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## Spatial Metaphors for Morality: A Perspective from Chinese

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to contribute to the research on spatial metaphors for morality from the perspective of Chinese. It outlines the linguistic patterns in Chinese that manifest the putative underlying spatial subsystem of moral metaphors, which can be summarized by a central metaphor “*MORALITY IS SPATIALITY*.” In doing so, it focuses on 17 spatial words that instantiate in real-life discourses five pairs of moral–spatial metaphors in their positive and negative valence. The total of 10 metaphors under study forms a cluster as the spatial metaphor subsystem operating in conjunction and connection with other metaphor subsystems in our moral cognition. It is suggested that the 10 conceptual metaphors emerge from four image schemas: UP-DOWN, BALANCE, PATH, and OBJECT. A unified schematic configuration is proposed to lay out the spatial elements and relations represented by the four image schemas in a single diagram. Based on its linguistic analysis, the study also provides a list of prototypical target aspects of MORAL and IMMORAL onto which the source concepts of the 10 moral–spatial metaphors are mapped. The list reflects a division of labor, although with some overlaps, among the 10 metaphors under study. Finally, the study conducts a decompositional analysis of two moral–spatial metaphors as examples showing how deeper analyses of metaphors can be achieved.

Metaphor is a powerful cognitive tool for understanding abstract social concepts (Landau, Meier, & Keefer, 2010; Landau, Robinson, & Meier, 2014). One of such concepts is morality, concerning our judgments and decisions on human character, behavior, or action in social life that distinguish between right and wrong, or good and evil, especially in enhancing human wellbeing. In the past decades, Cognitive Linguistics has argued that our moral cognition is largely metaphorical, emerging in part from a complex system of conceptual metaphors for the understanding of moral principles and values (Johnson, 1993, 2014; Lakoff, 2002; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, Ch. 14). That is, our moral thinking or abstract thinking in general is imaginative in nature, depending in a fundamental way on conceptual metaphors grounded in our embodied and socioculturally situated experience in the world (see, e.g., Gibbs, 1999, 2006; Kövecses, 2005, 2015; Yu, 2009, 2015a). Thus, morality and immorality are conceptualized metaphorically in terms of some common contrastive categories in our bodily experience in physical environment (e.g., healthy and sick, strong and weak, light and dark, clean and dirty, pure and impure, and high and low). This claim, framed within conceptual metaphor theory (see, e.g., Gibbs, 1994, 2014; Kövecses, 2005, 2010, 2015; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, 2003), has inspired a growing body of research on the metaphorical nature of moral cognition in various research fields (see, e.g., Campbell, 2013; Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993; Haidt, Rozin, MaCauley, & Imada, 1997; Landau et al., 2010; Lee & Schwarz, 2010; Lizardo, 2012; Massengill, 2008; Meier & Robinson, 2004; Meier, Robinson, & Clore, 2004; Meier, Robinson, Crawford, & Ahlvers, 2007; Sheikh, Botindari, & White, 2013; Sherman & Clore, 2009; Zhong & House, 2014;

Zhong & Liljenquist, 2006). This body of literature, much of which applies experimental and other empirical research methods, contributes to the understanding of functions and operations of conceptual metaphors from areas of study other than linguistics.

The research on the metaphorical character of moral cognition has so far, however, been focused on the English language. This study is part of my attempt to contribute a Chinese perspective on moral imagination through metaphor. To this end, my primary task is to find out what Kövecses (2010) calls the range of source concepts for moral metaphors in Chinese. My preliminary analysis of linguistic data suggests that the moral metaphor system in Chinese is quite complex, consisting of some subsystems as clusters of conceptual metaphors with source concepts from different domains of physical experiences. For one study I have done (Yu, 2015b), I focused on one particular subsystem of metaphors grounded especially in our visual experiences, specifically in terms of color, light, clarity, cleanness, and purity. For the present study, I focus on the one that converges on a cluster of conceptual metaphors with source concepts coming from the spatial domain.

Humans often depend on their ability to recruit spatial concepts and schemas for non-spatial, abstract tasks because abstract cognition is built on the indispensable foundation of spatial cognition and the spatial domain is an appropriate and appealing platform for higher cognitive processes (Casasanto, 2010; Gattis, 2001). This is also why cognitive scientists in general and cognitive linguists in particular have long treated spatial metaphors as a central topic in the study of abstract thought and embodied cognition (e.g., Cienki, 1998; Dirven & Taylor, 1988; Gibbs, 1994, 2006; Heine, 1997; King, 1988; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, 2003; Radden, 1995; Yu, 1998). It is spatial metaphors that help us understand and reason about abstract domains through mental representation or configuration of spatial structures that lay out their elements and relations in terms of spatial orientations, dimensions, and arrays. Space is relational, and therefore benefits relational reasoning about abstract structures and concepts on the basis of spatial relations and configurations. Because of its central role in human cognition, studies of spatial metaphor are found in various disciplines such as communication (Bromme & Stahl, 1999; Peltola & Saresma, 2014; Tversky, 2011), literature (Brown, 2006; Davies, 2004; Halloran-Bessy, 2009), psychology (Austin, 2013; Lakens, 2012; Lynott & Coventry, 2014; Meier & Robinson, 2004; Meier, Robinson, & Caven, 2008; Reed, 2003; Schubert, 2005; Shayan, Ozturk, Bowerman, & Majid, 2014; Stites & Özçalışkan, 2013), and social studies (Bourk & Holland, 2014; Cuervo & Wyn, 2014; Giessner & Schubert, 2007; Silvera, Josephs, & Giesler, 2002).

For this study, I investigate a metaphor subsystem for morality based on spatial conceptualization of moral constructs in Chinese. This subsystem can be summarized by a central metaphor: “*MORALITY IS SPATIALITY*.” In the second section, I first lay out the major spatial concepts engaged in this moral metaphor subsystem as source concepts, presenting a schematic configuration of how these spatial concepts are related to each other in pairs of valence mapped onto their respective target concepts MORAL and IMMORAL. This is a linguistic study. In the third section, therefore, I outline the linguistic patterns which manifest the putative metaphorical mappings at the conceptual level. I then take a deeper look at the linguistic evidence in the fourth section. The final section is a brief conclusion.

