

Cognitive-archetypal Study on Female Images in Romance ---A Case

Study of *Small World*

Li min LI

(College of International Studies, Southwest University, Chong'qing 400715; School of Foreign Languages, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an 710129; email: lilimin20@hotmail.com)

Abstract: Female is always depicted as domestic, fragile and ready to obey in romance. However, after a thousand years' development, does female experience a change? Taking David Lodge's masterpiece *Small World: An Academic Romance* (1984) as a case study, the paper aims to compare female characterizations between Medieval romance and *Small World's* from the Archetypal perspective. It finds out that some of the female characters in *Small World* such as the twin sisters and Sybil are transformed from romance archetypes and recreated by Lodge, while the rest subvert to the Medieval female archetypes. By depicting those female images as manipulator of narrative text, masters of sex, life and death decision maker of men, rebels of marriage and self-improvement female, Lodge remold the female characterizations in romance. Moreover, the twin sisters redemptive trait is deepened through their combination with the Mother archetype, their role as the hidden heroes is highlighted by the integration of the Holy Grail narrative and the hero-birth archetype, which elevate female's status and their thematic meanings in romance narrative. Readers can construe vivid and round female characters through their pre-existed romance knowledge and the textual information in *Small World*.

Key words: romance, female, archetype, *Small World*, reader

1 Introduction

Character is one of the most difficult type of narrative factors to summarize in literary works, they are ever-changing and the same archetype becomes a brand new character in different writer's works. Even in the most prototypical writing like romance, the characters are developing and evolving. Taking Britain's contemporary academic writer David Lodge's (1935-) *Small World --- An Academic Romance* (1984) as an example, he portrayed many female images who rely on female archetypes in medieval romances on the one hand, and subvert them to varying degrees on the other.

A review of Western and Chinese studies of women images in romance reveals that although Western studies on romance (including those on women images) are very mature and systematic, most of the studies based on the main female protagonist in individual works, or they studies female readership, or the studies of modern romance under the perspective of feminism. Nevertheless, female images in romance

are seldom studied in China. The only studies are Cai Yu chen's master thesis, in which he comments that women in romance "have been treated as an object in most cases"(2015:II); and in her doctoral dissertation "The Evolution and Value of the Image of the Holy Grail in Western Literature", Gao Hong mei argues that "Dan Brown re-explores the idea of female worship, aiming to create a harmony between different genders and different cultures (2017:V). However, the current Chinese and Western academic circles rarely pay attention to study the female images changing status from medieval romances to modern romances. This paper first summarizes the classification and characterizations of female archetypes in medieval romance. Then the paper makes a comparative study on the differences between medieval romance females and the females of contemporary work *Small World---An Academic Romance* (It will be abbreviated as *SW* in later passages), the cognitive processes of readers' construing processes on female characters of *SW*, and the archetypal analysis of those female images in it.

2 Female Archetypes and their Characterisations in Medieval Romance

According to all related studies, female images in medieval romances can be classified as the following five types: 1) the subject of disaster. They are the cause of a kingdom's fall, or a troublemaker who makes knights quarrel or fight. Roberta writes that "all the works of Chretien de Troyes, author of the first full-fledged Arthurian romance who set his successor's critical agenda for several generations, portray a woman or women as a catalyst for questions that profoundly trouble the courtly world" (2000:138). Thelma expresses that thought in an even direct way that "since women were implicated in the fall of the Round Table, the Arthurian kingdom might be saved if women can be placed at the periphery" (2000:xlvi). Correspondingly, the reasons for them to be the troublemaker are their beauty and attractive characterisation.

2) The incarnation of evil. By shaping women who were not accepted by society, the medieval romance is a mean to moralize women thoughts and behavior. Witches, fallen women, women who have voracious lust for sex and power are all described as evil. As a punishment, marriage is always absent from them or they married to counter-heroes. Such women are cruel, profligate, greedy and powerful. In medieval romance, women becomes increasingly weakness and fallibility, far from the normal. The medieval romance forcefully advocated that "ladies should devote themselves to the private sphere and cultivate the arts of adornment, sentimental refinement, and mothering"(Roberta, 2000:132).

