

THE MANIPULATED IMAGE:
WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE'S 51,13

by Susan L. Clark

In a 1936 essay that radically altered the focus of *Beowulf*-scholarship, J. R. R. Tolkien noted:

For it is of their nature that the jabberwocks of historical and antiquarian research burble in the tulgy wood of conjecture, flitting from one tum tum tree to another. Noble animals, whose burbling is on occasion good to hear; but though their eyes of flame may sometimes prove search lights, their range is short.¹

Just as *Beowulf*'s monsters deserved better treatment from critics, Walther von der Vogelweide's poems merit attention of a different sort from that they have received to date, since for the most part scholars have dealt in rather naive terms with these fairly sophisticated poems.

A case in point is Walther's 51,13 ("Muget ir schouwen"²), a poem which critics either sentimentally praise³ or warily approach with *topoi* and socio-literary conventions extended as weapons.

- 51, 13 Muget ir schouwen waz dem meien
wunders ist beschert?
15 seht an pfaffen, seht an leien,
wie daz allez vert.
grôz ist sîn gewalt:
ine weiz obe er zouber künne:
swar er vert in sîner wünne,
20 dâ ist niemen alt.
Uns wil schiere wol gelingen.
wir suln sîn gemeit,
tanzen lachen unde singen,
âne dörperheit.
25 wê wer waere unfrô?
sît die voegele alsô schöne
singent in ir besten dône,
tuon wir ouch alsô!
Wol dir, meie, wie dû scheidest
30 allez âne haz!
wie dû walt und ouwe kleidest,
und die heide baz!

Miss Clark is Assistant Professor of Germanics at Rice University.

- diu hât varwe mê.
 'du bist kurzer, ich bin langer',
 35 alsô strîtent's ûf dem anger,
 bluomen unde klê.
 Rôter munt, wie dû dich swachest!
 lâ dîn lachen sîn.
 52, 1 scham dich daz dû mich an lachest
 nâch dem schaden mîn.
 ist daz wol getân?
 owê sô verlornere stunde,
 5 sol von minneclîchem munde
 solch unminne ergân!
 Daz mich, frowe, an fröiden irret,
 daz ist iuwer lîp.
 an iu einer ez mir wirret,
 10 ungenaedic wîp.
 wâ nemt ir den muot?
 ir sît doch genâden rîche:
 tuot ir mir ungenaedeclîche,
 sô sît ir niht guot.
 15 Scheidet, frowe, mich von sorgen,
 liebet mir die zît:
 oder ich muoz an fröiden borgen.
 daz ir saelic sît!
 muget ir umbe sehen?
 20 sich fröit al diu welt gemeine:
 möhte mir von iu ein kleine
 fröidelîn geschehen!

Can you see what miraculous powers are given to May?
 Look at the clergy, look at the laymen,
 how they all act.
 Great is May's power.
 I do not know if he can do magic,
 but wherever he brings his joy,
 no one is old.

Everything we do goes well.
 We must be happy,
 dance, laugh and sing
 to celebrate appropriately.
 Who could possibly be unhappy?
 The birds sing their most beautiful songs,
 let us do the same.

Hail, May, who peacefully
 settles all quarrels.
 You dress up the woods and the fields,
 and the heath has even more color.
 "You are shorter. I am taller."
 In the fields flowers and clover
 try to outdo each other.

Red mouth, you diminish your beauty!
 Stop your laughing.
 Shame on you for laughing at me
 because of my suffering.
 Is that the way you should act?
 What a pity for the time lost
 when such a lovable mouth causes
 such unhappiness!

My lady, you are destroying my happiness.
 You alone confuse me,
 merciless woman.
 Why do you do this?
 You are full of grace,
 but if you are unmerciful to me,
 then you are not good.

My lady, take my sorrow away,
 fill my days with love,
 or I will have to borrow happiness elsewhere.
 Be happy!
 Can't you see around you?
 All the world is happy;
 If only a tiny bit of happiness could come from you to me!

