

PROGRAMME

Colégio Almada Negreiros, Room CAN 219

NOVA Institute of Philosophy, Campus de Campolide, NOVA University Lisbon, Portugal

Monday, June 27

10:00-10:45 Registration / Coffee

10:45-11:00 Opening: João Constâncio, Director of the NOVA Institute of Philosophy

11:00-11:45 Presentation 1: Marie Guillot, "Bullshit as a source of illocutionary disablement in public argument"

11:45-12:30 Presentation 2: Grace Paterson, "Denial, Retraction, Disavowal"

12:30-14:00 Lunch

14:00-14:45 Presentation 3: Marcin Lewiński, "Authority in multi-party conversations: The case of advising"

14:45-15:30 Presentation 4: Chris Cousens, "Solving the Authority Problem: Why we won't debate you, bro"

15:30-16:15 Presentation 5: Cristina Corredor, "Can we conclude norms by arguing?"

16:15-16:45 Coffee Break

16:45-17:30 Presentation 6: Felix Bräuer, "Statistics as Figleaves"

Tuesday, June 28

9:30-10:30 Keynote 1: Mary Kate McGowan, "Public speech actions: on extending the scorekeeping analysis"

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-11:45 Presentation 7: Giles Howdle, "Microtargeting, dog whistles, and deliberative democracy"

11:45-12:30 Presentation 8: Tasneem Ahmad, "The 3rd party Hermeneutical Impasse"

12:30-14:00 Lunch

14:00-14:45 Presentation 9: Neri Marsili, "Illocutionary norms and rational expectations"

14:45-15:30 Presentation 10: Álvaro Domínguez-Armas, Andrés Soria-Ruiz & Marcin Lewiński, "Provocative insinuations as argumentative inferences"

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break

16:00-16:45 Presentation 11: Amalia Haro Marchal, "Two subtypes of illocutionary acts of arguing"

16:45-17:30 Presentation 12: Shiyang Yu & Frank Zenker, "A scheme and critical questions for the argumentum ad baculum"

17:30-18:30 Keynote 2 Marina Sbisà, "Public argument in nonideal conditions"

20:00-22:00 Conference dinner: [Marisqueira Valbom, Av. Conde Valbom 114](#)

Wednesday, June 29

10:00-11:00 Keynote 3: Jennifer Saul & Ray Drainville (Waterloo, CA): Visual and Linguistic Dogwhistles

11:00-11:15 Coffee Break

11:15-12:15 Keynote 4 Rae Langton, "Norms and back-door speech acts"

12:15-13:00 Presentation 13: Kyle K. J. Adams, "For Whom the Dog Whistles: Demystifying the Double Speak of White Supremacy"

13:00-14:30 Lunch

14:30-15:15 Presentation 14: Andrei Moldovan, "The limits of autonomous critical thinking"

15:15-16:00 Presentation 15: Grzegorz Gaszczyk, "Helping others to understand. A normative account of the speech act of explanation"

16:00-16:30 Coffee Break

16:30-17:30 Keynote 5: Mitchell Green, "Dimensions of Commitment and the Abuse of Illocutionary Norms in Public Discourse"

17:30-17:45 Closing

ABSTRACTS

Keynotes

Rae Langton, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Monday, June 27, 9:40-10:40

Norms and back-door speech acts

Norms of discourse shift dynamically following a 'rule of accommodation', where what is said 'requires and thereby creates' what is required, given certain conditions (Lewis). Presupposition accommodation is a familiar form, and contributes to a variety of 'back-door' speech acts, working for good or ill. 'That's just locker-room talk' (Trump) presupposes a social norm which makes permissible a certain way of talking. Such presuppositions testify and help enact certain norms, sustaining or constructing them if they were not there before. Blocking can be a mode of resistance, as when athletes objected, 'wait a minute, we don't talk that way in locker rooms!'. Blocking isn't always easy or even possible, but has potential as a distinctive kind of counter-speech.

Marina Sbisà, University of Trieste, Italy

Monday, June 27, 16:45-17:45

Public argument in nonideal conditions

After exploring the conditions in which public discourse takes place in our society, it will be considered what is the place of argumentation in it. Considering also incomplete or implicit argumentative structures, argumentation is widespread. But looking at the contents and the quality of arguments is somewhat depressing. Could we do better? Can reflection on speech act norms be of any help? On what aspects of speech act norms should we insist in our discursive practices as well as in education, in order to enhance the monitoring of public discourse by argumentation?

