Exploring image schemas as a critical concept: Toward a critical-cognitive linguistic account of image-schematic interactions*

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Abstract

This article aims to advance the study of "image schemas" by drawing on insights not only from cognitive linguistics but also from critical linguistics. It highlights five specific features possessed by "image schemas": (1) their serving as a bridge between concrete, sensorimotor experience and abstract reasoning; (2) their being emergent patterns created and evoked when people engage in understanding language; (3) their function of superimposition (i. e. interactions among image schemas); (4) their insinuation of a plus-minus parameter (i. e. the tendency of the opposing parts of an image schema to be more positively or negatively valued); and (5) their static and dynamic nature. It will also briefly address how image schemas, metaphors and socio-cultural values are entwined. The critical-cognitive perspective calls for the view of "situated" image schemas in discourse. By way of illustration, I will analyze two Chinese Zen poems. The analysis will pay special attention to image-schematic patterns and their significance in the interface between discourse, cognition, and worldview.

1. Introduction

"An image schema is a recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience" (Johnson 1987: xiv). Johnson (1987: 126) and Lakoff (1987: 267) provide a list of what they consider to be among the most basic and important image schemas, for example, CONTAINER (i. e. IN-OUT), PATH, NEAR-FAR, LINK, CONTACT, VERTICALITY (i. e. UP-DOWN) etc. (cf. Hampe 2005a: 2–3).

According to Johnson's (1987) and Lakoff's (1987) pioneering work, we can make the following three points about image schemas. First of all, they are derived from bodily experience, as they stem from perceptual and motor inter-

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actions (Johnson 1987: 19–21). Secondly, image schemas are nonpropositional. They are identifying patterns traced and sublimated from numerous experiences, perceptions, and image formations (Johnson 1987: 28). Thirdly, image schemas function as a bridge between concrete, sensorimotor experience and abstract reasoning (Lakoff 1987: 440; Johnson 1987: 29).

The concept of image schemas has been utilized to enhance the understanding and interpretation of literature. For example, in Stockwell's (2002) introduction to the enterprise of cognitive poetics, he briefly mentions in passing that "[t]he creative elaboration of image schemas can be seen as the striking and unsettling re-cognition of familiar patterns: that is, defamiliarization" (Stockwell 2002: 18; cf. Shklovsky 1965 [1917]; Cook 1994: 130–140, 206–209). Freeman (2002: 74) argues that image schemas "can help to identify and articulate a poet's poetics and thus contribute to an explanatory account that distinguishes one poet's poetics from another". By comparing Robert Frost and Emily Dickinson, she shows that, while the dominant image schemas of the former are PATH and BALANCE, the dominant ones in the latter are CONTAINER and CHANGE. Kimmel (2005a) sees a connection between image schemas and story macrostructure, thus contributing to a better understanding of how image schemas figure in the poetics of narrative.

This article aims to further advance the study of image schemas and their application to literature. I will first highlight five specific features that image schemas possess, based on cognitive accounts of the concept.

1. Their serving as a bridge between concrete, sensor-motor experience and abstract reasoning;
2. Their being emergent patterns created and evoked, directly or indirectly, when people engage in understanding language;
3. Their function of superimposition;
4. The insinuation of the plus-minus parameter;
5. Their static and their dynamic nature.

Then I will discuss image schemas in relation to metaphors and culture. As the title of this article suggests, I will elaborate on image schemas by drawing on insights not only from cognitive linguistics but also from critical linguistics, also known as critical discourse analysis (henceforth, CDA). My intention is not to attempt a theoretical synthesis of cognitive linguistics and critical linguistics (cf. Stockwell 2001) but to enrich and expand the cognitive accounts of image schemas in light of critical linguistics where appropriate. Here I am more interested in exploring image schemas as a critical concept in linguistics (cf. Toolan 2002) and as a means of practicing linguistic criticism (Fowler 1981, 1996a) than in synthesizing cognitive linguistics and CDA. Although a theoretical synthesis of cognitive linguistics (CL) and CDA is yet to be devel-

oped, their respective insights can complement each other in accounting for various facets of discourse and comprehension. As Stockwell (2001: 525) suggests, "the main thing that CL can learn from CDA is to be more self-reflexive and socially-aware, and less totalizing. The main advantage that CL models offer to CDA is a wider scope of method and a means of theorizing metaphorical representations, foreground and background, social and conventional categories, and [readerly] attention [caused by stylistic patterns]". Adopting this assumption of cross-fertilization, this article concentrates on "image schemas" rather than cognitive linguistics in general. By way of illustration, I will analyze some Chinese Zen poems. This genre is chosen for analysis because of its strong cultural component, which will require contextual consideration. Moreover, the cultural dimension of image schemas has been little explored so far, and therefore deserves investigation.

2. Image schemas as reader-discourse interactions as well as body-mind-world interactions

I will first elaborate on image schemas functioning as a bridge between sensorimotor interactions and higher-order perception and conception. Johnson considers image schemas to be essential factors in understanding and reasoning about the world. He writes: "in order for us to have meaningful, connected experiences that we can comprehend and reason about, there must be pattern and order to our actions, perceptions, and conceptions" (Johnson 1987: 29).

In his more recent work, Johnson (2005) not only reemphasizes this feature but also suggests that image schemas themselves should have qualitative dimensions, i. e. they play a constitutive and constructive role in meaning.

> They are recurrent patterns of organism-environment interactions that exist *in* the felt qualities of our experience, understanding, and thought. Image schemas are the sort of structures that demarcate the basic contours of our experience as embodied creatures. They depend on how our brains work, what our physiology is like, and the kinds of environments we inhabit…. Their philosophical significance … lies in the way they bind together body and mind, inner and outer, and thought and feeling. (Johnson 2005: 31; emphasis original)

Johnson seems to suggest that image schemas are interactive in that they are patterns derived from interactions between the human being and the world, i. e. between body, mind, and environment. Such interactions, according to Johnson, exist in our experience. Indeed, VERTICALITY, CONTAINMENT, PATH, FAR-NEAR, etc., are recognizable patterns in our experience of the world.

