An Analysis of Li He's Poetry from the Perspective of Sub World Theory

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Abstract

The Sub World Theory is the third theoretical part of Text World Theory which proposed by Professor Paul Werth and further developed by Joanna Gavins. It is concerned with how language, as well as the context in which it is produced, leads the participants in the discourse to build mental representations for original events. In fact, the Text World Theory originates from the traditional Cognitive Linguistics which is the theory about the production and receiving of the discourse. The Sub World Theory has been applied widely in the literary text analysis to explain how fictional words are created and how they develop. According to this theory, "sub world" can be divided into three levels: the Deictic Sub World, the Attitudinal Sub World and the Epistemic Sub World. Li He was a well-known and outstanding poet in Song Dynasty. If the achievements of literature and art are combined together, Li He is definitely the historical figure in ancient times. No one in the entire Chinese cultural history can keep pace with him. The purpose of this paper is to use the Sub World Theory make an analysis of classic Chinese poetry Li He's works. The combination of the foreign theory and Chinese culture further promote the advancement of the cognitive poetics and enrich the analyzing methodologies for Chinese classical poems. Meanwhile, it is beneficial to Chinese traditional culture to appear on the international stage.

1. Introduction

The article includes four parts. Section1 is the overview of the Sub-World Theory, illustrating some of the features of Li He's poems. Section 2 carries out detailed analysis from Li He's three poems. In section 3, the article will discuss practice use in the sub world. The last section sums up the key findings and provides suggestions for future research.

1.1. Introduction to Sub World Theory

Sub World Theory, proposed by Paul Werth and developed by Gavins, Joanna, is an important part of the Text World Theory. It offers a holistic framework through which to analyze how discourse is conceptually constructed and negotiated by discourse participants. [1] The sub worlds share terms of structure such as world-builders and function-advancers which contain the same deictic and referential details. [2] Sub-worlds don't discard the connection with the original world but are embedded into it by alternations in deictic parameters of a text world which may display shifts in time and space. At the sub world level, details in poetry will come to plot light to explain the writer's sensibility and exhibit how artistic conceptions are represented in mind during the reading process of poetry. Werth schematizes three main types of sub-worlds while Gavins modifies Werth's term of sub-worlds into two types under the influence of Simpson's classification

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of model system. [3] In this part, the researcher tries to make further introduction to three kinds of sub worlds.

1.1.1. Layers of Sub World Theory

Deictic Sub World Layer

"Deictic alternations in the existing text world are based on a variation of the world-building parameters of the text world: time, location, entities (character and object). The alternations take place in the same text world but in a different location or another time or with focus on different entities". [4] Deictic sub-worlds contain flashbacks, flash forwards and other departure from the current circumstance such as the world embedded into direct speech, character's view on other scenes (for example, if characters are watching TV, what the TV screen has exhibited forms a deictic sub-world). This type of sub-world is defined by three parameters including time, location and entities which can function alone or together.

Attitudinal Sub World Layer

Werth thought the second type of sub-worlds was the attitudinal sub world. Being related to desire (want-worlds), belief (believe-worlds) and purpose (intend-worlds), the attitudinal sub world has three central areas of conceptual activities. [5].

(a) Want-worlds. The want-worlds set wish, want, hope and dream as their world building elements. Werth explains: "Desire worlds can be cued by predications such as hope, wish, dream, want, similar other words and verbal phrases. Besides direct marks for the modality, structures that can carry speakers or writers' attitudes and feelings with subjectivity can make departure from the originating world".

(b) Believe-worlds. Believe-worlds are introduced by predicates such as *know, think and think.* It occurs when a character expresses a degree of belief in a particular proposition.

(c) Intend-worlds. Intend-worlds are related to propositional attitudes clustered around the concept of intending future action which include promises, offers, commands and request. Werth acknowledges that there is some of overlap between intend-worlds and want-worlds. However, though the fulfillment of want-worlds may involve some form of future action, Werth argues that, unlike intend-worlds, there is no intention to carry that action out.

