

# ***A Study on the Female Consciousness in Chinese Classical Literature: Focusing on the Three Pieces of Ci Written by Li Qingzhao's***

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**Abstract:** In Chinese classical literature, female consciousness means that authors can restore the true, natural and vivid state of female in their description. Li Qingzhao's three pieces of ci in different periods all portray the image of an independent female, who expresses the feelings of complaint and sorrow. By reviewing the development of female images and comparing the female images in ci written by male and female writers in the Song Dynasty, it is found that female consciousness always exists in Chinese classical literature, though it has never become the mainstream.

## **1. Introduction of Female Consciousness**

In the literary works under the background of the patriarchal society, women usually have a rigid image, such as a negative Nancy caged in boudoirs or a good wife and mother. In the female images created by various writers in different times, there are some deep-rooted characteristics, such as dependence, flatness, and so on. Shen Xiao mainly discussed this phenomenon in western literature. In fact, it also exists in Chinese classical literature. She points out that the appearance of women in literary works is rigid and lifeless, and the so-called female consciousness is that artists "revive" the original and proper images of women to avoid the rigid and limited imagination in their works [1]. The male's ci about resentment in boudoir obviously shows the rigidity of female images. Even if they imitate the emotion of a longing women in their works, they unintentionally reveal the "desire-for-nothing" of the female characters. They have no subjective demands for their lives or intimate relationship, that is, they exist as a man's "companion", which means that the character is far away from human nature.

In *Butterflies in Love with Flowers*, Ouyang Xiu wrote "Leaving his saddle and bridle, there he has been. Merry-making. From my tower his trace can't be seen." The heroine's husband is pursuing pleasure in somewhere, but she could only climb the tower to look into the distance. "The third moon now, the wind and rain are raging late; At dusk I bar the gate, But I can't bar in spring.". She has been waiting for a long time and her youth has gone. "My tearful eyes ask flowers, but they fail to bring an answer, I see red blooms over the swing." From "my tearful eyes ask flowers", it can be seen that she is begging and humble. Although this work describes the moves and thinking of the

heroine in detail, it feels false. The reason is that the author neglects the true psychology of women and defines women as the accessory of men. Actually, women and men both have complex human nature. To describe a real and vivid female image, they must face the female nature.

*Playing the Flute at the Phoenix Tower*, written by Li Qingzhao, is another work of resentment in boudoir, which describes a longing woman look into the distance on a high building, but it successfully draws the real figure of the woman. "One fears to say adieu. Speak many rues out? Oh, no." points out the heroine's expectation and hesitation. "The rail sees the rill flow, Just for me, who stares all day." This sentence is certainly clever evasion. By implying that only the flow here cares, the heroine complains her husband's departure. Li Qingzhao regards herself as an equal subject as her husband, instead of only being a companion. This emotion comes from her desire and grows stronger because it cannot be satisfied. Such emotion also exists in her other works such as *In the Capital — to the tune of Yuangwangsun*, which will be interpreted in detail in following parts. "One deep in love is by nature involved in trouble. A hard thing to be free of. Again, the Cold-Food Festival approaches." This sentence is vivid and real. As socialized people, women have their own emotions, personalities and thoughts. Therefore, a literary work with female consciousness should reflect the unique female perspective, female emotion and female posture.

Women, as "human beings", have the human nature. From the complexity of human nature, female images should also be complex and diverse. When judging whether the works have female consciousness, critics tend to fall in a false dilemma. For example, some people don't think that Li Qingzhao's ci has "masculinity". It is also femininity to acknowledge the soft and sensitive nature of women and it is not necessary for writers and critics to cater to the bold and vigorous masculinity. Especially in a patriarchal society, we should reflect on whether catering to male characteristics is a real respect for women. Of course, the "tenderness and sensitivity" mentioned here is only a female trait, but not a characteristic that all women must have. Some women can also show bold and vigorous masculinity, but this kind of "display" should be out of natural revelation, rather than giving in to men's criticism. Similarly, some women bear the pressure of social roles such as daughter, wife and mother. If this "pressure" comes from the oppression of identity, it belongs to the "instrumental" coercion of women in the patriarchal society, with painful expression. However, if women spontaneously choose this role, it will belong to the demand of women's self-consciousness, and it should be the same as women's self-consciousness. This kind of female consciousness requires artists to pay attention to women's real self-demands, and also requires critics to respect their self-choice.