However, I would suggest that we adopt an even more interactive view of image schemas. Not only are image schemas recurrent patterns from organ-

ism-environment interactions that exist in our experience, but they are also embedded in the production and reception of discourse. I am not saying that writers are aware that they use something called "image schemas" when they write, but as long as their texts involve representation of bodily perception and movement, these recurrent patterns inevitably provide organizing structures of such experience. Here I am more concerned with reading and understanding discourse; therefore, I would like to spell out how image schemas work in the interactions between reader and discourse. It is in the reader-discourse interactions that image schemas are seen as emergent patterns created and evoked – another feature of image schemas. When readers engage in reading and understanding discourse, image schemas can be created spontaneously. In Gibbs's (2005: 132) recent work, he argues that "image schemas are created on-the-fly as part of people's ongoing simulations of actions when they engage in cognitive tasks, such as understanding language". He suggests that image schemas are better understood as "emergent, fleeting entities that are part of the embodied simulations used in online thought, including abstract reasoning" rather than as long-term mental representations (Gibbs 2005: 113). This view of image schemas emphasizes their being dynamic and, in a sense, "situated" in the act of reading and understanding, i. e. a contextualized view of image schemas. As Gibbs (2005: 132) writes, "each construal of an image schema will have a different profile depending on the overall state of the organism in some activity". Gibbs seems to be more concerned with differences in individuals that could affect one's construal of an image schema. But we also need to consider discourse-reader interactions in a given reader's image-schematic construals.

Johnson (2005: 20) reminds us that we can identify image schemas by reflecting on "the most fundamental structures of … [our] perception, object manipulation, and bodily movement". However, identifying image schemas from discourse involves not only the reader's awareness of the recurrent patterns of mind-body-world interactions but also his/her interactions with discourse, in which such recurrent patterns of mind-body-world interactions operate. According to Johnson (2005: 22), the meaning of image schemas "typically operates beneath the level of our conscious awareness, although it also plays a role in our discrimination of the contours of our bodily orientation and experience". Johnson puts forward this view very much in terms of speaking or writing, because, indeed, one is not necessarily aware of using these patterns in speech or writing. However, identifying image schemas when one reads cannot possibly "operate beneath the level of our conscious awareness". The reader clearly has to be aware of what these recurrent patterns are and even to face the challenge of identifying them in discourse.

Image schemas are evoked by words or/and their combinations that explicitly specify or implicitly suggest some kind of skeletal physical pattern. We

can identify image schemas from two types of linguistic cues: explicit and implicit. Take spatial image schemas for example. Explicit linguistic cues are space expressions that express space concepts involving IN-OUT, UP-DOWN, FAR-NEAR, CONTACT, CENTER-PERIPHERY, etc., whether they are prepositions (e. g. "in", "on"), adverbs (e. g. "up", "down"), nouns (e. g. "center", "core", "margin"), adjectives (e. g. "far", "adjacent"), or verbs (e. g. "touch", "connect", "fall"). By contrast, certain entities have their archetypical or canonical position though no explicit orientational space is expressed. For instance, "mountains", "sky", "moon", "stars" are associated with UP because of their disposition – their being high up relative to the places that humans normally inhabit. In contrast, "shadow", "river", "feet" are associated with DOWN because of their association with the ground: a shadow is a shady area on the ground, a river flows in a downward direction along the ground, and one's feet have to step on the ground. This type of implicit cue can trigger relevant image schemas, especially when items associated with different positions or orientations are juxtaposed in a text. Take the following lines for example: "Jade-green trees join stream mountains;/A pavilion stands in the air, the land beneath encrusted with gold" ("On Liou He Temple in Mt. Nan", Venerable Qi Sueng, 1007–1072 AD). The juxtaposition of "stream" and "mountains" can indirectly evoke VERTICALITY because mountains stand upright whereas "streams" normally flow downward. Similarly, VERTICALITY can be created when we read and imagine a "pavilion in the air" and the views it offers, including "land" down there illuminated with golden sunlight. LINK can be created in the first line by the verb "join", because the word means establishing some kind of connection. When we read the lines, whether these image schemas are ignored or emergent, created or re-experienced would depend on what we are reasoning about. When we read the lines and attempt an image-schematic analysis, image schemas can emerge in reader-discourse interactions.

Then one may ask: in what way is such an image-schematic analysis meaningful? Before answering the question, I would like to consider another feature of image schemas – superimposition, that is, the interaction of a series of image schemas. When discussing the CENTER-PERIPHERY schema, Johnson (1987: 125) mentions that it is inevitably interconnected with a chain of other schemas. For example, once a "center" is established, something or someone can be viewed as near to or far away from it. That is, the FAR-NEAR schema is inevitably experienced as well and thus superimposed upon it. Then again, a quantitative measurement can be used to determine the distance between an object or subject and the center. In other words, a SCALE schema also emerges. In addition, a CENTER-PERIPHERY schema entails a boundary which separates inside from outside. Therefore, a CONTAINER schema is almost always superimposed on the CENTER-PERIPHERY schema. However, superimposition of image-schematic structures is triggered not only by

a schema like CENTER-PERIPHERY but also by discourse itself, which can employ various schemas simultaneously. Investigating how compound image schemas work together in a given discourse will inevitably "situate" image schemas in their usage contexts, their intratextual context. The questions then arises as to the cumulative effect of various image-schematic interactions (cf. Kimmel 2005b: 289–294) and the socio-cultural meanings of these interactions (cf. Kimmel 2005b: 304–305).