Epistemic Sub World Layer

The third type of sub worlds is epistemic sub world which cover remoteness and assumption expressed within the text world. As a typical example of epistemic sub world, conditional constructions and indirect thought attach great importance in the world construction. These include use of model auxiliaries such as must, could and might, and model

lexical verbs such as think and suppose. In the poetry, Verbs like "believe", "suppose" and their respective derivatives that are accessible in the attitudinal worlds will create an epistemic sub world. Words "maybe", "perhaps", "possibly", "certainly", etc. can also reveal the epistemic modality. The functions can be gotten from the degree of probability and possibility as its name suggests. [6].

1.1.2. Researches on Sub World Theory

Sub-worlds are widely used to interpret various forms of texts, such as poetry, novels and plays. In 2017, Patricia Canning using text world theory to consider the personal and social impact of reader engagement in sub worlds. [7] Isabelle van der Bom, in 2015, illustrated that sub worlds can explain the complex and muti-layered nature of identity. [8] In 2013, Marcello Giovanelli wrote a book named *Text World Theory and Keats' Poetry*, trying to figure out how sub-worlds are applied in Keats' poetry. [9] In 2012, based on Sub world theory, William takes Zehra Cirak's poems as example, demonstrated that background knowledge owned by readers influences the construction of sub-world and comprehension of the whole poem. [10].

Compared with studies above, sub worlds theory in Chinese poetry is still in its development stage. Only a few articles can be found. In 2013, Ruan Jing, studied in Wuhan Ligong University, China, investigated the sub worlds in Li Shangyin's poem. [11] In 2017, Zhou Shanshan took a further demonstration by analysis Xin Qiji's poem in sub world theory. [12] In what follows, I address this gap, and in so doing discuss how the sub worlds exist in Li He's poem.

1.2. Introductions to Li He

In Chinese literature history, amounts of excellent poems were composed by poets that with great talent. Among these gifted, Li He has considered as the combination of poetic genius and fractional morbidity. Besides that, he is also regarded as the most outstanding star in Chinese ancient poem group.

Li He (790–-816) was a Chinese poet in late Tang Dynasty. He has great reputation in his unconventional and imaginative writing style. As a diligent poet, Li He's poems famously explored ghostly, supernatural and fantastic themes which connected his love, political ambition and other uncertain areas, exposing the darkness and corruption inside the ruling rank and the expressing his depressing emotions in politics. He hated the real world, thus having composed lots of poems that illustrate his dreams, desires and imagination.

In Li He's poem, he listed a large number of ghostly images and created some picturesque illusory world. This kind of special creation of arts came from the phantom that was led by his depressed mind. Many poems of Li He mentioned grave, which showed his desperation. His chanting for death made

him exhausted, because he used his soul to stimulate the inspiration. Thus, he hurriedly passed away from the world for which he had a mixture feeling of love and hate. [13] To sum up, the long-term suffering and depression life of Li He that fertilized him being a poet who wrote large amounts of special ghosts and gods poems.

1.3. Research Question

This thesis, based on the theoretical framework of Paul Werth and Joanna Gavin's Text World Theory, explores Li He's poetry so as to answer the following questions from the cognitive point of view:

In the view of Sub-worlds theory, what are the characteristics of Li He's poetry?

How did Li He create a wired atmosphere in his poetry?

Based on Sub-worlds theory, how do readers conduct the interpretation of Li He's emotional world?

Therefore, this study mainly uses the Sub-World Theory framework to conduct a cognitive study on Li He's poetry. In conclusion, the thesis will be organized with relatively independent parts. Each part will focus on a specific topic and solve the problem step by step.

2. Purpose and Significance of the Study

Pervious scholars and researches always study the ancient Chinese poems by analyzing the rhetorical usage. This thesis attempts to analyze Li He's poetry from another angle, that is, the Sub-worlds theory of cognitive poetics. The significance if the paper is listed as follows:

Firstly, this paper tries to use this theory to analyze Li He's poetry, which makes the theory more useful. Therefore, readers can read and study Li He's poetry from another perspective, which can make readers learn more about Li He and his poetry. Secondly, this paper facilitates readers' understanding of Li He's poetry in a cognitive way. Besides this, the combination of the foreign theory and Chinese culture further promote the advancement of the cognitive poetics and enrich the analyzing methodologies for Chinese classical poems.

