The present chapter introduces the theoretical notions that are necessary for identifying and describing the linguistic expressions in the book of Job that testify of spatial conceptual metaphors. Its argument proceeds in three stages. Firstly, I present a fundamental definition of spatial metaphor which is refined in the remainder of the chapter with the necessary theoretical insights (§3.1). When this definition is applied to a sample text, it demonstrates how ubiquitous and fossilized spatial metaphors are. Secondly, I introduce the basic notions of spatial semantics (§3.2). The latter deals with how people physically locate entities and how they speak about motion. In other words, before turning to metaphorical uses of space, I briefly describe how several cognitive linguists study literal space, and more particularly location and motion. In the analyses presented in the following chapters, it is regularly necessary to use the theoretical apparatus of spatial semantics to describe a metaphorical conceptualization. Thirdly, I summarize how conceptual metaphor theory relates to spatial metaphor (§3.3). I describe how important spatial metaphor is for conceptual metaphor theory, and how fundamental spatial metaphors are for human cognition. Then I document how on a conceptual level space can be defined using image schemata. In the conclusion and application, I highlight the reasons why spatial metaphor is valuable for the study of the Hebrew Bible and I point out how the chapters following the present one identify and analyze spatial metaphors in the book of Job.

1 The title of this chapter refers to spatial metaphor in language and cognition. In line with the previous chapter the focus is mostly on conceptual metaphors and their linguistic manifestations. I refer to spatial metaphor in language mostly because spatial metaphor could also be studied in gesture or music, for instance. K. Emmorey, B. Tversky and H. A. Taylor, “Using Space to Describe Space: Perspective in Speech, Sign, and Gesture,” Spatial Cognition and Computation 2.3 (2000): 157–80.


3 Spatial cognition is too vast a topic to deal with exhaustively. It is my goal to explain some basic theoretical issues and select these elements of the theory and methodology that are fit for use within literary analysis. When referring to space as a source domain, I use small capitals, elsewhere I take the liberty of not using special formatting for the word space, even if it can refer to the concept of space.
3.1 Definition

Spatial metaphors are conceptual metaphors that use the source domain space to understand something that is in and of itself not spatial. The introduction to this study (§1.1) highlights several examples found within the book of Job that illustrate what spatial metaphors are in practice. The number of examples I could give is almost indefinite. For instance, the phrase she felt utterly lost uses the lack of orientation to verbalize ill-being. When someone states that time flies when you’re having fun, time is thought of as an object moving in space. The noun phrase the following chapter conceptualizes the chapters of a book as a path in which earlier chapters lead the way and later chapters follow them. These examples are chosen randomly and when they are presented in isolation, they do not do justice to the systematicity of the conceptualizations behind these expressions. In a study of human computer interaction, Kuhn and Blumenthal provide an example that shows how ubiquitous and fossilized spatial metaphors are. Spatial metaphorical expressions (according to Kuhn and Blumenthal) are italicized in their example:

The following text provides, by way of a short exercise, a down-to-earth introduction to spatial metaphors and spatialization. Please highlight all expressions in the text that are spatial, but stand for a non-spatial concept.

After outlining the basic arguments for metaphors in [Human Computer Interaction], we are well on our way to show that spatialization through spatial metaphors is a core idea in human-computer interaction. Before getting into the details of spatialized interfaces, let us look at some evidence for the central role that space plays in natural language. So far, we have seen that metaphors in general are fundamental to human cognition and communication. As the text in front of you demonstrates, a large proportion of these metaphors are spatial. They build on our experience

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4 This definition is self-explanatory. Later sections of this chapter, however, demonstrate that the source domain space is not always easy to delineate.

5 Only the first two paragraphs of their example are quoted here. Kuhn and Blumenthal are interested in spatial metaphor for their study of human-computer interaction and the perspective of usability: for a user interface to be effective it needs to use the right conceptual metaphors. Spatial metaphors are highly frequent in this context. Does a computer have a desktop or a file system or windows, for instance? Werner Kuhn and Brad Blumenthal, “Spatialization: Spatial Metaphors for User Interfaces,” in Conference Companion on Human Factors in Computing Systems, ed. Michael Tauber (New York: Association for Computing Machinery, 1996a), 346–7. Werner Kuhn and Brad Blumenthal, “Spatialization: Spatial Metaphors for User Interfaces,” 1996b, http://ifgi.uni-muenster.de/~kuhn/research/publications/pdfs/monographs/Spatialization.pdf.