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## **Introduction**

1. Few areas in the human sciences exhibit both the theoretical exuberance and the conceptual fatigue that characterize the study of metaphor. Over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, an almost inflationary proliferation of frameworks has emerged – semantic, pragmatic, cognitive, hermeneutic, semiotic, and (psycho)linguistic – each proposing a distinct approach to understanding metaphor. Together, they delineate a field that remains by nature unfinished: metaphor resists closure. As Floarea Vîrban aptly notes in her contribution to this issue, “despite the impressive number of works dedicated to this issue [metaphor], some pieces are still missing from the puzzle; the puzzle of the thinking tradition on metaphor is far from being entirely composed”.

This proliferation, however, also reveals a methodological impatience. Theoretical models multiply in the pursuit of explanatory synthesis, yet often compress the very complexity that makes metaphor such a fertile ground for thought. The risk is not only theoretical fragmentation, but also epistemic acceleration – a tendency to favour system over history, and classification over hermeneutic depth. By arranging metaphor theories into formal categories, scholars produce synoptic tableaux that may be conceptually illuminating but historically flattening. What is lost in such cartographies is precisely what Hans Blumenberg (1960) called “the background of conceptual thought”: the slow, sedimented history of metaphors as vehicles of human self-understanding.

2. When we launched the Call for Papers for this issue, we anticipated a broad range of voices – contributions from linguistics, philosophy of language, semiotics, aesthetics, and related fields – each approaching metaphor from its own disciplinary perspective. With few exceptions, the submissions we received, however, proved more focused, centering primarily on Eugenio Coseriu’s conception of metaphor as articulated within his integral linguistics. This apparent narrowing has proven exceptionally fruitful.

As Willems (2023: 585; see also Rodríguez, this volume) observes, unlike in the previous century, Coseriu's name is increasingly rarely cited in international handbooks and compendia published over the last two decades across various linguistic subfields, despite the remarkable scope and significance of his work. From this perspective, it is particularly fortunate that this special issue concentrates on his conception of metaphor – a dimension of Coseriu's thought that has itself often been overlooked or simplified through selective interpretations.

Coseriu's approach to metaphor is notable for the way it highlights its creative dimension of language. This perspective not only offers deeper insight into the relationship between language, thought, and culture but also anticipates many of the central themes of cognitive linguistics, which emerged as a dominant research paradigm in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The contributions gathered in this volume succeed in presenting, through their focus on different facets of Coseriu's reflections on metaphor, an almost "integral" view of his conception. Importantly, this view is not presented in isolation, but is set in dialogue with the major contemporary paradigms of metaphor studies. Many of the studies examine metaphor through the lens of integral linguistics while critically and/or comparatively engaging with the two other dominant approaches of the twenty-first century – the cognitive and the semiotic.

Given this concentration on multiple dimensions of Coseriu's conception and its interaction with current paradigms, we will proceed directly to presenting the contributions that, each in its own way, complete and nuance the overall picture of his view on metaphor.

**3.** The contributions by Edoardo Moré, Floarea Virban, Fernando Gabriel Rodríguez, and Filomena Diodato revisit the theoretical and philosophical foundations of Coseriu's linguistics and examine metaphor from this perspective, while also situating Coseriu's view of metaphor in relation to two major contemporary approaches: the Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed within cognitive linguistics and the Motivation and Sedimentation Model proposed in cognitive semiotics. Whereas Willems / Faur's contribution explores metaphor within Coseriu's integral conception, establishing connections both to the theory of language and to the description of speaking activity across and beyond the three levels of language, the contributions by Fayçal Agzoum / Brahim Oumeraouch, Rolf Hotz, Keita Ikarashi / Patrick Maher adopt a more focused and descriptive approach, each examining specific aspects of metaphor from distinct perspectives. From a Coserian integral standpoint, these texts can be seen as addressing aspects that pertain to one or another of his three levels of language – universal, historical, or individual.

Marina Eiriz Zarazaga's contribution, in turn, extends linguistics toward literary and aesthetic studies, revealing yet another significant facet of Coseriu's integral conception.

In "La creatività metaforica in Coseriu: apprensione dell'essere e conoscenza intuitiva", **Edoardo Moré** provides an account of Eugenio Coseriu's view of metaphor from the standpoint of the philosophy of language. The paper emphasizes the fundamental role of "philosophical reflection" in shaping Coseriu's integral linguistic conception. From this perspective, Moré seeks to assess the potential of Coseriu's view of metaphorical creation in relation to the major contemporary approaches to metaphor.

