

## Beijing Olympics and Beijing opera: A multimodal metaphor in a CCTV Olympics commercial

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### *Abstract*

*This paper is a cognitive semantic analysis of a CCTV educational commercial, which is one of a series designed and produced in preparation for, and in celebration of, the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Called the “Beijing Opera Episode”, this TV commercial converges on the theme: “To mount the stage of the world, and to put on a show of China”. That is, China sees her hosting of the 2008 Olympics by Beijing as a great opportunity for her to step onto the international stage to perform a show of China. This theme, which alludes to China’s globalization and retention of cultural identity, is conceptualized and expressed in terms of a central metaphor of theatrical performance: HOSTING THE BEIJING OLYMPICS IS PERFORMING BEIJING OPERA ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE. This study first analyzes in detail how this central metaphor is manifested multimodally through visual and aural as well as verbal discourse, thus examining it as a multimodal metaphor. The study then applies a decompositional approach, based on the distinction between primary and complex metaphors, to analyzing the central metaphor as a metaphorical compound with its internal structures and components, which is nevertheless built on a more general cognitive foundation. The study also offers a linguistic perspective on a cultural model underlying the central metaphor, which is arguably a Chinese cultural model for understanding various aspects and events of life in general.*

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*At the core of this cultural model is the widespread LIFE IS A STAGE metaphor, which however has a specific manifestation within the Chinese cultural context.*

*Keywords: Multimodal metaphor, primary metaphor, complex metaphor, De-compositional Approach to Metaphorical Compound Analysis, cultural model, TV commercial.*

## 1. Introduction

In 2008 Beijing hosted the Summer Olympic Games. In preparation for the Games, China spent billions of dollars not only on the construction of its “hardware”, such as sporting venues (e.g., the Bird’s Nest and Water Cube) and transportation systems (e.g., the new airport terminal and subway line), but also on the development of its “software”, namely, making its people ready for this significant international gathering in China, and especially in Beijing, the designated host city. One of the efforts on the “software” front was to wage a major campaign on mass media to promote civil behavior (i.e., civility) and national pride among the Chinese people. For example, China Central Television (CCTV) designed and produced a series of TV commercials “To greet the Olympics, to cultivate civil behavior, and to foster a new spirit”.

TV commercials of this kind are called “commercials for public welfare”. In contrast with business commercials, which are designed for the purpose of financial profits, the commercials for public welfare are designed to educate people by influencing their way of thinking, understanding, and acting. For this reason, they can also be called “educational commercials”. One recurrent educational commercial on CCTV characterizes the nature of TV commercials for public welfare in terms of a LIGHT metaphor: “A commercial for public welfare is also a lamp”. That is, the purpose of educational commercials is to “enlighten”, namely to “shed light on” something, which is otherwise “in the dark”, so that the viewers can “see” it. Here, the metaphor EDUCATIONAL COMMERCIALS ARE LIGHT SOURCES, for the purpose of moral or educational “enlightenment”, is apparently related to the general metaphors KNOWING IS SEEING and UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING (see, e.g., Kövecses 2010; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Yu 2004).

In this paper I will analyze a CCTV educational commercial within the cognitive semantic paradigm. Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) of Cognitive Linguistics, which can be traced back to its origin in Lakoff and Johnson’s seminal book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), argues that metaphor gives rise to understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another. A central tenet of CMT is that human beings think metaphorically (e.g., Gibbs 1994; Johnson

1987; Kövecses 2005, 2010; Lakoff 1987, 1993; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Yu 1998; see also Gibbs 2008 for some new developments). It is argued that “metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3). As Forceville (2008: 463) points out, however, if metaphors are essential to thinking as cognitive linguists have argued, “it makes sense that they should occur not only in language but also in static and moving pictures, sounds, music, gestures, even in touch and smell—and in their various permutations”. Forceville (2008) rightly argues that it is crucial for CMT to study nonverbal and multimodal metaphors systematically to test claims made about conceptual metaphors. “Multimodal metaphors” are defined as those metaphors whose target and source are rendered exclusively or predominantly in two or more modes and the verbal is in many cases just one of them (Forceville 2006; see also Forceville 2008; Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009a). The possible modes involved include written language, spoken language, static and moving images, music, nonverbal sounds, and gestures (Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009b). In an overview of nonlinguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors in various areas of human experience (Kövecses 2010: 63–75), Kövecses concludes that conceptual metaphor “is present not only in the way we speak but also in much of our nonlinguistic reality”, pervading “much of our social, artistic, psychological, intellectual, and cultural lives” (2010: 73).

The present study supports this claim by providing a systematic analysis of the manifestation of a conceptual metaphor in a TV commercial as a multimodal discourse. This particular TV commercial is named “Beijing Opera Episode”, which is one of a series produced by CCTV in preparation for, and in celebration of, the Beijing 2008 Olympics. I will show that this TV commercial is centered on a conceptual metaphor, *HOSTING THE BEIJING OLYMPICS IS PERFORMING BEIJING OPERA ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE*, which is manifested multimodally, through visual and aural as well as verbal discourse. In this particular case, the visual discourse consists of moving and static images and written language as captions, the aural discourse of music, including percussion, and spoken language, and the verbal discourse of both spoken and written language. The three modes involved in part overlap one another in their expression and contribute to the totality of the multimodal discourse. Following the analysis of the central metaphor as a multimodal metaphor, I will apply a Decompositional Approach to Metaphorical Compound Analysis (DAMCA), examining the central metaphor as a complex metaphor in hopes that a “deep analysis” (Lakoff and Turner 1989) like this can reveal the general cognitive foundation of a metaphorical compound that would otherwise appear to be highly culture-specific and occasion-specific. Finally, I will provide a linguistic perspective on a cultural modal underlying the TV commercial’s central metaphor. This Chinese cultural model, arguably, underlies the understanding

of various aspects and events of life in general. Before proceeding to the analysis, I first provide a synopsis of the commercial under discussion.

## 2. Synopsis of the TV commercial

With the increasing pace of beats of the *bangu* or *danpiguo*—a small, high-pitched drum used in Beijing opera to conduct the accompanying percussion and music—the commercial presents in an increasingly rapid pace a series of moving images, which fall into, and alternate between, two domains: Olympics and theatrical performance. These images include, for example, the following:

The Olympics logo over a metropolitan scene (Figure 1); stage curtains remaining closed (Figure 2); a group of people jogging on a Beijing street (*Tian An Men* ‘the Gate of Heavenly Peace’ of the Forbidden City visible in the background) as part of the bid campaign, the front runner carrying a big flag with the official logo of Beijing for the host city of the 2008 Olympics (Figure 3); the interior of a theater with one spot light being turned on (Figure 4); people celebrating the successful bid, cheering and waving the national flag of China (Figure 5); a row of stage lights being turned on inside the theater (Figure 6); the athletes sprinting off the starting line (Figure 7); the lights above a row of mirrors in the dressing room being turned on in sequence from left to right (Figure 8); the curtains of the stage being slowly drawn apart with a heavy beat of a gong and a series of sounds of cymbals (Figure 9).

At this point, the commercial starts to show a series of ten well-known Beijing opera actors and actresses speaking to the camera in plain clothes about the Beijing 2008 Olympics, with their words captioned at the bottom of the screen (see, e.g., Figures 10–12). While they are talking, the shots of their speaking alternate with the shots of their performing in make-up and costumes (see, e.g., Figures 13–18), as well as some other scenes about the Beijing Olympics.

The speeches made by the ten Beijing opera actors and actresses are provided below, from (1)–(10):

- (1) Yu Kuizhi of the National Beijing Opera Institute:  
当时钟指向那一刻，普天之下呼唤着同一个声音：2008北京奥运。  
*Dang shizhen zhi xiang na yike, pu tian zhi xia huhuan zhe tongyi ge shengyin: 2008 Beijing Aoyun.*  
‘When the hands of the clock point to that moment, the whole world is cheering loudly in one voice: Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.’
- (2) Yuan Huiqin of the National Beijing Opera Institute:  
北京奥运展示了中国人对和谐的期待，展示了中国是礼仪之邦。



Figure 1  
*Five rings over city*

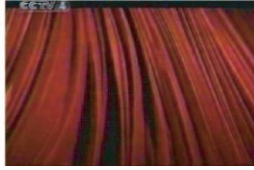


Figure 2  
*Curtains remaining closed*



Figure 3  
*Beijing bidding for 2008*



Figure 4  
*Interior of a theater*



Figure 5  
*Celebrating the success*

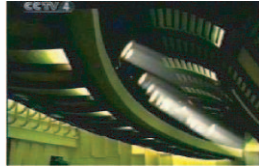


Figure 6  
*Stage lights being turned on*

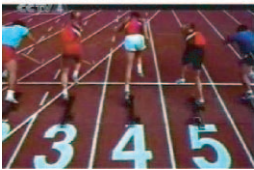


Figure 7  
*Athletes starting for a race*



Figure 8  
*Dressing room lights on*



Figure 9  
*Stage curtains drawn apart*



Figure 10  
*Yu Kuizhi*



Figure 11  
*Li Shengsu*



Figure 12  
*Meng Guanglu*

*Beijing Aoyun zhanshi le Zhongguo ren dui hexie de qidai, zhanshi le Zhongguo shi liyi zhi bang.*

‘The Beijing Olympics exemplifies the Chinese people’s wishes for harmony, and demonstrates China as a land of ceremony and propriety.’



