

An International Conference, "Beyond Meaning," aimed exploring the territory beyond meaning, which is pervasive in linguistic and non-linguistic interpretation will take place at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 13-15 Sept, 2017. Abstracts submission deadline: April 1st, 2017. More details below and [here](#).

The conference:

Conference chairs: Elly Ifantidou, Louis de Saussure, Tim Wharton, Patricia Kolaiti.

Keynote speakers: Greg CURRIE, Nigel FABB, Patrizia LOMBARDO, Deirdre WILSON.

"Verbal activity involves a massive amount of inferential reconstruction, the results of which are sometimes too nebulous to be paraphrased in propositional, conceptual terms. Language use, both in ordinary conversation and in literary works, generates and conveys 'impressions' of various kinds that cannot be explained in terms of the notion of 'meaning', classically construed. This conference aims at exploring these phenomena – the territory beyond meaning, which is pervasive in linguistic (and non-linguistic) interpretation. The conference has a focus on cognitive science and we therefore particularly welcome submissions from scholars in linguistics, pragmatics, philosophy, literary studies, cognitive psychology etc. However, submissions are welcome from researchers working in any relevant field of study.

The interpretation of language whether in acts of ordinary communication or in works of literature or poetry, involves a massive amount of inferential reconstruction. It is generally presumed that since inference operates over propositions, what is reconstructed is propositional: in Gricean terminology, a speaker 'meansNN that p'. But this cannot always be the case. Sometimes, what a speaker intends to convey is too nebulous to be paraphrased in propositional, conceptual terms at all – it is 'descriptively ineffable'. And a good deal of what is conveyed in communicative acts is quite vague. What a hearer is often able to infer is a weakly implicated, or an array of weakly implicated, impressions: aesthetic experience, emotions or attitudes. Sperber and Wilson (2015) point out that linguists, philosophers and pragmatists have tended to focus their attention on cases that congregate in the top left corner of a square formed by a continuum between showing and meaning and another between determinate and indeterminate meaning. The ineffable, vague aspects of communication, despite that fact that they are crucial to our understanding of language use, have largely been ignored.

The aim of this conference is to encourage exploration of the territory beyond meaning. How might the descriptive ineffability of expressives, interjections, perspectival interpretations of tenses, intensifiers, figures etc. be accommodated within a more general theory of language use? How might we account for the communication of non-propositional phenomena such as moods, emotions and impressions? Do pauses, creative metaphors, unknown words in L2 and other 'pointers' to 'conceptual regions' (Carston 2002) communicate concepts? More broadly, what type of cognitive response do these phenomena trigger, if not conceptual-propositional?

The answers to these questions will also have a range of implications for our understanding types of language use that pursue aims which are not, strictly speaking, communicative: literature and poetry, for example. It could be argued that poetic and literary theorists have fallen into the same trap as linguists. They have traditionally treated literary texts as objects that are designed to be interpreted through the achievement of effects at a conceptual level. But these objects surely involve different kinds of effect: perceptual, emotional, and perhaps others... Moreover, the answers will have implications for how we understand other types of human activities – such as art at large – which involve the instantiation of effects that go 'beyond meaning'. To ask of an artwork 'What does it mean?' might simply be the wrong question: literature and art are about more than mere

conceptualizing. It might even be the wrong question to ask of ordinary conversation.

The Beyond Meaning conference will bring together scholars from linguistics, cognitive psychology, philosophy/aesthetics and the study of literature and art. We aim to broaden the current machinery and scope of pragmatics and cognitive science and perhaps lead to a reconsideration of the notion of meaning itself."

Topics

may include, but are not limited to:

- Linguistic descriptive ineffability
- Cognition and affect
- Literary theorizing of emotions and impressions
- Aesthetic experience
- Emotions and attitudes in linguistic and non-linguistic representational systems
- Emotions and understanding
- The showing-meaning distinction
- The non-conceptual dimension of figurative meanings

paper submission and important dates:

Submissions are invited in English in the following format: one 500 word (max) abstract (excluding references).

Submissions must be uploaded on the Easychair platform exclusively by following this link:

Submissions: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=bm2017>

Abstracts submission deadline: **April 1st, 2017.**

Notifications to authors will be sent by **June 1st, 2017.**

Preliminary programme will be available by **June 30th, 2017**

Final programme will be available by **July 30th, 2017**

Registration: Early bird: by **July 30th, 2017**; Final deadline: **August 15th, 2017.**

Conference page: <http://www.beyondmeaning.net/>