

This international meeting aims at exploring the many senses of irony as a rhetoric figure and existential tone, and its relevance for the study of social and political experience. During four days, scholars from various fields in the Humanities (Philosophy, Cultural and Literary Criticism, History of Ideas, Psychoanalysis) will be debating on the many ways to understand irony and its meaning in different historical periods. From Antiquity and Renaissance to Modernity and Postmodernity...and beyond. Philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Hegel, Kierkegaard, William (and Henry) James, Freud, Leo Strauss, Vlastos, Nehamas, Derrida Rorty and Lear will be revisited on the issue of irony, but also earlier and modern classics like Cervantes, Montaigne, and Shakespeare, and contemporary writers as Penelope Fitzgerald and Nabokov, Pynchon and Foster Wallace, Kundera and Piglia.

Irony seems contrary to sincerity, engagement, truthfulness and the justification for each one's way of life and beliefs; but irony has also to do with self-examination, caring and tolerance needed to live a life with less violence and cruelty. These topics will open further discussions on some decisive drifts in the political sensitivity and thinking since the 1990s. What happened to the ironic, yet socialdemocratic committed citizen that Richard Rorty so highly praised? Why did such a Neo-Nietzschean as Sloterdijk want to paint the rortyan democrat as the successor of Nietzsche's "last man"? What is the difference between cynicism à la Baudrillard and the new political sensibilities? How does Žižek really distinguish between irony, sarcasm and cynicism? Can we still be ironic in our time –a time of destruction, endless violence and permanent horror? Should we vindicate the virtue of irony over again? Or should we rather say farewell to irony?

We will have the special participation of Professor Richard J. Bernstein (New School for Social Research in New York), among whose books there are titles as influential as *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question* (1996), *Freud and the Legacy of Moses* (1998), *Radical Evil: A Philosophical Interrogation* (2002), *The Abuse of Evil: The Corruption of Politics and Religion since 9/11* (2006) and most recently *Reflections on Violence. Thinking Without Bannisters* (2013). Professor Bernstein will give a special lecture on the actuality of Socratic irony and the art of living. He will also contribute with a presentation on his departed friend Richard Rorty and Jonathan Lear's *A Case for Irony*. He is currently preparing a new book on the idea of irony in the philosophical tradition.

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#### In collaboration with

Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid

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## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

# AFTER IRONY

DISCOURSE, FORMS OF LIFE AND POLITICS

May 25-28

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid  
Ronda de Toledo 1 | sala 1.A.16

May 26

Círculo de Bellas Artes | 19:30  
Alcalá 42 | sala Ramón Gomez de la Serna

## MONDAY 25

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- 9:30 OPENING REMARKS
- Session I Chair: ÁNGEL FAERNA  
(Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha)
- 09:45-11:30  
EVELYN VARGAS  
(Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina)  
*'Half-ironically, Half-defiantly...'*  
*Peirce on Irony and Inference*
- JUAN VICENTE MAYORAL  
(Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain)  
*Language, Change and Irony:  
Rorty and the Linguistic Turn*
- Coffee break
- 12:00- 13:00  
PABLO QUINTANILLA  
(Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú)  
*Irony and Metaphor*
- Lunch
- Session II  
Chair: ÁNGEL FAERNA  
(Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha)
- 15:30-17:15  
CHRIS VOPARIL  
(Union Institute & University, USA)  
*Rorty and James on Irony,  
Moral Commitment and the  
Ethics of Belief*
- FEDERICO PENELAS  
(Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina)  
*The Cruelty of Irony*
- Coffee break
- 17:30-18:20  
BJØRN RAMBERG  
(Oslo University, Norway)  
*Pop! Pop! Pop! Conditions of  
Possibility of Conversational Effervescence*

## TUESDAY 26

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- Session III Chair: SARIN MARCHETTI  
(University College Dublin)
- 09:30-11:15  
JAMILA MASCAT  
(Nosophi/ Paris 1-Sorbonne, France)  
*The Danger of Vanity.*  
*Hegel's Critique of Romantic Irony*
- ANTONIO GÓMEZ and ANDREA GREPPI  
(Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)  
*Citizenship, Irony and Representation*
- Coffee break
- 11:30-13:45  
CRISTINA BASILI  
(Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)  
*The Esoteric Irony: Leo Strauss on Socrates*
- JAIME INFANTE  
(Universidad Carlos III de Madrid-UNED, Spain)  
*Character, Destiny and  
Ironic Detachment*
- 19:30 **LECTURE**  
**Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid**  
**Alcalá 42 / Sala Ramón Gomez de la Serna**
- RICHARD BERNSTEIN  
(New School for Social Research, USA)  
*What is Socratic Irony?*  
(con traducción simultánea)

## WEDNESDAY 27

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- Session IV Chair: ALICIA GARCÍA  
(Universidad de Barcelona)
- 09:30-11:15  
CAROL BERNSTEIN  
(Bryan Mawr College, USA)  
*Fragmenting "The Blue Flower"*
- MARIANNE JANACK  
(Hamilton College, USA)  
*Is David Foster Wallace Wrong About  
Irony?*
- Coffee Break

- 11:45-13:30  
ISRAEL RONCERO  
(Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain)  
*Irony as Resistance. Figures of Abjection in  
Social Networks: An Anthropological  
Approach.*
- EDUARDO MENDIETA  
(Stony Brook University, USA)  
*Ironic Technologies:  
on Our Antiquarianism*
- Lunch
- Session V Chair: ALICIA GARCÍA  
(Universidad de Barcelona)
- 15:30-17:15  
GREGORY F. PAPPAS  
(Texas A&M University, USA)  
*Is Irony a Virtue?*  
*A Dialogue with Lear and MacIntyre*
- RICHARD BERNSTEIN  
(New School for Social Research, USA)  
*Rorty: Living Ironically*

## THURSDAY 28

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- Session VI Chair: SARIN MARCHETTI  
(University College Dublin)
- 09:30-11:15  
DAVID SÁNCHEZ USANOS  
(Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)  
*Literature and Displacement:  
Irony and Conspiracy*
- BRENDAN HOGAN  
(New York University, USA)  
*Ironies and Contradictions*
- Coffee Break
- 11:30-12:15  
RAMÓN DEL CASTILLO  
(UNED, Spain)  
*Žižek again:  
Ideology, Cynicism and Irony*
- 12:30 **FINAL SESSION**  
**Open Debate and Closing Remarks**  
Chair: CARLOS THIEBAUT  
(Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)