(Translated by E. C. Riemschneider, Rutgers University)

The critics assume a posture that is at once defensive and offensive, as they attempt to answer the bothersome question: "Why doesn't the 'rôter munt' ('red mouth') grant her favors to the speaker?" In effect, the catch-all phrase "social status" serves as a convenient shield for these critics, a sturdy bulwark of accepted scholarly opinion, as well as a bludgeon to subdue the poem. If one accepts this rationale, the girl must either be a peasant who won't play the game correctly and go to bed with anything in armor or, at the other extreme, a highly-born lady who dare not comply with the poet's desires, although she may smile encouragement.⁴ If the poem is considered without resorting to pre-determined social categories, however, it is immediately apparent that Walther's speaker does not sense the female's position in medieval society as an issue at all. Other Walther poems deal explicitly with social status as a problem in love affairs⁵ and easily communicate this problem to the audience. Whatever the woman's social status in 51,13 may be, the speaker of the poem does not state it as a problem and certainly does not view her rejection of him in light of social status. In fact, he suggests no concrete reasons whatsoever to explain the girl's rejection, unless one takes seriously his value judgment, spoken in the tone of Aesop's fox eyeing the grapes, that if she will not behave compliantly to him, then she is not "quot."

If one entertains the possibility that social status might be an external consideration imposed upon the poem by critics—and this would not be

the first time that Walther's poems have been judged without recourse to the text itself⁶—then it cannot automatically be assumed that social status accounts either for the girl's refusal or for the reasons that she might be expected to comply in the first place. Actually, if one believes what the poem itself states, the girl should grant her favors to the speaker simply because *he* expects her to do so. His expectations, however, arise not from social conventions but rather primarily from his own argument, which is worth examining in some detail. If one approaches the question of non-compliance in regard to the poem's imagery and the implications of this imagery, one becomes aware that the speaker marshals his language purely to convince, utilizing exclamations, questions, rhythmic shifts and clichés not only to persuade but also to seduce.

Walther's manipulative use of the ideal landscape *topos* is a case in point. Walther quite often uses this *topos* in other poems⁷ and here sketches a variation of it, a variation with hidden teeth in it and consequently a bite to it. On the one hand, the description of spring seems stylized in the tradition so ably studied by Curtius.⁸ The personified figure of May dominates the first three strophes and stages a smoothly arranged production in the grand manner; an obliging chorus of birds trills the musical score, fields and forests don vivid costumes, and the meadow's colors form a bright scenic background. It is as if nothing—neither incongruous ugliness nor squabbles among cast members—dares to mar the scene, simply because May the Magician wields power in such a manner that miracles are the order of the day. But on the other hand, to prove conclusively that extraordinary influences are at work in May, the speaker intimates that the nature and sources of May's unusual power have their roots in more than one force—possibly divine power or common trickery, or both. A deliberately ambiguous situation is created. The word "wunders"⁹ of line 51,14 initially suggests the inexplicable and miraculous, possibilities reinforced by the decidedly religiously flavored phrase "grôz ist sîn gewalt," even though it is not God's power, after all, which is praised here but rather that of May.

On the one hand, the point is that no mere month could equal God's power without magic; the beauty of such an ideal spring has to come from supernatural sources. But, on the other hand, the speaker's insistent listing of May's effects on man and nature suggests something else more in keeping with the structure and purpose of his argument, something that indicates he is manipulating the ideal landscape to further his own ends. By filling the strophe with unvoiced and unanswered questions, the speaker indicates that he has no knowledge of the precise source of May's powers or, more likely, that he purposely wishes to veil it in uncertainty. By suggesting—but, more importantly, by *not* discounting—the possibility of "zouber," Walther's *persona* wavers, almost as if he wishes to make clear,

without specifying in detail, what is in store for anyone who doubts May's powers. In his emphasis on "zouber," "wunders," and "gewalt," he hints that anyone daring to resist May's influence faces a formidable array of power—and the listener is also assured that May will not necessarily fight fairly. These are scare-tactics on the speaker's part, strategically formulated to discourage anticipated resistance to May's dictates while at the same time to attest to May's supernatural power. The images must do double duty. Moreover, the process of piling up images to persuade has begun in earnest. In his determination to convince the woman of what she must do, the speaker emphasizes May's unusual powers to the degree that his May becomes a joyful world in itself, a world set apart, an enchanted world in which everyday rules have no effect.

