



THE UNCONSCIOUSNESS OF THE FEMALE DISCIPLINE IDEOLOGY – ANALYSIS OF THE SYMPTOMS OF THE THREE POEMS OF QINGPING TUNE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FEMINISM

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Abstract: In this paper, from the perspectives of feminism, through the analysis of Li Bai’s inheritance and innovation of palace-style poetry in his creation, the author puts forward two techniques and their symptom in the three poems of *Qingping Tune*: inheriting the sensationalization of palace-style poetry and innovating in the mythological and legendary techniques of palace-style poetry. Based on these two techniques, the unconsciousness of the fetish and goddess mythological fantasy is revealed from the “blankness” of the image itself, so as to achieve the research effect of a comprehensive analysis of the female discipline ideology in the aristocrats’ patriarchal courtly literature.


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Resumen: En este artículo, desde la perspectiva del feminismo, a través del análisis de la herencia y la innovación de la poesía palaciega de Li Bai en su creación, la autora plantea dos técnicas y su síntoma en los tres poemas de Qingping Tune: heredar la sensacionalización del palacio -poesía de estilo e innovando en las técnicas mitológicas y legendarias de la poesía de estilo palaciego. A partir de estas dos técnicas, la inconsciencia del fetiche y la fantasía mitológica de la diosa se revela a partir del “vacío” de la imagen misma, para lograr el efecto de investigación de un análisis integral de la ideología disciplinaria femenina en la literatura cortesana patriarcal de los aristócratas.

Palabras clave: Los tres poemas de Qingping Tune. Feminismo. Lectura sintomática. Disciplina.

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Abstract: In this paper, from the perspectives of feminism, through the analysis of Li Bai's inheritance and innovation of palace-style poetry in his creation, the author puts forward two techniques and their symptom in the three poems of *Qingping Tune*: inheriting the sensationalization of palace-style poetry and innovating in the mythological and legendary techniques of palace-style poetry. Based on these two techniques, the unconsciousness of the fetish and goddess mythological fantasy is revealed from the "blankness" of the image itself, so as to achieve the research effect of a comprehensive analysis of the female discipline ideology in the aristocrats' patriarchal courtly literature.

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INTRODUCTION

Li Bai is one of the greatest romantic poets in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.), and many scholars devote themselves to the study of his poems. The three poems of *Qingping Tune* are one of his masterpieces. The first poem is written from the perspective of space, comparing Lady Yang's beauty to peonies. The second poem is from the time's perspective, showing Lady Yang's favored pose. The third succeeds from the former two, integrating the peony with Lady Yang and the Emperor. The whole poem is ingenious in conception and beautiful in diction. It blends flowers with people and depicts the people's scene and one of flowers in a trance, showing the poet's superb artistic skills.

However, this exquisite creation mode is not entirely derived from Li Bai's talent. Behind the seemingly gorgeous and overelaborate image application, it reflects the "unconsciousness" of the patriarchal culture of the palace of Tang Dynasty as a whole. This is "[...] a cultural psychological structure manipulated by invisible forces, which unconsciously influences, shapes and controls cultural activities in human life", and is "[...] an invisible director of human drama" (Gu, 2013, p. 3). This is essentially a "cultivated" unconsciousness (Lu, 2020, p. 158). That is, they should be disciplined by social ideology and carry out

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regular literary production. Li Bai and his excellent poetry creation are also the patriarchal society's creation in ancient China, and it is natural to be "shaped" and "controlled" by the culture of his time. Moreover, Li Bai is Emperor Xuanzong's close aide, and the discipline effect of power is all over his body. His manners and works would be further "cultivated". The presentation of Li Bai's poems exposes this "unconsciousness" and the ideology behind it incisively and vividly.

1 THEORETICAL BASIS

Symptomatic reading is a text-reading mode proposed by Althusser, which is directly influenced by Lacan's psychoanalysis, using its mirror theory to explain the intricate interaction between "subject" and "object" in a group of social relations in a structuralist way, and reveals the cause of the interaction: the subject's unconscious psychological desire (Lacan, 1979, p. 95). Althusser refers to the content directly displayed in the text as "symptoms", a psychological term. But he pays more attention to exploring the deep ideology in the unconsciousness of the text, which is reflected in the form of "[...] blankness, error, silence, absence, etc." (Alex, 1990, p. 47). What is not directly stated in a text is as important, if not more so, than what is visible (Louis, 2001, p. 6). He criticizes Hegel's theological fantasy of pure and direct reading (Louis, 2001, p. 5), but argues that, in the analysis of textual symptoms, "[...] we must completely change the concept of knowledge, discard the myth of the reflection of seeing and direct reading, and regard knowledge as production" (Louis, 2001, p. 15), which is a kind of "[...] theoretical labor and production" (David, 1986, 244). In a word, the creation of literary works is the production and construction of a discourse system, which lies not only in the presentation of symptoms on the surface, but more importantly, in the "absence" under the surface symptoms. Moreover, it is the "absence", as the embodiment of the unconscious, that is substantially influenced by social ideology.

In view of such "unconscious" mode, feminists have a unique style of social ideology and discourse system. Feminism has originated from the women's movement for social and political equality and there are three waves in its development. The first wave developed in the women's movement striving for social and political rights, advocating the establishment of equality between men and women. The second wave was combined with black civil rights and the anti-war movement, which focused on the overall elimination and subversion of patriarchal centralism (Kate, 1970, p. 49). The third wave focused on respecting each individual's differences (which transcended gender boundaries) and tried to reconstruct self-subjectivity in deconstruction. Feminists have always been committed to striving for equal rights in political fields, and concurrently to dispelling the male worship of "Phallogocentrism" in discourse of public opinion by simultaneously accepting and questioning the psychoanalytic

doctrine represented by Lacan² theoretically. They concentrate on the analysis of the desire factor in the male-dominated discourse system and the excavation of the disciplined ideology of the power/knowledge system behind it, which has collided with Foucault's thought (Yuan, 2013, p. 109). Therefore, in this specific interpretation of "unconsciousness", feminism inherits Lacan's and Foucault's theories with a critical attitude³, attaches importance to the key role of discourse in generating and maintaining power, and emphasizes the challenges and doubts contained in marginal discourse, which is committed to dismantling the dominant mode that "[...] still exists but is relatively ignored" (Diamond, 1988, p. X).