Johnson (1987: 126) writes that "[m]uch of the structure, value, and purposiveness we take for granted as built into our world consists chiefly of interwoven and superimposed schemata". He argues that image schemas "establish a range of possible patterns of understanding and reasoning" (Johnson 1987: 137), which are inevitably tied up with both one's embodiment of perceptual and sensorimotor interactions, and one's "embeddedness within culture, language, institutions, and historical traditions" (Johnson 1987: 137):

> It will not do, therefore, to pretend that one's understanding consists only of one's beliefs – these beliefs are merely the surfaces of our embodied understanding which we peel off as abstract structures. It might be more satisfactory to say that our understanding is our bodily, cultural, linguistic, historical situatedness in, and toward, our world. And … image schemata, their abstract extensions, and their metaphorical elaborations constitute a great part of the constraining structure of this understanding. (Johnson 1987: 137–138)

Two points in the quotation need further discussion. First, as Johnson suggests, understanding is a complex web of interactions that involve the reader's belief system, conceptual stance, bodily movements, discourse stimuli and response, cultural and historical inputs, etc. This view informs my discussion of reader-discourse interactions. However, this "contextualized" view of understanding is not developed in Johnson's account of image schemas. As Kimmel (2005b: 287) comments, "the classical account has overlooked that image schemas are not *only* generalized mental entities, but also ones that are instantiated in socio-cultural contexts" (emphasis original; cf. Werth 1999: 45–47). Second, according to Johnson, through "image schemata, their abstract extensions, and their metaphorical elaborations", we can see better how understanding is structured. But then how such understanding, structurally coupling with image schemas and metaphors, relates to socio-cultural contexts is not developed either (cf. Quinn 1991). Image schemas seem to be a good starting point in our attempt to disentangle the discourse-cognition-culture triangle.

If we accept Johnson's view that superimposed and interwoven image schemas are crucial in building – or perhaps instilling as well – taken-for-granted value into discourse, then we need to spell out how this is done. This question is similar to a question posed by van Dijk (1993: 107) to be further clarified in CDA: "which properties of text and talk typically condition which properties

of social, political or cultural structures, and vice versa". It seems that van Dijk's question offers an interactive view from which to consider why non-propositional image schemas become laden with values. It is the result of their being interwoven into the fabric of discourse, which is socially and culturally contextualized and which is inevitably perspective-bound. Discourse is not merely a product but also a process in which superimposed and interwoven image schemas are employed to contribute to the production of discourse, which is value-laden and worldview-charged. In other words, it is in the interaction between discourse, cognition, and society or culture that imposed and interwoven image schemas are gradually entwined, structured, and patterned with particular conceptualizations and worldview. If we believe such an analysis to represent the actual state of affairs, then if human, cross-cultural, political and inter-religious communication is ever to be clarified, such an image-schematic analysis becomes vital. Unconscious and inappropriate axiology may be continuously disrupting the perennial project of establishing pristine human communication.

Let us turn to the fourth property of image schemas. Krzeszowski (1993) suggests that a plus-minus or an axiological parameter is inherent in most, if not all, image schemas. This parameter refers to the tendency of the opposing or complementary parts of a schema to be more positively or more negatively valued. For example, UP tends to be positive (e. g. "Our sales figures have risen during the past two months") while DOWN tends to be assigned a negative value (e. g. "He felt down today"). But as Cienki (1997: 4) reminds us, "[t]his bias should be understood as a tendency and not a rule, as reversals of evaluation are sometimes possible". For which part of a schema is associated with a positive or negative default is not universal, but is subject to contextual consideration and can vary across cultures (Cienki 1997: 5–6). By focusing on UP-DOWN schema, Hampe (2005b) suggests that the axiological parameter proposed by Krzeszowski (1993) be modified. Hampe proposes:

> …axiological default components are determined by broader and richer conceptual frames relating to aspects of experience not captured by single, isolated ("primitive") image schemas. They should thus be regarded as default dimensions of image-schema compounds characterizing entire ICMs [i. e. Idealized Cognitive Models].
>
> … various instances of a given linguistic expression, all referring to the same conceptualization from a specific domain, can still exhibit different evaluative properties depending on the context. (Hampe 2005b: 107)

In other words, evaluative components are not necessarily inherent in single, isolated image schemas. Instead, "*axiological components are dimensions of richer, contextualized cognitive models, in which image schemas appear as complex superimpositions, i. e., image-schema groupings or compounds*" (Hampe 2005b: 81; emphasis original). For example, the tendency for the up-

ward position to be positively valued (or to be emphasized) is considered in the context of the canonical human orientation or posture, which includes not only VERTICALITY but also BALANCE, STRAIGHT, CONTACT, etc. (Cienki 1998: 111; Hampe 2005b: 106).

Such a contextualized view of image schemas fits in well with my discussion of superimpositions of image schemas above. Indeed, a discourse-cognition-societal viewpoint of image schemas as illustrated above reinforces and enriches Hampe's contextualized-cognitive view of image schema compounds in that the socio-cultural context is brought to bear while we consider possible variations in interpretation. On the other hand, the interconnection between discourse, cognition and society behooves us to reconsider the distinction between mere experiential variation and the evidentially broader socio-cultural variation. The notion of "differential experiential focus", proposed by Kövecses (2005: 246), partly helps to explain why the universal bodily basis, from which image schemas are derived, can be utilized in different ways: "… different people may be attuned to different aspects of their bodily functioning in relation to a target domain, or … they can ignore or downplay certain aspects of their bodily functioning as regards the metaphorical conceptualization of a particular target domain". Kövecses further explains:

> Universal embodiment associated with a target domain may consist of several distinct components, or of distinct aspects. The conceptual metaphors that emerge may be based on one component, or aspect, at a certain point of time and on another at another point. Which one is chosen depends on a variety of factors in the surrounding cultural context. In addition, the conceptual metaphors may be based on one component, or aspect, in one culture, and another component, or aspect, in another culture. (Kövecses 2005: 246)

Thus universal physical embodiment, including more or less permanent, deeply embedded image schemas, can be employed in different ways and result in different conceptual metaphors, and the variation can be attributed to a variety of factors: individual, social, ethnic, regional, stylistic, subcultural, etc. (Kövecses 2005: 88–113). Seen in this light, image schemas are subject to various factors in the cultural context. The superimposition of these image schemas may also be conditioned by the varying conceptualization of one or more of the contextual factors involved. In view of this, we need to reconsider the positive-negative evaluative tendency associated with certain aspects of image schemas. It seems limited to discuss the interaction of image schemas only in terms of positive-negative evaluations. Image schemas can work in ways which project not merely the plus-minus evaluative bias but something else – something richer – due to various contextual factors. For example, I have argued elsewhere that, in Zen poetry, it is the physical space between the opposing orientations of image schemas – between UP and DOWN, IN and OUT, FAR and NEAR, CENTER and PERIPHERY, etc. – that is mapped onto

the poetic context of the Zen domain. In other words, in this context it is not merely a plus-minus evaluative bias (e. g. GOOD IS UP and BAD IS DOWN) but an ever-extending physical space that is mapped onto the unbounded spaciousness of an all-embracing mind (Tseng 2005; see Section 4).