### Spatial concepts in moral metaphors

Spatial concepts and schemas have long been engaged in moral thinking and reasoning in Chinese thought, and this has left behind abundant traces in the Chinese language. In *The Analects of Confucius*, for example, Confucius (551–479 BC) said, “七十而从心所欲, 不逾矩,” meaning “At seventy, I can follow my heart’s desire, without transgressing what is right,” where “transgressing what is right” is literally “crossing over the square.” That is, there is a metaphorical mapping from “square,” a shape in space, onto the “moral (and legal) boundaries within which one is supposed to stay socially.” According to HYDCD (p. 1970), 矩 *jǔ* “square” has the following three relevant senses, extended from the concrete to the abstract: (1) the tool with which the shape of square is drawn (the primary meaning); (2) the

shape of square drawn with it (a metonymic extension); (3) moral standard, established norm, rule, law, and so on (a metaphoric extension). In the Chinese language today, the compound word 规矩 *guiju*, whose two components separately mean “compasses/dividers” and “square” as tools and “circle” and “square” as shapes, means: (1) rule, established practice, or custom; (2) well-behaved, well-disciplined, or honest. In other words, the tools of compasses and square and shapes of circle and square are metaphorically mapped onto “rules” which regulate human behavior with “moral boundaries,” and onto “morally good behavior” following socially established norms and standards. Such metaphorical senses of “circle” and “square” are also highlighted in the old saying attributed to Mencius (ca 372–289 BC), the best known Confucian after Confucius himself, when he said, “不以规矩, 不能成方圆 (lit. Squares and circles cannot be drawn without the compasses and square),” meaning “Nothing can be accomplished without norms or standards.” Social norms and standards are established according to the moral values and principles of a society. The metaphorical meaning, however, is grounded in the shapes of circle and square. In fact, the shapes of circle and square carry special significance in Chinese civilization, where ancient Chinese thought conceptualizes the heaven as being round and the earth as being square (天圆地方 *tiānyuán dìfāng*). As prototypical shapes, circle and square are indeed good spatial symbols for unity and regularity: A circle has equal distance (radius) from its center to any point on its circular boundary; a square has all its four corners at equal degree (90° right angle) and all its four sides at equal length. They are therefore shapes of balance and equality, which are concepts important to an ideal harmonious society, with fair legal systems and sound moral standards.

As the historical examples above show, moral–spatial metaphors have existed in Chinese thought and language for a long time, and can be traced back to the times of Confucius and Mencius and much further. How do they fare today? This study investigates spatial metaphors as manifested in Chinese moral talk. In the remainder of this section, I lay out the major spatial concepts involved in moral metaphors and present a schematic configuration of them so that they are related to one another in a systematic way.

Table 1 lists the major spatial source concepts in five pairs for the contrast in valence between MORAL and IMMORAL as their target concepts, along with the corresponding conceptual metaphors to be studied in this article. It is worth stressing that the spatial concepts listed therein are major ones involved in moral–spatial metaphors. There may still be other minor ones utilized in such metaphorical mappings.

Schematically, the configuration of spatial concepts, both orientational and dimensional ones, can be illustrated as in Figure 1 (A and B). The figure is meant to show the image schemas of the spatial concepts involved and how they are related to one another in a system. Image schemas are schematic abstractions of recurring dynamic patterns of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that give coherence and structures to our experience while emerging from our bodily experience and constantly operating in our perceptual interaction, bodily movement through space, and physical manipulation of objects (Johnson, 1987).

In Figure 1A, one vertical line (ab) and one horizontal line (cd) cross each other at point (g) forming a perpendicular relation between them. A third slanting line (ef) also runs through point (g). The vertical line is divided by the horizontal line into the upper and lower halves. Its upper half (ag) is mapped onto morally positive valence, that is, “MORAL IS HIGH,” in contrast with its lower half (gb), which is inherently negative, that is, “IMMORAL IS LOW.” Also, there is a contrast in valence between line (ag) and line (eg): the former is positive because it is upright,

**Table 1.** The subsystem of moral metaphors derived from spatial concepts.

Targets	MORAL	IMMORAL	Conceptual metaphors	
Sources	HIGH	LOW	“MORAL IS HIGH”	“IMMORAL IS LOW”
	UPRIGHT	TILTED	“MORAL IS UPRIGHT”	“IMMORAL IS TILTED”
	LEVEL	UNLEVEL	“MORAL IS LEVEL”	“IMMORAL IS UNLEVEL”
	STRAIGHT	CROOKED	“MORAL IS STRAIGHT”	“IMMORAL IS CROOKED”
	BIG	SMALL	“MORAL IS BIG”	“IMMORAL IS SMALL”

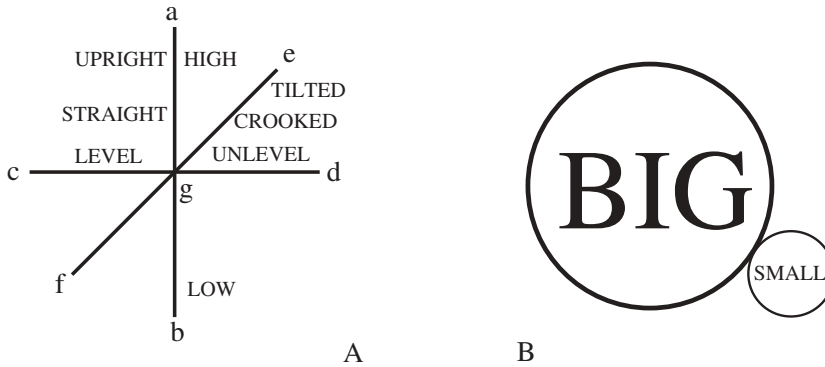


Figure 1. Schematic configuration of spatial concepts for moral metaphors.

hence “*MORAL IS UPRIGHT*,” whereas the latter, which is tilted or slanted, is negative in valence, namely “*IMMORAL IS TILTED*” (or “*IMMORAL IS SLANTED*”).

As for the horizontal line (cd), it is also mapped positively onto morality because it is level, that is, “*MORAL IS LEVEL*,” in contrast with the unlevel line (ef) or (cge), which is negative, that is, “*IMMORAL IS UNLEVEL*.” Note that “*LEVEL*” here refers to a horizontal line “that is straight and has both ends at the same height.” According to this criterion, line (ef) is not level because it is inclined to one side, forming a slope down toward the left. Line (cge) is not level, either, because it is not straight, with a bend at point (g), and its two ends are not at the same height.

In fact, any single line that is bent into a crook, for instance, line (age) or (dge), is mapped negatively onto immorality, that is, “*IMMORAL IS CROOKED*,” in contrast in valence with a straight line, that is, “*MORAL IS STRAIGHT*.” Note that “*STRAIGHT*” here has to meet two relevant criteria: (a) not bent, and (b) level or upright. With criterion (a), a straight line is simply the shortest distance between any two points disregarding its environment. Criterion (b), however, is dependent on the spatial context in which a straight line is situated. In Figure 1A, lines (ag) and (cgd) are straight because these two are upright and level respectively. In contrast, line (ef) is not straight because it is neither upright nor level. Line (gb) is not straight either since it is “downright,” not upright.

Finally, Figure 1B merely displays one valence contrast in size mapped onto morality and immorality: “*MORAL IS BIG*” and “*IMMORAL IS SMALL*.” In the next section, I will put forth an analysis of the linguistic data, showing how the conceptual metaphors in Table 1 are manifested in the Chinese language.

