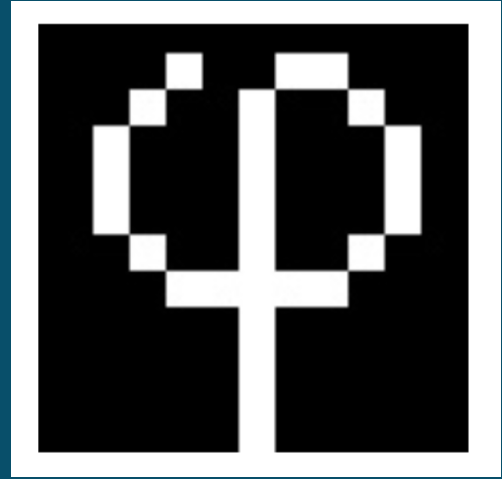
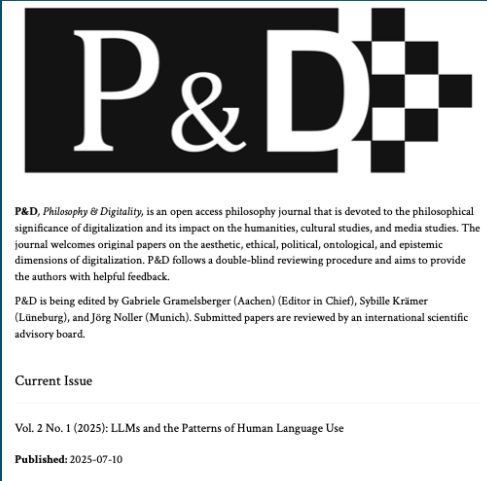




Welcome to PhiDOS

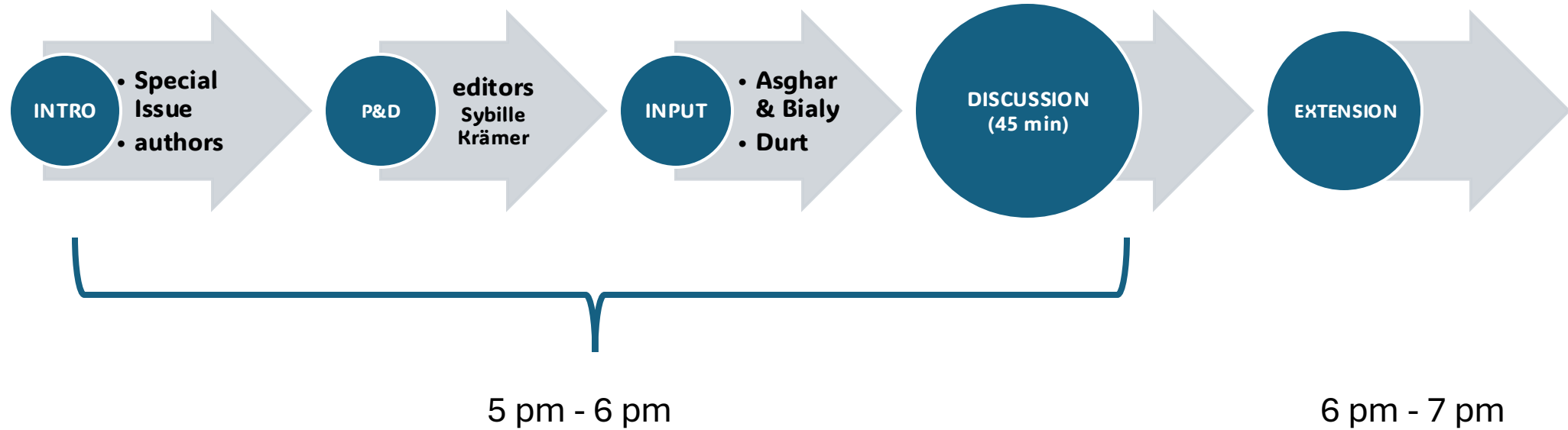
– a Philosophy of Digitality Open Space –