Finally, we turn to the fifth property of image schemas – their being static and dynamic. Image schemas can be experienced as states of being or as a process. For example, the PATH schema can be experienced in a dynamic way – the process of moving from one place to another. Or it can be realized "as a static *thing*", the road, track or passage that has been traversed (Cienki 1997: 6; emphasis original). As Cienki (1997: 7) observes, this dichotomy can be explained by two modes of our cognitive abilities – summary versus sequential scanning (Langacker 1987). "Summary scanning" is more like a static state of being. It is a mode of cognitive processing, with "each set of events contributing something to a single configuration, all facets of which are conceived as co-existent and simultaneously available" (Langacker 1987: 145). "Sequential scanning" is a more dynamic mode of cognitive processing. It "involves the transformation of one configuration into another, or a continuous series of such transformations" (Langacker 1987: 145). The static *versus* dynamic nature of image schemas is reflected in "image-schema transformations", which refer to different ways of perceiving the same image schema (cf. Lakoff 1987: 440–443). Take the image schema PATH for instance. It can transform between path focus and end-point focus. Consider the pair of sentences: "Mary walked *down* the road" versus "Mary lives *down* the road" (Lakoff 1987: 441). Although the same image schema PATH is involved in both sentences, the former sentence focuses on the "path" itself while the latter one focuses on the "end-point" of the path, a point reached at the end of the path traversed. Another transformation that can occur is between a "one dimensional trajectory" and a "zero-dimensional moving trajectory" (Lakoff 1987: 442). Take the following two sentences for example: "Sam ran *through* the forest" versus "There is a road *through* the forest" (Lakoff 1987: 442). Again, both sentences involve PATH. However, the former does not contain any explicit trajector that specifies Sam's trip in the forest whereas the latter specifies a trajector – a "road" – that explicitly expresses the PATH schema. Perhaps we can term such image schema transformations "intrinsic", because they refer to possible transformations that image schemas themselves can undergo within the language system. Besides, in Lakoff's discussion of this issue, he mainly uses prepositions to suggest that "[n]atural image-schema transformations play a central role in forming radial categories of senses" (Lakoff 1987: 440). It seems that we can further characterize the static versus dynamic character of image schemas by considering it in the light of CDA, especially the dynamism of image schemas and its relationship with the production and reception of discourse. By so doing, we can attend to "extrinsic" image schema transformations – image schema interactions and their relationship with society and worldview.

CDA sees language use as "discourse practice", which involves the production and reception of text, and as "social practice", which is tied up with social-institutional aspects of language, including power and ideology, socio-economic and historical changes, cross-gender interaction, etc. (Fairclough 1989: 17–42, 1995: 133–135). In other words, CDA sees language use as dynamic in that it is not only capable of encoding ideology and values but also "instrumental in enforcing them" (Fowler and Kress 1979: 195; Kress 1989: 68–84; Fowler 1996b: 3–7).

In CDA, much attention has been paid to investigating how linguistic patterning, especially "the predominant unity and congruency of all linguistic units" (Fowler and Kress 1979: 213), contributes to constructing and shaping "the ideological basis of the discourse itself" (Fowler and Kress 1979: 213). It is also important to attend to the less obvious aspects of discourse patterning. For example, we can see as co-emergent the dynamic nature of image schemas and the superimposition of them in discourse rather than merely treat individual image schemas and their transformations separately. Then under scrutiny are issues such as what patterns of image-schematic interactions emerge and how the patterns link perception and conception, link discourse and ideology (cf. Fowler 1996a: 165–183), and indeed link discourse, cognition, society and culture.

3. Image schemas, metaphorical utterances, and socio-cultural values

When using and understanding metaphors, we can resort to image schemas; they "can be projected by metaphor onto abstract domains" (Johnson 1987: xv). Obvious examples are image-schema metaphors (Johnson 1987: 112–125; Lakoff and Turner 1989: 96–100). For example, metaphorical expressions such as "He is *out* of money", "The spirit of the team is *low*", "Hold *on*, please", etc., respectively use IN-OUT, UP-DOWN, CONTACT schemas. The conceptual elements of the image schemas – OUT, DOWN, and CONTACT – are respectively mapped from the source domains to the target domains concerning financial situation, morale, and interpersonal interaction.

However, image schemas do not merely operate in image-schema metaphors. They can operate subtly in discourse and/or together with metaphors. Take the following passage from *Middlemarch* for example.

> Poor Mr. Casaubon had imagined that his long studious bachelorhood had stored up for him a compound interest of enjoyment, and that large drafts on his affections would not fail to be honoured; for we all of us, grave or light, get our thoughts entangled in metaphors, and act fatally on the strength of them. (George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, Chapter 10, p. 85; quoted from Kress 1989: 70)

Kress (1989) comments on the metaphoric function and effect of the prepositions used in the final sentence quoted.

