of cultural products as "texts," limiting the process of interpretation. Traditional Chinese literati held that the integrity of both textual and visual forces created the total context of writing and interpretation. This paper examines two of Pa-ta's paintings and their inscribed poems: "White Jasmine" and "Two Birds" to explore possible textual and visual strategies the poet-painter may have used, and thereby derive from the possible conflicting meanings the interpretation which is "right" or the one which is most rewarding.

KEY WORDS

Pa-ta Shan-jen
Chinese poetry
Chinese painting
Ming loyalists
"White Jasmine"

"Two Birds"
interdisciplinary approach
literary criticism
poetic allusion
poetic symbolism

Part of the pleasure of reading Pa-ta Shan-jen's 八大山人 poetry for me is akin to the pleasure of my "reading" his painting — for both concern the unraveling of the play of symbolism, the ambiguous, unbounded symbolism which contains allusions within allusions, memories within memories, and lines that change meanings with continued reimagining and reexperiencing. But it is worth remembering that in reading Pa-ta's poetry our critical focus is on the *text*, although in reading his painting we are inevitably obsessed with our power of *sight*. What seems unusual to modern art historians about studying Pa-ta's painting (or almost all Chinese painting for that matter) is that they need to be constantly involved with two powerful but opposed forces — the textual and the visual. This point is important especially because we know that most Chinese paintings contain inscribed poetry, poetry that transcends its generic boundaries and fuses into a unity with painting. Generally, in studying Chinese painting, one needs first of all to decipher the various links between these two arts — and to remember that the inscribed poem and the painting itself are not simply placed next to each other, but rather they complement and define each other.¹ Whether all modern art historians of Chinese painting are up to such a task is of course an open question. The fact is that many art historians today have forgotten that painting can have a "textual" dimension. Thus, the deconstructive critic Paul de Man says in his *The Resistance to Theory*: "We now have to recognize the necessity of a non-perceptual, linguistic moment in painting and music, and learn to *read* pictures rather than to *imagine* meaning."² If there is anything whereby deconstruction in literary criticism has exercised a truly unique influence (for better or for worse) in academic discourse today, it must be by this insistence on interdisciplinary approaches that intends to erase the boundaries that traditionally distinguish one discipline from another.

But in spite of the existence of interdisciplinary work, we modern scholars in poetry and criticism do have a tendency to conceive of every cultural product exclusively as a "text," not realizing that such an approach comes from a simple and artificial reduction of what interpretation should be. Indeed, by translating everything into "reading", we have often become textualists even when visual appreciations of artistic images are called for. And this problem has recently provoked a largescale cultural debate that appeals to American readers across a wide spectrum of interests — as may be witnessed by the recent feature on a debate between Camille Paglia and Neil Postman in *Harper's Magazine*, with Paglia defending the image culture (as reflected in the imagistic world of television) and Postman supporting the

powers of the written text.³ Of course, it is always worth remembering that there is in the history of culture an age-old competition between pictorial image and verbal representation.⁴ But the kind of extremism in the Paglia-Postman debate seems to me based on fallacy, or at least a needlessly restricted definition of "vision" and "text." What we really need today is interdisciplinary reading, looking for both literary and visual meanings.

Certainly, traditional Chinese critics would have agreed with me, for it was the marriage of the textual and visual forces that created the total context of artistic creation and intellectual interpretation for the literati (especially from the T'ang Dynasty onwards). As Hans Frankel has observed, "There is no parallel in Western civilization for the harmonious association, mutual inspiration, and blending" between painting and poetry "that were cultivated by the Chinese literati for many centuries."⁵ And, most important, the three arts of poetry, calligraphy and painting have been intimately connected in the Chinese tradition — what is known as the "three perfections" (*san-chüeh* 三絕).⁶ With calligraphy serving as "an important link between literature and for both of these arts depend largely on the skillful use of the brush, a fundamental tool in calligraphy⁷ — the Chinese concentrated on both words and visual impressions. They called painting "soundless" poetry, and, as the Sung poet Ou-yang Hsiu said, preferred to "read a poem, like . . . a painting."⁸ Hans Frankel described the relationship between these two sister arts as one of "convertibility," and Jao Tsung-i called it "transpositions."⁹