The speaker divides reactions to May's magnificence and power into human and non-human responses and specifically mentions in passing the actions of "pfaffen" and "leien" and then those of the "bluomen unde klê." At first glance the coupling of "pfaffen" and "leien" as a *Sprachformel* in the parallel structure of line 51,15 calls forth only the familiar medieval allusion to the two-fold division of the church on earth. But, at second glance and one which goes beyond the conventional use of the image, these two groups of men joined together in the common enjoyment of May are rather odd companions, it would seem, when viewed in light of other of Walther's poems,¹⁰ poems in which enmity between the two factions is an accepted fact. In 51,13, however, the "pfaffen" and "leien" are not portrayed as mortal enemies as the tradition would have it, for the very good reason that the speaker describes May as being able to enchant both of them, to make their conflicts appear meaningless in comparison with May's magnificence, and, more than that, to cause all evidence of conflict simply to vanish. It is not merely that May makes the lion lie down with the lamb, but rather that he creates a state in which the lion and the lamb were never enemies. May can supply a context in which differences—even of such magnitude as the conflict between "pfaffen" and "leien" described in Walther's other poems as well as in contemporaneous political and historical poetry—are reduced to the level of a dispute between flowers as to which is the taller.

When the speaker alludes to the argument between "bluomen unde klê," representatives of the whole green spring landscape, he significantly describes the participants as if they were two small children who taunt each other and good-naturedly bicker about who really is the taller. As the speaker would have it, this cheerful competition between flowers and clover¹¹ serves not to weed out the weak and unfit but to increase the magnificence of spring. The result is that, just as Walther has deviated from his usual portrayal of in-fighting and trickery in the capsule description of priests and laymen, so does he underplay the destructive potential of what

conflict there is within nature. The actions of "bluomen unde klê" become more child's play than biological battle and take place "âne haz" (51,30). This is in stark contrast to the description of nature in the "Ich hörte ein wazzer diezen" strophe of the Reichston,¹² where "daz wilt" is brutally pitted against "daz gewürme" and bird against bird, and, most importantly, where "... keinez lebet âne haz."¹³

For the woman's benefit, the speaker of 51,13 sketches a flawless spring that, lacking the pseudo-realism of strife in the animal kingdom and a war of words in the human sphere, proves to be an ideal season that draws its impact from its contrast to the normal imperfect spring. In addition, the elements in the description of spring are carefully chosen to communicate certain expectations that the speaker has vis-à-vis his audience as well as the woman whom he is trying to convince. He is obviously well aware of the tradition binding together spring and love.¹⁴ To him, there would be little to be gained in trying a more innovative approach in attempting to persuade the girl to behave as do the "pfaffen" and "leien" or the "bluomen unde klê" and, implicitly, as do the birds and the bees. Thus it is not that he employs the stylized commonplaces of the ideal landscape because he is afraid to try something new; rather, the high literary visibility of these references enables him to demand of the girl as well as of his audience that the three-strophe spring opening should be seen as a prelude to dealings with that emotionally charged poetic preoccupation: love.