Figure 13  
*Performing on Great Wall*



Figure 14  
*Performing in sunshine*



Figure 15  
*Performing in spotlight*



Figure 16  
*Performing outside buildings*



Figure 17  
*Performing on stage*



Figure 18  
*Female martial role*

- (3) Zhang Jianguo of the National Beijing Opera Institute:  
奥运，中国人期盼你，中国人欢迎你，中国人祝福你。  
*Aoyun, Zhongguo ren qipan ni, Zhongguo ren huanying ni, Zhongguo ren zhufu ni.*  
'The Olympics, the Chinese people have been looking forward to you with much eagerness, and they are greeting you with best wishes.'
- (4) Zhang Huoding of the National Beijing Opera Institute:  
北京奥运会，中国大舞台，绽放着无限的精彩。  
*Beijing Aoyunhui, Zhongguo da wutai, zhanfang zhe wuxian de jingcai.*  
'The Beijing Olympics, the big stage of China, is breaking out into blossom of infinite brilliance.'
- (5) Yang Chi of the Dalian Beijing Opera Troupe:  
同一个世界，同一个梦想，同一个舞台。这个舞台展示着中华文明的风采，悠久华夏，豪迈时代。  
*Tongyi ge shijie, tongyi ge mengxiang, tongyi ge wutai. Zhe ge wutai zhanshi zhe Zhonghua wenming de fengcai.*  
'One world, one dream, and one stage. This stage is displaying the magnificence of Chinese civilization. The long history of China is entering into a splendid era.'
- (6) Wang Rongrong of the Beijing Institute of Beijing Opera:  
唱念做打，我们向艺术汲取每一个生动的细节；春夏秋冬，我们向五环呈现每一个灿烂的季节。



*Chang nian zuo da, women xiang yishu jiqu mei yi ge shengdong de xijie; chun xia qiu dong, women xiang wuhuan chengxian mei yi ge canlan de jijie.*

‘Singing, reciting, acting, and acrobatic fighting, we absorb every vivid detail from art. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter, we present each glorious season to the Five Rings.’

- (7) Li Shengsu of the National Beijing Opera Institute:  
北京奥运的点点滴滴，都是中国人的美好记忆。  
*Beijing Aoyun de diandian didi dou shi Zhongguo ren de meihao jiyi.*  
‘All the details of the Beijing Olympics will be beautiful memories of the Chinese people.’
- (8) Chi Xiaoqiu of the Beijing Institute of Beijing Opera:  
迎奥运，讲文明，树新风，是每个人的光荣，每个人的责任。  
*Ying Aoyun, jiang wenming, shu xinfeng, shi mei ge ren de guangrong, mei ge ren de zeren.*  
‘To greet the Olympics, to cultivate civil behavior, and to foster a new spirit is everyone’s honor and everyone’s responsibility.’
- (9) Wang Yan of the Tianjin Institute of Beijing Opera:  
奥运是新的起点，我们对文明的追求永远没有终点。  
*Aoyun shi xin de qidian, women dui wenming de zuiqiu yongyuan meiyou zhongdian.*  
‘The Olympics is our new starting line, but our chase of civilization has no finishing line.’
- (10) Meng Guanglu of the Youth Beijing Opera Troupe of Tianjin:  
传承文明，奉献奥运；点亮圣火，唱响中国。  
*Chuanzai wenming, fengxian Aoyun; dianliang shenghuo, changxiang Zhongguo.*  
‘To pass and carry on civilization, to contribute to the Olympics, to light the holy flames, and to sing China into prominence.’

After the ten actors and actresses have spoken one by one, a close-up shot shows a *jinghu*, a central accompanist instrument in Beijing opera, being played (Figure 19). Then another close-up shows a female martial role’s hands in action (Figure 20) to the solo accompaniment of the *jinghu*. It is followed by the alternation of quick shots of the *jinghu* accompanist playing in the dark (Figure 21), his hands playing the *jinghu* in quick, jerky movements, and the performance of the female martial role in the spotlight, which ends with a close-up of her face as she strikes a pose (Figure 22).

At that same moment, with a beat of the gong, the commercial shows the female martial role standing at the center of the stage while the curtains are

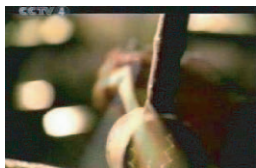


Figure 19  
*Jinghu played in close-up*



Figure 20  
*Hands in action*

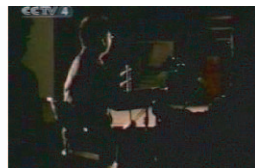


Figure 21  
*Accompanist playing jinghu*



Figure 22  
*Close-up of female warrior*



Figure 23  
*Performing to the world*



Figure 24  
*Beijing Olympics emblem*

being opened. The female character, with her back toward the camera, is facing the “audience” off the stage, which consists of a “crowd” of buildings and skyscrapers. When the curtains are parting, we see the caption over the female martial role: 登世界的台，唱中国的戏 *Deng shijie de tai, chang Zhongguo de xi* ‘To mount the stage of the world, and to put on a show of China (lit. to sing an opera of China)’ (Figure 23), which is spoken by a male voice-over. The commercial finishes with an image of the Beijing 2008 Olympics emblem. Below the emblem, the caption reads: “To greet the Olympics, to cultivate civil behavior, and to foster a new spirit” (Figure 24).

### 3. Analysis of the TV commercial

The TV commercial under discussion, as outlined in Section 2, can be divided into three parts. The initial part, illustrated by Figures 1 through 9, is the introductory part. The second part, illustrated by Figures 10 through 18, is the main body. The final part, illustrated by Figures 19 through 24, is the concluding part. In what follows, I will analyze these parts, providing my interpretation and focusing on the multimodal manifestations of the commercial’s central metaphor:

- (11) HOSTING THE BEIJING OLYMPICS IS PERFORMING BEIJING OPERA ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE



As the popular perception or conception of the Olympics goes, the Games, though a sporting event in which athletes from all over the world compete with one another for better places and records, “also constitute a major opportunity for the host city and country to showcase themselves to the world”.<sup>1</sup> It is in this sense that the performers on the stage are not athletes themselves, who nonetheless put on a “show” of a different kind, but the people of the city and country that host the Games. In a similar vein, when the International Olympics Committee selects the next host city and country, it is deciding who should “perform on this international stage”. The central conceptual metaphor in (11), which maps the source domain of art onto the target domain of sport, may include the following general mappings and entailments:

| (12) SOURCE            | TARGET   |
|------------------------|--|
| Art                    | → Sport  |
| A Performing Event     | → A Sporting Event                                   |
| An International Stage | → An International Event of Competition              |
| The Theater            | → The Sports Venues and Supporting<br>Facilities     |
| Performing a Show      | → Hosting the Event                                  |
| Performers             | → People of the Host City and Nation                 |
| Action in Performance  | → Activity in Organization                           |
| Audience               | → People of the World (excluding the host<br>nation) |

In the above list, the second mapping is from “performing” to “sporting” whereas the third one is from “stage” to “event”. Note that “stage”, metaphorically, as “a center of action or attention”<sup>2</sup> can be either the physical location in which an event takes place (an entailment of the LIFE IS A PLAY/SHOW metaphor) or the event itself in which participants “play their roles”. In the latter, which is the interpretation taken here, the event itself is conceptualized spatially and metaphorically (though with a strong metonymic basis, i.e., LOCATION FOR ACTIVITY) as a bounded space, “a stage” or “an arena”, so to speak, on or in which people involved “perform their parts” (an instantiation of the LIFE IS A STAGE metaphor). I will come back to this point in Section 4.

Extending the above general mappings and entailments in (12) to the specific context of the Beijing Olympics, we derive the following more specific mappings and entailments:

- 
1. “Olympic Games”, *Wikipedia*. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympic\\_Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympic_Games) [accessed 30 August 2010].
  2. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1978: 1084, Harlow and London: Longman).

| (13) SOURCE   | TARGET                                      |
|---|---|
| Beijing Opera   | → Beijing Olympics                          |
| Beijing Opera<br>as a Chinese Folk Art                | → Beijing<br>as the Chinese Host City       |
| Beijing Opera Performers                              | → People of Beijing and China               |
| Audience  | → People of the World (excluding<br>China)  |
| Performing Beijing Opera<br>on an International Stage | → Hosting the Beijing 2008<br>Olympic Games |
| Performing the Best Chinese<br>Show to the Audience   | → Showing the Best of China<br>to the World |

The second and third mappings in the above list are metonymic whereas the rest are metaphoric. Thus, the first metonymy is BEIJING OPERA FOR BEIJING OR, more generally, A SALIENT FEATURE OF A PLACE FOR THE PLACE. The second metonymy is BEIJING OPERA PERFORMERS FOR PEOPLE OF BEIJING OR CHINA, which is a specific instantiation of PART FOR WHOLE.