### Linguistic evidence for spatial metaphors for morality

Language plays an important role in mediating the adaption of spatial schemas to abstract thought (Gattis, 2001). In this section, I analyze the linguistic evidence from Chinese that may manifest the underlying conceptual metaphors for morality. In collecting data, I used the CCL corpus (Center for Chinese Linguistics, Peking University). While this is a linguistic study, my hope is that the linguistic patterns delineated through systematic analysis of linguistic data may serve as a basis for inferences about possible conceptual structures in our conceptual systems. Further, my larger goal is to show how our language and thought are embodied as part of embodied cognition in general. I will deal with the conceptual metaphors in Table 1 pair by pair in the following subsections.

#### “*MORAL IS HIGH*” and “*IMMORAL IS LOW*”

In this subsection I focus on two pairs of conceptual contrasts involving six lexical items that encode HIGH and LOW on a vertical axis of which the two spatial values representing two valence poles in morality:

**Table 2.** Words encoding HIGH and LOW in the moral-spatial metaphors.

Source concepts	HIGH	LOW
Lexical items	高 <i>gāo</i> : 1. (spatial) high; tall 2. (moral) noble; lofty; noble character; noble people	低 <i>dī</i> : 1. (spatial) low 2. (moral) bad; vile; odious; corrupt 卑 <i>bēi</i> : 1. (spatial) low; low-lying 2. (moral) of low character; inferior in quality 下 <i>xià</i> : 1. (spatial) below; under; underneath; down 2. (moral) lowly; base 薄 <i>bó</i> (or <i>báo</i> ) <sup>1</sup> : 1. (spatial) thin (vertically); slight; small 2. (moral) unkind; ungenerous; mean; frivolous; coldly
	厚 <i>hòu</i> : 1. (spatial) thick (vertically) 2. (moral) kind; magnanimous	

MORAL and IMMORAL. Their spatial and moral senses are given in Table 2. The first pair comprises four spatial words: one “high” and three “low” words; the second comprises two: one “thick” and one “thin” word. The second pair is placed in this category because it also refers to relative points on a vertical axis as being “high” or “low.” Thickness and thinness on a horizontal axis as diameter, for instance, are encoded by a different pair of spatial words (粗 *cū* “thick” and 细 *xì* “thin”) in Chinese.

In Chinese, 高 *gāo* “high” and 低 *dī* “low” form a common pair of antonyms in the spatial domain, and 卑 *bēi* “low” is usually found in the moral and social domains. 下 *xià* “down” is generally used in contrast with 上 *shàng* “up,” but can also be used in contrast with 高 *gāo* “high.” For instance, it can replace 低 *dī* “low” in the compound 高低 *gāo-dī* (high-low), hence 高下 *gāo-xià* (high-down), in the sense “relative superiority or inferiority.” For illustration of the words in Table 2, first look at the examples in (1) which instantiate “MORAL IS HIGH.”

- (1) a. 拾金不昧是一种高尚的道德行为。

Returning money found is a kind of **lofty** (lit. **high-esteem**) moral behavior.

- b. …… 评议在客观上对提倡清廉高洁的道德风尚起到一定的作用。

…appraisals produced in reality an effect on the promotion of the honest and upright (lit. clear-honest), and **noble and unsullied** (lit. **high-clean**) social ethics.

- c. 文学应该以崇高的道德精神、道德理想，烛照新的人生之路。

Literature should illuminate a new life path with its **sublime** (lit. **lofty-high**) moral spirits and moral ideals

The three examples make comments respectively on a “good deed” advocated through ethical education started in early childhood (1a), the evaluations of candidates for local offices in ancient China (1b), and the moral function of literature (1c). All of them involve a compound with 高 *gāo* “high” which, along with other moral-related elements, represents the positive moral valence. They contrast with the following examples where 低 *dī* “low,” 卑 *bēi* “low,” and 下 *xià* “down” are involved, thus instantiating “IMMORAL IS LOW.”

- (2) a. 道德的要义在于有所不为而不是无所不为；这样，才能使自己脱离低级趣味……

The essence of morality lies in refraining oneself from doing all, instead of letting oneself do all; only this way can one divorce oneself from **bad tastes** (lit. **low-grade tastes**)…

<sup>1</sup>HYDCCD treats *báo* as a variant of *bó* in pronouncing 薄. For this study I consulted three dictionaries, HYDCCD, XDHYCD, and XDXHYCD, for lexical senses of the words, and XSDHYDCCD for their English translations. These four dictionaries are listed in the appendix. The English translations of all the sentential examples, rather literal on purpose, are my own.

- b. 这种商业道德低下、不正当竞争的做法，为国际经贸界同行所不齿。

This kind of practice, which reflects **lowly** (lit. **low-down**) business ethics and improper competition, is held in contempt by people in international economics and trade.

- c. 但也出现了一些平庸之作，甚至出现了一些颓废消极、卑琐低俗、淫秽色情的精神垃圾。

However, there appeared some mediocre works, too, and even some moral garbage that was decadent and negative, **mean** (lit. **low-petty**) and **vulgar** (lit. **low-vulgar**), and obscene and pornographic.

- d. 一些人还骂他“道德沦丧”，“卑鄙无耻。”

Some even scolded him for being “morally degenerate” and “**base and brazen** (lit. **low-mean no-shame**).”

All four examples involve one (2a, 2d) or two (2b, 2c) “low” words as morphemes of compounds. The commonality among them is that the concept LOW is instantiated linguistically and is mapped onto IMMORAL. In consistency with this conceptual mapping is the fact that the verbs expressing changes from morality to immorality do so by mapping “downward movements” onto such changes (see discussions of the Event Structure metaphor in, e.g., Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, chapter 11; Yu, 1998, chapter 5). In Chinese, for instance, there are following compounds referring to the “fall” of people in morality: 堕落 *duò-luò* (fall-fall) “degenerate,” 沉沦 *chén-lún* (sink-sink) “sink into (sin, vice, degeneration, etc.),” and 沦落 *lún-luò* (sink-fall) “decline; degenerate.”

The examples in (3) illustrate the contrast between the “thick” and “thin” words in their moral senses.

- (3) a. 诚，即在对待利润上要诚实**厚道**，讲求互利互惠。

Sincerity means that one must be **honest and magnanimous** (lit. **thick-way**) in making profits, stressing reciprocity and mutual benefit.

- b. 他一贯以身作则，**宽厚**待人，关心人民的疾苦……

He always set personal examples, treated others with **generosity and kindness** (lit. **broad-thick**), and was concerned with people’s hardship…

- c. 髯黑大将本是举止谨慎、行为检点的**忠厚**之人，从无**轻薄**行径。

General Ranhei was an **honest and sincere** (lit. **loyal-thick**) man of careful manner and discreet conduct, and had never committed any **frivolous** (lit. **light-thin**) act at all.

- d. 其实，徽州人或许并不比历史上出现过的商人更加**刻薄**或吝啬。

In effect, Huizhou businessmen were not really **meaner** (lit. more **cutting-thin**) or stingier than other businessmen in history.