The purpose of my paper, however, is not to continue demonstrating how Chinese poetry and painting are closely related to each other — since by now the idea is already accepted as common knowledge. Rather, my goal is to answer (through a rereading of Pa-ta Shan-jen's poems) a few questions regarding interpretation which every reader of Chinese poetry and painting will ask sooner or later. Two of the most important questions are, quite simply: What are the reasons for writing (and painting) between the lines, and also for reading between the lines? And in what way does poetry inscribed on painting (or vice versa) set a limit on the seeming open-endedness of interpretation?

Traditional Chinese readers of poetry have been taught to prize ambiguity and complexity as positive values in a poem. In reading a poem, they generally expect to be "provoked to infer something more, or other, as the true meaning of the poem, indeed until all the symbolic possibilities are exhausted."¹⁰ To the modern reader, Pa-ta Shan-jen's poetry (and his paint-

ing and calligraphy for that matter) provides a special pleasure of decoding — for his poems are often like riddles, full of difficult allusions and obscure references. Both Wang Fangyu and Jao Tsung-i have been hard at work trying to elucidate the ambiguity in Pa-ta's poetry.¹¹ And Richard Barnhart happily takes on the responsibilities of the sympathetic reader in trying to demystify the meaning of Pa-ta Shan-jen's art. He says in his introduction to a recent catalogue, *Master of the Lotus Garden*:

Bada's poetry is extremely difficult, but as is true of his calligraphy, he was a serious student of poetry, and incorporated in this art his broad learning and fascination with language and linguistic puzzles. Like his calligraphy, his poetry sometimes recalls Huang Tingjian in its difficult language and obscure references: While some modern scholars attribute their inability to understand Bada's language to its intrinsic irrationality, it finally becomes clear that the difficulty lies primarily with us, not Bada.¹²

Part of the fascination in studying Pa-ta Shan-jen comes from our continuing attempt to understand Pa-ta the man: a prince of the fallen Ming dynasty who might be using the pretense of madness as a means of his salvation at a time when literary censorship and persecution posed a severe threat to Ming loyalists during the Ch'ing.¹³ Reading the existing biographies of Pa-ta (which contradict each other in many ways),¹⁴ we are inevitably left with a riddle, a puzzle, and a sense of indirection. But, beyond the highly visible political reasons, there are aesthetic reasons which make Pa-ta's work extremely appealing to modern people. For example, Richard Barnhart found a quality of "abstraction" in Pa-ta that fascinated those Chinese under the influence of modern Western art — for "as abstraction became attractive to Chinese artists, they found abstraction" in Pa-ta, too.¹⁵

Like his painting, Pa-ta's poetry is wonderfully suggestive. Pa-ta's work can provide a rich ground for the hermeneutic enterprise — an ongoing enterprise of "deconstructing" and unmasking the poet's private language. For example, my own interest in Pa-ta has been, to a large extent, inspired by the modern critical approach that insists on rereadings and on the reader's constant discovery of new interpretations — although the traditional Chinese hermeneutic strategy has always been based on a somewhat similar procedure of unfolding the symbolic meanings in the text. In fact, traditional Chinese authors also sought to provide limits of interpretation by intentionally caus-

ing the readers' fixation on certain key images or allusions that would help the readers achieve validity in interpreting the meaning of the text. For the rest of this paper, I shall examine ways of achieving some determinacy of interpretation — by looking into possible textual and visual strategies which Pa-ta might have used in his works.