10 July 2025:

**A special Issue of the *P&D, Philosophy & Digitality*,
an open access philosophy journal**

Vol. 2 No. 1 (2025): LLMs and the Patterns of Human Language Use

AGENDA



			
<u>ANNA STRASSER</u>	<u>BETTINA BERENDT</u>	<u>CHRISTOPH DURT</u>	<u>SYBILLE KRÄMER</u>
(Denkwerkstatt Berlin / LMU Munich)	(TU Berlin / Weizenbaum Institute)	(TU Munich)	(Leuphana University of Lüneburg)

more information at

<https://www.denkwerkstatt.berlin/ANNA-STRASSER/ORGANIZED-EVENTS/LLMs-in-Berlin/>



International Hybrid Workshop

LLMs and the Patterns of Human Language Use

Location: Weizenbaum Institute, Hardenbergstraße 32, 10623 Berlin
August 29-30, 2024

THURSDAY

Sybille Krämer *How should the generative power of LLMs be interpreted?*

Christoph Durt & Tobias Hey *Philosophy and Software Engineering: A Transdisciplinary Perspective on LLMs and the Patterns of Human Language Use*

Xyh Tamura *How does Esposito's "Artificial Communication" compare with Gygi's Japanese "Emergent Personhood"?*

Elena Esposito *Communication with nonunderstandable Machines'*

Geoffrey Rockwell *ChatGPT: Chatbots can help us rediscover the rich history of dialogue*

FRIDAY

Iwan Williams & Tim Bayne (online) *The NLP Trilemma: Language, Thought, and the Nature of Communication*

Anna Strasser *What we can learn from developmental psychology for dealing with non-understanding LLMs*

Mia Brandner *Interpretative Gaps in LLMs—The Trial to Bridge the Limits of Language with Multi-Modal LLMs*

David Gunkel *Does Writing Have a Future?—Literary Theory for LLMs*

Bettina Berendt & Dimitri Staufer *Anonymizing without losing communicative intent? LLMs, whistleblowing, and risk-utility tradeoffs.*

PANEL DISCUSSION

Anita Keshmirian

Sabine Thürmel

Christiane Schöttler

Hadi Asghari

More information
www.denkwerkstatt.berlin/LLMs-in-Berlin/

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LLMs and the Patterns of Human Language Use



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P&D - Philosophy & Digitality

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P&D, *Philosophy & Digitality*, is an open access philosophy journal that is devoted to the philosophical significance of digitalization and its impact on the humanities, cultural studies, and media studies. The journal welcomes original papers on the aesthetic, ethical, political, ontological, and epistemic dimensions of digitalization. P&D follows a double-blind reviewing procedure and aims to provide the authors with helpful feedback.

P&D is being edited by Gabriele Gramelsberger (Aachen) (Editor in Chief), Sybille Krämer (Lüneburg), and Jörg Noller (Munich). Submitted papers are reviewed by an international scientific advisory board.

Current Issue

Vol. 2 No. 1 (2025): LLMs and the Patterns of Human Language Use

Published: 2025-07-10

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Beyond Artificial Intelligence: How Algorithms Communicate without Understanding

Elena Esposito

Abstract: The remarkable performance of recent algorithms grounded in machine learning and Big Data is often portrayed as a milestone in Artificial Intelligence (AI), suggesting a replication of human cognitive processes by machines. This article challenges such interpretations, arguing that systems like ChatGPT excel not by achieving intelligence akin to humans, but by generating outputs that can be used by humans to create their own relevant information. Without understanding content, algorithms have learned to participate in communication. The evolving interaction between humans and such technologies is likely to significantly influence the future of intelligence. However, understanding these effects requires shifting focus away from direct comparisons and competitions between human and machine cognitive abilities, toward exploring their complementary roles in communication.



