

PRESENTATION OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE 13TH PRINCIPIA INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM: PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

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At the opening ceremony of the 13th International Principia Symposium on August 14, 2023, at around 13:45 BRT (GMT-3), the chair of the Organizing Committee, Prof. Jerzy Brzozowski, reminded the more than 200 people present at the EFI Auditorium on the UFSC campus in Florianópolis of a promise made at the end of the 12th Symposium, two years earlier, and also recorded in the Preface to the special issue of Principia that resulted from that event: that *there would be a 13th Principia International Symposium* (cf. Cunha & Brzozowski 2022). The context of such a commissive speech act may sound unfamiliar as those strange pandemic times recede into the distance. It was followed by an expressive act about our hope for an in-person event.

On that windy and sunny afternoon in the winter of 2023, we could already see that the promise had been kept and the hope fulfilled. In addition, the symposium was held on the university campus (instead of a hotel), making it easier for our students to participate and giving the Principia community a small taste of our exciting university life in the heart of the Island of Santa Catarina.¹

The 13th Principia International Symposium was dedicated to a philosophical discipline, *Philosophy of Language and Linguistics*. Although this was not unprecedented (remember the 11th Symposium, on *The Quest for Knowledge*), this time the theme allowed for a greater diversity of approaches than usual, which allowed our community to intersect with other approaches and traditions. This plurality also resulted in a large number of participants — this was one of the largest Principia Symposia, with nine parallel sessions running simultaneously at times.



Presenting the main theme, our keynote speakers were:

Amie L. Thomasson (Dartmouth College, USA), “Starting a Step Back: The Relevance of Systemic Functional Linguistics to Metaphysics”. In the talk, Thomasson presented how the field of systemic functional linguistics can help reframe some long-standing questions in metaphysics.

Anandi Hattiangadi (Stockholm University, Sweden), “The Normativity of Meaning and Content Revisited”. Hattiangadi presented an update on her book *Oughts and Thoughts* (2007), formulating a novel argument against *physicalism*, the view that all facts are either physical facts or fully grounded in the physical facts. Hattiangadi argues that, even if meaning is only weakly normative, that is sufficient to undermine physicalism.

Benjamin Davies (University of Oxford, UK), “Disability discrimination in emergencies: the return of Taurek”. Davies revisited an argument by John Taurek to the effect that, when deciding whom to rescue, we should choose at random. Davies then argues for a position advocated by disability rights activists, that instead of equalizing *survival chances*, we should aim at equalizing *selection chances*.

Eleonora Orlando (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina), “Fictional names, mental files, and declarative speech acts”. Orlando presented a reinterpretation — based on the idea that fictional names refer to mental files — of the classical distinction between fictive, parafictive, and metafictional uses of sentence containing fictional names. Orlando articulated this view with some remarks on the performativity of speech acts in and about fiction.

Ernesto Perini-Santos (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil), “Building the common ground: a new metasemantics for demonstratives”. In the talk, Perini-Santos suggested how the concept of building the common ground can shift the course in the metasemantics of demonstratives.

Marco Ruffino (Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brazil), “Austin and Kripke: Making Sense of Contingent A Priori Truths”. Ruffino presented material from his book *Contingent A Priori Truths* (2022), focusing on how scientific stipulations are illocutionary speech acts having the force of declarations.

Matthew Mandelkern (New York University, USA), “Ability, Chance, and Control”. Mandelkern analyzed the semantics of ability ascriptions of the form ‘S is able to p’, arguing against the view that ability requires control over the action in question, and for the view that ability ascriptions have an essentially conditional meaning.

Otávio Bueno (University of Miami, USA), “Referring to Nothing”. Bueno argued for the importance and the possibility of referring to the nonexistent. This should be

done, according to Bueno, not with the apparatus of free logics, but with ontologically neutral quantifiers instead. Contrary to previous similar approaches, however, Bueno maintains that nonexistent objects do in fact have properties.