3) Women were treated as objects. Although female characters in medieval romances were more than other literary genres, they existed as something desirable by the knights during their adventurous journey. The more women are aestheticized and romanticize, the more they are highlighted their role as rewards or trophy. As Sheila writes that "even the most prominent and (in)famous women of Arthurian legend are persistently dismissed, marginalized, made, at most, secondary to men's ongoing struggles to construct their knightly identities"(2000:158). They are weak, passive, obedient, silent, not allowed to think, act or have right, and they are usually the object

of sexual assault.

4) Women as means and tools for atonement and redemption. In many medieval romances, the national disaster was ultimately solved by sacrificing women, who were both expiators and redeemers in these texts. In *Percival*, it was Percival's sister who sacrificed herself and let her blood flow into a bowl that woke up the Holy Grail and healed a female leprosy patient, so that her brother and brother's companions can complete the pursuit. This type of women are usually described as pure, selfless, caring and sacrificial.

5) Women dresses up as men. They disguised as knights and fought and succeeded, but they had to live according to the code of female at last, like Britomartis in *The Faerie Queen* and Silence in *Le Roman de Silence*. This type of female might be powerful, brave, determined temporarily, but they turned to be docile, obey, gentle in their family lives. These women have won more victories than the male knights in the fights, but they eventually return to the family, and the resistance is temporary and ineffective.

3 SW's Recreated Female Characters Based on Literary Archetypes

The *SW* has depicted nineteen female characters with different personalities. Some of them are based on female archetypes in different literary works, like the twin sisters Angelica L. Pabst are the combination of two or more female archetypes from Angelica in *Orlando Furioso* and Agnes in *St. Agnes Eve* and Andromeda in Greek mythology; and Miss Sybil Maiden is the transformed figures of a prophet and a mother. By inheriting and changing some traits of those literary archetypes, these new female figures are no longer passive, weak, silent; they are independent, active, and powerful.

4 Cognitive analyses of SW's subverting female images under the Text World

Theory

In *SW*, most of the female characters subvert the archetypal female images in the medieval romances. They could be a underlying narrative manipulator who secretly controls the fate of male characters; or controller of sexual behavior who plays male's body by her will; or decider of the life and death of men; or those who can redefine one's life by getting rid of unhappy marriage; or those who can rediscover one's value in marriage by improving herself. All in all, they are a group of new era women who has the rights to control one's own life without the interference by men.

4.1 Narrative manipulator---Cheryl Summerbee

SW is 'small' because it narrows temporal and spacial distances in the globe by modern transportation means airplane. Cheryl Summerbee, a checker at London Heathrow terminal, only appears four times in the whole novel and she might be regarded as a minor character in the novel. However, each time of Summerbee's

showing up is quite vital to all the narrative chains, she might offer important information to the male protagonist Persse, or she might secretly manipulate other's life in the text world. The following paragraphs reveal how Summerbee interferes other's life by her intentional arrangement of seat.

Cheryl Summerbee, a checker for British Airways in Terminal One at Heathrow, did not, however, complain of boredom. Though the passengers who passed through her hands took little notice of her, she took a lot of them. She injected interest into her job by making quick assessments of their characters and treating them accordingly. Those who were rude or arrogant or otherwise unpleasant she put in uncomfortable or inconvenient seats, next to the toilets, or besides mothers with crying babies. Those who made a favourable impression she rewarded with the best seats, and whenever possible places them next to some attractive member of the opposite sex. In Cheryl Summerbee's hands, seat allocation was a fine art, as delicate and complex an operation as arranging blind dates between clients and lonely hearts agency. It gave her a glow of satisfaction, a pleasant sense of doing good by stealth, to reflect on how many love affairs, and even marriages, she must have instigated between people who imagined they had met by pure chance.

