

A Study on the Source Domain Cognition of Love Metaphors in Yao Folk Songs

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Abstract

Using folk hand-copied text of Yao folk songs collected from Yao counties and Yao townships around Hezhou City as corpus, this study explores the diversity of the source domain of love metaphors in them. Research has shown that due to ethnic integration, the metaphorical origin of love in Yao folk songs has diverse and regional characteristics. The origin of love not only comes from the cultural traditions of the Yao ethnic group itself, but also from the animals and plants, love tokens, and agricultural products and other daily necessities in the production as well as the living environment of the Han ethnic group. The expression of love in Yao folk songs tends to be implicit and concise. Besides, the diversity of love metaphor sources reflects the rich and colorful culture of the Yao ethnic group.

Key words: Love metaphors; Yao folk songs; Source domain

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is recorded that “The Yao ethnic group and the Zhuang ethnic group make up a large proportion of the population

in Guangxi. Among the Ten Thousand Ridges, by the mouths of the Three Rivers, the Yao ethnic group built their nests on sixty-three mountains, and around the thirty-six centers, they scattered in the counties of Guilin, Liuzhou, qingyuan and Pingle, and their habitat was still expanding, of which Tianzhou, Sicheng were especially known as the top. Their branches were so many that you can’t enumerate them all, and their territory was as large as that of Yunnan province.” According to *Hezhou Yearbook*, the Zhuang and Yao ethnic groups are the permanent residents in Hezhou. The Pan ethnic group, who speak Yao language and call themselves “Mian” and “Tuyou”, are mainly distributed in the Babu District, Zhaoping County, and Xiling Mountain area of Fuchuan Yao Autonomous County. The Pingdi Yao, who call themselves “Bingduoyou”, are mainly distributed in Fuchuan Yao Autonomous County and Zhongshan County. Zhuang and Yao languages are both used in ethnic settlements among their own ethnic groups, and at the same time, one or several common dialects are also used. Generally, except for a few elderly elders, they can all speak and understand Putonghua. without their own ethnic script, most of the towns, counties, urban areas, and even families in the city mainly use one language or one dialect, or use multiple dialects, so Chinese characters are commonly used throughout the city. Because the Yao people have long lived together with the surrounding Han and Zhuang ethnic groups, they have been influenced by the Han culture earlier, and their economy and culture have been deeply sinicized, that is why Yao folk songs are all recorded in Chinese characters. It is well known that the collection of Yao folk songs in Yao counties and townships around Hezhou City is rich in content and diverse in form, of which there are many original ecological oral mountain songs like smoke songs, tea songs, house sighing songs, village entrance songs, guessing songs, and gift exchange songs, etc.; Handcopied folk songs such as *Solar Calendar Songs of Twelve Years*

Morning Worship, Lunar Calendar Songs of Twelve Years' Morning Worship, A Bound Copy of Wedding Poems, "Lyrics for Redeeming Vows to the Ancestors" as well as historical folk songs like ethnic origin songs, migration songs, Panwang songs, creation songs, etc. are popular with them, the themes of these songs always cover the society and life of the Yao ethnic group. Since there are many ethnic festivals in Yao people, the date of the festival and singing songs by sitting in the hall provide an opportunity for them to showcase their singing skills and convey their emotions through songs. In various traditional festivals of the Han's as well as Yao's, the Yao ethnic group usually get together to sing songs, even a special song festival included during those periods. In their custom, duet singing is an important social means. When the time comes, young men and young women will visit villages by villages, and when night falls, they will sing in antiphonal style to make the song hall lively, of course, it is especially popular to sing love songs, and through duet singing, they can meet young people of the opposite sex to choose their partners. If they match in a duet and both parties have a mutual understanding, they will privately commit to a lifetime. At wedding occasions, relatives and friends of both parties will use songs to express their emotions and bless the newlyweds in order to enhance their family relationship, "which, to some extent, can reflect the general picture of the ideological, cultural, and social historical development of the Yao people in Hezhou." (Xie, 2009) Taking "A Song in Deep Dusk" as an example, this song is often sung by men and women at night to convey love, and the content of the song can be easily inferred from the name alone. As the saying goes, "The moon rises over the trees and people meet after dusk". "The usual form of singing for 'A Song in Deep Dusk' is male solo singing, with a relatively low and soft voice", (Tian, 2014) and it must be faithful to the original work. Yao ballads were originally folk oral literature, with new content constantly added during the process of oral transmission. Nowadays, Yao folk songs have also been continuously processed and innovated due to the popularization of culture, so that they are recorded and passed down in Chinese characters. Yao folk songs use a huge amount of space to praise folk life, especially sincere love, and use the source domains of animals, plants, and tokens in real life to reflect it.