Edoardo Moré refers to several works from the early period of Coseriu's intellectual activity (Coseriu 1952, 1956, 1958) in which the philosophical foundation of his thought remains only implicitly formulated. These texts are brought into dialogue with some of Coseriu's mature works on the same topic (Coseriu 2001, 2007, 2015), where he explicitly addresses the implications of the history of linguistic thought and the decisive role played by "philosophical reflection" in defining the "essence of language".

For Coseriu, the persistent "inquiry into the essence of language" is realized through a continuous engagement with the philosophical and linguistic tradition, which provides the conceptual horizon within which he delineates the object of linguistics as a "creative semantic logos", that is, *enérgeia*. Edoardo Moré considers the concept of *enérgeia* – i.e., "the free and creative human activity" that generates semantic entities in language – as the very "centre of Coseriu's ontological reflection" on language and, by extension, on metaphor ("what is" "the being" of language and metaphor).

In developing his argumentation, Moré draws upon several intellectual influences that decisively shaped Coseriu's thought since his Milanese years (1945-1950). Significant among them is the influence of his professor, Antonio Banfi, from whom Coseriu early on understood the necessity of legitimizing linguistics as a science through the active involvement of the entire history of philosophy and reflection on language. From Banfi (1939), and, through Banfi, from Husserl (as Banfi was Husserl's student), Coseriu also inherited an integrative phenomenological view of human experience and knowledge, within which language is conceived as "a free activity within the world". Another significant "Italian" source of Coseriu's thought discussed by Edoardo Moré is Antonino Pagliaro (see Coseriu 1994), who influenced Coseriu's understanding of the "historical being" of language.

Edoardo Moré suggests that Coseriu's enduring concern with the ontological delimitations imposed by the nature of the object of linguistics is the essential feature that

distinguishes his perspective on metaphorical creation from contemporary theoretical models. From this standpoint, he explores the “possibilities and limits” of a productive dialogue between Coseriu’s view of metaphor and the two mainstream trends in metaphor studies: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff / Johnson 1980) and Motivation & Sedimentation Model (Zlatev / Jacobsson / Paju 2021).

**Floarea Vîrban**’s paper, “Metaphor in Vico and Coseriu”, continues the discussion on the philosophical foundations of Coseriu’s conception of metaphor and focuses on a crucial segment of this philosophical tradition: the influence of Giambattista Vico on Coseriu’s view of language and metaphor. The author shows that, although Coseriu does not explicitly mention Vico in his fundamental 1956 study (Coseriu 1956), there are “striking similarities” between the two models of understanding metaphor, suggesting a profound intellectual filiation. In this sense, one could say that Vîrban’s study inhabits the interval that connects the Vichian and Coserian perspectives – a zone where metaphor becomes the fundamental cognitive device through which humans access knowledge and create meaning through language (*ingenium* in Vico, *fantasia* in Coseriu).

The paper traces Vico’s view of metaphor, starting from his early studies (Vico 1709/1965; 1710/1988) and culminating in his major work, *Scienza Nuova* (1744/1948). Vîrban highlights the importance, for Vico’s inquiry into human knowledge, of the *verum-factum* principle (i.e., the coincidence of “knowing” and “making” ‘facere’), of the creative role of *phantasia* / *ingenium* (i.e., the capacity to perceive unity within difference through analogy) – and, implicitly, of metaphor – as well as of the “poetic foundation of knowledge” (“all knowledge” is originally “poetic”, i.e., imaginative, as distinct from rational knowledge).

Comparing Vico’s perspective with that developed by Coseriu in his study on metaphor (Coseriu 1956), Vîrban observes that the same articulation of ideas is reformulated linguistically by Coseriu: for Coseriu, language and metaphor function as mediation between world and consciousness, culture and cognition; metaphor becomes, in Coseriu’s linguistics, the “expression” of a “poetic intuition” that unifies different things through analogy; what Vico intuited as the poetic foundation of human wisdom, Coseriu re-articulates as the linguistic foundation of knowledge, where every new utterance repeats the original creative act.

Viewed through this relational lens, the paper traces a genealogy of metaphor linking early humanistic sciences to their modern reinterpretations. Emphasizing the essential cognitive dimension in the study of metaphor within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Vîrban proposes the “Vichian-Coserian paradigm” as a “proto-theory of conceptual metaphor”,

suggesting that a creative revival of this tradition may stimulate a genuine “renaissance” in contemporary metaphorology.

In “The Coserian Theory of Metaphor and Conceptual Metaphor Theory: Affinities and Divergences” **Fernando Gabriel Rodríguez** explores the extent to which Coseriu’s integral linguistics and cognitive linguistics may share conceptual affinities in their treatment of metaphor. His inquiry builds on previous attempts to position Coseriu’s thought in relation to the major currents of contemporary linguistics and metaphor theory. To this end, Rodríguez conducts an in-depth analysis of the theoretical frameworks that form the basis of each approach to metaphor.