The four examples involve three instances of 厚 *hòu* “thick” (3a–c) and two instances of 薄 *bó* “thin” (3c, d) as elements of compounds. Example (3a) is about moral practice in business, (3b) and (3c) concern the moral character of individual people, and (3d) is a comment on the moral characteristic or stereotype of the business people in a region. In all these examples, relative points as being “high” or “low” on the vertical axis are mapped onto MORAL or IMMORAL, respectively.

### “MORAL IS UPRIGHT” and “IMMORAL IS TILTED”

For this pair of conceptual metaphors I focus on three Chinese words encoding UPRIGHT or TILTED, whose primary spatial senses are extended into the moral domain, as shown in Table 3. The word prototypically encoding UPRIGHT in Chinese is 正 *zhèng*, whose metaphorical moral senses



**Table 3.** Words encoding UPRIGHT and TILTED in the moral–spatial metaphors.

Source concepts	UPRIGHT	TILTED
Lexical items	正 <i>zhèng</i> : 1. (spatial) upright; perpendicular; straight; straighten 2. (moral) upright; impartial; honest; correct; right; proper	歪 <i>wāi</i> : 1. (spatial) askew; tilted; inclined; slanting 2. (moral) improper; unethical; evil  偏 <i>piān</i> : 1. (spatial) inclined or leaning to one side; slanting; diverging 2. (moral) partial; prejudiced; biased

derive from the original spatial and bodily senses. For instance, “stand at attention” or “attention” as an imperative is 立正 *lìzhèng* in Chinese, literally meaning “stand upright,” namely with one’s body straight up. We could hypothesize that the upright body posture is the embodied basis for abstract understanding and reasoning in our moral cognition.

As shown in Table 3, *zhèng* “upright” can also be used as a verb meaning “cause to be upright or straight.” According to Confucianism, it is important to cultivate oneself or one’s moral character. The Chinese compound for moral cultivation is 修身 *xiūshēn* (cultivate-body) or 正身 *zhèngshēn* (straighten-body). In its literal sense, one’s moral character is embodied, manifested in one’s manner and behavior with one’s body. People with a good moral character have an “upright and straight body.” In *The Great Learning* (大学 *dàxué*), a Confucian classic, it is said that “Those who want to cultivate one’s body should first *straighten one’s heart* (正心 *zhèngxīn*)” (欲修其身者，先正其心). This is because, in traditional Chinese culture, the heart, taken as the central faculty of cognition, is the locus of one’s moral character (Yu, 2009, pp. 62–81). A strong moral character lies in “an upright and straight heart.” A “tilted or crooked heart” must be “straightened” before one can “straighten one’s body” to be a morally good person. The following sentential examples contain a compound involving *zhèng* “upright.”

(4) a. 遵守纪律和职业道德，诚信廉明，公道正派，甘于奉献。

One must abide by disciplines and professional ethics, be honest and clean, impartial and **upright** (lit. **keeping an upright bearing**), and be willing to dedicate oneself.

b. 当前医务工作者要努力树立正气，切实加强职业道德。

At present, medical workers should try to foster a **moral spirit** (lit. erect an **upright air**), strengthening their professional ethics in earnest.

c. 这种高度的道德纯正从爱情这样的自私情感中无法得到完全满足。

Such high moral **purity and uprightness** cannot find total satisfaction in the selfish sentiment of romantic love.

As shown in these examples, being morally sound and strong is “keeping an upright bearing” (正派 *zhèngpài*) in (4a), having an “upright air” (正气 *zhèngqì*) “erected” in (4b), and being “pure and upright” (纯正 *chúnzhèng*) in (4c). The concept of *qì* “air” in (4b) is an important one in Chinese culture referring to a gaseous force functioning in the human body as the micro world and the universe as the macro world (Yu, 1998, 2009). “Moral spirit,” conceptualized as “upright air,” is seen as such a force that keeps individuals and society as a whole “upright.” In (4c), the compound *chúnzhèng* (pure-upright) also instantiates “MORAL IS PURE” (see Yu, 2015b).

In Table 3, the two words often used in contrast with *zhèng* “upright; straight” are 歪 *wāi* “tilted (to one side); askew” and 偏 *piān* “inclined or leaning (to one side).” They cover different conceptual spaces in the moral domain: the former ranging from “improper” to “evil”; the latter focusing on “partiality; bias; prejudice.” The character of the former is comprised of two parts, one on top of the



other. The upper part is 不 *bù* “not” and the lower part is 正 *zhèng* “upright.” By face value, the word means “not upright,” both spatially and morally. The contrast in a moral sense between 正 *zhèng* “upright” and 歪 *wāi* “tilted” can be found in a proverbial saying based on a building metaphor: 上梁不正下梁歪 (lit. If the upper beam is not straight, the lower ones will go aslant), meaning “If those above (e.g., higher in official ranking) behave immorally, those below will follow suit.” Look at the following examples:

- (5) a. ……要对经营者、商贩进行职业道德教育，“君子爱财，取之有道”，靠歪门邪道长久不了。

… it’s necessary to educate retailers and peddlers on work ethics: “A gentleman loves money but gets it through a (moral) way”; it won’t last if he gets it through a **crooked path** (lit. **tilted-door evil-way**).

- b. 文化衰落了，道德败坏了，歪风邪气也盛行起来。

Culture declined, morality deteriorated, and **harmful trends and sinister practices** (lit. **tilted-wind evil-air**) became flourishing.

Here, (5a) also instantiates the “*LIFE IS A JOURNEY*” metaphor, involving both “door” and “way.” The idiom “tilted door and evil way” refers to an immoral means to an end. In (5b) the idiom “tilted-wind and evil-air” refers to unethical trends or practices at a social level (cf. 4b).

It is worth noting that both idioms in (5a) and (5b) contain 邪 *xié* “evil,” which, also used in contrast with 正 *zhèng* “upright; straight” in its moral senses, does not seem to have a primary spatial sense in present-day Chinese. However, it at least used to have a spatial sense too, as can be found in the obsolete usage of 邪径 *xié-jìng* (evil-path) and 邪路 *xié-lù* (evil-road). Both compounds mean “an evil path” in a moral sense today, but are defined in HYDCD as having a primary spatial sense “a shorter path than the main road” (p. 459). In contrast with 邪 *xié* “evil,” another word 斜 *xié*, pronounced exactly the same, is utilized primarily as a spatial word meaning “oblique; slanting; tilted; askew.” Even this word can be used metaphorically in a moral sense, as in the proverbial saying 身正不怕影子斜 (lit. If one’s body is upright, one should not be afraid that its shadow is askew), that is, “If one is morally upright, one should not be afraid of false accusations.” Note that the image of one’s “shadow being askew” manifests two possible conceptual metaphors: “*IMMORAL IS TILTED*” and “*IMMORAL IS DARK*” (see Yu, 2015b).