3. The Exploration into the Sub-worlds of Li He's Poetry

In section two, the author mentioned the theoretical bases and background of Li He. In this section, the exploration into Sub world theory will be listed. This section will conduct a research on the sub words in 金铜仙人辞汉歌 (Prelude to

Song of the Bronze Statue), 雁门太守行 (The Walking Line of Yanmen Prefecture) and 梦天(Dream of Heaven), and the analysis of his poems will be showed in the following parts.

3.1. Analysis of *Prelude to Song of the Bronze Statue* from the Deictic Sub World

3.1.1. Background and Interpretation

This poem was composed in the eighth year of Yuanhe era, Tang Dynasty. The poet Li he was a high-ranking official in ancient China's capital. However, because of his illness, he had to resign his job and back to his hometown Luoyang. On his way home, Li felt depressed and composed this poem.

The poem described a story which happened in the eighth month of the first year of the Qinglong era, during the reign of Emperor Ming of Wei Dynasty, the court ordered a palace officer to ride west and bring back the gilded bronze figure of an immortal holding a disc to catch dew made during the reign of Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty (Emperor Hanwu). When the palace officer removed the disc and took the statue to his carriage, the bronze figure shed tears.

《金铜仙人辞汉歌》　李贺

茂陵刘郎秋风客，夜闻马嘶晓无迹。

画栏桂树悬秋香，三十六宫土花碧。

魏宫牵车指千里，东关酸风射眸子。

空将汉月出宫门，忆君请泪如铅水。

衰兰送客咸阳道，天若有情天亦老。

携盘独出月荒凉，渭城已远波声小。

Prelude to Song of the Bronze Statue

Li He

Emperor Hanwu ride through the autumn wind, whose horse neighs at night and has passed without trace by dawn. The fragrance of autumn still lingers on those cassia trees by painted galleries, but on every palace hall the green moss grows.

As Wei's envoy sets out to drive thousands of miles, the keen wind at the East Gate stings the statue's eyes. From the ruined palace he brings nothing forth, but the moon-shaped disc of Han. True to his lord, he sheds leaden tears.

And withered orchids by the Xianyang Road saw the traveller on his way. Ah, if Heaven had a feeling heart, it too much grows old! He bears the disc off alone. By the light of a desolate moon, the town far behind him, muted its lapping waves.
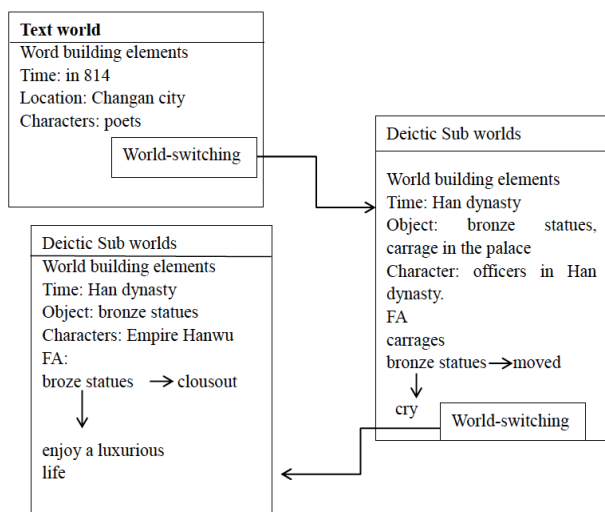
Figure 1. Deictic Sub World in Prelude to Song of the Bronze Statue.

In this poem, Li He was mourning the passing of time. It can be divided into three levels, the first four sentences were full of emotional thoughts that time flies and life changes. In the middle four sentences, Li He combined imagination into reality, which creates a Deictic Sub-world. the middle four sentences recalled the historical moments that Emperor Hanwu couldn't shake off the restrictions of the dominant ideas, so he pursues living forever on his accession to the throne. However, things go contrary to Emperor Hanwu's wishes, he died like a leaf in the wind and did not recognize his arrogancy. Legend makes him being the "God's favored one", however, in the endless history river. The Emperor Hanwu was not able to take fame and his treasures when he was died. In this poetry, the poet Li He called Emperor Hanwu as "Liu Lang", which reflected Li's sarcastic trait.