### 3.1. *The initial part*

Having laid out the possible mappings and entailments of the central metaphor, I now turn to the specific multimodal manifestations of this metaphor in the TV commercial. The initial part establishes the target and source domains, respectively SPORT and ART. More specifically, this metaphor involves OLYMPICS and PERFORMING ART as target and source. The very first two shots of the commercial help establish these two conceptual domains of the metaphor, which can be formulated as OLYMPICS IS PERFORMING ART. Note that this metaphor's target and source are actually established by means of two metonymies, as illustrated by Figures 1 and 2, respectively:

- (14) a. OLYMPICS LOGO STANDS FOR OLYMPICS  
b. STAGE STANDS FOR PERFORMING ART

Considering (14a) and (14b), the metaphor established by the commercial's first two shots can be formulated, in my notation, as OLYMPICS LOGO FOR OLYMPICS IS STAGE FOR PERFORMING ART (see detailed discussions in Section 4). The images in Figures 1 and 2 also have other functions. Figure 1, with the urban scene below the Olympics logo, points metonymically to the fact that each Olympiad is hosted by a major city in the world whereas Figure 2, which shows the stage curtains remaining closed, suggests metaphorically that the next Olympic "show" has not started yet.

Then, as illustrated by Figures 3 through 9, the commercial furnishes details about the preparatory stage prior to the Beijing 2008 Olympics in a metaphorical way involving the source domain of theatrical performance. In the target

domain, China's effort and success in bidding for Beijing as the host city are illustrated by Figures 3, 5, and 7. Figure 7, which shows the starting of a 100 m race, can be interpreted as indicating that the successful bid in 2001 is the beginning of a "race" toward the finishing line—a successful Olympiad hosted by Beijing in 2008. Interpreted this way, it is a prototypical instantiation of the conceptual metaphor LONG-TERM PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY, based on the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL image schema.

In the source domain, on the other hand, the progress of this preparatory stage for the Beijing Olympics is metaphorically illustrated by Figures 4, 6, and 8. All the shots show the interior of a theater: One spot light is turned on (Figure 4) and so is a row of stage lights (Figure 6); and the dressing room is ready for the performers to use (Figure 8). At this point, it is appropriate to turn to the aural mode of the commercial, which as already mentioned at the beginning of Section 2 contributes from the very beginning to the source domain—the theatrical performance—of the central metaphor. Throughout the initial part, the visuals are basically accompanied by only one sort of sound in the audio track—the increasingly rapid beats of a drum. This sound effect immediately contributes to the aural manifestation of the central metaphor in (11), helping establish the source domain of theatrical performance in general, and of Beijing opera in particular. It is also an aural manifestation of the Chinese idiom *jinluo migu*, which literally means "rapid beating of drums and gongs", but is generally used figuratively to mean "intense publicity preceding a public event". As a set pattern of Chinese folk performing art such as Beijing opera, there is usually rapid beating of drums and gongs preceding the beginning of the performance. That is, the figurative meaning of the Chinese idiom is a metaphorical extension from its original sense in performing art. Public events, especially important ones, are "shows on a stage". As the drumbeats intensify at an increasing speed, the shots become shorter, resulting in a more rapid montage rhythm. Finally, the show is supposed to start when the stage curtains are being drawn apart after a beating of a gong and a series of cymbal sounds (Figure 9).

### 3.2. *The main part*

The second or main part of the commercial, which introduces the verbal mode for the first time, further manifests the central metaphor in (11), of which the target and source have been established in the initial part. The visual mode of this part consists mainly of two kinds of moving images: (i) ten famous Beijing opera actors and actresses speak in plain clothes to the camera about the Beijing Olympics (see, e.g., Figures 10–12, and Examples 1–10 in Section 2); (ii) they perform Beijing opera in make-up and traditional costumes (see, e.g., Figures 13–18). The actors and actresses speak, metonymically, on behalf of

all the Chinese people, their voices representing whole China as a nation (i.e., PART FOR WHOLE). More particularly, since they are Beijing opera actors and actresses, the very fact that they are talking, instead of people in other walks of life, helps further establish the source of the commercial's central metaphor. While they are talking about the Chinese people's high expectations and aspirations of hosting the Beijing Olympics, which is the target domain of the metaphor, the accompanying moving images, however, are mostly those in which they are performing Beijing opera, which visualize and enrich the source domain in a "dramatic" manner.

It is worth noting that in those moving images Beijing opera is performed on two kinds of "stage": (i) the conventional stage in a theater (e.g., Figures 15, 17, and 18), which is entailed by the source domain of the metaphor; (ii) the unconventional "stage", namely, the actors and actresses are performing on the Great Wall (e.g., Figure 13), or in a modern setting of high-rise buildings (e.g., Figure 16). It can be interpreted that the ancient Great Wall is metonymic for the "long history" of Chinese civilization whereas the modern skyscrapers are metonymic for China's recent, rapid modernization in a "splendid era" (Example 5). That is, the Beijing Olympics that China is to host will become "the one big stage" of the world where "one dream" will be shared by the "one world" (Examples 4 and 5). It is also worth noting that those actors and actresses are speaking not only *for* the Chinese people, but also *to* them as well. Thus, they encourage the Chinese people to take up their responsibility in preparation for the Olympics (Example 8), to make continuous effort in their "chase of civilization" (Example 9), and finally, "To pass and carry on civilization, to contribute to the Olympics, to light the holy flames, and to sing China into prominence" (Example 10). That is, by hosting a successful Olympics, the Chinese people will make a great contribution to passing and carrying on the world civilization and, at the same time, rejuvenating China as a nation.

The tenth and last speech by Meng Guanglu (Figure 12 and Example 10) brings the main part of the commercial to an end.

### 3.3. *The final part*

The final part focuses on the source domain except that the final poster bears the official Beijing 2008 Olympics logo (Figure 24). What distinguishes this part is the addition of a new salient feature to the source domain of Beijing opera. In contrast to the special drum in the initial part, the final part highlights the central musical instrument of Beijing opera, the *jinghu*, which is a bowed, two-stringed instrument in the *huqin* family with the smallest size and highest pitch. It is interesting to note that in contrast with the actress performing on the stage in the spotlight (Figures 20 and 22), the *jinghu* player stays in the dark

(Figure 21), playing a supporting role behind the scenes. Nonetheless, the *jinhū* role is indispensable and essential, as an integral part of Beijing opera performance. This audible-only role in the source domain, mapped onto the target domain, can be interpreted as the role played by the Chinese volunteers and people at large, who provided the Beijing Olympics with support crucial to its success.

The whole TV commercial, which multimodally manifests its central metaphor, concludes with the scene as illustrated by Figure 23, which should be taken as “the climax of the show”. The *jinghu* solo play of a prototypical piece of Beijing opera music in the aural mode, accompanying the flashing alternation of moving images of a female martial role performing on the stage and of a male *jinghu* soloist playing off the stage, leads to a beating of the gong that preludes the parting of the stage curtains. As the curtains are getting apart, the female martial role is posing at the center of the stage, facing the sunlight above the horizon and overlooking the “audience” of buildings. At this moment, the verbal message “To mount the stage of the world, and to put on a show of China” appears over the sky as the caption, also vocalized by a male voice-over. This brief message, which is the most explicit manifestation of the central metaphor, comes at the very end of the commercial in the verbal (both written and spoken) mode. It adds the finishing touch to clinch the point of the commercial, thus serving the function of what the Chinese idiom *hualong dianjing* refers to as “bringing the painted dragon to life by putting in the pupils of its eyes”.

This final scene, illustrated by Figure 23, is full of conceptual metaphors and metonymies, structuring the three main elements: the stage, the buildings in front of the stage, and the female martial role standing on the stage. First of all, the image of the stage is open to various metaphorical interpretations. It is a visual realization of the conventional but metaphorical conception of “stage” as the place of action or center of attention (e.g., *the stage of a famous battle*; *the European political stage*; *a case on the center of the medical stage*). Noticeably, this stage is a “big” one—echoing the reference to the Beijing Olympics as “the big stage of China” in Example 4—in relation to the buildings in front of it (i.e., IMPORTANT IS BIG VS. UNIMPORTANT IS SMALL). Also in comparison with the buildings, this stage is “high” in vertical elevation (i.e., IMPORTANT IS UP VS. UNIMPORTANT IS DOWN). After all, this is not a regular stage found in a theater; instead, it is a metaphorical one, often referred to in political discourse as an “international stage”, a “global stage”, or a “world stage”.

It is noteworthy that the element of buildings in front of the stage is crucial in cuing that the stage as such is not a conventional stage found in a regular theatrical setting. In such a setting, one would expect to see where the buildings are the real audience of human spectators. Furthermore, as suggested above, the sizes of the buildings in comparison with the stage set up the stage

as an extraordinarily “big” one, and therefore as “the stage of the world”. That is exactly what the explicit verbal caption, appearing concurrently on the screen, states. Other than these cuing functions, the “audience” of buildings also manifests visually a metaphor and a metonymy simultaneously, as in (15):

- (15) a. HUMANS ARE BUILDINGS (metaphor)  
 b. BUILDINGS STAND FOR THE WORLD (metonymy)<sup>3</sup>

This pair of visual metaphor and metonymy is to some extent constitutive of the central metaphor of the commercial. In the source domain, it should be the human audience, metaphorically rendered as buildings, that is watching the show. In the target domain, it is the world (or people of the world), metonymically represented by the buildings, that is watching the Olympics hosted by Beijing, China.

