



Breath, Landscape, and the Journey of the Soul: A Comparative Study of Persian, Mongolian, and Chinese Poetic Forms

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Abstract

This research is an inquiry into how concepts of breath, the landscape, and the movement of the soul inform and shape poetic forms in Persian, Mongolian, and Chinese cultures. The research is an analysis of how each tradition conceives of human experience in relation to a living world by means of three contemporary poems that evoke forms such as the ghazal, the long song, and traditional Chinese forms. The research draws on classical literary scholarship, ethnomusicology, and contemporary phenomenology to argue that concepts such as breath operate as a force of relation, landscape appears as a living force, and the movement of the soul is the work of distinct logics in each tradition. Though differing in form and philosophical approach, each conceives of poetry as a site of relation between the human and the more-than-human world around us. As these poems are brought together in this research, they reveal both their differences and their resonances, which could suggest through such approaches to inter-cultural poetics a deeper level of continuities in how humanity conceives of its place within the natural world.

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1. Introduction

Across the poetic traditions of Persia, Mongolia, and China is that poetry itself is something that enables us to relate to a world that is alive, responsive, and full of meaning. Breath, landscape, soul, these are not peripheral elements across these poetic traditions. They are, on the contrary, the central factors through which poetic experience is even made possible. Breath governs the cadences of utterance, the tones and qualities of voice. Landscape gives us the context within which the poem occurs and through which experience touches us. The journey of the soul is treated through these forces, and they are ordered and given meaning through philosophies that give each tradition its character.

Contemporary thinkers have also proposed valuable ideas to assist us in grasping the richness of these associations. Concerning the force of breath, Bachelard proposes that breath is a force that permits the imagination to move, to expand, to occupy new spaces of possibility^[4]. Abram posits that our experience of the world is embedded in a vast field of earthly presence, in which the distinction between self and world is permeable and fluid^[5]. Those ideas known to resonate powerfully with the ideals articulated in Persian ghazal, Mongolian long song and the classical Chinese poetry. In the ghazal, the force of breath is inwardly oriented, favoring the subjective voice of longing and devotion. In the long song, the force of breath expands outward into the space of the open steppeland, metaphorically becoming the song. In classical Chinese poetics qi as the animating breath of both the poet and the cosmos. The idea isn't that poets consciously align their breathing with the seasons in a mechanical way, but that the vitality of qi in a poem should resonate with the natural cycles that govern all life.

The three poems written in a contemporary style under analysis in this study find their source of inspiration from these genres and hold promise for an analysis of how to best connect these resonances to a modern-centric mode. One of the poems is reminiscent of the wide vocality and wind-bound motion found within Mongolian Long Songs, wherein the voice travels across the wide-open spaces of the steppes and merges formally with the landscape itself ^[1]. Another is reminiscent of the contemplative and aspirational movement found within Persian lyric poems, wherein the soul seeks union through a constant mode of separation and longing ^[2]. Finally, there is a sense of imagism and a sense of connecting and separating forces found within early Chinese poetry, wherein natural phenomena function as signs of ethical and cosmic order ^[3].

The current research is also based on key studies in Chinese literary thought ^[9, 10, 11, 12, 13], ethnomusicological and literary studies of Mongolian long song ^[14, 15, 16, 17, 18], as well as core studies of Persian lyric verse and Sufi aesthetics ^[19, 20, 21, 22, 23]. In addition, it incorporates more general studies in world literature and relational poetics, which highlight issues of movement between cultures, peoples, and ideas ^[7, 8]. The paper argues, through this body of research, that there is a shared conception in all three traditions of a meeting place between the human and a living cosmos, with breath as a meeting place between inner and outer world, with landscape as a meeting place in matters of meaning, and with the poem as a journal of movement of the soul in space, relation, and transformation in accordance with cultural philosophies which create the unique voice in each tradition.

In bringing these traditions into dialogue, the study seeks to show how poetry may disclose a deeper continuity of human experience with the natural world. The tri-cultural cycle here at the center of analysis testifies that breath's momentum, landscape's presence, and the soul's journey are not confined to any single culture. They are shared human concerns finding expression through different forms, different philosophies, and different manners of imagining the world. The comparative approach followed here is sensitive to their differences while tracing the subtle threads connecting them. This study will bring these traditions into dialogue with one another in order to demonstrate the dialogue of breath, landscape, and the traveling of the soul as part of a shared poetic language. Through the close reading of the three poems together, the analysis will highlight the unique aesthetic logic of each tradition and the underlying ways in which they connect to one another as well in ways of illuminating one another in lights of our shared human desire to move into relation and to create meaning and change within our souls.

This paper maintains that Persian, Mongolian, and Chinese poetic traditions share a common interest in breathing, landscapes, and the movement of the soul; however, their unique aesthetic logics can be seen when these traditions are compared to each other in terms of their deeper connections with the way people think about their own relationship to the living world.