> George Eliot writes of getting *our thoughts entangled in metaphors, of acting fatally on the strength of them*. The prepositions *in* and *on* shift our thinking from the abstract to the spatial, turning the relation into one which is "in" space: "in", as opposed to "by" for instance, which would make the relation into an instrumental rather than a spatial one. "In" also makes "metaphor" into a container, a net, where "by" makes it into a tool. (… prepositions have agentive power "to shift our thinking", which at once turns "thinking" into both an object-like entity, and one which is portrayed as being quite separate from the thinker.) These prepositions are metaphors by which we locate ourselves and everything else in space, time, or in instrumental relations with other objects. (Kress 1989: 71; emphasis original)

Although Kress does not use the term "image schema", his interpreting the preposition "in" as a metaphor for a container is tantamount to saying the use of "in" here is a metaphor based on the CONTAINER image schema. Of course, Kress is not a cognitive linguist, who might well make the observation that the conceptual metaphor IDEAS ARE OBJECTS underlies the metaphor "thoughts entangled in metaphors". A cognitive linguist might also observe that the domain of entangled objects, e. g. ropes, strings, threads, etc. is mapped onto the domain of thought complex. Instead of seeing things in this sort of way, Kress regards such metaphorical use of prepositions as itself having the power to shift our thinking. In his view, metaphor is a choice of linguistic use, and the choice can have ideological significance. "Metaphorical activity occurs at sites of difference, in struggles over power, whenever there is contention of an ideological kind, whenever an attempt is made to assimilate an event into one ideological system rather than another" (Kress 1989: 71). Kress views metaphor as embodying ideological struggle and argues that metaphor conveys values as well as meaning, a view consistent with the contention of critical linguistics that text and discourse are ideology-charged. As Kress puts it, "[t]he ubiquitous action of metaphor is one force in the discursive and ideological process of 'naturalizing' the social, of turning that which is problematic into the obvious" (Kress 1989: 72–73). For example, in science, metaphor is a discursive strategy of moving "from the known to the unknown, from the well established to the new and hypothetical" (Kress 1989: 72). Consider the following sentence from a science book for secondary school students: "The movement of the electrons in one direction means that the atom can be considered as a tiny rod with a negative charge at one end and a positive charge at the other" (quoted from Kress 198: 72). The atom-as-rod metaphor brings the complexity of scientific matters into the world familiar to its readers. Another example given by Kress is the title "Squandering our inheritance" used for a passage about the danger of using up the earth's resources. As Kress (1989: 71–72) comments, "[t]he title, itself a complex metaphor, sets the stage for the

operation of the metaphor of 'husbanding of wealth' with its echoes of the profligate prodigal son". In other words, Kress does not simply see metaphor as something we live by; he problematizes metaphorical use of language and brings to the fore its force of instilling and naturalizing values into discourse. He does not jump quickly to the blending of concepts or prioritize metaphorical meaning over the source domain. Instead, he sees the mapping from source to target as being the projection of an ideological configuration.

Kress's view of metaphors can complement cognitive accounts of metaphors and image schemas in that the socio-cultural dimension of language is brought to bear on cognition. Indeed, in cognitive approaches to metaphor, there has been an awareness of the need to strike a balance between cognition and culture (e. g. Gibbs 1999; Kövecses 2005: 88–113, 193–228). For example, Gibbs (1999) explicitly considers it necessary to study the link between what is cognitive and what is cultural.

> Our use of metaphors to structure concepts, such as anger or time, is strongly shaped by (a) how we culturally conceptualize situations, like getting angry and sensing time, and (b) by our interactions with social/cultural artifacts around us. Under this view, metaphor is as much a species of perceptually guided adaptive action in a particular cultural situation as it is a specific language device or some internally represented structure in the minds of individuals. (Gibbs 1999: 162)

Gibbs (1999: 154) also points out that "image schemas … might very well have a strong cultural component to them, especially in terms of which aspects of embodied experience are viewed as particularly salient and meaningful in people's lives". The view concerning the socio-cultural embodiment of cognition strikes a chord with such critical linguists as van Dijk (1990, 1993, 2001) and Chilton (2004: 50–56) since they also see discourse as "a product of individual and collective mental processes" (Chilton 2004: 51). Chilton (1996: 50–65) explicitly uses image schemas in his account of security metaphors in Cold War discourse. For instance, the CONTAINER schema underpins the recurrent metaphor "Soviet Union is a container" in Cold War discourse (Chilton 1996: 143): "Thus all forms of international organizations not amenable to Communist penetration and control … must expect to find themselves under fire…", "The Soviet regime is a police regime par excellence, reared in dim half world of Tsarist police intrigue…" (quoted from Chilton 1996: 430).

Van Dijk (1993) stresses the need to further explore "social cognition" in CDA:

> Social representations in our minds (such as socially shared knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and ideology) are assumed to act as the necessary "interface" between micro-level interactions and individual text and talk, on the one hand, and societal macro-structures, on the other hand. This assumption goes beyond the classical "correlational" approaches to the relationships between language and society, for instance

> in sociolinguistics. At the same time, it provides a necessary extension of work in critical linguistics and discourse analysis about the ways language use or discourse contribute[s] to the reproduction or legitimation of social power. (van Dijk 1993: 107)

As van Dijk (1993: 110) suggests, "[s]ocial cognition entails the system of mental strategies and structures shared by group members, and in particular those involved in the understanding, production and representation of social 'objects', such as situations, interactions, groups and institutions". In this article, by analyzing how image-schematic pattern can signify cultural meaning, I will explore the "system of mental strategies and structures" involved in representing and understanding the genre called Zen poetry. I believe the selected type of discourse extends the work of CDA given CDA's tendency to treat how discourse – especially media discourse – structures, represents, enacts, and presupposes dominance, power and inequality in society (e. g. Fowler 1991; Hodge and Kress 1993; Fairclough 1995; Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard 1996).

4. An image-schematic analysis of Zen poetry

Based on the above theoretical account of image schemas, my analysis below will attempt to illustrate how a critical-cognitive linguistic perspective can contribute to textual analysis. By using two Chinese Zen poems as my examples, my analysis will pay special attention to image-schematic pattern and its significance in the interface between discourse, cognition, and culture.

Let me first define Zen poetry. The American poet Lucien Stryk[1] (1995: xlv) points out three distinctive features that characterize Zen poetry of all periods and even beyond its Chinese roots: "dynamism …, flowing spontaneously from the formless self and partaking of the world's fullness". That is, Zen poetry is characterized by dynamism, formless self (i. e. emptiness), and fullness. To put it in another way, perhaps a better way, despite its being contemplative and tranquil, Zen poetry captures the dynamic human experience of being united with the cosmos. Such a characterization may well apply to Chinese Zen poetry. What distinguishes Chinese Zen poetry from, for example, Japanese or American Zen poetry is mainly the Chinese language originally used and (of course) the Chinese poets who composed them.

