

Listening to the Ghostly Genius:

The Auditory Depiction in Li He's Poetry

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## ABSTRACT

Li He (790-816), an outstanding poet full of literary talent in classical Chinese poem history, his poignant words, incredible literary construction, nether artistic conception and nuanced peculiar poem style owned him the reputation of “ghostly, demonic genius” 鬼才. Scholars demonstrated that his ghostly and demonic style has much to do with the special imagery and allusion in his poetry. However, this kind of ghostly appeal of literature exactly have much to do with the large quantity of sensory vocabulary that the poet is expert in using in his poems, which evokes resonance from the readers/audiences. Li He fuses visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile sensation in his poems, building up his special writing style, evoking and creating a sensorial space for readers. The thesis concentrates on analyzing the sensory vocabulary in Li He’s poetry, sonic depiction in particular, which are rarely discussed before, based on which making further conclusion about the artistic conception and the special style of Li He’s poetry.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother Ms. Yaru Sun, father Mr. Xuejian Wen and my twin sister Miss Hao Wen for their lasting support and understanding.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

With the reading experiences we got from poetry, it is clear that poetry is an exploration of different worlds and of languages used by the poets; the choice of “what to write,” as in motifs, images, and allusions, and “how to write,” as in language and ways of expression together build up to a certain poet’s writing style.

As for the poetry of mid-Tang and late-Tang, after the extreme abundance of high-Tang poetry, the writing style of poets in this time period, as generally considered, developed in two opposite directions: “plain and easy” (*ping yi* 平易) and “steep and strange” (*xian guai* 險怪). As we all know, Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) and Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831) are viewed as the representative poets of the former while Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) and Meng Jiao 孟郊 (751-814) represent the latter. As a Ming scholar, Tan Yuanchun 譚元春 (1586-1637) commented on the mid-Tang poetry:

The transformation of poetry has already reached its extremity in the high-Tang. As for later those who distinguished themselves from others, naturally the school of Dongye (Meng Jiao) and Changji (Li He) cannot be lacked.

詩家變化，盛唐已極，後又欲別出頭地，自不得無東野，長吉一

派。<sup>1</sup>

Li He 李賀 (790-816), as an eminent poet with a “strange and steep” writing style, has his own style, dictated by his choices in both “what to write” and “how to write.” According to his writing style, though he was grouped into the school of Han and Meng, he has his own approach to make himself prominent among those people. As for the images he used and the high aspiration shown in his poems, the comments of later generations have reached to a high degree of uniformity. For instance, the monk Qi Ji 齊己 (863-937) said in his poem of “Reading the Lyric Collection of Li He” 讀李賀歌集, “With much craziness, he overthrow the Penglai island, the coral was exhausted picked and only the empty mound was left.”<sup>2</sup> 狂多兩手掀蓬萊，珊瑚掇盡空土堆。The monk Dao Qian 道潛 (1044-1114?) in his poem “Observing the Painting of Li He’s ‘The Tall Official Carriage Comes on a Visit’ by Ming Fa” 觀明發畫李賀高軒過圖, saying that “The power of his brush blocks hundreds of streams, the wind and waves even petered out their craziness.”<sup>3</sup> 筆力障百川，風瀾息其狂。In these two couplets, we may see that Li He’s writing is full of

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<sup>1</sup>Mao Xianshu 毛先舒 (1620-1688) comp., Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 ed., “Shi bianchi” 詩辯坻 [Distinguish and Comments on Poetry], in *Qing shihua xubian* 清詩話續編 [The Continuation Edit of Poetry Comments of Qing] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), 83.

<sup>2</sup> Qi Ji 齊己 (863-937), “Bailian ji” 白蓮集 [White Lotus Collection], in *Sibu congkan chubian* 四部叢刊初編 [The First Compilation of the Fourfold Classification Series] (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1989), *juan* 10, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Dao Qian 道潛 (1044-1114?), “Canliaozi shiji” 參寥子詩集 [The Poetry Collection of Canliaozi], in *Yingying wenyuange sikuquanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 [The Photography of Grand Collectanea of the Four Libraries of Wenyuan Pavilion] (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), vol. 1116, 71.

strength even mixed with a state of craziness while his dictions are so delicate that can be compared with a colorful treasure as coral. Li Gang 李綱 (1083-1140) also has a couplets commenting on Li He's dictions in his poem "Reading Li Changji's Poetry" 讀李長吉詩, "Changji experts in writing *yuefu* poetry, every characters are all engraved and carved."<sup>4</sup> 長吉工樂府, 字字皆雕鏤. For the images and allusions in Li He's poems, Zhang Lei 張耒 (1054-1114) in his poem "On Li He's House" 李賀宅 says that, "He especially interested in writing poems with images beyond normal figures, he respected and relied on the mountains, waters, spirits and deities."<sup>5</sup> 獨愛詩篇超物象, 祇因山水與精神. For those good poetry and writings, not only employing allusions or what predecessors have been said is needed, more importantly, what others haven't been explored should be presented. Li He's writing is exactly doing what others cannot do and by which wins him a name of "ghostly, demonic genius" 鬼才. What makes Li He's poetry so valuable is that he finds himself a special way to express his inner emotions. His creation not only flourished in the content of his poetry, say the ideas, themes, images etc. the way of his expression deserves more of our attention, especially in an artistic dimension. Except for using large quantities of "steep words" 險辭

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<sup>4</sup> Li Gang 李綱 (1083-1140), Wang Ruiming 王瑞明 annotated, *Li Gang quanji* 李綱全集 [The Whole Collection of Li Gang] (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2004), vol.5, 98.

<sup>5</sup> Zhang Lei 張耒 (1054-1114), "Zhangyoushi wenji" 張右史文集 [The Literature Collection of Zhangyoushi], in *Sibu congkan chubian* 四部叢刊初編 [The First Compilation of the Fourfold Classification Series] (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1989), *juan* 26, 3.

and has a passion for the images of “deities,” “ghosts,” “demons,” and “monsters,” for the creation of the poetry texts, are there any other factors that could have a strong influence on forming Li He’s special “ghostly” writing style?

Scholars have paid attention to the themes, images and allusions in Li He’s poetry, identifying them as “ghostly, demonic” and “immortal.”<sup>6</sup> Admittedly, the strange and unfamiliar themes and images in Li He’s poems contribute greatly to his writing style, and surely we cannot avoid talking about “what to write” when dealing with a certain poem. However, rather than discussing images and allusions, I would like to put emphasis on “how to write.” In other words, by exploring the language and ways of expression he uses, I would like to, hopefully, make clear the special writing style of Li He.

One may have a general panorama in his/her mind by reading the sentences from one of Li He’s contemporaries, Du Mu’s 杜牧 (803-852) “Preface to the Songs and Poems of Li Changji” 李長吉歌詩集序:

Clouds and mist gently intermingling cannot describe his manner;  
illimitable waters cannot describe his feelings; the verdure of spring  
cannot describe his warmth; the clarity of autumn cannot describe  
his style; a mast in the wind, a horse in the battle-line cannot  
describe his courage; earthenware coffins and tripods with  
seal-characters cannot describe his antiquity; seasonal blossoms and

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<sup>6</sup> E. H. Schafer, “The Goddess Epiphanies of Li Ho,” in *The Divine Woman: The Dragon Ladies and Rain Maidens in T’ang Literature* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1973): 104-114.

lovely girls cannot describe the colorfulness; fallen kingdoms and ruined palaces, thorny thickets and grave mounds cannot describe his resentment and sorrow; whales yawning, turtles spurting, ox-ghosts and serpent-spirits cannot describe his wildness and extravagance. He is in the tradition of the *Li Sao*. Even though he does not come up to it in high seriousness he sometimes surpasses it in expression.

雲煙錦聯，不足為其態也；水之迢迢，不足為其情也；春之盎盎，不足為其和也；秋之明潔，不足為其格也；風檣陣馬，不足為其勇也；瓦棺篆鼎，不足為其古也；時花美女，不足為其色也；荒國隳殿，梗莽丘壘，不足為其怨恨悲愁也；鯨吸鼉擲，牛鬼蛇神，不足為其虛荒幻誕也。蓋騷之苗裔，理雖不及，辭或過之。<sup>7</sup>

When it comes to “how to write,” one of the manifold aspects of his poetry is the sensory expressions. As an extremely sensitive man, Li He mobilized extensive sensation, including visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile sensation, into his poetry composition. For me, it is the perfect usage and management of these sensory words that makes Li He’s writing style as it is: strange, eccentric, unfamiliar, rocky and steep. In the past, scholars have preferred to discuss Li He's usage of vision in his poems and his

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<sup>7</sup> Du Mu 杜牧 (803-852), “Li Changji geshi jixu” 李長吉歌詩集序 [Preface to the Songs and Poems of Li Changji], in *Fanchuan wenji* 樊川文集 [The Literature Collection of Fanchuan] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), vol.9, 149. The translation is according to Frodsham, see J. D. Frodsham, ed. and tr., *The Poems of Li Ho (791-817)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 2.

use of color dictions in particular. As J. D. Frodsham listed out a table of the color dictions and its usage rate in his book and Du Guoqing also made another one to show that Li He's inclination of using color words.<sup>8</sup> Since the vision part has been almost fully discussed before, I would not elaborate on it. However, some scholars, both eastern and western, have mentioned the outstanding usage of auditory dictions in Li He's poetry.<sup>9</sup> These aspects of his poetry have not been elaborated upon, though, nor discussed in detail. As such, the sensory composition in Li He's poems, especially the sonic ones, demands more attention from us. According to my research, the poems "with sound" comprise as much as 57% of his corpus (see the table #1, 2 and 3); such predominance is rarely found in the corpuses of other poets throughout Chinese literature and therefore could be viewed as one of the most prominent features of his poetry.

As Ming scholar Wang Siren 王思任 (1574-1646) in his "Preface of Analysis on Changgu's Poetry" stressed, the different kinds of sound in Li He's poetry as well as the images contribute much to the "strangeness" of his writing style:

[He] likes using words such as "ghost," "weep," "death" and "blood" and so on.....[In his poems] sometimes [there are] crickets

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<sup>8</sup> See J. D. Frodsham, *The Poems of Li Ho (791-817)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), lix. and Du Guoqing 杜國清, *Li Ho* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), 87.

<sup>9</sup> Qian Zhongshu 錢鐘書, *Tanyi lu 談藝錄* [Records of Discourse on Art] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2001): 133-136. Also, Du Guoqing, *Li Ho* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979): 89.

chanting, sometimes parrots chattering, sometimes making the sound of frosty crane screaming, sometimes flower, flesh and coquettish eyebrows, sometimes army chariots and iron horses, sometimes sacred caldron and white smoke, sometime emerald wildfire and flashing lightning. In a flashy short minute they merged, [his lines] do not contain any normal things.

喜用“鬼”字，“泣”字，“死”字，“血”字，如此之類……時而蛩吟，時而鸚鵡語，時而作霜鶴唳，時而花肉媚眉，時而兵車鐵馬，時而寶鼎晴雲，時而碧磷劃電，阿閃片刻，不容方物。<sup>10</sup>

Apart from some steep diction and the abnormal images, which are used extensively in Li He's poetry corpus, such as “ghost,” “weep,” “death” and “blood,” Wang Siren, in his preface, also mentioned several kinds of sounds in Li He's poems, mainly those from nature.

Contrastingly, by figuring out all the sound poems and all the couplets, which describe or are concerned with sound, I categories Li He's sound world into three sections: “natural sound,” “supernatural sound” and “cultural sound.” Additionally, since sound and silence usually come and show together and should not be divided, the silent poems of Li He will also be discussed. In the absence of any extensive studies of Li's auditory depiction, based on exhaustive auditory sources of his poems, combing

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<sup>10</sup>Wang Siren 王思任, comp., “Preface of Analysis of Changgu's Poetry” 昌穀詩解序, in *Wenfan xiaopin* 文飯小品 [A Taste of a Meal of Literature] (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1989), 436.

through and categorizing those sources, this study will attempt to explore some of the ways in which he employs the sound and even silence, and make further conclusions on how these auditory depictions, combining with visual, tactile and other sensations build up his weird, steep, ghostly writing style.

## Chapter 2

### 2.1 FEELING FROM NATURE: A LAMENTABLE MAN OF MIMICKING

“Natural sound” refers to all kinds of sounds from nature that can be used in any poems of any poets – there is nothing fancy and strange in such references, which cannot even be involved in the conception of “style.” However, what makes Li He prominent here is the way he chooses to express, namely “how [he chooses] to write,” those certain natural sounds. He has always got an inclination of putting the sound from nature into his inner world, and after his own interpretation, he twists the sound and puts it out with a strong color of his inner emotion. Usually, the sounds from nature are represented in a way that mimicks human beings; in other words, he uses personification. Specifically, the human being that these sounds mimick is, far from a general conception of a human being or a human abstraction, the poet himself. That’s why the sounds from nature in his poems are often mingled with “cry,” “weep,” “shout,” and “roar,” etc.; they reflect directly the inner emotion, always the sorrow, resentment, and unpeacefulness of the poet. Many examples can be found in his corpus of this technique of personification; by personifying the sounds of nature, a sense of the unfamiliar is evoked and a sense of strangeness is lent to his composition style. Though the personification of sound in his poems is one of the focuses of my auditory

research, it is not what I'm going to elaborate here.

In addition to the usage of personification, another significant choice in how he represents the sounds of nature in his writing is his frequent usage of onomatopoeic words, which are always presented in a reduplicative form. According to my statistics, the number of lines with onomatopoeic words is 39, taking up 14% of the total sound lines of 276, while most (31 of 39) of the onomatopoeic dictions are reduplicative form, representing 79% of total. The research shows that when dealing with sounds, Li He has an inclination to mimic the sounds of nature and put them directly into his composition, reaching an effect of vitality. As we know, onomatopoeic words are scarcely used in classical Chinese literature, especially poems. Contravening the norm, Li He's reliance on such words definitely leads his poems to a sense of the "strange" and "steep." In particular, some of the onomatopoeic words were invented by himself, such as "ke-ke" (榼榼), "cuk-cuk" (促促) and "hong-long" (鴻隴)<sup>11</sup> etc.

A close reading on one of his "poems with sound," "Twelve Music Lyrics on the Theme of the Twelve Months of the Year Composed While Taking the Examinations in Henan Fu, Ninth Moon" 河南府試十二月樂詞•九月 might help us unveil his special ways of expressing the sounds of nature and get a sense of the choices that lend themselves to his "eccentric" or "strange" writing style.

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<sup>11</sup>See the appendix, table of "Lines of Sound in Li He's Poem Corpus," no. 19, no. 40, no. 60, no. 81.

- In the summer palace<sup>12</sup> scattered fireflies      離宮散螢天似水，  
and the sky is like water.
- 2      Bamboos turn yellow, pools grow chilly,      竹黃池冷芙蓉死。  
the lotus dies.
- Moonlight embellishes on golden door-rings,<sup>13</sup> 月綴金鋪光脈脈，  
light beams softly.
- 4      Under the cold moon,      涼月虛庭空澹白。  
deserted and void courtyard is  
limpidly white and empty.
- Flowers of dew<sup>14</sup> are flying, flying,      露花飛飛風草草，  
winds are making rustle sound of *cou-cou*.
- 6      Kingfisher brocades<sup>15</sup> in gorgeous hues      翠錦斑斕滿層道。  
and light spot spread  
along wayside of different levels.