Elaine Showalter [2] believed that the patriarchal society excludes most female scholars from literary history through the aesthetic experience and criticism dominated by men. Male literati use standards such as "greatness" to prevent women from entering the literary history. This criterion of "greatness" is based on the aesthetic experience of male literati, which is discriminated and biased, and is not in line with women's literature characteristics [2]. In western literary works, the image of "crazy woman" created by many female writers is a kind of resistance to the image of "angel" under the confinement of patriarchal society. The "indoor angel" is a kind of image that is left to the men with ease, who is always obedience and has no self-consciousness. The spirit of their sacrifice is not spiritual nobility, but the end of life and the embodiment of death [2]. Here, we generalize the female consciousness as an independent aesthetic consciousness which is not affected by the male discourse. It is not limited to the phenomenon mechanically becomes male affiliated in some artists works, but is a real and independent expression, and it is the female image that artists express when they regard women as an independent person in their writing.

## 2. Female Consciousness in the Feudal Society of Ancient China

In the feudal society of ancient China, women were restrained and oppressed by ethics. They were in a weak position compared with men in terms of education, economy and social status. Women's living status as accessories in society is reflected in literary works, which often presents the appearance of male dominating and hiding female consciousness. However, hiding does not mean inexistence. It can be seen from some literary works that female consciousness always exists in Chinese classical literature.

In *The Book of Songs*, the earliest collection of poems in the history of Han literature, *Beifeng · Gufeng* and *Weifeng · The Faithless Man* both describe abandoned wives, but their heroines show two different images. In *Gufeng*, the heroine's attitude towards marriage is that "Couples should be willing to work together, and not to be angry", but their marriage life is that "He always scolded me and gave me heavy labors.". They were poor at home and she worked hard, but she was mercilessly abandoned by her husband. Women's grief is full of the whole story, but there is no resentment or anger, which goes against the natural feelings of human beings. The image is flat and there is no female consciousness. In *The Faithless Man*, the woman is also abandoned by her husband, but she can analyze the problem rationally and denounce the man's betrayal. "I have done nothing wrong; He changes all along." After careful thinking, she affirmed that she had made no mistake, and understood that the reason for her abandonment is "He's fickle to excess, Capricious, pitiless.", that is, the husband's betrayal. It means that the woman realized that she had been oppressed. Whether she indulged in love or complained about her marriage life, she was real and this reflects women's consciousness to a great extent. In *Yuefu* of Han Dynasty, *A Pair of Peacocks Southeast Fly* and *Song of Mulan*, which are called "the best two works of *Yuefu*", both portray vivid female images. Liu Lanzhi revolts against patriarchy and Mulan joins the army for her father. Many folk works reflecting the social customs embody female consciousness. In addition, in literary creation, although literati such as Wen Tingyun and Ouyang Xiu tend to describe women's images rigidly, Liu Yong and others truly represent women's feelings and lives. For example, "why not leave with holding hands and get rid of the life in brothel" in *Song of the Lost*, express the woman's eagerness to join hands with her lover for a better life. The sentence "When you come back, you will find my door closed." in *Spring in the Palace* shows the anger and revenge for the man's non-compliance. From these works, it can be seen that female consciousness is universal in the patriarchal society. Because not belonging to the mainstream, it always exists and hides in literary works.