Roberta Pires de Oliveira (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil), “Natural languages, Logic and the Mind/Brain: some thoughts”. Pires de Oliveira provided an overview of recent studies in the linguistics of some Native Brazilian languages, with some philosophical upshots about the relation between language, logic, and the mind. She argued that languages build a natural logic while they structure mental representations.

Sara L. Uckelman (Durham University, UK), “Fiction Writing as Philosophical Methodology”. In her talk, Uckelman defended the view that fiction writing, by sharing some key aspects with philosophical argumentation, can serve as a legitimate philosophical methodology. Uckelman encouraged the audience to attempt framing a philosophical problem through a piece of fiction.

We deem the event was extremely successful, especially as a showcase of recent developments in the Philosophy of Language and related topics.

As usual, during the symposium the journal’s Editorial Team released a Call for Papers, which was answered by 29 submissions. This surprisingly high number meant that the editorial process had to take a bit longer — *but that’s the kind of work we like to have!* In this issue we are publishing eight articles and we still have eight more under evaluation that, if accepted, may appear in future issues of the journal. Our Editorial Team has also selected seven submissions to become chapters in a book on logic, language and metaphysics to be released in the *Rumos da Epistemologia* collection — check our website: <https://nel.ufsc.br>.

For now, in the present issue, we have the following:

Amie L. Thomasson, “Should Ontology be Explanatory?”;

Peter J. Lewis, “A Dilemma for Relational Quantum Mechanics”;

Eduarda Calado Barbosa & Mariana Teodoro Fernandes, “Resistência Conversacional e as Variedades de Contradiscurso”;

André J. Abath, “Erotetic Ignorance Does Not Reduce To Factive Ignorance”;

Décio Krause, “The Underlying Logic is Mandatory also in Discussing the Philosophy of Quantum Physics”;

Sara L. Uckelman, “Fiction Writing as Philosophical Methodology”;

Wilson Mendonça & Julia Telles de Menezes, “Da Definição Tarskiana da Verdade à Teoria Davidsoniana do Significado e à Semântica Intensional: Uma Perspectiva Avaliativa”;

Otávio Bueno, “Referring to Nothing”.

While wishing you a productive reading, we would like to thank all the participants of the symposium, guests, contributors, audience, as well as the participants of the workshops and Anpof workgroups. To all those who submitted their articles in response to our Call for Papers: our deepest gratitude for your trust in *Principia* as a possible vehicle for your work.

Satisfied with the last symposium and all the animation it generated in our community, we are already issuing the call for the next one: the 14th Principia International Symposium will probably take place again on the UFSC campus and will have as its main theme **Formal Approaches to Philosophy of Science**. By choosing this topic, we invite our community to reflect on the potential, as well as the limitations, of formal methodologies in the philosophy of science. An extension of this theme is the reflection on the characteristics, potentialities and limitations of formal approaches in the analysis of natural languages and cognitive practices in general. We also encourage submissions dealing with historical discussions related to the use of formal methods in the philosophy of science. As usual, in addition to the main theme, contributions on any topic in epistemology and philosophy of science, broadly construed, including philosophy of language, philosophy of logic, analytic ontology, and more, will be certainly welcome. Please check our website (principia.ufsc.br) for more information.

See you in Floripa in 2025!

References

- Cunha, I. F. da; Brzozowski, J. A. 2022. Models and Modeling in the Sciences: Preface to the Special Issue of the 12th Principia International Symposium. *Principia* 26(1): 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.5007/1808-1711.2022.e88139>
- Hattiangadi, A. 2007. *Oughts and thoughts: rule-following and the normativity of content*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ruffino, M. 2022. *Contingent A Priori Truths: Metaphysics, Semantics, Epistemology and Pragmatics*. Synthese Library. Cham: Springer.

Notes

¹The last time a Principia Symposium was held on the UFSC campus was in 2011 (the 7th Symposium, on *The Philosophy of Nelson Goodman*). Both authors of the present text were graduate students at UFSC back then and presented their papers at the symposium.