The third major element of the scene, the female martial role on the stage, represents Beijing, China, again both metaphorically and metonymically, as in (16):

- (16) a. A NATION IS A PERSON (metaphor)  
 b. BEIJING OPERA STANDS FOR BEIJING CHINA (metonymy)

Here the metaphor in (16a) is what is commonly known as personification, whereby a society is understood in terms of an individual human being. As such, the NATION AS PERSON metaphor falls into what Lakoff and Turner (1989: 204–213) describe as the extended Great Chain Metaphor system (see, also, Kövecses 2010: 152–162; Musolff 2005). The metonymy in (16b) is one metonymic link of a two-link metonymic chain: ROLE OF FOLK OPERA → FOLK OPERA → CITY/NATION OF FOLK OPERA. This metonymic chain, with the intermediate link ignored, also instantiates the metaphor in (16a) in a specific context, namely with mapping from the human role to the city and/or nation. It is worth noting that the metonymy in (16b) is a specific instantiation of the more general metonymy A SALIENT FEATURE OF A PLACE FOR THE PLACE, OR A CHARACTERISTIC

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3. As Koller (2009: 47), citing Barthes' (1977) concept of anchoring, points out, “the verbal elements of a multimodal text serve to cue and thereby restrict possible interpretations of the visual elements”. In other words, in multimodal metaphors and metonymies, verbal components anchor figurative interpretations of visual elements (see Koller 2009: 53). With the verbal caption “To mount the stage of the world, and to put on a show of China”, as well as all the multimodal evidence I have analyzed in this study, the metonymic interpretation of the buildings for the world therefore stands out among other possible interpretations. As the verbal messages in Examples 4 and 5 (Section 2) as well as in the above caption suggest, the Beijing Olympics is a “big stage” shared by the whole world, but it is China that is putting on a “Chinese show” on it while the rest of the world is “watching”. It is in this sense that the Beijing Olympics is both “the stage of China” and “the stage of the world”.



OF AN ENTITY FOR THE ENTITY (see Kövecses and Radden 1998).<sup>4</sup> As we can see, the female martial role “is taking center stage”, which is “the position of prominence or importance” (i.e., IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL VS. UNIMPORTANT IS PERIPHERAL), and is facing “a bright future” (i.e., FUTURE IS AHEAD and PAST IS BEHIND, which are two possible mappings under the TIME AS SPACE metaphor). We ought to interpret the sunlight as coming from a “morning rising sun” rather than from an “afternoon setting sun” (i.e., STRENGTHENING IS RISING VS. WEAKENING IS FALLING, STRONG IS UP VS. WEAK IS DOWN, IMPORTANT IS UP VS. UNIMPORTANT IS DOWN).

The commercial ends with the target-domain poster of the Beijing 2008 Olympics emblem, plus the caption that reads “To greet the Olympics, to cultivate civil behavior, and to foster a new spirit” (Figure 24; cf. Example 8). Thus, the commercial both begins and ends with the target domain of Olympics. After all, it is about the Beijing Olympics rather than Beijing opera.

#### 4. Further analysis of the central metaphor: A decompositional approach

As analyzed in Section 3, the central metaphor of the TV commercial, HOSTING THE BEIJING OLYMPICS IS PERFORMING BEIJING OPERA ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE, is a highly culture-specific and occasion-specific metaphor, created in a particular multimodal discourse in a special temporal and spatial context. I have studied its multimodal manifestation through the multimedia discourse of a TV commercial, thus analyzing it as a particular case of “multimodal metaphor” (Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009a). In this section, I will further analyze it as a “complex metaphor” (e.g., Grady 1997a, 1997b, 2005; Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 2003). Such an analysis, I believe, can help reveal the complex nature of the internal structure of this seemingly quite simple metaphor and, by doing so, shed light on the general cognitive foundation from which this seemingly highly specific metaphor emerges. To do so, I will apply a Decompositional Approach to Metaphorical Compound Analysis (DAMCA) based on the distinction between *primary metaphor* and *complex metaphor* (e.g., Grady 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2005; Grady et al. 1996; Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 2003).

According to the decompositional account, which was originally formulated to explain the motivational differences and commonalities observed among conceptual metaphors, primary metaphors are derived directly from experiential correlations that pair subjective experience and judgment with sensorimotor

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4. It is also interesting to note that at the closing ceremony of the Athens 2004 Olympics, the show put on by Beijing, the host city of the next Olympiad, was actually a show of Beijing opera, directed by the famous movie director Zhang Yimou, who would also direct the opening and closing ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

experience. As such, they tend to be widespread or even potentially universal. In contrast, complex metaphors are composed of primary metaphors combined with commonplace knowledge and cultural beliefs. As such, they are more likely to be specific to cultures. The following example is adapted from Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 60–61):

- (17) A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY
- a. PEOPLE ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE PURPOSES IN LIFE
  - b. PEOPLE ARE SUPPOSED TO ACT SO AS TO ACHIEVE THEIR PURPOSES
  - c. PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS
  - d. ACTIONS ARE MOTIONS

That is, the complex metaphor in (17) is composed of two cultural beliefs (17a and 17b) and two primary metaphors (17c and 17d). The metaphorical compound has a two-level structure: the complex metaphor at the higher level, and the primary metaphors and cultural beliefs which compose the complex metaphor at the lower level.

Yu (2008, 2009a) further developed this decompositional approach to analyzing complex metaphors by (a) differentiating multi-level structural complexity in analysis, (b) postulating complex metaphors at the intermediate levels of analysis, and (c) allowing metonymies into the equations of analysis. For example, the complex metaphor BEING MORAL IS HAVING A CLEAN HEART is analyzed as follows (Yu 2009a: 303):

- (18) BEING MORAL IS HAVING A CLEAN HEART
- a. MORAL IS CLEAN (a complex metaphor)
  - b. MORAL IS GOOD (a proposition)
  - c. GOOD IS CLEAN (a primary metaphor)
  - d. HEART FOR MORALITY IS AN OBJECT (a complex metaphor)
  - e. HEART IS THE SEAT OF MORALITY (a proposition)
  - f. HEART STANDS FOR MORALITY (a metonymy)
  - g. MORALITY IS A QUALITY (a proposition)
  - h. A QUALITY IS AN OBJECT (a primary metaphor)

In the above list, “a proposition” (in the parentheses) represents commonplace knowledge (e.g., 18g) and/or a cultural belief (e.g., 18e). As shown, the complex metaphor at the higher level in (18) is first decomposed into two intermediate-level complex metaphors in (18a) and (18d), which are then further decomposed into lower-level elements (18b and 18c; 18e–18h). Note that the complex metaphor in (18d) itself also has a complex target that contains a metonymy in it. It can be taken as a shorthand formula for its full-fledged version: (HEART STANDS FOR MORALITY) IS AN OBJECT, where the parenthesis has the

same function of indicating priority as in mathematic calculation.<sup>5</sup> The two primary metaphors, (18c) and (18h), have arisen from pairing our subjective judgment and experience (GOOD; QUALITY) with our sensorimotor experience (CLEAN; OBJECT), whereby human experiences and traits are conceptualized in terms of properties and attributes of physical things.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, they are both part of our fundamental metaphor system of the “Great Chain of Being” (see Lakoff and Turner 1989: 160–213; Kövecses 2010: 152–162).

Adopting such a decompositional approach, in what follows I will look into the central metaphor of the CCTV commercial by taking it apart. For simplicity, I will use the following abbreviations: PR = Proposition, CM = Complex Metaphor, PM = Primary Metaphor, and MY = Metonymy (the last one, however, will not be used in this particular analysis).

- (19) HOSTING THE BEIJING OLYMPICS IS PERFORMING BEIJING OPERA ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE (CM)
- a. BEIJING OLYMPICS IS AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT IN LIFE (PR)
- b. BEIJING OPERA IS A SHOW ON A STAGE (PR)
- c. HOSTING AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT IN LIFE IS PERFORMING A SHOW ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE (CM)

As is shown, the metaphor in (19c) is still a complex one. Here, the core correspondences form a simpler but still complex metaphor as in (20), which then can be decomposed as consisting of (20a) and (20b):

- (20) AN EVENT IN LIFE IS A SHOW ON A STAGE (CM)
- a. AN EVENT IS A SHOW (CM)
- b. LIFE IS A STAGE (CM)

Before I move on, let me first straighten out the complicated relations among the four concepts (i.e., LIFE, EVENT, SHOW/PLAY, and STAGE) involved in (20a) and (20b), so as to pave the way for my analysis that will follow. I will consider these relations only to the extent relevant to my analysis, within the conceptual frame of the Beijing Olympics.

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5. Yu (2008) analyzes the metaphorical conceptualization of human DIGNITY in terms of human FACE. One complex metaphor reads: DIGNITY IS FACE AS A VALUABLE POSSESSION, in which the source itself contains another complex metaphor FACE IS A VALUABLE POSSESSION. Again, the higher-level complex metaphor can be taken as a shorthand form for the full formula: DIGNITY IS (FACE IS A VALUABLE POSSESSION).
6. Note that (18h), or its plural form, QUALITIES ARE OBJECTS, is considered a primary metaphor on the same par with STATES ARE LOCATIONS (OR A STATE IS A LOCATION). These two metaphors as a pair actually represent, respectively, the object-dual and location-dual, i.e., the two subsystems, of the Event Structure Metaphor system (see Lakoff 1993; also, Yu 1998: Chapter 5). For more detailed analyses of metaphors on a decompositional account based on a distinction between primary and complex metaphors see Yu (2008: 253–260; 2009a: 293–307).

