

In a series of recent exchanges, Hubert Dreyfus and John McDowell have clashed over questions regarding the nature of practical intelligence exercised in every-day skills. Their debate has centered on the degree to which conceptual understanding enters into the forms of perception and action involved in the execution of such skills. The workshop will explore various issues raised by their exchange.

These issues are systematic and exegetical. The systematic questions have to do with, on the one hand, the relation between sensibility and understanding in perception, and, on the other hand, the relation between practical understanding and bodily movement. Dreyfus holds that practical coping, at the most fundamental level, is a non-conceptual affair and as such a precondition of higher-level conceptual cognition. He accuses McDowell of falling into the *Myth of the Mental*—the myth of the self-sufficiency of the conceptual upper floors of the edifice of knowledge. McDowell, conversely, charges Dreyfus with falling prey to the *Myth of the Disembodied Intellect*. The real source of trouble in this area of philosophy, McDowell holds, is a form of thought that makes it look as if affirming the pervasiveness of conceptual rationality will not cohere with giving proper weight to the bodily character of our lives. Exegetically, contested figures on the topics under dispute include Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Wittgenstein. Differences in philosophical view in this dispute tend to parallel differences in the understandings of these figures. As the workshop explores the aforementioned systematic questions, the discussion will often take the form of a debate over the true teaching of the aforementioned authors.

The format of the workshop will be the following: the papers will be distributed in advance. No papers will be presented at the workshop. The workshop sessions will be devoted entirely to a discussion of each of the papers, with the author of each paper responding to questions and objections. Participants are required to register with Karin Sturm ([karin.sturm@unibas.ch](mailto:karin.sturm@unibas.ch)), from whom they will receive the papers to be discussed.

We regret not to be able to provide hotel reservations, but there are many affordable hotels in Berlin. Unfortunately, we are also unable to pay for meals, but will provide information about lunch facilities in the neighborhood of the workshop venue.

# The nature of practical intelligence

Workshop to be held at  
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin  
May 28 – 30, 2009

Co-sponsored by the  
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin,  
SNF-Project *Perception, Thought,  
and Knowledge*, and  
Humboldt TransCoop-Project  
*From transcendental logic  
to the analysis of practice.*

# Schedule of the Workshop

## Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>

09:30 - 10:00

Introduction to the Workshop

10:00 - 12:00

Presenter: Hubert Dreyfus (UC Berkeley)

Chair: Joseph Schear (Oxford University)

Reading: "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental"  
and related texts

12:30 - 13:30

*Lunch break*

13:45 - 15:45

Presenter: John McDowell (University of Pittsburgh)

Chair: Anton Ford (University of Chicago)

Reading: "What Myth?" and related texts

15:45 - 16:00

*Coffee break*

16:00 - 18:00

Presenter: Sean Kelly (Harvard University)

Chair: Charles Taylor (McGill University)

Reading: "Seeing Things in Merleau-Ponty"

18:00 - 18:30

*Cocktail Reception*

18:30

*Dinner*

## Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>

10:00 - 12:00

Presenter: Andrea Kern (BTU Cottbus)

Chair: Matthias Haase (Universität Basel)

Reading: "The Riddle of Rationalism"

12:30 - 13:30

*Lunch break*

14:00 - 16:00

Presenter: Matthew Boyle (Harvard University)

Chair: Wolfram Gobsch (Universität Basel)

Reading: "Tack-on Theories of Rationality: A Critique"

16:00 - 16:30

*Coffee break*

16:30 - 18:30

Presenter: Sebastian Rödl (Universität Basel)

Chair: Thomas Land (Universität Basel)

Reading: "Life and Consciousness"

19:30

*Dinner*

## Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup>

10:00 - 12:00

Presenter: Robert Pippin (University of Chicago)

Chair: Christoph König (Universität  
Osnabrück, Wissenschaftskolleg zu  
Berlin)

Reading: "What is 'Conceptual Activity'?"

12:30 - 13:30

*Lunch break*

14:00 - 16:00

Presenter: Alva Noë (UC Berkeley)

Chair: Dieter Thomä (Universität St. Gallen)

Reading: "On Over-Intellectualizing the Intellect"

16:00 - 16:30

*Coffee break*

16:30 - 18:30

Final Discussion

Presenter: Pirmin Stekeler (Universität Leipzig)&  
James Conant (University of Chicago,  
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin)

Chair: Michel Chaouli (Indiana University,  
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin)

Reading: "Die soziale Logik der Anschauung"

19:30

*Dinner*