From Interiority to Interaction: Reframing Personhood, Communication, and Affect with Artificial Interaction Partners through Japanese Cultures

Xyh Tamura

Abstract: Current debates about AI, robots, and LLMs often focus on intelligence and sentience, which can obscure how these technologies already participate in human social interactions, performing roles often associated with personhood. They reorganize data and communication, maintain emotional bonds, participate in rituals, assume kinship roles, and introduce new ways of being. These effects are less about interiority and more about the dynamics of the interaction. From Gygi's studies of how these technologies participate in Japanese society, we see that their success in these multiple roles depends as much on human and systemic flexibility in incorporating them as on their characteristics. These phenomena can be characterized through Blewett and Hugo's actant affordances, which emphasize that what a technology is, either as a tool, inert object, partner, or others, and the nature of a technology's personhood are dynamic positions negotiated in real time through the interaction system of which it is a part. By shifting the focus from what these technologies lack, such as consciousness or intentionality, to what they already do in networks, we can see that the significance of these technologies lies less in their ability to mimic humans but more in their capacity to co-constitute new forms of being, sociality, and kinship within human-technological networks.



Large Language Models, and the Humanization of Nature through Artificial Communication

Wilrich Jeffrey Nieto

Abstract: This paper examines large language models (LLMs) through Elena Esposito's concept of "artificial communication," arguing that this framework helps us understand LLMs as instantiations of what Marx called the "humanization of nature." Rather than viewing LLMs as possessing human-like intelligence, Esposito conceptualizes them as artificial participants in communicative processes that process information statistically without understanding. This perspective situates LLMs within human practices and reveals them as realizations of our communicative capacities and embodiments of our social relations. Under capitalism, the objectification of human life-activity in LLMs becomes alienation, human capacities realized into forms that return to dominate their creators. The contradictions arising from this dialectical process define the terrain for transformative praxis, offering potential resolutions to Esposito's problem of "control over control." Addressing the underlying social relations embedded in these systems enables a collective reappropriation of artificial communication that preserves meaning, ambiguity, and uncertainty within human flourishing.



How should the generative power of Large Language Models (LLMs) be interpreted? Do chatbots understand linguistic meaning?

Sybille Krämer

Abstract: How can we explain that contemporary AI chatbots provide appropriate, sometimes complex answers to many questions, yet neither understand the human language nor have access to the world? This essay attempts to answer this question in eight steps: 1. Anthropomorphism should be avoided because diversity, not similarity, forms the basis for successful human-technology interactions. 2. The cultural technique of flattening (illustrated/inscribed) offers creative potential for social epistemology and is a springboard for digitalization. 3. Humans restore the amputated depth dimension of artificial flatness through interpretation. 4. Computers analyze and synthesize huge data collections using surface technology, i.e., without interpretation, as patterns only. Behaving like a machine is also a proven template that has historically enriched all cultural techniques of formalizing symbolism. 5. Written colloquial language functions in two dimensions: as the content of human-interpretable linguistic expression and machine-operable token statistics. 7. Token relations form socially sedimented, 'unconscious' knowledge, which is processed by trained AI algorithms. 8. The duality of perspectives of human-interpretable language and machine-operable token statistics is the basis of the potential of contemporary AI.



Does Writing have a Future?

David Gunkel

Abstract: In opposition to much of the current scholarly and popular publications on the subject, this essay argues that what large language models (LLM) signify is not the end of writing but the terminal limits of a particular conceptualization of writing that has been called logocentrism. Toward this end, the essay will 1) review three fundamental elements of logocentric metaphysics and the long shadow that this way of thinking has cast over the conceptualization and critique of LLMs and generative AI; 2) trace the contours of a deconstruction of this standard operating procedure that interrupts influential and often-unquestioned assumptions about the concept of the author, the meaning of truth, and the meaning of what we mean by the word "meaning"; and 3) formulate the terms and conditions of an alternative way to think and write about LLMs and generative AI that escape the conceptual grasp of logocentrism and its hegemony.



Why a careless use of AI tools may contribute to an epistemological crisis

Anna Strasser

Abstract: With the rise of generative AI technologies, AI tools such as ChatGPT play a prevalent role in our world. This poses new opportunities and risks. Particularly in the field of education, the use of AI tools raises a number of new questions, for example, the challenge of proving human authorship, or whether we can continue to trust electronically distributed texts. This then puts into question whether the widespread and careless use of AI tools is contributing to an epistemological crisis. Based on an analysis of the inherent unreliability of generative AI and the increasing indistinguishability between human-written and machine-generated texts, this paper outlines the impact of generative AI on education and provides suggestions for the responsible use of AI tools. Investigating their use as legitimate tools, it also addresses the question as to whether the use of such tools could be counterproductive because it could possibly result in a deskilling effect.