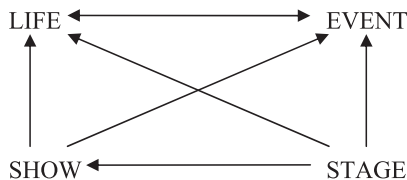


Figure 25. *Directions of figurative mappings in the central metaphor*

Now look at Figure 25. The conceptual relationships in the figure, as represented by the arrowed lines, are rendered as below in (21):

- (21) a. EVENT  $\rightarrow$  LIFE; LIFE  $\rightarrow$  EVENT (i.e., PART FOR WHOLE metonymy; WHOLE FOR PART metonymy)  
 b. STAGE  $\rightarrow$  SHOW (i.e., LOCATION FOR ACTIVITY metonymy)  
 c. SHOW  $\rightarrow$  LIFE (i.e., LIFE IS A SHOW OR LIFE IS A PLAY metaphor)  
 d. SHOW  $\rightarrow$  EVENT (i.e., AN EVENT IS A SHOW metaphor)  
 e. STAGE  $\rightarrow$  EVENT (i.e., AN EVENT IS A STAGE metaphor)  
 f. STAGE  $\rightarrow$  LIFE (i.e., LIFE IS A STAGE metaphor)

More specifically, both (21a) and (21b) represent metonymic relations. Thus, in the central metaphor under discussion, the Beijing Olympics is an international event in life (see 19a), and EVENT and LIFE hold a PART-WHOLE relationship or vice versa (21a). In English, for instance, *stage direction* meaning “direction for performance of a play” and *stage fright* meaning “nervousness felt by someone (going to be) performing in public” reflect the metonymic mapping in (21b). The mappings in (21c–21f) are metaphorical. As in (21c), LIFE IS A SHOW (or PLAY) is, to say the least, a widespread metaphor.<sup>7</sup> The metaphor AN EVENT IS A SHOW in (21d), which is also in (20a), has some sort of a metonymic basis.<sup>8</sup> First, in general, a show is an event, and therefore SHOW and EVENT hold a PART-WHOLE relationship. Secondly, with the special case of Olympics, the opening and closing ceremonies, the two major components of the Olympic Games,

7. Readers are referred to Lakoff and Turner (1989: 20–23) for a detailed discussion of the LIFE IS A PLAY metaphor and its prolific manifestations in ordinary and literary English, and to Kövecses (2005: 184–189) for a detailed discussion of LIFE IS A SHOW as a central or “foundational” metaphor at the heart of American culture. Kövecses (2005) points out that the PLAY/SHOW metaphor has been gaining prominence in contemporary America as the conceptualization of life extends from theater plays to all forms of entertainment, such as sports, films, radio, and television. Various aspects of life, including politics, education, sports, even warfare, can be talked about in term of this metaphor. Kövecses’ point is that since cultures are metaphorically constituted to some extent, cultural studies can benefit from the analysis of their metaphor systems.
8. Many cognitive linguistic studies over the past decade have focused on the metonymic basis or motivation of metaphor and the interaction between metonymy and metaphor. See, e.g., Barcelona (2000), Dirven and Pörings (2002), Panther and Radden (1999).

contain real shows. If we refer to the whole Olympics as a “show”, there is also a PART-FOR-WHOLE element in it. On the other hand, however, that a show is an event does not entail its reverse. Thus, political, military, economic, educational events and many others are not really “shows” and can be said as such only in a metaphorical sense (see, e.g., Kövecses 2005: 184–189).

The last two metaphorical mappings in (21) have to do with “stage”. When it is said that the Beijing Olympics is China’s “big stage” (cf. Examples 4 and 5), it is an example of the EVENT AS STAGE metaphor in (21e). The final metaphor is LIFE IS A STAGE in (21f) as well as (20b). From Figure 25 this metaphor can be seen as being grounded by two possible routes of metonymic extension. The first route is LIFE IS A STAGE FOR A SHOW (i.e., LIFE IS A SHOW and A STAGE STANDS FOR A SHOW). For instance, if a politician sees his political life as a show, then by LOCATION-FOR-ACTIVITY metonymic extension his political life is also a stage for him to put shows on. The second route has two possibilities: (a) AN EVENT FOR LIFE IS A STAGE (i.e., AN EVENT STANDS FOR LIFE and AN EVENT IS A STAGE); or (b) LIFE FOR AN EVENT IS A STAGE (i.e., LIFE STANDS FOR AN EVENT and AN EVENT IS A STAGE). For instance, if a politician sees his election campaign as a stage on which to put on a show, then by PART-FOR-WHOLE metonymic extension his whole political life is also such a stage. That is, people living in real life are conceptualized as roles performing on the stage for others to watch. In the case of Beijing Olympics, China is performing on the stage while the rest of the world is watching off the stage.<sup>9</sup>

Having sorted out the relationships among the four concepts in (20), I come back to the further analysis of the central metaphor. At this juncture I need to

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9. It is worth noting that the LIFE AS STAGE metaphor is actually richly manifested in language. For instance, a search on the term “world stage” in the British National Corpus (BNC) yielded a random selection of 50 tokens. A look at them found that the phrase refers to various aspects of international life: e.g., God “as one of the actors on the world stage” (religion); a fading superstar in football talking about another player “taking over from me on the world stage” (sport); “the profile of Irish music on the world stage” (art); “the momentous developments in the environmental sphere that are taking place on the world stage” (science); oil as “one very important natural resource on the world stage” (economy). A Google search for “Life is a stage” produced results too many to go over. But some of them are clear instantiations of LIFE IS A STAGE, including the following quote from Bill Watterson, an American author and cartoonist: “If life is just a stage, then we are all running around ad-libbing, with absolutely no clue what the plot is. Maybe that’s why we don’t know whether it’s a comedy or tragedy” (see, also, footnotes 10 and 11 in Section 5). As already suggested previously, LIFE IS A STAGE and LIFE IS A SHOW/PLAY are closely related to each other, the former being a variant of the latter by involving one more metonymic mapping in the source domain: LIFE IS A STAGE = LIFE IS A SHOW/PLAY + A STAGE STANDS FOR A SHOW/PLAY. In my notation, the latter can be rendered as: LIFE IS (A STAGE STANDS FOR A SHOW/PLAY), or simply LIFE IS A STAGE FOR A SHOW/PLAY (see the discussions on 18d and in footnote 5, as well as on Figure 25). For a study of multimodal manifestations of LIFE IS A STAGE as well as LIFE IS A JOURNEY in a CCTV commercial, see Yu (2009b).

point out that the metaphors in (20) are rooted in the generic Event Structure Metaphor system (see, e.g., Kövecses 2010: 162–167; Lakoff 1993; Yu 1998: Chapter 5), which “describes how events (and events as changes of states) are metaphorically understood” (Kövecses 2010: 151). In this metaphor system, “various aspects of event structure, including notions like states, changes, processes, actions, causes, purposes, and means, are characterized cognitively via metaphor in terms of space, motion, and force” (Lakoff 1993: 22). Along with the Great Chain Metaphor mentioned earlier, the Event Structure Metaphor is one of the two fundamental metaphor systems discussed in Kövecses (2010: 149–169). It includes the following mappings, for instance, in its location-dual (cf. footnote 6):

- (22) a. STATES ARE LOCATIONS  
 b. CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS (FROM LOCATIONS TO LOCATIONS)  
 c. ACTIONS ARE SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENTS  
 d. PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS (i.e., DESIRED LOCATIONS)

All these are primary metaphors based on correlations between subject experience and sensorimotor experience. In short, life and events that constitute it are a series of states, which are conceptualized as locations, and changes of states are conceptualized as motions from locations to other locations. People have to make “self-propelled movements” (i.e., take actions) in order to reach “desired locations” (i.e., achieve purposes). In the case of (20), viewed in the light of (19), the Beijing Olympics is a large-scale, social event consisting of many abstract states and changes, but it is conceptualized however as a show of Beijing opera consisting of many bodily movements in spatial locations. The most significant “location” is of course the “stage” itself; it is certainly a “desired location” for China to be in since it is a “stage of the world”. By hosting the Beijing Olympics, China was receiving the attention of the whole world.

Considering (22), the complex metaphors in (20a) and (20b) can be further decomposed as follows:

- (23) AN EVENT IN LIFE IS A SHOW ON A STAGE (CM)  
 a. AN EVENT IS A SHOW (CM)  
 b. AN EVENT IS A SERIES OF CHANGES OF STATES (PR)  
 c. A SHOW IS A SERIES OF MOVEMENTS (PR)  
 d. CHANGES (OF STATES) ARE MOVEMENTS (PM)  
 e. LIFE IS A STAGE (CM)  
 f. LIFE IS A STATE (PR)  
 g. A STAGE IS A LOCATION (PR)  
 h. A STATE IS A LOCATION (PM)

Here, indentation indicates lower-level components of a higher-level element above them. That is, the two complex metaphors in (23a) and (23e) are each



composed of two propositions and one primary metaphor. As we can see, the “bottom lines” here are the two primary metaphors, (23d) and (23h), grounded in embodied experience or experiential correlation. As in (23f), life is conceptualized as a state here. It can be conceptualized as a process as well, consisting of a series of changes of states. Disregarding all the details, however, we can still conceptualize life as an abstract state as a whole (cf. footnote 10 in Section 5).