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<sup>12</sup> *Li gong* 離宮, generally understand as the summer/winter palace, which is the temporary imperial head-quarters away from the capital. As it is the ninth month of the year, the term here means the summer palace. Additionally, the *li gong* can also has the meaning of a constellation, which can be found in “Record of astronomy” 天文志 of *Jinshu* 晉書 [Book of Jin]. This constellation also refers to the imperial’s summer palace on the ground.

<sup>13</sup> *Jin pu* 金鋪, the golden door-rings, is actually the *pu shou* 鋪首, which is brass animal-heads set into the rings of the knockers.

<sup>14</sup> “Flowers of dew” is the frost on the grass.

<sup>15</sup> The “kingfisher brocades” could be the colorful autumn leaves on the road. Also, if read together with *ban lan* 斑斕 (colorful), it could also has the meaning of the morning lights through trees.

The Cock-herald<sup>16</sup> ceases chants – 雞人罷唱曉瓏璵，  
 refulgence of morning!  
 8 Ravens cry by the brazen well<sup>17</sup> 鴉啼金井下疏桐。  
 as leaves flutter down from bald *wutong* trees.<sup>18</sup>

In this poem composed for an examination, a scene of late autumn is stretched out in front of our eyes. Li He composed a poem of scenery that perfectly matched the theme of the “ninth moon.” It was 809 when he wrote this poem series; he was 20, he had not started his bitter journey to Chang’an yet and he was a candidate for the district examination of Henan-*fu*. The poems were almost certainly intended to demonstrate his poetic gifts to the examiners since they showcased his tendency toward the cold, strange and steep, which is perfectly shown in this poem.

When composing a poem, Li He tends to call up all kinds of sensation to describe a certain scene. This usage of sensory words can be a prominent feature of his dense writing style.

Despite the symbolic images of autumn he used in this poem, such

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<sup>16</sup> *Ji ren* 雞人 is a term used for the palace watchman who announces each dawn of the day.

<sup>17</sup> *Jin jing* 金井, the brazen well, conveys a meaning of the autumn. The color *jin* 金 (gold), refers to the west and autumn, and also implies the brazen material.

<sup>18</sup> Wang Qi 王琦 (r. 1661-1760), Yao Wenxie 姚文燮 (1628-1693), Fang Funan 方扶南 (ca. 1675-1759) annotated and commented, *Sanjia pingzhu Li Changji geshi* 三家評注李長吉歌詩 (Commentaries and Annotations of Li Changji [He]’s Poems from the Three Masters) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), 51.

as “scattered fireflies,” “yellow bamboo,” “dead lotus,” “cold moon,” “empty courtyard,” “golden well”<sup>19</sup> and “bald *wutong* tree,” Li He uses several sensory organs in this poem to describe the sense of late autumn, including vision, auditory and tactile sensation. For vision, he shows the images of autumn in two ways: one is color, the other is light. As we can see, besides the yellow bamboo and white courtyard, the roadside is brocaded with the brilliant colors of the kingfisher. The management of light is shown by the description of the moon. Instead of directly describing the moon, the poet describes the objects under the moonlight. The golden door-rings reflect the soft light, and the courtyard remains even more empty and pale since it is in the light of the moon.

As for the sound in this poem, there are three lines invoking sonic words: line 5, line 7 and line 8. These words represent sounds coming from nature, but they are expressed specially in Li He’s own style. Line 5 is difficult to understand. But if we view it as a line concerning sound, it can be better understood. I translate it as “Flowers of dew are flying, flying, winds are making rustle sound of *cou-cou*.”<sup>20</sup> We find that the poet tries to mimic the sound of the blowing wind by using an onomatopoeic word of “*cou-cou*,”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>The word of “golden” can often refer to the direction of west and the season of autumn in Chinese literature history.

<sup>20</sup>Frodsham translates this line as “Flowers of dew are flying, flying on an unhurried wind,” which I think does not make sense, for the word “*cao-cao*” 草草 does not have a meaning of “unhurried.” See J. D. Frodsham, ed. and tr., *The Poems of Li Ho (791-817)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 41

<sup>21</sup>When I translate a line with onomatopoeic word, I would rather choose the pronunciation of Cantonese, for it is closer to ancient Tang dynasty’s pronunciation

which can make the description more vivid. The “flowers of dew” refers to dewdrops about to freeze. Since there are scarcely any flowers in late autumn, the “dew flower” (*lu hua* 露花) cannot be referring to real flowers and must be talking about the frost. Unlike “coo-coo” in English that invokes sounds that doves makes, which suggest a gentle and warm sound, this “cou-cou” could be compared with “sou-sou” (嗖嗖) in modern Mandarin. Likewise, when the wind of autumn and winter are described in literature as “sou-sou,” it is always harshly blowing and cold. By using “cou-cou,” the poet makes clear that the wind is strong and chilly. In this light, the sonic word “cou-cou” contributes to the strangeness of his writing style, for he invented this sound description by himself; therefore, his poems sometimes can be “difficult and obscure” (*hui se* 晦澀).

Li He also uses natural sounds to convey the passage of time. As can be seen in this poem, the sense of time is shown along with the description of sound. There is a perfect sense of time sequence within this poem. In the first two couplets, the time is night, for the fireflies are coming out, and the moon is shining. For the next couplet, the dawn is coming together with the emerging of the frost, because frost only congeals during the early morning before the rise of the sun. Next, the morning sun comes out shining through the woods. Admittedly, the word “colorful” (*ban lan* 斑斕) could refer to the colorful autumn leaves of trees on the wayside; however, without sunlight, the

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compared to Mandarin.

color cannot be seen. So the sun has already come out in line 6, and the word *ban lan* could also, to a larger extent, refer to the light spot among the trees.

For the last couplet of this poem, both lines are concerned with the sound of morning. The day has already come, since the “Cock-herald”<sup>22</sup> has ceased his singing and the morning sun has become rather bright and refulgent. In the last line, the cry of the crow serves as a symbol that the world has come awake. In this sense, the “sing” and “cry” function to indicate the time of day. Rather than choosing other images, Li He chose the sounds of nature to make clear the passage of time, which, to some degree, can show his attention to and preference for auditory words.

## 2.2 Table #1:

### Lines of Natural Sound in Li He’s Poem Corpus

	Chinese text	English translation	Source
1.	天高 <u>慶雷齊墮地</u>	*Heaven is high, and celebrating thunder altogether falls to the earth.	The Emperor Returns 上之回
2.	<u>撞鐘</u> 飲酒行射天	To the chime of bells he drank his wine, shot arrows at heaven.	*Melancholy on the Ancient Terrace of Liang 梁臺古愁
3.	轆轤 <u>咿呀</u> 轉 <u>鳴玉</u>	The turning windlass of the well, creaking <i>ji-ah</i> like singing jade.	Song: A Lovely Girl Combing Her Hair 美人梳頭歌
4.	<u>啼鳥</u> 披彈歸	A crying crow, struck by a bolt, came home.	Leaving the City 出城
5.	<u>蟲響</u> 燈光薄	*Insects were nosing and the lamplight was wan.	While Studying in Changgu, I Showed This Poem to My Servant-lad from Ba.

<sup>22</sup>“Cock-herald” (*jiren* 雞人) is a term used for the palace watchmen who announced the dawn each day, which can be found in *Ritual of Zhou* 周禮 and *Ritual of Officials of Han* 漢官儀.

- 昌穀讀書示巴童  
\*I See off Wei Renshi and His Brother to Enter the Pass  
送韋仁實兄弟入關
6. 馬首鳴金環  
夜雨叫租吏，春聲暗交關。  
Jingle of golden rings on horses' heads.  
On rainy nights, the tax collector's shouts darkly mingle with thump of pestle on mortar.
7. 石澗凍波聲，雞叫清寒晨。  
From stony ravines, the sound of freezing waves, a cock crows out in the cold of a clear dawn.  
I Journey from Changgu and Arrive at Luoyang through the Rear Gate  
自昌穀到洛後門
8. 金環壓轡搖玲瓏，  
馬蹄隱耳聲隆隆。  
\*Gold rings weighing down their reins, shaking and jingling. Drumming of hoof beats in my ear, *lung-lung* sound as it was.  
The Tall Official Carriage Comes on a Visit Written at the Command of Assistant Secretary Han Yu and Censor Huangfu Shi When Thy Visited Me  
高軒過 韓員外愈皇甫侍禦湜見過因而命作
9. 使我清聲落人後  
\*Make my pure sound fell far behind others.  
A Few Remarks Addressed to Huangfu Shi from the Renhe Quarter  
仁和裏雜敘皇甫湜
10. 雄雞一聲天下白  
誰念幽寒坐鳴呃  
Yet at a single cock-crow the sky will turn white.  
\*Who heeds a man who sits and wails out in the deep cold?  
致酒行
11. 霜重鼓寒聲不起  
\*So cold the drums, in the heavy frost, their sound cannot be raised up.  
Ballad of the Grand Warden of Goose Gate  
雁門太守行
12. 金粟堆邊哭陵樹  
榼榼銀龜搖白馬  
To weep at Gold Grain Mound by funereal trees.  
\*The high official wearing silver tortoise seal with a sound of *hap-hap*, his white horse was lingering about.  
Song: General Lü 呂將軍歌
13. 壁上雷鳴  
婦人哭聲  
[Short sword] hang on the wall, growling like thunder.  
The sound of a woman's weeping comes.  
Ballad of the Savage Tiger  
猛虎行
14. 走馬夜歸叫嚴更  
口吟舌話稱女郎  
\*Galloping homewards at night, past watchmen calling the hours of alert walking at night.  
\*Mouth chanting with a glib speaking tongue he is only deserves praise from women.  
Joys of the Rich  
榮華樂

- 軍裝武妓聲琅璫 \*Singing-girls in battle-array with a jangling sound of *long-dong*.
- 雲弮絕騁聒旱雷 They held the reins, let their steeds gallop on among the clouds, thunder from a rainless sky!
15. 七星掛城聞漏板 When Seven Stars hang over the city-wall, I hear the clepsydra's gong. Song of a Palace Beauty 宮娃歌
16. 美人醉語園中煙 Lovely girls chatting tipsily, mist-hung gardens. \*Song: Planting Peonies 牡丹種曲
17. 紙錢窸窣鳴颯風 \*Rustling sound of paper money together with moans of whirlwind. Magic Strings 神弦
18. 圓毫促點聲新靜 Often the round brush whispers on the stone, forever new. Singing of Yang's Purple Inkstone with a Green Pattern 楊生青花紫石硯歌
19. 夢泣生白頭 \*Wept in my dream and my hair turned white. After Days of Rain in the Chongyi District 崇義裏滯雨
20. 露光泣殘蕙，蟲響連夜發。 \*Shining dew weeps over withered orchids, cry of insects' sounds out every night. Autumn Cold, A Poem Sent to My Twelfth Elder Cousin, the Collator 秋涼詩寄正字十二兄
21. 豈解有鄉情，弄月聊鳴啞。 \*How could those who even have not got a home sickness, do not have a sorrow of sighing and sobbing when appreciating the moon? Ballad for Encouraging My Beloved, Two Poems for Seeing off My Little Brother on His Way to Mount Lu, No.1 勉愛行二首送小季之廬山
22. 水聲繁，弦聲淺 \*Sound of water is louder, and the sound of turning windlass is faint. Song: Digging a Well in the Back Gardens 後園鑿井歌
23. 旅歌屢彈鋏 Often I sing a traveler's song, beating my sword. The Traveler 客遊
24. 夜聞馬嘶曉無跡 At night we hear his whinnying horse, at dawn not a hoof-print there. Song of the Brazen Immortal Bidding Farewell to Han 金銅仙人辭漢歌
- Already Weicheng lay far behind

25. 渭城已遠波聲小  
酒酣喝月使倒行  
宮門掌事報一更
- and its waters faintly calling.  
\*Flushed with wine, he shouts at the moon to run back in her course.  
At the palace portals the Gatekeeper cries the first watch of the night.
- \*The King of Qin Drinks Wine  
秦王飲酒
26. 大旗五丈撞雙環
- \*Mighty banners, five fathoms long, battered the double knockers of the gates.
- Song: Do not Dance, Sir!  
公莫舞歌
27. 春月夜啼鴉
- Spring moon, crows crying at night.
- Passing by the Huanqing Palace  
過華清宮
28. 烏啼夜闌景
- Crows cry the tattered end of night.
- Song: A Nobleman at the End of the Night  
貴公子夜闌曲
29. 涼風雁啼天在水
- \*In the chill wind wild geese are crying, heaven is in the water.
- Song of the Emperor's Daughters  
帝子歌
30. 咽咽學楚吟  
羈魂夢中語
- \*Chokingly chanting, I study the sighs of Chu.  
The vagrant spirit mutters through its dreams.
- Ballad of an Aching Heart  
傷心行
31. 晚漏壺中水淋盡
- \*In the bottle of water-clock at night, the water would still its drips.
- Song: On the Lake  
湖中曲
32. 雀步蹙沙聲促促  
黑幡三點銅鼓聲,  
高作猿啼搖箭箛。
- \*Treading like sparrows, they kick up the sand with sibilant sound of *cuk-cuk*.  
Jet-black banners with triple marks, bronze drums calling, high-pitched voices shrilling like apes, they shake their quivers.
- The Cave of the Yellow Clan  
黃家洞
33. 城上烏啼楚女眠
- As crows cry from the city walls, the girl from Chu sleeps on.
- Song: The Screen  
屏風曲
34. 塘水漉漉蟲嘖嘖  
石脈水流泉滴沙
- \*Pool-water clear and quiet, insects whining in a sound of *zik-zik*.  
Water flows from veins of rocks, spring drip on sand.
- Ballad of the South Mountain Fields  
南山田中行
35. 雞唱星懸柳,  
鴉啼露滴銅。
- At cockcrow stars hang in the willows, crows cry as dew drops from the plane trees.
- \*Hate You Sir  
惱公
36. 秋沙亂曉顰
- \*The autumn sands mass up the
- Seeing off the

- 甲重馬頻嘶 sound of dawn drum. Banquet Officer Qin on His Military Expedition to the North
- 銀壺狒狒啼 \*Howling as the apes and baboons on the silver arrow-jars. 送秦光祿北征
- 呵壁懸金門 \*As hawking, his elbow weighed down with a dangling, gold seal.
37. 嚶嚶白馬來 \*He comes with the *ang-ang* neighing white horse. Ballad of the Noble Son-in-law of Jia Gonglü  
賈公閭貴婿曲
38. 柳花鴉啼公主醉 In the willow-garden crows are cawing; A drunken princess! Song: Drinking All Night, Asleep All Morning  
夜飲朝眠曲
39. 楊柳伴啼鴉 \*Willows company with the crying crow. Presented in Reply  
答贈
40. 石泉水聲發 \*Sound of splash of water rise from a stony spring. Written on the Wall of Zhao's House  
題趙生壁
41. 朱城報春更漏轉 In Vermilion City they announce the spring as the water-clock turns. Spring Morning  
春晝
42. 關東吏人乏詬租 \*Officials east of the Pass are tired of revile for taxes. Second Year of Zhanghe  
章和二年中
43. 蟬于鳴高邃 Cicadas cry from high sequestered spots. \*Poem of Changgu  
昌穀詩
- 嘹嘹濕姑聲, 咽源驚濺 \*Down in their damp, mole-crickets making a chirp sound of resonant, a muted chocking spring wells up with startled splash.  
起。
- 鳴流走聲韻 \*A singing stream runs on melodiously with rhyme.
- 細頸喧島斃 Small-throated birds chatter by an island spring.
- 鴻瓏數鈴響 \*Several of the eaves bells tinkle, making a sound of *hung-lung*.
- 丁丁幽鐘遠 \*Away in the distance *zang-zang* booms a lonely bell.
- 危溜聲爭次 \*Torrents from high make their sounds in a way of competed different levels.
44. 賢兄小姑哭鳴鳴 \*Your virtuous brother and the little girl are bitterly weeping sound of *wu-wu*. Song for Vertical Harp  
箜篌引

