Meaning: before and beyond
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In this talk I want to explore two ways in which the domain of pragmatics (Gricean intentional communication, or non-natural meaning) might be broadened. The first involves looking at dimensions of human communication that, arguably, existed **before** (both ontogenetically and phylogenetically) Gricean non-natural meaning. Grice (1989) famously presents a 'myth', in which he suggests how human cognitive capacities might have spiralled in such a way that non-natural meaning could have emerged from natural meaning. Implicit in his myth is the claim that intentional communication, and the meta-psychological abilities that underpin it, necessarily precedes language. Consider infants: well before they are capable of passing false-belief tests and acquiring a full-blown 'Theory of Mind', they can sense the emotional state of their carers. Indeed, intention recognition probably plays a rather limited role in recognising the emotional states of others.

The second involves exploring a point recently proposed by Sperber and Wilson (2015), who point out that for a variety of reasons 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 Gricean non-natural meaning (top x axis) and another between determinate and indeterminate non-natural meaning (left y axis). Each continuum reflects a separate dimension of intentional communication and suggests there is a territory **beyond** meaning.

Drawing on these two observations, I attempt to synthesize an account of emotional communication (Wharton 2009, 2016) that fits, on the one hand, with notions from cognitive models of pragmatics and, on the other, recent work on emotions in cognitive science. Central to this thinking is the idea that the traditional relevance theoretic notion of 'cognitive effect' needs to be complemented by a new notion of 'emotional effect', which are typically activated by emotion-reading procedures and render them worth processing.

References
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