

The Poetics of **MIND**

*Figurative Thought, Language,
and Understanding*



Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr.

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In this bold new work, Ray Gibbs demonstrates that human cognition is deeply poetic and that figurative imagination constitutes the way we understand ourselves and the world in which we live.

The traditional view of the mind holds that thought and language are inherently literal and that poetic language is a special human ability requiring different cognitive and linguistic skills than those employed in ordinary language. This view has imposed serious limitations on the scholarly study of mental life and on everyday folk conceptions of human experience. *The Poetics of Mind* overturns the traditional perspective by showing how figurative aspects of language reveal the poetic structure of mind. Ideas and research from psychology, linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, and literary theory are used to establish important links between the poetic structure of thought and the everyday use of language. Particular use is made of the extensive research that has accumulated in experimental psycholinguistics and cognitive linguistics over the past fifteen years.

The Poetics of Mind evaluates extant philosophical, linguistic, and literary theories of figurative language, using tools provided by psycholinguistic and cognitive psychology. It relates the empirical work on figurative language to broader issues concerning the nature of everyday thought and reasoning. As such, it will be of crucial interest to students and researchers in psychology, cognitive science, and linguistics.

"*The Poetics of Mind* is Cognitive Science at its best, a marvelous survey of the evidence from many disciplines showing that thought itself is normally figurative – metaphoric, metonymic, and ironic. The experimental evidence is overwhelming, and no one knows it better than Ray Gibbs. He is one of today's great experimental psychologists, and his presentation is masterful and clear. If you think that you normally think only literally, you will give it another thought after you read this book." — George Lakoff, author of *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*

"Ray Gibbs makes one think about language in new ways. He raises central issues for the field and identifies critical problems with predominant views, including the problematic nature of literal meaning and the mundane nature of figurative meaning. Rather than being driven by well-established 'mechanical' theories of language, Gibbs takes a more phenomenological approach, yielding a refreshing view of language that somehow seems more in touch with its reality. Besides being of theoretical significance, the book is beautifully written, it reviews a diverse collection of timely and interesting research, and it contains a wealth of colorful examples." — Larry Barsalou, The University of Chicago

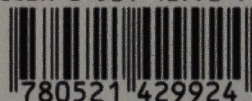
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