45. 城中嘶瘦馬 \*Our half-starved horses whinny \*In Ping City  
平城下
46. 爭潛海水飛凌喧, Whirling in a raging sea the Cold up North  
山瀑布無聲玉虹懸。 flying ice-floes roar, soundless 北中寒  
hang mountain waterfalls,  
rainbows of jade.
47. 佩馬釘鈴踏沙路 Jingle of bridle-bells, as horses Song: Sandy Road  
沙路曲
48. 疊聲問佐官來否 \*Continuously sound of asking The Official Has not  
his assistants: "Is he coming or Come, A Poem  
not?" Written in the Office  
of My Senior,  
Huangfu Shi  
官不來題皇甫湜先  
輩廳
49. 新槽酒聲苦無力 \*Splash wine into new vats, the Song: The Mansion  
by the River  
江樓曲
50. 馬嘶青塚白 \*Horses whinny, the green grave \*Song: At Frontiers  
塞下曲  
河聲出塞流 Across the frontier comes the  
River's roar.
51. 春梭拋擲鳴高樓 \*Spring shuttle is tossed and Dyed Silk on the  
Spring Loom  
染絲上春機
52. 塘水聲淅淅 \*Water splash in the pool with a Song: By the Pool  
塘上行
53. 晴嘶臥沙馬, \*Horses lie on the sands, Passing through  
老去悲啼展。 whinnying in the bright sun; The Sandy Park  
經沙苑  
the old ones walk off, piteously  
neighing develops.
54. 塞嚶折翅雁 \*On the frontier chirp a wild  
goose with broken wings.  
玉輓鳴鞞麟 \*The jade carriage wheels On Leaving the City  
and Parting from  
Zhang Youxin I  
Pledge Li Han with  
Wine  
綠網緇金鈴 Golden bells dangle from their  
green nets.  
I wanted to noise Ritual and  
Music abroad, making sure the  
tunes were fresh and new.  
吾將噪禮樂,  
聲調摩清新。
55. 鴉噪城堞頭 Up on the city battlements crows Song: Never Sorrow  
莫愁曲
56. 鴉鴉向曉鳴森木 \*Crow after crow towards dawn, \*Someone I longing  
有所思  
露花飛飛風草草 \*Flowers of dew are flying, Twelve Lyrics for  
Music on the Theme  
of the Twelve Months  
of the Year (Together  
with an Intercalary  
Month) Composed  
While Taking the  
雞人罷唱曉瓏聰 The Cock-herald chants no  
longer: refulgence of dawn!  
\*Ravens cry by the brazen well,

	<u>鴉啼金井下疏桐</u>	as leaves flutter down from bald <i>wutong</i> trees.	Examinations in Henan Fu, Second Moon. 河南府試十二月樂詞並閏月 Ninth Moon.
57.	<u>搗鐘高飲千日酒</u>	Strike the bells! Drink your fill of this thousand-day wine!	Eleventh Moon.
58.	古刹 <u>疏鐘度</u> <u>沙頭敲石火</u>	*Occasional boom of a bell from the ancient monastery comes.	Thirteen Poems from My Southern Garden, 南園十三首 No.13
59.	曉思 <u>何譎譎</u> , 闌闌 <u>千人語</u> 。	*At the day break, how dissentious as my thought! Round the market gates, a thousand chattering men.	Five Satires, No.4 感諷
60.	<u>鳴驄辭鳳苑</u>	*Neighing steep bid farewell to the Phoenix Park	Twenty-three Poems about Horses, No.3 馬詩二十三首
61.	向前 <u>敲瘦骨</u> , <u>猶自帶銅聲</u> 。	*Stand in front, rap on its skeletal bones, they still ring out like bronze on their own.	No.4
62.	隨鸞 <u>撼玉珂</u>	*Hanging simurgh bells shake jade bridle-gems.	No.22
63.	狒狒 <u>啼深竹</u>	Baboons screaming deep in the bamboos.	Four Poems Written after Looking at a Painting of the Jiangtan Park, No.3 追賦畫江潭苑四首
64.	旗濕 <u>金鈴重</u>	The banners are drenched, their gold bells heavy.	No.4
65.	曲沼 <u>鳴鴛鴦</u>	On a winding pool, mandarin-ducks start singing.	Six Satires, No.1 感諷六首
66.	黑水 <u>朝波咽</u>	Black Water's waves sobbing at dawn.	No.2
67.	班子 <u>泣衰紅</u>	*Lady Ban weeps for her fading beauty.	No.5
68.	春昏 <u>弄長嘯</u>	*Long whistles sound through spring night.	No.6

68/243 (27%)

## Chapter 3

### 3.1 SUPERNATURAL CREATION: CRYING OUT OF UNEASINESS

Like “natural sound,” supernatural sound also plays an important role in building up Li He's eccentric writing style. These “supernatural sounds” are generated from ghosts, demons, and immortals and are always sounded in a shrill way.

As Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824), one of Li He's contemporaries conveyed in “An Essay of Bidding Farewell to Meng Dongye” 送孟東野序:

Generally, an object will cry out when it cannot get its easiness.....they sing with thoughts, they cry with concerns. Those who is making a sound out of their mouths, how could all of them don't get a sense of uneasiness?

大凡物不得其平則鳴.....其歌也有思，其哭也有懷，凡出乎口而為聲者，其皆有弗平者乎!<sup>23</sup>

Though the point Han Yu made in his essay concerns writing itself, the shrill and eccentric sounds in Li He's poetry can also be viewed as a violent expression of his inner uneasiness, which contributes to his “ghostly and demonic” style.

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<sup>23</sup>Ma Qichang 馬其昶 ed., *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu* 韓昌黎文集校注 [Revision and Annotation of Han Changli's Collection] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 232.

Undoubtedly, Li He is well known for his “ghostly and demonic” writing style; however, we may have this question: in what way, to what extent, shall we understand his “ghostly and demonic” writings? To answer this question, we should pay attention not only to “how [he chose] to write,” but also to “what [he chose] to write [about].” In discussing this “supernatural sound,” we cannot avoid talking about his images and allusions, some of which are tightly connected to the sound of supernatural. I would like to subject to a close reading the famous “ghostly” piece of Li He – “Coming of Autumn” 秋來– in order to examine its incorporation of “supernatural sound” and its creation of a “ghostly sense.”

Wind in the *wutong* trees startles heart,                      桐風驚心壯士苦，  
and a heroic man feels bitter.

2            In the guttering lamplight,                                      衰燈絡緯啼寒素。  
spinners<sup>24</sup> cry their icy silk.

Who can see that these slips of green bamboo,<sup>25</sup>誰看青簡一編書，

<sup>24</sup> The cricket is called “spinner,” *luo wei* 絡緯 or *fangzhi niang* 紡織娘, because its singings like the reeling of silk. <sup>24</sup>In the Qing scholar Wang Qi’s 王琦 annotation, it says *luowei* 絡緯 is *shaji* 莎雞, a kind of cricket, also called *cuzhi* 促織, which literarily translated as “urge to spin.” Also in “Annotation of Poems” 詩疏, it says “the spinner cries, lazy women startled” 促織鳴, 懶婦驚. *Sanjia pingzhu lichangji geshi*, 55.

<sup>25</sup>In “Wu You’s Biography” 吳祐傳 of *Houhan shu*, it records as “Wu Hui wanted to dry bamboo slips to write classics on them.” 恢欲殺青簡以寫經書. Li Xian 李賢 (655-684) annotated as, “Drying green bamboo slips, means that dry green bamboo strips on fire to make them creep, then choose green ones and some easy to write on, they would not be rotten by worms any more, this called ‘dry the greens,’ also called ‘make creep of strips.’” 殺青者, 以火炙簡令汗, 取其青易書, 復不蠹, 謂之殺青,



likes to create self-referential allusions as well. Or it could be more properly said that he is good at intertwining sources, stories, imageries, and conceptions into his own world to recreate allusions, with which he builds up a distorted space and expresses his fierce and depressed emotions.

While some images are of his own creation, many are borrowed from tradition, as “wind in the *wutong* trees” (*tong feng* 桐風), “spinners” (*luo wei* 絡緯) and “slips of green bamboo” (*qing jian* 青簡). The wind in the *wutong*-trees and the spinners are two traditional symbols of autumn, and the usage of these two allusions therefore perfectly creates a sense of “coming of autumn,” as the title goes. Also, the “autumn” in the title has already, in the traditional context, indicated a sense of melancholy.<sup>29</sup> The sadness and sense of unfulfilment of ambitions caused by coming of autumn also make the mention of time in this poem proper and natural, and therefore creates a sense of time anxiety. We can see this sort of time anxiety in the allusion of “spinners” as well. Not only does this allusion indicate the time of autumn, it also suggests an urge to action. Together with the words “startles heart” (*jing xin* 驚心) and “bitter” (*ku* 苦), Li He uses the traditional allusions to suggest the sadness and bitterness in his heart caused by the passage of time. This kind

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<sup>29</sup>Traditionally, Chinese literati have an inclination of “mourning the spring and sad for the autumn” 傷春悲秋. As the first sentence of “Nine arguments” 九辯 of Song Yu 宋玉 (ca. 298 B.C.-222 B.C.) goes “How sad is the *qi* of autumn!” 悲哉秋之為氣 and a contemporary of Li He, Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842), also got poems goes as “From ancient times when we face with autumn, there would be sadness and solitary.” 自古逢秋悲寂寥 in his “Lines of Autumn” 秋詞. In autumn time, literati always get a sense of unfulfilment of ambitions and careers.

of time anxiety is further explained in the second couplets, which Frodsham has translated as “Who will ever read these slips of green bamboo, or forbid the ornate worm to pierce its powdery holes,”<sup>30</sup> which is not necessarily a good reading. According to the footnote of this line in Frodsham’s translation, clearly, he follows the reading of Wang Qi,<sup>31</sup> which suggests Li He’s fear that no one else would read or appreciate his own poetic work. But in my understanding, the “shui kan” (誰看) cannot be understood as “who [else] will ever read,” but “who can see that,” and therefore this “green slips” does not necessarily refer to Li He’s own works in specific, but to a broader spectrum of literature in history. If we examine the “slips of green bamboo,” a crucial allusion which Wang Qi and Frodsham failed to study, we can find that rather than expressing the hopelessness of his writings, this couplet actually has a perfect continuity of time anxiety of the last sentences. These “slips of green bamboo,” in “Wu You’s Biography” of *East Han Records* 後漢書, are actually the slips which cannot be rotten by bookworms at all. Li He keeps the intact meaning from *Houhan shu* here. By using the sharp comparison of imperishable *qingjian* that can also eventually be rotten by worms, he implies his pessimistic and gloomy belief that there is nothing everlasting, including poems and literature, which deepens the sense of time anxiety of the poet.

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<sup>30</sup>J. D. Frodsham, ed. and tr., *The Poems of Li Ho (791-817)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 48.

<sup>31</sup>Wang Qi holds the view that Li He bitterly wrote poems and wanted it to be handed down, but no one could appreciate it and it would be rotten by bookworms in vain. There was no benefit or hope to tear his guts and carve his bones to devote himself in making such kind of elaborated poems. *Sanjiazhu*, 55.

Therefore rather than refers to Li He's own works, the "slips of green bamboo" implies the enduring literature in history. So I translate the couplets as "Who can see that these slips of green bamboo, they do not avoid from the ornate worm to pierce its powdery holes." That is why *bu qian* 不遣 makes sense. Rather than "forbid," it should be translated as "do not avoid from" in this light.

As well as preserving intact the meaning of certain allusions, Li He is also good at creating self-referential allusions. Some certain allusions found in his poems can always bear the same meaning throughout his whole collection; therefore, we can see that these allusions have an inter-textual consistency and significance within his own corpus. Two good examples are his "heroic man" (*zhuang shi* 壯士) and "guttering lamplight" (*shuai deng* 衰燈). What appears in front of our eyes when we talk about a *zhuangshi* is probably a man full of heroism, roughness and audaciousness; we might think of Fan Kuai<sup>32</sup> 樊噲 (242 B.C.-189 B.C) recorded in *Shiji* 史記. But in this poem, this "heroic man" refers to Li He himself. According to the biography written by Li Shangyin 李商隱 (813-858),<sup>33</sup> Li He's appearance is clearly too far away from a traditional conception of a "*zhuangshi*." However, Li He

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<sup>32</sup>In "Banquet of Wild Geese Gate" 鴻門宴, Fan Kuai is described as a brave, strong man. When his lord Liu Bang faced with danger, he broke into the gate with his shield; his hair bristled up and opened his eyes so broadly that the canthus nearly cracked. Xiang Yu therefore called him as "*zhuangshi*."

<sup>33</sup>"Changji was slender and thin, and his eye brows brushed together. His fingers are thin and long, and he can do bitterly composition and fast writing" 長吉細瘦, 通眉, 長指爪, 能苦吟疾書. "A Short Biography of Li Changji" 李長吉小傳, in *Sanjiazhu*, 13.

twists the allusion into his poems in order to convey the lofty aspiration within his heart. If we examine his whole corpus, it is not difficult to see that Li He always refers to himself as “a heroic man” or “a true man” (*nan er* 男兒), those words of masculinity.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, he uses the allusion to “guttering lamplight” frequently in his whole collection of poems, allowing it to be read in an inter-textual way within his corpus.<sup>35</sup> He uses this kind of dying lamplight to build an atmosphere that suggests gloom, decline, faintness of life and instability.

The construction of atmosphere shows exactly what was on the poet’s mind: in this autumn time, there is no hope for a man like me to fulfill my ambitions. And my condition, life and aspiration are just like the guttering lamplight which could die out at any time. This kind of scene is enough to make even a “heroic man” feel “startled” and “bitter.”

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<sup>34</sup>As he does in the poem “Song in the Wilds” 野歌, in the whole poem, he describes a hero wearing a coarse black linen clothes, standing in the wilderness. There are lines “Bend my body though I may, my heart’s unyielding. Success and failure are both uncertain, why rail at the Creator?” 男兒屈窮心不窮, 枯榮不等嗔天公. In his “Thirteen Poems from my Southern Garden” 南園十三首, No. 5, he says, “Why shouldn’t a young man wear a Wu sword? He could win back fifty provinces in pass and mountain” 男兒何不帶吳鉤, 收取關山五十州. Also, in “Presented to Chen Shang” 贈陳商, “In Chang’an city lives a lad of twenty whose heart’s already so much rotten wood” 長安有男兒, 二十心已朽. These are translated by Frodsham, which are not quite faithful to the original texts and do not show fully what does “nan er” mean. These masculine pronouns are all refers to the poet himself.

