

International Conference and Workshop

Oppression, Experience and Language

Wittgenstein and Epistemic Injustice

24-25 March 2022

Université Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne, Institut des Sciences
Juridique et Philosophique de la Sorbonne, Paris

Keynotes

Prof. Estelle Ferrarese (Université de Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens)

Prof. Rahel Jaeggi (Humboldt-Universität, Berlin)

Organized by Mickaëlle Provost (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris), Jasmin Trächtler (TU Dortmund), Sandra Laugier (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris), and Camille Braune (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris). In collaboration with the Bergen Network for Women in Philosophy (University of Bergen)

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Thursday, 24th March 2022

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| 09:15-09:30 | Coffee & Welcome |
| PANEL I: LANGUAGE AS EXPRESSION AND VOICE | |
| 09:30-10:15 | Luz Ascarate: <i>'Injustice épistémique' et 'formes de vie'. Une herméneutique critique et pragmatique de l'exclusion absolue</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| 10:20-11:05 | Zainab Sabra: <i>The Right to Meaning: Social Injustice as Illocutionary Distortion</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| 11:15-12:00 | Camille Braune: <i>Feminism and Gender in Iris Murdoch's Novels</i> |
| <i>Lunchbreak</i> | |
| PANEL II: RETHINKING MORAL PHILOSOPHY WITH WITTGENSTEIN | |
| 13:30-14:15 | Francesca Scapinello: <i>Changing the Ordinary Through Words: A Wittgensteinian Approach</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| 14:20-15:20 | Alicia García Álvarez: <i>'Epistemic Care' as a Feminist Paradigm for Epistemic (In)Justice</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| 15:30-16:15 | Nora Hämmäläinen: <i>A Liberatory Wittgenstein?</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| PANEL III: POLITICAL FORMS OF LIFE | |
| 16:20-17:20 | Estelle Ferrarese: <i>The Politics of the Deformed. Thinking a Politics of Forms of Life with Adorno</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| 17:30-18:30 | Workshop Session I with Estelle Ferrarese Discussion of Claire Vielhomme's paper |
| 19:30 | <i>Dinner</i> |

Friday, 25th March 2022

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| 09:45-10:00 | <i>Coffee & Welcome</i> |
| PANEL III: POLITICAL FORMS OF LIFE | |
| 10:00-11:00 | Rahel Jaeggi: <i>t.b.a.</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| 11:10-11:55 | Deborah Mühlebach: <i>Criticising Language – Strategies of Discursive Resistance in a Non-Ideal World</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| PANEL IV: SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY | |
| 12:00-12:45 | Isabel Gamero: <i>Mental Illness Diagnosis, Political Silencing and Epistemic Injustice</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| 14:15-15:00 | Camila Lobo: <i>The Problem of the New: Hermeneutical Justice, Reason and Affectivity</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| 15:05-15:55 | Jasmin Trächtler: <i>From Doubt to Despair – A Wittgensteinian Perspective On Gaslighting</i> |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| 16:15-17:15 | Workshop Session II with Rahel Jaeggi Discussion of Nikki Ernst's paper |
| <i>Break</i> | |
| 17:20-18:20 | Workshop Session II with Rahel Jaeggi Discussion of Fatma Hamdoun's paper |
| 19:30 | <i>Apéritif</i> |

ABSTRACTS

LUZ ASCARATE

L'Université de France Comté, Besançon

'Injustice épistémique' et 'formes de vie'. Une herméneutique critique et pragmatique de l'exclusion absolue