Chinese Zen poems can be broadly categorized in two ways: in terms of their authors and in terms of their subject matters. First, Chinese Zen poems can be classified into two types in terms of the monastic-lay dichotomy of their authors. That is, some poems were written by Zen Buddhist poet monks who aimed to communicate aspects of Zen essence through poetry. On the other hand, some Zen poems have been composed by lay poets who were inspired or influenced by Zen Buddhism (Wu 2002: 1); some of the latter, while inspired by

Zen, might attend more to the aesthetics of poetry than to the profound truth of "the Ultimate" – if indeed such a distinction can ultimately be sustained. Zen poems can also be categorized into two broad types through their subject matters. One type directly and explicitly concerns aspects of Buddhist philosophy. Such poems usually contain Buddhist terms and most likely originated from a monastic setting. For example, they can be "pointers" given by a Master to his disciples, poems illustrating Enlightened experience, poems eulogizing ancient Zen Masters, etc. (Li 1995: 1). The other type depicts sparks of Zen in poets' daily lives, for example, when they are observing nature, visiting a temple, living in mountains, visiting friends, etc. This type of Zen poem is probably more reminiscent of Wordsworth, Thoreau, or Whitman than of any great Buddhist Patriarch or philosopher, because it tends to articulate truths of a higher order through description of nature rather than illustrate doctrine or philosophy. Two Zen poems[2] are cited below just to give a flavor of this type of Zen poetry.

(1) A thousand-foot fishing-line heading straight down,
One wave followed by ten thousand waves,
In the tranquil night and the cold water, no fish wants to feed;
The boatful of emptiness carries the bright moon back.
("A thousand-foot fishing-line", Venerable De Cheng, ?–860 AD)

(2) Jade-green trees join stream mountains;
A pavilion stands in the air, the land beneath encrusted with gold.
I walk to a point where the white clouds merge;
The rushing stream and the pines' rhythmic swaying lighten the mind.
("On Liou He Temple in Mt. Nan", Venerable Qi Sueng, 1007–1072 AD)

Without knowing that their authors are Buddhist monks, one might not be able to tell that they are Zen poems, even though the sense of tranquillity associated with contemplation can be felt.

In this study, I will use this nature-evoking type of poem to illustrate my point, since my concern here is not to expound Buddhist philosophy but to investigate how image-schematic patterns, including human interactions with and perceptions of nature, are consistently employed and mapped to Zen Buddhist thought. Zen poem (3) quoted below will be under scrutiny.

(3) Atop the mountain, in a meditation room, hangs a monk's robe;
Outside the window no one in sight but stream birds flying.
At sunset halfway down the mountain,
Hearing water murmuring, I keep looking back at the green mountainside.
("Visiting Venerable Master Rong, Lan Ruo Temple", Meng Hao-Ran, 689–740 AD)

In this four-line Zen poem, at least five image schemas are entwined. The VERTICALITY image schema is employed in the first and third lines, where a visit up the mountain and a return down the mountain are suggested. Next, CONTAINER is also operative as the things inside and outside a meditation room are mentioned in the first and second lines. Superimposed upon CONTAINER is still another image schema: FULL-EMPTY. Inside the room is nothing but a monk's robe. Outside the room only flying birds are to be seen. Between the plus and minus of the FULL-EMPTY schema, the poem is not oriented toward either end. Instead, the first two lines seem to transcend the emptiness versus non-emptiness distinction. While the monk is not in the room, his robe hanging there almost suggests his presence. Furthermore, whilst his presence is not figured outside the window either, "stream birds", presumably birds from the stream or birds flying along the stream, unfolds to the eye. In other words, the poem communicates the realization that no boundaries exist between emptiness and non-emptiness and that emptiness and non-emptiness co-exist. Such an understanding would involve still another image schema, LINK, since contrasts or opposites are interfused or transcended rather than emphasized.

The LINK image schema is superimposed not only on FULL-EMPTY but also on VERTICALITY and CONTAINER, because the bipolar elements of these image schemas are both brought to bear on the interdependence of things and, indeed, suggest one of the fundamental principles of Zen – non-duality. Neither the upward trip to the mountain nor the downward journey back receives any positive-negative evaluation. The same is true of the inner or the outer of the monk's room. Instead, an extended physical space encompassing UP and DOWN, penetrating IN and OUT, is created and projected onto a Zen domain, whose ultimate goal is to cultivate the mind. The physical spaciousness is seen in the process of being mapped onto the domain of Zen, thus suggesting and preserving the natural spaciousness of mind (see below for further discussion).

Last but not least, the PATH schema, used in depicting the journey, especially in the third and fourth lines, reinforces the interdependence of UP and DOWN, the mutual conditioning of IN and OUT. For the trip involves going up the mountain and coming down and involves going inside the monk's meditation room and coming out. As such, the PATH schema reinforces the LINK image schema. Besides, the LINK is also reinforced by the poet's looking back on the mountainside when he is halfway down the mountain. Furthermore, the halfway point on a PATH, represented by a look-back glance cast "halfway" down the mountain, can be metaphorically interpreted and projected onto the target domain of Zen: the halfway point could be a metaphor for the Middle Way, the Buddhist Truth that emphasizes the avoidance of extremes and denies any ultimate duality – or for the Point of No Return – the decisive spiritual experience. The use of the LINK schema may well support my analyzing VERTICALITY, CONTAINER, FULL-EMPTY, LINK as contributing to the

representation, construction, and shaping of the non-polarized experience. The analysis also reveals that the poem emphasizes the interconnections between bipolar aspects of image schemas rather than their dichotomies. This image-schematic pattern partly uncovers the poet's direct cognition, his perception of the world without any extraneous conceptualization. Meanwhile, it is shaped by modes of cognition inculcated by Zen and Zen culture, and insofar as the poem is incorporated into the classical canon, it may in its turn shape Zen discourse and Zen culture as well. The subtle message of such a poem may surface not only in body-mind-environment interactions but also in cognition-discourse-culture interactions.