Going back to (19c) and considering the primary metaphor in (22c), i.e., ACTIONS ARE SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENTS, we can now decompose the complex metaphor as follows:

- (24) HOSTING AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT IS PERFORMING A SHOW ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE (CM)  
 a. ACTIONS ARE SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENTS (PM)  
 b. AN EVENT IN LIFE IS A SHOW ON A STAGE (CM)

Here, as can be seen, (24a) is a primary metaphor whereas (24b) is a complex one, which can be further decomposed as in (23). The identical items on the two sides of the equation in (24), i.e., INTERNATIONAL, are eliminated as a tautological proposition (i.e., INTERNATIONAL IS INTERNATIONAL).

In summary, the central metaphor of the TV commercial under analysis can be decomposed, in terms of primary and complex metaphors and propositions, as follows:

- (25) HOSTING BEIJING OLYMPICS IS PERFORMING BEIJING OPERA ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE (CM)  
 a. BEIJING OLYMPICS IS AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT IN LIFE (PR)  
 b. BEIJING OPERA IS A SHOW ON A STAGE (PR)  
 c. HOSTING AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT IN LIFE IS PERFORMING A SHOW ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE (CM)  
 d. ACTIONS ARE SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENTS (PM)  
 e. AN EVENT IN LIFE IS A SHOW ON A STAGE (CM)  
 f. AN EVENT IS A SHOW (CM)  
 g. AN EVENT IS A SERIES OF CHANGES OF STATES (PR)  
 h. A SHOW IS A SERIES OF MOVEMENTS (PR)  
 i. CHANGES (OF STATES) ARE MOVEMENTS (PM)  
 j. LIFE IS A STAGE (CM)  
 k. LIFE IS A STATE (PR)  
 l. A STAGE IS A LOCATION (PR)  
 m. A STATE IS A LOCATION (PM)

Again, indentation indicates lower-level components constituting the higher-level component above them. As illustrated here, the central metaphor of the TV commercial is but a metaphorical compound composed of lower-level

components, in the form of propositions, complex metaphors, and primary metaphors, shown in (25a–m), with a five-level structure. At the lowest level, as we can see, the two primary metaphors in (25i) and (25m) serve as the “cornerstones” or “foundation stones” of the whole complex. As such, they fundamentally account for the “metaphoricness” of the central complex metaphor. It is precisely because *CHANGES* are primarily conceptualized as *MOVEMENTS*, and *STATES* AS *LOCATIONS*, that we can have two complex but widespread metaphors, *AN EVENT IS A SHOW* (25f) and *LIFE IS A STAGE* (25j), as “building blocks” at the next level above. At the third level from the bottom, the two “building blocks” are connected and combined into one higher-level structure as in (25e), *AN EVENT IN LIFE IS A SHOW ON A STAGE*. Then, this complex metaphor, still at an intermediate level, is combined with another primary metaphor *ACTIONS ARE SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENTS* (25d), to make the metaphor formula “A IS B” change into “A-ING IS B-ING”, which is thus “a metaphor in action” (Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009b: 11). Note that, as a result of all the conceptual build-up at the levels below it, the complex metaphor at the next level above, i.e., *HOSTING AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT IN LIFE IS PERFORMING A SHOW ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE* in (25c), has already had a fairly complicated internal structure. Nevertheless, it is still an all-purpose metaphorical formula that can be adopted to characterize any international event (e.g., the Shanghai Expo 2010, the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa) as long as the larger cultural model holds to the complex metaphor at the level below it: *AN EVENT IN LIFE IS A SHOW ON A STAGE* in (25e). I suspect that (25e) is a widespread complex metaphor exactly because it has a robust metonymic basis or motivation as discussed earlier in this section (see Figure 25 and the discussion following it). Since the Chinese cultural modal is one that holds to (25e), therefore, (25c) is combined with two propositions in (25a) and (25b) to result in the final construction that is the central metaphor of the TV commercial under study. Although this construction appears to be highly culture-specific and highly occasion-specific, its unique appearance nonetheless covers its much general internal cognitive mechanisms and structures combined and built upon a most likely universal cognitive foundation.

As demonstrated above, this decompositional approach to studying metaphors, DAMCA, is a useful analytical tool that can give us insights into how complex a given metaphor is with its internal components and structures, and how and why it is culture-specific, widespread, or potentially universal. Such an approach has the potential to enable us to see not only how linguistic and multimodal metaphors systematically manifest conceptual metaphors underlying them, but also how conceptual metaphors themselves are systematically related to one another in a hierarchical system. At the bottom of this system, there exists a limited number of primary metaphors, which can ground, or combine to form, complex metaphors at a higher level, along with common-

place and cultural knowledge. In a similar fashion, complex metaphors can generate conceptual metaphors of a more complex nature at a higher level in the system. With this decompositional approach we are potentially able to specify how complex metaphors are constructed efficiently and economically within the hierarchical system, and what commonplace and cultural knowledge is built into particular complex metaphors. The consequence is that it sheds light on the dynamic nature of and cognitive relationship among conceptual metaphors in our conceptual systems. The analysis presented in this section is a mere demonstration of how this approach may work.

### 5. Underlying cultural model: A linguistic perspective

In general, languages reflect their underlying conceptual systems and cultural models (see, e.g., Holland and Quinn 1987; Kövecses 2005, 2006, 2010; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Palmer 1996; Sharifian and Palmer 2007; Sharifian et al. 2008; Yu 2009a). When linguistic and conceptual structures and categories are studied in relation to their cultural environment, the investigation is then broadened to the study of cultural models (Geeraerts 1995). As cultural knowledge organized in a coherent manner, cultural models shape what people believe, how they act, and how they speak about the world and their own experience, and set up specific perspectives from which “aspects of embodied experience are viewed as particularly salient and meaningful in people’s lives” (Gibbs 1999: 154).

At the end of the preceding section, I suggested that the cultural model, which may be metaphorically structured, plays a role in the selection of metaphors in specific contexts. In this section I probe into the underlying cultural model for the CCTV commercial under discussion with regard to its central metaphor. Hypothetically, the conceptual metaphor *LIFE IS A STAGE* (OR *LIFE IS A PLAY*)<sup>10</sup> is a widespread one, existing in various languages and cultures. In the West, for instance, William Shakespeare elaborated this metaphor in his creative writings, which have been influential across cultural and linguistic boundaries.<sup>11</sup> In the following I will argue that Chinese culture, especially, is a

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10. I assume that the difference between *LIFE IS A STAGE* and *LIFE IS A PLAY* is that in the former life is conceptualized as an abstract state in which events take place whereas in the latter life is conceptualized as a dynamic process through which events take place (cf. footnote 9).

11. For example, the following is a quote from an online blogger [[http://ian-maleny.gaia.com/blog/2006/8/life\\_is\\_a\\_stage](http://ian-maleny.gaia.com/blog/2006/8/life_is_a_stage); accessed April 2009]:

“Life is a stage . . .”, said Shakespeare. Well, it really is. On a stage people get dressed up in costumes, change their appearance, suppress their true character and take on the part of another character. They then act the stage part using what they learned and practiced in preparation for the play. So it is in spiritual life because each life is a play wherein we dress up as a

culture of folk operas, and that opera-related concepts constitute a prominent source domain for metaphors spreading over “cultural cognition” (Sharifian 2008) of the Chinese people.

It is said that there exist over 360 different kinds of local operas, with Beijing opera as the most popular one, generally regarded as a “national treasure” of Chinese culture. While they are the major form of entertainment in traditional Chinese culture, local operas have declined in popularity in contemporary China under the increasing impact and pressure from popular culture and modern media. Nevertheless, opera-related concepts and conceptualizations have long been rooted deeply in cultural cognition of the Chinese, having invaded and penetrated other conceptual domains. Such invasions and penetrations are extensively reflected in everyday usages of Chinese language. Discussed below are just some examples:

- (26) a. 展览会明天开幕。  
*Zhanlanhui mingtian kaimu.*  
 ‘The exhibition will *open* (lit. *open the curtains* or *raise the curtain*) tomorrow.’
- b. 会议已胜利闭幕。  
*Huiyi yi shengli bimü.*  
 ‘The conference has *come to a successful close* (lit. *closed the curtains* or *lowered the curtain* with success).’
- c. 他上台以后，政府调整了对外政策。  
*Ta shangtai yihou, zhengfu tiaozheng le duiwai zhengce.*  
 ‘After he *took office* (lit. *went up onto the stage*), the government adjusted its foreign policy.’
- d. 总统快下台了。  
*Zongtong kuai xiatai le.*  
 ‘The President will soon *leave office* (lit. *step down from the stage*).’

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character, change appearance, suppress our true character, take on the part of a new character and act out what we learned in the periods between other lives.

Then, a reader responded:

I fully agree that our life is a stage where we are acting the role of our life. The problem is that we very often are forgetting this. We should remember that there is ‘someone’ behind this character, someone who is playing a specific role. And the purpose of this play is to enrich the soul of the actor, to expand our horizons without becoming one with our role. Look behind the scenes . . .

It is worth noting that Shakespeare’s original quote is “All the world’s a stage” (*As You Like It*).