[*'Epistemic Injustice' and 'Forms of Life' – A Critical and Pragmatic Hermeneutic of Absolute Exclusion*] La catégorie de l'exclusion est une catégorie fondamentale pour la théorie critique de la société. Cependant, si nous concevons toute théorie comme constituée sur la base d'informations dont l'accessibilité est médiée par des relations de pouvoir qui limitent nos puissances cognitives, nous pouvons supposer qu'il existe des exclus qui, par principe, ne peuvent pas être identifiés. Nous les nommons « les exclus absolus ». La notion d'*exclusion absolue* est donc à la fois une fiction théorique (que nous construisons sur la base d'une critique immanente des théories sociales) et un outil qui nous permet d'identifier les limites de toute théorie de l'exclusion. L'exclusion absolue est un concept proche de celui d'« injustice herméneutique » de Miranda Fricker (2007). Selon ce concept, un aspect de l'expérience sociale de l'exclu ne peut pas être compris en raison des ressources partagées dans le cadre de l'interprétation sociale constituée. À l'opposé de ce concept, Miranda Fricker fait référence à une vertu herméneutique, intellectuelle et éthique qui permet aux expériences exclues d'être entendues, ce qui atténue les effets de l'injustice herméneutique. En nous appuyant sur cette vertu, nous souhaitons ici fonder une herméneutique critique de l'exclusion

absolue. Mais sa mise en œuvre nécessite une vision pragmatique. À cette fin, nous analyserons la réinterprétation de Rahel Jaeggi (2013) de la notion wittgensteinienne de *formes de vie*. Nous établirons dans quel sens la proposition pragmatique de R. Jaeggi, qui comprend les formes de vie comme des ressources de résolution de problèmes, constitue une véritable contribution au problème de l'exclusion absolue. Nous défendrons ainsi que cette extension du concept wittgensteinien de formes de vie permet de concevoir une herméneutique critique capable de rendre explicites certaines formes d'exclusion pour lesquelles on ne dispose pas de la structure cognitive susceptible de les exprimer (Fricker, 2007).

CAMILLE BRAUNE

Institut des Sciences Juridique et
Philosophique de la Sorbonne, Paris

Feminism and Gender in Iris Murdoch's novels

Between biting satire and tragicomic situations, Iris Murdoch's fiction lead us into psychological arcana of human life, a human comedy where the author is pleased to portray the apparent chaos of life to better reveal us the underlying truth. Steeped of a sensual and oneirically atmosphere, those novels are all underpinned by a deep reflection on the Good, Bad, God, Love and death, and ask Iris Murdoch's dearest question of the invention of a new ethics in a world ruled over the complexity of our inner life and the anxious research of our own voice.

As Tammy Grimshaw expounded it in his 1995's book *Sexuality, Gender and Power in Iris Murdoch's Fiction*, if Iris Murdoch has never really been classified as a feminist writer, her fiction reveals that she was troubled with the impact social forces had upon individuals who might be socially marginalized because of their genders or sexualities, namely those who display "nonnormative" gender or sexual behaviors. As she scrambled the lines, forbidding herself to imprison her characters within a gender traditional frame of reference, she challenged social prejudices about gender and sexuality by asserting that the community's views on the "nonnormative" were unloving and morally unjust. If the figure of the repressed homosexual appears as a constant shadow in Murdoch's novels, we would like to shed light upon all the complexity of this character's inner life, as restrained (Bellamy James in *The Green Knight*), and reprimanded, seen by others as the odd and most of the time delinquent (Francis Marloe in *The Black Prince*), perceived like the black spider lurking in the corner (Nigel in *Bruno's Dream*).

Ultimately, we would like to stand by that Iris Murdoch was a feminist. When she writes in 1973, through Rachel's character (*The Black Prince*) : "*To sleep! With my mind in this state! He sent me to hell. He took my whole life. He ruined the world for me. I am as smart as him. He frustrated me with everything getting in the way of everything. I cannot work, I cannot think, I cannot be, because of him*". Iris Murdoch is putting in scene, through her own literary method (that it will be to study), a strong plea for women conditions (that it will be to reveal). In her time, Iris Murdoch sensed so already what Miranda Fricker will think as the concept of "Epistemic Injustice" (2007).

ESTELLE FERRARESE

Picardie-Jules-Verne Université, Amies

The politics of the deformed. Thinking a politics of forms of life with Adorno

This paper considers the politics of forms of life not through the prism of "life", as has been done in the emerging literature on this theme, but through that of "form". Many contemporary theories and practices make politics a matter of creating a new form of life; it is assumed that it is *by living* (differently) that we transform the world. Two logics can be distinguished. Either one insists on the proper limits that a prolific mass gives itself, on the contours taking a flow; to give a form to one's life is then a matter of contention, of discipline. Or one conceives a politics that coincides with life insofar as it struggles with any external form. It is then the figure of a politics of exuberance or of the formlessness that appears, and the "life" constituted in politics is here a living which escapes all the successive or contemporary forms in which it is molded. The first approach takes the risk to flatten the politics on the ethics, while the second conceals a fascination for an intense consumption that dulls as much the political point of the gesture.