Not only is the audience given unmistakable clues as to what the speaker hopes will follow—and he is aiming at nothing less than physical consummation—but the lady is also told exactly what is expected of her with respect to compliance with spring's inflexible rules. Accordingly, to cement the bond between spring and the woman, the speaker sets up grammatic as well as thematic connections between the three spring-strophes and the three woman-strophes. In an ambiguous form of address ("Muget ir schouwen . . .") he has previously urged the audience and the woman to view ". . . waz dem meien / wonders ist beschert." He later reinforces this urging with "Muget ir umbe sehen," which clearly seems to be addressed to the woman. But he demands more than visual compliance. The woman must move beyond the role of observer and become a participant. It is as if the ideal spring were held up to her head as a weapon. She must emulate the clerics and laymen and must act in harmony with the flowers and clover, whose battle hurts none and benefits all in the riot of colors and lush growth produced. Having painstakingly set up analogies according to an authoritative tradition and having focused on one element after another in the ideal landscape, the speaker now triumphantly draws parallels between May and the girl.

Whereas the connections have been implicit earlier in the poem, they become explicit in the image of the red mouth, which Walther uses again

in 110,19 and 26, and in 112,8. It is a commonplace usage, as Erika Kohler observes in her inclusion of the red mouth in the study of the *topoi* of the *Liebeskrieg*.¹⁵ As one of the major weapons in sexual battle, the "rôter munt" serves as one of the prime designators of a woman, but Walther's speaker integrates this *topos* into his argument to serve still other functions. First of all, the assertion of man's duty to laugh, dance, and sing in the ideal spring is rapidly followed by an allusion to the laughter of the red mouth, although the latter laughter is certainly of a different sort from the former. Also, while the first three strophes of the poem suggest colors only in a general way and mention people only in groups, the sudden focus on the color red in the girl's mouth makes concrete the bright spring hues and singles her out as an individual.

Furthermore, the speaker makes the tie between May and the "rôter munt" even stronger in the grammatically related constructions "wol dir, meie, wie dû scheidest . . ." (51, 29) and "Rôter munt, wie dû dich swachest!" (51, 37). An additional connection is set up in the recurrent verb "scheiden"; whereas it refers to the settling of disputes in the description of May, the meaning is altered to the more specific in reference to the girl: she is not to judge, as is the case with May, but is to deliver the speaker from sorrow. In effect, in the charmed circle set up within the poem, the speaker equates the girl's powers with those of May. Both have the ability to bring joy and to banish pain and strife.

But in the process of charting the speaker's expectations, one comes full circle and still must ask "Why doesn't the girl grant her favors to the speaker?" How the speaker goes about convincing the girl that she should love him is apparent as he chooses images and manipulates them to serve his cause, but what is not so immediately obvious is that the speaker's imagery may be directly responsible for the girl's refusal. On one level, the speaker uses images to set out game rules. The girl should play by these rules if she is to play the game at all, since she is but one member of the human community, which includes clerics and laymen, and of the even larger group of all living things, which encompasses birds, meadows, forests, and the like. The spring that the speaker has described would hardly have her behave in any way other than in accordance with the premise that because all things in nature pair off in spring, she must as well. She, on the other hand, still unapproachable despite the "dû," laughs at him precisely because he carries on at length about a few flowers and trees and believes that she should emulate their fecundity.

These clashing views, on a more complex level, illustrate a definite literary distinction that Walther the poet makes: the poem can show the difference between two views, i.e., on the one hand, the medieval commonplace that pairing takes place in the spring, as we are told in the *Roman de la Rose* and Chaucer's *Parlement of Fowles* and, on the other hand, the

courtly lyric's denial of this pairing and the resultant glorification of unrequited love. Seen in this light, the outcome of 51,13—although the phraseology of the poem differs—is still well within the *canzone* tradition, except for one element that sets the poem apart: the speaker alone has hope that perhaps the lady may yet relent and conform to nature, unlike his counterparts in other medieval lyrics, who know from the start that their arguments have no hope whatsoever of success. But the girl in 51,13 knows, the poet knows, and the audience knows that the speaker will in all likelihood not win the girl's love.

