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"Now", forcing and causality

We discuss data with “now” in sentence-initial position, optionally taking a “that”-clause argument (Carter & Altshuler 2017), including sentences about the future (“will” and futurates) and about the past. We show that the meaning conveyed by these sentences differs from the meaning of otherwise identical sentences in which “now” is a regular time adverb; their meaning, we argue, points to a kind of modal reading to ground which we propose a general notion of *forcing* (Spolaore & Del Prete 2019). The relation between forcing and causality will be discussed, along with its connections to discourse interpretation.