Of course, this does *not* mean that the author's rhetoric is the only legitimate meaning we can assign to the work itself. There are always elements in the work — in Octavio Paz's words, "the pleasures and surprises we derive from the reading" — which may not coincide exactly with the author's "impulses and objectives."¹⁶ In fact, traditional Chinese poets and critics have been keenly aware of this important function of the reader, viewing the reader as constantly standing between the text and the author. For example, the Ch'ing critic Chou Chi 周濟 recommends that a work be written in a mode of implicit allegory, so that the reader can be "like a man standing on the edge of a pool admiring the fish," wondering "whether it is a bream or a carp."¹⁷ But it is undeniable that the author's rhetoric is *one* of the important meanings that many readers wish to decipher, although they are also interested in their own hermeneutics. Most readers do not want to remain in a state of permanent mystification; they wish to become privileged readers who can somewhat approximate the strategic devices behind the "verbal icon."¹⁸

For many Chinese authors, combining poetry with painting is one effective way to create limits of interpretation. For they know the readers would read the poem and the painting together — and in the process of reading, textual meanings and visual images would enhance each other by enlarging the possibilities of symbolic associations. And such readings would ultimately lead to a certain determinacy in interpretation. Indeed, this may be one of the reasons why "the practice of using an earlier *shih* poem as the subject for painting, called *shih-i*," arose so early in ancient China (i.e., the Han dynasty).¹⁹ In the case of Pa-ta, his poems inscribed on his paintings work more or less like secret signs, for they are meant to be concealed from naive readers and revealed only to those familiar with the particular political events and literary conventions. (So the supposed "limits of interpretation" are really limits on the appropriate audience.) This way, the poet-painter was able to create in his art the impression of distancing and reticence on the one hand, but on the other hand guide the readers to his intended meaning.²⁰ It is this dual function — developing from a special response to the Chinese aesthetic and political considerations — that will eventually help us decode the enigmatic quality of Pa-ta's works. His works are highly idiosyncratic;

we remember the angry eyes of his ducks, the cold “eyes” of his grapevines, etc. Indeed, Pa-ta was seeing the world in his own image; he wrote and painted between the lines. And it is our task as readers to read between the lines in order to elucidate his art of ambiguity and to understand how it works in his unified textual and pictorial creation. For his painting – which works like an icon – does have a conceptual and linguistic dimension.

By way of illustration, I shall focus on a poem inscribed on Pa-ta's “White Jasmine” painting dated approximately 1694 (See Figure 1).²¹ The year 1694 was the most productive of Pa-ta's artistic life, and it was also an important turning point for the poet-painter. Around 1694 Pa-ta began to develop a new acceptance of his situation as a loyalist survivor, and had just started to paint large-scale landscapes. In many ways, his “White Jasmine” poem represents an important emotional exploration during a period of personal crisis and critical transition:

In Hsi-chou, the spring slightly enchanted;
 At Nan-wei the flowers have bloomed long ago.
 Somewhere nearby is the sound of a lone *ch'in*,
 I wonder who is composing an elegy.²²

西洲春薄醉
 南內花已晚
 傍著獨琴聲
 誰爲挽歌版

A key image in the poem, the *ch'in* music, immediately comes to the reader's mind (line 3). It alludes to a third-century poem by Hsiang Hsiu 向秀, entitled “Recalling Old Times” (“Ssu-chiu fu”), which was written to mourn the death of Hsi K'ang 嵇康, the poet-musician who was skilled at the *ch'in* music and was executed at a time of ugly political events. Hsiang Hsiu used to be a near neighbor of Hsi K'ang. One day, after the death of Hsi K'ang, Hsiang Hsiu passed by the old houses where they used to live. He heard someone nearby was playing a flute, and suddenly he thought back to the good times he had had with Hsi K'ang. Stirred to sadness by the music, Hsiang Hsiu wrote his “Recalling Old Times,” an elegy in memory of his dear friend:

... I grieve that Master Hsi had to leave forever,

Looking at the sun and shadows, playing on a lute,
 Entrusting his destiny to a deeper understanding,
 Giving his life's remainder to that moment of time.
 When I heard the wailing flute with its troubling sound,
 Wonderful notes that break and begin again,
 I halted my carriage before going farther,
 To take a brush and write what is in my heart.²³