Mary Kate McGowan, Wellesley College, United States

Tuesday, June 28, 09:30-10:30

***Public speech actions:
On extending the scorekeeping analysis***

A scorekeeping framework tracks relevant aspects of a conversation; this framework has been useful in highlighting hidden ways that ordinary

speech under ordinary circumstances can be especially harmful. Such speech can be constitutively harmful by enacting norms that are harmful. Although a scorekeeping framework affords an account of ordinary conversational contributions, it is unclear that it can account for other (less conversational) speech actions. In particular, it is unclear that a scorekeeping framework can account for public speech actions like a newscast or a politician's sound bite. In this paper, I begin to explore this question, identifying both challenges and further complexities.

Jennifer Saul, University of Waterloo, Canada

Wednesday, June 29, 10:00-11:00

Saying the quiet part loud:

How Figleaves facilitate the rise of blatant racism and falsehood

It is widely held that something has changed with respect to both blatantly racist speech and obvious falsehood in recent years. Both seem to have gone mainstream, to a shocking degree, in political speech. There's obviously nothing new at all about racism in politics, or about false political speech. Yet since the Civil Rights movement politicians felt a need to conceal their racism at least partially, in response to the social unacceptability of explicit racism. And concealment of falsehood obviously has a very long tradition in politics. With the rise of the Far Right, and the increasingly high profile of conspiracy theories, there seem to have been dramatic shifts. In this paper, I explain the linguistic mechanism of Figleaves, and argue that they have helped to facilitate both blatantly racist and blatantly false political speech.

Mitchell Green, University of Connecticut, United States

Wednesday, June 29, 16:30-17:30

Dimensions of Commitment and the

Abuse of Illocutionary Norms in Public Discourse

After briefly laying out a cultural-evolutionary approach to speech acts, I argue that the notion of commitment at play in many central acts such as assertion manifests itself in multiple dimensions. This enables us to hypothesize evolutionary precursors to the modern practice of assertion and related speech acts that are governed only by some of these dimensions. One such precursor I call verbal signaling, which I elucidate. Our perspective also equips us to consider how a modern speaker might employ an illocutionary analogue of the Priorian runabout-inference ticket, in which the pragmatic “introduction rules” for utterances correspond to evolutionary precursors of modern speech acts, but in which the “elimination rules” correspond to those modern descendants. Such behavior would be abusive, though not in a way readily discernible without an evolutionary perspective on speech acts. Such behavior also raises the question how we may safeguard against it in public discourse, and I close with some suggestions for doing so.

Presentations

Marie Guillot, University of Essex, United Kingdom

Monday, June 27, 11:00-11:45

Bullshit as a source of illocutionary disablement in public argument

Contexts in which bullshit (Frankfurt 1986) is rife in public discourse threaten the possibility of non-defective public argument. This paper tries to understand why. I start by defending a new, non-assertoric account of bullshit which departs from the Frankfurtian approach. On this view, bullshit undermines a prerequisite of all meaningful argument: a common trust that participants will respect the norms governing the practice of arguing. When bullshit becomes prevalent, it can cause a sui generis, community-wide form of “illocutionary disablement” (Langton 1993): speakers struggle to make their words count as the speech-acts they intend them to be when engaging in public disputes.

Grace Paterson, University of Vienna, Austria

Monday, June 27, 11:45-12:30

Denial, Retraction, Disavowal

I will provide an account of the speech act of disavowal. I argue that disavowal is an important conversational move distinct from both denial and retraction. On my view, disavowing a speech act involves accepting illocutionary responsibility, while also explaining that it is out of character and thereby altering many of its perlocutionary effects. I will then briefly discuss two further issues: how to understand disavowals more generally (for instance, disavowal of a person or an ideology), and when it is and is not appropriate to call upon someone to issue a disavowal.

Marcin Lewiński, Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal

Monday, June 27, 14:00-14:45

Authority in multi-party conversations: The case of advising

This paper departs from one simple question: Who are the *players* of a language *game*? While trivial in itself, this question has non-trivial consequences for how the dynamics of authority relations develop in a conversation. The standard approach would grasp these relations in terms of the basic dyadic engagement, epitomized in Lewis's master-slave metaphor. Inspired by Simmel's early social ontology, I explore what happens to the authority-in-conversation when a third, etc., player is added to the game. I focus on the speech act of seeking advice as a powerful illustration of how authority can be strategically managed, even constituted, in a multi-party context.