As (26a) and (26b) indicate, the beginning and end of an event, such as an exhibition or a conference, are said to be “curtain rising” and “curtain falling”, which mark the beginning and end of a theatrical performance. As in (26c, d), a major position in an office is said to be a “stage”. People “get onto the stage” to play their roles and then “step down from it” after they finish.<sup>12</sup>

- (27) a. 研究所里的几个台柱全让人用高薪挖走了。  
*Yanjiusuo li de ji ge taizhu quan rang ren yong gaoxin wazou le.*  
 ‘The institute has lost several of its *best research fellows* (lit. *stage pillars*) by the outside offer of higher pay.’
- b. 本届杯赛没有众多东道主球迷的捧场。  
*Ben jie beisai meiyou zhongduo dongdao zhu qiumi de pengchang.*  
 ‘This Cup lacked the *attendance* (lit. *supporting presence*) of huge crowds of the home team fans.’
- c. 他有意跟我唱对台戏。  
*Ta youyi gen wo chang duitaixi.*  
 ‘He is deliberately *putting on a rival show against me* (lit. He intends to *sing [the same] opera on a stage right across/opposite to mine*).’

In (27a), “stage pillars” refers to the most important or competent people, namely the “leading lights”, but the term originally refers to the leading actors or actresses of theatrical troupes. In (27b) *pengchang* (literally, “holding up the theater in both hands”) originally refers to people being present in a theater to show their support of an actor or actress (by cheering and applauding, etc.) when the latter is performing. In this example, the concept has extended into the domain of sports, as it can into many other domains. The expression *chang duitaixi* in (27c) originally refers to the competition in traditional theatrical performance where one theatrical troupe openly confronts another by setting up a stage in the vicinity of, or right opposite to, the rival’s stage and performing a different or the same opera. This expression now refers to any competition in a confrontational manner, usually meant to make the rival’s “stage collapse” (cf. footnote 12).

- (28) a. 这个课题组由你来唱主角。  
*Zhe ge ketizu you ni lai chang zhujue.*  
 ‘You’ll *play* (lit. *sing*) *the leading role* in this research team.’

12. Related Chinese compounds also include: *chaitai* (tear.down-stage) ‘pull away a prop’; *chutai* (come.onto-stage) ‘come into the open; publicize’; *daotai* (fall-stage) or *kuatai* (collapse-stage) ‘fall from power’; *houtai* (back-stage) ‘backstage supporter’; *qiantai* (front-stage) ‘in public’; *tantai* (crumble/collapse-stage) ‘lose face; fall into disgrace’.

- b. 这项工作要注重实效，不能走过场。  
*Zhe xiang gongzuo yao zhuzhong shixiao, bu neng zou guochang.*  
 ‘We should emphasize practical results of the work instead of reducing it to mere formality (lit. merely crossing the stage).’
- c. 我在这位主任手下跑龙套。  
*Wo zai zhe wei zhuren shouxia pao longtao.*  
 ‘I just play a “walk-on role” under the director.’
- d. 一个唱红脸，一个唱白脸。  
*Yi ge chang honglian, yi ge chang bailian.*  
 ‘One coaxes while the other bullies (lit. One sings the red face [of the stage hero] while the other sings the white face [of the stage villain]).’

The relevant expressions in (28) all originally have to do with the roles in traditional operas in China. In (28a) *chang zhujue* literally means “to sing the leading role”. In a traditional Chinese opera, such as Beijing opera, to play a leading role involves four major skills (see Example 6 in Section 2). Singing, however, is the first and most important skill. Therefore, “sing” is metonymic for “play” the leading role (i.e., PART FOR WHOLE). In (28b) *zou guochang* originally refers to the scene in a traditional opera where the actor or actress simply crosses the stage from one end to the other without stopping. When extended into other domains, it means “make a gesture to give the impression of doing something”. In (28c) *pao longtao* refers to a minor role, such as a servant or a soldier, who only has a “walk-on” part in a traditional opera. In everyday life, people who have only a “walk-on role to play” are usually those who serve their superiors as aids or assistants. In (28d) *honglian* ‘red face’ and *bailian* ‘white face’ refer to the stereotypical make-up painted on the face of a character in a traditional opera. A “red face” represents a hero whereas a “white face” a villain. When one “sings the red face” and another “sings the white face” (i.e., one plays the good cop while the other plays the bad cop) in cooperation, they are more likely to change the behavior of a third party as they wish to.

- (29) a. 我的粗枝大叶的东西就算作开台锣鼓好了。  
*Wo de cuzhidaye de dongxi jiu suan zuo kaitai luogu hao le.*  
 ‘My rough-and-ready words may serve the same purpose as the beating of the gongs and drums before a theatrical performance.’
- b. 厂领导决心转变工作作风，开台戏就是领导干部值班实行三班倒。  
*Chang lingdao juexin zhuanbian gongzuo zuofeng, kaitai xi jiu shi lingdao ganbu zhiban shixing sanbandao.*



‘The factory leaders were determined to change their style of work; *their first step* (lit. *the first item of their theatrical performance on the stage*) taken is that all the leaders will be on duty on three-shift rotation.’

- c. 中国外交部发言人说：“冷战之后的重头戏是经济”。  
*Zhongguo Waijiaobu fayanren shuo: “Lengzhan zhi hou de zhong-touxi shi jingji.”*  
 ‘The spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry of China says, “The *important part of the show* (lit. *heavy part of the opera*) after the Cold War is economy.”’
- d. 世界杯足球赛将在洛杉矶降下帷幕，意大利队和巴西队将在压轴戏中唱主角。  
*Shijie bei zuqiu sai jiang zai Luoshanji jiang xia weimu, Yidali dui he Baxi dui jiang zai yazhouxi zhong chang zhujue.*  
 ‘The World Cup will *lower its curtain* in Los Angeles, and Team Italy and Team Brazil will *play* (lit. *sing*) the *leading roles* in the *grand finale* (of the theatrical program).’
- e. 政府鼓励他们从配角转变成主角，自己搭台去领衔上演大戏。  
*Zhengfu guli tamen cong peijue zhuanbian cheng zhujue, ziji datai qu lingxian shangyan daxi.*  
 ‘The government encouraged them to switch from *supporting* to *leading roles*, and to *set up a stage* for themselves so that they could *star in full-scale operas*.’

In (29a), *kaitai luogu* refers to the beating of gongs and drums that precedes the beginning of the opera before the curtain rises. In the example cited, however, it refers to the introductory remarks in the form of a speech or an essay. In (29b), *kaitaixi*, which literally means “stage-opening show”, refers to the beginning show of the theatrical performance. It is of course important for theatrical performances to have a good start. In (29b), however, it refers to the first step taken by the leaders in the change of their style of work, which should consist of a series of “moves”. In (29c), *zhongtouxu* is a term for the important part of opera in which great exertion is needed to act or sing. It then refers to the focus of attention and effort in general, as in the example cited. In (29d), *yazhouxi* refers to the final and best item on a theatrical program. Naturally, it refers to the final and championship game of the World Cup, metaphorically “a theatrical show” in which teams representing their nations “play their roles” between “the rise and fall of the curtain”. In (29e), “they”, encouraged by the government, would “set up their own stage” (*datai*) and “star and perform in

their own full-scale operas” (*lingxian shangyan daxi*), thus “playing leading roles instead of supporting ones” as they used to do.

As discussed above, the relevant expressions in the examples are really the jargon of theatrical performance in traditional Chinese culture. Since theatrical performance, including over 360 local operas with Beijing opera as the “king”, used to be at the center of traditional Chinese culture, as the major form of entertainment, this folk art has transformed itself into a dominant cultural model shaping the understanding of various aspects and events of life. In the following, I will cite one more example that may serve as a linguistic clue to its dominance. One of the most salient characteristics of theatrical performance in traditional Chinese culture is that theatrical troupes (*xibanzi*) travel around and “set up stages on which to perform operas” (i.e., *daitai changxi*; cf. 29e). This salient feature of traditional Chinese operas has penetrated other conceptual domains contributing to the conceptualization of various aspects and events of life in metaphorical terms. Linguistically, this metaphorical conceptualization is cast in a formulaic expression: *X daitai, Y changxi* ‘X sets up the stage whereas Y performs (lit. sings) the opera’, meaning roughly “X serves as an instrument to promoting or benefiting Y”. In other words, *X* stands for the instrumental concept (i.e., entity as a means to an end in a process) whereas *Y* stands for the beneficial concept (i.e., entity that benefits from the instrumental entity in the process). In the Chinese language corpus run by the Center for Chinese Linguistics at Peking University ([http://ccl.pku.edu.cn/Yuliao\\_Content.Aspx](http://ccl.pku.edu.cn/Yuliao_Content.Aspx) [accessed February 2009]), from which most of the linguistic examples cited above are taken, there is a large number of tokens containing this formulaic expression. For instance, a search on “*XX daitai, XX changxi*” (where *X* stands for a Chinese character) yields 143 tokens, with 40 different kinds of combinations of *X* (i.e., the instrumental concept) and *Y* (i.e., the beneficial concept). The instrumental concepts vary with government, culture, sports, tourism, holidays, literature, art, economy, etc. The major beneficial concepts are economy, trade, business, industry, agriculture, and tourism. That is, various aspects and events of life are conceptualized and expressed in terms of theatrical performance. The linguistic expressions all manifest the widespread conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STAGE (OR LIFE IS A PLAY). The conceptual metaphor is, however, localized with a strong cultural flavor within the cultural context of Chinese theatrical performance such as Beijing opera.

