

# Workshop The Role and Reality of Consciousness

## ABSTRACTS

### *Consciousness and Content*

**David Bourget**, University of Western Ontario

Frege's well-known argument for Fregean senses posits senses to account for the cognitive significance of certain true identity statements, for example "Hesperus is Phosphorus". This paper begins with the observation that this argument faces a dilemma. Cognitive significance has idealized and non-idealized definitions. Roughly, it can be defined either as being a posteriori or as being actually non-obvious to certain thinkers. The dilemma is that Frege's argument fails on non-idealized definitions (as Fodor and others have pointed out) and is circular on idealized definitions (a new claim I defend). After sketching this dilemma, I suggest an alternative way of introducing and defending the existence of Fregean senses: introspection. I suggest that introspection provides considerable evidence for a consciousness-centric conception of a layer of content akin to Fregean sense.

### *The Meta-Problem, the Meta-Question, and the Hard Meta-Problem.*

**Keith Frankish**, University of Sheffield

The meta-problem of consciousness is the problem of explaining our phenomenal intuitions -- our dispositions to make reports and judgements about phenomenal consciousness (Chalmers, 2018). But the meta-problem prompts the meta-question: Is it the only problem consciousness poses? If we could explain all our phenomenal intuitions in topic-neutral terms, would anything remain to be explained? Realists say yes, illusionists no. In this paper I defend the illusionist answer. While it may seem obvious that there is something further to be explained -- consciousness itself -- this seemingly innocuous claim immediately raises a further problem -- the hard meta-problem. What could justify our continued confidence in the existence of consciousness once all our intuitions about it have been explained away? The answer would involve heavy-duty metaphysical theorizing, probably including a commitment either to substance dualism or to the existence of a mysterious intrinsic subjectivity. A far less extravagant option is to endorse the illusionist response and conclude that the meta-problem is not a meta-problem at all but the problem of consciousness.

## *The Phenomenal Basis of Truth and Reference*

**Angela Mendelovici**, University of Western Ontario

According to the *phenomenal intentionality theory*, intentionality is ultimately grounded in phenomenal consciousness. Many versions of this view take intentionality to be a non-relational feature of the mind. Such views face a challenge in accommodating truth and reference, which arguably require a special kind of connection to things in the world. This talk considers various ways of addressing this challenge, ultimately arguing for what I will call a "voluntaristic" theory of truth and reference, one on which our referents, truth-makers, or conditions of truth and reference are up to us.

## *Consciousness and Phenomenal Space*

**Maria Venieri**, University of Crete

What are we conscious of in the case of spatial properties such as shape, size or distances between objects and the observer? In the debate on the nature of phenomenal properties and their place in the physical world spatial features of perceptual experience are mostly thought to be mind independent properties of physical objects and so, unlike colour or sounds, do not seem to pose a problem for physicalism. In this presentation, using among others thought experiments and empirical findings, I shall defend an internalist position concerning spatial phenomenal properties. According to this position in perceptual experience we are conscious of spatial properties, which are mind dependent and form aspects of the experience itself. I shall then point towards some consequences that this conception of phenomenal properties has regarding their nature and the existence of a phenomenal space, which is different from the physical one.