

## RUSSELL VS. MEINONG: 100 YEARS AFTER “ON DENOTING”

The Bertrand Russell Research Centre on 14–18 May 2005 will host a retrospective conference to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the publication of Bertrand Russell’s landmark essay, “On Denoting”.

Russell’s theory of definite descriptions has been hailed as a paradigm of philosophy and is frequently cited as inaugurating the analytic philosophy movement in the twentieth century. Russell’s analysis of definite descriptions with its logical, semantic, and ontic implications has nevertheless been a continual source of philosophical controversy, stimulating new generations of logicians and philosophers to reflect on the ontological implications of thought and language. The centenary of Russell’s theory is a notable opportunity to reassess Russell’s massive and enduring legacy to the analytic tradition.

“On Denoting” is especially noteworthy for its efforts to refute Alexius Meinong’s object theory, in which reference to and true predication of properties to non-existent as well as existent objects is permitted, and as Russell’s manifesto in support of robust realism in metaphysics, reflecting a preference for extensionalism in logic and philosophical semantics. Russell’s objections to Meinong have nevertheless been vigorously disputed by scholars sympathetic to Meinong’s semantic intensionalism. The occasion to re-examine Russell’s 1905 paper among other things is, therefore, an opportunity also to reconsider the fundamental dichotomy and ongoing controversy between extensionalism and intensionalism in logic and philosophical semantics.

Submissions to the conference are sought in all historical and philosophical categories on any area of Russell’s philosophy relevant to the theory of definite descriptions and in particular to Russell’s dispute with Meinong concerning the semantics of non-existent objects.

Contributors are asked to submit two copies of an essay (with abstract), suitable for a 30–45 minute presentation, no later than 1 January 2005 to:

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Graduate students are also encouraged to submit.

Announcements of acceptances for the programme will be made by the end of February 2005.

For further details, visit <http://denoting.mcmaster.ca>

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