



Waterphors 2026 – Genoa, Italy – 22–23 October 2026

Following the first edition in 2024 in Lyon (the proceedings will soon be published in the online journal *Metaphorik.de*), the (second?) *Waterphors* conference will be held on 22 and 23 October 2026 in collaboration with the CIRM (Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca sulle Metafore – <https://cirm.unige.it>).

Call for papers

Water as an ancestral element is at the origin of metaphorical expressions in all contexts of communication; liquid metaphors belong to the universal collective imagination. They have fascinated specialists in various disciplines, from psychoanalysis to sociology, from anthropology to philosophy. Scientists have long pondered over the evocative power of water (Bachelard, 1942), the influence of a *liquid* imagination as a prism for interpreting contemporary society (Bauman, 2000), and the impact of this imagination on emotions and feelings (Omori, 2008, Crépin, 2021).

It has been posited that liquid metaphors are ubiquitous: they are pervasive in the vernacular and conceptualizations of everyday situations: we can *navigate in troubled waters*, or *swim against the tide*, be in difficulty in a *stagnant relationship*, but we can also *be in our element* or *happy as a fish in water*, if things work out... Phraseologisms and proverbs are a good *source* of liquid metaphors (Iovănescu & Rădulescu, 2018).

Liquid metaphors are also pervasive in the press, manifested across a wide array of contexts; in 2020, people quickly came to conceptualise the pandemic and the virus's spread as successive *waves*, while discourse on immigration has long been exploiting liquid metaphors (*waves* of immigration, but also *tsunamis of migrants* or *migratory submersion*), as evidenced by the scientific literature on this subject in the field of linguistics (Taylor, 2021 and 2022, Borriello, 2022, Porto, 2022, Jamet & Lafiandra, 2023), or sociology (Bernardot, 2016 and 2023).

In the realm of expert discourse, liquid metaphors abound, from economic language, with its *cash flows* (Resche, 2016), to hard sciences such as physics and its *electromagnetic waves*, to the *circulation of information*.

The importance of liquid metaphors in the history of literature and in poetic creation cannot be undermined (Prandi, 2017, analyses the “metaphorical swarms” linked to the metaphor of *liquid light* in several languages).

In all these cases, the liquid metaphor is an essential tool for the creation and communication of new concepts, not only through language, but also in visual and multimodal communication (Forceville, 2024).

Although the imagery of water as a primordial element is universal, it is possible to consider the cultural and social factors that influence the production of liquid metaphors (Kövecses, 2005 and 2019), as well as their translations into different languages and cultures – in French, one can *arroser* (*sprinkle*) someone, but in Italian one can *ungere* (*anoint*) someone with the same effect!

The Waterphors 2026 conference aims to bring together researchers from different disciplines and backgrounds to discuss the metaphor of water and its many avatars in different textual and discursive genres.

We welcome contributions in the following areas of reflection (non-exhaustive list):

- ~ What do water metaphors refer to? What themes are generally conveyed by water metaphors?
- ~ Can we observe a form of coherence among these target *domains*? Can we assume the existence of one or more conceptual metaphors of the type SOMETHING IS WATER (MONEY IS WATER, COMMUNICATION IS WATER (Jamet, 2008), etc., or dynamic conceptual schemas based on the BEING IN WATER scenario (FACING DIFFICULTY IS BEING IN WATER, (Crépin, 2019, 2023))
- ~ Can we observe differences between water metaphors and conceptual metaphors involving other liquids as the source domain?
- ~ What emotions do water metaphors evoke?
- ~ Water metaphors from a multimodal perspective: representations of sociological and political phenomena (immigration, the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, etc.)
- ~ Water metaphors in the visual arts and literature
- ~ Water metaphors in science and terminology
- ~ Liquid metaphors as a source of neonymy
- ~ Comparative approach to water metaphors from a multilingual perspective

It should be noted that, in the interest of scientific consistency, submissions that focus on water as a symbol rather than as an analogical material will not be considered for this conference.

How to submit a paper?

All proposals should be sent to waterphors2026@gmail.com before 31 March 2026. Proposals (in French or English) must include a title, an abstract (maximum 500 words, not including the bibliography), 5 keywords, and a short presentation of the author. The theoretical and methodological framework and the study corpus must be clearly stated.

Presentation length: 30 minutes maximum.

All proposals will be anonymised before being submitted to the scientific committee for evaluation.

Languages of study:

Presentations may cover any language, provided they are presented in French or English.
Languages spoken at the conference: French and English.
Languages of publication: French and English

Publications:

Papers may be published after the conference in an open-access journal, such as the *I Quaderni del CIRM* collection (<https://www.tabedizioni.it/shop/product/quaderni-del-cirm-527>), after receiving a favourable review from the reading committee.

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Schedule

- ~ End of October 2025: Call for papers
- ~ End of March 2026: Deadline for submitting proposals
- ~ End of June 2026: Feedback from the evaluation committee
- ~ 22–23 October 2026: Conference