



# Pipeline Princess: On the antinomy of female consciousness and discourse generation in consumer society

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**Abstract.** In the context of the image of the consumer society, the discourse of the princess of the assembly line came into being. With the continuous growth of female productivity, women show the pursuit of beauty in the consumption of visual images. However, the princess of the assembly line has an obvious derogatory connotation in the consumer society. In the media mirror, women develop false self-identities and bask in illusory satisfaction. This kind of consumption behavior has not substantially improved women's status and voice. The generation of pipeline princess discourse reveals the contradiction between female consciousness and discourse generation in consumer society.

**Keywords:** Assembly line princess; Consumer society; Female consciousness; Antinomy.

## 1 Introduction

With the continuous development of consumer society, women's status in the consumer market is gradually rising, and the visual demand for consumption images is getting higher and higher. Tourism is a common form of consumption in the consumer society. In recent years, travel photography has been developing continuously. Under this background, the concept of "assembly line princess" came into being, and it has made an appearance on social media, arousing attention and hot discussion from all sides. "Assembly line princess" refers to those girls who wear local traditional costumes for photos in tourist resorts. These girls rent local clothes, makeup and shooting services to get a sense of local culture and self-satisfaction. However, this experience is often only a superficial and false identification, because they do not really integrate into the local culture, nor do they really understand the local lifestyle and values.

Starting from the background of the assembly-line princess phenomenon, this paper will analyze the self-identification and discourse generation of women in the consumer society, as well as the antinomy phenomenon that exists in such identification and generation. In the process of shaping the discourse of the princess of the assembly line, women show their recovery of the body, improve the tourism industry chain, promote local employment, promote economic development, strengthen regional identity and

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Z. Zhan et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2024 10th International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research (ICHSSR 2024)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 858,

[https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-277-4\\_127](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-277-4_127)

enrich the local culture, which has relatively good significance. At the same time, the princess of the assembly line has obvious derogatory connotation in the consumer society, which is reflected in the media. Women form a false self-identity and are immersed in an illusory sense of satisfaction. This kind of consumption behavior has not substantially improved women's status and voice.

## 2 Assembly Line Princess Industry Formation Mechanism

In recent years, the tourism industry continues to develop. In 2023, the term "assembly line princess" appears on the media platform, which mainly refers to the behavior and process of wearing clothes with regional characteristics in popular tourist areas, making similar movements under the guidance of photographers, and finally producing similar visual images. The assembly line princess first appeared in the public number article of People magazine. The article holds that although the "assembly line princesses" have different identities, they are continuously produced like standard commodities because they rent similar clothes, draw similar makeup, do similar hairstyles, pose similar actions and take highly similar photos in scenic spots.[1]

Although the pipeline princess only appeared on the social media platform this summer, the travel auction industry has a long history and has a good momentum of development. The travel auction industry continues to grow on the basis of the development of the tourism industry. In the past 10 years, the travel auction market has grown from 9.52 billion yuan in 2015 to 22.82 billion yuan in 2020, and the market size has reached 29.73 billion yuan in 2021. According to the survey data of Flying Pig, the popularity of travel photography among tourism consumers has reached 85%[. In the relevant reports of the National Tourism Administration, it can be seen that different places attach importance to the travel photography industry.[2]

This year, all over the country combined with the characteristics of local resources and tourist sources, have launched the corresponding photography tour products, in 2023 during the May Day, Sanya launched more than 1000 tour lines, during the May Day, Sanya received 214,900 tourists from all over the country, Haikou launched more than 100 tour lines, local citizens said, Many brides are willing to combine the honeymoon with the tour. [3]According to Meituan's data, as of the end of August this year, the number of studio brands in Meituan has reached 4,350, compared with 3,634 in the same period last year.[4]t can be seen that the travel photography industry continues to develop in the consumer society, and the formation mechanism of the assembly line princess industry continues to improve.

