

Research Profile:

Tom Cumming

PhD in Philosophy

Phenomenology and Value in the McDowell-Dreyfus Debate

My research responds to a debate between Hubert Dreyfus and John McDowell that takes place between 2005 and 2013. The debate concerns the role of *concepts* in human perceptual experience. Dreyfus draws on phenomenological thinkers such as Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty to argue that concepts play no role in our unreflective skilled engagement with the world. McDowell, motivated by crucial epistemological and metaphysical considerations, insists that concepts must play a pervasive role in our perceptual and active engagement with the world.

I argue that the distinctive character of Dreyfus's phenomenological analyses of unreflective action can nonetheless be accommodated by a conceptualist account of perceptual experience and action. Now, a significant concern of my thesis is the role that phenomenology can continue to play in philosophical accounts of perceptual experience *if* that role is exhausted by a set of arguments for non-conceptualism. In the closing stages of my thesis, I argue that Dreyfus's presentation of phenomenology in the debate misses the opportunity to pursue an underlying philosophical point about the role of value in intentional perceptual experience.

Supervisors:

Patrick O'Connor, NTU

Neil Turnbull, NTU

Jerome Carroll, UoN

Publications:

2017:

- Book Review: *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, M. Heidegger - *Imago*, 5:8

Scholarly / Public Engagement Activities:

- Presentation: Research Overview, Nottingham Trent University, February 22nd, 2018
- Paper: "Responding to the McDowell-Dreyfus Debate: Wittgenstein on Perception", *Forum Scientiarum* Winter School, University of Tubingen, February 22nd, 2017
- Paper: "Sellars on Empiricism and Intentionality", University of Nottingham's Critical Theory Workshop, "Empiricisms", June 8th, 2016

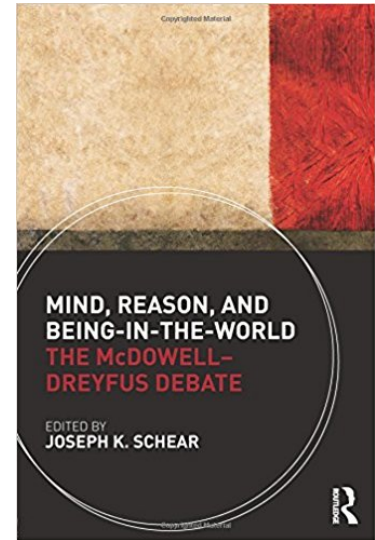
Education:

- University of Sussex, MA Literature and Philosophy, Distinction
- Nottingham Trent University, BA Philosophy with English, 1st Class Honours

Awards/Scholarships:

- AHRC Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership Scholarship, 2015 - 2018
- Chancellor's Masters Scholarship, University of Sussex, 2013
- NTU Philosophy Prize, 2012

Other Research Interests:



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- Aesthetics / Philosophy of Art