To substantiate his argument, Rodríguez draws on several key Coserian studies as a basis for his critical reassessment of the cognitive paradigm. Among these, Coseriu’s works (1990/2000) play a particularly significant role, as they articulate a direct critique of cognitive semantics in its most well-known form of prototype semantics. Coseriu challenges this perspective by showing that the proposed identification between the “constituting” of “categories” and the “constituting” of “meanings” of language, as well as between “designated things” and “knowledge related to things” and “linguistic knowledge” proper, is fundamentally misleading. More broadly, he reproaches prototype semantics for lacking a genuine theory of linguistic meaning, which should provide the necessary foundation for any designational semantics (*sachbezogene Semantik*), i.e., a kind of semantics that presupposes and depends on *the semantics of linguistic meaning*, rather than existing independently of it.

Against this background, Fernando Gabriel Rodríguez explores additional notions that, at first sight, might suggest potential convergences between the Coserian theory of metaphor and Conceptual Metaphor Theory, as developed by Lakoff / Johnson (1980). His study focuses particularly on linguistic and metaphorical creativity, as well as on the origin, nature, and function of mental imagery in metaphor within the two paradigms. Rodríguez’s analysis, however, reveals that even in the case of metaphor, the two approaches, despite certain superficial similarities, remain fundamentally distinct, owing to the divergent theoretical premises from which they proceed.

**Filomena Diodato**’s paper, “Integral Linguistics from a Cognitive Semiotics perspective: Metaphor between semiotic and pre-semiotic experience”, continues the debates initiated by previous studies in this volume. Her contribution examines the fundamental theoretical tension between Eugenio Coseriu’s integral linguistics and contemporary cognitive approaches, with a

particular focus on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff / Johnson 1980), and ultimately proposes a constructive dialogue with the Motivation & Sedimentation Model of cognitive semiotics (e.g., Zlatev / Blomberg 2019; Zlatev / Jacobsson / Paju 2021). The paper does not offer a synthesis between the integral and cognitive paradigms, but explores the very space of their encounter, showing that, beyond apparent divergences, a shared epistemological framework with the Motivation & Sedimentation Model is possible – one that can transcend the philosophical limits of mainstream cognitive linguistics while also recovering the semiotic and historical dimensions of language.

To illustrate this, Diodato presents the architecture of integral linguistics, emphasizing Coseriu's fundamental thesis that knowledge of the world is always mediated by linguistic signs, and that metaphor constitutes a manifestation of language universals (semanticity, creativity, alterity), rather than a pre-linguistic or neural mechanism. From this perspective, she deconstructs Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff / Johnson 1980) and Neural Metaphor Theory (Lakoff 2008, 2014), highlighting their philosophical inconsistencies: the confusion between literal and metaphorical, the reduction of metaphor to neural processes, the lack of a semiotic theory of the sign, and so forth.

Regarding the Motivation & Sedimentation Model, Diodato advocates a dialogue between two epistemic sensibilities: Coseriu's insistence on the primacy of linguistic and metaphorical creativity as a cultural activity (*énergeia*), and cognitive semiotics' attempt to articulate a phenomenology of metaphorical meaning that extends beyond language, yet without disregarding it. Informed by Coseriu's integral linguistics and phenomenology, the cognitive semiotic approach proposes a dynamic asymmetry – a movement between the semiotic and the pre-semiotic, between historically sedimented forms of expression and the pan-human experience that precedes them. Without overlooking the differences between the two approaches, Diodato suggests that such a dialog can occur “*with* Coseriu, but also *beyond* him”, mediated through an “integral ‘semiotic-semantic’” perspective, as the one proposed by De Mauro (1982).

In “Coseriu on Metaphor”, **Klaas Willems** and **Elena Faur** aim to reconstruct a coherent and systematic account of Eugenio Coseriu's view on metaphor, dispersed across various writings throughout his work. Although at first glance it may appear that, apart from his fundamental study on metaphor (Coseriu 1956), Coseriu returns to the topic only sporadically, the authors demonstrate that metaphor, in fact, occupies a central position within his integral conception of language.

The authors emphasize the originality of Coseriu's conception of metaphor, which, from a historiographical perspective, stands apart from the dominant trends of twentieth-century thought. Despite the "explosion" of research devoted to metaphor in the second half of the century, most approaches have remained fragmentary, focusing either on the structure or on the function of metaphor. In Coseriu's view, by contrast, these two dimensions are organically integrated within a comprehensive conception of language.