The speaker never completely realizes that his argument fails, or why it fails, for the poem ends on an optimistic question mark, freezing permanently the speaker's dogged determination, leaving him unsatisfied yet longing, implying that he is no nearer to his goal at the end of the poem than at the beginning. It is not just that the speaker is the very parody of a man who believes fully in the rhetorical *topoi* of spring, a man who is unaware that he cannot carry these fantastic arguments and analogies over into this particular relationship, nor is it entirely that the poet allows this *persona* to operate within the framework of a spring *topos* but with different expectations from those of the poet, but rather it is to a far greater extent that the speaker is unable to see the darker side of his own words.

Because his argument requires it, the speaker describes spring in a manner that implies a preceding winter, for he emphasizes that May transforms bare trees into leafy forests, a common enough progression in *Minnesang*. But he conveniently disregards the fact that winter will come again to strip the foliage from these same branches. Once the passage of time threatens to take away spring and replace it with autumn and winter, the speaker freezes time, catches and holds spring in its most hectic bloom, without a hint of fall's decay, and creates his perpetual spring in miniature. But ironically, despite emphasis on the positive aspects of spring, the speaker's key phrase "dân ist niemen alt" reveals that, on some level, there can be found the premise at the very foundation of the perpetual spring *topos*, a time-honored *topos* that relies on the delicate tension between permanence and transience. As Walther's didactic verse makes quite clear in allegorical fashion,¹⁶ eternal spring gains significance only in the face of imminent winter; without a contrasting state, it has neither meaning nor desirability.

Yet in 51,13 death does not seem to be introduced into the poem by means of the negation of aging in order to point toward an after-life, as is clearly the case in some of Walther's other poems, but rather to point toward something else. If one shifts the focus slightly and views only the skeletal thematic structure of this bi-partite poem, one sees that the three ideal spring strophes make clear that no aging (implicit meaning: death) is forthcoming. Not so oddly, the three subsequent strophes dealing with the woman indicate that no sexual gratification is forthcoming either. When

considered in connection with the obvious linkage of the girl and spring in the speaker's argument, the juxtaposition of "no death" with "no sexual gratification" attests to Walther's employment of sex as a metaphor for death, a metaphor which is frequent and time-honored in Western literature.

Awareness of Walther's underlying sex/death metaphor helps explain the speaker's retreat into a mythical May and his failure to achieve union with this woman. With this metaphor in mind, it appears that the speaker's choice of the ideal spring *topos* to convince a woman to make love is a good choice traditionally, but it becomes an excellent choice when one considers the important inner contradictions upon which the *topos* depends. It is important to note that, although the ideal spring *topos* has the expressed intention of halting time's passage, aging, and death, it actually depends upon these three factors for its very existence. A similar paradox exists in regard to the sex half of the sex/death metaphor around which Walther constructs his poem. Although sex implies a union, two separate selves must join to bring about this oneness. Significantly, awareness of "the other" in sexual union entails awareness that the self ends at a certain point and the other begins; in other words, that the self has physical limitations. The sense of physical limitations is very much a part of death as well, since recognition of death is tantamount to awareness of finitude, at least to the degree that one existence has come to an end. The connection, then, between spring and the woman is quite clear and traditional on the level of the literary conventions of the *Gesellschaftslyrik* and *canzone* conventions, but proves to be just as obvious on a psychological level, since both sex and death require consciousness of the boundaries of the self. Thus the speaker's non-consummation of his sexual desires should come as no surprise at the end of the poem, since the speaker's failure in the second half of the poem is amply foreshadowed in the first half.

NOTES

1. J. R. R. Tolkien, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," in *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), p. 56.

2. The text is from the standard edition of Walther von der Vogelweide: *Die Gedichte Walthers von der Vogelweide*, ed. Karl Lachmann, 13th ed. by Hugo Kuhn on the basis of the 10th ed. of Carl von Kraus (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965). See Manfred Günter Scholz, *Bibliographie zu Walther von der Vogelweide*, *Bibliographien des Mittelalters* 4 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1969), p. 108, for articles dealing with stock images in the poem.