We then defend the idea that Adorno's thought offers the elements of a politics of the *deformed* that takes seriously both form and life without encountering this double pitfall. He conceives form as materializing in a deviation from, against, what existed or was expected. And he gives to the form (and not to life) the role to maintain an indetermination in the movement of transformation of the world, thinking a form that doesn't forget that it is form, that it comes

from a movement that could have been different.

ISABEL G. GAMERO
Complutense University of Madrid

Mental illness diagnosis, political silencing and epistemic injustice

In *On Certainty* Wittgenstein wrote that “where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another, then each man declares the other a fool [*Narr*] and heretic” (OC:611), stating that great discrepancies among men might entail mutual accusations of madness. Delving into this idea, Foucault explained diagnosis of madness as one of the exclusion procedures of the know-power regimes, addressed to silence critic voices. Madmen were those “whose discourse cannot have the same currency as others. His words may be considered null and void, having neither truth nor importance, worthless as evidence in law” (1981:54). Recent developments in epistemic justice (Scrutton, 2017), have shown the loss of credibility of those diagnosed with mental illness. However, she does not consider the cases in which this kind of diagnosis is a way of discrediting oppositional voices in certain political regimes, as it happened, for example, in the USSR (vid. Bloch & Reddaway, 2019).

My aim is to connect these elements following the next questions:

- To what extent is diagnosis of mental disorder just a medical diagnosis, or are there socio-political factors involved in it? Is it possible to have a clear understanding about

mental illness without considering these factors?

- Is epistemic justice an adequate frame to analyse those cases? Fricker would answer negatively to this question, as she maintains that testimonial injustice differs from deliberate manipulation of others’ judgements of credibility (2017:55). In this case, which frame is more adequate to understand and avoid this kind of injustice?

- Which mechanisms can be enabled to hear those silenced voices? As a tentative answer, I will analyse letters written by women who were diagnosed as mad and incarcerated in Madrid, during the Francoist period (Villasante et al., 2018).

ALICIA GARCÍA ÁLVAREZ
University of Oviedo

‘Epistemic care’ as a feminist paradigm for epistemic (in)justice

In the past decades, feminist epistemology and feminist moral and political theory have illuminatingly criticised and constructed alternative forms of rethinking autonomy, individual subjectivity, theoretical and practical knowledge, and many other central concepts of hegemonic and male-dominated philosophy. The present proposal attempts to contribute to feminist normative interests by drawing on and putting into conversation two particular theories: Miranda Fricker’s theory of epistemic injustice (2007) and feminist ethics of care.

Theory of epistemic injustice has served feminist interests by revealing certain forms

of wrongdoing that specifically affect women's status as legitimate epistemic agents, rational thinkers, and authoritative speakers. On the other hand, feminist ethicists of care (Seyla Benhabib, 1987) have enriched our understanding of individual moral subjects by contesting traditionally masculine paradigms of 'abstract rational thinking' with 'historically female' conditions, such as vulnerability, emotion, or particularity.

Despite its mutual interesting overlaps, only one author, Vindra Dalmiya (2002, 2016), has so far proposed to articulate both theories together. In this paper, I propose to continue Dalmiya's proposal by relating it with contemporary discussions of epistemic (in)justice more particularly. In particular, I propose to articulate a 'care-based' model for epistemology that, unlike Dalmiya's, focuses *especially* on the role that caring aspects and attitudes such as emotion, responsibility, vulnerability, or commitment can play in enwidening our understanding of epistemic subjectivity and normativity. I develop the concepts of 'epistemic care' and the knower 'as a concrete other' and propose the former as a positive alternative to Fricker and others' solutions for epistemic injustice.