The 1956 study remains emblematic of the way Coseriu "conceptualizes" and "frames" metaphor within his theory of language, treating it as a phenomenon intrinsic to the creative-cognitive essence of language itself and placing it in direct continuity with the philosophical tradition developed by Aristotle, Humboldt, Vico, and Cassirer. In his later reflections, he revisits metaphor in close connection with the fundamental distinctions of his integral linguistics, which describe the activity of speaking across its three levels. Accordingly, he examines metaphor in relation to the three types of semantic content – signified, designation, and sense (e.g. Coseriu 1955-1956, 1967, 1979, 1990/2000, 1980/2007, 1988/2007) – as well as in connection to the notions of language norm (e.g. Coseriu 1964) and neutralization (Coseriu 1964, 1988/2007).

Willems and Faur further highlight the constitutive role of metaphorical creativity not only within language but also within the broader sphere of culture, underlining the essential role of metaphor in the process of meaning creation across „all forms of culture" (science, art, and religion) (Coseriu 1997). The paper also brings to light Coseriu's enduring concern with the relationship between linguistics and aesthetics, and points to the broader significance of his integral perspective for a unified understanding of human creativity.

In "Commenter c'est métaphoriser: les mappings conceptuels au cœur du commentaire footballistique", **Fayçal Agzoum** and **Brahim Oumeraouch** investigate the role of conceptual metaphors in structuring football discourse, adopting the theoretical framework of cognitive semantics and of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff / Johnson 1980). Within this framework, metaphor is understood as a fundamental cognitive, rather than purely linguistic, mechanism, operating through unidirectional mappings from a source domain (concrete, experiential) to a target domain (abstract), thereby establishing systematic correspondences that shape both thought and language.

The paper has an applied focus, analyzing a bilingual (French–Arabic) corpus of metaphorical expressions extracted from commentary on two high-profile football matches: the 2022 FIFA World Cup final (France–Argentina) and a Spanish league fixture. Using a

qualitative approach, the study identifies systematic mappings between the source domains of war, life, death, meteorological phenomena, theatre, and the target domain of football. Five major categories of conceptual metaphors results from the analysis: (1) *war metaphors*, the most frequent, framing football as a form of combat; (2) *meteorological and nautical metaphors*, representing challenges as natural phenomena; (3) *theatrical metaphors*, casting players as actors within a sporting drama; (4) *existential metaphors*, drawing on domains of life, death, and spirituality; and (5) *maternal metaphors*, portraying football academies as generative matrices of talent.

The investigation concentrates primarily on the identification of universal cognitive mechanisms underlying metaphor and does not examine the ways in which conceptual metaphors encode complex cultural and social representations. The analysis of the sociocultural specificity of metaphorical conceptualizations – particularly relevant from a contrastive perspective given the languages represented in the corpus – remains, therefore, a promising direction for future research.

In accordance with the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the paper aims to show that these metaphorical mappings are not arbitrary, but reflect systematic cognitive structures grounded in physical and sociocultural experience. Fayçal Agzoum and Brahim Oumeraouch also consider the pragmatic function of metaphor in football commentary: commentators exploit this cognitive flexibility by generating metaphors to avoid monotony, amplify discursive impact, and activate complex cultural and social representations.

In “The metaphorical extension of classifiers in Tawrã Mishmi: an exploration”, **Rolf Hotz** offers a contribution to the typological study of nominal classification systems. Relying on authentic field data collected by the author himself, the paper adopts a primarily empirical approach, analyzing a corpus of expressions from Tawrã – an endangered Tibeto-Burman language spoken in north-eastern India.

Although he focuses on a specific aspect of the description of a particular language, he emphasizes that the phenomenon cannot be fully understood without considering the interaction between linguistic and extralinguistic factors. The study of classifiers is situated at the intersection of semantics and morphosyntax. This amphibious position reflects the dual nature of these classifiers: on the one hand, they function as morphemes accompanying a nominal element in specific grammatical contexts, forming together a coherent semantic unit; on the other hand, they serve a classificatory role, organizing nouns according to semantic oppositions based on salient features of their referents.

The central premise of the study is that the metaphorical use of nominal classifiers extends their scope of application. Hotz identifies two main types of metaphorical extensions that “semantically” “motivate” the distribution of classifiers and exhibit a pronounced “anthropocentric orientation”. The first type involves plant classifiers used metaphorically to refer to human beings (*people as plants*). Hotz provides examples demonstrating the existence of a metaphorical “botanical idiom” (cf. Ellen 2020, Lewis 1988, Besky 2014, Lévi-Strauss 1963). In this context, plant biology serves as an inexhaustible source of metaphors for understanding humans – a phenomenon especially salient in non-Western traditional societies, where knowledge of the plant world is deeply integrated into cultural practices, rituals, and spiritual beliefs, fostering a holistic worldview. The second type of metaphorical extension concerns classifiers that distinguish certain nouns through the use of body parts as measure words (e.g., *a handful of rice*).