3. Hugo Kuhn, "Walther von der Vogelweide: 'Muget ir schouwen,'" in *Wege zum Gedicht*, ed. Rupert Hirschenauer and Albrecht Weber (Munich: Schnell and Steiner, 1956), pp. 54-63.

4. One critic, Hermann Schneider, is anxious to agree with two mutually exclusive assumptions and suggests:

Es ist wahr, der "rôte munt" in 110,13 und 51,13 könnte auf das Mädchen niederen Standes weisen, und ebenso die Anrede mit "du" in 51,37. Aber das "Ihr" und die "frowe" stehn hart daneben. Könnten da vielleicht diese *du* und *ir*, der *rôte munt* und *diufrowe*, zwei verschiedene Wesen sein?

"Drei Waltherlieder," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 73 (1936): 174. I am far more inclined to think that only one person is referred to in the poem and that there is nothing unusual about referring to the mouth with "du" and the whole woman with "ir."

5. In other poems which address themselves to the problem of social status, poems such as 46,32 ("Aller werdekeit ein füegerinne") and 49,25 ("Herzeliebe frowelîn"), it is invariably the speaker of the poem who cites social status as a problem and communicates an awareness of this problem to the audience. The concern with social class is absent in 51,13, where the speaker neither speculates about "nideriu" or "hohiu minne" nor assures a girl that it makes no difference to him what others think of her social class.

6. One prime example is Alfred Mundhenk's recent contention that 124,1 ("Owe war sint verwunden alliu miniu jar!") cannot be attributed to Walther, since this critic views Walther in a somewhat romanticized light, as "eine spannkraftige, zu Dialog und Tat drängende Individualität." Alfred Mundhenk, "Ist Walther der Verfasser der *Elegie*?" *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 44 (1970): 617. Even if Mundhenk's position were unassailable due to extant biographical evidence, which it is not, it would be suspect due to the very limitations inherent in a biographical approach to medieval literature, an approach which views the text as subordinate to the man's life and ignores the existence of poetic *personae*.

7. A brief survey demonstrates how repetitive and generalized the scenery of the ideal landscape becomes in Walther's poetry. The famous "Under der linden" (39,11) boasts a nightingale, one tree, roses, and other unspecified flowers. The landscape in "Sô die bluomen ûz dem grase dringent" (45,37) is no more specialized, with its singing birds, flowers, and grass, and the "spilden sunnen." "Nemt, frowe, disen kranz" (74, 20) goes so far as to color the flowers red and white but does not expand upon the stylized description beyond the mention of flowers and a tree and grass. "Diu welt was gelb, rôd und blâ" (75,25) adds "anger unde lô" to the flowers, sun, meadows, and birds we have come to expect. "Dô der sumer komen was" (94,11) mentions a brook and cool shadows with its conventional listing of birds, flowers, and meadows. But for all practical purposes, Walther sketches nearly the same picture each time and chooses particular elements from the limited selection which tradition has made available to him, with an occasional brilliant inclusion, such as his battling "bluomen unde klê." Except for the adjective "besten," the birds in 51,13 might well be the same birds which Veldecke mentions in his capsule description of spring, Wolfram emulates, and Neidhart later invokes. They are the same birds that crowd the initial strophes of many of Bernart de Ventadorn's songs, that "chanton chascus en lor lati" in William of Acquitaine's "Ab la dolchor del temps novel," and that warble in the *Carmina burana*.

8. See Ernst Robert Curtius's chapter ten on "Die Ideallandschaft" in *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern: Francke, 1948), pp. 189-207.