Although this paper brings these traditions into conversation with one another, it also remains sensitive to the individual historical and cultural contexts in which each tradition developed. The next sections briefly outline the main pieces of scholarship in each of these traditions and then conclude by reading the three poems in comparison with one another.

2. Literature Review

To ground this comparative inquiry, the study draws on scholarship from classical poetics, ethnomusicology, and modern theoretical reflection.

The exploration of breath, landscape, and the movement of the soul in Persian, Mongolian, and Chinese poetry entails drawing upon a variety of research literatures, including classical scholarship, ethnomusicology, poetics, and more contemporary research in perception and relationship. These literatures offer the foundation for understanding the way in which each of these cultures formulates its own understanding of poetic experience.

In researching classical Chinese poetry, academics highlight the close association between poetic forms, natural imagery, and cosmological order. For instance, Owen has demonstrated the association of Chinese High Tang poetry with the articulation of emotional and ethical themes through natural imagery to highlight a personal as well as a universal sense of poetry experience ^[9]. Watson has also studied the themes of lyricism through evolutions of shih poetry from the second to the twelfth centuries, illustrating its use of brief imagery and tonality to capture a state of mind that is inevitably entwined with natural landscapes ^[10]. The guided anthology by Cai offers a perspective into the technical and philosophical basis of Chinese poetry themes like 'qi,' seasonal change, and ritualism ^[11]. Kern has also researched the Shijing collection of Chinese poems, influencing reader awareness of the emergence of early Chinese poetry from a ritual context where natural phenomena are necessarily associated with astrological harmony ^[12]. Owen's research contributes to a general understanding of Chinese perspectives on the association between poetry, nature, and morality ^[13]. The studies collectively suggest that Chinese poetry treats natural landscapes as being lived and breath as a symbol of natural rhythms.

Attending to the scholarship on Mongolian long songs, we find a different, though complementary, understanding. Ethnomusicologist Sheila Pegg's work on the long song as a vocal music, achieved by stretching the breath over long melodies, captures the soundscape of the steppe, its expansive space, and the depth of the landscape in the long song's vocal production and delivery. Similarly, in her Garland Encyclopedia of World Music articles, she reflects on the long song's place within the wider cultural landscape, where music, space, and identity are closely linked. Gender studies and literature on Mongolian literature, as collected in Bawden's anthology, points to the oral and performative aspects of Mongolian poetry and the voice as a bridge between the human and the environment. Heissig's work on Mongolian religions offers insights into some of the religious beliefs that underwrite the long songs, including the shamanic and animistic understanding of wind, sky, and space. Similarly, Sheila Pegg's work on the use of the breath in the long songs points to the ways in which the long songs use the breath to create a sense of movement, distance, and the presence of the earth.

Persian poetic scholarship offers yet another perspective on breath and the soul. Arberry's foundational study of classical Persian literature traces the development of poetic forms centered on longing, devotion, and the search for union with the divine ^[19]. Lewisohn's work on Sufi musical traditions brings into view sama' as a practice wherein breath and rhythm coupled with spiritual yearning focus ^[20]. Schimmel's

study of Persian imagery discloses the manner in which poets avail themselves of natural symbols—dew, wind, and fields—to express states of mystical transformation^[21]. Meisami's analysis of medieval Persian poetry underscores the structural and symbolic coherence of the ghazal, each couplet a moment within the unfolding of the soul's journey^[22]. Losensky's research on individuality in Persian poetry in both Safavid and Mughal times provides further insight into how imitation and innovation can effect the evolution of a specific form of spiritual and emotional expression, which is the ghazal^[23]. Ultimately, all of these studies point out that Persian poetry is about the breath as a longing from within, landscape as symbol, and the soul's travels as separation and return.

However, contemporary theoretical writing offers a wider conceptual approach to these traditions of writing. Bachelard's meditation on air and movement may be seen as a phenomenology of breath and the role that breath plays in terms of imagination and poetic creation^[4]. Abram's research into perception and the more than human world may be regarded as a philosophical basis for understanding the poet's relationship with the landscapes depicted^[5]. Eliot's essays on criticism and poetic tradition suggest the significance of connecting past and present, as well as change and progression across different cultures of writing^[6]. Damrosch's theory of a worldwide literature may be regarded as connecting forms across cultures, a process which is clearly important for a comparative research endeavor of this type^[7]. Glissant's theory of relation may be regarded as a basis for considering how different traditions might be combined without negating their individuality^[8].