## 3. Investigation of Female Consciousness of Li Qingzhao's Ci

Virginia Woolf believed that if a woman wants to write a novel, she must have money and a room of her own. This means that the birth of female creation needs sufficient material and spiritual conditions, that is, rich life and education. Therefore, this paper takea Li Qingzhao's ci as a sample to analyze female consciousness. Li Qingzhao was born in the Northern Song Dynasty. With the development of commodity economy and strong civic culture, there was a mild social and cultural environment. Li Qingzhao was born into a noble family. Her father Li Kefei gave her high-quality education, and did not ask her to abandon study because she was a woman. In terms of concept, Li Qingzhao was hardly instilled with the traditional gender boundaries, such as "lack of talent in a woman is virtue". This kind of living environment created an outstanding female ci writer, who played an important role in the Northern Song Dynasty. The living space of ancient Chinese women is inseparable from their "boudoir", and the expression of their self-consciousness is also based on boudoir. Through the analysis of Li Qingzhao's three pieces of ci in different periods to explore the

prominence of their personal consciousness in ci, the performance of their female consciousness can be better understood.

*In the Capital*

*—to the tune of Yuangwangsun*

*Spring is late in the Imperial Capital,  
My wooden doors are shut.  
My courtyard is deeply hidden.  
Grass turns green in front of my stepping-stone.  
Lines of wild geese vanish from the evening sky,  
Who will send afar my messages from my chamber?  
Sorrow, my recurrent sorrow.*

*One deep in love is by nature involved in trouble.  
A hard thing to be free of.  
Again the Cold-Food Festival approaches.  
The deep-hidden lane is empty.  
A swing stands still.  
The bright beams shine aslant  
Soaking pear blossoms in moonlight.*

*Tune: "Silk-washing Stream"*

*Leisurely windows show in courtyard spring's grown old;  
My bower's dark behind the curtains not uprolled.  
Silent, I lean on rails and play on zither cold.*

*Clouds rise from distant hills and hasten dusk to fall;  
The breeze and rain together weave a twilight pall.  
I am afraid pear blossoms cannot stand at all.*

*Tune: "Yuanwangsun"*

*Wake up from my dream, hearing the whispering drop.  
So upset that drinking cannot solve.  
The pillow turns cold,  
Rosy down on the jade screen fold.  
Who's there cleaning up the petal?  
The winds in the night blow.*

*Sound of flute has stopped and the people is nowhere.  
It's another spring. How can you leave me here?  
My deep emotions and resentment  
Can only be trusted to the cloud  
To ask the God of the sun.*

*In the Capital — to the tune of Yuangwangsun* was written in 1103 A.D., the second year of the reign of Chongning Emperor. This year, Zhao Mingcheng became the director of Honglusi, Court for Dependencies, and went on a business trip. Li Qingzhao was only 20 years old and stayed in the capital. The sentence "Spring is late in the Imperial Capital. My wooden doors are shut." expresses a sense of loneliness in the first sight. This sentence describes the general and personal environment

