

**Computer Science and Philosophy Departments
University of Birmingham**

Wednesday 15th of June 2011
Room 149, ERI Building, University of Birmingham Campus

Irony and Related Figurative Uses
Royal Institute of Philosophy Workshop

11.15 Introduction

John Barnden (University of Birmingham)

11.30-12.30 “Irony, Pretence, and Metalinguistic Negation”

Gregory Currie & Francesco Gentile (University of Nottingham)

12.30-13.30 “Social Stereotypes and Irony Comprehension in Autism”

Francesca Ervas (University of Cagliari & Jean Nicod Institute, Paris)

13.30-14.30 Lunch

14.30-15.30 “When Irony Targets Other Figures”

Mihaela Popa (University of Birmingham)

15.30-16.30 “A Contrastive Look at the Processing of Metaphor and Hyperbole”

Felicity Deamer (University College, London)

16.30-17.00 Tea and Coffee Break

17.00-18.00 “Metaphor and Pretence”

John Barnden (University of Birmingham)

18.30-... Drinks and Dinner

Irony is an exceptionally subtle feature of communication, and continues to present serious challenges to the task of teasing out the nature of meaning and how people understand language. The purpose of this Royal Institute of Philosophy workshop is to discuss new lines of thought that have recently arisen on irony and its relationship to other types of figurative language such as metaphor and hyperbole. The workshop will bring together perspectives from Philosophy, Linguistics, Psychology and Artificial Intelligence.

The workshop is open to all audiences, and there is no attendance fee (refreshments will be free, but drinks and dinner will not be included). If you intend to attend the workshop, please email Dr Jussi Suikkanen (j.v.suikkanen@bham.ac.uk) to book a place.

Greg Currie is professor of philosophy at the University of Nottingham. He was educated at the London School of Economics and The University of California, Berkeley. His work in recent years has been concerned mostly with aesthetics, cognition and the relations between the two. He has a book on the imagination, *Recreative Minds*, written with Ian Ravenscroft (2002), a collection of essays *Arts and Minds* in 2004, and his most recent monograph *Narratives and Narrators* in 2010 (all with Oxford University Press). He has worked on philosophical aspects of psychopathology, having written articles on autism and on schizophrenia, and on the aesthetics of very ancient artefacts. His current project, funded by the AHRC is on "*The Challenge to Aesthetics from the Sciences*", and involves collaboration with Aaron Meskin and Matthew Kieran, both at Leeds, and a large group of scholars from Europe and North America. His "*Art and the anthropologists*" will appear in Arthur Shimamura (ed) *Aesthetic Science*, Oxford University Press, 2011. He is an editor of *Mind and Language*, an associate editor of the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, and an editorial consultant for the *British Journal of Aesthetics*.

Gentile Francesco is currently a Ph.D. student in philosophy at the University of Nottingham, under the supervision of Professor Gregory Currie and Professor Stefano Predelli. He completed an Mlit in 2008 and in 2010 spent a semester working with Professor Manuel García-Carpintero at Logos, Department of Philosophy, University of Barcelona. His research focuses on the nature of metaphor in language and thought. Its aim is to develop a pretence account of metaphorical utterances.

Francesca Ervas got her PhD in Philosophy of Language at the University of Rome III and her Specialization in Psychology at the University of Venice. She is postdoctoral researcher in Philosophy of Mind and Language at the Jean Nicod Institute and lecturer in Cognitive Psychology at the University of Cagliari. Her research currently focuses on Experimental Pragmatics and, in particular, on irony comprehension in autism spectrum disorders.

Felicity Deamer's central interest is in the processing of figurative language. Her current PhD project is to experimentally investigate the processing of metaphor in contrast with other instances of loose use, with the wider aim of testing pragmatic accounts of figurative language comprehension. She completed her BA in Linguistics at UCL in 2007 and her MRes, also at UCL in 2009. She then began her PhD at UCL that same year under the supervision of Nausicaa Pouscoulous and Richard Breheny. In 2011 she has presented her most recent research at the Workshop for processing and appreciating figurative language in Heidelberg and the Conference of Experimental Pragmatics in Barcelona.

Mihaela Popa is a Postdoctoral Researcher within the Leverhulme-funded project 'Metaphor and Metonymy: addressing a debate and a neglected problem' led by John Barnden in the School of Computer Science, University of Birmingham. She received her PhD from the University of Geneva (Linguistics and Philosophy of Language) in 2009. She is currently working on philosophical issues arising in connection with the interpretation of figurative speech, in particular metaphor and irony, and the constraints they put on the interpretation of one another when they are combined. The challenges raised by figurative language are taken up in relation to discussions about truth-conditionality criteria and semantics/pragmatics interface, as they are drawn in recent debates between indexicalism/minimalism and contextualism. Her broader research interests concern the general issue of accommodating context-sensitivity within a theory of human communication, in particular how context-sensitivity affects compositionality.

John Barnden is the Professor of Artificial Intelligence at the School of Computer Science, University of Birmingham, UK. His research has focussed on how metaphorical language can be understood by computational systems and on how this matter illuminates the general theory of metaphor and other types of figurative language. His current interdisciplinary project on figurative language, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, is the inspiration for the present workshop. He has published widely in artificial intelligence and cognitive linguistics. In particular, he was one of the chapter authors in the *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (2008), and his recent article in the *Cognitive Linguistics* journal was a novel exploration of the distinction between metaphor and metonymy, a closely-related form of figurative language.