The three current poems that are the focal point of this analysis are drawn from these traditions and are open to being read in a context that is historical and philosophical. The literature that has been presented here forms a backdrop that will be conducive to understanding how breath, landscape, and the journey of the soul are represented in each tradition and how these commonalities can be juxtaposed. The literature has shown that, although there are distinct differences in each of the three traditions in terms of style and philosophy, each of these traditions is dedicated to an exploration of the dynamic relationship that can be seen to exist between humanity and the living cosmos.

3. Methodology

3.1. Textual and Formal Analysis

This research will take on a comparative method with a text-centered and phenomenological approach in analyzing the theme of breath, the concept of landscape, and the journey of the soul in three contemporary poetic pieces based on traditions of Persian, Mongolian, and Chinese literature. Such an approach will be molded in a manner that honors and respects each of the traditions without compromising the value of cross-cultural interaction and dialogue, as discussed in the previous section.

The first step of the analysis is concerned with the internal structure of each poem: the use of rhythm, imagery, and the interplay of voice and environments is taken into consideration, and the method draws on the principles of classical poetics according to each tradition. Thus, for the poem drawing on Mongolian long song tradition, elements such as the movement of vocal gesture, imagery of wind, as well as the sense of space itself are taken into consideration

according to ethnomusicological studies^[14, 15, 18]. For the poem drawing on Persian ghazal tradition, the movement of longing, imagery of nature as symbol, and the directedness of the lyric voice are examined according to studies on Sufism and its aesthetics^[19, 20, 21, 22, 23]. For the poem drawing on classical Chinese verse tradition, elements such as the balance of imagery, imagery of nature as symbol of seasons and cosmologies, and the ethical aspect of imagery of nature are examined according to studies on Chinese lyrical patterns and ritual aesthetics^[9, 10, 11, 12, 13].

3.2. Comparative Framework

The second stage is a process of comparative reading that seeks to understand points of resonance and divergence between the three traditions. The basis for comparison is deeper and is related to concepts and ideas rather than specific similarities. The study will consider the ways each of the traditions conceives of breath as a poetic concept, the ways the idea of landscape is related to concepts of relation, and finally the ways movement related to the soul is expressed through form and image. The approach to comparison is deeply embedded in theories of a world literature that do not require hierarchies and homogenization but relate to concepts of transformation and circulation^[7, 8].

3.3. Phenomenological Orientation

The third stage involves phenomenological reflection and is supported by modern theoretical works focusing on perception and imagination and how they relate to reality in general. The phenomenology of Bachelard's thoughts on air and movement is one way of understanding how breathing affects poetry and its imagination^[4]. Reflection on Abram's views on perception reveals one way of understanding how the poems make use of their interaction with nature, which is alive^[5].

What can be noted is that this work maintains its constant commitment to each of these traditions on its own terms. The poems are not judged by any singular universal standard, but they are interpreted in terms of the cultural and philosophical perspectives which underlie their respective forms. Simultaneously, the comparative approach evinces itself to be able to discuss these perspectives to each other.

Methodology: The methodology is both historically informed, textually precise, and philosophically aware, permitting this exploration to be nuanced on the subject of breath, landscape, and the soul's journey within three poetic worlds.

Phenomenology as an approach is particularly fitting for cross-cultural analysis of poetry. Phenomenology emphasizes experience rather than cultural symbols. Experience is something that one finds in all cultures. Phenomenology is important in the analysis of poetry as it allows one to concentrate on experiences such as breath, landscape, and movement of the soul. In this regard, the phenomenology allows analyzing experience and focusing one's attention on what each of the poems says about being in the world, how a breath is meaningful, and how one experiences the landscape and reacts to it along with the soul's movement in this or that landscape. The phenomenological approach is effective here as it allows regarding the specificities of Persian, Mongolian, and Chinese cultures all at once.

3.4. Ethical Note on Cross Cultural Poetic Practice

Such use of Persian literature, Mongolian culture, and Chinese heritage demands respect and consideration. These poems in the study offer not appropriation of those genres but attempt to learn from them and to appreciate these genres with all their content. When it comes to writing of any culture other than our own, it demands humility from us. This demands us to listen to those genres and not attempt to appropriate them by any means; instead, it demands us to appreciate their scope and limit of our knowledge at the same time. The present creative piece emerges from our long exposure to these genres and our admiration and will to be part of it.

3.5. The Contemporary Poems as Primary Data

The contemporary poems of the Persian, Mongolian, and Chinese traditions employed in this research play the role of primary data for the comparative method. Their role is not to simulate the classical poems but to examine the possibilities for reviving the aesthetic principles of the Persian, Mongolian, and Chinese traditions but with a contemporary creative purpose. The long song poem developed as a response to the aesthetic principles of breath extension, spatial openness, and voice-landscape relationships. The ghazal poem also developed as a response to the aesthetic principles of cyclical movement of longing, natural imagery symbolism, and the introspective voice of the poem. The Chinese poem also arose as a response to the aesthetic principles of concision, natural imagery association with the seasons, and breath-linking with natural rhythm.

