[111] *Metaphors, Gestalt and Conceptual Blending*

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In the last twenty years of the 20th century a kaleidoscope of ideas, theories and philosophies gave birth to the embodied cognition paradigm, which rediscovered the centrality of semantics as a theory of categorization. To dismantle the tenets of standard cognitive science, the new semantic turn insisted on the metaphorical nature of the conceptual activity. Against Chomsky's disembodied cognitivism, the conceptual theory of metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, 1980) was followed by a great deal of research which confirmed the pervasiveness of this fact of thought and of brain (Lakoff, The Neural Theory of Metaphor, 2008). Conceptual metaphors consist in mappings across domains, whose essence is understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another. More recently the theory of conceptual integration provided an in-depth investigation into the nature of those mappings, showing that metaphor is only one of the outcomes of the process of blending mental spaces (Fauconnier and Turner, "Conceptual Integration Networks", Cognitive Science, 22/2, 1998). Our aim is to highlight some similarities between the aforementioned approaches and the reflections of the 20th century psychologist Karl Bühler (Sprachtheorie 1934), a critical exponent of Gestalt psychology. Indeed, a hotly debated issue in the Gestalt schools was that of Ubersummativität, which Bühler discussed according to the general question of the compound nature of language and metaphor. In this regard he integrated supersummativity with subsummativity, stating that the second plays a complementary role in a sphere of signification (the ensemble of conscious contents that can be associated to an expression) filtering out incompatible elements. Yet Bühler's sematological perspective reveals surprising correspondences with the current approaches, which highlight the structural character and the properties of conceptual integration (cf. Hofstadter, Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies, 1995). According to Fauconnier and Turner, the blending process has a compositional nature which, however, transcends the simple sum of its parts (supersummativity); it has a creative essence, since the blended space is not predictable by observing the sources. Thence, blending seems to have both the properties of supersummativity and subsummativity, given that a fusion both shows and hides, partially projecting in the emergent space some of the elements of the sources. Nevertheless, if according to Bühler the indeterminacy of the sign, which is systemic before than pragmatic, relates to the creativity of languages, in the current approaches linguistic meanings mirror conceptual structures, and emerge from the synthetic schemas resulting from the blending process.