3.1.2. Spatial Separation

Through the analyses using the text world theory, the shift of the scenes and function-advancing propositions reveals the cognitive mechanisms and means of the theme. [14] In the part of this poem, Li He just firstly was showing a black picture of sorrow: when all the dust and the yellow leaves, the rusty statues and downfallen dynasty. It was for many years after the Han Dynasty perished. These years, regardless of the length, were limited, but it was endless between life and death. The statues have seen the changing data for they always standing there. In this poem, the art of transcending time and space is expressed outstandingly. When he visited Wei's envoy, some statues came into his eyes and brought him from reality into Han Dynasty. Thus he used "As Wei's envoy sets out to drive thousands of miles, the keen wind at the East Gate stings the statue's eyes. (魏宫牵车指千里，东关酸风射眸子)" to describe the scene where the Han dynasty perished. This poet breaks down the barriers of time and space, and let his free soul roam freely in different time

of all events, or different space of reality or fantast. His poem recounts his sorrows that his ideal cannot be realized and his pursuit of life with hardships. The last sentence "By the light of a desolate moon, the town far behind him, muted its lapping waves. (携盘独出月荒凉，渭城已远波声小)" is back to the deictic sub-worlds. The multiple sub-worlds just clearly elaborate the mood of the poet and reveal the sadness because of time variation

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3.2. Analysis of The Walking Line of Yanmen Prefecture form the Attitudinal Sub-world Theory

3.2.1. Background and Interpretation

Attitude sub-world can be directly explained by the words such as "desire" and "want". The Chinese character "愿" (wish)"欲"(desire) is usually translated into the words "want" and "desire" in English, which is widely used to express the poets' ambition, unfortunate and resentful emotion, and classified as the modality. It is hard to understand. That phrase can be translated into the sentence pattern "it is regrettable" attached "to". The word like "want", "hope to" shows wishes without any action at present, and the temporarily unrealized stuff is the key point. Take the poem The Walking Line of Yanmen Prefecture

雁门太守行

黑云压城城欲摧，甲光向日金鳞开。角声满天秋色里，塞上燕脂凝夜紫。

半卷红旗临易水，霜重鼓寒声不起。报君黄金台上意，提携玉龙为君死。

The Walking Line of Yanmen Prefecture
Li He

Black clouds loom heavy over the city, and the city on the

verge of caving in. Armors gleam golden with open scales in the sun. Battle horns fill the sky of an autumnal hue, frontier rouge freezes into a nocturnal purple.

Battle banner half-furled stood over the Yishui River. Drums go mute from heavy frost and cold. To return the favor on the Golden Stage, I hope to tote my Yulong sword to die for him.
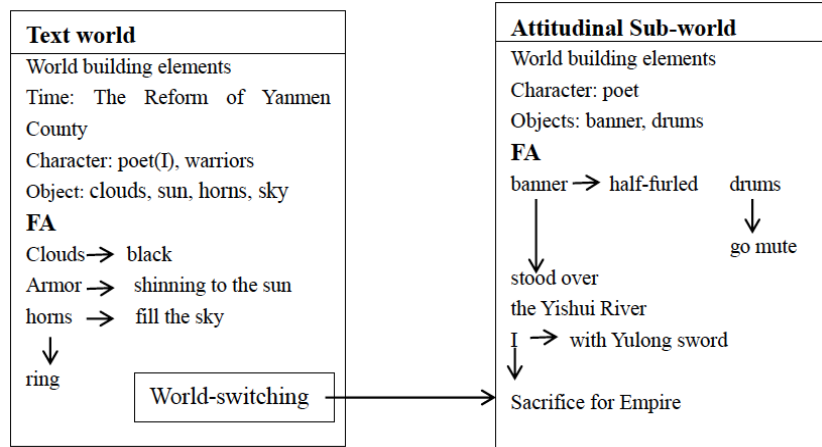

Figure 2. Attitudinal Sub-world in Prelude to Song of the Bronze Statue.