Clearly, this is not intended to be historically accurate work, but it provides a space within which these classical ideals can be tried, interpreted, and negotiated. The fact that these poems are contemporary pieces also provides a way to analyze the continued applicability of these classic aesthetics, even within more contemporary creative circumstances. The use of these poems, as primary research, allows them to be approached from a more internal perspective, rather than looking purely at external research. This is useful towards the overall aims of the research, whereby there is a desire to understand how breath, landscape, and the movement of the soul can be interacted with, without losing their individuality.

3.6. Author's Note on the Poems

The author is conscious of the traditions in which these poems were written, having researched their historical, musical, and philosophical grounding with care. The poems were written as a response to and with extensive engagement with the literary traditions in which they were written: Mongolian Long Song, Persian Ghazal, and Early Chinese Poetry. The fact that the author is not fluent in either of these two languages means that the poems in them were written with the help of AI powered language applications. The intention of the poems, however, is entirely the author's own, and it is submitted that using AI was a pragmatic means of engaging with these traditions in a spirit of respect for their intricacy.

4. Comparative Analysis

The three poetic traditions dealt with in the study suggest different though evocative ways of conceiving of breath, of landscape, and of the movement of the soul. While each suggests its own aesthetic particularities, all three forms

involve an investment in exploring the relationship between human emotion and a world of animate matter. The discussion of the three contemporary poems in long song form, ghazal form, and classical Chinese form will explore how the three elements of breath, landscape, and the movement of the soul operate in combination.

4.1. Breath as Form and Force

The most obvious area of difference is that of breathing. In the Mongolian long song, the breathing is expansive and outwardly focused. The poem inspired by the long song features imagery that utilizes the concept of wind to create the feeling of a voice carrying across a wide area, and its syntax is long and phrased to emphasize the sense of long song. This fits in line with the ideals presented in the ethnomusicological theory of long song, in which the use of breathing creates a sonic symbol of the steppes, based on the physical environment and the emphasis placed on the use of space.

In contrast, breathing in the poem that adopted Persian Ghazal form is depicted as an internal action. The meter appears to be shorter and more cyclical, evoking the emotional cycle of longing and return that is so characteristic of Ghazal poetry^[2]. Studies have shown that, as is the focus in Persian lyricism, breathing is, within Ghazal, also an expression of spiritual longing, an action towards faith that is enacted through the fervor of the lyric voice^[19, 20, 21, 22, 23].

The poem, modeled after traditional Chinese form, offers a third perspective. Breath is neither expansive nor turning inward but rather balanced and responsive to the cadences of the larger natural world^[3]. Academic research into Chinese poetics has demonstrated that breath is conceived as being part of the larger movement of qi, which links the human body to seasonal and cosmic cycles^[9, 10, 11, 12, 13]. The succinct images and rhythmic cadence of the poem offer a sense of harmony with the larger environment.

The theme of breath is dealt with differently by each poem, but such is their simplicity that these differences clearly shine through. The Mongolian poem looks out into space, while the Persian looks inward, and the Chinese breathes contentedly into nature.

4.2. Landscape as Presence and Partner

The modes through which it is used vary from one tradition to another but remains core in its understanding and interpretation. For instance, in the Mongolian long song tradition, the presence and role of land/landscape can be seen as expansive and open, affecting and determining how it is used and expressed. For instance, when it is mentioned as wind, plains, and distance in the poem, it speaks of the cultural belief and understanding of the land as being in association and interaction with it as a live partner in expression, as shown in ethnographic research that indicates that in performance, land is depicted as being able to listen or carry sound^[14, 15, 18].

The landscape of the Persian ghazal is symbolic rather than spatial. The field, the dew, and the presence of the beloved are metaphorical rather than locational. It has also been found in the studies on the imagery of Persian that the natural elements are used symbolically to represent mystical experience, where the world around the lover reflects the inner experience of the soul^[21, 22]. The landscape in the poem reflects the intimate and emotionally charged nature of the

imagery.

We see, in the Chinese poem, a landscape that is imbued with ethical as well as cosmological significance. The dew, the fields, and the seasons are not metaphors but expressions of a world in which natural phenomena are the embodiment of moral order^[3]. In interpretations of early Chinese poetry, emphasis is given to the idea that the landscape is apprehended as part of a ritualistic philosophical system in which human emotion is articulated through specific images that are evocative of meaning^[9, 10, 11, 12, 13]. The landscape in the Chinese poem is therefore neither symbolic nor expansive but part of a worldview that apprehends nature as a teacher.

