Title: Realism and Rationality

What is the connection between the nature of thinking, our metaphysical picture of reality, and our theory of experience? The Phd dissertation “Realism and Rationality” investigates the interrelations between these three philosophical issues. The dissertation takes its outset in Frege’s characterizations of thinking, as well as in Dummett’s argument for why thinkers such as us could never conceive of a world that is radically independent of our consciousness. However, as our metaphysical enquires concern precisely the world of our thoughts, hopes, and dreams this means that an investigation of the structure of our thinking can deliver answers to our metaphysical questions. The goal of the dissertation is to defend a realist picture of the world as independent of our consciousness. The dissertation is structured around a presentation of those considerations that led Dummett to doubt such a realist worldview. He claims that if we wish to conserve a picture of thinking as a rational endeavor, then our thoughts cannot refer to mind-independent states of affairs. The goal of the dissertation is to present this Dummettian argument in its strongest possible form, so as to consider the possibility of realism. It is at this stage that a discussion of the nature of experience becomes of relevance. Through the philosophical works of Gareth Evans and John Campbell, it will be argued that the justificatory potential of experience is sufficient to support a picture of thinking as rational in combination with a realist worldview.