<sup>35</sup>As in “Ballad of an Aching Heart” 傷心行, “The lamp burns blue, its orchid-oil run dry, found its falling sparks the flying moths are dancing” 燈清蘭膏歇, 落照飛蛾舞. “Lament of the Brazen Camels” 銅駝悲, “Useless to toil away in this life of ours, it’s only a wind-blown candle in a bowl” 生世莫徒勞, 風吹盤上燭. Also in “Someone I love” 有所思, “Mountains and rivers stretch into the distance, endless, unbroken. My tear-filled eyes gaze at the taper, flaring, the dying” 江山迢遞無休絕, 淚眼看燈乍明滅. etc.

Also, Li He in this poem uses allusions in an unexpected way to create an alienating effect and to arouse the sense of the “ghostly.” The third couplet is a perfect example. As we know, traditionally, literati or poets chose to express their laments by using the phrase, “break my guts” (*duan chang* 斷腸). In Sima Qian’s “Letter to Ren An” 報任安書, he expresses his unbearable sufferings and pains by saying that “my guts are even rotate or entwine nine times in a day” (*chang yiri er jiuhui* 腸一日而九回). However, Li He is the only man in literary history who disentwines and straightens his guts to express his melancholy. This sort of expression seems more powerful than the usual one. The sheer repetition, in literature, of “guts are entwined,” suggests that this entwinement - even “entwined nine times” - is easier than Li He’s inspiration to “straighten” his guts.

When he has “spirits come to pay condolence to the scholar,” Li He also contravenes literary tradition. Typically, to express sorrow, poets mourn the graves and spirits. But Li He makes the spirit come and mourn for him. In this light, he switches the world of life and death: his sorrow, he implies, is so deep that it can call on spirits from the nether world. In this sense, his sorrow rises to the utmost level, for it deserves even the condolence of the spirits. This “fragrance spirit” can be treated as a female. In the Qing scholar Fang Funan’s 方扶南 (1675-1759) annotation, this “fragrance spirit” can be traced back to a story of “Biography of Dugu Mu”<sup>36</sup> in *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記. According

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<sup>36</sup>The “Biography of Dugu Mu” 独孤穆傳 in *Taiping guangji* tells a love story of Mu Dugu with a ghost, who is the daughter of Yang emperor of Sui 隋煬帝

to Fang Funan, the line can be understood as the unbearable sorrow which the poet would rather die than suffer. But if we read it in this way, the allusion used here is intact from the original one, but not an alienation composition skill. However, in my understanding, this “fragrance spirit” does not necessarily refer to a female but to a male spirit with virtue, as “fragrance grass and beauty” (*xiangcao meiren* 香草美人) could also refer to men with virtues in Qu Yuan’s lyrics. If we read it together with the last couplets, the “fragrance spirit” could refer specifically to Bao Zhao 鮑照 (ca. 415-470) or Chang Hong 蔦弘. In any case, this couplet is the most attractive lines in this poem. By re-making a traditional expression in an unexpected way, making an ordered expression into a disordered one, and viewing things from exactly the opposite side, Li He creates a voice of unpredictability, alienation and strangeness. It is the alienation and strangeness that contribute to his “ghostly poems.”

Based on the discussion of the allusions in this poem, we make clear the sense of “strangeness and eccentricity.” Further, when the “supernatural sound” is introduced, the “strangeness” would rise to an utmost point. In the last couplet in this poem, the poet shows us three allusions. One is “ghost

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(569-618), called princess of Linzi 臨淄縣主. In order to become wife and husband and stay together for long, rather than the ghost girl becomes embodied, but Mu Dugu fulfills a sudden death to join the nether world when the ghost princess comes to call him. So Fang Funan understands this “diao shuke” 吊書客 as “the fragrance spirit calling or leading the scholar to nether world.” This could be an over-reading, as Fang Funan says himself, but also supply a way of understanding. Also, in the version of *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 [Illustrious of Literature], the “fragrant spirit” (*xiang hun* 香魂) is recorded as “home spirit” (*xiang hun* 鄉魂). If this version were taken, there would be no such a story and explanation.

singings,” one is “poems of Bao’s,” and another one is the “rancorous blood.” The latter two are based on the “ghost singings” and are generated from it. As the three Qing scholars say, there might be a story of “ghost sings poems,” but there is no way to locate an original source. Or in my opinion, it is probably just an allusion the poet created by himself. Since the line has a sequence and directly follows the lines in which a “spirit” appears, it could be natural to have ghosts here. The “poems of Bao’s” in the next sentence might also make it natural. The “poems of Bao’s” refers to “Represent Walking in the Wormwood”<sup>37</sup> 代蒿裏行 and “Represent the Eulogy”<sup>38</sup> 代挽歌. The first one indicates an anxiety over the passage of time and the vulnerability of

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<sup>37</sup>“Rich and poor, all meet the same end. Differing wishes granted or unfulfilled. Galloping waves urge on eternal night, falling dew hastens the brief dawn. Make up my secluded carriage, to leave away from all relatives filled up the hall. Worthless appearance left over with the swords and tassels, the real figure put away my clothes and scarf. How could a *dou* of wine be drunk, and who would read again of a *chi* of book? As the ages process a little bit further, thinking and ambitions would gradually fall deep. Man’s life time just originally passes by quickly, the heavenly principle would go with whom? Taking my everlasting resentment with me, I would eventually go back to the dust of fox and hare” 同盡無貴賤，殊願有窮伸。馳波催永夜，零露逼短晨。結我幽山駕，去此滿堂親。虛容遺劍佩，實貌戢衣巾。鬥酒安可酌，尺書誰復陳。年代稍推遠，懷抱日幽淪。人生良自劇，天道與何人。齋我長恨意，歸為狐兔塵。Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯 annotated, *Bao Canjun jizhu* 鮑參軍集注 [The Annotated Collection of Bao Canjun] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chufanshe, 1980), 141.

<sup>38</sup>“Staying lonely beneath the layers of earth, I recall the ascending to the high terrace of old times. Overweening this world during my life, I did not constrained by benefits. The tomb gates are only double closed; white worms are coming in clans. The orchid-fragrant body of life time is now harmed by little worms. There is no a root again of my black hairs and my bones are next to moss. Remembering I was like drinking in old times and green plums were offered in plain plate. Peng Yue, Han Xin, Lian Po and Lin Xiangru, they were all became ashes in ancient times. The heroic men were all dead, where is the rest part of men?” 獨處重冥下，憶昔登高台。傲岸平生中，不為物所裁。埏門只複閉，白蟻相將來。生時芳蘭體，小蟲今為災。玄鬢無複根，枯骸依青苔。憶昔好飲酒，素盤進青梅。彭韓及廉藺，疇昔已成灰。壯士皆死盡，余人安在哉? *Bao Canjun jizhu*, 142.

books, literature and ambitions, just as Li He expresses in his second and third couplets. We can say that the emotions Li He wants to express are exactly borrowed from Bao Zhao's "Walking in the Wormwood." As for the "Eulogy," it speaks from the perspective of a ghost, conveying the remembrance of his life time and expressing pity for that "heroic man," and expresses the poet's resentment toward this world. Therefore Li He's "ghost singings" could specifically refer to this ghost of Zhao's. Also, the "emerald blood" has its origin in Chang Hong's story,<sup>39</sup> which can be found in chapter of "What comes from without" 外物篇 of *Zhuangzi* 莊子. But in Li He's poem, he uses this allusion in an ambiguous way. It can refer to Chang Hong, Bao Zhao, the singing ghost or Li He himself. Generally, Li He preserves the meaning of this allusion intact and perfect; this "blood of resentment" can go all the way back to his first sentence to match that "heroic man." In this sense, Chang Hong, Bao Zhao, the ghost and Li He himself, are all conflated in the "heroic man." By using all these allusions, Li He couches his voice within the voices of other people; the "ghost singing" could perfectly shout out the depressed and gloomy emotions within his heart.

Based on the discussion of allusions above, we can see the "supernatural sound" from the ghost is actually the inner sound from the poet himself. The usage of the "supernatural sound" is, in Han Yu's words, exactly

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<sup>39</sup>In *Zhuangzi*, "Chang Hong died in Shu, people put his blood away for three years and it turned into emerald jade." 萇弘死於蜀，藏其血三年，而化為碧。Chang Hong was a person of integrity and loyalty, and was killed in injustice and died in a heroic way, so his blood was said to become jade.

the “uneasiness” within the poet’s heart. In other words, the poet expresses the violence, wildness and depression in his heart by means of the “supernatural sound.”

### 3.2 Table #2:

#### Lines of Supernatural Sound in Li He’s Poem Corpus

	Chinese text	English translation	Source
1.	蘭臉別春啼脈脈	*Orchids’ faces wept soundlessly, parting from spring.	*Melancholy on the Ancient Terrace of Liang 梁臺古愁
2.	臨歧擊劍生銅吼	Where the road forks I beat my sword with a brazen roar.	*Release from Melancholy: Written under Mount Hua 開愁歌華下作
3.	曉聲隆隆催轉日， 暮聲隆隆催月出。	*Drums at dawn <i>lung-lung</i> , rumbling like thunder, hastening the sun; Drums at dusk <i>lung-lung</i> , rumbling like thunder, calling out the moon.	Drums in the Street of the Officials 官街鼓
4.	劍龍夜叫將軍閑	His dragon-sword cries out at night-but the general’s left idle.	Song: General Lü 呂將軍歌
5.	金蟾呀呀蘭燭香	*Golden toads as if making a sound of <i>ah-ah</i> burnt fragrant, orchid candles.	Joys of the Rich 榮華樂
6.	樓頭曲宴仙人語 紫繡麻暇踏嘯虎	*A banquet on top of a palace tower, immortals talking. In purple brocade and flaxen shoes he treads on a roaring tiger.	*Poem on Qin Gong 秦宮詩
7.	啼蛄吊月鉤欄下	Crying mole-cricket mourn for the moon, beneath curved balustrades.	Song of a Palace Beauty 宮娃歌
8.	樓臺月明夜燕語	Moon shines bright on terrace and tower, swallows chatter all night.	*Song: Planting Peonies 牡丹種曲
9.	江娥啼竹素女愁 昆山玉碎鳳凰叫	*Ladies of the Xiang River weeping among bamboos and the Whit Girl mournful. Jade from Mount Kun is	Song: Li Ping at the Vertical Harp 李憑箏篋引

- shattered, phoenixes shriek.
- 芙蓉泣露香蘭笑 \*Lotuses are weeping dew,  
fragrant orchids laugh.
10. 蜀國弦中雙鳳語 Through strings of a lute from Shu, two phoenixes talk. Song: Listening to Master Ying Playing the Lute  
暗佩清臣敲水玉 Hidden girdle-gems of an honest minister, tinkling crystals. 聽穎師彈琴歌
11. 雲陽臺上歌， \*Singing came from the tower of Yunyang, wail of a ghost, and all to no avail. \*Song: Tangji of Han Drinks Wine  
鬼哭復何益。 漢唐姬飲酒歌
12. 青霓扣額呼宮神 \*A Taoist priest kowtows and calls to the Palace Deities. \*A Matter of Sealing up Green Prayers  
金家香街千輪鳴， \*In perfumed lanes of the Jin family, noise of a thousand wheels, there was no mundane sound within Yang Xiong's autumn studio. 綠章封事  
楊雄秋室無俗聲。
13. 玉爐炭火香咚咚 \*In a jade brazier charcoal burns in fragrance, with a boom *dung-dung* sound of drum. Magic Strings  
神弦  
紙錢窸窣鳴颿風 \*Rustling sound of paper money together with moans of whirlwind.  
攢額一喋重一彈 \*Knitting her brows, she heavily plucks the lute for each word uttered.  
呼星召鬼歆杯盤 She calls down stars and summons demons to savour meat and drink.
14. 嗷嗷鬼母秋郊哭 \*His demon mother wailing loudly making a sound of *ngou-ngou* in the autumn wilds. Song of the Sword of the Collator in the Spring Office  
春坊正字劍子歌
15. 古劍庸一吼 When these antique swords together give a roar? Presented to Chen Shang  
贈陳商
16. 細綠及團紅，當路雜啼笑。 \*Thin greens and rondures scarlet, heterogeneously weeping and laughing along my road. Returning to Changgu in Spring  
春歸昌穀
17. 露光泣殘蕙，蟲響連夜發。 \*Shining dew weeps over withered orchids, cry of insects' sounds out every night. Autumn Cold, A Poem Sent to My Twelfth Elder Cousin, the Collator  
秋涼詩寄正字十二兄
18. 莎老沙雞泣 \*The cricket weeping in the old sedge. While Recovering from a Drinking-bout in the Elder Zhang's House in Luzhou, I Sent This Poem to

- My Fourteenth Elder  
Male Cousin through  
the Agency of a River  
Messenger  
潞州張大宅病酒遇  
江使寄上十四兄  
Do not Go out of  
Your Gate, Sir!  
公無出門
19. 嗾犬狺狺相索索  
公看呵壁書問天  
\*Dog whistles sounds like *sok-sok* and the dogs snarling, making a sound of *ngan-ngan*.  
\*You sir think of the man raving wildly towards the wall, as he wrote his “Heavenly Questions.”
20. 幽蘭露，如啼眼。  
\*Dew upon gloomy orchids like weeping eyes. Su Xiaoxiao’s Tomb  
蘇小小墓
21. 羲和敲日玻璃聲  
\*Xi He knocks the sun with his whip, which tinkles like glass. \*The King of Qin  
Drinks Wine  
秦王飲酒
22. 老兔寒蟬泣天色  
\*The aged hare, the cold toad, sob for the color of the sky. A Dream of Heaven  
夢天
23. 銀浦流雲學水聲  
The Silver Stream floats through the clouds, mimics the murmur of water. A Ballad of Heaven  
天上謠  
\*The King’s son plays his *sheng* pipe, which as long goose-quills; Calling on dragons to plough the mist and plant Jade Grass.
24. 漏催水咽玉蟾蜍  
Hurrying drops of the water-clock choke the jade toad. I Shout My Song  
浩歌
25. 衰燈絡緯啼寒素  
\*In the guttering lamplight, spinners cry at their icy silk. Coming of Autumn  
秋來  
秋墳鬼唱鮑家詩  
\*On an autumn grave a ghost chanting loudly the poems of Bao’s.
26. 湘神彈琴迎帝子  
The goddess of Xiang, playing her lute, welcomes the Emperor’s daughters. Song of the  
Emperor’s Daughters  
帝子歌  
雌龍怨吟寒水光  
\*A woman-dragon resentfully chanting, water glints cold.
27. 紅絃媚雲咽深思  
Red-string music writhes to the clouds, as she sobs out her grief. Pearl-A Luoyang  
Beauty  
洛姝真珠
28. 青青無光宮水咽  
Blue, so blue and lusterless the clouds over sobbing palace waters. The Lady Li  
李夫人  
孤鸞驚啼商絲發  
\*The lonely simurgh gives a startled cry, and a *shang* note from the strings starts.  
From out of the Jade Toad water drips, the Cock-herald chants.