悼嵇生之永辭兮
 顧日影而彈琴
 託運遇於領會兮
 寄餘命於寸陰
 聽鳴笛之慷慨兮
 妙聲絕而復尋
 停駕言其將邁兮
 遂授翰而寫心

“To take a brush and write what is in my heart.” This reminds us of Pa-ta’s tone of voice in his “White Jasmine” poem. When Pa-ta says, “I wonder who is composing an elegy,” is he mourning the death of some dear friend, or possibly the death of the Ch’ung-chen Emperor who hanged himself after the fall of the Ming — like Hsi K’ang who also died tragically because of political reasons several centuries before? We of course can never know all the circumstances surrounding Pa-ta’s writing of the poem.²⁴ But we can be certain of one thing: the year of Pa-ta’s composing the poem (and painting the white jasmine) does not have to coincide with the time of the actual event referred to in the poem. For it is obviously a poem of memory, of “recalling old times,” like Hsiang Hsiu’s. It happens that 1694, the likely date of the “White Jasmine” painting, was not just an unusual year in Pa-ta’s painting career. In that year, too, Pa-ta adopted a new manner of inscribing, of *writing on*, his paintings: he began to use the cipher *san-yüeh shih-chiu* (“nineteenth day of the third month”)²⁵ — the very date on which the Ch’ung-chen emperor had killed himself in 1644, the day on which the Ming dynasty came to an end. This makes it entirely possible that Pa-ta’s poem with its muted elegiac tone was written on the occasion of the Ming emperor’s thirtieth death anniversary. The colophon enables those who know — those, probably Ming loyalists, for whom “san yueh shih-chiu” already means something — to stabilize the wavering reference of both poem and painting. With this historical reference in mind, we can go on to “see”

the poem and "read" the painting with greater confidence.

This takes us to a second level of meaning in Hsiang Hsiu's poem which is relevant to our interpretation here: Hsiang Hsiu's "Recalling Old Times" is both about the death of a dear friend and about mourning the vanished glories of past dynasties. Although Hsiang Hsiu himself never experienced a dynastic fall, he assumed in his elegiac poem the image of a traditional loyalist:

I intoned the "Drooping Millet" with its tears for Chou,
Sorrowed with the "Ear of Wheat" over ruins of Yin.²⁶

(lines 9-10)

歎黍離之愍周兮
悲麥秀於殷墟

"Drooping Millet" and "Ear of Wheat" are references to two ancient songs which were thought to celebrate the virtues of the loyalists of the Shang and Chou who revisited their ruins of the old capital. Although the original songs give very little internal indication that they must be read in such a loyalist frame of reference, Chinese scholars since the Han dynasty have insisted on reading them as specifically referring to the sorrows of loyalists.²⁷ And Hsiang Hsiu was just one of the scholar-poets who tried to establish a tradition of loyalist writing by continuing to treat these ancient songs as historical sources. In all this the Chinese poets and critics were allowing interpretation to make *text*, or to inscribe them in new genres. By alluding to Hsiang Hsiu's poem — through the crucial image of the *ch'in* music — Pa-ta shows his consciousness of the loyalist tradition in poetry.

But Pa-ta's poem was written in a new mode. Unlike Hsiang Hsiu's poem which explicitly mentions the titles of the ancient "loyalist" songs, Pa-ta's "White Jasmine" poem employs the rhetoric of indirection, a refined device of insinuating something without saying it explicitly. First of all, Pa-ta's poem is in the form of a quatrain (*chüeh-chü*), a genre of poetry known for its device of creating endless overtones.²⁸ Its moral and aesthetic sense is produced "intertextually," or to be more precise, by an interaction of the present poem with the loyalist tradition of reading and writing, and also by an interaction between the poem and the picture on which it is inscribed. In what ways does the poem's meaning depend upon the visual images created by the painting, "White Jasmine"?