of the poet. "The Imperial Capital" is different from other areas. It has more strict etiquette, with the implication of "being imprisoned", and the appearance of this environment seems to contain women's complaint about the restriction of freedom by ethics. "The spring night" is a description of time. Because of the temperature difference between day and night, dusk is slightly cold. There is no direct description of cold, but it has already been expressed. "My wooden doors are shut" is the poet's self-described personal environment, isolated from the outside world, as if she was locked in this deep courtyard by doors. The word "doors" describe the loneliness of the boudoir. "Grass turns green in front of my stepping-stone. Lines of wild geese vanish from the evening sky" describes the scenery. The grass in front of the terrace is green, echoing the late spring mentioned above. It reflects the lonely residence of no one. It is the poet's sorrow of no company and no one comes to see her. The absence of wild geese in the twilight sky indicates that she could have been with wild geese before, but they flew away, and she can only see the grass in front of the terrace, deepening the loneliness. "Who will send afar my messages from my chamber? Sorrow, my recurrent sorrow." This sentence is connected with the last one. The goose has been the pronoun of the letter since ancient times, and "who will send afar my messages" seems to be the poet's sigh: who can help me pass the words in my heart to the people I miss from afar? The word "vanish" is full of loss. When her husband is not around, even the wild goose that reposes her feelings is gone. The emotional color of "sorrow, my recurrent sorrow" is extremely strong, continuous and uninterrupted. Li Qingzhao and her husband have been separated from each other, and she is lonely the boudoir, which adds to the girl's sadness and sorrow. In this year, Zhao Mingcheng just went out for work. At this time, Li Qingzhao did not adapt to the days without her husband around. This sentence also reflects Li Qingzhao's strong dissatisfaction with the helplessness of her marriage in the patriarchal society. In the next part, the sentence "One deep in love is by nature involved in trouble. A hard thing to be free of. Again the Cold-Food Festival approaches." makes people feel the real psychological state of the poet. She is unable to extricate herself because of the deep feeling, and it's hard to give up all the emotion, as if it has become part of her life. The poet attributes her love and hatred to the "amorous" feelings, but in fact, it shows a sense of sadness, complaining that her husband is not as affectionate as she is. "Again the Cold-Food Festival approaches." The word "again" gives this sentence a vivid girl-like mood. Li Qingzhao uses a coquetry tone that "It's the Cold-Food Festival again. How long have you been away from home?" People can't help guessing that Li Qingzhao wrote this sentence with her expectation for her husband, hoping he can spend the festival with her after reading this sentence. In a few short sentences, the image of a coquettish girl stands out. The last sentence "The deep-hidden lane is empty. A swing stands still. The bright beams shine aslant. Soaking pear blossoms in moonlight." is a description of the scenery. The cold tone is superimposed and full of chill. Because of the catalysis of this artistic conception, the poem becomes lonelier and sadder. In addition, the scenery at this time is already in the late night, and there is a significant time change from the early evening to the late night now. "Swing" is a woman's toy, standing in the alleys. In the evening, some people may play here, but they disperse in the middle of the night, while the poet is still staring upstairs. The sense of loneliness is obvious, and it also sets off the deep feeling of separation.

*Tune: "Silk-washing Stream"* was written in 1110 A.D., the fourth year of the period of Dagan, when Li Qingzhao was 27 years old and moved to Qingzhou with Zhao Mingcheng. At this time, her husband went out for pleasure and left Li Qingzhao at home alone. The sentence "Leisurely windows show in courtyard spring's grown old; My bower's dark behind the curtains not uprolled." points out the season and the environment of the small courtyard where she lives. Although the courtyard is small, it can feel the spring and is full of vitality. The colors outside the house are bright, but the curtains inside the house have not yet been rolled up. The interior is dark, with a sense of laziness and silence. It implies that the poet is bored and has no interest in the outside

world. "Silent, I lean on rails and play on zither cold." reflects the poet's current state. "Lean on rails" depicts the poet's idle behavior, while "silent" gives the poet unspeakable sadness at this moment, reflecting her light sadness of distress and boredom. In connection with the above, "fiddling with the zither cold" is a kind of subconscious action, which fully shows the state of the poet. She is not sitting upright and focusing on playing the instrument or casually playing some music, nor attach her emotions on the zither, but lazily fiddling with it, which is closer to the "absence of mind". In both of the works, her husband is away from home and she is alone in the boudoir, but this work does not have the same intense emotion compared with the first one. It just shows slight boredom. "Clouds rise from distant hills and hasten dusk to fall; The breeze and rain together weave a twilight pall." This sentence describes the scene of mist flowing and the reappearance of peaks. The pall is flowing, the breeze is blowing, and the rain is splashing. The previous stagnant and lazy feeling is changed, time begins to flow, leading to the final sentence "I am afraid pear blossoms cannot stand at all." This sentence reflects the poet's concern that the pear flower is about to start to wither and fall, which can't be stopped. She expressed her feelings for the disappearing beauty by cherishing spring. However, the prominent meaning in this sentence is "fear", which is the strong subjective feeling of Li Qingzhao as the narrative subject, full of irreparable fear and worry, that is real and moving. What's more, Li Qingzhao's "fear" is relatively independent. It comes from the change of plants in nature, that is, "the pear flower is going to wither", rather than based on the patriarchal society with "husband as the standard". In other words, Li Qingzhao's work does not reflect the worry of "pleasing men with the beauty of youth, and fear of being abandoned because of the perishability of youth", but a natural feeling, the regret for the passing beauty.