Women gradually rise in the consumer society and become an important force in the consumer market. In the assembly line princess industry, women wear local traditional costumes to take photos, which not only shows women's pursuit of beauty, but also improves the tourism industry chain, promotes local employment and promotes economic development. Therefore, women play an important role in the formation mechanism of the assembly line princess industry.

With the development of streaming media platforms and short videos, Generation Z has a large demand for travel photography, and the travel photography industry has a

strong momentum of development. Under the new tourism mode, people can wear local characteristic clothes, experience local culture, better integrate into local characteristics, and enrich the tourism experience. Take Xishuangbanna as an example, the Dai culture and Naxi culture become Dai and Naxi princesses in the tourism film industry, which are more important in the local culture. When consumers visit the local area, they wear Dai long skirts and traditional Naxi costumes, and become elegant and beautiful princesses under the classic makeup, which increases the sense of tourism experience and immersion. Better understand the Dai and Naxi culture in the process of traveling, and the clothing and makeup actions can reflect the local national temperament in a certain sense.

This year, Quanzhou hairpinned flowers, which are more representative on streaming media platforms, and Xunpu women show their positive attitude towards life by wearing blooming flowers on their heads in daily life. When tourists visit Quanzhou, the rapid growth of consumer demand produces a steady stream of consumers, but the industrial development cannot meet the personalized needs of consumers. The phenomenon of princess on the assembly line appears: wearing similar clothes, performing similar actions in the same tourist resort, and finally producing highly similar images on social platforms and streaming media platforms.

### **3 Self-identification is Formed in the Media Mirror**

In the consumer society, media mirroring has an important influence on the formation of people's self-identity. Media mirror refers to the reflection and reproduction of reality presented through the media. In the phenomenon of the princess on the assembly line, media mirror has an important influence on the formation of female self-identity. By sharing their pictures of the assembly line princess on social media, women gain a sense of satisfaction and achievement, which comes from the self-identity formed in the media mirror. In media mirror image, women see images similar to themselves, and this similarity makes them feel recognized and accepted. This sense of identity makes them more confident and positive, thus promoting the rise of female consciousness.

#### **3.1 The Media Shaped the Typical Female Image**

Visual consumption is the consumption activities of consumers through vision in the consumer society. Various images of goods or services are the media of this activity. These images operate through various mass media, thus forming a complex relationship between consumers and commodities. The [5]princess of the assembly line is a consumption activity developed by female consumers through vision. When female consumers travel, they usually get some information about the princess through mass media. In the continuous information shaping of movies, television, streaming media and other media, the media will create some typical images. In the consumer society, women's self-image shaping and identification are often influenced by the media. The media conveys messages to women about standards of beauty, lifestyles and values through advertising, magazines, social media and other channels. These messages not

only influence women's aesthetic concepts, but also have a profound impact on their self-identity and discourse generation.

In the two-way interaction between the media and the audience, female groups accept the information and gradually accept the female images created by the media. Among the assembly line princesses, there are some very classic princess types, such as Xuemi, Dragon Kui and Zixuan in the Legend of Sword and Sword III, or Xiao Feng in the East Palace. These are classic images created in the media of movies and television. Consumers will imitate the classic image when traveling. In addition, the development of streaming media platforms such as Douyin and XiaoHongshu will produce some opinion leaders and shape some female images, such as the Western Regions Princess, Tibetan princess, Yanji Princess and Banna Princess, etc., are mostly shaped by streaming media platforms. The classic image shaped by the platform has gradually become the typical female image commonly chosen by female groups when traveling.

### **3.2 Women Complete Their Identity in the Mirror Image**

Lacan believes that human knowledge stems from people's fascination with images; More specifically, it begins with the infant's identification with the image in the mirror. In essence, this identification is both an aesthetic understanding and a kind of illusion, which represents the subject's efforts towards wholeness and autonomy. [6]Lacan believes that the construction of the self cannot be separated from the self and its counterpart, that is, the image of the self from the mirror; The self is realized through identification with this image, and human identity is completed in the mirror image.