Cheryl Summerbee was very much in favour of love. She firmly believed that it made the world go round, and did her bit to keep the globe spinning on its axis by her discreet management of the seating on British Airways Tridents. (Lodge: 1984, 114)

Summerbee allocates passengers seat interestingly, her passionate stance at arranging seats was like a person who had been injected passion into her body. There are several metaphorical expressions towards her understanding of seat arrangement. SEAT ALLOCATION IS A FINE ART. Fine art is including painting, sculpture, music, poetry and architecture. In order to achieve beauty and meaningfulness, fine art is quite delicate and complex; while arranging seat is also delicate and complex. Having greatly influenced by all the romances she has read, Summerbee treats seat allocation as a way of generate love affairs, thus she would rather arrange the possible people to seat together, those who have the same occupation, the same age, the same likes and dislikes, and etc., whether they will generate love or not is totally depend on her allocation of seat, it is quite complex because what she can do is by her intuition and her quick observation of passengers.

SEAT ARRANGEMENT IS BLIND DATES in Summerbee's mind. Blind date is the arrangement of two people who have never met or seen each other before. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the person who arranges the date to ensure that they are a good match. The date is also very adventurous in the way that neither party knows what to expect and whether or not they will hit it off, or whether they might create a marriage. Because Summerbee has a good impression of professor Morris Zapp, she hopes Zapp may have a happy journey and she deliberately arranges Zapp

next to Fulvia Morgana, who is an extremely elegant Italian lady professor. Zapp is considered to be a knowledgeable, humorous, respected gentleman professor, and Morgana is charming and speaks good English. Summerbee puts Zapp and Morgana as the two clients of the blind date and hopefully they might have love affairs.

LOVE IS ENERGY that drives the world go around, Summerbee firmly believed that and she have instigated many love affairs even marriages by her discreet management of the seating. Zapp and Morgana is another example of her deliberate arrangement, and in Summerbee's blend world, Zapp and Morgana must have love affairs in the future. Because she judged that both of them are professors at the nearly same age, Zapp speaks English and Morgana also speaks good English. Moreover, Morgana is a very charming lady, their love will give the world more energy to make it goes around. As the metaphor text world, see figure 1 Summerbee's metaphorical text-worlds.

4.2 Controller of sexual behavior---Fulvia Morgana

As Summerbee's expectation, Zapp and Morgana has dialogues on the plane and Zapp accepted Morgana's invitation to live in her house for a night. After supper, they had a conversation about Zapp's ex-wife's novel *Difficult Times*, Morgana asked Zapp several questions that are related with the novel.

"Is it really twenty-five centimetres?" she murmured.

"Your wife's book..."

"You don't want to believe everything you read in books, Fulvia." (Lodge, 1984:134)

"That is in the book."

"Airy as a beast... You were a beast to your wife, I think."

"Ow"

"Ow? Well, for example, trying 'er up with leather straps and doing all those degrading things to 'er?"

"Lies, all lies!" said Morris desperately.

"You can do those things to me, if you like, *caro*." Fulvia whispered into his ear, pinching his nipple painfully at the same time. ... (Lodge, 1984:135)

In Gavins' book *Text World Theory An Introduction*, Gavins defines "world-switches occurs whenever the temporal boundaries of a text-world shift, causing the discourse participants to construct a new text-world through which the distinct time-zone can be conceptualised" (2007:48). In the above paragraphs, as Figure 2 shows, it formed two text-worlds, four epistemic modal-worlds and two negative modal world.

At the beginning of the dialogue, Morgana and Zapp are in the same text world, they chat freely. When the topic goes to "the book", which refers to Zapp's ex-wife's novel *Difficult Times*, they created a new "Difficult Times" text world. They began to talk about the novel. Morgana wonders whether it is true or not that his ex-wife's

description of Zapp's phallus length, and Zapp denies it by creating another negative modal world in which Zapp reminds Morgana the falsity of novel, and he thinks that Morgana will not believe the descriptions in the novel. However, Morgana is not convinced and when she sees Zapp's airy beast, she continues to create another epistemic modal world by believing that "Zapp was a beast to his wife," and the third epistemic modal world that Zapp did all the degrading things to his wife. After Morgana's construction of several modal worlds based on the novel, Zapp concludes with another negative modal world by saying "lies". Still not convinced, Morgana constructs a deontic modal world that she nearly commands Zapp to do the same to her, "can" her implies the meaning of "must" according to the context.