Another *Tune*: "*Yuanwangsun*" was written in 1139 A.D., the ninth year of the period of Shaoxing and the 56th year of Li Qingzhao. Ten years after Zhao Mingcheng's death, Li Qingzhao and her brother's family lived in Jinhua. There was no war and the life was peaceful. When the heroine wakes up from her dream, she hears the diminishing sound of dribbling, and her heart is covered with deep sorrow. She wakes up suddenly before the dream is finished. The sound of dribbling becomes smaller, which reflects the coming dawn and her heavy thoughts, laying the emotional tone of the work. In addition, this sentence uses the small voice to reflect the silence, implying that there is only one person in the room. The reason for "annoyed by liquor" is probably due to the discomfort of hangover. It also indicates the annoyance that liquor can't relieve worries but why did I drink so much last night? Here, the uncontrollable drinking also highlights the poet's deep sorrow. In this sentence, there are vivid and real complaints, remorse and pain, as well as detailed self-observation, which makes Li Qingzhao's self-portrait clearer. "The pillow turns cold, Rosy down on the jade screen fold." The speaker lay in bed, feeling the pillow gradually gets cold, and watched morning light sprinkled on the jade screen. This sentence reflects the sadness by mentioning the value of the furniture in the room. The warm morning light contrasts with the cool color of the jade screen, which maximizes the sadness. "Who's there cleaning up the petal? The winds in the night blow." The self-questioning is the description of the poet's mind. This sentence makes people feel extremely lonely. It is also a sharp contrast between joy and happiness. The hope seems to burn up and get extinguished. The poet has a hangover. She gets up in a daze and sees the traces swept outside the door. It seems that someone has come back, but soon she clears her mind and finds that it is the wind blowing away the petals at night. The petals can be swept by the wind, but who will care and understand the poet when she is old. The contrast further shows her loneliness and helplessness. "Sound of flute has stopped and the people is nowhere. It's another spring. How can you leave me here?" The sound of flute suddenly disappears, giving people a sense of loss. It implies a sudden misfortune in Li Qingzhao's fate. The death of her husband is one of them. Li Qingzhao once thought that she could stay with her husband forever, but this beautiful wish

suddenly vanished. When the sound stops, where could the person playing the flute be? There appears the sorrow and sadness of the listener. "It's another spring." Year after year, she has been suffering for a long time. "How can you leave me here?" is a question to the deceased that will never be answered. "My deep emotions and resentment. Can only be trusted to the cloud. To ask the God of sun." Thinking of this, Li Qingzhao has mixed feelings, including the laments that the deceased is gone and can't come back and helplessness of unrelieved melancholy. How can she resolve her inner pain? She wants to express the deep sorrow in her heart, but has no one to talk to. At this time, the sun finally rises after the long night, the poet can only rely on the clouds to ask the God of the sun in the sky. The complex and strong pain is reflected incisively and vividly. It expresses the unbearable pain of her husband's passing away and her lonely old age. However, the poet did not regard the husband as the only one in life, and the loneliness in the lines is more about loneliness in the heart than the helplessness as an accessory. It expresses women's powerlessness to impermanence and expresses their inner feelings simply in mourning for the deceased. In addition, Li Qingzhao does not avoid talking about "drinking" in this work, which is different from the traditional women's ethics. Li Qingzhao truthfully describes her life and vividly shows her personality.

