

# Comparative Analysis of the Metaphorical Projection of Moon in Chinese-English Poetry

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**Abstract:** Poetry is a cultural treasure, with metaphors bringing new and profound layers of meaning to poetic works. The moon, a prevalent natural symbol, embodies rich cultural and symbolic significance. This study examines the metaphorical projections of the moon in Chinese and English poetry through the lens of cognitive linguistics. By analyzing moon imagery in both Chinese and English poetry, this paper uncovers the similarities and differences in how the moon is metaphorically represented in these two cultural contexts. The research indicates that the common metaphorical themes of the moon in both Chinese and English poetry are primarily psychological, including associations with motherhood and femininity, loneliness and disappointment, and love. However, Chinese poetry uniquely uses the moon to symbolize Zen Tao, eternity, and homesickness. These shared metaphors arise from similar natural and socio-cultural realities and cognitive processes, while the differences reflect the divergent philosophical orientations of Chinese and Western cultures. This comparative analysis enhances our understanding of the distinct perspectives Chinese and Western poets have on the moon, aiding readers in grasping the deeper meanings of moon imagery in poetry and fostering cross-cultural dialogue.

**Keywords:** Embodied- Cognitive Linguistics; Metaphor; Poetic Image.

## 1. Introduction

Poetry, as a gem of Chinese culture, carries the wisdom and emotions of millennia of civilization. It is not only an art of language but also an expression of the soul, an emotional sustenance, and a witness to history. The importance of poetry lies in its ability to transcend the boundaries of time and space, allowing us to converse with the ancients and feel their unique charm and sentiments. In the vast ocean of poetry, we can glimpse the features of ancient society, experience the ancients' perception of the world, and understand their reflections on life.

The image of the moon plays a crucial role in poetry. It is both an element of nature and a vehicle for the poet's emotions. The moon's image is ever-changing, sometimes bright as a mirror, sometimes hazy as a dream, quietly hanging in the night sky, witnessing countless poets' joys and sorrows.

Metaphor, as a linguistic phenomenon, has always received widespread attention from linguists, and literary scholars.

From ancient Greek rhetoric to modern cognitive science, metaphor has been regarded as an important tool for understanding and expressing human thought. In 1980, *Metaphors We Live By* was published, marking the beginning of modern cognitive metaphor theory. Lakoff & Johnson pointed out: "Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature." They also mentioned that metaphor is not just a linguistic phenomenon but a significant cognitive mode.

The Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics (ECL) perspective originates from Wang Yin's localization research in cognitive linguistics, subsequently proposing ECL, which posits that "language is embodied." Its core principles are summarized as "reality (embodiment) - cognition (recognition) - language," suggesting that language is a product of embodiment (interactive experience) and cognition (cognitive

processing). Existing research has pointed out that conceptual metaphor occurs at the conceptual cognitive level, based on embodiment, mainly achieving innovative expression of conceptual meaning through metaphor. It argues that embodiment is the basis for the generation and understanding of source and target domain concepts, the basis for the interaction and similarity generation between two cognitive domains and their concepts, and the basis for the generation and understanding of conceptual metaphor, laying the foundation for the embodied basis and logic of metaphor and conceptual metaphor (Lin Zhengjun, 2024).

This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the moon imagery in Chinese and English poetry, drawing on metaphorical data from the Chinese Poetry Database and the Complete Tang Poetry Database etc. By examining these materials through the core principles of embodied-cognitive linguistics, this research seeks to elucidate the commonalities and differences in moon imagery between Chinese and English poetry, enhance cross-cultural understanding, and advance translation studies and practice.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics

In recent years, Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics (ECL), a localized branch of cognitive linguistics in China, has received extensive attention and application. ECL emphasizes the interplay between "embodiment" and "cognition," with "embodiment" focusing on the "interactive experience" between individuals and the objective world, while "cognition" emphasizes the mental cognitive processes. Its core principle is encapsulated in the triad "Reality-Cognition-Language."