29. 蠻娘吟弄滿寒空 \*Chanting and playing with music of southern native girls fill the cold sky. The Ladies of the Xiang  
湘妃
- 涼夜波間吟古龍  
In the icy night among those waves, the ancient dragon roars.
30. 水弄湘娥佩， \*Water plays with girdle-jades of the Lady of Xiang, bamboo sobbing, moon over dew-drenched hills. The Man with a Yellow Hat  
竹啼山露月。 黃頭郎
31. 木葉啼風雨 Leaves on the trees moan in the wind-blown rain. Ballad of an Aching Heart  
傷心行
32. 山壇晚霧吟白蠶 \*In mist-wreathed mountain tarns at dusk white alligators chants. The Cave of the Yellow Clan  
黃家洞
33. 冷紅泣露嬌啼色 \*Cold reds weeping dew, tenderly and sweetly crying colors. Ballad of the South Mountain Fields  
南山田中行
34. 千歲石床啼鬼工 From thousand-year-old beds of stone, demon weavers wail. Verses on Being Presented with a Length of Summer Cloth by the Mountaineer of Luofu  
羅浮山人與葛篇
35. 蜂語繞粧鏡 Bees go buzzing round the vanity mirror. Hard to Forget  
難忘曲
36. 燕語踏簾鉤 \*Chattering swallows tap on the curtain-hooks. Ballad of the Noble Son-in-law of Jia Gonglü  
賈公問貴婿曲
37. 彈琴石壁上，翻翻一仙人。 \*Strumming his lute, high on a crag of stone, sits and immortal flapping his gown. Immortals  
仙人
38. 行輪出門去，玉鸞聲斷續。 Sound of the traveler's wheels leaving our gate, jade simurgh-bells tinkling intermittently. Thoughts in Her Chamber  
房中思
- 臥聽沙雞泣  
Lying awake, I listen to the crickets' tears.
39. 光露泣幽淚 Bright dew weeps, shedding its secret tears. \*Poem of Changgu  
昌穀詩
- 嘹嘹濕姑聲，咽源驚濺起。  
\*Down in their damp, mole-crickets making a chirp sound of resonant, a muted chocking spring wells up with startled splash.
- 鶯唱閨女歌  
An oriole chants the song of a girl from Min.
40. 銅駝夜來哭 \*The brazen camels weep as Lament of the Brazen

- night comes. Camels  
銅駝悲
41. 八轡冬瓏逐天迴 \*Eight bridles *dong-long* jingling as they drove round the heaven. \*Joys of the Jasper Pool  
瑤華樂
42. 畫絃素管聲淺繁， \*Painted zithers and plain flutes play sparsely and tersely tunes, to the rustle of embroidered skirts she treads the autumn dust. Song of the Magic Strings  
花裙綵繡步秋塵。 神弦曲
- 桂葉刷風桂墜子，  
青狸哭血寒狐死。
- 笑聲碧火巢中起  
43. 燭騎蹄鳴上天去 \*Emerald fire, laughing wildly, they leaps from their nests. Song: Sandy Road  
沙路曲
44. 丁丁海女弄金環 \*The Sea-lady plays with her god rings, with a jingling softly *zang-zang* sound. Lady of the Cowrie Palace  
貝宮夫人
45. 吹簫飲酒醉 \*Playing her flute, a little drunk with wine. The Temple of the Goddess of Orchid Fragrance  
走天呵白鹿 \*Roaming the heavens, she calls up her white deer. 蘭香神女廟
46. 白狐向月號山風 A white fox barking at the moon calls out the mountain wind. A Cold Gorge at Twilight  
苦黃對客吟歌筒 \*The bitter bamboo facing at this traveler chant as singing flutes. 谿晚涼
47. 左魂右魄啼肌瘦 Souls to the left, spirits to the right, gaunt with hunger, wailing. Song of an Arrowhead from Changping  
長平箭頭歌
48. 曉釵催鬢語南風 \*The pin of dawn urged hairs saying words to the south wind. Song: The Mansion by the River  
江樓曲  
鼉吟浦口飛梅雨 \*The crocodile chanted by the harbor and the plum-rain flew.
49. 雨梁燕語悲身老 Swallows are chattering on rain-drenched beams, sad that I'm growing old. Song: A New Summer  
新夏歌
50. 石軋銅環，吟詠枯瘁。 \*Stone grating on a copper bowl, the sound is faint and lasting as chanting dull and deep. Song: Imitating the Singing of Dragons  
假龍吟歌  
蒼鷹擺血，白鳳下肺  
Blood spattered from blue eagles, lungs ripped from a white phoenix.
51. 亂笑含春語 \*Laughing wildly, it contains the words of spring. Deriding the Snow  
嘲雪
52. 貧人喚雲天上郎 \*A poor calling up to clouds as a man from the heaven. Ridiculing a Young Man

53. 清明笑語聞空虛  
On clear, bright days their laughter and words echoes round the empty sky.  
嘲少年  
Ballad of the Immortals  
神仙曲
54. 泣露枝枝滴天淚  
Branch after branch is weeping dew, shedding heaven-born tears.  
\*Song: A Modest Maiden in the Spring Dawn Light  
靜女春曙曲
55. 宜男草生蘭笑人  
勞勞胡燕怨酣春  
津頭送別唱流水  
\*Day-lilies grow there and orchids smiling at people.  
Northern swallows, hard at work, chide the heightened spring.  
They bid us farewell at the ferry singing the tune of "Water flows."  
Twelve Lyrics for Music on the Theme of the Twelve Months of the Year (Together with an Intercalary Month) Composed While Taking the Examinations in Henan Fu, Second Moon.  
河南府試十二月樂詞並閏月
56. 啾啾赤帝騎龍來  
\*With flames roar of *zau-zau* comes the Scarlet Emperor riding his dragon.  
Sixth Moon.
57. 傍蟾蟲緝絲  
\*Beside the eaves insects weave their silk.  
Eighth Moon.
- 雞人罷唱曉瓏璵  
The Cock-herald chants no longer: refulgence of dawn!  
Ninth Moon.
58. 紅花夜笑凝幽明  
\*Red flowers smile upon the night; light and dark congeal on it.  
Tenth Moon.
59. 黃桑飲露窸宮簾  
Yellow mulberries, drinking dew, rustle on palace blinds.  
Thirteen Poems from My Southern Garden, No.2  
南園十三首
60. 文章何處哭秋風  
\*Where should be a place for writings to cry for the autumn wind?  
No.6
61. 山巒泣清漏  
A mountain crevice weeps with crystal tears.  
No. 5
62. 露厭煙啼千萬枝  
\*Weighed down with dew, a million branches are weeping in the mist.  
Four Poems about New Bamboo-shoots in My North Garden, No.2  
昌穀北園新筍四首
63. 神驂泣向風  
Divine Dapple wept, breasting the wind.  
Twenty-three Poems on Horse, No.10  
馬詩二十三首

63/243 (25%)

## Chapter 4

### 4.1 INDULGENCE IN MUSIC: WRITING INTO

#### SYNAESTHESIA

When it comes to the “cultural sound” in Li He’s poetry, I would like to talk about the music pieces. The sound of music and his preference for musical description can be treated as one of the most prominent aspects in Li He’s poetry. It seems there is a music troupe in the mind of this genius poet, for according to my research, there are as many as thirteen different musical instruments in his corpus: “*se* zither” (*se* 瑟), “*zheng* zither” (*zheng* 箏), “ancient zither” (*gu qin* 古琴), “*pipa* lute” (*pipa* 琵琶), “vertical harp” (*kong hou* 箜篌), “*sheng* pipes” (*sheng* 笙), “vertical pipe” (*xiao* 簫), “short flute” (*duan di* 短笛), “bamboo flute” (*zhu di* 竹笛), “barbarian flute” (*hu jia* 胡笳), “tartar reed” (*bi li* 觱篥), “painted horn” (*hua jiao* 畫角) and “drum” (*gu* 鼓). Not only the musical instrument troupe but also the chants and songs from singing-girls are frequently mentioned in his poems. In his corpus, there are several pieces which specially describe music, such as “Song: Li Ping at the Vertical Harp,” “Song: Listening to Master Ying Playing the Lute,” “Song: Bearded Shen Playing His Tartar Horn” and “Bitter Bamboos: A *Tiaoxiao* Ballad” etc. Here I choose one of his banquet poems for close reading to discuss the sound of music in his poetry.

- Straddling a tiger,<sup>40</sup> the King of Qin      秦王騎虎游八極，  
 roams the Eight Poles.<sup>41</sup>
- 2      His glittering sword flashes through the sky,<sup>42</sup>      劍光照空天自碧。  
 heaven becomes sapphire-blue by itself.
- Xi He<sup>43</sup> knocks the sun with his whip,      羲和敲日玻璃聲，  
 which tinkles like glass.
- 4      The ashes of kalpas<sup>44</sup> all fly away,      劫灰飛盡古今平。  
 the world is at peace.
- From a dragon's head<sup>45</sup> spouts wine      龍頭瀉酒邀酒星，

<sup>40</sup> Straddling a tiger instead of a horse shows the ambition and the invincibility of the host. The allusion can be found in the *Zuo Tradition* 左傳, the 28<sup>th</sup> year of duke *Xi*, in the battle of Chengpu 城濮之戰, Jin army covered their war-horses by tiger skins, therefore they won the battle. “Straddling a tiger,” on the one hand, indicates the vigorousness of the king. But on the other hand, also conveys a meaning of danger and risk. In “Biography of Wen Qiao” 溫嶠傳 of *Jinshu* 晉書 [Book of Jin], it says “Straddling on a fierce animals, how could one get down in the half way?” 騎猛獸，安可中下哉？

<sup>41</sup> Eight points of the compass. This is a Daoist phrase in *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and *Huainanzi* 淮南子, it refers to extremely remote places in universe. It indicates the universal power of the host and the military prowess of the host was manifest everywhere.

<sup>42</sup> The line implies the heaven also obey the host's military power, let alone all things under the heaven. See Wang Qi's commentary.

<sup>43</sup> Xi He is the charioteer of the sun.

<sup>44</sup> A kalpa is a Buddhist unit of measure for a cosmic cycle. Fourteen mahayuga of 4, 320, 000 years each constituted one kalpa. At the end of each kalpa came a great dissolution (Mahapralaya), when the universe was reduced to ashes. This ash of kalpa is said to be firstly found by Emperor Wu of Han in a mythical lake of Kunming 昆明湖. By saying that the kalpa ashes has been totally wiped out, the line indicates under the power of this host, it has reached a time of unexampled prosperity and the peace would last long forever.

<sup>45</sup> Scholars as Wang Qi and Fordsham interoperate the “dragon head” as a large wine-vessel made of copper and shaped like a dragon spouted wine from its mouth for the guests. The historical records assert the place is the emperor's palace Taiji dian 太極殿 and the guests are officials, which can be found in “Records of

- to call down the wine-stars.
- 6 *Pipa* with golden slot. 金槽琵琶夜根根。  
 makes a sound of *cang-cang*<sup>46</sup>  
 The feet of rain on Dongting lake 洞庭雨腳來吹笙，  
 come blown on the *sheng* pipes.
- 8 Flushed with wine, he shouts at the moon 酒酣喝月使倒行。  
 to run back in her course.  
 Beneath dense drifts of silver clouds 銀雲櫛櫛瑤殿明，  
 the jasper hall glows.
- 10 At the palace portals the Gatekeeper cries 宮門掌事報一更。  
 the first watch of the night.<sup>47</sup>  
 In the ornate tower, a jade phoenix sings, 花樓玉鳳聲嬌癯，  
 faltering and sweet.<sup>48</sup>

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Marching to West” 西征記 in *Beitang shuchao* 北堂書鈔.

<sup>46</sup> According to Frodsham’s translation, he just omits this kind of onomatopoeic word as “Golden lutes are singing softly throughout the night.” Also, several layers of meanings are thereby being ignored.

<sup>47</sup> Wang Qi understands this “first watch of the night” as the time is still early in night according to last line: “the dense drift silver clouds” indicates the moonlight. But Yao Wenxie says according to last line, “the jasper hall glows” and the “silver clouds” are caused by morning light, which is saying that the night has passed and dawn has arrived. But the Gatekeeper just cries the first watch of the night because dare not to violate the wish of he host and gives false information of the time. See *Sanjiazhu*, 57, 220.

<sup>48</sup> *Jiao ning* 嬌癯, the fist commentator Wu Zhengzi 吳正子 says, the character 癯 could be 癯, the former one has the meaning of ugly sound and the latter one means “gentle and tired.” Wang Qi take this as the sings of the singing girls, which is plausible because it is the occasion of a banquet, playing of musical instrument, singings and performances are presented here. Fang Funan understands the sound here is the chaos of laughter of those concubines after drunk, which is sweet and also ugly. This is also a possible way of interpretation.

12 From ocean-pongee,<sup>49</sup> patterned in crimson, 海綃紅文香淺清,  
a faint, cool scent.

The yellow beauties<sup>50</sup> kneel down in their dance. 黃鵝跌舞千年觥。  
a thousand years with each cup!

14 As immortals<sup>51</sup> candlesticks waft on high a light, 仙人燭樹蠟煙輕,

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<sup>49</sup> The dancers were clad in ocean-pongee 海綃, a rare and costly fabric said to be woven by the mermaids or sharkpeople who lived under the sea off the coast of Champa. See Frodsham, 53.

<sup>50</sup> According to different edition, one version is “yellow goose” (*huang e* 黃鵝) and the other one is “yellow beauties” (*huang e* 黃娥). Wang Qi says it might be the name of a certain kind of dance or a kind of way of dancing. Yao Wenxie holds the view that the “yellow goose” into a historical matter as it is a goose shaped wine vessel made of gold in Xuan emperor of Tang 唐玄宗 period (712-756), which was presented to emperor by the officials. Li He uses this to ascribe the fond of campaigns of the host. Fang Funan says that it is a metaphor of wine, according to a poem of Du Fu, “goslings are as yellow as wine” 鵝兒黃似酒, so the color of wine is like gosling yellow. These are all possible understandings. Wu Zhengzi 吳正子 (r. 1368-1644) and Frodsham read it as “beautiful girls with yellow make-up” (*huang e* 黃娥). This is very plausible because from 11<sup>th</sup> line to 13<sup>th</sup>, they are all concerning about banquet ladies. And the gesture of “reel in their dance” or literally “fall down and dance” (*die wu* 跌舞), could be understand as a drunken dancing or as Wang Qi’s interpretation, is a special kind of dance. Or to my understanding, is a gesture of kneel down to cheer to the host if we read it together with “a thousand years with each cup” (*qiannian gong* 千年觥). For the reason that in the banquet performances during medieval China, when the performance comes to the end, the performers have a gesture of “qishou” 稽首, which including a gesture of kneel down, to the host and guest, especially to the emperor, to wish for the longevity of the guests. If we follow the patterns of this banquet, the sequence of performance is described in an extreme orderly way, which exactly fitted with the format of banquet performances in medieval China. The very first part of the banquet is the invitation of guest to drink wine, which is mentioned in 5<sup>th</sup> line “invites the wine-star.” Next, musical instrument begins, as the playing of *pipa* and *sheng* in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> line. The the singing and dancing part is brought in, as the performers are described in 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> line. Specifically, in 13<sup>th</sup> line, the performance meets an end by the “fall down dancing” and cheers to the host. As for the sequence and format of the banquet performances, see Xiaojing Sun, “The Sound of Silence: *Daqu* (“big-suite”) and Medieval Chinese Performance” (Ph.D diss., University of California-Berkeley, 2012).

<sup>50</sup>The dancers were clad in ocean-pongee 海綃, a rare and costly fabric said to be woven by the mermaids or sharkpeople who lived under the sea off the coast of Champa. See Frodsham, 53.