2. USING FRAGRANT HERBS AND BENEFICIAL BIRDS TO EXPRESS LOVE

Lakoff believes that "metaphors construct most of our daily conceptual systems." (Lakoff, 2015) Initially, people only paid attention to the conceptual mapping role of metaphors in cognition, that is, conceptual metaphors often manifest as the use of simple, concrete, and emotional concepts to express complex, abstract, and

rational concepts, such as the imaginary God, gods, and objectified animals, plants, and objects, all of which can be used as image schemas to metaphorically represent human's emotions. The metaphorical art in Chinese is mainly reflected on the use of techniques as "beneficial birds and fragrant herbs match loyalty; evil birds and odorous substances are compared to slander; spiritual beauties are compared to compare with gentlemen." Thus, the images of "The swallows go flying about; Now up, now down. Those young ladies are going to be married, and far will I accompany her." are common metaphorical forms in Chinese poetry, originating from totems in primitive times. It can be said that "poetic art is a symbol of conceptual consciousness and physical activity that has differentiated from the chaotic unity of primitive culture that contains various ideologies". (Zhao, 1987) Here, "swallows" reflects aristocratic ladies. In fact, compared to thinking, metaphor is already an intuitive object, and thinking is just a potential thing. "Metaphor is an organic existence that constantly changes and generates, and human's language, literature, cognition, and even ontology all have the ability to change and generate." (Zhang, 2004) In folk song art, the singer's emotion must be constructed through thinking, while thinking relies on imagination to achieve the purpose of metaphor, which in turn must be reflected through symbolism. The Yao ethnic settlement area in Hezhou is rich in animal resources, with 290 species of terrestrial vertebrates and wild animals. Besides, the Yao people live in mountainous areas where there are productions of various wild vegetables, fruits, potatoes, as well as wild animals and birds such as wild boars, yellow muntjacs, antelopes, goats, otters, mountain rabbits, squirrels, bamboo rats, civets, monkeys, and pheasants, as well as various bird species such as thrushes, spotted doves, magpies, owls, woodpeckers, baybears, orioles, and falcons. These birds and animals are of great significance to their material life, becoming their main source of meat and also the materials for their songwriting. The reason why love has diverse metaphorical sources is that love is the most complex emotional form of human beings', in which love and hate intertwined and entangled endlessly. The Yao folk songs, nurtured in the mountainous areas of Hezhou, are inspired by traditional Chinese cultural mascots and various wild animal species raised in daily life, vividly celebrate love life. Take *Solar Calendar Songs of Twelve Years' Morning Worship* for example,

Setting traps for hunting on the head of Jiumei Mountain and building a platform on the foot of it,

Three strikes and three refining cannot form a platform while four strikes and four refining complete it finally.

Setting traps for hunting on the top of Jiumei Mountain and building a platform in the estuary of Hunan,

Smiling under the green mountains and trees, a pair of scholars set traps for hunting.

A pair of scholars talked to each other, wishing to catch a pair of birds but not,

A thousand birds they cannot win except a pair of nice birds named babbler.

Setting traps for hunting on the top of Jiumei Mountain and building a platform on the foot of it,

smiling on the foot of Jiumei Mountain, a pair of scholars set traps for hunting.

A pair of scholars talked to each other, wishing to catch a pair of birds but not,

A thousand birds they cannot gain except a pair of nice birds named partridge.

According to Baidu's explanation, the kind of bird babbler lives in the mountainous areas south of the Yangtze River in China, they are used to inhabiting in the shrubs on hills or shrubs and bamboo forests near villages. They are quick witted but timid, often foraging in the grass under the forest, not good at long-distance flying. During the breeding season, male birds often hide alone among weeds and branches, and are extremely good at singing. Their sound is melodious and melodious, very loud and pleasant, with a tail sound slightly similar to "mo gi yiu -", therefore, ancient people called their calls "Ruyi Ruyi". The forests in the mountainous areas of Lingnan are dense, and babblers often live next to Yao residents, over time, feelings naturally developed between humans and birds .