4.3. The Soul's Journey Across Traditions

The mode in which the movement of the soul is expressed in each poem is unique and solely contingent upon the philosophical underpinnings of the tradition from which the poetry emanates. In the Mongolian long song poem, the movement of the soul has an outward and horizon-seeking theme. The imagery used in the poem evokes a movement of the soul through space and under the guidance of the wind and the open sky^[1]. This is based on the cultural importance accorded to movement, freedom, and the human life-land scan^[14, 16, 17].

It shows that in Persian Ghazals, the soul is on an inner, cyclical journey. This recurrent movement of separation and union in the poem is in accordance with Sufi beliefs about the soul's journey to union with the divine^[2]. In studying Persian lyricism, it is found that in Persian Ghazals, the soul's journey is portrayed through emotions and symbols, as well as presence and absence^[19, 20, 21, 22, 23].

The Chinese poem delineates the soul's journey not as a motion in space but as alignment. The falling of dew on the field is not a longing but an omen of natural and ethical restoration^[3]. Chinese poetics studies further claim that the work of the soul consists in attuning itself with the rhythm of the world, not in fleeing from or surpassing that world^[9, 10, 11, 12, 13]. The calm and balanced imagery of the poem echoes this orientation.

4.4. Points of Convergence

Despite the differences between these three traditions, there are some intersecting points of resonance. All three traditions perceive breath as mediating between human beings and the world. All three perceive landscape as an entity with an impact on human feelings and spirituality. And all three perceive the soul's journey as one of relating in some manner: outwards, inwards, in harmony.

These convergences reinforce the broader theoretical perspectives of a world literature and related concepts of a relational poetics, as they focus on the movement of forms and ideas across cultural borders^[7, 8]. The tri-cultural cycle represented within the framework of this particular text indicates that poetry is a highly effective means of expressing shared aspects of the human condition through distinctly different aesthetic and philosophical forms and frameworks with regard to breath, the landscape, and the journey of the soul.

4.5. Primary Texts

The following poems serve as the primary texts for the comparative analysis which follows.

Өндөр тэнгэрийн хаяанд
урьхан цагаан үүлс сунана.
Сэрүүн өглөөгийн салхи
зөөлөн дуугаар намайг дуудна.

Уудам талын хөвөөнд
ганцхан шүүдэр дусал гялалзана.
Тэнгэрийн нууц амьсгал
газарт бууж ирсэн мэт.

Алсын замд гарсан сэтгэл
салхины жигүүрт сууж хөвнө.
Доторх нууц гэрэл минь
оддын зүг аажмаар асна.

Хөх огторгуйн дор
намрын намуухан дуу эгшиглэнэ.
Уулсын сүүдэр урсаж
сэтгэлийн гүн рүү уусна.

Хэн замд гарна вэ,
сэтгэл нь үнэн байвал,
замын төгсгөлд
амар амгалан тал нээгдэнэ.

At the far edge of the high blue sky,
soft white clouds stretch and drift—
the cool wind of morning
calls to me in a gentle voice.
At the rim of the wide open plain,
a single drop of dew glimmers—
as if the secret breath of heaven
had descended quietly to the earth.
A heart that has set out on a distant road
rides upon the wings of the wind—
the hidden light within me
slowly rises toward the stars.
Beneath the vast indigo sky,
the soft autumn song resounds—
the shadows of the mountains flow
and dissolve into the depths of my soul.
Whoever sets out upon the path—
if their heart is true—
will find, at journey's end,
a plain of peace opening before them.

Fig 1: Long Song Poem (contemporary composition inspired by Mongolian long song principles)

The poem uses of the expressive qualities found within Mongolian long song, in which breathing, wind, and space are all integral to the flow of sound. Images of sky, plains, and space itself are also characteristic, as Mongolian culture

emphasizes spaciousness and expansiveness. The elongation of phrases and images can be seen in this poem, in which it describes the soul as a traveler moving outward in space, led by wind, light, and the expansiveness of plains.

غرل صوفیانه (نسخه پاک‌سازی‌شده و منسجم)
 بازگشتِ شیم به دشتِ دوست
 سحر شیم ز لطفِ حق پدید آمد به دشتِ دوست
 نسیم صبح بر جان‌ها دمید آمد به دشتِ دوست
 رهرو تنها به نور یار نهد ز خویش اراد
 که آن نور از دلش بالا جهید آمد به دشتِ دوست
 ز سنگ و آب آواز نهد می‌گفت پنهانی
 که جان خسته باید برکشد آمد به دشتِ دوست
 خوشه‌های خمیده در نسیم فجر روشن
 چو اهل ذکر جان را آفرید آمد به دشتِ دوست
 ز شاخ آواز مرغ و نور چرخ نیلگون
 دل سالک را به خاموشی کشید آمد به دشتِ دوست
 ای محبوب، هر که در طلب افتاد از دل صادق
 به پایان راه خویش دويد آمد به دشتِ دوست