Putting care at the center of epistemic (in)justice could not only reveal new forms in which we could prevent and respond to daily forms of wrong-going which especially affect women. It is also essentially relevant to the feminist project of including perspectives, forms of thinking, experiences, and subjectivities which have been traditionally excluded in mainstream culture, while also enriching and critically informing our contemporary understandings of individual epistemic identity and its connections to autonomy, dignity, and justice.

NORA HÄMÄLÄINEN
University of Pardubice

A Liberatory Wittgenstein?

Current growing interest in the political implications of Wittgenstein's work mobilizes old divisions within scholarship on (and applications of) his work in novel ways. On the one hand he offers tools for inquiring our situatedness within historically shaped forms of life, while on the other hand he inspires to "therapeutic" models for overcoming aspects of our situatedness. These gestures may well constitute dimensions of a coherent account but stand in some cases at odds in ways that warrant closer scrutiny. In this paper I address this complex by discussing Rupert Reads recent step from a therapeutic to a "liberatory" (and thus supposedly more political) reading of Wittgenstein's philosophy, reviewing the latter critically in terms of both exegetical issues and political potential.

CAMILA LOBO
Universidade NOVA de Lisboa

The Problem of the New: Hermeneutical Justice, Reason and Affectivity

The notion of "hermeneutical injustice" was originally developed by Miranda Fricker (2007) to account for a structural form of epistemic injustice that occurs when certain gaps in our collective hermeneutical resources prevent marginalized subjects from understanding or communicating their social experiences. Although the notion has

been quickly and justly incorporated into the jargon of social epistemology, critics have identified several limitations in Fricker's original account of hermeneutical injustice. In this article, I follow Alice Crary in arguing that Fricker's reliance on a neutral conception of reason cannot account for what it takes of an agent to overcome a case of hermeneutical injustice. To that effect, I trace a distinction between conceptual and lexical resources that reveals how a subject might not have access to the lexical tools that would allow her to publicly communicate her experience while retaining the capacity to conceptualize it. This notion of conceptualization, however, does not have a place in Fricker's original account, in which it is suggested that the process of naming alone is able to fill in the gap that obscured a certain social experience from collective understanding. I go on to identify this difficulty with that which Linda Zerilli, following Hannah Arendt, has called "the problem of the new" in political philosophy and suggest that a similar explanatory model must guide our efforts to bring about hermeneutical justice. Finally, I argue that opening up the realm of rationality to accommodate affective responses is not only required to understand and successfully overcome cases of hermeneutical injustice, as it further authorizes a reevaluation of marginalized subjects' agency under ideological systems. To illustrate this point, I go back to the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein to look for a conception of reason that might adequately guide our efforts to create hermeneutical justice.

DEBORAH MÜHLEBACH
Freie Universität Berlin

Criticising Language – Strategies of Discursive Resistance in a Non-Ideal World

Our everyday practices involve countless instances of morally and politically problematic language use. Since feminist, anti-racist and other social movements keep reminding us of the importance of language for their struggles it is worth asking what political language critique is and should be. An answer depends on how different forms of morally and politically problematic language use work.

Drawing on two ideas from the philosophical literature, I aim to explore the various challenges we face regarding political language critique. First, as Ludwig Wittgenstein (PI) has pointed out, and others such as Robert Brandom have set out to further explain, words get their meaning through social practices. If we want to understand their meaning and explore possible ways of criticising their use, we must examine what function they have in these practices. Second, as the work of feminist and critical race philosophers shows, simply turning to politically relevant linguistic issues without theorising their political aspects is futile. In order to engage in what has been called non-ideal theorising, we need to pay attention to how power relations and (social) categories shape the morally and politically discursive practices as well as the possibilities of critique thereof.

By considering these two ideas, I differentiate between a variety of strategies of discursive resistance. These range from direct blocking of problematic moves in a linguistic practice to engaging in ideology critique

that tackles hermeneutic (Fricker 2007) and categorical injustices (Ásta 2019) and epistemic oppression (Dotson 2014), or even challenging economic inequalities. Sensible political language critique, so I shall argue, requires us to attentively choose between these different strategies in each situation, often combine them, and, consequently, neither under- nor overestimate the linguistic dimension of our social practices.