Foreign Matter in Lingnan records that there are more partridges in Lingnan, which are used to crying in pairs. At dawn and dusk, several birds can sing simultaneously, with sounds such as "do-be-quick-pa" or "come to the peak ha-ha" in English, and "No husband and wife but brother and sister" in Chinese. In Zheng Gu's poem of *The Partridge* in Tang Dynasty, he depicts the sound of the partridge with the line of "When the wanderer first hears it, his sleeve wet with wiping tears, when the beautiful woman starts her first song, her green eyebrows lows down with heart broken." It seems that the beauty's "Singing" and the wanderer's "listening" are echoing each other. As a "beneficial bird" and a language element of love song thinking, the partridge has been transformed into a referential symbol, metaphorically implying the pairing of men and women. The call of the partridge to mate is in line with human courtship thinking patterns and artistic images, depicting the scene of a man and a woman singing together at first sight. It is also a depiction of the emotional and reluctant love between the two parties.

In Su Shi's poem of *Huichong, Spring River Evening Scenery*, there are lines of "The duck prophesied the warm water of the spring river", which add a touch of meaning to the life of ducks, even using ducks as metaphors for people. Also, lines in his poem *Painting Wild Geese* of "With rhythmic head bowed now and then, the duck's parade slowly complacent, as my official career is gloomy, how can geese (I) keep company with

ducks (snobs)?" describes the "wild geese" as the poet's own image, while ducks symbolize the mean people struggling for power and status. And lines in his another poem of *The Qi Pavilion*, there are lines of "Learning that I had braved the cold to come here, they hurriedly called for the preparation of wine and mobilized the neighbors to run around the village to catch geese and ducks" also proves the ancient custom of raising ducks and making dishes. There being many mountain ponds in the Yao ethnic region located in Lingnan, the ducks they raised not only allow them to peck at small fish, pests, and rice left in the fields, but also serve as a dish for worship and consumption during festivals and holidays, so ducks are closely related to the life of the Yao ethnic group. Hence, there are often scenes in folk songs where ducks are used to reflect life. In the song of *Lunar Calendar Songs of Twelve Years' Morning Worship*, the content of it is a duet between men and women, reflecting the life scene of Yao youth choosing partners through songs.

When I come by appointment, my companion has songs to teach me sing,

During the day we go into the mountains to talk with each other, and at night we go home to share poetry.

When I come by appointment, my companion has songs to teach me sing,

Using a long pole to pick dung for saving time and labor, we slowly mix it with water when arriving at the field.

She slowly combs her hair into a good bun, and it will take us a long time to sing slowly,

The roosters often wave their tails when entering the chicken coop, while the mother ducks move their necks frequently.

Now that many songs have been sung, I can sing a song freely,

Till the first two or three songs have been sung, we are waiting the next with eyes looking on.

Here, the roosters and the mother ducks refer to the male rooster and female duck in the line "The roosters often wave their tails when entering the chicken coop, and the mother ducks move their necks frequently", this type of expression may be influenced by the postposition of adjectives in Zhuang language, but another meaning may be that the male rooster is a sexually mature male rooster, then the chickens and ducks in folk songs are metaphorically depicted as scenes of men and women living at home, full of life charm.

In Cao Rui's poem of *A chapter of Planting Melons*, there are lines of "I married my husband on my wedding night, like melon vines and kudzu vines entwined together. I entrust my unworthy body to you, like leaning on Mount Tai. Cuscuta has no roots and spreads to its roots, climbing its own path. The duckweed floats on the current, it often fears being incomplete. Being favored by you, I swear to be loyal to you forever. My loyalty is known

to the world, but I still worry about being abandoned.” Here, women humbly attach themselves to men like the “melon vines and kudzu vines entwined together” and “leaning on Mount Tai”, as if they were “flowing water and duckweed”, and they are full of uneasiness in the hearts. Another example, in the poem of *Joyful Nine Songs of Xiangyang*, the lines “The young woman herself is humble, relying on the long pine tree. How can she cherish the frost and death, but it is so precious that she is committed to her husband” are metaphorical relationships of love dependence. Since the sources of love metaphors in Yao folk songs’ are rich and diverse, mascots and agricultural products are often used to metaphorize love relationships. Therefore, their traditional marriage reflects women’s dependence on men through plants. As stated in *The Collections of Wedding Poems*:

As a pair of bamboos goes well with each other, the young lad is taller than the young maiden.