Domestic research on ECL has gone through three phases, with key research areas concentrating on its philosophical roots, theoretical framework, and practical applications (Huang Dongjing & Mao Zhujun, 2023). Initially, ECL can

be traced back to 2005, but it gained significant traction in 2014 when Wang Yin published *Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics from the Perspective of Postmodern Philosophy*. This work addressed, from ten perspectives, the need to adapt globally popular cognitive linguistics into ECL, striving to localize advanced foreign linguistic theories (Wang Yin, 2014). ECL aims to underscore materialism in philosophy through "embodiment," adhering to the view of interactive experience in language, and critiquing the linguistic theories of Saussure and Chomsky that are grounded in idealism. The "cognition" aspect emphasizes human agency and cognitive processing, opposing non-humanistic orientations (Wang Yin, 2021). As a localized form of cognitive linguistics, ECL's research is deeply intertwined with the philosophy of language. Wang Yin highlights the importance of understanding ECL from both "academic" and "methodological" perspectives and positions ECL as a continuation of Western language philosophy (Wang Yin, 2019). Zhang Zhiyi's research delves into the Chinese cognitive philosophical dimension of ECL, arguing that its ontology encompasses reality, cognition, and language, which can be traced back to traditional Chinese philosophical concepts of names and reality, words and meaning, and knowledge and action (Zhang Zhiyi, 2021).

In terms of practical application, scholars have been conducting case studies and integrating ECL with metaphor studies, foreign language teaching, translation, and multimodal research. Some researchers have explained the cognitive mechanisms and characteristics of oxymorons using the principles of embodied reference points and perspectivalization (Liu Yumei, 2024); others have examined the English translation of proverbs in "Dream of the Red Chamber" and structural symmetry based on ECL (Wang Yin, 2023); and some have applied ECL to teaching, exploring principles for teaching English grammar, vocabulary, and other aspects of foreign language instruction.

In the field of metaphor and conceptual metaphor research from an embodied perspective, Sun Yi has elucidated the similarities and differences of specific terms like "胃/stomach," "血/blood," "脚/foot," and spatial metaphors like "up/down" in Chinese and English based on ECL and cultural scripts (Sun Yi, 2023). Other scholars have focused on metaphorical imagery in poetry, such as "sorrow(愁)," or plant metaphors in Tang poetry and Shakespearean drama. Despite these efforts, there remains a significant gap in the comparative study of image metaphors in Chinese and English poetry from an embodied perspective.

## 2.2. Research on the Metaphor of the Moon in Poetry Imagery

Metaphors permeate everyday life and even the precise language of science. The more abstract the philosophy, the more it relies on metaphors for conceptual thinking. Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work, *Metaphors We Live By*, was the first to examine metaphors from a cognitive standpoint. They assert that "metaphors are pervasive not only in our language but also in our thoughts and actions. The conceptual system by which we think and act is fundamentally metaphorical" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The book categorizes metaphors into three primary types: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors.

The introduction of metaphor theory in China sparked a wave of scholarly research. This research spans multiple disciplines, including cognitive linguistics, pragmatics,

pedagogy, and semantics, focusing either on metaphorical expressions themselves or on interdisciplinary studies. The study of metaphors in poetic imagery has also garnered academic interest. Sun Xiaoyan, for instance, compares the cognitive aspects of flower imagery metaphors in English and Chinese poetry, highlighting their similarities and differences (Sun Xiaoyan, 2013). Xu Ming and Yu Linlong explore the role of intentionality in metaphorical choices for "sorrow" in Chinese poetry, examining three formal structures: part-whole, presence-absence, and unity in diversity (Xu Ming & Yu Linlong, 2024). Scholars have also investigated imagery like "chrysanthemums," "sun and moon," and "dreams." Research is not confined to specific images but also extends to particular poets, dynasties, and translations. Li Jiaying and Guo Bin categorize metaphors of "joy" in Mao Zedong's poetry into ontological, orientational, and structural types, using the conceptual integration framework to analyze these metaphors' cognitive processes and meaning construction (Li Jiaying & Guo Bin, 2024). Li Ying and Huang Qianhong analyze the strategies for translating metaphors in Xu Yuanchong's translations of Su Shi's poetry, using the framework of embodied translation studies (Li Ying & Huang Qianhong, 2023).