As far as the three ci works, Li Qingzhao's female consciousness is significant. First of all, it is reflected in the authenticity and integrity of her self-emotion. The emotional colors expressed in the three poems of sorrow of the spring are different, but they all truly reflect the poet's demands or subjective thoughts in the current life period. Secondly, the self-image of the heroine in Li Qingzhao's works is clear and picturesque, which reflects her understanding and remolding of her image to a certain extent. In the first one, the poet looks at the scenery in the pavilion, misses her husband, and wanders at night. In the second one, the poet leans against the building, fiddles with the strings, and feels bored. In the third poem, the poet wakes up with a hangover, lamenting her loneliness and old age. The female perspective and female tone in the three works can make readers clearly aware of the author's state in the lines. From the image of a coquettish young woman to that of an old lady full of sorrow and hatred, there has always been a portrayal of the author's self-state. In addition, in feudal society, women took boudoir as the main place of activity, and Li Qingzhao defined the images of courtyard, terrace, pillow and jade screen in her ci works from her unique female perspective. This "definition" was completely out of Li Qingzhao's self-examination of beauty, which made her have a unique personal emotional tendency and was also the embodiment of her female consciousness.

#### 4. Contemporary Writers' Description of Women

In the history of Song Dynasty, there are also two outstanding female poets, Madam Wei and Zhu Shuzhen. Like Li Qingzhao, they express their own aesthetic interest in their ci works. They express their inner feelings and ideas in words from their own values and positions from their unique perspective. They have unique charm and prominent female consciousness. For example, in Li Qingzhao's *Partridge in the Sky*, there is "How can you need the color of rose or green jade? Beside you there're no beautiful flowers but fade." Zhu Shuzhen's *Pu'Sa Man* also has: "No matter how cold the Moon Palace is, you shall compare the beauty of branches." Li Qingzhao praises osmanthus fragrans, saying that it doesn't need beautiful colors, but only noble qualities. She praises the osmanthus, which is not outstanding in appearance but has rich fragrance. Zhu Shuzhen praises osmanthus that though it does not have unique beauty, but seems to be fearless of having "annoying fragrance" and insists on its own quality at any time. These two pieces of ci express self-examination and self-image by depicting flowers and plants. From the emotional expression point of view, their poems are joyful songs of youth, which describes women's play and games from the first perspective, for example, in Zhu Shuzhen's *Celebrating Peace and Order (A Summer day*

on the Lake), "Hand in hand, we stroll by the Lake of Lotus Flower; A sudden rain drizzles into a shower.", and in Madam Wei's *Pu'Sa Man*, "Lotus flowers are charming and smiling in the lake of mandarin ducks." These two songs, whether they are touring by the lake or on the lake, cannot be separated from the perspective of "hand in hand" and "laughter" which are easy to be noticed by women's mind. They express the girl's thoughts and the happiness of traveling with her lover. There are also direct expressions of sorrow, such as Zhu Shuzhen's "There are new sorrows and the frown always exists" and "Thanks for the pity of the moon who decides not to be full tonight." in *Pu'Sa Man* and "Hearing the sound of drum across the stream with sorrow, it just like choking with sobs" in *Song of Good Event* by Madam Wei, which capture the touch of things with women's unique sensitive and delicate mood, and express the loneliness and sorrow of being alone. Some even express women's love and desire more directly from the female perspective, bold and unrestrained, such as Zhu Shuzhen's "Fond to be silly, I care not for others, never. Undoffed, I lie down with my breast against his chest.", and "I draw circles and you must know what they mean: A single circle is me, and the double circle is you; the whole circle is reunion, and the broken circle is parting". Zhu Shuzhen's bold expression of the romance and tenderness needed by women proves her full awakening of female consciousness, which is rare at that time to be women who do not adhere to feudal ethics and dare to love and hate. These natural and real emotions and images are the vivid embodiment of female consciousness in literature.