Finally, Hotz highlights the crucial role of the interplay between language, cognition, and culture in the study of phenomena such as nominal classification – phenomena that, precisely because of their nature, require explanations that are functional, cognitive, and cultural in scope.

In their study “What Happens when the Tomato Ripens? Manufacturing Sense through Metaphorical Suspension in the Picturebook *Kechappu-Man*”, **Keita Ikarashi** and **Patrick Maher** examine the construction of textual sense in the Japanese surreal picturebook *Kechappu-Man* (*Ketchup-Man*) by Noritake Suzuki. Their analysis is carried out from the perspective of Eugenio Coseriu’s text linguistics (1980/2007, 1988/2007) and builds on his distinction between three types of neutralization of incongruence: metaphoric, metalinguistic, and extravagant.

The study concentrates on metaphorical suspension or neutralization, highlighting the complexity of textual sense articulated through a metaphorical reading of the picture book, in contrast with one constructed by extravagant neutralization, which remains more closely tied to the surface level of the narrative.

Drawing on Coseriu’s concept of “evocation” (Coseriu 1980/2007) and examining various sign relations within the text, the authors seek to demonstrate how various linguistic and visual “building blocks” guide readers toward layered metaphorical interpretations. In doing so, they demonstrate that the reader moves beyond a superficial acceptance of absurdity characteristics of an extravagant reading, uncovering instead a deeper metaphorical sense that reflects adult disillusionment in modern society.

To further refine the distinction between the types of sense constructed through metaphorical and extravagant neutralization, the study also includes a comparison with the Korean translation of the picturebook. The authors note that the absence of certain linguistic devices in this language, the use of polite verbal forms, and the lack of prosodic rhythm in the Korean version encourage a reading that favors the extravagant suspension of incongruence. This comparative dimension reinforces their hypothesis that specific linguistic choices play a determining role in shaping the type of suspension privileged in interpretation.

**Marina Eiriz Zarazaga's** study, “«Como un mar chispeante bajo el sol»: una perspectiva coseriana sobre las metamorfosis del lector en los *Epigramas* de Marcial (1st c. AD)”, investigates the metamorphoses of a concept that evolves into a character – Lector, the central figure of Martial's *Epigrams* (1st c. AD) – from a linguistic-philological perspective. The study is firmly grounded in Eugenio Coseriu's conception of text linguistics as a hermeneutic science (Coseriu 1980/2007), while also engaging with his reflections on the interplay between linguistics and aesthetics (Coseriu 1991/2006). Within this theoretical framework, Zarazaga draws on the notion of creativity as *enérgeia*, developed by Coseriu (1956, 1991) and reinterpreted by Ana Agud (2017, 2023) in the context of her Critical Theory of Linguistics and Language.

Zarazaga demonstrates that the act of reading, as conceptualized by Martial through metaphor, constitutes a dynamic and creative process, exemplifying Coseriu's concept of *enérgeia*: reading is never static, but a continuous re-creation of senses, which contributes to the poet's enduring presence.

In this regard, the study identifies and examines the principal metamorphoses of the Lector in Martial's *Epigrams*: the Lector as spectator (*spectator*), interpreting the “theatre of the epigrams”; the Lector as traveler (*viator*), breathing life into the verses; the Lector as lover (*amator*), consumed by a passion for poetry; the Lector as matron (*matrona*), stirred by the erotic pleasures of reading; and the Lector as guest (*conviva*), savoring the “bread with the taste of human life” offered by the epigrams.

These metaphorical transformations are approached within the framework of Coseriu's text linguistics, highlighting how textual sense is articulated through a double semiotic relationship. Reading emerges as a vivid example of linguistic creativity: not a mechanical reproduction, but an ongoing creation of senses. Informed by Ana Agud's Critical Theory of Linguistics and Language, the study advocates for an “integral linguistics” that seamlessly intertwines *mythos* and *logos*, scientific prose and poetic expression. The methodological

approach itself becomes performative, alternating between academic analysis and poetic interpretation, thereby embodying the very dynamism it seeks to describe.

Taken together, these contributions do not aim to erase the distinctions between different perspectives, but rather to highlight their complementarity. By acknowledging the value of each approach while situating it within a larger intellectual horizon, the volume seeks to foster a richer, more interconnected understanding of the subject under inquiry.

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