<sup>51</sup> In *Hailu suishi* 海錄碎事, it says “immortal wax tree” is as the *wutong* trees (*wutong* 梧桐). For their barks are dry and can be used as wax for a long-time burning. Wang Qi thinks that it might be wax with immortals painted on it or wax

waxy smoke,  
Eyes rapt with wine, those Emerald Lutes<sup>52</sup> 清琴醉眼淚泓泓。  
shed seas of tears.<sup>53</sup>

“The King of Qin Drinks Wine” 秦王飲酒 is an outstanding and a representative work of Li He. Basically, it describes a drinking banquet of a certain emperor. We may want to set aside the intention of this poem, the question of which emperor this poem refers to, and whether it means to critique or praise the emperor. What really strike me are its auditory words, imagery and special way of describing this drinking occasion.

The poem can be divided into two parts; the first part is the first four lines, and the second is the rest of the poem. The first part identifies the host of this drinking banquet and the reason why the banquet is held. From the imagery, we can see that this is an imperial banquet, the host of which could be a person with great power. The poet chooses mystical and celestial imagery to indicate the imperial or aristocratic identity of the host. Though the title of this poem as well as the first line shows us the host of this banquet is the King

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was shaped as immortals or it was a kind of wax, which was named as immortals. *Sanjiazhu*, 57.

<sup>52</sup> According to different edition, it was recorded as “pure zither” (*qing qin* 清琴) or “emerald zither” (*qing qin* 青琴). If take the first one into consideration, it was a description of the sound of zither. Basically, its sound is pure. If take the second one, this “emerald zither” can be traced back to “Rhapsody of Shanglin” 上林賦 of Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (ca. 179 B.C.-118 B.C.), in which is an ancient goddess. This goddess can refer to the ladies in banquet, performance girls or concubines, according to which, the “eyes rapt with wine” could be eyes of those ladies.

<sup>53</sup> *Sanjiazhu*, 56-57.

of Qin, this image, to a larger extent, could be a metaphorical expression.<sup>54</sup>

This kind of mystical and celestial imagery is used throughout the poem. In order to show the great power and the grand achievement of the host, Li He uses the allusions and images of “straddling a tiger,” “eight poles,” “sword flashes through the sky,” “Xi He” and “ashes of kalpas.” When it comes to the scene of the banquet, all of the imagery is divine and suggests the banquet's extreme luxury. The “dragon’s head” can be a certain symbol of imperialism, and the guests of the banquet, who are “wine-stars,” are also from the celestial world. From this “wine-stars,” we can see the immortals who take charge of wine also attend the banquet; in this case, the overabundance of wine is highlighted. The banquet is held at “jaspar hall,” where immortals dwell. The dancers and singing girls are those “yellow beauties” in “ocean-pongee” dresses, the decorations of the banquet are candlesticks of the “immortals,” and the palace beauties are fairy maidens and “emerald lutes.” All these mythical and celestial figures and imagery contribute to exhibiting the extreme power, indulgence and appetite for luxury of the host.

Second, the auditory words in this poem are also a prominent

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<sup>54</sup>The old commentaries say that this poem was made for King of Qin. But the Qing scholars Wang Qi 王琦, Yao Wenxie 姚文燮 and Fang Funan 方扶南 all have the interpretation of this King of Qin as a representation of De emperor of Tang 唐德宗 (742-805), whose career and deeds has much influence on Li He when he was young. For the reason that the poem just mentions the name of King of Qin, but throughout the poem, there were no other stories or allusions concerns about Qin. Wang Qi also points out that when Li Kuo hasn't got throne, he was a prince has the enfeoffment of Yongzhou 雍州, which was once belonged to Qin state. These scholars also compares the disposition of King of Qin with De emperor, both of them are staunch and brutal and love luxurious banquets. Li He, comp., Wang Qi etc., annotated, *Sanjiazhu*, 57, 220, 301.

feature. Since the poem is describing a banquet, the auditory words are unavoidable and can be seen everywhere. However, what makes Li He's poems so special here is that he puts the sounds into a twisted sensory world according to his own feelings.

Specifically, he always has an inclination to mix all of his sensations together with imagination. Therefore, a composition style of synaesthesia occurs. There are two outstanding lines of synaesthesia in this poem, and both of them include the auditory words. The first one is the line "Xi He knocks on the sun, which tinkles like glass." In this line, the poet compares the host of the banquet to the charioteer of the sun. Frodsham translates "qiao" (敲) as "whipping,"<sup>55</sup> which I think is not as faithful as "knock" because it may hide away the direct effect of sound. We may wonder why the sound of knocking on the sun is like glass, since glass was a strange conception which was introduced from central Europe during mid-Tang dynasty. Li He just mingled visual and auditory sensations, as well as his imagination together to create an effect of alienation to his readers. The brightness and transparent visual sensation leads Li He to imagine a lucid, transparent sound.

The second synaesthetic line is "The feet of rain on Dongting lake come blown on the *sheng* pipes." This line is a complex one, fusing many images together. There can be two ways to interpret it. Literally it reads: "Dongting rain feet come blow *sheng* pipes" and the basic allusion is to the

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<sup>55</sup>Frodsham, *The Poems of Li Ho (791-817)*, 48.

music played for the Yellow Emperor on Dongting lake in northern Hunan (see *Zhuangzi*, XIV), which sounds like raindrops on water. This is the understanding of Yao Wenxie and Frodsham. However, “Dongting rain feet” does not necessarily refer to the sound of raindrops on the water. If we understand it in this way and compare the sound of raindrops to the sound of pipes, we would miss the visual part and omit the visual sense which combines together with the sound. Dongting, according to *Zhuangzi*, could be the name of the tune of “Xian pound” played by the Yellow Emperor and “rain feet” could mean the raindrops themselves. Actually, in this line, Li He is using the visual sight to describe the sound.<sup>56</sup>The shape of the raindrop can be mellow and full, and this visual sense was applied to the sound. Also, raindrops are scattered everywhere, and the sound can also be scattered and mussy.

As mentioned before, the sound in his poetry is also shown in a descriptive way or in an onomatopoetic way. In the 11<sup>th</sup> line, the singing voice is described as “sweet, faint and tired,” which indicates that the excesses of the feast have made the singers exhausted. And the metaphor of “jade phoenix” refers to the singing girls. It could refer to the singers themselves, but to a larger extent, it could also be the description of their voices as bright as jade and as pure as the twitter of the phoenix.

For the onomatopoetic words in this poem, we can see that in line

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<sup>56</sup>If we take this interpretation, it would be different from Bai Juyi’s 白居易 (772-846) as the first interpretation, which is just a comparison of two different kinds of sounds but not a synaesthesia phrase.

six, when describing the sound of *pipa*, Li He uses the word “cang-cang” (枘枘). This onomatopoeic word, to my understanding, indicates the technique of “sweep strings” (*sao xian* 掃弦) when playing *pipa*. According to Bai Juyi’s famous lines, when music sounds like “pearls dropping onto jade plate,” it might be the result of the technique of “bo xian” 撥弦, which literally means “plucking or picking one string,” or “fingers circulating” (*lun zhi* 輪指), which is a circular movement of the fingers on one string to make a succession of separated sounds. “Sweep strings,” then, literally means sweeping on all of the strings, which implies a sudden and hard sound. Usually this kind of technique can express grandness and dignity within a musical piece. And it sounds like “cang-cang,” which Li He describes very vividly here. Also, this “jin cao” (金槽) can literally be translated as “golden or medal slot,” which describes the upper part of a *pipa*. This “golden or medal” can be the appearance and the material which the *pipa* is made of. At the same time, it could also be another description of the sound of *pipa*, as an echo to “cang-cang” and as a kind of strong, clanging sound.

Besides, the auditory words in this poem always appear together with a sense of time. For example, “Xi He knock the sun” implies that the time of day is passing by quickly, as does the line, “Flushed with wine, he shouts at the moon to run back in her course.” Frodsham translates the verb “shout at” (*he* 喝) as “command,”<sup>57</sup> which is not proper enough for its omitting the sound

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<sup>57</sup>Frodsham, *The Poems of Li Ho (791-817)*, 48.

effect and losing other layers of meanings as well. If we use the verb “shout at,” it suggests the directness and crudeness of the host. On the other hand, if we translate it as “command,” in Chinese it can be a word of “ming” 命 or “ling” 令, which are inanimate and soundless words. Also, this “shout at” can show the improper manner of the host because of his arrogant or unconstrained and obstreperous state after drinking. The sense of time here is that he orders the moon to run back. Although he is of great power, he is also afraid of the passage of time and wants to use his power to change nature, so that he can indulge himself in entertainment forever.

Moreover, we are reminded of the passage of time when “At the palace portals the Gatekeeper cries the first watch of the night.” The appearance of this sudden voice in the middle of poem and also in the middle of the banquet puts the issue of time in a prominent place and sort of stresses it. The sense of time also shows in 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> line and the two forms a sharp comparison of time. In the 13<sup>th</sup> line, when the dancers finish their dancing, they cheer the emperor, hoping for “a thousand year with each cup,” and wishing that his career and entertainments will last so long, but in the next line, if we follow the reading of Yao Wenxie, this “light, waxy smoke” could also be a sign of the coming of dawn, for the wax is nearly burned out and therefore smoke comes out. The juxtaposition of the wish for longevity with the quick ending of the entertainment emphasizes the poet's sense of quickly-passing time. In Li He's composition, he has an inclination to pay

much attention, and always with a sense of anxiety, to time, a concern which is shown in this poem.

## 4.2 Table #3

### Lines of Cultural Sound in Li He's Poem Corpus

	Chinese text	English translation	Source
1.	蚩尤死， <u>鼓逢逢</u> 。	*Chi You is dead, <i>fung-fung</i> as the drums rolling.	The Emperor Returns 上之回
2.	<u>五十弦</u> 瑟海上聞	*Fifty-string zithers sounding out and can be heard as far as to the sea.	*Upper Clouds Music 上雲樂
3.	<u>角聲</u> 滿天秋色裏	Clangour of horns fills the sky with colors of fall.	Ballad of the Grand Warden of Goose Gate 雁門太守行
4.	含嚼 <u>蘆</u> 中聲	*You holding in mouth and chewing the sound within the reed.	Song: Bearded Shen Playing His Tartar Horn 申鬍子鬻築歌
5.	<u>嘈嘈</u> 絃吹匝天開， 洪涯 <u>簫</u> 聲繞天來。	*Clamour sound of <i>cou-cou</i> of strings and pipes encircled heavens just started. The sound of Hong Ya's vertical pipe lingered from the heaven.	Joys of the Rich 榮華樂
6.	樓頭曲宴 <u>仙人</u> 語， 帳底 <u>吹笙</u> 香霧濃。	*A banquet on top of a palace tower, immortals talking, <i>sheng</i> playing under awnings in thick, scented mist.	*Poem on Qin Gong 秦宮詩
7.	拂袖風吹 <u>蜀國</u> 弦	Waving their sleeves as the breeze plays "Zithers from Shu."	*Song: Planting Peonies 牡丹種曲
8.	<u>吳絲</u> 蜀桐張高秋	*Strings from Wu, paulownia from Shu stretch out in high autumn.	Song: Li Ping at the Vertical Harp 李憑箏篋引
	<u>江娥</u> 啼竹素女愁	*Ladies of the Xiang River weeping among bamboos and the Whit Girl mournful.	
	昆山 <u>玉碎</u> 鳳凰叫	Jade from Mount Kun is shattered, phoenixes shriek.	
	芙蓉 <u>泣露</u> 香蘭笑	*Lotuses are weeping dew,	

9. 蜀國弦中雙鳳語  
暗佩清臣敲水玉  
涼館聞弦驚病客
10. 雲陽臺上歌，  
鬼哭復何益。
11. 玉爐炭火香咚咚  
  
紙錢窸窣鳴颯風  
  
攢額一喋重一彈  
  
呼星召鬼歆杯盤
12. 郊原晚吹悲號號
13. 離歌繞懦弦
14. 旅歌屢彈鋏
15. 吳歎越吟未終曲
16. 吹龍笛，擊鼉鼓，皓齒  
歌，細腰舞。
17. 金槽琵琶夜棖棖  
  
洞庭雨腳來吹笙
- fragrant orchids laugh.  
Through strings of a lute from  
Shu, two phoenixes talk.  
Hidden girdle-gems of an honest  
minister, tinkling crystals.  
Sound of strings through the cold  
room rouses me from my  
sick-bed.
- \*Singing came from the tower of  
Yunyang, wail of a ghost, and all  
to no avail.
- \*In a jade brazier charcoal burns  
in fragrance, with a boom  
*dung-dung* sound of drum.  
\*Rustling sound of paper money  
together with moans of  
whirlwind.  
\*Knitting her brows, she heavily  
plucks the lute for each word  
uttered.  
She calls down stars and  
summons demons to savour meat  
and drink.
- \*Over fields of the waste the  
evening, the *hou-hou* sound  
made by the wind moans sadly.
- \*Songs of parting rose from  
flabby strings.
- Often I sing a traveler's song,  
beating my sword.
- Catches of Wu, ballads of  
Yue-our songs never stop.
- Blow dragon flutes! Beat  
alligator drums! Dazzling teeth  
in song, slender waists in dance.
- \**Pipa* with golden slot makes a  
sound of *cang-cang*.  
\*The feet of rain on Dongting  
lake come blown on the *sheng*
- Song: Listening to  
Master Ying Playing  
the Lute  
聽穎師彈琴歌
- \*Song: Tangji of Han  
Drinks Wine  
漢唐姬飲酒歌
- Magic Strings  
神弦
- Ballad for  
Encouraging My  
Beloved, No.2  
While Recovering  
from a Drinking-bout  
in the Elder Zhang's  
House in Luzhou, I  
Sent This Poem to  
My Fourteenth Elder  
Male Cousin through  
the Agency of a River  
Messenger  
潞州張大宅病酒遇  
江使寄上十四兄
- The Traveler  
客遊
- Pleasures South of  
the Yangzi  
江南弄
- Let Wine be Brought  
in!  
將進酒
- \*The King of Qin  
Drinks Wine  
秦王飲酒

- pipes.  
In the ornate tower, a jade phoenix sings, faltering and sweet.
- 花樓玉鳳聲嬌獐
18. 華筵鼓吹無桐竹，  
長刀直立割鳴箏。 \*Drummers and pipers at the feast, no zithers or flutes, long knives planted in the ground split the singing zither. Song: Do not Dance, Sir!  
公莫舞歌
19. 王子吹笙鵝管長，  
呼龍耕煙種瑤草。 \*The King's son plays his *sheng* pipe, which as long goose-quills; Calling on dragons to plough the mist and plant Jade Grass. A Ballad of Heaven  
天上謠
20. 秋墳鬼唱鮑家詩 \*On an autumn grave a ghost chanting loudly the poems of Bao's. Coming of Autumn  
秋來
21. 吳娥聲絕天 Songs of Wu maidens rise to the heavens. Lyric for the Duster Dance  
拂舞歌辭
22. 湘神彈琴迎帝子 The goddess of Xiang, playing her lute, welcomes the Emperor's daughters. Song of the Emperor's Daughters  
帝子歌
23. 高樓唱月敲懸璫  
紅絃媚雲咽深思  
玉喉窸窣排空光 Singing to the moon in her tall tower, beating time on a pendant. Pearl-A Luoyang Beauty  
洛姝真珠
24. 孤鸞驚啼商絲發 \*The lonely simurgh gives a startled cry, and a *shang* note from the strings starts. The Lady Li  
李夫人
- 玉蟾滴水雞人唱  
From out of the Jade Toad water drips, the Cock-herald chants.
25. 玉瑟調青門 On a jade zither she plays "Green Gates." The Man with a Yellow Hat  
黃頭郎
26. 女垣素月角啾啾 A pale moon over the battlements as the horns crow out with a sound of *ji-ji*. Joys of a Princess Traveling in Battle-array  
貴主征行樂
27. 歌聲春草露  
細管吟朝幌  
雞唱星懸柳，  
鴉啼露滴銅。 I hear her singing among dewy, spring grass. \*Hate You Sir  
惱公
- \*The small pipes chants by the curtains at dawn.  
At cockcrow stars hang in the willows, crows cry as dew drops from the plane trees.