At dawn the dew appeared by Mercy's
 grace in the Beloved's field.
 The morning wind breathed life into the
 souls in the Beloved's field.
 The wanderer, freed from self, rose by the
 hidden Friend's pure light,
 for that light lifted him upward from his
 heart to the Beloved's field.
 From stone and stream a secret voice kept
 whispering softly:
 the weary soul must rise and spread its
 wings toward the Beloved's field.
 The bending ears of grain in the bright
 wind of early dawn,
 like saints in remembrance, shaped the
 soul within the Beloved's field.
 From branch to branch the birdsong rose,
 and the indigo sky's glow
 drew the seeker inward, into silence, in
 the Beloved's field.
 O Beloved, whoever enters the path with a
 truthful heart
 will run to the end of their destined road—
 into the Beloved's field.

Fig 2: Ghazal Poem (contemporary composition modeled on Persian lyric principles)

The style of this poem follows the inner, devotional pattern of the Persian ghazal form. The individual couplets represent a glimpse of longing, rebirth, or insight that contributes to a repetitive process of discovery leading to the Beloved. The natural elements of dew, wind, grain, and birdsong function

as a symbol of mystical transformation. The poem demonstrates the Sufi perspective of the way of the soul. The separation, remembrance, and return define the emotional and spiritual process of the individual couplets.

朝露在田
 和風動草
 行子于野
 懷土其好

The morning dew, pure-fallen, lies on field;
 Stirred by soft Zephyr, meek the grasses yield.
 Alone across the plain the wanderer moves,
 His breast yet warmed with love of native soil.

上水湯湯
 石間洋洋
 子行求道
 禮從其行

Broad as they roll, the upper waters spread,
 Through stones they glide with solemn, murmuring
 sound.
 The path he treads, in search of righteous ways,
 By ancient rites is shaped and governed still.

稻穗在野
 朝風其至
 子學其容
 古言在心

In stillness stand the rice-ears on the wild;
 Their heads the dawn-wind lightly bends and bows.
 His bearing thus he learns with humble grace,
 And deep within his heart keeps utterance old.

晨鳥在林
 天光在上
 行子既返
 露反于田

From bough to bough the woodland songbirds lift
 Their notes, while Heaven's radiance, calm, descends.
 Then turns the wanderer back the way he came,
 And on the field once more returns the dew.

Fig 3: Chinese Poem (contemporary composition guided by early Chinese poetic sensibility)

The poem reflects the clarity, balance, and ritualism which were typical of the earliest form of Chinese poetry. The depiction of the imagery of dew on the fields, water in motion, the winds, and the birds achieves clarity that favors simplicity over symbolism. Within the scheme of things, the natural imagery has a sense of ethical and cosmological importance. By no means is the wanderer's travel a search for the transcendent, but a search to fall into rhythm with the seasons that have a sense of ethical order. The return of dew to the fields reflects the return of the traveler. These comparisons together forms the ground for a closer

examination of how each poem embodies the aesthetic principles of its tradition.

5. Close Reading

The three modern poems, which form the focus of discussion in this paper, raise questions about their inner structure, imagery, and how they reflect the specific canons of particular literary traditions. Each of them demonstrates the role of breathing, landscape, and the soul's movement in a particular cultural context. The close analyses of the poems come with a discussion of the interrelated comparative

questions raised in the introduction.

5.1. The Long Song Poem: Breath Across Open Space

The Mongolian long song that is being sung here commences with an invocation of wind and dawn light, which evokes an environment of openness accompanied by movement as depicted in ^[1]. The speech rhythm is prolonged, and the imagery is sung slowly. This is similar to the nature of long song performance, where the breath is extended across wide melodic movements that relate to the vastness of the steppe landscape ^[14, 15, 18]. The rhythm of the poem indicates a voice that does not hurry but moves, allowing each vision to resonate before the next is heard.

Landscape functions as an active presence. The plain is not a backdrop but a participant in the poem's unfolding. The wind seems to respond to the voice, and the horizon becomes a measure of emotional distance. Ethnographic studies of long song describe this relational dynamic, where the singer's breath is shaped by the land and the land is animated by the singer's voice ^[14, 18]. The poem captures this interplay by allowing the environment to determine the scale and direction of its imagery.

The movement of the soul in this poem can be seen as one of movement and space searching. There is no movement toward internal exploration. The movement is meant to be one of openness, as it is defined by this and the need to encounter, not escape, something. Again, this can be seen as a function of Mongolian culture and their emphasis on space, and the close association between humanity and the earth in this tradition ^[16, 17].

The emotional tone of this poem may be seen as expansive in nature, due to the freedom of movement associated with going along with the wind in plainlands.