This poetry was finished during the ninth year of Emperor Xianzong in Yanshan County. At that time, Li He was at fierce fight with the reform of Zhenwu Army and then he wrote *The Walking Line of Yanmen Prefecture* to encourage warriors. After this, he was an official in different places. The first part about the black clouds express a nervous atmosphere when the warriors confronted with the enemies, which means "the enemies look like dark clouds that pressed nearby, and the broken wall seems to be destroyed". The second sentence uses another color to express the scene，which means "sunlight exposures on the scale-like armor and it is shining brightly". This sentence includes two clauses, which describes the voice of the horn and the blood of warriors, that is, "the voice of horn resounds through the sky in autumn, and the blood in fort is so red that it looks like purple blood". The third sentence means the wind blows the red flag, and the troops come to Yishui (a river in Hebei province), frost have made the drumhead wet, the voice of drum is low and it is a picture of fighting against enemies. The last sentence shows the warriors, as well as Li He's determination to fight for country, "in order to repay the reward and appreciation of the prince，the soldiers are willing to fight for the country with sword in hands until they die". This poetry shows the text world in the first three sentences, and then develops into the attitudinal sub-world. "To return the favor on the Golden Stage, I tote my Yulong sword to die for him." are just two attitudinal sub-worlds, showing the two wishes, embodying the transcendental philosophical, positive attitude towards war, which is the theme of the poem.

3.2.2. Description on Li He's Political Ambition

Li He was so young and his whole political life was very simple, Li was discouraged by some of his contemporaries

from taking the Imperial Examination. Encouraged by Han Yu and another famous poet who admired his talent, Li took the examination but failed. He had splendid political ambition but had no great achievement in his life. That made him always indulged in subjective fantasy and focused too much on the vanity. People can even say that he lacked a kind of strong and fulfilling personality charisma. However, the lack of rational temperament, on the contrary, helped him become a poet that possessed great and strong emotion. It is precisely because his simple thought that his poems is considered as his whole life and only his poems can reflect the value of his life. In his poems, he wrote some sentences to reflect his ambitions and desires. This kind of poetry creates an Attitudinal Sub-world vividly. For instance, he desired rich and luxurious material comfort, he wanted an experience of being specially favored by others, he regarded fame as a life right, but he didn't consider making contributions to the whole society. After searching all poems, the writer find that Li He's despair of politics was showed not only in the poems like *The fall comes* (《秋来》); *Five Irony Poems* (《感讽五首》); *Splendid Song* (《浩歌》)、*Bitter and Transient Daytime* (《苦昼短》); *The Sorrow of Camel's Bell* (《铜驼悲》); *Persuasion wine*（《相劝酒》），which lament the transience of life, but also in the poems *Dance and Song of Gongmo* (《公莫舞歌》); *Prelude to Song of the Bronze Statue* (《雁门太守行》); The Song of An Old Man Takes Jade (《老夫采玉歌》)，which emphasize the reality. In the poems *Annoying Man* (《恼公》); *Butterfly Dance* (《蝴蝶舞》); *Flower Tours*（《花游曲》），he expressed his envy of the luxury life and he even thought he should own this kind of life. [15].

In the poem *Five Poems of South Garden* (《南园五首》)，Li He has written that "The ambitious man with sword in hand

will rescue your people of the occupied land!" which expressed his political ambition. According to statistics, there are also 15 poems that contain an image which reflect his personal willing and ambition. As in *Twenty-three Horse Poems* (《马诗二十三首》)，Li He thought he was full of talents and gifts just like the red hare, but different from the experience of red hare, no one appreciated him. He wanted to make contribution to the society but had no opportunities.