As already mentioned, 偏 *piān*, which has the primary spatial meaning “inclined or leaning to one side,” means “partial; bias; prejudiced” in a moral sense. That is, when people are partial, biased, or prejudiced, they are inclined to one side, thus resulting in the loss of balance. The mental balance is conceptualized as physical balance with the “*MIND AS BODY*” metaphor. In Chinese, a person who is mentally partial or biased has an “inclined heart” (偏心 *piānxīn*). Again, one’s heart is seen as the locus of one’s moral character. The word 良心 *liángxīn* (good-heart) means “conscience,” and a conscienceless person is one who has “totally lost the good heart” (丧尽良心 *sàngjìn liángxīn*). Two sentential examples follow.

- (6) a. “我”终于超越了世俗的、也是那些自视高贵、完美的绅士淑女的道德偏见。

“I” eventually transcended the moral **prejudice** (lit. **inclined-view**) of those worldly gentlemen and gentlewomen who considered themselves as noble and perfect.

- b. 道德是关于善和恶、公正和偏私、诚实和虚伪等问题的观念，以及与之相适应的依靠社会舆论和人们的信念来实现的社会行为规范的总和。

Morality is concerned with the conception of good and evil, impartiality (lit. impartial-upright) and **partiality** (lit. **inclined-selfish**), honesty and hypocrisy, and so on, and the totality of related norms in social behavior realized on the basis of public opinion and human belief.

In (6a), “prejudice” is literally “inclined view,” leaning to one side. Example (6b) contains a definition of morality, in which the moral contrast between “impartiality” and “partiality” seems to emerge from the spatial contrast between “upright” and “inclined or leaning to one side.”

### “MORAL IS LEVEL” and “IMMORAL IS UNLEVEL”

The Chinese adjective that represents LEVEL is 平 *píng* “level,” with a basic spatial sense referring to a horizontal line that is straight with both ends at the same height, or to a horizontal plane with a flat surface and all its sides at the same height. The opposite of 平 *píng* “level” is its negative form 不平 *bù-píng* “unequal,” referring to the line or plane being not straight or even or having a slope toward one side. Their moral senses are found in Table 4.

In their moral senses, the pair of words means “fair; just” or “unfair; unjust” accordingly. That is, if a line or plane is “level,” it means equality, equity, or justice to all. Conversely, if the line or plane is “not level,” it means inequality, inequity, or injustice, which is a state in favor of some but against others. The Chinese saying 一碗水端平 (lit. hold a bowl of water level) refers to a moral situation where it is necessary to be fair and just, and therefore “to treat all people evenhandedly or impartially.” In Chinese, 不平 *bù-píng* (not-level) is often used as a noun meaning “injustice; unfairness; wrong,” as illustrated in the old saying 路见不平, 拔刀相助 (lit. As one sees something unlevel on the road, one would unsheathe the knife to help), that is, one would “stand out boldly to redress a social injustice.” The following sentences show how the concepts LEVEL and UNLEVEL are used in moral contexts.

- (7) a. 只有实现了公平、平等，才能最大限度地消除种种社会问题。

Only when **equity** (lit. **public/impartial-level**) and **equality** (lit. **level-equal**) are realized can various social problems be eliminated to the greatest degree.

- b. 经营者在市场交易中，应当遵循自愿、平等、公平、诚实信用的原则，遵守公认的商业道德。

Businessmen should follow the principles of voluntariness, **equality** (lit. **level-equal**), **equity** (lit. **public/impartial-level**), and honesty and credibility in their market transactions, abiding by the accepted business ethics.

- c. 按照这种论调，发展中国家以低廉的劳动力价格扩展贸易，对于发达国家或发展中国家的劳工来说，是“不道德”、“不公平”、“不平等”的。

According to this view, if developing countries expand trade with low labor costs, it is “immoral,” “**unfair** (lit. **not impartial-level**),” and “**unequal** (lit. **not level-equal**)” to developed countries or laborers in developing countries.

On the societal level, only when all members of a society “play on a level field” can social problems be eliminated to the greatest degree (7a). This is especially true in fair trade and business transactions (7b). Nevertheless, fairness and justness can be relative to circumstances, especially at the international level, where the “players” are different nations (7c).

### “MORAL IS STRAIGHT” and “IMMORAL IS CROOKED”

In this subsection, I again focus on three Chinese spatial words that encode the source concepts STRAIGHT and CROOKED, as listed in Table 5.

**Table 4.** Words encoding LEVEL and UNLEVEL in the moral-spatial metaphors.

Source concepts	LEVEL	UNLEVEL
Lexical items	平 <i>píng</i> ; 1. (spatial) level; flat; smooth; make even or level 2. (moral) equal; just; fair; impartial	不平 <i>bù-píng</i> ; 1. (spatial) not level; not flat; not smooth 2. (moral) unfair; unjust; injustice; unfairness; wrong

**Table 5.** Words encoding STRAIGHT and CROOKED in the moral–spatial metaphors.

Source concepts	STRAIGHT	CROOKED
Lexical items	直 <i>zhí</i> : 1. (spatial) straight; vertical; upright; perpendicular; straighten 2. (moral) just; upright	曲 <i>qū</i> : 1. (spatial) bent; crooked; bend; crook 2. (moral) wrong; false; unjustifiable 勾 <i>gōu</i> : 1. (spatial) bent (in the shape of a tick or hook); crooked 2. (moral) collude with; gang up with; entice; seduce

The moral contrast represented by 直 *zhí* “straight” and 曲 *qū* “crooked” is well illustrated by the saying 宁在直中取，不向曲中求 (lit. [I] would rather get from the straight than seek from the crooked) “I would rather get what I want by honest means than by crooked means.” That is, STRAIGHT is mapped onto HONEST and CROOKED is mapped onto DISHONEST. This contrast is further illustrated by the following examples.

- (8) a. 这正是—个正直学者的品格，也是他成功的道德基础。

This is exactly the quality of an **upright** (lit. **upright-straight**) scholar, and also the moral basis for his success.

- b. 这些精神特点正好与他们急公好义、耿介刚直、不苟合于污浊世态的道德风貌相补充。

These mental characteristics complement their moral outlook with which they are zealous for impartiality and righteousness, honest and straightforward, **upright and outspoken** (lit. **firm-straight**), refusing to yield to filthy ways of the world.

- c. 法官多偏曲，不能主持正义，腐败行为时时发生。

Judges were mostly **unfair** (lit. **inclined-crooked**), and would not uphold justice, and therefore corruption happened quite often.

- d. 道德上的是非曲直，除在一些极端的场合以外，是一种很难识别的标准。

The criteria for judging moral goodness and badness or **rights and wrongs** (lit. **crooked-straight**), unless under extreme circumstances, are often not so clear-cut.

As in (8a), one’s moral character is good and strong if it is “upright and straight.” In (8b), which refers to a good moral character, the two elements of the compound separately characterize the “material” and “shape” of that moral character. In (8c), the unethical judges’ unfairness is expressed in spatial terms as being “inclined or leaning to one side” and “crooked.” The compound in (8d) comprises *qū* “crooked” and *zhí* “straight” as a pair of antonyms, extended into the moral domain meaning “right and wrong.”