The young lad is the Golden Rooster and the young maiden the Phoenix, the Golden Chicken, like the dragon and the Phoenix, match the husband and wife.

As yellow clouds reflect on the Heaven and the earth, the sun shines in all directions.

Choose a right time to talk about marriage, the young lad and the young maiden finally are paired up.

A pair of dragon candles is inserted in front of the ancestors’ gods, and the Golden Boy and the Jade Maiden are reunited.

As the dragon and the phoenix both bow down together, the first bows are to their parents and the second bows to their ancestors.

A pair of oil candles illuminate the whole hall, and the red candle glowed with light.

As the ancestral hall is lighting candles tonight, they wish to give birth to a son early and to become a high official.

A pair of oil candles illuminate the whole hall, lighting up the bride into the bridal chamber.

With Gold Cage on the left, the Dragon and the Phoenix are in pairs on the right.

With candles lighted in the ancestral hall tonight, the dragon and the phoenix will sing in harmony for a hundred generations.

The first bows for the heaven and the earth forever, and the second bows to the earth for a long time.

The third bows for a happy couple, and the fourth bows for the guests full of the house.

The fifth bows for being well off, and the sixth bows for matching in pairs.

The seventh bows for the seven sons reunited, and the eighth bows for the family to be well off.

The source domain of conceptual metaphor has the characteristics of openness and diversity, it is not limited to a certain category or system concept, so multiple positioning of the source domain concept may not belong to a conceptual system, which allows the love target

domain to achieve diversified expansion. The original bamboo trees in the southern region are nestled against each other, when the gentle breeze passes by, the sounds are just as the lovers whispered in their ears. In Shen Fu’s *Memories of the Courtyard in Six Records of Floating Life*, there are lines of “From then on, the ears and temples are rubbing together, close as the body and its shadow.” As we know, the story of the Golden Boy and the Jade Maiden comes from the lines in Xu Yanbo’s *Xingbai Lu Guan Yingzhi*, it reads “The Golden Boy holds purple medicine high, and the Jade Maiden presents the Green Lotus.” It is said that the ducks and shrimp in the Du Kang River are the Golden Boy and the Jade Maiden guarding the Yao Pool by the Heavenly Queen Mother, over time, the two of them generated love and affection, admired each other, and finally fell in love with each other. In Tang Dynasty, the term “bridal chamber” referred to a place where men and women loved each other, using to describe “boudoir relationships”. For example, Shen Quanqi’s poem of *Ancient Song* states that “fallen leaves flow in the wind towards the jade platform, and in the cold night and autumn, I think of the opening of the bridal chamber”, and Qiao Zhizhi’s *Encouragement for Women* also states that “do not blow the Qiang flute to startle the neighbors, and do not use the Pipa to disturb the bridal chamber”. Thus, the nouns “a pair of bamboo”, “dragon and phoenix”, “heaven and earth”, “double”, “a pair of dragon candles”, “Golden boy and Jade Maiden”, “bridal chamber”, and the verbs “齐qi”, “配pei”, “结jie”, “会hui”, and “团圆tuanyuan” that represent the union of the couple in the folk songs do not belong to the same conceptual domain, but this does not prevent the folk songs from praising beautiful love.

Lakoff and Johnson’s “philosophy of experience” holds that “concepts are formed through the body, brain, and experience of the world, and can only be understood through them.” (Johnson, 1999) In ancient Chinese poem collections of *Book of Songs*, there are metaphors of beautiful maids in the form of “The peach tree is young and elegant, brilliant are its flowers.” while Song Zhu Xi’s *Biography of Poetry Collection* stated, “Zhou Li, in the middle of spring, men and women will meet. However, it is the time for marriage when the peach is blooming.” The City of Hezhou is located in the northeast of Guangxi, belonging to the subtropical southern monsoon climate, with abundant sunshine, abundant rainfall, obvious dry and wet seasons, and a long period of frost free, so she is very conducive to the growth and reproduction of flowers, plants, and trees. The songs of the Yao people who grow up in this green mountains and fields also use a large number of plants, crops, especially flowers as “fragrant herbs” to reflect love, as the peach blossom metaphor in the folk song’s lines of “Mandarin ducks paired up on peach and fig, like peach blossoms inserted in two rows” is for maidens.