Therefore, if we are to approach literary criticism based on symptomatic reading from a contemporary feminist perspective, we need to be absorbed in Lacan's and Foucault's doctrines thoroughly. The theory of symptomatic reading is quite structuralist - it emphasizes the holistic, systematic and macro-historical nature of textual criticism and cultural analysis. Moreover, it will continue the traditional Marxist theory of attributing the causes of ideology to the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure, thus becoming highly deterministic and essentialist. Such literary criticism tends to ignore the microcosm and "silence" of historical truth from the perspective of today's feminist literary criticism, and the analysis tends to be static and monolithic, making it challenging to explore the reproducibility of this microcosmic power mechanism. In addition, Althusser's theory provides more of a research perspective than a specific analytical practice, so it is not possible to explore the genesis mechanisms of ideology, which belongs to the courtly aristocracy under a specific patriarchal society, and its particular operational processes.

Fortunately, Lacan's and Foucault's theories can exactly fill these gaps and provide us with two feasible and penetrating perspectives on the literary-text genetics: the gender-desire ontology in social relations and the epistemic type centered on "power". These theories that go deep into the occurrence of "symptoms" themselves provide us with the possibility of looking for the difference and regeneration of literary images from the perspective of specific poetic texts beyond the traditional discourse system of commenting ancient literature. This also allows us to separate from the usual and monotonous essentialist analysis, disenchant the

² In Lacan's theory, desire is a basic sense of inadequacy and scarcity that arises when one is confronted with the disconnection between the Signifiant and the Signifie of language (this relation of language is isomorphic to the real world's subject-object relation). It implies pointing to the "present" other in order to compensate for this scarcity. The desire goes further and becomes a desire to be the object of the desire of the Other (this is Lacan's desire of the Big Other). Since desire arises in the realm of the Big Other and functions in the unconscious, desire is a society's product, that is, the basis of the social construction of gender. Therefore, in Lacan's context, Phallus has become the "transcendental Signifiant" in the linguistic structure of gender, symbolizing the absolute orderliness and dominance of masculine values. Feminism accepts this theory of desire and questions the unavailability of Phallus' center, critiquing and breaking with Lacan's doctrine of desire on this basis.

³ Foucault put forward the "panoramic vision", which relies on power to let the "prisoners" observe and supervise themselves, to ensure that power is automatically exerted on each subject and produces a micro power mechanism. This theory also extends to the principle of social panorama, declaring the tame role of knowledge and power in all aspects of human life. This is the main content of the feminist criticism inheriting Foucault's thought.

act of naming and inheriting classical images, and search for the genealogy of life politics of such a literary work under the shadow of classical knowledge. All in all, when we examine and interpret the literary works born under the patriarchal court of antiquity in the symptomatic reading of feminism, we can interpret the desire feathered Phallocentrism and patriarchal discipline of the author's creation with the help of those "relatively ignored unconsciousness" in the images of the works, and analyze the deep power/knowledge operation in the construction of the discourse system of the works from a micro perspective of social ideology.

2 "UNCONSCIOUSNESS" UNDER THE SYMPTOM OF LOVE BETWEEN THE EMPEROR AND LADY YANG: FROM THE STILL LIFE PAINTING LIKE FETISH TO THE FANTASY OF GODDESS MYTH

Judging from the symptoms of surface techniques, the three poems of *Qingping Tune* can be roughly divided into two categories according to the different description methods. The first category is to compare peony flowers with Lady Yang. The second kind is to mythologize Lady Yang. In the first category, Li Bai intentionally inherits the creation technique of palace-style poetry, that is, the use of sense. The second category highlights Li Bai's change, that is, Lady Yang's myth and legend. Additionally, Li Bai has made an attempt in the extension and richness of synesthesia and the hierarchy of analogy, giving a unique Yang's image, who is both beautiful and brilliant. Through the analysis of the discipline ideology, it is not difficult to see that the cultural unconsciousness behind the sensory description is reflected as a "still life painting style fetish" mode, while the process of mythologizing Lady Yang is more derived from the illusion of the goddess myth. These two modes coincidentally reflect the female discipline after the patriarchal court with strict ethics and distinct social strata in ancient China.

2.1 FETISH IN STILL LIFE PAINTING STYLE

SYMPTOMS OF PALACE-STYLE POETRY: SENSORY WRITING

When it comes to the background of Li Bai's poems, in addition to the realistic background of Li Bai's being called into the Imperial Academy (Fu, 2000, p. 5), there was also the inheritance of palace-style poetry of the Tang literature, which was popular in the late Liang Dynasty⁴ (502-557 A.D.), developed and expanded by Xiao's literary group. The Southern Dynasty (420-589 A.D.) was prosperous and, as a result, the imperial family advocated extravagance and pleasure. In addition, Xiao's literature attached great importance to accomplishments (which could be reflected in the compilation of *Zhaoming Literary Selections* and *Yutai New Chant*), which made it a great sight to write palace-style poems with the theme about women in palace. As the Tang Dynasty was also in a state of tranquility and

⁴ The Liang Dynasty referred to here is the third southern dynasty of the Northern and Southern Dynasties in China.

happiness, and as it was not far from the Liang Dynasty, where poetry in the palace style was prevalent, poets were also involved in the imitation of palace-style poetry, such as Du Shenyang's *Playfully Presented to A Beauty of Zhao Shijun*. The palace-style poetry was based on the typical poem style in the Liang Dynasty, that is, "[...] poets of the Tang Dynasty, in particular, followed the style of poetry of the Liang periods. They did not in any way remove the style of the past, but refined their verses in a delicate manner" (Wu, 1998, p. 612). The "delicate manner" here is the biggest feature of palace-style poetry, which pursued exquisite expression to achieve the effect of exhaustive writing.