3.3. Analysis of Dream of the Heaven from the Epistemic Sub-World Theory

3.3.1. Background and Interpretation

In Li He's poem, there are many imaginations that sited by dreams. In the poem *Dream of the Heaven*, Li He mentioned the picturesque scenery that he dreamed about things that happened on the moon. As people known, there is a woman called Chang'e on the moon with a rabbit and a man who is cutting the osmanthus tree. Li He is a unique figure in poetic history, with his life-long pursuit exhibited the aspiration for achievement, the frustration of unfulfilled wish to serve his country and dissolution of all ambitions. Therefore, while admiring and delineating the terrestrial luxury, he pinned his hope on his dream. The poem *Dream of the Heaven* is composed of conflicting coexistence of aesthetics and morality, elegance and frightfulness.

梦天

老兔寒蟾泣天色，云楼半开壁斜白。玉轮轧露湿团光，鸾佩相逢桂香陌。

黄尘清水三山下，更变千年如走马。遥望齐州九点烟，一泓海水杯中泻。

Dreaming of Heaven
Li He

Old rabbit and chilly toad crying over the color of the sky.

A tower of clouds opens ajar, its slanting wall glowing white.

The Wheel of Jade rolls over heavy dew and moistens the halo round, Phoenix-pendant goddesses encountered on osmanthus-scented path.

Yellow dust and clear water beneath the three fairy mounts, The sea change of a thousand years as fleeting as a galloping horse.

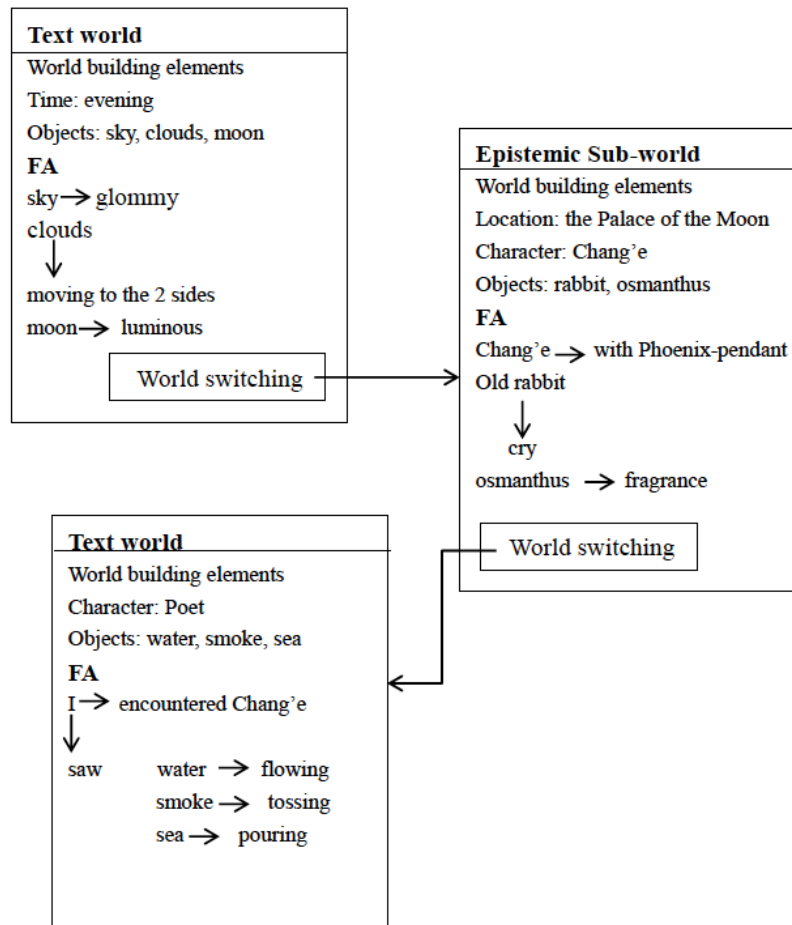Qizhou from this far just nine points of smoke, Flanked by bodies of sea waters the size of a spill from a Cu.