Regarding the metaphor of the moon in poetry, Huang Jiabin uses conceptual metaphor theory to analyze ancient Chinese poetry, identifying seven common metaphorical uses of the moon (Huang Jiabin, 2023). Hao Yang explores metaphors of the moon in Li Bai's poetry through orientational, ontological, and structural lenses. For orientational metaphors, the moon signifies status, nobility, rarity, and talent; for ontological metaphors, the moon represents a person and emotions; for structural metaphors, the moon is a plate, mirror, hook, frost, and snow. However, this study is confined to ancient Chinese poetry and does not extend to other languages (Hao Yang, 2019). Zhou Qingyan's research addresses this by comparing moon imagery in Chinese and foreign poetry, showing that poets often use the moon to express longing, homesickness, loneliness, sadness, and romantic love (Zhou Qingyan, 2020). However, Zhou's classification of metaphors is not comprehensive, and the analysis of commonalities and differences is relatively simple. This study, therefore, aims to fill this gap by deeply analyzing the commonalities and differences in moon metaphors in Chinese and English poetry from an embodied-cognitive linguistic perspective.

## 3. Commonalities and Differences in the Metaphors of the Moon in Chinese and English Poetry

### 3.1. Commonalities in Moon Metaphors in Chinese and English

As a common imagery in Chinese and Western poetry, the moon holds rich symbolic meanings. This imagery transcends regional and cultural boundaries, resonating with countless poets and lyricists. In both Eastern and Western poetry, the moon is endowed with certain metaphorical commonalities.

#### 3.1.1. Metaphor for Motherhood and Femininity

In Chinese culture, it is believed that women, like the moon, possess a gentle and delicate beauty. The fundamental symbolic meanings of the moon are motherhood and femininity. The *Book of Rites* mentions: "The sun arises in the east, the moon arises in the west; this is the division of yin

and yang, the positions of husband and wife.(大明生于东, 月生于西, 此阴阳之分, 夫妇之位也。)" Thus, the moon in the sky arises in the west, representing yin, and corresponds to women on earth. Besides literary works, ancient myths also tell the story of Chang'e flying to the moon, ultimately becoming the goddess in the moon. This myth, passed down through generations, has deepened the connection between the moon and women.

(1)玉阶生白露, 夜久侵罗袜。却下水晶帘, 玲珑望秋月。  
——李白《玉阶怨》

(2)初闻征雁已无蝉, 百尺楼高水接天。青女素娥俱耐冷, 月中霜里斗婵娟。——李商隐《霜月》

In his poetry, Li Bai links women with the moon by describing a woman gazing at the moon sitting on the silk stockings, using the moon's "coldness" to depict the loneliness and sorrow of the woman on an autumn night. Similarly, Li Shangyin, in *Frosty Moon*, juxtaposes Chang'e in the moon with the maiden in the frost, using the moon to portray the resilience and beauty of women.

(3)The moon is my mother. She is not sweet like Mary.  
Her blue garments unloose small bats and owls.  
How I would like to believe in tenderness -  
The face of the effigy, gentled by candles,  
Bending, on me in particular, its mild eyes.--The Moon and the Yew Tree by Sylvia Plath

(4)The Moon was but a Chin of Gold

A Night or two ago -

And now she turns Her perfect Face

Upon the World below - --The Moon by Emily Dickinson

In the third example, the moon is directly likened to mother, suggesting the poet's complex emotions towards her mother. "Mary" typically refers to the Virgin Mary in west poetry, a image of purity and compassion. In contrast, the poet's depiction of the "mother" moon lacks these qualities and instead portrays as cold and indifferent. On the other hand, Emily Dickinson portrays the moon as a noble and graceful woman in her poetry, where the lunar image evokes feelings of gentleness and beauty.

In all these cases, poets connect the moon with motherhood and femininity. This demonstrates that in both Chinese and English poetry, the moon can metaphorically represent women, serving as a poetic symbol of femininity.

### 3.1.2. Metaphor for Loneliness and Disillusionment

Literati and poets often use the moon to express feelings of loneliness and sorrow, conveying emotions of solitude and disillusionment.

