

Heidegger's unrestricted normative conceptualism. The case of colour-perception.

Abstract

In this paper, I will present a general case about what I call Heidegger's unrestrictive normative conceptualism (UNC). Against a dominant trend in the literature, I hold that Heidegger's description of experience does not privilege some phenomena (say tools or meanings) vis-à-vis others (things, colours and the like) but a way of understanding experience in general (as organized in terms of a whole of meaningful relations where each single thing is defined by its normative import for the whole) vis-à-vis a way of understanding it in terms of atomic items and stratified properties. I will call Heidegger's conception of experience a normative conceptual one (see Golob 2014). This take is a general one about what are the conditions under which we experience the world and hence it is to be taken as not being restricted to a certain realm of phenomena (say tools, cultural practices or what have you). But if so, then a case should be made about how UNC can accommodate those phenomena that usually fall beyond the scope of conceptualism such as instincts, emotions and simple sensory experiences such as colour perception.

In order to provide support for my more general claim concerning Heidegger's account of experience, I will explore the case of colour perception. In particular, I will claim

1. that Heidegger's description of *Umsicht*, i.e. the way of coping with the world as a meaningful whole, is not limited to the typical forms of practical coping he explicitly mentions but can be extended to the analysis of basic cases such as colour-perception.
2. that such analyses provides some new and interesting insights into what perceiving colours means (some surprising points of contact with Sellars' analysis in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* may be drawn here).
3. that colours provide a prime example of Heidegger's normative conceptual conception of experience.
4. that some Heidegger-inspired approaches to the topic such as Kelly's are misguided. Kelly (2001) claimed that colour perception is a very good candidate to deny conceptualism, i.e the thesis that contents of experience involve a form of articulation that is at least similar to the one expressed in judgment. I will claim, on the contrary, that colour perception is an excellent candidate to show in which sense conceptualism is true, precisely by analysing Kelly's examples of colour sorting.

Bio

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