I will next analyze another poem, where a similar image-schematic pattern is used.

(4) The hand plants rice seedlings all over the field;
Head down, you see the sky in the water.
The pure mind is the Way;
Stepping back is moving forward.
("Planting rice seedlings", Venerable Qi Ci, ?–916 AD)

The first, second, and fourth lines explicitly describe the chief bodily actions involved in planting rice seedlings in a field: a farmer's doing the planting with his hands, keeping his head down as he engages in the action; he is seeing the sky reflected in the water, and walking backward as he proceeds with his planting lest he trample over the seedlings he has planted. In contrast, the third line explicitly states the theme of the poem – the pure mind being the Way. What counts as "the pure mind" is a philosophical question beyond this study; nevertheless, we can say that the third line refers to the soteriological Way, to the ultimate Truth, to the means of liberation that lies within the body – the mind. Seen in this light, all three descriptive lines (1, 2, and 4), although they depict quite simply, directly and literally the farmer's sensorimotor interactions, can also be read metaphorically, especially when read against the third line and in the context of reading poetry. We can consider farming – or cultivation – as the source domain and the human mind and/or Zen as the target domain. In Chinese, the metaphorical projection from farming to the mind is particularly common as evidenced in the Chinese expression of mind/heart – *xindi*, which literally means "mind land".

Planting seedlings all over the field metaphorically expresses the cultivation of the mind to the full. Seeing the sky in the water is a metaphor for realizing the Way through the mind. Besides, the reflection of presumably pure blue sky in the muddy water is metaphorically projected as the reflection of the pure mind even in the defiled mind. Stepping backward as a way to move forward can metaphorically suggest being humble and getting out of

the rat race as a way to develop spirituality. Table 1 summarizes the mappings involved.

Table 1. *Metaphorical mappings from farming to the mind*

Source domain: Farming		Target domain: Mind
Planting seedlings all over the field	→	Cultivating the mind to the full
Seeing the sky in water	→	Realizing the Way through the mind
Clear reflection in muddy water	→	Reflection of the pure mind in ordinary mind
Stepping backward as a way to move forward	→	Being humble and getting out of the rat race as a way to develop spirituality

Operative in our literal and metaphorical understandings of Zen poem (4) are at least six image schemas. EMPTY-FULL is used in understanding a scene of planting seedlings all over a field which is presumably empty of any crops or seedlings. VERTICALITY is involved in picturing the head down, the water occupying the lowest level, in the downwards direction in the field, and the sky high up. CONTAINER is employed in depicting the "inside" of the field – the receptive muddy and watery earth – and the "outside" of the field – the sky above. The sky reflected in the water enacts LINK because the water down in the field and the sky high up and outside the field are brought together and made to coincide. Furthermore, FRONT-BACK and PATH are used: the spatial bodily movements and the path traversed when one is doing the planting (or the "cultivating" – a word used often in Zen circles). The LINK schema is explicitly superimposed on UP-DOWN, IN-OUT, and BACK-FORTH, as evidenced in "the water in the sky" and "stepping back is moving forward". Arguably, the LINK schema is also superimposed upon the EMPTY-FULL schema in that a fully cultivated mind generates only pure mind, which is presumably empty of cravings. Like (3), poem (4) is not biased toward either end of the bipolar elements of the schemas but subtly interfuses them.

As the above analyses have shown, from the interactions and superimpositions of the image schemas emerges an image-schematic pattern that preserves and interconnects bi-polar elements of image schemas instead of emphasizing or exaggerating one specific orientation. Such an image-schematic pattern and its no-boundaries, freedom-flavored extension constitute a pattern of understanding Zen. Namely, the interconnected, interdependent, co-nascent opposites are consistently mapped onto the domain of Zen. The Zen mind is thus characterized as one that sees opposites mingled and united, including subject and object, inner and outer. "There is not the mind, on the one hand and its experiences on the other: there is just a process of experiencing in which there is nothing to be grasped as an object, and no one, as a subject, to

grasp it" (Watts 1989: 53). For example, in (3), the Zen mind is suggested by the poet's hearing water murmuring, mentioned in the final line of the poem, because the object of a murmuring stream and the subject experiencing it are united in the mind attending to the sound. In (4), the line "The pure mind is the Way" also suggests that the Way is not something to be grasped as a separate object but is inseparable from the mind.

Such understandings manifest not only the poet's embeddedness – his at-one-ness – within a language and culture but also the reader's relatedness and receptivity to Zen society and culture (cf. Johnson 1987: 137). Image schemas and their patterns are inevitably involved in the process of communication in all cultures. As part and parcel of the interaction between discourse, cognition, society and culture, inborn and imposed image schemas are gradually entwined, structured and patterned with particular conceptualizations, particular ideologies. The image-schematic pattern, arising from the consciously superimposed and possibly sub-conscious previously interwoven image schemas employed, contributes both to the production and to the reception, the "reading" of Zen, including Zen poems. The Zen patterning is not arbitrary but motivated by the culture's conception of "the Ultimate" and its challenge to dualistically polarized thinking, which is grounded in dichotomized values (e. g. GOOD IS UP versus BAD IS DOWN).

In order to further support the image-schematic pattern that I have analyzed and to highlight the metaphorical mappings of physical space onto mind, I quote five more Zen poems below. A brief comment follows each of the poems. My comment will pay special attention to UP-DOWN schema. Where appropriate, I use underlining to indicate a supposed downward orientation and italics to indicate height and therefore a supposed upward orientation. The comments are not intended to be detailed analyses but to reinforce MIND IS SPACE and the image-schematic pattern.

(5) …
Sunset and rain meet
In the shadow of the green, silent *mountains*.
Contemplating the white lotus,
Pure mind alone is seen.
("On Yi Gueng's meditation room in TaYu Temple", Meng Hao-ran, 689–740 AD; emphasis mine)

The sunset and the rain both indicate a downward movement in or from the sky, and together they conjure up a vision of boundless space. The juxtaposition of the mountains and the shadow they cast evokes the vision of a large intervening space.