Table 1 shows the seven most frequent combinations of *X* and *Y* (out of the 40 different kinds in 143 tokens) found in the corpus. For instance, as the most frequent combination of *X* and *Y* in row 1, “*Culture* sets up the stage whereas *economy* sings the opera” has occurred 45 times in the database. It is obvious that the most frequent beneficial concept (i.e., *Y*) is economy (which occurs in all rows but 4), and trade (rows 2, 3 and 5) and industry (row 4) contribute and belong to economy as well. This linguistic evidence reinforces the view that, in

Table 1. Examples of concepts that instantiate X and Y in the formulaic expression

| No. | X ( <i>datai</i> 'sets up the stage') |                      | Y ( <i>changxi</i> 'sings the opera') |                        | Frq. |
|-----|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| 1   | culture                               | <i>wenhua datai</i>  | economy                               | <i>jingji changxi</i>  | 45   |
| 2   | culture                               | <i>wenhua datai</i>  | economy & trade                       | <i>jingmao changxi</i> | 16   |
| 3   | tourism                               | <i>liyong datai</i>  | economy & trade                       | <i>jingmao changxi</i> | 12   |
| 4   | government                            | <i>zhengfu datai</i> | enterprises                           | <i>qiye changxi</i>    | 9    |
| 5   | literature & art                      | <i>wenyi datai</i>   | economy & trade                       | <i>jingmao changxi</i> | 7    |
| 6   | sports                                | <i>tiyu datai</i>    | economy                               | <i>jingji changxi</i>  | 5    |
| 7   | tourism                               | <i>liyong datai</i>  | economy                               | <i>jingji changxi</i>  | 4    |

the post-Cold-War era, economy is the “heavy part of the show” (*zhongtouxu*), as cited above in (29c). In the corpus, for instance, searches on *jingji changxi* (economy sings the opera) and *jingmao changxi* (economy and trade sing the opera) respectively yield as many as 68 and 52 tokens.

In sum, the linguistic evidence presented in this section points to a Chinese cultural model based on traditional Chinese theatrical performance, represented especially by Beijing opera. This cultural model, structured by the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STAGE (OR LIFE IS A PLAY), in part shapes the Chinese understanding of various aspects and events of life. It also helps account for the CCTV commercial under analysis with a central metaphor that connects the Beijing Olympics with Beijing opera. It is because the central metaphor is wired into this cultural model that the TV commercial is charged with and energized by the power that cultural models are supposed to have.

## 6. Conclusion

The previous sections analyzed the multimodal manifestations of the central metaphor, with its internal components and structures, of the educational TV commercial under study, and a linguistic perspective on the cultural model in which this commercial is rooted. As we have seen, the central metaphor manifests itself through multimodal narratives of a multimedia discourse, heading a network of more general metaphors and metonymies that are realized more locally, and functioning as a “metaphor scenario” (Musolff 2006) or a “metaphorical analogy” (Kövecses 2010: 287) that lends coherence to the TV commercial. The central metaphor’s multimodal manifestations are summarized in Table 2. In the initial part, only two modes are involved: the aural mode establishes the source domain whereas the visual mode establishes both the target and source domains. In the main part, the verbal messages in the verbal mode about the Beijing Olympics are realized in the other two modes. In the aural mode, they are vocalized against the background music. In the visual mode, they are captioned at the bottom of the screen while the actors and actresses are

Table 2. Summary of the multimodal manifestations of the central metaphor

| <b>Central Metaphor</b>  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| HOSTING THE BEIJING OLYMPICS IS PERFORMING BEIJING OPERA ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE   |   |  |
| <b>Target:</b> SPORT—BEIJING OLYMPICS  |   | <b>Source:</b> ART—BEIJING OPERA   |
| Initial Part   |   |  |
| Aural Mode   | Visual Mode   | Verbal Mode  |
| Increasingly rapid pace of beats of a <i>bangu</i> drum of Beijing opera, leading to a gong beat, and a series of cymbal beats ( <b>source</b> )   | Increasingly rapid flashing of moving images contributing to the following themes:<br>a) Beijing bidding for host city, celebrating successful bid, and getting ready for the competition to start ( <b>target</b> )<br>b) Theater getting prepared for the show (Beijing opera) to start ( <b>source</b> )   |  |
| Main Part  |   |  |
| Aural Mode   | Visual Mode   | Verbal Mode  |
| Beijing opera actors and actresses' speeches about the Beijing 2008 Olympics vocalized against an orchestral music played in the background ( <b>target</b> )  | Ten famous Beijing opera actors and actresses speaking in plain clothes to the camera one by one, their words captioned at the bottom of the screen ( <b>target</b> ); the shots of their speaking alternating with the shots of their performing in make-up and costumes ( <b>source</b> ), as well as the shots of the Olympic artifacts ( <b>target</b> )  | Beijing opera actors and actresses' verbal messages about the Beijing Olympics vocalized and captioned ( <b>target</b> ) |
| Final Part   |   |  |
| Aural Mode   | Visual Mode   | Verbal Mode  |
| Solo <i>jinghu</i> play of a prototypical piece of Beijing opera music ( <b>source</b> )<br>Beating of a gong ( <b>source</b> )<br>The verbal message "To mount the stage of the world; and to put on a show of China" as voice-over ( <b>source</b> ) | Alternation of the shots of a <i>jinghu</i> played by a solo player and the shots of a female martial role performing ( <b>source</b> )<br>When the stage curtains are opened, a female martial role standing at central stage facing the "audience" of buildings ( <b>source</b> ); over her head is the caption of the verbal message "To mount the stage of the world; and to put on a show of China" ( <b>source</b> )<br>Poster of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games emblem ( <b>target</b> ) | Verbal message "To mount the stage of the world; and to put on a show of China" ( <b>source</b> )                        |

speaking. Their speaking about the Beijing Olympics in plain clothes contributes to the target domain, but their performing in make-up and costumes contributes to the source domain. In the final part, all three modes contribute to the source domain except the final poster in the visual mode. That is, the whole commercial ends with the target in the visual mode, echoing its very beginning in the visual mode with a moving image in the target as well.

It is interesting to note that while the source domain of the central metaphor is PERFORMING BEIJING OPERA, mapped onto the target of HOSTING THE BEIJING OLYMPICS, the performance shown in the commercial involves no singing, which should be a basic element of Beijing opera, and its musical accompaniment involves, mainly and visually, two instruments, i.e., the *bangu* drum in the initial part and the *jinghu* in the final part (other percussions, the gong and the cymbals, are utilized minimally in the aural mode only). After all, as CMT predicts, metaphorical mappings across domains are always partial in nature (see, e.g., Kövecses 2010; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). What are highlighted in this TV commercial are the visual effects of locations and movements, which are the source concepts of the primary metaphors in the Event Structure Metaphor system. In the aural mode, the only Beijing opera elements are the solo play of the *bangu* and *jinghu*, respectively in the initial and final part. These two are, nevertheless, prototypical instruments in the percussive and musical categories of the Beijing opera accompaniment and, as such, they are capable of playing a highly effective metonymic role (PART FOR WHOLE) representing the source domain.

Applying the Decompositional Approach to Metaphorical Compound Analysis (DAMCA), based on the distinction between primary and complex metaphors, the study has demonstrated that the central metaphor of the CCTV commercial, HOSTING THE BEIJING OLYMPICS IS PERFORMING BEIJING OPERA ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE, is a shorthand formula for a metaphorical complex with a number of propositions, complex metaphors, and primary metaphors as components combined at different levels. The “bottom lines” are primary metaphors that are grounded in experiential correlations based on embodied experience. Thus, as an analytical tool, DAMCA is able to show that the central metaphor, though at face value highly culture-specific and occasion-specific, is built with more general building blocks upon a cognitive foundation that is quite likely to be universal. This cognitive foundation consists of two likely-to-be universal metaphor systems: the Great Chain Metaphor system and the Event Structure Metaphor system. In the former, the national and societal behavior (i.e., China’s hosting the Beijing Olympics) is conceptualized in terms of individual human behavior (i.e., performing Beijing opera). In the latter, states, changes, actions, purposes etc. are conceptualized as locations, motions, self-propelled movements, and so on. As I said, the primary metaphors involved actually serve as the “cornerstones” or “foundation stones” of the whole

construction. Indeed, as Grady (2005: 1612) points out, “primary metaphors are an established set of counterpart connections, from which we draw on a regular basis. They form the basis of the metaphor system of a given language, and possibly a universal system of metaphors which guide human conceptualization more generally”.

Needless to say, DAMCA as an analytical instrument is subject to further development and improvement.

Finally, a look at cultural models from a linguistic perspective can shed light on the relationship between language, culture and cognition. This study also presented some linguistic evidence pointing to a Chinese cultural model for understanding various aspects and events of life in terms of Chinese theatrical performance represented by Beijing opera. As a highly-structured and intricately-patterned folk art, Beijing opera and other local operas take a salient position in traditional Chinese culture and, for that reason, have penetrated other domains in cultural cognition of the Chinese people, helping structure or enrich the understanding of those domains. At the heart of this cultural model is the widespread conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STAGE OR LIFE IS A PLAY. This widespread metaphor, however, is embraced in a highly culture-specific scenario of Beijing opera, with its particular singing style, costumes, face masks, musical and percussive accompaniment, etc., which are very different from, for instance, Shakespearean plays or Western operas. While sharing some common properties of fruits at a more abstract level, at a concrete level an apple is an apple and an orange is an orange. A commonly shared conceptual metaphor can evoke very distinctive mental imageries and conceptual scenarios in different cultures. That is why we need to study linguistic and conceptual systems in their cultural contexts.

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