In Table 5 the second word in contrast with 直 *zhí* “straight” is 勾 *gōu*. According to HYDCD (p. 310), it has a primary spatial sense 弯曲 *wān-qū* (bent-crooked) “winding; zigzag; crooked.” Particularly, it refers to the shape of a line being bent into a tick or hook. Thus, when utilized as a verb, it means “get with a hook.” For my purpose in this study, 勾 *gōu* is often used in the moral domain to mean “collude with; gang up with; entice; seduce,” evoking the image of “hook up” or “be hooked up with.” Given in (9) are two examples.

- (9) a. 小说……有力地揭露和批判了官厅中腐败的人际关系和官商勾结所犯下的无耻罪行。

The novel ... forcefully exposes and criticizes the corrupt relations among people and the disgraceful crimes committed in **collusion** (lit. **hook-knot**) between governmental officials and businessmen.

- b. ....她故态复萌, 竟至勾引一个17岁的学生, 被家长发现, 写信向校长投诉, 说她“道德败坏.....”

...she slipped back into her old ways, and even **seduced** (lit. **hook-lead**) a seventeen-year-old student, whose parents would discover it and write to the principal complaining about her “moral degeneration...”

In (9a), the immoral relations between governmental officials and businessmen for dirty deals are “hooked up into knots.” In (9b), the Chinese compound for “seduce” is literally “hook and lead.” In sum, the three spatial words discussed in this subsection evoke an image-schematic contrast between STRAIGHT and CROOKED, mapped onto MORALITY and IMMORALITY, respectively.

### “MORAL IS BIG” and “IMMORAL IS SMALL”

This last subsection focuses on three spatial words used in a moral sense to encode BIG and SMALL: 大 *dà* “big,” 小 *xiǎo* “small,” and 微 *wēi* “tiny.” The first two are the most common antonyms representing the contrast in size in Chinese whereas the third one is somewhat synonymous to the second. Their spatial and moral senses are listed in Table 6. The examples in (10) show how the words are used in real-life discourses instantiating the moral metaphors.

- (10) a. 勿以善小而不为, 要积小善成大德.....

One should not step away from doing good because it appears small in amount; instead, one should accumulate small goodness until it becomes **big virtue**...

- b. 然而我想说, 更伟大的道德力量存在于这样的信仰当中.....

However, what I want to say is that even **greater** (lit **greater-bigger**) moral force exists in such a belief...

- c. 领导干部要光明正大, 表里如一, 做到对上与对下一致, 人前与人后一致; 当官以前与当官以后一致; 言论与行动一致。

The officials should be **open and aboveboard** (lit. **bright-light upright-big**), think and act in one and the same way, and remain consistent to their superiors and subordinates, in front of and behind other people, before and after taking office, and between their words and deeds.

Example (10a) talks about charities. It seems that *dà* “big” in this case refers to a “big amount” of virtue, but that is only its surface meaning in this context. 大德 *dà-dé* (big-virtue), according to HYDCD (p. 747), also has its intrinsic senses as a compound meaning “lofty moral character” and “person of noble moral conduct or high moral integrity.” In (10b), the compound *wēi-dà* (great-big) “great” is deployed to modify “moral force.” Although the head noun here is “force” and it appears that “great” ultimately modifies “force,” the point is that the “force” cannot be modified by “great” if it is immoral or evil. That is, only “moral force” can be “great,” and “great moral force” instantiates “MORAL IS BIG.” Of course, *wēi-dà* “great” as a modifier is not limited to morality, but when it is applied to morality, it encodes MORAL rather than IMMORAL. In

Table 6. Words encoding BIG and SMALL in the moral-spatial metaphors.

Source concepts	BIG	SMALL
Lexical items	大 <i>dà</i> : 1. (spatial) big; large; great 2. (moral) good; noble	小 <i>xiǎo</i> : 1. (spatial) small; little; tiny; minor 2. (moral) bad; evil; base; mean; contemptible, despicable; 微 <i>wēi</i> : 1. (spatial) minute; tiny 2. (moral) lowly; base

ancient Chinese thought, there is a moral contrast between what is literally a “big man” (大人 *dàrén*) and a “small man” (小人 *xiǎorén*). A “big man” would seek “righteousness” (义 *yì*) and do what is right whereas a “small man” would seek “personal gains” (利 *lì*) and do what is profitable. Example (10c) involves an idiom, *guāng-míng zhèng-dà* (bright-light upright-big) “open and aboveboard,” which is a moral quality to be found supposedly in governmental officials as part of their professional ethics.

- (11) a. 他说：“人格伟大的艺术家产生伟大的艺术；人格渺小的艺术家产生渺小的艺术；……一言以蔽之，艺术与道德的关系便是如此。”

He said, “An artist of great (lit. great-big) moral character produces great art; an artist of **petty** (lit. **petty-small**) moral character produces petty art; ... In short, the relationship between art and morality is just that.”

- b. 人们常从某人的言谈举止来判定其人格的高尚与卑微。

Very often people judge a person’s moral character as being noble (lit. high-esteem) or **base** (lit. **low-tiny**) according to his/her speech and bearing.

The two examples in (11) each contain a compound with a component encoding SMALL. In (11a) such a compound is *miǎo-xiǎo* (petty-small) “petty.” It is said that artists’ moral character, “great” or “petty,” are directly related to their artistic products, which will be consequentially “great” or “petty.” In (11b) the compound expressing the source SMALL is *bēi-wēi* (low-tiny) “base,” that is, one’s moral character can be “high” and “great” or “low” and “tiny.” Such moral distinction is assumedly revealed in how one speaks and acts.

### A further look in perspective

In the preceding section I laid out the linguistic evidence for a systematic manifestation of the possible underlying spatial metaphors for morality. I discussed a total of 17 lexical items that instantiate the source concepts of five pairs of moral-spatial metaphors (see Table 1). I would suggest that the 10 conceptual metaphors are based on four common image schemas: (1) UP-DOWN, (2) BALANCE, (3) PATH, and (4) OBJECT. The UP-DOWN schema consists of a vertical axis with an imaginary division between UP and DOWN. The vertical axis is in general not symmetric, with its UP and DOWN halves respectively representing the positive and negative valence.<sup>2</sup> This schema is responsible for the understanding of HIGH and LOW (including THICK and THIN). The BALANCE schema, as I suggested before (Yu, 1998, p. 174), may have two possible variants as illustrated in Figure 2, where the dotted lines indicate off-balance shifts. Thus, Figure 2A stands for UPRIGHT versus TILTED, and Figure 2B for LEVEL and UNLEVEL. Version B can be seen as an image schema for the scales, which are a common symbol for legal justice and moral fairness.