Chris Cousens, La Trobe University, Australia

Monday, June 27, 14:45-15:30

Solving the Authority Problem: Why we won't debate you, bro

The 'Authority Problem'—how ordinary speakers might acquire the authority to perform subordinating speech acts—is supposed to bedevil speech act accounts of oppressive speech. This paper defends a solution inspired by McGowan's (2009) analysis of subordinating hate speech, even against concerns McGowan (2019) has raised. A relevant, 'deflated' kind of authority can be gained from the hate speaker's standing in a norm-governed 'activity of oppression'. We need to be wary about debating or platforming such speakers, lest we elevate their position within that activity

and enable them to perform more pernicious speech acts than was previously possible.

Cristina Corredor, UNED, Spain

Monday, June 27, 15:30-16:15

Can we conclude norms by arguing?

Can a norm of action be the conclusion of an argumentative dialogue? My hypothesis is that, whenever a norm of action is the conclusion of an argument, it should be analyzed as the statement of a norm and thus as a verdictive. If the context is the appropriate, and the interactants are sincerely (or institutionally) committed to their argumentative exchange and its conclusion, then this verdictive speech act motivates and institutes a new one with the force of an exercitive. The interactants' recognition and acceptance that the new illocution has been performed lends the norm its exercitive force.

Giles Howdle, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Tuesday, June 28, 11:00-11:45

Microtargeting, dog whistles, and deliberative democracy

Political 'dog whistles' and microtargeted political advertisements are objects of widespread concern. Existing ethical/political criticism focuses on their problematic content—that a dog whistle is racist, or a microtargeted advertisement misleading. I argue that these speech act types are additionally wrongful on content-neutral grounds—regardless of their content. My argument proceeds from a deliberative conception of democracy according to which only votes which follow from an adequate deliberative process confer democratic legitimacy on their results. I claim that dog whistles and microtargeting threaten to prevent adequate democratic deliberation, and therefore that these practices are anti-democratic.

Tasneem Ahmad, University of Waterloo, Canada

Tuesday, June 28, 11:45-12:30

The 3rd party Hermeneutical Impasse

The opposing movements, World Hijab Day (WHD) and No Hijab Day (NHD), constitute a unique hermeneutical impasse called the '3rd party impasse'. This impasse is unlike the types characterized by Luvell Anderson (2017). Anderson addresses the 'Black Lives Matter' and 'All Lives Matter' case, i.e., where a dominant group wrongfully misrepresents the message of a marginalized group. The 3rd party impasse, in contrast, addresses the heterogeneity and difference existing within a marginalized group forced to resist/react to different 3rd parties. Utilizing the WHD-NHD case, I identify the features of the 3rd party impasse and some steps towards its resolution.

Neri Marsili, University of Barcelona, Spain

Tuesday, June 28, 14:00-14:45

Illocutionary norms and rational expectations

According to a received paradigm, speech acts are regulated by their illocutionary rules by *conceptual necessity*: necessarily, any given illocutionary type (e.g. asserting, promising) is defined by the unique set of rules that governs its performance. In this talk, I present a series of objections against this paradigm, and sketch an alternative view. Illocutionary norms can be understood as expectations of rational cooperation within a joint communicative project. This alternative approach takes illocutionary norms to be loose, complex, ever-evolving, and markedly context-sensitive. It is also better suited to describe how norms come to be adopted within a linguistic community.

Álvaro Domínguez-Armas, Andrés Soria-Ruiz & Marcin Lewiński, Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal

Tuesday, June 28, 14:45-15:30

Provocative insinuations as argumentative inferences

We explore a particular type of propagandistic message, which we call "provocative insinuations". For example: 'Iraqi refugee is convicted in Germany of raping and murdering teenage girl' (NYT, 2019). Although this sentence seems to merely express a fact, it also conveys a hateful message about Iraqi refugees. Previously, we have sketched the semantic/pragmatic profile of these inferences (Domínguez-Armas & Soria-Ruiz 2021). In this talk, we look at the argumentative role that these utterances play in public

discourse. Specifically, we argue that they strongly invite hearers to make generalisations based on “striking” properties (Leslie 2008, Haslanger 2011).