3. TOKENS OF LOVE

As is well known, the themes of folk songs are mostly the joys and sorrows of love. Now that the language of folk songs is poetic, its function of expressing love is also rich in metaphorical language of poetry. However, the language that expresses metaphorical functions in folk songs is different from everyday language, where the latter only represents the function of conceptual meaning, while the language expression function of folk songs is multi-layered and profound, endowing ordinary people with unexpected metaphorical functions. In ancient China, men and women often used herbs, jade pendants, fans, and other items as tokens of love when choosing a partner for sexual intercourse. For example, in Xiao Gang's *Halfway Creek* states, "When we meet halfway through the river, we are still on each side of the river without crossing it. Judging from a distance is a confidant, then we conform each other from the graceful steps. Picking the fragrant orchids as a changing gift, we just want to express the same feelings. Although I hold onto our old feelings, I fear that your wife's suspect and jealousy arise." Emperor Jianwen of the Liang Dynasty also wrote in his poem of *The Lady of Zhuyu*, "Young men from all directions rushed to send Jade, they have come a long way in order to visit her home. There is no shortage of husbands' horses, and no room for ambassador's carriage to stop." And in the poem of *Summer Song at Four O'clock of Midnight*, he also wrote, "At peach mature season, young men give women fans as gifts. Feeling deeply congenial, they expect a meet in the Orchid Room." This is a picture of a man giving a fan to a woman he loves. In love stories, the love between men and women is usually expressed through life and death, or through tokens of affection. Thus, the gifts of tokens serve as evidence, practical, emotional, contractual, ethical, and other functions, which have long exceeded their intended use. Vibrant flowers harvested from the countryside and precious gold rings can symbolize the beauty of love and the strength of emotions, and a ring is still a kind of contract, carrying the spiritual value of their respective love promises, which symbolizes that love requires self-restraint and unwavering loyalty from both parties, so both men and women in love will cherish the tokens given by each other. Fans, umbrellas, scarves, shoes, etc. can all become dowries, just as Cao Zhi's poem of *Chapter of Beauty* states, "Her appearance is like the brightness of the morning sun, who doesn't envy her beauty? What happened to the matchmaker? why not send jade objects and silk fabrics in time, betrothal engagement?" Here, the jade and silk referred to the Gui Zhang and the bundle of silk, which were used in ancient times for betrothal and engagement. In Fu Xuan's poem of *Stories of Ladies*, there are also lines as "Her eyebrows were like kingfisher feathers, and her eyes were bright and delicate. Her red lips cover her white teeth, her beautiful color is like Gui

Zhang. And when she smiled, her two small dimples appeared on her cheeks, making her too charming to be detailed...The matchmaker laid out bundles of silk, and lamb and goose barked non-stop in front of the hall." Here, "jade silk", "bundle silk", and "lamb and geese", are all gifts brought by the matchmaker when she (he) visits the house. Like the fan in the Yao folk song of *The Collections of Wedding Poems*:

A fairy floats down to the Earth, she was fanned with the wind to your hall.

This marriage has been doomed to you, a female surname matches with a male surname.

After money and gift have been handed in on the horseback, she is fanned to his door after gets off the horse saddle.

When she is greeted in front of his house, chairs are arranged and tea and cigarettes are served in the front of his hall.

Furthermore, besides serving as a token of love, scarves are also a symbol of the starting point of love life, as Huangfu Mi's *Poems of Female Lament* states, "When the wedding is set, it is about to be completed. As two silk ribbons are tie up, they are told again and again by their parents." The ribbon, also known as the "silk ribbon", is a handkerchief. In ancient times, when women got married, their mothers would tie them with scarves and remind them of the etiquette and behavior norms that women should master. So scarves can also serve as a source domain mapping for the beginning of love life. Yao people's scarves, also known as hand scarves, are also used in *Songs of Meeting People at the Foot of the Road*, and there is also a situation where a daughter gets married and her mother helps her wear a handkerchief when giving her dowries.

What has been changed, changed into a silver comb to connect you with the girl?

What kind of silver comb have you got, making it sparkling on the girl's head?

What has been changed, changed into a silver hairpin for you to marry your lover?

What kind of collar have you got, making it dazzling on the girl's neck?

And what kind of belt have you got, making it shines on the girl's waist?