It is by looking at the painting itself that we come to know the central place of the flower in the poem. As Richard Barnhart says, "It is interesting to observe the painter's technique in painting his blossoms. The long bending stem was drawn through the central area on wet paper, creating a subtle bleeding effect. . . ." (see Figure 1).²⁹ This subtle "bleeding" image of the blossoms corresponds to line 2 of the poem: "At Nan-wei the *flowers* are already late." The juxtaposition of the pictorial image and the poetic description forces us to read the whole poem as a *yung-wu* 詠物 ("ode on the object") poem – with the white jasmine serving as the "object" under concern – while the poem becomes an associative representation capable of evoking the shared qualities between the *symbol* (the "object") and the *thing* symbolized.

What does the white jasmine, as a symbol, stand for? Traditionally, jasmines are known for their sweet-smelling flowers, and that's why they are often made into hair ornaments.³⁰ In Chinese culture, the jasmine is a symbol of the fair sex, of woman. Thus, when read at this level, Pa-ta's poem could be viewed as an elegy mourning the death of a lover. However, when we come across another key image, "Nan-wei," in the poem, we are compelled to go beyond this context of interpretation. For Nan-wei was the name of a palace occupied by the Ming emperors (and also by the earlier Southern Sung emperors).³¹ "Nan-wei" provides an important referential context and intertextual link, for it is an allusion that brings the jasmine blossoms (in the painting) and other related details (in the poem) in close contact with political significance. Pa-ta has thus created a complex web of flower symbolism by following the rules of the *yung-wu* tradition, which dictates that every allusion and image in the poem contributes to the meaning of the dominant symbol – in this case, the white jasmine.

Pa-ta's is a device of ambiguity that turns secret feelings into structures of symbolic language. The white jasmine, which usually symbolizes the femininity of the beloved, is here a secret sign for linking romantic love and loyalist sentiment. For loyalism could be seen as a form of love, and it has been a tradition ever since the *Li-sao* that if we want to present loyalism allegorically – that is, to reveal it and at the same time hide it – the most effective and most readily comprehensible image for us to use would be that of romantic love.³² And, most important, love and loyalism have in common a predominant idea of impermanence and loss – an idea that is best symbolized by fragile spring flowers. Thus, Li Yü 李煜 (the tenth-century poet and King of the Southern T'ang) wrote after the loss of his kingdom:

The forest *flowers* have lost their *spring* red,
Before their time.³³

林花謝了春紅
太匆匆

The Ming poet Ch'en Tzu-lung 陳子龍 (1608-1647) wrote after the fall of his country:

The beauty of *spring* fills my vision . . .
Flowers alone are hard to preserve.³⁴

滿眼韶華
東風慣是吹紅去

And now Pa-ta, the Ming loyalist, says in his "White Jasmine" poem.

In Hsi-chou, the *spring* slightly enchanted,
At Nan-wei the *flowers* have bloomed long ago.

西洲春薄醉
南內花已晚

These poets have adopted the strategies of love poetry for their loyalist poems precisely because they understand that both kinds of regret — the regret of past love and the loyalist's regretful memories — share a sense of loss that can be symbolized by ephemeral spring flowers. This also explains why the boundaries between love poetry and loyalist poetry can be extremely fluid in the Chinese tradition. This fluid boundary, in turn, offers the reader a means of elucidating the ambiguity through textual, imagistic and contextual references. It is well to note here that the "genres" are not simply juxtaposed, but are mutually reinforcing. Pa-ta's devices of indirect reference lead us *from* poem to picture, and then, via a chain of visual allusions, back to poetic precursor texts which enrich the visual image's meaning.

To demonstrate the importance of context in our interpretation, one need only look at another painting by Pa-ta, entitled "Two Birds" (see Figure 2). The painting was also done in 1694 — and, quite interestingly, it also contains the "san-yueh shih-chiu" cipher and the "White Jasmine" poem.

Obviously, Pa-ta liked the poem so much that he wanted to inscribe it again on another painting. But, in the "Two Birds" painting, the poem is only the first half of a two-poem series:

In Hsi-chou, the spring slightly enchanted;
At Nan-wei the flowers have bloomed long ago.
Somewhere nearby is the sound of a lone *ch'in*,
I wonder who is composing an elegy.