As a poet of the Tang Dynasty, Li Bai's poetic talent is undeniable, but his image construction and specific operation are still affected by the times and environment. Therefore, in order to write the peerless love between the emperor and the imperial concubine, the palace-style poetry of the Liang Dynasty, which was not far away from the Tang Dynasty, would also be a good source of material owing to its female characterization. Li Bai "unconsciously" uses the palace-style poetry in the three poems of *Qingping Tune*.

The specific characteristics of palace-style poetry were deeply studied. The content of palace style poetry, "restricted to erotic matters", and the imperial writers also flocked to the palace. At that time,

[...] there was no one who did not abandon the study of the Six Arts (the six skills of ancient Chinese aristocratic education, including rites, music, archery, charioteering, reading and writing, and arithmetic) in favor of the glorification of sexuality [...] At a time when obscene writings and nasty books abounded, everyone felt quite accomplished by the flourishing of such literary poetry in the poetry world (Yan, 1999, p. 576).

Furthermore, because of the characteristics of this style, its overall expression also floated in voluptuousness and flamboyance. Therefore, the content of palace-style poetry itself was "light and flashy".

Palace-style poetry has "[...] the characteristic of sensing the body" (Gui, 2004, p. 138). The way to "sense" the palace maid is to investigate its causes. Yu-Kung Gao pointed out that "[...] palace-style poetry [...] accepts sensuality [...] so that the connotation of poetry degenerates into the most entertaining" sensation (Yu-Kung, 2008, p. 243). The creators of palace-style poetry rely on the role of sensuality to show the palace maids' beauty and achieve the effect of their "sensuality". On the contrary, the content of sensory poetry is also one of the most striking features of palace-style poetry. To convey the most extreme sensory experience within a few words, each image needs to maximize its own sensory experience and give full play to this sense in the interaction of images. Taking the sentence "The mat leaves wrinkles on the jade wrist, and the sweet sweat stays in the red gauze" in Xiao Gang's "Singing of My Wife Sleeping in the Day" as an example, when we analyze the sensory characteristics

of its image, we can find that the *wrinkles* referring to the vision also imply the touch of long-term extrusion. The contrast between the jade wrists and the bamboo mat highlights the visual whiteness and smooth texture. The term “sweet sweat” not only points out the scent of smell, but also has a sense of moist sweat, accompanied by heat. The term “red gauze” gives people impression of visual color and the texture of clearness and smoothness. Therefore, each sense can penetrate into each other in the time’s stillness and of space and the diffuse characteristics of “sweet sweat”, providing a corresponding paradigm for the palace creation of later generations of poets.

Back to the syndrome of palace-style poems, like Li Bai’s poems, the sensual writing of Lady Yang’s analogy with peonies is mainly reflected in these three sentences: “Her robe is made of cloud, her face of flowers made, caressed by vernal breeze, refreshed by morning dew” and “A beauty’s flourishing fragrance” (Song, 1985, p. 24). The writing of these three sentences also shows the complex feelings of smell, vision and touch.

There are two groups of relationships in the sentence “Her robe is made of cloud, her face of flowers made”: the robe is like cloud and the face is like flower. The word “cloud” originally means clouds and fogs. It is included in the “rain” section of *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*⁵, which has the tactile meaning of moist gas, paving the way for the appearance of the image “dew” in the following. In the subsequent evolution of the Chinese language, the “cloud” was extended into something soft and curly, so it was compared to a robe, highlighting the elegant and moist touch of Lady Yang’s clothes. The flower is used as a metaphor to refer to the beauty of Yang’s appearance. These two groups constructed the basic impression of Yang’s beautiful appearance from a very general conceptual description.

The next sentence, based on this basic impression, carefully dissects the image of spring flowers with wind and dew by using the senses. This sentence is highly symbolic and realistic. It delicately depicts the more charming appearance of peony flowers nourished by the spring breeze. In fact, Yang is more charming under the king’s favor. In the imagery of spring breeze, its “blowing over” naturally carries with it the tactile experience of a lithe sweep. As a symbol of welcoming warmth through winter, the “spring breeze” has a touch of warmth and tenderness. Flowers “with crystal dew” is built on the basis of spring breeze. Under the wind of spring, the color of flowers with dew in full bloom is more “refreshed”, while the dew makes the flowers glitter with crystal luster under the wind of spring. As a verb in this poem, “refreshed” is placed at the end of the sentence in the Chinese version of the verse, not in accordance with the traditional grammatical relationship of active object, giving full play to the rhetorical tension of the Chinese language in poetry language organization. Through the interaction between the polysemy of subject-object orientation and the character, “refreshed” extends the range of the senses, and also sets off the relationship between spring breeze, dew

⁵ It is a dictionary that systematically analyses the morphology and examines the etymology of Chinese characters.

and flowers. In other words, “refreshed” is not only limited to the color of flowers, but also makes the soft and warm feeling of spring breeze, and increases the visual concentration and tactile wetness of dew, thus making the overall moist, color and temperature of the poem “refreshed”.