(5)花间一壶酒, 独酌无相亲。举杯邀明月, 对影成三人。  
月既不解饮, 影徒随我身。暂伴月将影, 行乐须及春。——李白《月下独酌·其一》

(6)今夜鄜州月, 闺中只独看。遥怜小儿女, 未解忆长安。  
——杜甫《月夜》

(7)今宵酒醒何处? 杨柳岸、晓风残月。——柳永《雨霖铃·寒蝉凄切》

Li Bai's poem *Drinking Alone under the Moon* vividly portrays his contradictory emotions of loneliness and the desire for freedom through descriptions of flowers, wine, the moon, and shadows. Drinking alone, he feels deeply isolated, thus whimsically inviting the moon and his shadow to accompany him, yet ultimately realizing that "Sober, we three remain cheerful and gay; Drunken, we part and each may go his way." The poet's resignation reveals a subtle sadness amidst his attempts to find happiness in solitude, yet unable

to fully dispel his inner loneliness.

Similarly, Du Fu expresses his sentiments through moon-watching, using the depiction of the bright moon to convey his longing for his family and the helplessness and loneliness of being displaced due to war. Unlike Li Bai, Du Fu's loneliness stems more from concerns for his family and country, exhibiting a deeper sense of sorrow and helplessness.

Poet Liu Yong, using the desolate autumn night and the faint moonlight of dawn as the backdrop, expresses the sadness of parting and the pain of career disappointment. Here, the moon symbolizes the passage of time and the impermanence of life. As in the poems of Li Bai and Du Fu, the moon serves as a vehicle for expressing complex inner emotions, further highlighting the poets' feelings of helplessness and pain.

(8) Art thou pale for weariness

Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,

Wandering companionless

Among the stars that have a different birth,-

And ever changing, like a joyless eye

That finds no object worth its constancy?--To The Moon by Percy Bysshe Shelley

Similarly, poet Shelley personifies the moon, giving it human traits. He envisions the moon as tired from climbing the sky to watch over the Earth. It drifts alone among different stars, without any companions. Like an eye that constantly changes focus, the moon cannot find a place to rest. Shelley uses this metaphor of the weary and lonely moon to express his own feelings of solitude and disillusionment. Clearly, the moon, as an eternal natural phenomenon, is widely used in both Chinese and Western poetry to symbolize loneliness, homesickness, disillusionment, and other complex emotions.

### 3.1.3. Metaphor for Love

Love, across cultures, has always been a source of inspiration for countless writers, becoming a timeless theme in poetry and literature. Many poets choose to convey their emotions through the imagery of the moon.

(9)夜来幽梦忽还乡, 小轩窗, 正梳妆。相顾无言, 惟有泪千行。料得年年肠断处, 明月夜, 短松冈。——苏轼《江城子·乙卯正月二十日夜记梦》

(10)长相思, 在长安。络纬秋啼金井阑, 微霜凄凄簟色寒。孤灯不明思欲绝, 卷帷望月空长叹。——李白《长相思·其一》

(11)The rising moon has hid the stars;

Her level rays, like golden bars,

Lie on the landscape green,

With shadows brown between.

And silver white the river gleams,

As if Diana, in her dreams,

Had dropt her silver bow

Upon the meadows low.

On such a tranquil night as this,

She woke Endymion with a kiss,

When, sleeping in the grove,

He dreamed not of her love.--Endymion by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

(12)Come, walk with me  
in moonlight.

We'll rejoice the close of day.

Talk with me

as moonlight sparkles dreams

before our way.