Amalia Haro Marchal, University of Granada, Spain

Tuesday, June 28, 16:00-16:45

Two subtypes of illocutionary acts of arguing

Pragma-dialectics and the Linguistic Normative Model of Argumentation follow Searle’s account in considering that some conditions must be fulfilled for the speaker’s utterance to count as a speech act of arguing. I will argue that, to overcome the problems of the Searlean approach, it is necessary to distinguish between two different levels in the analysis of the speech act of arguing. Furthermore, I will argue that, to account for these two levels of analysis, it is necessary to distinguish between two subtypes of illocutionary acts. The first subtype involves only what the speaker does, while the second also involves and affects the hearer.

Shiyang Yu & Frank Zenker, (respectively) College of Philosophy, Nankai University, Tianjin, P.R. China and Warsaw University of Technology, Faculty of Administration & Social Science, Center for Formal Ontology, Warsaw, Poland.

Tuesday, June 28, 16:45-17:30

A scheme and critical questions for the argumentum ad baculum

We treat the *argumentum ad baculum* as a contingently fallacious argument form and evaluate its instances by combining argument scheme theory and speech act theory. This evaluation proceeds from the viewpoint of a rational third-party, making it superfluous to supply dedicated felicity conditions for the speaker and hearer. The felicity conditions of threatening serve not only to construct a new scheme for the *ad baculum* argument, but also to forward a list of arguably complete and functionally distinct critical questions, which the literature fails to provide. Results also include slightly revised felicity conditions for the speech act of threatening.

Felix Bräuer, University of Mannheim, Germany

Wednesday, June 29, 11:30-12:15

Statistics as Figleaves

Recently, Jennifer Saul has explored the use of “figleaves” in popular discourse on race and gender: “[a] racial figleaf is an utterance which (for some portion of the audience) blocks the conclusion that (a) some other utterance, R, is racist; or (b) the person who uttered R is racist” (2021: 161), while “[a] gender figleaf is an utterance which (for some portion of the audience) blocks the conclusion that (a) some other utterance, R, is sexist; or (b) the person who uttered R is sexist” (2021: 163). Following Saul, figleaves are problematic because they can shift the boundaries of what is acceptable to say. The aim of my talk is to expand on Saul’s picture as follows: I will argue that statistics can function as figleaves and then show that they can be especially problematic in this regard.

Kyle K. J. Adams, University of Waterloo, Canada

Wednesday, June 29, 12:15-13:00

For Whom the Dog Whistles: Demystifying the Double Speak of White Supremacy

I argue that popular understandings of white supremacist double speak strategies do not accurately represent the practice of these strategies. I use ‘double speak’ to encompass a range of different forms of speech that are intended to manipulate, mislead, or otherwise influence by using multiple meanings. Examples of double speak include audience-relative conceptions of bullshit (Kenyon and Saul 2021), Jennifer Saul’s work on figleaves, and dogwhistles (López 2013). All three concepts are widely taken to be popular tactics for white supremacists, but I argue that these theories do not adequately encompass the practices of white supremacist recruitment speech.

Andrei Moldovan, University of Salamanca, Spain

Wednesday, June 29, 14:30-15:15

The limits of autonomous critical thinking

The Critical Thinking tradition emphasises the value of developing reasoning skills, in order to “decide for ourselves what to think” (Johnson

and Blair 1994, 167) about any topic under consideration. Recently, Sorial (2017), Grundmann (2021) and others have made the case that deference to experts is always a better epistemic route than relying on general reasoning skills when the question under consideration requires knowledge of a kind that only an expert could possess. In this paper I accept this thesis and focus on the consequences it has for the public use of argumentation.

Gregor Gaszczyk, University of Groningen, Netherlands

Wednesday, June 29, 15:15-16:00

Helping others to understand. A normative account of the speech act of explanation

I propose a normative account of the speech act of explanation with understanding as its norm. The previous accounts of the speech act of explanation rely on the factive notion of understanding and maintain that proper explanations require knowledge. I argue, however, that such accounts are too demanding and do not reflect the everyday practice of explanation. Instead, the non-factive attitude of understanding is sufficient for a felicitous explanation. The proposed account puts the audience in the centre, i.e., an explanation is sensitive to the epistemic position of the audience. On the speech act level, explanations are distinct illocutionary acts.