“She is as beautiful as a zhi (it is nearly equal to ‘branch’) of flamboyantly crimson peony with condensed dew and fragrance” is also the result of highly symbolizing Lady Yang into a peony flower. In this sentence, the use of the quantifier “zhi” is very meaningful. Han Jiansu, drawing on Dang Xiangkui’s opinion, proposed that “zhi” refers to “[...] a branch (or stick) from the main trunk of a tree that are more watery than the main trunk” and “[...] a small wood forking out of the main trunk of a tree” (Han, 2021, p. 20), and hence the character of the word “zhi” has the characteristics of small size in vision and tender in touch, confirming Lady Yang’s exquisite and slim figure, and her tender and smooth skin. “Flamboyantly crimson” is used for vision, and “flamboyantly” strengthens the degree of redness. The feeling of dew also needs to be identified by the vision and then pass through the moist touch, and the fragrance of flowers condenses in the dew. This is the same as Xiao Gang’s “Jade Wrist”, “Sweet Sweat” and “Red Gauze”, which show their multiple feelings and connect them in the pervasion. It can be seen from this that the connection of the three senses of seeing, touching and smelling in these three poems has thoroughly opened up the sensory experience and realized the extension of the aesthetic modeling of desire with the help of the polysemy of words. This sensory type also coincides with the creation mode of palace-style poetry. In such “unconsciousness”, we can easily see the potential operation of the “sensuality” model behind this “blankness”.

SENSORY WRITING OF STILL LIFE PAINTING STYLE: THE FETISH AND FEMALE DISCIPLINE OF PALACE-STYLE POETRY

Still life painting is a kind of painting genre that takes the static or man-made objects as the description object. Although its position in the art history is not very high, the similarity of still life to palace-style poetry in cultural unconsciousness cannot be ignored.

First of all, from the visual characteristics of still life painting, it is an art of “viewing”. The “initial drawing” of still life painting borrows the means of visual illusion. It “[...] forms the creation tradition of visual logic” (Zhang, 2009, p. 9), which is similar to the nature of palace-style poetry “viewing poetics” (Tian, 2010, p. 156).

Secondly, from the perspective of production mode, still life painting also puts forward high requirements for the fineness of presentation. Dutch artists are obsessed with applying lenses, which are used to help improve visual accuracy, to painting and replacing the artistic and flexible parts of painting with physical images and stillness. The cultural effect is

that “[...] seeing pictures recorded in kind through the lens makes Dutch art an unusual and patient description of the world” (Zhang, 2009, p. 18). And palace style poetry is also “[...] poetry about concentration, attention, and a new way of viewing the material world” (Tian, 2010, p. 173).

Finally, from the perspective of composition form, still life painting reflects the numerous ways of space-time operation. Hal Foster pointed out that still life painting is an “art of fetishism”, and its image effect swings between “one of death suspension” and “eerie animation” (Hal, 1993, p. 257). “Suspension” means the state of hanging, and something “being hung” needs to be fixed in space to stop the activity (and it is the end of deathly stillness). “Animation” means possessing or being characterized by fresh life, which emphasizes the liveliness of organic things. Behind such *sprightliness* is the time’s undercurrent surge, which keeps artistic things in the painting and will not become purely rigid things. “Eerie” means mysterious as to send a chill up the spine, which gives people a thrilling sense of stillness and uncanny mystery. It emphasizes the time’s solidification and stillness and echoes the death suspension. And palace style poetry is also composed of time solidification (instant) and continuity (passing) and space static and subtle intertwined. In the “instantaneous nian”⁶, “[...] the image in a vivid moment is successfully displayed” (Tian, 2010, p. 174).

Take Li Bai’s series of poems as an example. In the sentence “The flowers are refreshed by the spring breeze which blows over them with crystal dew”, the dew under the spring wind, the luster and the strong feeling of flowers can only be produced under the effect of the static. In other words, the peony flowers, which show a natural state without foreign interference, and this spatial static “nian” are also the products of this moment, which provides the basis for the self-consistent and perfect state of the dew, light, flowers and wind. These four objects in the “refreshed” will be their own multiple complex and mysterious sensory presentation of the ultimate expression to achieve a subtle expression of the results. The “refreshed” activation also helps to break this self-consistent solid state and continues to move toward the next state with a “refreshed” movement, bringing readers a real aesthetic experience in the space and time of both static and motion. “She is as beautiful as a zhi of flamboyantly crimson peony with condensed dew and fragrance” is also a similar mechanism. Peony flowers are natural. The color, luster, fragrance and dew also use “condensation” to maximize self-consistency, expressiveness and sensory subtlety. “Condensation” itself not only has a state expression of coagulation, but also can refer to the action of coagulation to achieve continuity. This complex organization of time and space is also the mode of “nian”, which provides excellent space and time writing conditions for sensationalization in the operation of poetry.

When we trace back to the unconscious of the three similar symptoms of still life painting and palace-style poetry, it is not difficult to find that they are all based on the

⁶ This is an indigenous Chinese Buddhist term. It has two meanings: firstly, it refers to the thoughts and ideas that float into the mind. Secondly, it refers to the ability to remember the situation one is in.

ideology of a fetish discipline. From the perspective of still life painting, when observing the objects to be painted/written, the creator/appreciator does not regard them as purely aesthetic objects, but is always full of subjective creation and painting/appreciation desire. The fresh activity of the “molded” object becomes a trigger point for the male subject to meet the desire in the “distortion” of desire, and it becomes a female object transformed by the subjective consciousness in the image construction of the subject’s mind. The original state of the object is “a living subject”. In order to make the still life painting/palace style poem become the painting appearance of desire pouring, the subject needs to make it reach the “static” state and be fully disciplined by power in the creation process because “[...] the world of still life is an artificial real world, which is a reality that has been changed by people” (Zhang, 2009, p. 2). Under this subject’s power discipline, the object is completely reduced to a “still life” and it presents a fresh visual effect, that is, the subject imagines this living thing, making it “[...] a static painting mode” (Zhang, 2009, p. 4), but still permeates the quality of life. In this way, we can carefully observe the beauty of its vivid and static coexistence (the former is the beauty of vision, and the latter is the beauty of “control”), so as to achieve the effect of such a magnificent description. Through the women’s forced “abuse” and “peeping”, we can complete the ideological discipline of women’s bodies (Laura, 2006, p. 11), and achieve the unconscious satisfaction of the desire to shape/appreciate works of art.