What has been changed, changed into a belt to connect you with the girl?

What kind of skirt have you got, making it gathering around the girl's feet?

What has been changed, changed into a headscarf for you to marry your lover?

What kind of headscarf have you got, making it sparkling on the girl's head?

What has been changed, changed into clothing for you to marry your lover?

The source of love in the song includes "silver", "shirt", "belt", "skirt", and "headscarf". Headbands were

originally accessories worn by ancient people to avoid the scorching sun or to keep warm. In the Book of *Later Han, Biographies of the Exemplary Women, and Dong Si's Wife*, it writes, "During the cold season, a headscarf and socks were given." Here, clothing and accessories such as "headscarves" and "clothing" were used to turn the accompanying dowries into a carrier for mothers to bless their daughters and teach them after they arrive at their husband's house. Umbrellas are not only a shelter from the rain in the rainy Lingnan Yao residential areas, but also one of the dowry gifts. As stated in the lyrics of *The Great Songs of Emperor Pan*:

When the moon hangs aslant in the sky, I invited my maiden to carry an umbrella to come by Pingtian.

I invite her to drink Pingtian's water together, and the umbrella covers what a skirt can't.

The folk song concerns a lady's umbrella when a lad and a maiden sing to each other. In this context, the umbrella should be a tool used by ladies to cover up and avoid embarrassment during romantic interactions. In addition to exchanging tokens of love and expressing heartfelt vows in marriage and romantic life, Yao folk songs also yearn for pastoral scenes after marriage. The source areas in the songs reflect the painting of the love life of men and women, as stated in *Lunar Calendar Songs of Twelve Years' Morning Worship*:

Picking a yoke on the yellow mulberry tree, and picking climbing vines deep in the mountains.

Yokes and climbing vines are everywhere, the only thing missing is a vomeronasal vine.

The husband takes the lead to plow the field in March, and the wife takes the lead to transplant rice seedlings in May.

The husband carries rice seedlings to go in front, and the wife then delivers the meals to him.

The husband takes the lead to plow the field in March, and the wife takes the lead to transplant rice seedlings in May.

Three hundred and two people are filled in the valley, making the valley full of green rice seedlings now.

The husband takes the lead to plow the field in March, and the wife takes the lead to transplant rice seedlings in May.

Three hundred and two people are filled in the valley, they transplant rice seedlings from the head of the valley to the center of it.

The husband will follow his wife's instructions, leaving home to join the army in a larger state.

The husband takes the lead to plow the field in March, and the wife takes the lead to transplant rice seedlings in May.

They transplant rice seedlings all over the valley, making the lower places full of green rice seedlings before the higher places are to transplant.

There are various love metaphors in this folk songs, such as "climbing vines" on trees, "plow the field"

and "transplant rice seedlings" for male and female's interaction, "carry seedlings" and "deliver meals", "follow wife's instructions", etc. The topics in the lyrics revolve around agricultural activities, which are actually used to metaphorically represent the interaction between husband and wife of their love life.

The traditional carriers of love in China are often beds, pillows, curtains, etc. Other examples are "curtains" in the poem of *Gifts to Women* by Qin Jia in the Han Dynasty, "Fluttering curtains, shimmering candles. If you are not living in, how can curtains be used?", "bed" in the poem of *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio: The Heroic Maiden* by Pu Songling, "Those who say 'but never again' will repay those who are not in bed", "mat" in the poem of *Watching Fu Lang's Newlywed Poem* by He Xun, "The husband is in a good condition, he sleeps on the mat with glowing.", and "pillow seat" in the poem of *Peacock Flies Southeast*, "We married and shared the same pillow seat, and we will be friends in the afterlife", all of them are the carriers of marriage. Of course, when describing the wedding scene, there are also some source words and objects reflecting love in Yao folk songs, such as bronze mirrors and shoes that sound like "together", chopsticks that symbolize "quick childbirth", and fans that symbolize "being good at giving birth". As stated in *A Bound Copy of Wedding Poems*:

A pair of candles are shining brightly in the hall, and a pair of good mandarin ducks are in the pond.

With dragon and phoenix chairs on both sides, a scholar bed is set up in the middle.

The first command is to put the ancestral portrait, the second is to arrange the groom's seat.

The third is to move out of the newly married dragon bed, and the fourth is to bless the husband and the wife hand in hand to eternal pair.