- 吹笙翻舊引  
長絃怨削崧
28. 歌聲且潛弄  
29. 侯調短弄哀  
羌兒奏落梅  
30. 簫聲吹日色  
31. 笛愁翻隴水  
32. 胡琴今日恨，急語向檀  
槽。  
33. 彈琴石壁上，翻翻一仙  
人。  
34. 歌迴蠟板鳴  
35. 風桐瑤匣瑟  
篁掉短笛吹  
36. 唯留一管人間吹  
37. 為君起唱長相思  
38. 青帳吹短笛  
39. 歌淫淫，管愔愔。  
40. 吹簫飲酒醉
- \*She plays again an old tune on her *sheng* pipes.  
\*Long strings resent the incapability to cut down the Song Mountain.  
\*Make the singings tentatively faint.  
\*Hou Tiao plays mournful short tunes upon her harp.  
A nomad boy played the tune called “Falling Plum.”  
\*The vertical pipe blows the color of the sun.  
\*The flute is sorrow and rise to play the tune of Longtou.  
\*Today my barbarian lute grows rancorous, quick-tongued playing towards its sanders slot.  
\*Strumming his lute, high on a crag of stone, sits and immortal flapping his gown.  
Circling songs, click of waxed castanets.  
\*Bamboo aquiver as if short flute playing.  
\*Only a single pipe remains blowing in mundane world.  
For you I rose and sang my song, long thoughts of love.  
They sit and play short flutes in their green tents.  
\*Singing is loud and long, pipes are peaceful and harmonious.  
Playing her flute, a little drunk
- Following the Theme of He and Xie: Singing-girls in the Brazen Bird Tower  
追和何謝銅雀妓  
Seeing off the Banquet Officer Qin on His Military Expedition to the North  
送秦光祿北征  
Hard to Forget  
難忘曲  
Poem Presented to My Second Elder Cousin When He Stopped Being a Messenger, Sent Back His Horse and Went Home to Yanzhou  
奉和二兄罷使遣馬歸延州  
Spring Melancholy  
感春  
Immortals  
仙人  
The Palace of Peace and Joy  
安樂宮  
\*Poem of Changgu  
昌穀詩  
Bitter Bamboos: A Tiaoxiao Ballad  
苦篁調嘯引  
Song: Sitting Through the Night  
夜坐吟  
\*In Ping City  
平城下  
Let’s Drink Wine  
相勸酒  
The Temple of the

- |     |   |  |  |
|-----|---|--|--|
|     |   | with wine.   | Goddess of Orchid<br>Fragrance<br>蘭香神女廟  |
| 41. | 苦黃對客 <u>吟歌筒</u>   | *The bitter bamboo facing at this<br>traveler chant as singing flutes.   | A Cold Gorge at<br>Twilight<br>谿晚涼       |
| 42. | <u>胡角</u> 引北風   | *Barbarian horns lead the<br>northern wind.  | *Song: At Frontiers<br>塞下曲               |
| 43. | 帶酒日晚 <u>歌田中</u>   | Drunk at twilight, I'm still<br>singing down in the fields.  | Song in the Wilds<br>野歌                  |
| 44. | <u>清弦五十</u> 為君彈<br><u>彈聲咽春</u> 弄君骨<br><u>轉角含商</u> 破碧雲                       | *Fifty pure strings will be played<br>for your delight.<br>*Plucking sound sobbed the<br>spring, stirring your bones.<br>*Gliding from note to note with<br>the <i>shang</i> tune, her song pierced<br>the sapphire clouds.  | A Song for Xu's<br>Lady, Zheng<br>許公子鄭姬歌 |
| 45. | 羅床 <u>倚瑤瑟</u>   | She Sings to a jeweled lute on<br>her silk-hung couch.   | Song: Never Sorrow<br>莫愁曲                |
| 46. | 去年陌上 <u>歌離曲</u>   | Last year, by the wayside we<br>sang a song of parting.  | *Someone I longing<br>有所思                |
| 47. | 樓高夜靜 <u>吹橫竹</u><br><br><u>一聲似向天上來</u><br><br>暗合清風調宮徵<br><br>胡兒莫作 <u>隴頭吟</u> | *By a tall mansion, in the still of<br>the night he is playing his<br>transversal bamboo.<br>*One note seems to have come<br>down from heaven.<br><i>Gong</i> and <i>zhi</i> secretly harmonize<br>with the pure breeze.<br>Play no more the Longtou tune,<br>nomad boy! | *Dragon Chanting in<br>Night<br>龍夜吟      |
| 48. | 畫鼓 <u>餘清節</u>   | *Pure beating of the painted<br>drum throbs in ears.   | Six Satires, 感諷六<br>首                    |
| 49. | <u>調歌</u> 送風轉   | Sound of singing borne afar on<br>the breeze.  | No.2<br>No.6                             |

49/243 (20%)

## Chapter 5

### 5.1 SOUNDLESS WEEPING: THE SILENCE OF REPRESSION

When talking about the various sounds in Li He's poetry, one cannot avoid the discussion of the contrary part of sounds: the silence. Before touching on this term, several questions should be made clear. What is the conception of silence? How could people get a sense of silence? What is its significance and what kind of feelings can be aroused from such human experience? What is the relationship between sound and silence?

Actually, from the perspective of a binary, the acoustic world consists of these two important elements: the sounds and silence cannot be separate from each other, most of the time, they even rely on each other to be fetched out. One cannot tell the sounds if there were no silence and in turn, a sense of silence is usually felt strongly by people after a noisy occasion or in an anechoic environment, that is, a completely soundproof environment. For the latter one, does this kind of environment really exist? At least there will be slightest sounds from nature and from lives. Even in the modern world where technology can help to construct a completely soundless chamber, when a life (the experiencing subjective as human) enters in, the sound of breath and blood circulation can be heard. Since the sound and silence are both included in human experience, we can say, whereas there is life, there is sound, and we

also could say, whereas there is sound, there is the experience of silence, usually physiological but not physical.

In Schafer Murray's book *The Soundscape*, he described the "silence" in several ways.<sup>58</sup> In the chapters of "Ceremonies of Silence" and "Western Man and Negative Silence," he also mentioned that experiences of silence happened after a noisy occasion by giving out examples of the program of the War Remembrance on May 4<sup>th</sup> in Utrecht, Netherlands and tried to make clear the definition of silence by discussing the "absolute silence." He concluded that "When man regards himself as central in the universe, silence can only be considered as approximate, never absolute."<sup>59</sup> Also, he cited the book *Silence* from John Cage, saying, "For modern man, any use of this term must be qualified or assumed to be ironical."<sup>60</sup> From this point, how could we examine the abstract silence in whatever social or textural context?

In Schafer's descriptions of the ceremony, we can see the untouchable abstract "silence" exposed in quite a few physical and valid ways. At the beginning of the ceremony, all public amusements are closed with no advertising or store-window lighting, people are asked not to carry ensigns, flags or wreaths with them, and are requested to be still (literally, to pay attention to being silent), the church bell starts and then ends, and two minutes of total silence

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<sup>58</sup> Schafer Murray, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1977), 253-259.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

begin of the Cathedral Square. In this social occasion, we can see silence becoming fluid, lingering between human's sensations of visual and audial. Not only the approximate audial silence occurred, as the two minutes stillness after the sound of bells, the visual silence also contribute a great deal to create the feeling of silenceness. The closing of lighting and the inhibition of flags and wreaths provide a comparative stillness for eyes. Thus the sense of silence comes into a larger spectrum, not limited to the auditory world by comparing with sounds, but the visual, even other human sensations as tactile sensation, altogether creating a psychological silence in social or textural context. Since Li He's poetry is full of audio depiction, the soundless world comes together, as *yin* comes with *yang*, as those sounds definitely needs more attention from us.

To reveal the sense of silence, poets can use all kinds of the direct and straight-forward words such as *ji* 寂 (soundless), *jing* 靜 (quiet), *qiao* 悄 (silent), *wusheng* 無聲 (without a sound), *wuyu/wuyan* 無語/無言 (without a word). However, as we know, usage of these direct “soundless words” does not necessarily build up a soundless couplet or a soundless poem. In most cases of classical Chinese poetry, poets tend to make comparison with sounds or other approaches to create an atmosphere of silence and stillness. As in two of the most famous narrative poems “Peacock Flying to the Southeast”<sup>61</sup> 孔雀東南飛 and “Song of *Pipa* Lute”<sup>62</sup> 琵琶行, both of them

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<sup>61</sup> Xu Ling 徐陵 ed., Mu Kehong 穆克宏 annotate., *Yutai xinyong jianzhu* 玉台新詠箋註 [The Annotation of New Songs of Jade Terrace] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju,

have couplets to introduce the soundless occasions. After demonstrating the bustling and noisy occasion of wedding ceremony, a soundless couplet occurs to turn the whole picture into silence, “Glowing after the sunset, soundlessly people just got rest.” 奄奄黃昏后，寂寂人定初 to provide a silence environment for Liu Lanzhi to commit suicide. Also, after the lute girl finishes the gorgeous piece of music in “Song of *Pipa* Lute,” a silence scene is created for her to promote her unparalleled music skill to extreme, “The east boat and west yacht are quiet and without a word, only the pale autumn moon was seen in the river” 東船西舫悄無言，唯見江心秋月白. Both of the examples included the direct soundless words, but the true essence of the sense of silence, which takes the readers’ breath, is the comparison with sounds and the visual stillness as “glooming sunset” and “the pale moon in river.” These are only couplets showing a sense of silence, a technique that can also be found in other “silent poems.”

Regarding the “silent poem,” what I mean is not soundless poem, but the whole poem creates a sense of silence and stillness not necessarily using the soundless words as mentioned above. When mentioning about the “silent poem,” one cannot avoid talking about “Buddhist poem” 禪詩 and Wang Wei 王維 (701-761), who is a representative figure for “silent poem.” One of his famous pieces concerning silence is “The Deer Stockade” 鹿柴:

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1999), 42.

<sup>62</sup> Hengtang tuishi 蘅塘退士 ed., Lu Ming 陸明 annotate., *Tangshi songci yuanqu sanbaishou* 唐詩宋詞元曲三百首 [Three Hundred Pieces of Tang Poems, Song Lyrics and Yuan Tunes] (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2002), 53.

	In the empty mountain one cannot see a person,	空山不見人，
2	But one can hear people's voice,	但聞人語響。
	The reflective sunlight enters in the deep forest,	返景入深林，
4	Again the light shines on the green moss. <sup>63</sup>	復照青苔上。

When examining the whole poem, we can find that there are no such explicit expressions as “soundless” or “quiet,” on the contrary, a sounding line of “people’s voice” 人語 even plays an indispensable role in the poem. For this five-syllable quatrain, two dimensions of audio and visual parts together construct the sense of silence and the Buddhist meaning of restfulness. As mentioned before, when it comes to the sense of silence, one cannot avoid talking about its counterpart sound and the visual stillness. For the first two couplets, the emptiness and silence is created by mentioning the sound. Wang Wei’s piece is a perfect example to explaining this point. Another silent poem “Entering the Ruoye River”<sup>64</sup> 入若耶溪 by Wang Ji 王籍 (fl. 502-557)

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<sup>63</sup> Wang Wei 王維 comp., Zhao Diancheng 趙殿成 annotate., *Wang Youcheng ji jianzhu* 王右丞集箋註 [The Annotated Collection of Wang Youcheng] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 241.

<sup>64</sup> How floating is the grand warship, together with the misty water in the remote. The shady clouds rise from the distant mountain peak, the reflection of the sun chases the swirling floats. The noisy cicada makes the woods even quiet; the singing of birds makes the mountain more resolute. At this place I get the idea of returning, for so long a year I sorrow for the tired travelling. 舳舻何泛泛，空水共悠悠。陰霞生遠岫，陽景逐迴流。蟬噪林逾靜，鳥鳴山更幽。此地動歸念，長年悲倦遊。 In Chen Changqu 陳昌渠 ed., *Weijin nanbeichao shixuan* 魏晉南北朝詩選 [The Selected Poems of Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties] (Chengdu: Sichuan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987), 169.

demonstrates this idea perfectly by saying “The noisy cicada makes the woods even quiet, the singing of birds makes the mountain more resolute” 蟬噪林逾靜, 鳥鳴山更幽 and it is exactly what Wang Wei is doing here in his first two couplets. For the second dimension to make the silence, Wang Wei also applies the visual silence of light and shadow in this poem. Interestingly, numbers of “silent poems” deal with Buddhist or Daoist ideology for they are concerned with the peace of mind and inner fulfillment of the poets. In order to reveal and construct the silent of the whole poem, poets tend to choose and use the image of light, shadow, reflections in water and mirror. Another poem famous for its “silence” is Chang Jian’s 常建 (708-765?) “A Poem on Zen-court of a Shabby Mountain Temple” 題破山寺后禪院.<sup>65</sup> The last two couplets “The light of mountain delights the nature of birds, the reflections in a deep pool make one’s heart empty. All of the creatures become silent here, only the sound of bells is left” 山光悅鳥性, 潭影空人心. 萬籟此都寂, 但余鐘磬音 combines visual silence and isolates sound to construct the sense of silence in the poem. Similarly to the silent poems mentioned above, Chang Jian also uses light, shadow and reflection to create this visual silence. The reason for this inclination of poets to use light, shadow and reflection probably

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<sup>65</sup> At dawn I entered the ancient temple, the rising sun shines on the top of woods. Bamboo path leading to the place of resolute, flowers and bushes of Zen studio are deep. The light of mountain delights the nature of birds, the reflections in a deep pool make one’s heart empty. All of the creatures become silent here; only the sound of bells is left. 清晨入古寺, 初日照高林。竹徑通幽處, 禪房花木深。山光悅鳥性, 潭影空人心。萬籟此都寂, 但余鐘磬音。Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 ed., *Quan tangshi* 全唐詩 [The Whole Collection of Tang Poetry] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), vol.2, 1465.

comes from the sense of silence itself, for all bright colors and bustling scenes fade away, only light and shadow exist, and the reflection conveys a meaning of vagueness of the real world or even carry on a sense of solitude and self-retrospect.

Following the conception and explanation of “silent poems” above, I will examine the “silent poems” in Li He’s poetry. As I conclude, there is no absolute silence in a well-written silent poem. As a genius poet dealing with sound, Li He managed the silence in his poems with expressions of different sounds. From the second to fourth sections of this article we know that there are three sound categories in Li He’s poetry.