Exert yourself — do whatever you will,
There's no escaping the vicissitudes of "heat" and "cold."
Build yourself a hall on T'ien-t'ai Mountain,
And take in mountain birds as your disciples.

西洲春薄醉
南內花已晚
傍著獨琴聲
誰爲挽歌版

橫施爾亦便
炎涼何可樂
開館天台山
山鳥爲門徒

Now, our object of concern has been shifted from the "white jasmine" to the "two birds" painting, and we have to read the poem-series in the context of the "White Jasmine" poem. From the second half of the poem-series, we know that the "two birds" painted here are not just ordinary birds — they live on the T'ien-t'ai Mountain, a paradise for Chinese Buddhists and Taoists. As the Six Dynasties poet Sun Ch'o 孫綽 says in the opening passage of his *fu* poem, "Wandering on Mountain T'ien-t'ai,"

Mount T'ien-t'ai is the sacred flower of all mountain ranges. Cross the sea and you will find Fang-chang and P'eng-lai, turn inland and you will come to Ssu-ming and T'ien-t'ai, all of them places where the sages of the occult wander and perform their transformations, where the holy immortals have their caves and dwellings.³⁵

Clearly, the poem-series represents a progression from loss to transcendence³⁶ – with the first poem (which is also the “White Jasmine” poem) alluding to the poet’s lamentation for his fallen country, and the second poem signifying a gradual acceptance of country, and the second poem signifying a gradual acceptance of a new world to replace the old one. Perhaps, in the poet’s imagination, the Ming emperor has become an immortal happily residing in T’ien-t’ai with his devoted loyalists serving as his disciples (Poem 2, lines 3-4). Seeing birds or chickens as symbols of loyalists is not at all far-fetched – in fact, it was a central theme for many Ming-Ch’ing poets. For example, the poet Wu Wei-yeh 吳偉業 (1609-1671) – in his attempt to express his unchanging loyalty to the Ming – compares the Ming Emperor to chickens (through the use of a historical allusion):

To this floating life I owe only a single death,
 In this earthly sphere no way to master the Nine Cycles of elixir.
 Formerly I was one of King Huai’s chickens or dogs,
 Unable to follow him to the immortal land, I was left behind in
 this world of men.³⁷

浮生所欠只一死
 塵世無緣識九還
 我本淮王舊雞犬
 不隨仙去落人間

However, it should be noted that, if read differently, the second poem in Pa-ta’s poem-series can also be translated as follows:

Exert yourself – do whatever you will in this world,
 For there’s no escaping the vicissitudes of “heat” and “cold.”
 Let me build a new studio on Mount T’ien-t’ai,
 And have mountain birds as my disciples.³⁸

If we follow such a reading, the poem becomes the poet’s own autobiographical voice. It shows his new determination to rebuild his life in an artistic “Peach blossom Spring,” turning his loyalism from political activity (on the model of Po I and Shu Ch’i) into a quasi-Taoist search for immortality on an isolated peak. But it nonetheless conveys the same notion of transcendence which we have encountered in the previous reading of the poem.

Pa-ta's "Two Birds" painting was done in the important year 1694, as was, perhaps, his "White Jasmine" painting. This was also when he started to paint landscapes. In some emotional way, Pa-ta was trying to establish a new direction in his life, and landscape abruptly became an important vehicle for him. In his later landscape paintings, he explored new patterns, shapes, and tonalities to suggest a new sense of balance. And in his inscribed poems on the landscapes, he especially focused on the idea of serenity and peace. For example, Pa-ta wrote the following poem on a landscape dated ca. 1698-1700:

In spring mountains there is no near or far,
 Far away, everything is like a forest.
 With no shortage of places where the clouds are flying.
 How is it possible for these thoughts of human life to come to my
 mind?³⁹

春山無近遠
 遠意一爲林
 未少雲飛處
 何來人世心

Interpreting Pa-ta's poems (and his paintings) is full of paradox and surprises. If we evaluate his poems against his pictorial inventions, and vice versa, we will enjoy the fruitful reward of an immediate encounter with the moral and aesthetic content of his work. Pa-ta's "hidden signs" will ultimately become understandable under our scrutiny, and we should be able to decide which of the conflicting meanings is the right — or the most rewarding — one.