5.2. The Ghazal Poem: Breath as Longing and Return

The poem written in the form of the Persian Ghazal has a completely different tone. In its form, it is almost cyclical, with each two lines being a moment of emotional power in the build towards longing and return ^[2]. The rhythm is shorter and more focused than in the long song poem, but again reflects the introspection of the Ghazal tradition. The breath in use here is not expansive, but more intimate in its movement between longing and being satisfied ^[19, 20, 21, 22, 23]. Landscape appears as symbolic imagery rather than literal description. Dew, field, and beloved are not physical locations but metaphors for states of spiritual and emotional transformation. Schimmel's work on Persian imagery shows that natural elements often serve as signs of mystical experience, where the external world mirrors the inner movement of the soul ^[21]. The poem follows this logic by using dew as a symbol of return, renewal, and the delicate presence of the beloved.

The way of the soul in this poem is a journey that is both inner and circular. The journey is not one on which the soul is traversing space, but one on which it is passing through different emotional and spiritual conditions or stages. The form of the poem is concerned with the Sufi idea of the journey of the soul in which longing is not something to be eliminated but is a form of being which is drawing the soul towards the Divine ^[20, 22]. The emotional power of this poem stems from the tension between separation and union which is expressed in the imagery and the rhythm.

5.3. The Chinese Poem: Breath in Harmony with the World

The third poem that is written in classical Chinese verse is another mode of poetic experience. Its imagery is concise, its rhythm balanced, and its emotional tone calm and reflective ^[3]. Breath in this poem is aligned with the rhythms of the natural world rather than directed outward or inward. Chinese poetics emphasize that breath is understood as part of the flow of qi, which connects the human body to seasonal and cosmic cycles as discussed in ^[9, 10, 11, 12, 13]. The poem's measured cadence beautifully reflects this proposed alignment, creating a sense of harmony between voice and environment.

Landscape is presented with clarity and precision. Dew, field, and morning light are not symbols but manifestations of a world in which natural phenomena carry ethical and cosmological meaning. Kern's research on the Shijing shows that early Chinese poetry emerged from ritual contexts in which nature was understood as a guide to moral cultivation ^[12]. The poem gently follows this tradition by presenting landscape as a site consist of order and renewal, where the return of dew signifies the restoration of balance.

The path of the soul in the poem is not a path of moving, but one of alignment. The returning dew to the field is the natural process and the reflection of the rhythms of the world. The poem shows the view that the work of the soul is a process of harmonizing with the rhythms of the world, not moving beyond them or trying to transcend them. This echoes the worldview of the Classical Chinese, in which emotional expression cannot be separated from ethical and cosmological awareness ^[9, 13].

These close readings prepare the ground for the broader comparative insights developed in the conclusion.

6. Theoretical Synthesis

The three poetic traditions under investigation through this current study demonstrate specific ways of conceiving a connection between breath, landscape, and soul. However, within a dialogue of these traditions, one finds a common conception of what poetry is and what it can offer as a place where the human experience meets a living world. The theoretical synthesis provided within the following section attempts to combine the ideas of classical scholarship, phenomenology, and the close readings of the three contemporary poems. It seeks to demonstrate that all three traditions arrive at a conception of a relational experience of poetry, albeit through forms and media and philosophical beliefs.

6.1. Breath as a Mode of Relation

Breath is the most immediate expression of the poet's presence in the world. In the Mongolian long song, breath is extended in space and becomes a bridge between the singer and the land ^[14, 15, 18]. In the Persian ghazal, breath becomes a space for longing and religious return ^[19, 20, 21, 22, 23]. In the classical Chinese poem, breath becomes associated with the rhythms of qi and partakes in a larger flow of the universe ^[9, 10, 11, 12, 13].

It is obvious that these are also the sorts of fundamental difference that are grounded in varying cultural understandings of the self, the voice, and the world. Nevertheless, all three philosophical traditions agree that

breath is a relational power. This means that it is never contained within the self. It is a power that extends outward, be it to the horizon, to the divine, or to the natural order. Perhaps Bachelard's reflections on the nature of air and movement serve to underscore the significance of such a notion. Indeed, breath functions as a sort of surrogate, a means through which the power of imagination makes contact with the world ^[4]. Abram's own reflections on the nature of perception also serve to underscore the significance of such a notion, particularly since it is grounded in the notion that the self is experienced within a field of earthly presence at all times ^[5]. The poems that are discussed here serve to underscore the significance of this notion.

6.2. Landscape as a Living Presence

In particular, the notion of landscape varies in each tradition but remains present rather than mere background. In the form of the long song poem, the steppe guides the movement of the voice and acts in some way as a partner in expression ^[1]. In the form of the ghazal poem, the landscape assumes symbolic value to mirror inner states of longing and spiritual change ^[2]. In the form of the Chinese poem, the landscape represents ethical and cosmological order in precise and evocative images ^[3].