When it comes to silent poems, not comparing with the supernatural or cultural sounds (the music), Li He’s sense of silence is often aroused from the sound of nature. Like other prominent poets dealing with silent poems, Li He also combines the dimension of visual, the use light, shadow and all kinds of reflections. What makes Li He different from others is that, not only is the visual sensation is applied, but also other human sensations are freely used altogether to create a feeling of silence. Not as regulated as the Buddhist silent poems, he breaks the disciplines of auditory, visual, tactile sensations, mixes them together and put the feelings to the extreme to create a silence. Unlike other silent poems of inner peace, Li He’s silence poems are full of loneliness, coldness and depression. As I discussed in section two, Li He’s inner heart is full of uneasiness and there is a necessity to cry out, therefore the high

frequency of supernatural sound in his poetry. But in his silent poems, a psychological conflict between “crying out” and “keeping silent” occurs. He wanted to be a man full of ambition and masculine as *nan'er* 男兒, but the real world threw him into a straitened circumstances as he even has no chance to join the imperial examination simply because of his father’s name.<sup>66</sup> Facing the fact, he tends to go to extremes to make his sound heard, as he does to make supernatural sounds through animals, spirits, ghosts, gods, goddess and demons, or he just represses his emotions in deep silence and immerses in sorrow and solitude. In several poems, he describes himself as “At my twentieth I cannot fulfill my ambitions, my heart is worried and withered like the decayed orchid” 我當二十不得意, 一心愁謝如枯蘭,<sup>67</sup> “There is a man in Chang’an city, at his twenty his heart has already got rotten” 長安有男兒, 二十心已朽,<sup>68</sup> “From Longxi comes a fatigued and hear-loosen guest Li Changji, after drinking he feels a narrowness in his heart” 隴西長吉摧頹客, 酒闌感覺中區窄,<sup>69</sup> and “His straw clothing is tattered and ragged in the autumn of Zhao city, chanting a poem for a whole night till the east is

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<sup>66</sup> According to Li He’s biography by Du Mu 杜牧 (803-852), Li He was inhibited to join the imperial examination because his father’s name is Li Jinsu 李進肅, which is homophonic with the name of exam *jinshi* 進士. It was considered inauspicious for Li He to take part in the exam. To help Li He, Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) wrote a famous essay “Discussion on Taboo” 諱辯 to argue with those who prevent Li He from joining the exam, but failed.

<sup>67</sup> “Song of Breaking Sorrow” 開愁歌, in *Sanjiazhu*, 121.

<sup>68</sup> “For Cheng Shang” 贈陳商, in *Sanjiazhu*, 111.

<sup>69</sup> “‘After a Drinking-party’: Zhang Che, My Elder, Once Presented Me with a Poem on This Theme. At That Time Zhang Was Serving as Adviser in Luzhou” 酒罷張大徹索贈詩時張初效潞幕, in *Sanjiazhu*, 82.

lightened” 葛衣斷碎趙城秋，吟詩一夜東方白，<sup>70</sup> all of these lines are the self-portrait of himself. This kind of depression for not fulfilling his ideals could be revealed in his silent poems.

Depending on his passive emotions, one of his silent poems of repressions turns into supernatural imagination, mostly ghost poems; the other kind of silent poems are concerned about the real world and mostly reproduce his difficult situations. I will choose a most representative silent poem of Li He to talk about the special features of his silent poems and his repressed emotions.

“The Tomb of Su Xiaoxiao” 蘇小小墓<sup>71</sup> is an outstanding ghost poem in Li He’s poetry, and a most representative poem of silence. Unlike other ghost poems in his poetry collection, “The Tomb of Su Xiaoxiao” has no sharp words such as shrill crying, distinct colors of blood, absurd faces of ghosts and demons, and the strangeness of inconsistency of the inner logic. However it successfully creates the ghostly atmosphere and reading experience for readers through silence and quietness. Instead of crying out, Li He chooses to repress the loneliness and weeping in this poem.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Su Xiaoxiao, 蘇小小 was a famous singing-girl in Qiantang 錢塘, which is Hangzhou 杭州 in nowadays. She lived during Southern Qi dynasty 南齊 (479-502). It is said she has two tombs, one is in Jiaying county 嘉興縣, which is not far from Hangzhou. The other one is said on Mount Gu 孤山 in Hangzhou. A Tang writer Li Shen 李紳 (772-846), recounts the story that sounds of music and singing could be heard coming from the tomb on stormy nights. “I ride in an oil-silk carriage, my love rides a piebald horse. Where shall we twine our love-knots? Under the pine and cypress of the Western Grave-mound.” 我乘油壁車，郎乘青驄馬。何處結同心，西陵松柏下。 In *Sanjiazhu*, 46.

- Dew upon lonely and remote orchids, 幽蘭露,
- 2 Like crying eyes. 如啼眼。
- No twining of love-knots, 無物結同心,
- 4 Misty flowers she cannot bear to cut. 煙花不堪剪。
- Grass for her cushions, 草如茵,
- 6 Pines for her awning, 松如蓋。
- Wind as her skirts, 風為裳,
- 8 Water as girdle-jades. 水為佩。
- In her oil-silk carriage, 油壁車,
- 10 She is waiting at dusk. 夕相待。
- Cold kingfisher-green candles, 冷翠燭,
- 12 Weary faint light. 勞光彩。
- Under the Western Grave-mound, 西陵下,
- 14 Wind blows rain. 風吹雨。

In this poem, Li He portrays a female ghost named Su Xiaoxiao, who was a renowned singing-girl in Southern Qi dynasty. It is a silent poem without any silent words such as “quiet” and “soundless,” but a sense of silence in the whole poem was created and perfectly received by the readers. In this short poem, Li He depicts a scene in which Su Xiaoxiao is waiting for her lover. Without crying or singing or expressing her own feelings, she just

waits in silence. To reveal the silence, the poet tried to create a sense of nothingness, that is, to create nothing out of something. We could say, in this poem, nothingness is the essence of constructing the sense of silence. Nothing of sight, nothing of sound, nothing of tactility and even the heroine is nowhere and cannot be seen, be heard, be caught, but can only be felt. Nothing is left but silence. As I discussed before, only by depending on their contrary parts, all human sensations, all of these silences can be revealed. By evoking all of his sensations, Li He created the visual silence, audio silence, tactile silence and the quiet female ghost.

The first ten lines are all picturing the ghost, her eyes, cushions, awning, skirts, girdle-jades, carriage, and candles. All of her daily objects are formed by nature, except the carriage, which could be buried together with her in her tomb,<sup>72</sup> and even the ghost herself is from nature. The heroine's identity generates the necessity to create the sense of silence in this poem. According to her name Xiaoxiao (small), one could have a rough idea of her small and light figure. Since she is a ghost who is buried in the tomb, she becomes nothing but dew, water and wind. Although she was a singing girl when she was alive, she has nothing to do with any warmth, prosperous occasions and music any more. Even the flowery ornament, "misty flower" is untouchable and could not bear to cut. The only accessories she got is the cold water jade but no love-knot. All of the visual things are mixed with tactile

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<sup>72</sup> See Frodsham's annotation 2, in *The Poems of Li Ho (791-817)*, 30.

sensation and full of coldness, as orchid, dew, misty flowers, grass, pines, wind, water, setting sun, and kingfisher-green candle, which altogether create a visual silence. Additionally, this visual silence is promoted by the dealing with lights. As it is a waiting occasion, the lights in the poem exhibit the sense of time. From “waiting at dusk” to the “weary faint light” of the “cold kingfisher-green candle,” it was the dusk to night. The sunlight has gone and only the faint candlelight was left. The darkening of light construct a sense of silence, and the glooming candlelight put the silence to the utmost. According to Hu Sanxing 胡三省, the “cold kingfisher-green candle” 冷翠燭 is the will-o’-the-wisp, “has light but with no flame” 有光無焰,<sup>73</sup> which is glittering, dim and has no warmth. The word “weary” 勞 also bears the meaning that the candle lasts for a longtime, probably for a whole night, but the waiting for her lover is just in vain. Because the action of waiting itself has a sense of stillness and silence, for a long-time’s waiting, thus the word “weary” also carries a sense of stillness.

From the perspective of sound, the silence is presented through two sentences; one of which is from the very beginning when describing the eyes of Su Xiaoxiao. There is a tension and contrast between the first two couplets. The “lonely and remote orchid” 幽蘭 bears a sense of quiet and solitude, which makes the sentence as a silent one; but the “crying eyes” 啼眼, not as normally expressed by other poets as “tearing eyes” 淚眼 (*lei yan*), seems a

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<sup>73</sup> In *Sanjiazhu*, 46.

synaesthesia expression combining visual and audio together, as tearing eyes with a sound of weeping. By contrast, the dew on orchid appears more lonely and quiet. Not from a perspective of hearing, but from the sight of those “eyes,” a sound of silence was delivered. The other comparison of sound and silence occurs in the end of the poem, which is not explicitly using any sharp sounding words like some other audio poems in his works as “whistling” 嘯, “shouting” 呼, “screaming” 叫 etc., as he only present the sight of “wind blows rain” 風吹雨. Definitely, the wind must be whistling, the rain must be pattering, and the verb “blow” makes all of the sounds heard, combined with each other and becoming even stronger. At this point, the candlelight should have been died out, leaving the Western-mound and Su Xiaoxiao in a total silence. When Schafer explaining the silence, he said, “Man likes to make sounds to remind himself that he is not alone. From this point of view total silence is the rejection of the human personality. Man fears the absence of sound as he fears the absence of life.”<sup>74</sup> Throughout the whole poem, the poet is absent from the occasion, and the only subject is Su Xiaoxiao, who makes no sounds and even does not form a valid figure. The only action for her is waiting. The absence of sound specifically refers to the absence of life here. And the only sound from the nature sharpens the contrast and makes the silence even prominent.

The other contributing element to the silence of this poem, which I

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<sup>74</sup> In *The Soundscape*, 256.

want to talk about, is the format of the poem itself. Generally, it is an ancient-style poem, not a regulated five or seven-syllables poem. Li He uses the ancient-style more freely to write his poems and is not constrained in the regulated forms.<sup>75</sup> In this specific poem, all of the lines are three-syllables except the third and fourth line. A pattern of three-syllables can make the whole poem full of a sense of isolation when chanting. It seems that the poet himself cherished every characters and saved words to make this poem. The deduction of syllables to three can also be considered as an important aspect to create the sense of silence, as if the poet did not want to make more chanting sound to disturb the quiet atmosphere in this poem. In regards to the rhyme and tones in this poem, although it has fourteen lines, the only rhymed characters are *dai* 待 and *cai* 彩, both of which belong to the 15<sup>th</sup> *hai* 海 entry of the third tone 上聲 in the *Grand Collection of Rhymes* 廣韻.<sup>76</sup> Though the poem is not rhymed, most of the lines, except 3, 5, 7, 9, are all oblique tone 仄聲 (*ze sheng*), which is falling or short when chanting. The format of the poem and the sounding of the syllables can certainly add to the sense of silence and solitude of this poem.

Knowing that Li He is a man full of depression who experienced many frustrations during his life, we can easily understand why he composed

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<sup>75</sup> See Du Guoqing 杜國清, *Li Ho*, (Boston: A Division of G. K. Hall & Co.), 98-105. He makes a statistical analysis on Li He's versification, and most of his poems are ancient-style ones. The regulated verses and quatrains are takes only 26.5% in total.

<sup>76</sup> Zhou Zumo 周祖謨 ed., *Guangyun jiaoben* 廣韻校本 [The Revised Edition of *The Grand Collection of Rhymes*], Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004.

some silent poems to represent his repressed emotions. Admittedly, most of his sound poems consist of weird and sharp sounds, from the view of natural, supernatural or cultural, and in some certain cases he also composes such silent poems as “The Tomb of Su Xiaoxiao.” One cannot just keep crying and shouting to express his inner uneasiness, sometimes the silence can be a stronger way to deliver the deepest depression.

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSION

Since Tang times, numerous of commentators and scholars have offered various interpretations of Li He's poems, especially in regards to his composing style. After Song dynasty, Li He's followers even made his steep and ghostly writing style into a conception of poetry genre as "Changji's style" 長吉體. Instead of talking about the imagery, the employment of spirits, immortals, ghosts, god, goddess, and demons, which has been discussed for so such long a time, this study examined Li He's ghostly poetry style from the perspective of sensations. Rather than talking about the color in those poems, the paper explored the usage of auditory in his corpus.

A review of poetic diction in Li He's work permits, first of all, a definition of the poet's universe of diction, through isolation of the favored vocabulary. A statistical review and categorization of the auditory diction in Li He's work permits us to know the exact percentage of Li He's auditory poems in his whole corpus and thus reveals the importance of the sonic function contributing to his writing style. Categorization also helps to figure out the inclination and tendency of how the poet applied sounds to his writings. Predominating in the auditory vocabulary are the sounds from nature and supernatural world. The culture sound, at a music banquet or a ritual occasion helps us understand how the sounds was used in his music pieces to twine the

rich, gaudy occasion into a strange, mysterious literature work.

When examining the sound from nature, one sees how the personification of objects from nature is frequently applied in Li He's poetry. Not only are these personifications used on all kinds of animals, but also wind, rains, branches, leaves, stones, the sun and moon etc.: all nature things could be a vocal one. Intensive usage of personification creates a certain sense of strange and weird, and in turn, the vocal things are also the reflections of Li He's pursuit. In addition, a high frequency of the onomatopoeic vocabulary is found in Li He's mimicking the nature world. This is because of the vividness of representation, drama, and intensity of description driving Li He to do so. For onomatopoeic vocabulary is normally used in colloquial expressions, applying these characters into his intensively carved poetry certainly creates a sense of abnormal as the weirdness and strangeness are aroused.

The impossible fulfillment of his ideal from the real world inner anxiety forced the poet to pursuit mysterious world beyond the mundane world and the supernatural sound is therefore raised. Concerning the supernatural sound, the subjects of the sound actually create the sense of strangeness. When mentioning the supernatural subject, one cannot deny that they come from the imagination world of the poet. Since the uneasiness is fierce inside, Li He just cannot keep silent and make his voice be heard through those supernatural creatures. Most of the sounds coming from the supernatural world are fierce and full of temperamental vigor, which are actually the sound from the bottom

of the poet's heart, and therefore have a sense of steepness and uneasiness.

To clarify the cultural sound, the music pieces are dragged out from all kinds of sounds in Li He's poetry. Soaking in the entertainment of music or music banquets, the poet temporarily gets away from the depressing world. As an extremely sensitive poet, Li He's attraction of music is irresistible; therefore numbers of music pieces was composed. Music often arouses the wildest imagination of the poet, as well as all of his sensations. Synaesthesia is perfectly applied in his poems concerning music. To put the auditory sound on paper, he mixed up visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile sensations altogether and put them to extreme to describe what he heard. The expression of synaesthesia usually constructs a sense of weirdness.

After elaborating on the sound poems, the contrary part of sound, the silence, is an indispensable way to explore the auditory. By firstly making clear the definition of "silence," one can get an idea of how sound and silences are created in poetry. Discussions on "silence poems" in Chinese poetry history give us ideas of how sound and silence are mingled, what is the features of a silent poem and how a poet employs visual and audio to compose a silent poem, based on which, the specialty of Li He's silent poems is revealed. Compared with the part of supernatural sound, one can see that the silent poem of Li He also has a great deal with psychological depression of the poet, thus applying a certain ghostly feature to his writing style.

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