The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Conscious Perception



A talk by

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Some metaphysical disjunctivists about conscious perceptual experience argue that their position has attractive, anti-sceptical, epistemological consequences. Perceiving a particular round red ball is a matter of being in a conscious condition, which serves as the ground for judgement that that thing is round and red, that is inconsistent with the falsity of that judgement. For it consists in a relation of acquaintance with that very thing and its shape and colour. Hence the ground for judgement suffices for its truth in a way that contributes to understanding the status of the judgement as knowledgeable. Here I explore an analogous way in which it might be argued that the metaphysics of conscious perception may have epistemological benefits. This concerns, not the fact that such experience consists in the relational presentation of particular worldly objects and their perceptible properties, but the fact that it consists in their presentation from a particular point of view. This is what enables perception of those particular worldly things, rather than any others, and makes sense of their continued existence unperceived. For it may subsequently vary independently of the existence and nature of what is presented on any specific occasion.