In addition, the female consciousness of male ci writers in the Song Dynasty is compared and studied in the following parts based on Wen Tingyun and Liu Yong's work of boudoir resentment. Song of Homecoming (jade ornament)

**Wen Tingyun**

*The jade ornament,*

*Emerald phoenix dangling from precious hairpin,  
The glittering hair clasp in the shape of osmanthus,  
The dress made of yueluo is green as spring water.  
Remaining candle shines on the curtain of the hall,  
Waking up from the dream feeling the nightwatch sound louder.  
Sorrow of Ms. Xie is like,  
Light and shadow on the Xiaoping mountain.*

The first part describes the beauty of the heroine with a large number of beautiful objects, such as the jade ornament, emerald phoenix, precious hairpin, hair clasp, osmanthus, yueluo, etc. "Jade" refers to the heroine. The ancients always used jade to describe women. A fragrant jade is even warm and soft, which shows her noble beauty. Moreover, she is decorated with a series of valuable ornaments, such as precious hairpin and dress, which deepens the luxurious appearance. However, the perspective of descriptions of the protagonist is entirely out of the appreciation of an object. She is another beautiful "object" born out of the pile of beautiful ornaments. The heroine can't show her aesthetics as a human being. The words focus on the luxuriousness, which is a kind of quantification of women's value and materialization of women. The scenery in the second half is connected with the heroine's room. The remaining candle of the hall is shining in the curtain, and the night watch sounds more urgent when she wakes up from dreams. The description of the scenery shows the uneasiness of the emotional tone. "Remaining candle" reflects that it is near dawn, and listening to the night watch reflects the loneliness of the woman who cannot sleep all night. It is obvious that in the patriarchal society, the female protagonist is presented as "accessories", such as "materialized beauty" and "waiting without complaint", which is the author's mandatory requirement for women in his self-state as a man. The last sentence uses the allusion of Xie Qiuniang, Li Deyu's beautiful concubine. According to *Interpretation of Tang Poetry*, "He

locked her in a splendid palace and favored her a lot". The allusion here simply indicates that the heroine's identity is concubine, and she is a beloved lady. However, this kind of love is in sharp contrast to her loneliness. Her emotions are broken and endless, which should refer to her missing for her husband. The use of this allusion shows the woman's suffering day after day. However, in addition, her hope is obscure and unknown. The beauty concubine's suffering is expressed from a one-sided perspective and ignores the emotion of herself. The heroine's mentality becomes the "humbleness" in the subordinate state, which caters to men's ownership of women at that time and does not reflect the female consciousness.

### ***Ding Feng Bo***

*Liu Yong*

*It is spring but the green leaves appear dismal and the red petals sad,  
Despondent and weary, I wile away my time.  
The sun has risen above the blossoms,  
Orioles flit amidst the willow twigs,  
Yet I still lie silent under a scented quilt.  
My full and soft cheeks are haggard,  
My glossy hair hangs loose and uncombed,  
Too languid to make up my face and dress.  
What for I say, since that heartless man has left me.  
I'm angry there is no news from him.*

*Too late for regrets.  
I should have locked the carved saddle.  
Then, he would sit and face the window of the study,  
With coloured paper and ivory-handled brush in hand,  
Confined to reading and writing.  
We could have always been together,  
Never forsaking or shunning each other's company;  
With my needlework I would sit by his side.  
Only when he is with me,  
Does my young life not feel wasted.*

The first sentence is to write the heroine's mood directly, which lays the emotional tone of sadness. The sun has risen to the top of the flower, and the Orioles are flying through the willow branches, but the heroine doesn't get up in such a beautiful spring scene. The following sentence clearly depicts the heroine's self-image. She is thin with drooping long hair and she is unwilling to comb. "What for I say, since that heartless man has left me. I'm angry there is no news from him." tells the cause of depression in the heroine's tone. This sentence expresses the plaintive feeling, and is full of dissatisfaction with men, which is an open emotional expression. This sentence reflects a vivid and strong subjective emotion. The first sentence of the second part expresses her remorse. It is expressed in the casual and natural tone of the protagonist, which is the embodiment of strong self-consciousness. The rest of this part fully expresses the woman's yearning for an ideal life, which is "With my needlework I would sit by his side." In order to realize her ideal, the heroine regrets that she didn't locked the carved saddle, which has strong initiative and is a rare expression in ancient literature, for it's full of strong female consciousness. The heroine's wish is no longer the universal one of "expecting her husband to be successful" at that time, but simply to be together. Liu Yong used his empathy to describe women and make them full of self-independence. The last sentence "Does my young life not feel wasted." expresses the deep feeling of regret, reflecting the