(6) The green lake, clear spring water;
The cold *mountain*, the white *moon*.
In silent illumination, consciousness brightens,
Gazing at emptiness, the state becomes wholly silent.
("Green lake, clear spring water," Venerable Han Shan; emphasis mine)

The juxtaposition of the lake, the mountain, and the moon evokes a space stretching between them. Water naturally flows down, while the mountain extends upwards, and although the mountain top is far away, the moon is more distant still.

(7) Mountain after mountain *ascending*;
To Buddha's temple near solitary village.
As I journey, scenery and poetry merge.
Along the hillside, leaves tremble,
A monkey comes down to the water.
A monk, his staff tinkling, *ascends the steep mountainside* into the mist,
The pines cast shadows in the moonlight, their leaves cold.
The babbling spring waters bubble;
Tomorrow morning I'll head for more *distant clouds,*
Determined to grow old with the mist and with the *sky.*
("Staying at Hua Cheng Temple, Mt. Jiou Hua", Venerable Leng Ran, ca. 9th century; emphasis mine)

A series of contrasts create an ever-extending space: monkeys coming down to the water *versus* a monk walking up the mountains, the tall-standing pines *versus* their shadow on the ground, and downward-flowing babbling waters *versus* water bubbling up. The giant or ever-pervasive participants of nature – mountains, clouds, mist, and sky – reinforce the space created.

(8) A wild monk, heading down through the *mist* to greet a visitor,
I'm asked what Green Mountain Temple is like.
Close to a cliff a gate,
And a well one thousand feet deep;
A stone bridge spans streaming waters,
Surrounded by firs and pines.
("Composed as a response to Zhang Wu-jin", Venerable Yüan Ji; emphasis mine)

The monk's coming down through the mist indicates that the temple is located high up in the mountain; a VERTICALITY schema is triggered in reading the first line. An imaginative physical space, building on the VERTICAL-

ITY schema, is reinforced by the "deep" well and the cliff, both embodying dimensional space.

(9) Deep in winter, the green forest is still visible:
Steeping the mountainside, splashing the rocks.
The *moon* caresses the grassless land,
The sighing breeze perennially lenient to the lone wooden pavilion.
Far beneath the *sky* and *clouds*, the soft shadows flit
Upon the thunderous rhythm of the Yangtze River entering the vast sea.
Walking with staff, listening to the gibbons' calls, I look back.
Down there, who would dream of this remote forest?
("An evening walk in a pine mountain", Venerable Han Shi, ca. 17th century; emphasis mine)

A series of spatial contrasts pay equal attention to upward and downward orientations: the steep mountainside *versus* the rocks that the forest covers underneath, the moon up in the sky *versus* the grassless land below it, the sky and clouds *versus* the shade under the forest, and being up the pine mountain, as the title suggests, *versus* being "down there".

5. Conclusion

This article has elucidated a critical-cognitive linguistic view of image schemas. This attempt also fosters an exploration of a discourse-cognition-culture interface. Some generalizations can be made based on the above discussion and analyses. Firstly, image schemas provide a point of entry into social cognition, because they can be seen as "mental strategies and structures shared by group members, and in particular those involved in the understanding, production and representation of social 'objects'" (van Dijk 1993: 110). Although Zen itself would probably object to being called a type of "social object", the representation of Zen, as in the case of Zen poetry, inevitably utilizes certain "mental strategies and structures shared by group members" called Zen practitioners. An image-schematic analysis of Zen poetry helps to illustrate this. Secondly, arising from the observed fact of the superimposition of image schemas in discourse, it can be seen that image-schematic patterns are dynamic, inasmuch as they serve as a bridge between perception and conception, between discourse and world-view, and between discourse, cognition and culture. The image-schematic pattern in the selected poems consistently interconnects what would commonly be perceived as the bipolar, mutually-exclusive elements of image schemas and consistently unites or transcends the apparent polarization by projecting them onto or assimilating the supposed opposites

into "Zen thinking". Such discourse dynamically participates in shaping Zen conceptions, Zen culture, and Zen world-view, which aspires to exemplify the Middle Way. Johnson (1987: 138) contends that "image schemata, their abstract extensions, and their metaphorical elaborations constitute a great part of the constraining structure of … [our] understanding". But it is not enough to merely recognize that image schemas serve to constrain meaning and understanding. More importantly, we still need to make explicit how to identify image schemas and image-schematic patterns in the reader's interaction with discourse. This paper has attempted this task. Thirdly, a critical-cognitive linguistic view of image schemas affords to the concept itself a more productive and wide-ranging perspective. In this way, it contributes to the dawning realization that what had been thought of as definitively cognitive and what was considered merely socio-cultural are closer, more mutually-conditioned and mutually conditioning, than might otherwise have been thought.

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Notes

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1. Lucien Stryk is a contemporary Zen poet and has translated numerous Chinese and Japanese Zen poems into English. Some of the existing English translation anthologies of Zen poetry include the following: L. Stryk and T. Ikemoto (trans. and eds.) (1988). *Zen Poems of China and Japan: The Crane's Bill*. New York: Grove Press; J.P. Seaton and D. Maloney (eds.) (1994). *A Drifting Boat: Chinese Zen Poetry.* New York: White Pine Press; L. Stryk and T. Ikemoto (trans. and eds.) (1995). *Zen Poetry: Let the Spring Breeze Enter.* New York: Grove Press; L. Stryk (1997). *Where We Are: Selected Poems and Zen Translations.* London: Skoob Books; S. Hamil and J.P. Seaton (trans. and eds.) (2004). *The Poetry of Zen*. Boston: Shambhala.
2. All the Zen poems cited in this study are my translations from their original Chinese version. They are selected from two Chinese Zen poetry collections, respectively edited by Hueng (1993) and Li (1995). Since this study concerns image schemas, my English translations have tried to maintain all the image schemas as used in the original versions. As such, I have not romanized the Chinese poems as word-by-word, line-by-line English translations. This way of presenting Chinese Zen poetry should, however, be sufficient for the purpose of this study.

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