The exploration of Li Bai’s palace like poetic style in this group of poems also reflects an ideology of female discipline. Lady Yang is naturally a living individual and a subject with independent will. However, when she is the “image” observed by Emperor Xuanzong or Li Bai, she is natural to “unconsciously” be “distorted” by the domination desire under the patriarchal culture and the voyeuristic desire that can trigger the ultimate heterosexual sensory experience. In the production process of nearly static pictures, Li Bai almost completely contrasts the Lady Yang’s beauty with that of peony, a still life, and completes the materialization of her. In addition, the images of wind, flower and dew are almost static in the “refreshed” and “condensed” (which is also the result of a long time of suspension), and Yang is still-and-alive, that is, static materialization, becoming a passive and uncanny object being completely “manipulated”.

Furthermore, not only this is still discipline, but also the natural state of its image is directly interfered by the symbol of patriarchy and imperial power. In the formation of such an image of spring flowers hanging in the wind and dew, only the peony itself is Yang’s analogy, while the spring wind and dew are Emperor Xuanzong’s analogies, achieving the effect of fetishism. Therefore, Li Bai repeatedly uses the analogy of “peony flowers with dew” to imply that Yang is deeply favored. The symbolic meaning of spring breeze is directly reflected in the third poem. Li Bai mixes flowers with wind dew and Yang with Emperor Xuanzong in the third poem, and expresses his feelings directly: “In the beauty of the peony, the infinite sorrow of spring breeze is swept away” (Song, 1985, p. 25). At this time, the spring breeze also

has a dual meaning. In addition to the spring breeze itself, it can be directly concluded that the melancholy resolved here comes from Emperor Xuanzong through the former's analogy.

The image of "dew" is also very common in Tang poetry, and it refers to the king's favor to his concubines. For example, Du Mu's famous poem titled "Peach Blossom Lady Temple" said: "The dew-soaked peach blossoms in the palace of the King of Chu blossomed in all their beauty and freshness, while the Lady of Rest spent many springs in silence" (Peng, 1986, p. 1326). The dew-soaked peach blossoms here are similar to Li Bai's poems, showing that the imperial concubines are more beautiful by the king's grace. Therefore, what is further than still life painting and freeze frame images is that Emperor Xuanzong is not a mere onlooker who "puts aside the matter", but directly participates in the construction of images by virtue of the ideological advantages of imperial power - the peonies bathed in the spring breeze and the more moving symbolic meaning also points to Emperor Xuanzong's kindness to Lady Yang, making Yang more beautiful and pleasing to the emperor. In the process of peony blossom, Yang completely becomes a still life, which is in line with Li Bai and Emperor Xuanzong's desire for "creation needs" and "appreciation needs". Therefore, before the natural state of no external interference, it is actually the power discipline of Spring Wind/Dew/Emperor Xuanzong that makes this life dynamic. Relying on this operation process, Emperor Xuanzong is able to "peek" at all her beauty, or directly participate in the object formation of Yang's image as the subject. The "exposed" Yang has become a passive landscape. At this time, Emperor Xuanzong is able to "enjoy each other" and "look with laughter". He is satisfied with his desire for self-peeping and achieves the goal of discipline. Such symptoms are also presented in the "unconscious", reflecting the courtly aristocrat's overall patriarchal ideology in the Tang Dynasty at that time. The interaction of desire, creative discourse system and power can be seen.

2.2 FANTASY OF THE GODDESS MYTH

In addition to sensual creation techniques, Lady Yang, as Emperor Xuanzong's concubine, must also have uniqueness in beauty. Therefore, Li Bai endows this group of works with a new means of creation: mythologizing and legendizing Yang. According to the content, it can be divided into three groups: the first group is Mount Qunyu⁷ and Jade Terrace⁸; The second group is the Yunyu Wushan (or Wushan Goddess)⁹; The third group

⁷ Mount Qunyu, the legendary fairy mountain, is the Queen Mother of the West's residence. It is also said to be the ancient emperor's private library. People used it as a metaphor to refer to the library in charge of correcting books in that era.

⁸ Literally it refers to the building built by jade, so it can generally refer to the ornate carved platforms. The ancients often used it to describe the immortals' spotless dwelling place.

⁹ It originally refers to the goddess' mythological legend of Wushan, who sends clouds and rain, but in literature, it can be symbolic of sexual love between men and women.

is Zhao Feiyan¹⁰. These three women's images tend to be perfect in order to be comparable with Emperor Xuanzong's beloved Yang. When we trace back the cultural unconsciousness of the portrayal of such female images, whether they are the illusory gods or Zhao Feiyan, who is indeed involved in the historical materials, all of them present a mythical fantasy of the goddess image under the patriarchal system.