heroine's sincere love for the man without any cover up. however, even if “there is no news from the man”, her "regret", "lock" and "arrest" also show her distinct personality of daring to love and hate, and completely portray the image of the woman. Among them, the sentence " We could have always been together, Never forsaking or shunning each other's company; With my needlework I would sit by his side." reflects the real life style of women at that time. (Liu Yong was embarrassed all his life. He lingered in the brothels and lived with prostitutes all day, making living by selling his works. In such a background, unlike the scholar bureaucrats' ci which is far away from the society, his works are less restricted by feudal ideology and ethics. He has deep empathy with the lower-class women. He can always use the most sincere and natural language to express the appearance, voice and thoughts of the women at that time, to show people's feelings, and to change the image of dependent women to the ones with obvious female consciousness.)

## 5. Conclusions

Since the pre-Qin period, the description of female images in various literary works shows different degrees of female consciousness. Most of the female images in male writers' works have rigid defects, but some of them are also real and vivid, depicting women's psychology and life. The key factor determining whether there is female consciousness in the works is not the writer's gender, but the writer's ideology, which is closely related to the life environment. Taking Li Qingzhao's three pieces of ci. about boudoir resentment as the example, this paper finds that the embodiment of her personal consciousness in her poems is female consciousness, which is a real, natural and independent aesthetic consciousness not affected by male discourse. The female images in Li Qingzhao's works are vivid, natural and humanistic. Through the works of Madam Wei and Zhu Shuzhen, two female poets, this paper finds that women's writing generally presents the characteristics of delicate and sensitive emotion and concern for tenderness and romance. This is different from the common concern of men's writing, but there is no difference between them in terms of the height of ideology. Their works and female consciousness are also irreplaceable in the literary treasure-house.

Table 1: The works mentioned above are summarized here.

	Emotion	Female figure	Female consciousness
Li Qingzhao, In the Capital — to the tune of Yuangwangsun	Boudoir resentment; lonely and helpless; complaining husband's departure	Delicate woman complaining her husband	Yes
Li Qingzhao, Tune: "Silk-washing Stream"	Boudoir emotions; boring and sighing the pass of pleasant hours	A wife with sorrow lounging by the tower sighing the withering pear flower	Yes
Li Qingzhao, Tune of Yuanwangsun	Memorizing the deceased; pain of worries no one to talk about	Old lady full of resentment (clear self-portrait of the poet herself)	Yes
Liu Yong, Song of the Lost	Expectation of a wonderful life; hoping to hold hands with the lover	A young and noble courtesan imprisoned in the brothel	Yes

Zhu Shuzhen, Pu' Sa Man	Praising the traits of osmanthus to express the sorrow	A woman sticking to herself	Yes
Zhu Shuzhen, Celebrating Peace and Order	Joy of sailing on the lake in summer and having fun with the lover	A happy and shy girl	Yes
Zhu Shuzhen, Song of Circles	Deep love for a man	A straightforward woman who can speak out her love	Yes
Madam Wei, Buddhist Dance	Joy of picking water caltrop on boat	An ignorant girl	Yes
Madam Wei, Song of Good Event	Loneliness and sorrow; complaining husband's departure	A contradicted and painful lady resenting her husband	Yes
Wen Tingyun, Song of Homecoming	Boudoir resentment; loneliness	A beautiful and lonely lady in her boudoir	No

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