From the text-worlds diagram below, we may find that all the enactors in those epistemic modal worlds are Morgana, which highlights the controlling power of her during the relation. Zapp tries to deny that but it is in vain. Moreover, we can see from the above dialogues that all the actions are performed by Morgana, like a physical attacker to Zapp by "pinching" him, and Zapp is without any action and just "said desperately", the words which are used to describe women in medieval romances.

Because the two characters created different modal worlds during their conversation, and both of them are totally ignoring the other's modal world, the gap produced by different modal worlds making their talk exist at different textual levels, and thus have the humorous effects.

5 Archetypal analyses of Angelica Lily Pabst in *SW*

Although the female characters in *SW* subvert the medieval romance's code of behavior, if we observe them from the myth-archetype perspective, we might discover that to some extent the twin sisters Angelica and Lily are the embodiment of different ancient Goddesses.

5.1 Embodiment Of Anima Archetype

In Carl Jung's analytical psychology, anima is described as the unconscious feminine side of a man. Anima is a female archetype which reflects masculine, tempting, mysterious and dangerous. The twin sisters in *SW* are depicted as beautiful, independent, determined, and seductive. Both of them make a living by themselves, one as a teacher, the other as a stripper. Although their adoptive father is vice president of airlines, and he said he can provide them with money, the twin sisters would rather earn their own bread, from which reflect their economic independence.

They are determined in pursuing their ideal life. As a doctoral candidate, Angelica participates in various academic conferences to get information of having a position at college in the Boston area. Stripper is usually related with the fallen, bad or goatish girl, Lily is strong enough to disregard negative evaluations of the special job only because she likes it. By using one's own body to define one's identity and control one's destiny is an important way to realize self-empowerment, which is feminism's stand. The twin sisters are not attached to any person or influenced by any customary thoughts, they act according to their own preferences and be the real

master their lives. This hermaphrodite personality is the representation of Anima.

The mysterious and dangerous qualities of Anima are shown by her changeable images. Jung in his *The Archetypes and The Collective Unconsciousness* writes that anima could be “a siren, *melusina* (meimaid), wood-nymph, Grace, or Erlking’s daughter, or a lamis or succubus”(1968:25). As the anima of Persse, Angelica likes a sign who left traces but cannot be found, she could be a doctorate candidate, a stripper, a whore, a girl loved Persse, a hyacinth girl, and anybody in reader’s mind. The changing identity gives Persse not only the mystery and confusion, but also the desire to survive and to die.

The twin sisters are highly skilled performers, but one is recessive and the other is dominant. Angelica’s recessive performance is embodied by her using literary quotations as a clue to guide Persse’s pursuit; Lily’s dominant performance is mirrored through her combination with Andromeda’s archetype narrative and her striptease dancing show, which becomes the most attractive body show. The illusion of men’s ideal women is reflected by Anima, which leads men to fear and can’t wait to have it.

5.2 Embodiment Of Mother Archetype

Mother archetype , she usually appears as a maiden or lover. Mother has the redemptive power, caring, loving and compassion. The twin sisters are the representation of mother archetype. Angelica’s redemptive power is shown by her guidance of Persse’s stepping into the academic wasteland. *SW* describes a group of scholars who are flawed in different aspects and waiting for salvation, such as Ronald Frobisher, a writer runs out of inspiration; Arthur, the president of the MLA, has no new thoughts on literary criticism; Zapp, a completely mess in private life and so on. In order to find Angelica and inadvertently break into the MLA annual meeting, Persse’s randomly question “what do you do if everybody agrees with you?” (Lodge, 1984:319) let Arthur instantly restore his academic inspiration and correspondingly heals everyone’s flaw. At the first glance, readers might regard Persse as the hero who saves the academic small world. But after a careful thinking, without the guidance of Angelica, Persse won’t appear at this conference, and the so-called redemption won’t happen. Therefore, Angelica is the true initiators of the redemption movement, and also the mother of all things that bring new life to the academic world. At last, Angelica is the girl Persse pursuit, girl has the similar spelling with grail. The Holy Grail usually represents the female uterus, which is the birthplace of life.