The third image schema involved in moral imagination, PATH, is simply a straight line by default in contrast with a crooked line, a line that is bent or twisted. The schematic contrast between STRAIGHT and CROOKED has long been noticed by cognitive linguists as being mapped onto the moral contrast between GOOD and EVIL (Cienki, 1998; Jäkel, 2002). Finally, our schematic understanding of OBJECT is that it occupies space with its physical existence of various sizes. In Figure 1B,

<sup>2</sup>As far as the human body is concerned, the UP-DOWN, as well as FRONT-BACK, asymmetry is obvious while the LEFT-RIGHT asymmetry is far less so. In terms of function, however, the LEFT-RIGHT asymmetry is clear in people’s right versus left-handedness. See Casasanto (2014) for distinction between left- and right-handers in terms of bodily relativity and spatial mapping of valence. It seems that the LEFT-RIGHT distinction is chiefly deployed in the political domain in modern Chinese, with LEFT for the revolutionary (positive unless “ultra-left”) versus RIGHT for the reactionary (negative). In older strata of Chinese, however, LEFT indeed represents the negative valence (HYDCD, p. 509), and RIGHT the positive (HYDCD, p. 793), in the moral domain.

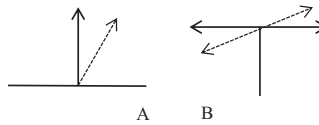


Figure 2. Two versions of BALANCE and OFF-BALANCE schemas.

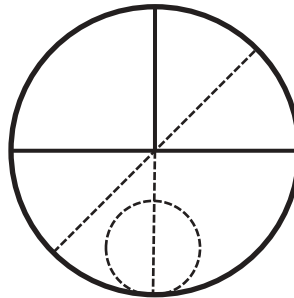


Figure 3. A unified schematization of spatial concepts for moral metaphors.

I used circles, a prototypical shape conventionally utilized for the CONTAINMENT schema, to represent the size of OBJECT.

In the third section, the four image schemas play a central role in our spatial conceptualization of morality. In summary, Figure 3 unifies them into one diagram, where dotted lines represent IMMORALITY versus MORALITY represented by solid lines. As seen in this figure, there is correlation between height and size: the longer the vertical axis (diameter), the larger the size of the circle. Such coherence finds a good example of linguistic instantiation in a Chinese compound word 高大 *gāo-dà* (high/tall-big), meaning in particular: (1) (of physical body) tall and big and (2) (of moral character) lofty or noble.

As shown in Figure 3, the subsystem of moral metaphors studied in this article hinges on the schematization of a few spatial concepts in pairs representing contrasts in moral valence. The 10 spatial metaphors for morality studied in this article, listed in Table 1, have only two target concepts: MORAL and IMMORAL. These two categories can be divided into subcategories. The five pairs of source concepts have a division of labor and are mapped onto various aspects of MORAL and IMMORAL with some overlaps. Table 7 lists the conceptual mappings between the source concepts in space and their prototypical target concepts within the contrastive categories MORAL and IMMORAL. These mappings, which are more conventional in nature, should exist in the conceptual system as the “conceptual-cognitive context” (Kövecses, 2015, chapter 3), with specific target concepts as aspects of MORAL and IMMORAL determining the selection of the source concepts. In actual discourses, various contextual factors could also prompt more novel elaborations on and combinations of the source concepts (Kövecses, 2015). As can be seen on the left of Table 7, HIGH

Table 7. Metaphorical mappings from spatial concepts onto aspects of MORAL and IMMORAL.

SPATIAL		MORAL		SPATIAL		IMMORAL
HIGH	→	LOFTY; NOBLE; GOOD		LOW	→	Base; Mean; Evil
UPRIGHT	→	RIGHT; Honest; IMPARTIAL		TILTED	→	WRONG; Dishonest; PARTIAL
LEVEL	→	FAIR; JUST; IMPARTIAL		UNLEVEL	→	UNFAIR; UNJUST; PARTIAL
STRAIGHT	→	RIGHT; JUST; HONEST		CROOKED	→	WRONG; UNJUST; DISHONEST
BIG	→	LOFTY; NOBLE; GOOD		SMALL	→	BASE; MEAN; EVIL



and BIG, both of which are dimensional concepts, have identical target concepts, owing to the above-mentioned correlation between the height of the vertical axis and the size of the circle in Figure 3. Also, there are some partial overlaps among the target concepts of UPRIGHT, LEVEL, and STRAIGHT, the three orientational concepts which need one another in a mutually defining relationship.

Figure 3 also provides a geometric hint at an answer to the question why moral cultivation and ethical education are needed at both individual and societal levels. Morality exists in the upper axis and in the bigger circle, and it always takes more and costs more to get higher and bigger. Also, straight, upright and level lines are lines of precision. Drawing them right usually requires some help in instrument. There is only a single way for a line to be straight between two points, but a crooked line can take an infinite number of ways. An upright line and a level line exist only at 90 and 180 degrees, respectively, but a tilted or inclined line can exist at any angles off them. If geometry is a science that emerges from embodied human experience, these simple geometric facts perhaps also provide a hint at why we need spatial metaphors for morality in the first place.

Finally, I would like to resort to a decompositional analysis for a deeper look at the spatial metaphors for morality under study. This is what I call a “Decompositional Approach to Metaphorical Compound Analysis,” or “DAMCA” for short (Yu, 2011a, 2011b, 2015b). The main purpose of developing this analytical instrument is to look more deeply into complex metaphors, or metaphorical compounds, for their major components, metaphorical or otherwise, in order to be more specific, and concise, about their motivations and constructions, and about their potential relations with other metaphors, complex or primary. Due to limited space, I will focus on two metaphors, “MORAL IS HIGH” and “MORAL IS LEVEL,” as examples. For more examples of analyzing moral–visual metaphors, see Yu (2015b).

- |      |  |                    |
|------|--|--------------------|
| (12) | “MORAL IS HIGH”                            | (Complex metaphor) |
|      | a. “MORAL IS GOOD FOR PUBLIC WELLBEING”    | (Proposition)      |
|      | b. “HIGH IS HAVING LARGE EXTENSION UPWARD” | (Proposition)      |
|      | c. “GOOD IS UP”                            | (Primary metaphor) |

Given in (12) is the decomposition of “MORAL IS HIGH” in its formulaic format. Here, (12a) is a literal proposition that is a major component of the concept MORAL. This component represents a value judgment and the scope to which the judgment is made, namely, something is “moral” only when it is “good” for the “public wellbeing” (vs., e.g., “one’s self wellbeing”). The second proposition in (12b) characterizes the source concept HIGH as “having large extension upward,” that is, describing a point on the upper half of an imaginary vertical axis. The last component, (12c), connects the key components of (12a) and (12b) with a mapping from a spatial concept to an abstract concept. This mapping is actually a primary metaphor, “GOOD IS UP,” widely deployed in our conceptual systems and, in this particular case, serves as the foundation stone of the complex metaphor “MORAL IS HIGH.”