There is no doubt that "one pair", "candle", "dragon and phoenix chairs", "mandarin ducks", "scholar bed", "dragon bed", and "eternal pair" express the meaning of good luck brought by dragons and phoenixes. The mandarin duck, also known as double birds, which is depicted in *Poetry · Xiaoya · Mandarin Ducks* as "When the mandarin ducks fly in pairs, they encounter large and small traps and nets." In Cui Bao's *Annotations on Ancient and Modern Times · Birds and Beasts* of the Jin Dynasty, it reads "Mandarin ducks, waterbirds, and wild ducks. Male and female have never been separated. When a person gets one of them, the other will think of another to die, hence it is called double birds." Using Mandarin ducks as a metaphor for couples, the Tang Dynasty poet Lu Zhaolin's poem of *Chang'an Ancient Intent* can serve as evidence, "I would rather be a mandarin duck than envy immortals." From these examples, we can see that daily language and literary language share a common language 'core', which is the ideographic function of expressing certain ideas and concepts. (Li, 2005)

Aristotle once pointed out, “Tragedy is the imitation of a serious, complete, and of a certain length of action; its medium is language, which is characterized by various pleasant sounds used in different parts of the play; the imitation is expressed through the actions of characters, rather than through narrative; it purifies this emotion by arousing pity and fear.” (Aristotle, 1982) Here, Aristotle’s basic view on the resentment of love is elucidated. As the themes in folk songs mostly revolve around the theme of love, and the protagonist’s love often ends tragically, a series of poignant and beautiful scenes are often well presented in them.

We know the melancholic love story between Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai of the Han ethnic group has been widely circulated, and its prototype was the enchanting folk song of *Huashan Ji* from the Six Dynasties period. No matter how various versions are passed down, the legend of Liang Zhu reflects the bold pursuit of true love by women in ancient society, and its tragic love ending in “turning into a butterfly” embodies the great power of love. Then, the Yao folk song *Liangshanbo and Zhuyingtai*, after being processed, describes the final outcome of their journey to hell as follows:

The Holy King sat on the high platform and listened, with patience he listened to this pair of lovers’ words.

Three and a half years of studying in college, they walked, slept, and wrote poems together.

They wrote with a shared pen during the day, and slept together on the same bed at night.

As they had taken an oath initially, the two would share the same fate to stick to Heyuan.

“Heyuan” originated from Heji, which is a gourd commonly known as bitter melon, often used to make ladles. In ancient weddings, a gourd was cut into two ladles, and the newlyweds each held one ladle and poured wine to drink. Later, “heji” was often used to symbolize marriage. In *Kong Yingda’s Commentary*, it states “Those who share the same prison and eat together...the meaning of ‘heji’ is to combine the two...When the two are combined, superiority and inferiority become a unity, they will meet forever and not be separated.” This is the original meaning of “heji”. Also, in *The Book of Rites, Faint Righteousness*, it states that “when the bride arrives, her husband bows to let her in, and they share the same room and food, so they merge together, respect each other, and treat each other as relatives.” (Cui, 2000, p.227) Later on, “heji” represented the union of love between a man and a woman, and the concept of “Heyuan” in the song refers to the union in real life. Upon hearing of their tragic love story, the Holy King decided that the two would return to the mortal world and be “destined for life and death together”. The phrase “sleeping together on the bed at night” is the origin of the term “scholar bed” in *A Bound Copy of Wedding Poems*.

4. CONCLUSION

The most abundant form of human emotion is love between men and women, whether it is presented with joy in exterior, with sadness in heart, or with song in emotion. Therefore, the source of love in them presents diverse characteristics, which can be sweet and precious things in life, as well as resonance and attachment in the soul. In short, Yao folk songs contain rich cultural essence of the ethnic group, they construct mapping relationships between the source and target domains through a large number of primitive metaphors of production and life scenes. The lyrics are easy to understand, for they reflect the marriage and love habits of the ethnic group and the depth of love, by which the beautiful love life is praised. Meantime, it is also a full reflection of the artistic characteristics of Yao folk songs. Study shows that the Yao culture is deeply influenced by the Han culture as well as Zhuang culture, and the mapping goals of its source domain are similar to those of Han and Zhuang cultures. Thus, the folklore and sociological meanings conveyed in Yao love songs can be explored from the perspective of the source domain.

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