9. In most instances in Walther's poetry, miracles call forth awe and calm acceptance through faith. For example, dogma molds the language of the *Palästinalied* (14,38) in which Christ's virgin birth is praised: "was daz niht ein wunder gar?" In the intricate *Leich* the word "wunder" appears no less than four times in one strophe to indicate Christ's miraculous nature. In 29,4 with the mention of a "merwunder" and in 28,11, a poem praising Leopold, however, the strictly religious associations are underplayed, and the pushing and gawking of eager crowds suggests the exhibition of some freak of nature, rather than the reverential attitude toward an act of God ultimately incomprehensible to men, or the worshipful reception of a ruler.

10. Particularly of interest are the following statements: "uns leien wundert umbe der paffen

lère" (12,32); "ir pffaffen, ezzen hūenr und trinken wīn, / und lant die tiutschen leien magern unde vasten" (34,12-13); and the following statement about the Pope:

33,16 gīset er, si gīsent mit im alle:
 liuget er, sie liegen alle mit ime sīne lūge;
 und triuget er, sie triegent mit ime sīne trūge.

The chain of responsibility leads ever upward, from layman to priest to pope, and stops at God himself, who dozes while any number of sins are committed and while his representatives on earth exercise their considerable power in a less than ideal way.

11. See Marianne von Lieres und Wilkau, *Sprachformeln in der mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik bis zu Walther von der Vogelweide*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters 9 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1965); and Johanne Osterdell, *Inhaltliche und stilistische übereinstimmungen Neidharts von Reuenthal mit den Vagantenliedern der Carmina Burana*, diss. Köln, 1928, for occurrences of German word-pairs as well as Latin equivalents.

12. Articles dealing with this poem can be found in Scholz, *Bibliographie zu Walther von der Vogelweide*, pp. 86-87.

13. Having sketched the world as a place where, as a result of all-pervasive animosity, laws and kings are not a pretty, ineffectual hierarchy but rather necessities for survival, the *Reichston*-speaker holds up to the Germans the humiliating fact that even the lowly "mugge" have their king, while the leaderless Germans are doomed to disorder and extinction unless they take positive steps and crown Philip. Yet, although the speaker seems to base his recommendation for the crowning of Philip solely on his cool evaluation of the way the world is, it is actually the other way around: *because* he wants to see Philip crowned, he describes the world as one in which "keinez lebet āne haz." The manipulative imagery in both the *Reichston* and 51,13 operates transparently and moves hand-in-glove with the respective purposes of the poems' speakers. While enmity is of prime importance in the campaign to crown a king, it is best underplayed in an attempt to seduce a woman.

14. In the medieval lyric, thoughts of spring frequently race to thoughts of love—be they joyful or sorrowful thoughts. For an interesting examination of the connection, see James J. Wilhelm, *The Cruellest Month: Spring, Nature and Love in Classical and Medieval Lyrics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).

15. *Liebeskrieg: Zur Bildersprache der höfischen Dichtung des Mittelalters*, Tübinger Germanistische Arbeiten 21 (Stuttgart/Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1935), pp. 131ff.

16. See, for example:

13,26 Owē der wīse die wir mit den grillen sungen,
 dō wir uns solten warnen gegen des winters zīt!
 daz wir vil tumben mit der āmeizen niht rungen,
 diu nū vil werde bī ir arebeiten līt!
30 daz was ie der welte meiste strīt,
 tōren schulten ie der wīsen rāt.
 wan siht wol dort wer hie gelogen hāt.

Like most of Walther's didactic verse, this poem minces no words. Spring and summer serve only to divert the fool who is unaware of the swift passage of time and the ultimate consequences facing man's soul. Spring is but a way-station on the road to a wintry grave, a progression detailed even more explicitly in 13,19:

13,19 Owē wir müezegen liute, wie sīn wir versezzen
20 zwischen frōiden an die jāmerlichen stat!
 aller arebeite heten wir vergezzen,
 dō uns der sumer sīn gesinde wesen bat.

der brähte uns varnde bluomen unde blat:
dô trouc uns der kurze vogelsanc.

25 wol im der ie nâch staeten fröiden ranc!

Summer's joys, captured in the image of the bird-song cut short, are as fleeting as earthly life.