Figure 3. Epistemic Sub World in *Dream of the Heaven.*

The whole poem is a description of a dream. Li He provided a surpassingly beautiful scene of the palace of moon by his imagination, which is a sharp contrast to the shortness of human life. The first sentence means "in the cold evening, the rain is like the tears of the old rabbit and the cold toad, the clouds roll away and the palace appears after the rain, the light of moon shoot out on the cloud and shows the white outline，which is just like the moonlight shooting on the house." The third clause means "the sky is full of the raindrops after the rain; the moon rolls across the raindrops just like a jade wheel, and the light seems to be wetted by the damp of raindrops". The first three clauses describe the scenery on the way when the poet dreamed about flying on the moon. From the fourth clause, the poet began to describe his dreaming experience in the palace of moon. "Phoenix-pendant goddesses encountered on osmanthus-scented path." contains the image of "osmanthus", which means on the way full of the osmanthus smelling, the poet comes across the fairies and Chang'e. That kind of image make poet's dream near at readers hand. The third sentence is the conversation between the poet and the Chang'e, which expresses the flying time in the human life. The last sentence describes the scene that the poet looked at from the palace of moon, "the nine states of the county are small as dust, and the sea is like a cup of water", that is，the big world on the earth is so tiny when looking from the moon. In fact, the description of the magnificent palace of moon is to contrast it. With the situation of human life, especially Li He's miserable life. The whole poem also compares the eternal life on the moon with the short life of human. Thus, the description of the moon palace has the atmosphere of being eternal and permanent. Therefore, the dream in this poem shows the eternal and permanent artistic conception.

3.3.2. Description of Dreams in Li He's Poetry

Experiencing the dream condition consciously is a regular method for archaic Chinese poets to deliver an Epistemic Sub-world. Li He has the strong emotion to sacrifice for his motherland while his poems are built an imaginary circumstance to satisfy his emotions.

This part attempts to analyses the tragic sense of Li He's poem about his dream. After Li He had experienced the political frustration, he began to dream up an illusion fairyland for himself, but he was incapable of accomplishing the salvation. While his imagination of fairyland often expressed the shortness and changeableness of human life.

Li He's poem *the Songs of Heaven* also reflects his dreamlife. In this poem, Li He described a fairyland surrounded exotic flowers and rare herbs. This kind of fairyland called Epistemic Sub World. It is far away from the real world and fabricate by Li He.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Findings of the Thesis

The thesis is trying to use the Sub-worlds theory to analyze Li He's poetry, and it mainly studies the three modes of sub world theory of the realization of the artistic conception of Li He's poetry which contains the Deictic Sub-world, the Attitudinal Sub-world and the Epistemic Sub-world.

Firstly, from analyzing Li He's poetry, the author knows Li He's poetry better. Li He suffered a lot in his life, therefore, his poem reflected what he suffered, which was a kind of torment and excruciation. Li He pursued beautiful words and gorgeous sentences. Thus，he often use words and sentences in the poems to express and vent the annoyance and depression in his heart. The poetry of Li He is not only a symbol of depression，but also is the reflection of the discordant externalization of his weird personality.

Secondly, from all examples in this paper, we could find that in constructing Li He's poems, readers get abundant information through poet's Sub-worlds. The Deictic Sub-world is realized through the transform space and time in Li He's poems. The Attitudinal Sub-world shows Li He's ambition and dream; heaven and ghost in epistemic worlds can also reveal the Li's epistemic modality. These sub-worlds concerning with poet's internal mind are expressed in a complicated way, readers have to make more cognitive efforts in order to construct Li He's personalities during their reading process.

Last but not least, the using of Sub-world theory to analyze the realization of classical Chinese poetry's artistic conception provides a new perspective for analyzing Chinese classical poetry. At the same time, it also provides the opportunity to combine western poetics together with Chinese culture.

4.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

Since lack of an adequate quantity of theory and data collection，the limitation of this thesis is obvious. On the one hand, some modes in literary schema theory are not analyzed in this thesis; on the other hand, the examples should be analyzed more deeply, especially in chapter five the thesis has a new perspective, and those limitations can inspire more researchers to study this perspective further. The other researchers can use this new perspective to analyze not only the poetry of Li He，but also other poets' poetry. All in all，combining the western poetics schema theory with Chinese ancient poetry needs more people to devote themselves to this research.

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