These differences follow different philosophical perspectives. The Mongolian perspective stresses the closeness between human life and land in terms of mobility and open space ^[16, 17]. The Persian perspective employs imagery from nature to describe the experience of mysticism and the movement of the soul towards divine ^[21, 22]. The Chinese perspective refers to nature with respect to moral development and harmony in the world ^[9, 12, 13].

However, all three modes of thought hold in common the conception of the landscape as a living entity imbued with significance. Poetic nature is not conceived of as a setting but as an space of relation in which human life occurs. This concept corresponds with contemporary thought on relational poetry, in which emphasis is placed on the interconnected nature of the self and the world around it ^[8]. Here, the landscape is conceived of as a space in which the poem reveals its connection to the human world and nature in general.

6.3. The Soul's Journey as Movement Toward Relation

The movement of the soul is articulated differently in each poem. The long song poem presents an outward journey across space, shaped by wind and horizon ^[1]. The ghazal poem presents an inward journey defined by longing, separation, and return ^[2]. The Chinese poem presents a journey of alignment, where the soul harmonizes with the rhythms of the natural world ^[3].

Such differences derive from different cultural understandings of the soul's nature and purpose. Still, in all three philosophical traditions, the movement of the soul is defined as movement toward relation. Regardless of whether the soul pursues the horizon, God, or cosmic order, it always moves toward something beyond itself. This underlines the general theoretical assumptions of world literature studies as defined by genre and cultural displacement ^[7]. The three poems demonstrate that the soul's journey transcends individual traditions and represents a universal human concern expressed in diverse aesthetic and philosophical terms.

6.4. Toward a Unified Vision of Poetic Experience

The synthesis of these traditions reveals a unified vision of poetry as a meeting place between the human being and a living cosmos. Breath becomes a way of entering into relation with the world. Landscape becomes a partner in meaning. The soul's journey becomes a movement toward connection, whether outward, inward, or harmonizing.

The tri cultural cycle at the center of this study demonstrates that poetry can reveal the deep continuity between human experience and the natural world. It is actually the differences among those traditions that enrich continuity rather than diminish. Each tradition contributes a uniqueness in imagining how the human being copes in the real life itself. They actually represent that poetry is not just a form of expression but a way of inhabiting the world with attention, openness and care. A powerful mode of relation.

7. Conclusion

This comparative study on three contemporary poems created on Persian, Mongolian, and Chinese traditions forms a shared vision of poetry as a proper mode of encountering the living world. Each tradition known to holds its own aesthetic vocabulary and philosophical orientation. All three poems treat breath, landscape, and the movement of the soul as central forces in poetic creation. These base elements are not decorative themes. They are the foundations through which the poem becomes a site of encounter between the human being and the more than human environment.

The attention to breath reveals how each tradition figures the voice as a medium of relation. The Mongolian long song extends breath across open space, generating a sonic horizon configured by wind and distance. The Persian ghazal inverts breath into interiority, where longing becomes a course of spiritual practice. It is known that classic Chinese poetry known to be in harmony with breath with the pulse of qi and the seasonality of the natural world. The differences exposes the distinct cultural ideas about the body and the spoken word. But all three traditions share a belief that breath is the element that binds the poet to the world.

In each work of poetry, the landscape is depicted as a living being. The steppe changes into a co, expressive partner, the field becomes the metaphor of spiritual metamorphosis, and the dew covered morning turning into a sign of a divine order. These scenes are not simply a backdrop, rather they influence the emotional and philosophical flow of the poem and demonstrate how each cultural heritage perceives the interaction of human life and nature.

It is through these depictions of communication and understanding that the souls voyage is conveyed. A soul in the long song merely stretches outward to the horizon. The soul in the ghazal turns inward as it goes through successive phases of yearning and returns. The soul in the Chinese poem on contrary, looks for harmony with the world's natural order. These directions symbolize the distinct cultural perceptions of the self. But in all three traditional portray the soul is treated as one relational entity but not isolated one in a process of finding connection.

As a whole, these three poems depict how poetry might be used as a cultural bridge, allowing one culture to peer into another through the recognition of universal human issues expressed in their different forms and philosophies. Breath, the landscape, the souls movement are not elements of one tradition only.

They are the universal aspects of the poetry experience that gain new significance when they travel across cultural barriers. The comparative method employed here respects the uniqueness of each culture while it outlines the subtle lines that connect them.

By making these traditions speak to each other, the paper therefore consists a poetry to be not only a voice but also a way of being in the world with attention and care. It uncovers a deeper bond between human life and nature and indicates that the mission of poetry is to facilitate our breathing with the world, our moving with its rhythms, and our recognizing our part in its living presence.

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