This comparison has a reasonable factor in its intuitive symptoms, that is, their relationship with the emperor is very close, so that Yang's beauty and her love can be smoothly embedded in the shallow content. First is the Queen Mother of the West, the supreme goddess in the Chinese Taoist system. In the third volume of the biography of *Mu Tianzi*, it is recorded that "[...] the place where the Queen Mother of the West met the emperor was in Jade Terrace" (Guo, 2006, p. 220) Besides, "[...] the Emperor drank with the Queen Mother of the West on the Jade Terrace" (Wang, 1998, p. 3). This kind of relationship between the emperor and the concubine is very similar to the love between Emperor Xuanzong and Yang. The second is the myth of *Yunyu Wushan*. The allusion of *Yunyu Wushan* originates from Song Yu's *Ode to the Tang Dynasty* (Yan, 1958, p. 73). It is used to record the happy love between King Xiang of Chu and his fairies, and it is used by Li Bai as a metaphor for Emperor Xuanzong and his concubine. At this time, King Xiang of Chu was regarded as a historical reality, while the *Yunyu Wushan* Goddess was a mythical shape. The third group related to "Zhao Feiyan" completely returns to the legendary description. In this poem, Li Bai mentioned that, in history, only Zhao Feiyan in "new makeup" could compete with Yang. Yang is not only dignified and beautiful, but also incomparable to other people in her dancing skills. She is also very good at the dance of "[...] whirlwind in neon clothes to please Li" (Wang; Shi; Yang, 2010, p. 103). On the other hand, from the perspective of the time environment, poets in the Tang Dynasty were generally affected by the use of the allusion of "[...] comparing the Han Dynasty with the Tang Dynasty" (Wang, 2006, p. 50), and imperial concubines and beauties in the Han Dynasty were generally favored by poets in the Tang Dynasty. Therefore, the goddess in these myths and legends is closely related to the emperor, and such images can improve the content in a logical and self-consistent way.

In the goddess structure under the patriarchal aristocratic civilization, the ideology under the male discipline behind the goddess shaping is also the discipline of the eastern civilization. As a production of a discourse system, this series of poems by Li Bai is naturally a times' product. When Li Bai "uses the blank", we can see the unconscious characteristics of the common goddess image in this poem.

In the first poem, the Queen Mother of the West is the most typical of unconscious features. In the traditional Chinese literature and culture, Queen Mother of the West has a

¹⁰ Zhao Feiyan was Emperor Chengdi's second empress of the Western Han Dynasty (202 B.C. - 8 A.D.). Because of her light swallow-like body, she was named "Feiyan" after entering the palace. Zhao Feiyan was deeply favored by the emperor, by which she denounced and then deposed the former empress, becoming the new queen ultimately.

high position and can “govern the infinite number of immortals”. As the immortals’ leader, Queen Mother of the West also shoulders the responsibility of blessing the common people. The unconsciousness of the setting of this responsibility is actually that the spiritual power and sustenance of people’s labor to obtain material sources are given or concentrated in the Queen Mother of the West’s hands in the worship of social gods. The Queen Mother of the West has a commanding position in “[...] reproduction [...] animal and plant fertility [...] and textile technology” (Song, 2017, p. 72-75) which establishes the basis for the absolute and legitimacy of its “rule”. When we trace back to the “unconsciousness” of this “rule”, we can find its strong dependence on patriarchy/imperial power. According to scholars’ research on the Queen Mother of the West’s source of power, “The archetypal truth of Queen Mother of the West should be a magical crocodile goddess, a variant of the ancient ‘dragon’ totem” (Wang, 2005, p. 137). When it comes to the ideology of the dragon totem, according to Mr. Zhang Guoqing’s inference, the dragon totem worship once became a symbol of imperial power, and the dragon symbolized “[...] masculinity, and also became a synonym for royal emperors and nobles” (Zhang, 2005, p. 59) (especially the emperor involved). The emperor enjoys the power of the so-called “There is no place under heaven that is not the land of the emperor” (Zhao, 2003, p. 9). It can be seen that its supreme position can take all the things in the world. The Queen Mother of the West, as the goddess of the highest status, as a variant of the dragon, can naturally be regarded as a “feminine dragon”, and can be attached to Tianzi’s¹¹ cultural unconsciousness under the patriarchal society to master the high status.

In addition, the Queen Mother of the West is also a God of Beauty’s symbol. Although the Queen Mother of the West, in *The Classic of Mountains and Rivers*¹¹, is still a strange god image, in the process of civilization evolution, the reproductive worship of the Queen Mother of the West became an “unconscious” worship of beauty with the characteristics of patriarchal ideology after becoming secular. What is more, this kind of beauty is also reflected in the numerous banquets between the monarch and the Queen Mother of the West, which are reflected in many literary works. For example, Zhang Hua of the Western Jin Dynasty wrote in his *Poems about Immortals*: “Her jade pendant is linked to the floating starbursts, and her light crown of hair is condensed with the early morning haze. The immortals sit in sequence in the hall of the House of the Queen Mother of the West, whose body becomes beautiful enough to feast the eyes in the light of the Jade Terrace” (Lu, 1983, p. 623). There is also Tao Yuanming’s *Reading the Classic of Mountains and Seas* in the Eastern Jin Dynasty: “Jade Terrace is even more beautiful in the sunset, and I was delighted by the Queen Mother of the West’s wonderful face” (Yuan, 2011, p. 275). The production of these works is also mostly that the author projects the “ego” into the “Tianzi” by means of spiritual tour, having

¹¹ It is an important ancient book from the pre-Qin (paleolithic period - 221 B.C.) period in China, as well as an ancient wonder book containing various myths and stories.

a feast with the Queen Mother of the West and “disciplining” the magnificent Queen Mother of the West.

Finally, the Queen Mother is the god of love (especially the god of sex), and the object of love is also the world’s emperor. In addition to the above relationship with King Mu of Zhou and Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty, there is also the relationship with Emperor Shun: “In the ninth year of Shun’s reign, the Queen Mother of the West came to the court for an audience. She presented white rings and jade rings” (Wang, 1997, p. 46). In addition, the white rings and jade rings are also symbols of the vulva from their configurations in Chinese court culture. Therefore, the first poem in Li Bai’s group specially presents the Queen Mother of the West with two lines to symbolize Lady Yang. Emperor Xuanzong was the emperor of the Tang Dynasty. Yang becomes the “Heavenly Daughter” who is Li’s concubine. Therefore, Tianzi, as the world’s father, is the most powerful man, and Yang Guifei, a beautiful goddess equal to the Queen Mother of the West, can also be the world’s mother. Yang has both a celestial being’s characteristics and the reality of a lofty position. We can find it in such elegant banquet places as Mount Qunyu and Jade Terrace (embodied as “Chenxiang Pavilion” in the third poem). Under such conditions, a father’s right illusion could be seen.