Notes

1. See Hans Frankel, "Poetry and Painting: Chinese and Western Views of Their Convertibility," *Comparative Literature* 9.4 (1957): 289-301; Jao Tsung-i, "Tz'u Poetry and Painting: Transpositions in Art" (trans. by Louise Yuhas), *National Palace Museum Quarterly* 8.3 (1974): 9-20. I am grateful to Hans Frankel for sharing with me a recently revised version of his article.
2. Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986), 10.
3. See Camille Paglia and Neil Postman, "She Wants Her TV! He wants His Book! A (Mostly) Polite Conversation About Our Image Culture," *Harpers* (March, 1991):

- 44-55. It should be mentioned that in her book *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), Camille Paglia claims (perhaps one-sidedly) that what she calls "the tyranny of the eye" provides the basis for creative art and literature in Western civilization from antiquity to the present. (See also Pat Lee's review of Paglia's book: "The Eyes have It," in *Yorkshire Post* (April 12, 1990). See also my review in Chinese: "Hsing chih tai-yü 性之代喻, in *China Times* 中國時報 (October 30, 1990).
4. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986), 43. I am also inspired by Longxi Zhang's discussion of this problem. (Longxi Zhang, *The Tao and the Logos: An East-West Comparative Study in Literary Hermeneutics* [Manuscript, 1990], 92-97.)
 5. Frankel, "Poetry and Painting," p. 307.
 6. Michael Sullivan, *The Three Perfections: Chinese Painting, Poetry and Calligraphy* (1974; rpt. New York: George Braziller, 1980).
 7. Frankel, 302.
 8. *Ibid.*, 305. Of course, such ideas (though in a different context) can also be found in ancient Europe. For example, Simonides of Ceos called painting "silent poetry," and poetry "speaking painting." (Frankel, 290.)
 9. See Note No. 1 above.
 10. Quoted from my article: "Symbolic and Allegorical Meanings in the *Yüeh-fu pu-t'i* Poem Series," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46.2 (1986): 363.
 11. Wang Fangyu 王方宇, "Pa-ta Shan-jen shih shih-chieh" 八大山人詩試解 and his "Pa-ta Shan-jen 'Shih-shuo hsün-yü shih'" 八大山人 "世說新語" 詩; and Jao Tsung-i, 饒宗頤 "Pa-ta Shan-jen 'Shih-shuo shih' chieh" 八大山人 "世說詩" 解. See Wang Fangyu, ed., *Pa-ta Shen-jen lun-chi* 八大山人論集 (Taipei: Kuo-li pien-i kuan, 1984), 1: 345-355, 357-377. 169-181.
 12. Richard M. Barnhart, "Introduction," *Master of the Lotus Garden: The Life and Art of Bada Shanren (1626-1705)* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Art Gallery and Yale Univ. Press, 1990), 15-16.
 13. Barnhart used "feigned insanity" to describe Pa-ta's situation, whereas James Cahill is more inclined to believe that there was some kind of real madness in the poet-painter. See *Ibid.*, 13; and James Cahill, "The 'Madness' in Bada Shanren's Paintings," *Ajia bunka kenkyu* (Tokyo: International Christian Univ.), no. 17 (March, 1989): 119-143.
 14. See Mae Anna Pany, *Zhu Da the Mad Monk Painter* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1985). See also the four biographies (by Shao Ch'ang-heng 邵長蘅, Lung K'e-pao 龍科寶, Ch'en Ting 陳鼎, and Chang Keng 張庚, respectively) appended to *Pa-ta Shan-jen lun-chi*, ed. by Wang Fangyu, 527-532.
 15. Barnhart, "Introduction," *Master of the Lotus Garden*, 19.
 16. Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988), 3.
 17. Chou Chi, Preface to his *Sung ssu-chia tz'u-hsüan chien-chu* 宋四家詞選箋注, annotated by K'uang Shih-yüan 鄺士元 (Taipei: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1971), 2.
 18. The term is of course borrowed from the New Critics. See W. K. Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1954).
 19. Jao Tsung-i, "Tz'u Poetry and Painting: Transpositions in Art," 13.
 20. His strategies remind us of those used by the Sung loyalist poets. See my "Symbolic and Allegorical Meanings in the *Yüeh-fu pu-t'i* Poem Series," 374.
 21. Barnhart, "Reading the Paintings and Calligraphy of Bada Shanren," in Wang and Barnhart, *Master of the Lotus Garden*, 152-153.
 22. Translation adapted from Chung-lan Wang and Richard Barnhart. See *Ibid.*, 153.