Draw closer in the moonlight;

feel warmth within my arms ?

drink deep the cup of moonlight--Walk with me in the Moonlight by Leon Knight

Northern Song poet Su Shi conveys his longing for his late wife through the imagery of a moonlit night in his poem. He writes, "The moonlit grave, The stubby pines," suggesting that under the moonlight, he seems to see his wife's figure, thus expressing his deep sense of longing. The moon symbolizes his lost love and eternal remembrance. In Li Bai's poem, the opening portrays the poet's longing in Chang'an, depicting a solitary figure. Despite having become a high-ranking official, he still feels loneliness and emptiness. The latter part of the poem uses a dream-like pursuit to express the longing between lovers, deeply depicting the pain of separation while also subtly alluding to the poet's frustration with his unfulfilled political ambitions.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow skillfully employs the image of the moon to express feelings of eternal love, beauty, dreams, and loneliness. The moonlight symbolizes the eternity and brilliance of love, while its mysterious and dreamlike qualities convey the poet's yearning for beautiful love and the loneliness and desire caused by unattainable love. In American poet Leon Knight's *Walk with me in the Moonlight*, moonlight serves as the theme, with the poet inviting his wife to walk under the moonlight, sharing a tranquil moment, describing the two closely nestled together, feeling each other's warmth. This deepens the hope that time could stop, allowing them to forever enjoy this beautiful moonlit night and their love. The moon stands as the witness and symbol of their love.

## 3.2. Difference in Moon Metaphors in Chinese and English

### 3.2.1. Metaphor for Zen Tao

The concept of Zen Tao in this context represents a unique aspect of Chinese traditional culture. It does not simply refer to the path cultivated by monks but refers to poets understanding the inherent brightness and purity of their mind and nature through everyday activities such as meditation, rest, and walking, thereby achieving the state of enlightenment akin to the Buddha. It fosters an elegant and transcendent mindset, providing a clear and tranquil spiritual experience, and often leads to profound insights and sudden enlightenment regarding life's direction and pursuits. In ancient poetry, poets often depict the brightness of the moon and the tranquility of moonlit nights to mirror their inner clarity and purity, using the moon as a metaphor for the heart to convey the experience of transcending the mundane world.

(13)人闲桂花落，夜静春山空。月出惊山鸟，时鸣春涧中。——王维《鸟鸣涧》

(14)清风徐来，水波不兴。举酒属客，诵明月之诗，歌窈窕之章。少焉，月出于东山之上，徘徊于斗牛之间。——苏轼《前赤壁赋》

(15)初闻征雁已无蝉，百尺楼高水接天。青女素娥俱耐冷，月中霜里斗婵娟。——杜牧《初冬夜饮》

Poet Wang Wei illustrates a peaceful and leisurely setting, with osmanthus flowers falling and the spring night on the mountain appearing ethereal and silent. The rising moon startles the birds in the mountains, causing them to chirp by the stream. This scene, with birds singing under the moonlight, paints a harmonious picture of nature, embodying the poet's yearning for a natural life and his quest for a transcendent state of mind. Similarly, Su Shi paints a serene picture with a

gentle breeze and calm waters. The moon rises from the eastern mountains and lingers between the constellations of Dou and Niu. The moon's presence enhances the night's poetic ambiance, reflecting the poet's transcendent and detached mindset. The entire scene exudes a sense of elegance, ease, and harmony with nature. In contrast, Du Mu describes an expansive early winter landscape. Through the cold and beautiful imagery of moonlight and frost, he conveys the poet's inner transcendence and loftiness, demonstrating a graceful and confident attitude even in the face of adversity.

### 3.2.2. Metaphor for Eternity

The moon, a celestial body beyond Earth, has existed since ancient times. As the saying goes, "The moon waxes and wanes, sometimes full, sometimes crescent." The moon's phases, from brightness to dimness, full moon to crescent, make it both unpredictable and eternally constant. Thus, scholars and poets have come to symbolize eternity with the moon. Existing beyond the confines of time and space, the moon's cycles follow a natural rhythm, unaffected by human actions. In this sense, the moon serves as a measure of time in traditional Chinese culture.

(16)海上生明月，天涯共此时。情人怨遥夜，竟夕起相思。——张九龄《望古怀远》

(17)秦时明月汉时关，万里长征人未还。但使龙城飞将在，不教胡马度阴山。——王昌龄《出塞》

(18)明月出天山，苍茫云海间。长风几万里，吹度玉门关。——李白《关山月》

In *Looking at the Moon and Longing for One far away*, poet Zhang Jiuling portrays the moon as a constant presence visible from anywhere, transcending time and space, serving as a bond between the poet and his distant relatives, expressing his longing for them. Similarly, Wang Changling's *On the Frontier* underscores the moon's eternal presence across the Qin and Han dynasties, viewing it as a witness to the frontier wars, expressing his patriotic sentiments and heroic spirit. In *The moon at the fortified pass* Li Bai describes the moon rising over the Tianshan Mountains, later depicting the frontier landscape and the soldiers' experiences. Using the eternal moon as a focal point, he gradually expresses his emotions, contrasting the enduring nature of the moon with the harshness and futility of war.