Typical female images created by media are mostly in line with the requirements of society or the image characteristics of women imagined by the whole society. The princesses of the Western regions are mostly charming and graceful, while the Dunhuang goddesses are holy and glorious. Every woman has her own glory. Such as the strong tribal princess and the brave Princess Jasmine. Women are in the field of consumer society. With the information conveyed by the media constantly strengthened, women accept the typical images shaped by the media as the idea of beauty, and in the constant acceptance, they mirror each other with the typical images to complete their identity.

### **3.3 "Becoming a Princess" is Internalized into Self-consumption**

Consumption is choreographed into a self-directed discourse, and in this minimal exchange tends to deplete with satisfaction and disappointment the consumption of goods differentiates the hierarchy of status. [7]Women taking photographs, paying to be a princess is shaped by the media as an act of female self-acceptance and self-pleasure, and "being a princess" is internalized as female self-consumption. Before the production line princess shooting, women usually get their idealized female images in various media and imitate them in practice. Taking Dunhuang Apsaras as an example, women will search for movements on media platforms during the shooting process and apply the movements on social platforms to the shooting under the guidance of photographers. Most apsaras on social platforms come from Dunhuang murals. In the

process of constant media reinforcement, the idea of women wanting to become "assembly line princess" was internalized into women's self-consumption by the media.

Becoming the princess of the assembly line is the result of the joint action of the consumer society and the media. Of course, the continuous appearance of a unified princess in various famous scenic spots increases the tourism experience. In the photo shoot, women become princesses for a short time, mirroring the female images created by the media to form a female identity, gain spiritual strength in the shooting, and in a sense, can face the real world more calmly.

## **4 Obtain Imaginative Satisfaction from False Fantasy Dreams**

Women complete their self-identification in the media mirror, which is based on the false fantasy. The image of the assembly line princess presented in the media mirror is a perfect image carefully created by photographers, makeup artists and retouching artists. This perfect image is not a true reflection of women, but a false image created by technological means. What women see in the media mirror is not the true image of themselves, but a glorified image. This kind of false illusion immerses women and makes it difficult for them to extricate themselves. They tend to spend a lot of time and energy on social media in pursuit of this image of perfection, ignoring their real selves.

### **4.1 Assembly Line Princesses Consume the Graphic Meaning of Images**

The consumer society has gradually entered the landscape society, consuming more of the symbolic meaning of objects[8]As the princess of the assembly line, women consume more of the graphic meaning of images rather than the actual function. Their desire for a free and equal society and their pursuit of a higher sense of self only obtain imaginative satisfaction from experiencing the shooting of the princess of the assembly line. Wearing the princess's clothes, the consumption is more of the graphic meaning, and has no practical role. Women wear the costumes of Princess Jasmine during the shooting, imitating the classic movements of princesses in movies and TV dramas, but when the shooting ends, it is like magic disappears, "Cinderella" is still "Cinderella" in the end, and the reality remains unchanged. In the process of shooting, women tend to consume the graphic meaning of images rather than the reality-oriented ones.

In the phenomenon of assembly line princess, women obtain a sense of self-satisfaction and identity by imitating local people's makeup and poses. However, this identification is often false, as they are not really integrated into the local culture and society. This false identity not only limits women's right to speak, but also poses a challenge to women's actual status improvement.

### **4.2 Media Shaping Image Constitutes Female Paradigm**

Self-consumption is because her relationship to herself is expressed and sustained by symbols that constitute the feminine paradigm, and this feminine paradigm constitutes the real thing. The female paradigm is produced by the mass media, and everyone can

imaginatively find his or her own value in its realization. The [9]female images created by the media constitute the female models, which are highly idealized and have the characteristics of poetry and romanticism. Back to the real world, it is difficult for a princess to survive in the real world. Ordinary people in the experience of the princess on the assembly line are more in the experience of the model shaped by the media. In the role of Princess Jasmine, I learned to be brave. Enjoy the nobility of God when you become a flying princess, and feel the power as a strong woman in the role of tribal princess. In these examples shaped by the media, everyone can find their own value in it, but at the same time, the directive obtains the satisfaction of imagination, which is not beneficial to reality.