ZAINAB SABRA
University of Southampton

The right to meaning: Social injustice as Illocutionary Distortion

Human rights are the rights that we have simply in virtue of being a human being. The reason behind the presence of such rights differ from one theory to another, it departed from a religious ascription to our human nature in scholastic teachings and moved towards a more secular version. In my paper i am focusing on the account offered by James Griffin which ground our rights to the fact that we have normative agency. In virtue of our normative agency marked by our autonomy, liberty and minimum provision, i argue that we can derive the ‘right to meaning’. By reference to J. L. Austin’s account of language, I define the right that each person has to the meaning of their utterance to be the right towards a proper uptake of the speaker’s speech act. Although i will be denoting certain valid excuses where the uptake of the speaker is distorted in exceptional cases, I will focus on the crucial reason for why someone might lose control over their uptake. The reason

that I elaborate on is that their loss of control over their uptake is due to the fact that they belong to a disadvantaged group in the society. I argue that discursive injustice , which marks the inability of the speaker to produce a speech act that they are entitled to, is a crucial form of social injustice. I refer to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s account of forms of life to explain the phenomena of discursive injustice introduced by Quill Kukla in *Performative force, Convention and Discursive injustice*. I end my paper by focusing on illocutionary silencing and illocutionary distortion as crucial patterns of social injustice.

FRANCESCA SCAPINELLO
University of Bergen

Changing the ordinary through words: a Wittgensteinian approach

Relegated to a dimension of public and political voicelessness, women – together with the larger group of marginalized subjectivities – have been subjected to *hermeneutical injustice*, an epistemic dimension “wherein someone has a significant area of their social experience obscured from understanding owing to prejudicial flaws in shared resources for social interpretation” (Fricker, 2009). Aware of the connection between women’s lived experiences as silenced subjects and the correspondent lack of political freedom, feminist movements have developed an emancipatory body of theories and practices that allows political subjectification through the rethinking of the boundaries of what is personal and what is political. Another aspect that undergoes feminist

revisions is the dimension of the ordinary, understood, as Cavell does, as “our common world of background” that constitutes the possibility for sense. However essential, what is ordinary can also represent a threat for marginalized subjectivities, whose non-normed existences are excluded from, or not recognized in, such reality: the ordinary can be a space of oppression if not reformed. The feminist groups of self-awareness created during the Sixties and Seventies in North America and Europe constitute a striking example of how collective elaboration has the tools to challenge what we ordinarily do and how we ordinarily speak, provided that these dimensions are discriminatory of subjectivities that have not been historically considered relevant.

In this ambivalent nature of the ordinary, then, the investigation on the possibility for change within linguistic and grammatical structures becomes an essential activity to reconfigure the relation between the personal and the political. Through the political experiences of second-wave Italian feminists, this talk wants to argue for the possibility for a linguistic and conceptual revision of the ordinary conducted by marginalized subjectivities when considered together with later-Wittgenstein’s distinction between public and private language, the refusal of the latter, the call for a linguistic community, the space for change within language games and the metaphilosophy he purports.

JASMIN TRÄCHTLER

Technical University Dortmund

From Doubt to Despair – A Wittgensteinian Perspective on Gaslighting

‘Gaslighting’ describes a form of manipulation that induces doubt in someone’s perceptions, experiences, understanding of events or conception of reality in general. But what kind of doubt is it? How do ‘ordinary’ epistemic doubts differ from those doubts that can lead to despair and the feeling of losing one’s mind?

The phenomenon of ‘gaslighting’ has been attracting public attention for some time and has recently found its way into philosophical reflections that address moral, sexist and epistemic aspects of gaslighting. Little has been said, however, about the nature of gaslighting-induced doubts themselves, how they differ from ordinary, even ‘reasonable’ epistemic (self-) doubts and how it can come to someone doubting their own perception and conception of reality in the first place.

The aim of this paper is to shed some light on these aspects by drawing on some of Wittgenstein’s remarks on doubt, published mainly in *On Certainty*. To this end, I will first outline the phenomenon of gaslighting as an epistemic injustice before presenting Wittgenstein’s reflections on doubt(ing). These will then be applied to the phenomenon of gaslighting, with a more specific focus on the evocation of such fundamental self-doubt in successful gaslighting, again drawing on some of Wittgenstein’s remarks.