Lily’s caring and compassion can be seen by her catering to Persse’s hungriness, and her “you were in love with a dream” wakes Persse and made him reconsider what he really want to have. The twin sisters power of creating new lives and redeeming the world are the archetype of a mother who has given birth to all things.

5.3 Embodiment Of Hero-birth Archetype

In his *Myth: a very short introduction*, Robert introduces Otto Rank’s *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, in which Rank summarizes the hero myth pattern:

The standard saga itself may be formulated according to the following outline: The hero is the child of most distinguished parents, usually the son of a king. His origin is preceded by difficulties, such as continence, or prolonged barrenness, or secret intercourse of the parents due to external prohibition or obstacles. During or before the pregnancy, there is a prophecy, in the form of a dream or oracle, cautioning against his birth, and usually threatening danger to the father (or his representative). As a rule, he is surrendered to the water, in a box. He is then saved by animals, or by lowly people (shepherds), and is suckled by a female animal or by an humble woman. After he has grown up, he finds his distinguished parents, in a highly versatile fashion. He takes his revenge on his father, on the one hand, and is acknowledged, on the other. Finally he achieves rank and honors. (2005: 95)

The narrative of the twin sister's birth mystery is described like this: abruptly, Angelica shows up at the annual conference of University Teachers of English Language and Literature without any registration information about herself and her university, no one knows where she comes from and where is her destination. Her mysterious identity is revealed by Persse during his pursuing process.

Angelica's appearance at the conference → Angelica's disappearance → Angelica as a stripper → Persse discovers that Angelica's twin sister Lily was the stripper → Persse's conversation with the twin sisters adaptive father, vice president of Dutch airlines → Persse knew that Mill Sybil found the twin sisters in the aircraft toilet → Persse asked Sybil who were the twin sisters when he met Sybil at the MLA conference → Sybil fell into a faint → Sybil told Arthur at the MLA dinner party that the twin sisters were their daughters.

Twenty-seven years ago, in the summer school at Colorado, the decent middle-aged virgin of the Oxford University had affairs with married Arthur and was pregnant. Afraid her identity of being questioned, Sybil placed the twin sisters in an airplane toilet to Europe and later claimed to have discovered the baby.

The whole narrative structure of *SW* seems to be looking for the Holy Grail. In fact, it has a hidden narrative structure of the birth of the hero. Arthur is the king of the small academic world, the twin sisters are the princesses. Archetypes sometimes may undergo transforms—same content with changed form, changed content with the same form, changed content and changed form. Compared with the hero-birth archetype, the twin sisters' birth mystery was narrated in a series of flashbacks. It is the change of form. The changes of contents are: 1) hero's birth becomes heroines', 2) the hero's quest does not happen to the twin sisters, instead, the pursuit is substituted by a clown-like journey of pursuing love illusion, 3) hero's revenge to his father changed into the twin sisters well get along with Arthur and Sybil.

6 Conclusion

From the worshiped goddess, to the representation of all negative temperaments, to the root of all disasters, women's status continues to decline. Until the movement of feminism, many women began to rebel openly the unjust treatment, Virginia Woolf

regards killing the angels in the house who are weak, docile, selfless and pure is her writing mission; Madonna's image makes female fans realize that the meaning of women has been freed from the binary opposition of ideological virgins – sluts. In *SW*, a series of modern romantic women who are depicted as assertive, actionable, and independent elevate female status in romance. Although the behaviors of women in *SW* are slightly exaggerated, these subversive female images have certain social significance and exemplary meaning. In particular, the redemptive trait of the mother archetype exhibited by the twin sisters fits close to the reborn theme of the novel; and the narrative function of the twin sisters is also activated by the hero-birth archetype, which allows the novel to complete the dual combination of romantic legend and heroic narrative. Throughout the reading process, readers utilize their own archetype knowledge about romantic women, or their life experience to constantly complement the character of women in *SW*, so that they become vivid and round characters in the active construction of readers.