The characteristics of this high status, God of Love and God of Beauty are also reflected in the second poem. In response to the analysis of the core of Wushan Goddess Syndrome in literary works, Ye Shuxian advocated “[...] the theory of God of Love and God of Beauty”¹². He pointed out, in an article, that Wushan Goddess “[...] represents the occurrence of a super utilitarian aesthetic concept of sex. The so-called aesthetic concept of sex is to look at sex from the perspective of aesthetic pleasure, without considering its original utilitarian purpose - reproduction of human individuals” (Ye, 1989, p. 99). The Wushan Goddess looks at the pure sexual love process with the world’s emperors with the concept of aesthetics and enjoyment, “having sex” with the Son of Heaven, and becoming the object of mutual love rather than fertility. And this coincides with the Western Queen Mother’s God of Sexual Love’s prototype. In response to this essential exploration of pure sexual love, Ye further explained in another article which believed that the prototype of the story of the encounter between the King of Chu and the Wushan Goddess¹³ was “[...] the holy wedding ceremony...” Its core was “[...] a simulated grain god or heavenly father, a king representing the positive vitality of the universe, and a simulated love god or earth mother, representing

¹² In the face of the qualitative conclusion of Wushan Goddess’s literary image, scholars have different opinions. Mr. Ye put forward the above conclusion - the Wushan goddess is a composite image composed of the most immaculate God of Love and the supreme God of Beauty. And it is precisely with her own flawless beauty and purification of all human behavior with beauty as her essence that she can develop a metaphysically pure love with the emperor. The two elements work together to form the sublime aesthetics of the Wushan Goddess (Ye, 1989, p. 91).

¹³ It refers to Wushan Goddess’ mythical story, who beckons clouds to rain. This auspicious rainfall was the product of the love between the king of Chu and the goddess.

the sexual union of the female priests representing the negative vitality of the universe” (Ye, 1992, p. 85).

Therefore, it is the combination of the feminine vitality that matches with the king, namely the Son of Heaven, and the holy marriage is the combination of the two genders' respective leader gods. This is also very similar to the Queen Mother of the West, which point out their respected status among people. Li Bai emphasizes in his poetry that “*Yunyu Wushan*” is not as touching as Li and Yang's love. Yang has a lofty position, the goddess of beauty's posture and the goddess of love's characteristics. Her image not only has Wushan Goddess' pure feelings, but also gets the touch of reality beyond the myth, making the reality more powerful and romantic than the myth. This is also the skillful use of Wushan Goddess' cultural unconsciousness.

Zhao Feiyan's pure legendary beauty is directly reflected in the text, that is, “new makeup”, and there are also examples in other literary works. According to *A Biography of Zhao Feiyan*, “Empress Zhao had a particularly slender waist and was adept at walking with a twist, swaying like a soft willow branch held in one's hand; none of the others could learn to do so” (Liu, 1983, p. 74). Not only she is dance graceful, but also the clothes are as colorful as a “willow branch” as if she were “an immortal” (Ling, 1929, p. 5) Zhao Feiyan's goddess of love's prototype is also related to the emperor's sexual entertainment. Wang Jia recorded that Emperor Cheng of the Han Dynasty “[...] often romped with Zhao Feiyan in the Taiye Pond during the leisurely hours of the autumn season” (Wang, 2019, p. 223), and the expression of playing in the naked bathing place “pond” has already had the meaning of sexual implication. The relationship between the two people is not barren and degenerated into a pure sexual relationship. The emperor actually showed more care filled with love: “While picking lotus flowers, the emperor, fearing that the boat's lightness and easy lurching might frighten Zhao Feiyan, ordered warriors to use metal chains to tie the boat in the waves” (Wang, 2019, p. 139). It can be seen from this that Emperor Cheng of the Han Dynasty cared for Zhao Feiyan, and they were so deeply in love that they could not part with each other.

However, Zhao Feiyan's prototype of high position is quite different from the former two's mythical conception. Because its realistic characteristics are embodied in the political struggle that is completely dependent on imperial power. The competition for favor based on color and art also makes it a completely politicized woman. The process of this power struggle is conveyed by the lewd description of Zhao Feiyan in the biography of Zhao Feiyan. Zhao's support for the crown prince, because he has no heir, is an act of maintaining and consolidating the so-called political interests that have been obtained. Imperial concubines must take childbirth as a follow-up condition, while Zhao Feiyan is out of reach, so she will “[...] name the new crown prince to obtain the recognition of the so-called ethical rules to gain the high status” (Li, 2002, p. 69).

Thus, we can see that, in the unconsciousness of these goddess images, there are three commonalities: the high status, the god of beauty and the god of love. These three sacred and perfect structures also show the illusion of perfect women behind the female body discipline of the patriarchal ideology, without exception.

The first is high status. When we explore its production mechanism, we will find that no matter how high the degree of goddess' material domination and power concentration in this group of poems is. In the ideology behind the worship of gods, the heaven's lofty status is sacred and supreme, which corresponds to the Son of Heaven/Emperor in the world, and the Earth/Queen is the next object. The Heavenly Emperor can hold the throne in heaven and play the natural gods' role in the world. For example, the most obvious sentence is "there is no place under heaven that is not the land of the emperor". Its "unconscious" logic is that there is the heaven representing the emperor as the main body, and then there can be all things disciplined. All things belong to the royal land on the earth. In other words, in the relationship between the three goddesses and the emperor, the natural resources with abundant birth materials can be obtained only when the heaven's environment is given first. As the heaven/emperor, it is naturally earlier than the earth/goddess (Queen Mother of the West, Goddess of Mount Wu) in the mythical configuration, and the earth/goddess is the derivation of the heaven power/imperial power. Therefore, in such a relationship, the unconsciousness of female body discipline starts to operate, and the goddess also needs to reach the ground system that can perfectly "control" people in the desire expectation from being disciplined successfully, and obtain the status that matches the sky on the surface after the sky's "reward". But in essence, it is still a subject-object type about giving and receiving, and the high status as the object spouse can more reflect the subject's absolute hegemony.