23. Translation taken from Burton Watson, trans., *Chinese Rhyme-Prose: Poems in the Fu Form from the Han and Six Dynasties Periods* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1971), 62-63.
24. See Wen Fong's comments on Pa-ta's artistic growth in this period: "We know almost nothing about Pa-ta's life after 1690, but his works from this decade witnessed a growth and development that is most unusual for a man in his late sixties and early seventies." (Wen C. Fong, "Stages in the Life and Art of Chu Ta." *Archives of Asian Art* 40 [1970]: 15.)
25. Barnhart, "Reading the Paintings and Calligraphy of Bada Shanren," 153.
26. Watson, trans., 63.
27. See also my book, *The Late-Ming Poet Ch'en Tzu-lung: Crises of Love and Loyalty* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1991), 103.
28. See also Yu-kung Kao and Tsu-lin Mei, "Ending Lines in Wang Shih-chen's 'Ch'ü-chüeh'," in *Artists and Traditions: Uses of the Past in Chinese Culture*, edited by Christian F. Murck (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), 131-135.
29. Barnhart, "Reading the Paintings and Calligraphy of Bada Shanren," 154.
30. C. A. S. Williams, *Outlines of Chinese Symbolism & Art Motives*, 3rd ed. (New York: Dover, 1976), 238.
31. Barnhart, "Reading the Paintings and Calligraphy of Bada Shanren," 153.
32. See my *The Late-Ming Poet Ch'en Tzu-lung*, 101. See also Yeh Chia-ying, "The Ch'ang-Chou School of Criticism," in *Chinese Approaches to Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'ü-ch'ao*, ed. by Adele Austin Richett (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), 186.
33. Translation adapted from my *The Evolution of Chinese Tz'u Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), 91.
34. Translation taken from my *The Late-Ming Poet Ch'en Tzu-lung*, 84.
35. Translation taken from Watson, *Chinese Rhyme-Prose*, 80.
36. In a different context, Lee Hui-shu discusses how Pa-ta's art "can transcend time, space and even physical form to wander freely in the great cosmos," and she compares this to Chuang Tzu's "free and easy wandering" (*hsiao-yao yu*). See Lee Hui-shu, "Pa-ta Shan-jen's Bird and Fish Painting and Chuang Tzu: The Art of Transformation" (paper, 1988), 20.
37. Translation taken from my "The Idea of the Mask in Wu Wei-yeh (1609-1671)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48.2 (1988): 294.
38. I am indebted to Wang Chung-lan for providing this alternative reading of the poem (private communication).
39. Translation adapted from Richard Barnhart, "Reading the Paintings and Calligraphy of Bada Shanren," 184.

Kang-i Sun Chang

"Rereading Pa-ta Shan-jen's Poetry"



Figure 1. "White Jasmine," ca. 1694.

Kang-i Sun Chang
"Rereading Pa-ta Shan-jen's Poetry"

西洲春薄殊
 南內書已晚
 傷著
 獨琴聲
 誰寫挽歌版
 物施
 二便
 空原
 何可無
 軍館
 大台
 山
 鳥
 為
 口
 德
 甲
 辰
 之
 夏
 日
 畫
 于
 行



Figure 2. "Two Birds," 1694.