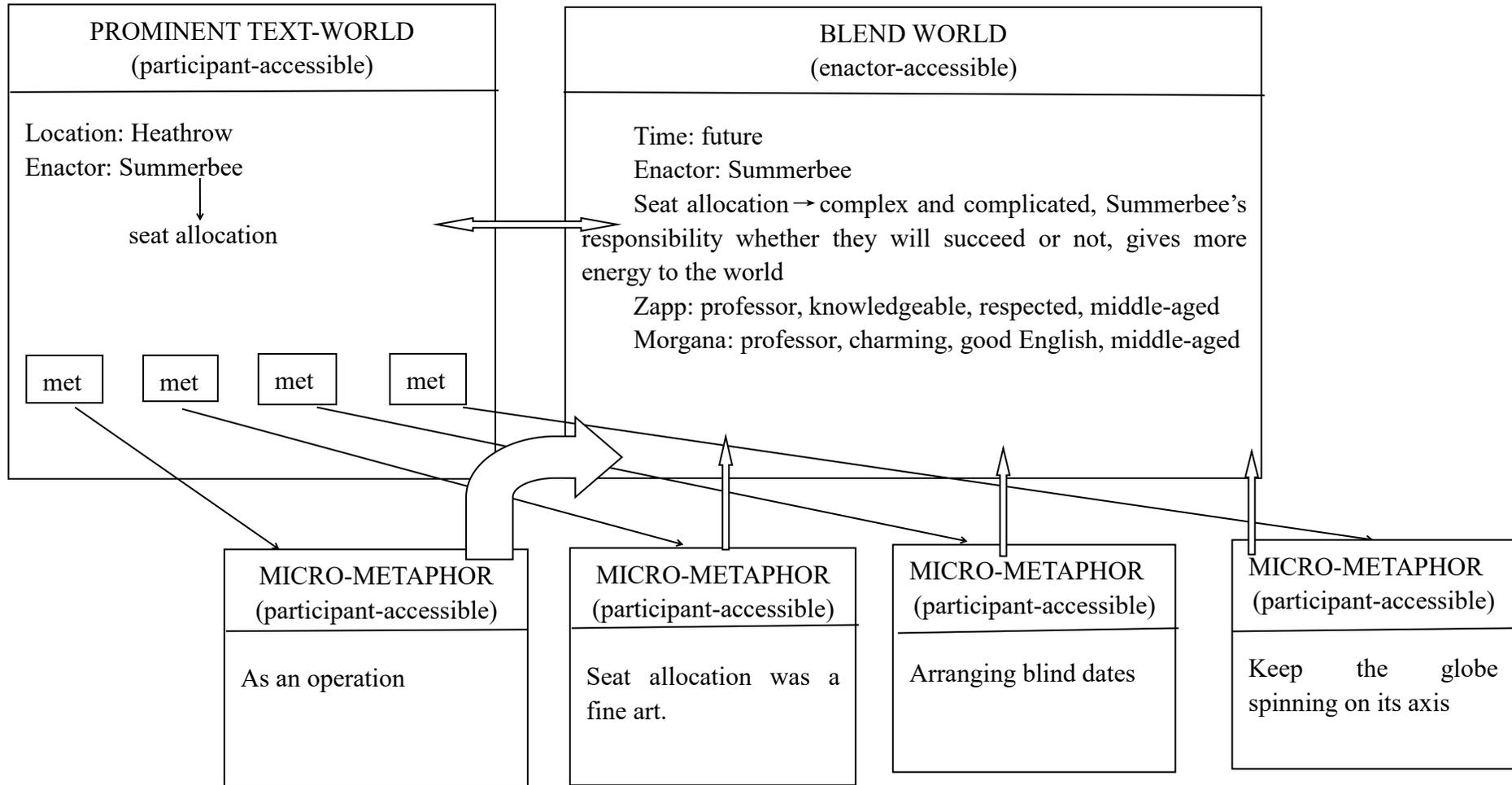


Figure 1: Metaphor

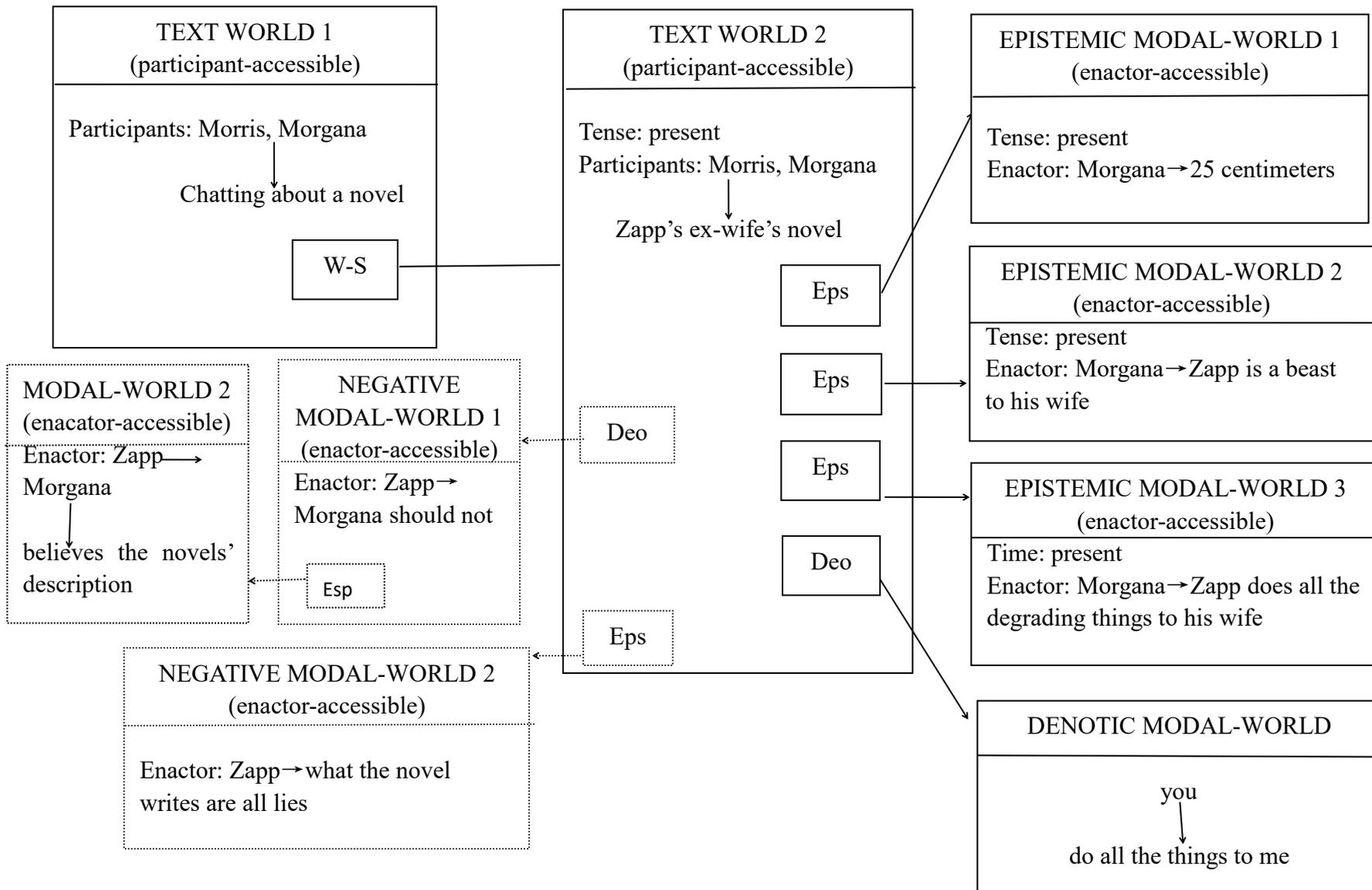


Figure 2: Multiple text-worlds and modal-worlds

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