

# 8th AISB Symposium on Computing and Philosophy: The Significance of Metaphor and Other Figurative Modes of Expression and Thought

Communication and expression in language, pictures, diagrams, gesture, music etc. is rich with figurative aspects, such as metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole and irony. People engage in such communication and expression in a variety of contexts and with a range of effects. Modelling figurative patterns of communication/expression is a key aim of academic disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy, discourse studies, and psycholinguistics, and automatically understanding such phenomena is a long-standing and now expanding endeavour within Artificial Intelligence, with metaphor generation also receiving more attention. In addition, some researchers have suggested that metaphor can be an intrinsic part of thought, not just an aspect of external communication/expression.

Specific topics of interest for the Symposium included the following:

- How philosophical thinking on figurative expression and thought can/should be exploited/heeded by relevant AI researchers
- How computational attempts to model figurative expression can aid philosophical thinking about it
- How the production of figurative expression reflects speakers' conceptualisations, goals and commitments
- How to model/analyse/understand the emotional and evaluative content of figurative expression
- The intersection of issues of figurative expression and issues of embodiment, enactivism, cognitive simulation, etc.
- Whether thought, as opposed to external expression, can be metaphorical, ironic, etc., and if so what this amounts to (philosophically, computationally, psychologically, ...)
- How figurative and especially metaphorical thinking might be involved in introspection, and therefore be bound up with the nature of consciousness
- Links between figurative thought/expression and the nature of creativity
- Figurative aspects of philosophical theorizing (about any topic), especially as uncovered by detailed technical analysis of figuration
- Figurative aspects of notions of computation ... and even: could the notion of computation be irreducibly metaphorical?

It was a specific aim of the Symposium to encourage speculative thought, provisional proposals, and provocative question-raising based on careful analysis of issues. The papers in this volume serve that aim well. Given the broad scope of the Symposium we could not hope to cover all the topics listed above, but the papers range widely and bravely over the remit of the Symposium, which brings together disciplines in an unusual way.

We thank Colin Johnson as Convention chair, and the Committee of the AISB, for providing the opportunity to hold a symposium with the above remit. We thank our co-organizers Mark Bishop and Yasemin Erden for their help, and moreover for entrusting us with an event in a symposium series that they have played leading roles in over the years. We also thank our Programme Committee, which had wide international and disciplinary reach, for their hard work. Apart from the organizers, the committee contained Tony Beavers, Jerry Feldman, Eugen Fischer, Mark Phelan, Mihaela Popa, Mark Sprevak, Tony Veale and Yorick Wilks.

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