### **4.3 Structural Discrimination is Rife with False Dreams**

The mirror stage is a moment of self-deception, a process of infatuation caused by illusory images, and the starting point of imaginative thinking. The self-identification that women gain in media images is false. In the identification of paradigms, it is obvious that everything is false. If you look at the assembly-line princess phenomenon, structural discrimination has been rife with this false fantasy. In it, the male paradigm is the one of high demand and choice, and competitive rather than selective virtue is the essence of the male paradigm. The [10]female paradigm, on the other hand, urges women more to self-please, and is a strictly pleasuring and narcissistic concern. Eternal in the female paradigm is a derivative and indirect value, and women have always consumed the decorative culture, and have always been alienated in this imaginary false fantasy.

Consumption behavior itself does not promote the improvement of women's actual status and discourse power. In the consumer society, consumption behavior is endowed with important significance. People express their identity, status and values through consumption. However, the act of consumption itself does not change women's status and power distribution in society. Women still face many challenges and problems in the consumer society, such as gender discrimination and workplace inequality. These problems have not been solved because of consumer behavior. Instead, consumer behavior is often used to reinforce traditional female roles and standards of beauty. Women are still in a weak position in the consumer society, lacking discourse power and expression space.

## **5 Conclusions**

Antinomy runs through the three major criticisms of Kant's philosophy, and its essence is: "rational self-conflict" specifically refers to the phenomenon that two theories or doctrines formed on the same object or problem are established respectively, but contradict each other. The [11]phenomenon of the princess of the assembly line appears in the consumer society, forming two kinds of views: on the one hand, most consumers believe that in modern society, women obtain the material power of consumption through work, and record the beauty in the process of travel, which is the expression of

the improvement of female discourse and power, highlighting female consciousness. On the other hand, in the field of consumer society, the princess of the assembly line more represents the mockery of the photo girls who wear the same clothes, pose the same actions in the same way, and harvest the same photos. In the consumer society, the real power of women has not been improved, and women form false self-identity in the media mirror and obtain sexual satisfaction in the false dreams. Assembly line princess is more regarded as a sneering term with derogatory meaning.

The graphic symbol of female consumption is originally intended to liberate the body and accept the self, but in the discourse generated by the consumer society, it is disparaged as the princess of the assembly line, which erases the personality and self-needs of female consumers. The princess of the assembly line presents the contradiction between female consciousness and discourse generation. The formation of self-identification in media mirroring and imaginary satisfaction in false dreams are the important mechanisms behind the phenomenon of assembly line princess. Media mirror has an important influence on the formation of female self-identity, but this kind of self-identity is based on false illusions. Consumption behavior itself does not promote the improvement of women's actual status and discourse power. Therefore, we need to re-examine the relationship between female consciousness and discourse generation in the consumer society, and seek a more positive and sustainable development path.

In the future development of travel photography, when shooting "assembly line princess" should really uphold the "assembly line principle": strict industry standards, better improve the service level, maintain the efficiency of the assembly line, but when taking photos, respect the individual differences of female consumers, more show the personality characteristics of the photographer, and resolutely abandon the uniformity. In the image shaping of the media, there are more images with male models. I hope that the future models will have higher requirements, more selective and competitive, and no longer indulge in the fantasies created by women in the rich material world of consumer society. In the society, the words that stigmatize women are opposed, and there is more awareness of women's care for the shaping of women's bodies and aesthetics during filming. In all aspects of social life, do not indulge in fantasy, give up fantasy, and strive for women's related rights!

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