The God of Love and God of Beauty's operation is more direct. In the God of Love's field, love is always bound to be linked with sexual relations, and appetite and sexuality are at the stage of id, which is the most direct way to release libido. With the most beautiful goddess' help, the emperor was able to complete the ultimate release of the original "animal-like" desire. Only after the emperor, as the subject, completed the satisfaction of the basic sexual desire, love can be born.

In the process of love, the feature of beauty also came into play. In the process of the presentation of the goddess' beauty, the emperor participates in the disciplinary activity as a male subject. As subjects, emperors can fully enjoy the visual pleasure brought by female objects in the dominance of ideology. Women, as the object, have been recognized as the subject of pleasure and have been given a high status. This mode basically takes beauty as the material, love/sex as the form of achievement, and high status as the presentation effect. The exploration of the production mechanism of discipline in literary works, from the micro role of "unconsciousness", shows that, as such an absolute receptor/object identity, the goddess

needs to “voluntarily” let the emperor set a threshold (that is, the threshold of beauty) for the female body posture and “monitor the aging of her face” to maintain such a cossetting and clinging sexual identity forever. In order to gain favor and trust all the time, the goddess needs to maintain her beauty. She needs to break through the time’s flow and become an absolute eternal and supreme beauty, so that she can “[...] reject the personal, historical factor” (Eliade, 2000, p. 38) and remain young forever, in order to complete the emperor’s perfect experience.

At the same time, it also eliminated the characteristic of “individual”, and “ossification” became the purest aesthetic thing in the emperor’s eyes, that is, every move completely lost its individuality but could have a vivid sense to meet the emperor’s sexual and ornamental needs as the subject (this process was demonstrated in the historical evolution of the Queen Mother of the West’s image from the murderous image in the matriarchal society to the colorful one in the patriarchal society). This completed the goddess’ self-discipline, and the emperor was able to satisfy his own sexual desire, voyeurism and prey addiction in the “sadism”. Therefore, Li Bai’s use of the goddess’ image, in this series of poems, is precisely Lady Yang’s discipline and fantasy through the literary discourse knowledge system of poetry.

In general, the cultural unconsciousness behind Li Bai’s series of poems is comprehensive and systematic. Behind the analogies of peony and goddess, the author materializes Lady Yang through the fetish structure and compares her to a static peony flower. In essence, it provides a good condition for controlling Yang’s female image, so that its spatial shape can be “manipulated” to become the most perfect appearance, which guarantees the god of beauty’s existence in the goddess’s conception. And turning this “still life” into a “still life painting” in the poet’s discourse power, making it have the characteristics of “deathly suspension” and “eerie animation”, also makes it appear generally static in time and space, which achieves the permanent presence of the God of Beauty’s effect. The feature of “animation” emphasizes that the peony flower/Yang still has vitality, but it is still the “still life”. Yang is as disposable as a bunch of flowers. It is this action to make Yang a “still life painting” that can make it have vitality, but it completely implements Emperor Xuanzong’s sexual will and loses the individual will, achieving the God of Love’s effect. Through the goddess of beauty and the goddess of love’s shapping, Yang’s beauty will never disappear and is unique in the world. This is naturally worthy of the Son of Heaven’s status - Yang can be rewarded by the social deity and become the first female in the world. This ideology swears to the emperor’s high status as well as that women must depend on men.

Therefore, Li Bai also completes the goddess Yang’s transformation in this series of poems with the help of several goddess archetypes. She kept her youth and beauty forever, and could have sex with Emperor Xuanzong for a long time, which became a solid and vivid existence of peony style. After being appreciated by the emperor, Yang was finally rewarded

with great power. Since then, Yang has also changed from a fresh individual to a “reproducible symptom” in the literary discourse fantasy, which is similar to the “peony flowers” and “Queen Mother of the West” and other goddesses, and the production of poetry has been completed. Therefore, in the metaphor of peony and the illusion of goddess, this kind of unconsciousness of discipline can be seen throughout the poetry.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, Li Bai’s three poems of *Qingping Tune* are constructed in two ways: sensationalization and mythologization of Lady Yang. The sensual writing style of palace style poetry is embodied in the three lines of poems that turn Yang into peonies. Li Bai also adopts a mythical and legendary approach to portray Yang further. But behind such peony and myth-and-legend symptoms, it still reflects the aristocrats’ ideology of female discipline in the patriarchal courts: behind the sensory description, there is an unconscious still life style fetish discipline mode. The three vehicles, in the process of myth and legend, jointly show high status, and simultaneously the three unconscious features of God of Beauty and God of Love jointly reflect a kind of goddess illusion. These two unconsciousness interact with each other. The still life style conception provides a static and dominant state and provides a basis for the construction of the vivid God of Beauty and the God of Love. On this basis, the discipline production of the goddess can also be systematically realized.

This paper discusses the patriarchal aristocratic ideology of the courts of Tang Dynasty in the poem from the perspectives of symptomatic reading, feminism, discipline and so on. Although the ideological criticism behind this work has been completed, there are still limitations, such as the single level of text analysis. Hope that readers can criticize and correct the fallacies in this argument, and open up the ideological interpretation behind other Li Bai’s palace-style poetry.

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