### 3.2.3. Metaphor for Homesickness

Beyond expressing loneliness, countless poets and writers frequently use the moon to articulate their homesickness.

(19)床前明月光，疑是地上霜。举头望明月，低头思故乡。——李白《静夜思》

(20)戍鼓断人行，边秋一雁声。露从今夜白，月是故乡明。——杜甫《月夜忆舍弟》

(21)春风又绿江南岸，明月何时照我还？——王安石《泊船瓜洲》

Li Bai paints a serene night with moonlight shining like frost in front of the window. As the poet looks up at the bright moon and then lowers his head, thoughts of his hometown come flooding in. The moon's constancy connects with the poet's enduring memories of home, making the moonlight a catalyst for homesickness. Du Fu, in his poem "Moonlit Night Thoughts," begins by describing the borderlands under descending white dew. The line "The moon is brighter in my hometown" poignantly expresses his deep feelings, with the moon symbolizing his profound connection to his home. Wang Anshi, moved by the scenery, feels homesick as the spring wind greens the southern banks. The moon here

symbolizes his yearning for home, with its light representing his hope of returning.

## 4. Explanation of the Commonalities and differences between Chinese and English moon metaphors based on ECL

### 4.1. Elucidation of Commonalities

ECL suggests that language stems from experience and is a product of the interaction between human cognition and the expression of the real world (Wang Yin, 2019). Language is born from human interaction with and cognitive processing of reality. "Embodied" pertains to the interactive experiences of the real world, while "cognition" involves cognitive processing. From the table one, it is evident that in both Chinese and English poetry, metaphors involving the "moon" originate from the source domain related to the moon and its external characteristics, such as shape, color, and light. Although the target domains vary, the commonality lies in the psychological connections they establish.

**Table 1.** Commonalities in Moon Metaphors

Source Domain	Target Domain	Common Point
The feeling of moon	Motherhood and Femininity	psychodomain
Color, light and temperature of the moon	Loneliness and Disillusionment	psychodomain
Moon	Love	psychodomain

"Reality" primarily includes natural reality and socio-cultural reality. "Embodied experience" is multidimensional, encompassing physical, physiological, psychological, and socio-cultural levels. "Cognitive processing" refers to mental activities based on experiences, including image schemas (Tie Yi & Qin Xiugui, 2022). Therefore, the metaphorical projection of the moon is a result of mental processes across these various levels. The similarity in how the moon is depicted in Chinese and English poetry can be attributed to shared aspects of natural reality, multidimensional experiences, and common image schemas.

First, the moon, as the Earth's only natural satellite, has been present in the night sky for billions of years, witnessing countless changes. Human experiences of natural reality are universal; the moon's visual and sensory impacts, stemming from its shape, brightness, and cyclical changes, provide a common ground for moon metaphors across different cultures. Second, human "embodied experience" is multifaceted. Physically, the moon's brightness and coolness influence human physiology, evoking feelings of night's tranquility and chill. Psychologically, the moon's ancient constancy, its daily waxing and waning, and its distant and unattainable nature often provoke deep reflections on the passage of time and life's impermanence.

Moreover, on a socio-cultural level, the moon is imbued with various cultural significances that resonate across boundaries. In Chinese culture, the moon as a symbol of femininity began with fertility worship. The creator goddess Nüwa, depicted with the moon, is also known as the moon goddess. Additionally, the myth of Chang'e in Chinese culture has significantly shaped the moon as a symbol of women,

reinforcing its connection with feminine and maternal imagery. Similarly, Western cultures have moon goddesses. In ancient Greek mythology, the moon goddess Artemis is associated with childbirth, fertility, and nurturing, paralleling the Chinese interpretation of the moon goddess. These shared natural and socio-cultural realities, combined with multidimensional experiences, lead to cognitive processing that allows poets in both cultures to form similar image schemas of the moon, symbolizing abstract concepts like motherhood and femininity, love, and loneliness and disillusionment.