Triangles, Justice, and AI: Testing Large Language Models' Comprehension of Political Ideologies

Hadi Asghari, Filip Bialy

Abstract: This paper investigates whether large language models (LLMs) comprehend and apply political ideologies beyond surface-level patterns and text reproduction. Using a scenario with sentient geometric shapes, we examine how LLMs apply John Rawls' and Robert Nozick's theories of justice. Using a framework inspired by Bloom's taxonomy, we evaluate seven LLMs across three levels: recall, application, and reflection. Results reveal significant variations, with one model demonstrating sophisticated understanding while others producing confused or generic responses. Findings suggest that LLMs may have internal conceptual maps (or networks) that resemble ideological frameworks, allowing them to reason about novel situations consistent with specific philosophical theories. This challenges the notion that LLMs function solely as word frequency models, though their understanding remains distinct from human cognition. We discuss implications for both AI research and political theory, suggesting that morphological analysis of ideologies could inform studies of meaning in neural networks.



On the Very Idea of a (Synthetic) Conceptual Scheme

Shane Denson

Abstract: This article critically engages with M. Beatrice Fazi's provocative argument that contemporary forms of generative AI, particularly large language models (LLMs), produce genuine language through acts of philosophical synthesis akin to human cognitive processes. While Fazi proposes a Kantian-inspired model wherein LLMs synthesize self-enclosed, coherent "worlds," I challenge this idea, questioning the coherence and implications of positing AI as creating separate worlds detached from shared human experience. Drawing on Donald Davidson's critique of conceptual schemes, along with insights from the phenomenological tradition, I argue instead for a distributed and open model of synthesis. Without equating computational processes with human agency, I emphasize the inherently mediated and social nature of both human and computational language generation, suggesting that generative AI mediates worldly significance not by synthesizing separate worlds but by intervening in this, the only world. Ultimately, I advocate a nuanced recognition of generative AI's transformative role within shared forms of life.



A Transcendental Philosophy of Large Language Models

M. Beatrice Fazi

Abstract: In this article, M. Beatrice Fazi responds to Shane Denson's commentary on her paper "The Computational Search for Unity: Synthesis in Generative AI," published in the *Journal of Continental Philosophy* in 2024. The article develops Fazi's transcendental argument about large language models (LLMs). While Denson raises questions about conceptual relativism through Donald Davidson's critique of conceptual schemes, Fazi maintains her position that LLMs construct "a representational world within" rather than referring to "the world." Responding to Denson's proposal for a model of synthesis based on the phenomenology of Jean-Paul Sartre, Fazi argues that a structuralist reinterpretation of Kantian synthesis better accounts for the operations of LLMs, where unity is that of a structure, not a self, and representation is technically central to synthetic activity. These distinctions preserve the functional aspects of Kantian synthesis without anthropomorphizing artificial intelligence, thus strengthening Fazi's original position that LLMs create their own internal representational reality.



The Meaning of Context and Co-text for Human Understanding and Large Language Models

Christoph Durt

Abstract: Context serves two distinct yet interrelated functions: (1) it provides a framework for interpreting symbolic expressions, and (2) it forms the core of Large Language Model (LLM) computation of numerical relationships between tokens. Each function relies on different features of context, and the widespread failure to distinguish them has given rise to confusion concerning the ability of LLMs to "understand" context and meaning. The paper distinguishes two kinds of context: (1) a broad sense, including the world we experience and live in, and (2) numerical relationships to other text parts. To clearly demarcate the two senses, the concept of "co-text" will be used for the second. LLMs transform co-text to produce text that is meaningful to humans, but this does not mean that LLMs understand meaning. Understanding the meaning of text requires embedding it in the broader context of human language use. Since LLMs do not do that by themselves, the correct question about LLM understanding is not whether they can understand context, but to what extent computations of co-text can compensate for missing context. The paper concludes with an outline of an answer: LLMs can remarkably well for missing context because the patterns they derive from human language use constitute co-texts that are intertwined with the context of sense-making.