Irony, pretense and the common ground

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Abstract
A theory of verbal irony must explain the conditions under which speakers say one thing to mean something else (often contradictory), how listeners recognize that a speaker is doing so, and moreover, why a speaker would ever prefer being ironic to speaking at face value. Inspired by previous work on verbal irony as a form of pretense, as well as the concept of "countersignaling" in economic game theory, we propose a Bayesian model of irony comprehension and production which addresses these questions.