Figure 4A presents the diagrammatic format of “MORAL IS HIGH.” As can be seen there, this metaphor is a conceptual metaphor from the spatial to the social domain. More specifically, it involves a mapping from verticality to morality. MORAL is but a special kind (i.e., subcategory) of GOOD, its box is therefore within that of the latter. In the source domain, UP is also treated as a concept more abstract and schematic than HIGH. In terms of lexical categories, the former is encoded by a preposition as a member of the closed-class system, which is the most fundamental and schematic conceptual structuring system of a language (Talmy, 2000). In contrast, HIGH is encoded by an adjective as a member of the open-class system. In the diagrammatic format, a primary metaphor, such as “GOOD IS UP,” is represented by the bold font type.

- |      |   |                    |
|------|---|--------------------|
| (13) | “MORAL IS LEVEL”                        | (Complex metaphor) |
|      | a. “MORAL IS GOOD FOR PUBLIC WELLBEING” | (Proposition)      |
|      | b. “MORAL STANDS FOR EQUAL”             | (Metonymy)         |

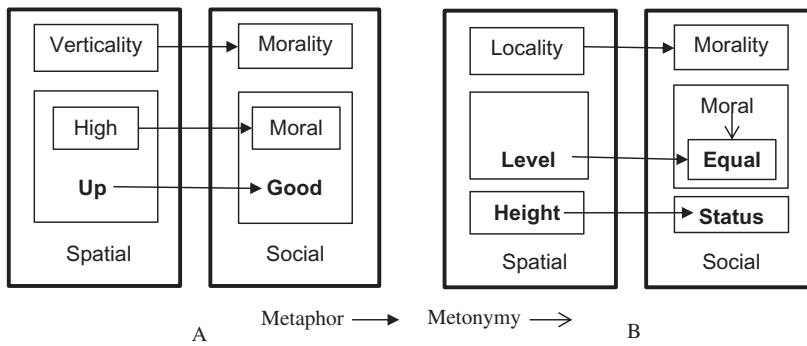


Figure 4. Schematic illustration of a decompositional analysis of “MORAL IS HIGH” and “MORAL IS LEVEL”.

- c. “MORAL FOR EQUAL IS LEVEL” (Complex metaphor)  
 d. “EQUAL IS HAVING SAME STATUS” (Proposition)  
 e. “LEVEL IS HAVING SAME HEIGHT” (Proposition)  
 f. “EQUAL IS LEVEL” (Primary metaphor)  
 g. “STATUS IS HEIGHT” (Primary metaphor)

As listed in (13), the structure of “MORAL IS LEVEL” is more complex. First, MORAL in this case stands for EQUAL (13b, c), which is a particular aspect (or subcategory) of MORAL concerning “fair and just.” As such, it is a case of the “WHOLE FOR PART” metonymy, represented by an open-headed arrow line in Figure 4B. Then, at the next level down, (13d) and (13e) characterize what is meant, literally, by “EQUAL” and “LEVEL” respectively, followed by two metaphors (13f, g) derived from (13d) and (13e). My hypothesis is that both (13f) and (13g) are primary metaphors that ground the complex metaphor “MORAL IS LEVEL” or, rather, “MORAL FOR EQUAL IS LEVEL” (13c).

In sum, (12) and (13) differ from each other in the following ways. First, ontologically as shown in Figure 4, (12) is a mapping from verticality to morality (Figure 4A), and the latter from locality to morality (Figure 4B), even though both of them undergo general metaphorical mappings from the spatial to the social domain. Second, in (12) HIGH maps onto MORAL directly; in (13) MORAL stands in a metonymic relation with EQUAL, the latter being a part of the former, and therefore LEVEL actually maps onto EQUAL via its whole MORAL. As shown in Table 7, HIGH is mapped onto more general aspects of MORAL such as LOFTY, NOBLE, and GOOD (vs. EVIL) concerning both individual moral characters and social ethical atmosphere, but LEVEL maps onto more specific aspects of MORAL such as FAIR, JUST, and IMPARTIAL in the more narrow scopes of MORAL concerning human equality and social equity. Third, because one more key concept (EQUAL) is involved as the real target in (13), it alters the internal structure, the level of complexity, and the conceptual mappings engaged therein. Last, as a consequence of the above differences, the complex metaphors in (12) and (13) are based on different primary metaphors which employ different aspects of human experience. “GOOD IS UP” is a primary metaphor with wide application, and “EQUAL IS LEVEL” is apparently less so.

It is worth stressing at this point that, while “GOOD IS UP” is not included in (13), it is not completely irrelevant. Thus, for instance, in the case of “UNEQUAL IS UNLEVEL,” people with different levels of politico-economic power and strength then stand on different social statuses with different heights. We can imagine that the more powerful and stronger occupy higher positions than those who are less so. This is because such metaphors as “POWER IS UP” and “CONTROL IS UP” are in operation in our conceptual systems. The question that arises is: If those more powerful and stronger are “higher up” in the social hierarchy, are they necessarily “good”? The answer is No. We can say that it is human nature for people to want to go “up”

rather than “down” on their life-journey. This is because we have such primary metaphors as “GOOD IS UP” and “BAD IS DOWN.” A fundamental difference among people, however, is whether they go “up” through a “straight” or “crooked” path. If it is the latter, then, they are not good or “up” morally even if they are “higher up” socially. In (12) “GOOD IS UP” is deployed in a moral context, and it is relevant in (13) as well, but is just out of the focus.

## Conclusion

In this study I have attempted to outline the linguistic patterns in Chinese that may manifest the underlying conceptual metaphors in the spatial subsystem of moral metaphors. The moral metaphors in spatial terms can be summarized by a central metaphor: “MORALITY IS SPATIALITY.” I focused on a total of 17 spatial words which I believe instantiate in real-life discourses five pairs of moral metaphors in Table 1 in positive and negative valence. The total of 10 metaphors forms a cluster as the spatial metaphor subsystem in conjunction with the visual (or color) metaphor subsystem which, also comprised of five pairs, I studied elsewhere (Yu, 2015b). I suggested that the 10 conceptual metaphors emerge from four image schemas UP-DOWN, BALANCE, PATH, and OBJECT. I proposed a unified schematic configuration of the spatial elements and relations represented by the four image schemas in a single diagram in Figure 3. Based on the linguistic analysis, I also listed in Table 7 more specific aspects of MORAL and IMMORAL as target concepts, and those aspects, with some overlaps, reflect a division of labor among the 10 moral-spatial metaphors in the subsystem. Finally, I also conducted a decompositional analysis on two conceptual metaphors as examples showing how deeper analyses of metaphors can be achieved.

This study concentrates on a single language, Chinese. It is hoped that the analytical approach deployed herein sets up a framework for further comparative studies across languages and cultures in a more systematic fashion. In effect, a preliminary study (Yu, Wang, & He, 2015) suggests that the spatial-moral metaphor subsystem, with a cluster of five pairs of conceptual metaphors, characterized in this article for Chinese may be applicable in English as well. Follow-up research is being conducted to gain a better understanding of commonalities and differences between these two languages.

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## Appendix: Dictionaries

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