### 4.2. Elucidation of Difference

Based on the collected and analyzed corpus, it is found that in the three projection levels of the moon as a metaphor for Zen Tao, eternity, and homesickness, there are differences between Chinese and English poetry.

The metaphor of the moon for Zen Tao is unique to Chinese poetry, which is due to the influence of traditional Chinese philosophy. Daoist philosophy advocates "governing by doing nothing," promoting conforming to nature and returning to one's true self, and achieving a state of harmony between heaven and man. The moon naturally waxes and wanes, and through observing the sun and the moon, the ancients not only developed the unique Chinese yin-yang calendar (i.e., the lunar calendar) but also understood the cyclical laws of the universe. This philosophical reflection allowed them to transcend life and death, achieving a unity of heaven and man. Therefore, when encountering life's setbacks such as demotion and frustration, poets could talk about life with a smile and achieve sudden enlightenment. In contrast, Western observation and contemplation of celestial bodies are more rational, leading to a more objective and neutral understanding of the world. This rationality also results in Western poets lacking the unique transcendent wisdom found in Chinese poetry when expressing emotions about the moon.

Additionally, Chinese poetry often uses the moon to symbolize an eternal existence that transcends time and space, while Western poetry more frequently uses "star" for this purpose. For example, Irish poet William Butler Yeats' *When You Are Old* is a passionate and sincere love poem dedicated to his friend Maud Gonne. The poem is divided into three stanzas. The first stanza opens with the poet imagining his lover reading by the fireside in her old age; the second stanza contrasts this with his own deep feelings; and the third stanza writes, "And paced upon the mountains overhead; And hid his face amid a crowd of stars." The imagery of "mountains" and "stars" expands the poetic realm, allowing the poet's love to ascend to a pure and noble realm, becoming infinite and eternal. This use of stars as a metaphor for eternity stems from Western mythology and philosophy. In the Bible, God takes Abraham outside and promises him, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: So shall thy seed be." The stars symbolize Abraham's countless descendants, eternally shining in the night sky, representing God's eternal blessing and promise. This symbolism has been widely recognized and disseminated in Western culture.

## 5. Conclusion

In Chinese and English poetry, the moon serves as a significant symbol, rich in emotional and ideological depth. Metaphors, as cognitive tools, are intricately linked to poetry, providing it with profound and layered meanings. This study examines the image of the moon in both Chinese and English

poetry, drawing from sources such as the "Chinese Poetry Database" and the "Complete Tang Poems Database" to gather and analyze metaphorical expressions of the moon. Using the core principles of embodied cognition linguistics, the study elucidates the reasons behind the commonalities and differences in these metaphors.

The research reveals that the moon in both Chinese and English poetry commonly symbolizes motherhood and femininity, loneliness and despair, and philosophical reflection, with these projections focusing on psychological aspects. This is because, universally, people's experiences of reality are shaped by natural and socio-cultural contexts, encompassing multiple dimensions. These dimensions include physical, physiological, psychological, and socio-cultural layers. The moon, as a celestial body, universally exists and its physical characteristics—such as light, color, and the physiological sensation of coldness it evokes—are similarly perceived by people across cultures. Furthermore, the reverence for female fertility and the depiction of moon goddesses in ancient myths contribute to similar cognitive frameworks, facilitating metaphorical projections. The key differences lie in Chinese poetry's tendency to use the moon as a metaphor for Zen, eternity, and homesickness. Chinese poets, influenced by traditional philosophies, often emphasize a harmonious unity between heaven and man and a transcendence beyond worldly concerns, achieving spiritual enlightenment and a Zen-like state through contemplation.

By investigating the similarities and differences in the moon's metaphorical projections in Chinese and English poetry, we gain insights into the unique cognitive perspectives of poets from both cultures. This understanding also helps readers appreciate the intricate and deeper meanings of the moon's imagery in poetry.

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