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Phenomenology and the Pittsburgh Neo-
Hegelians*

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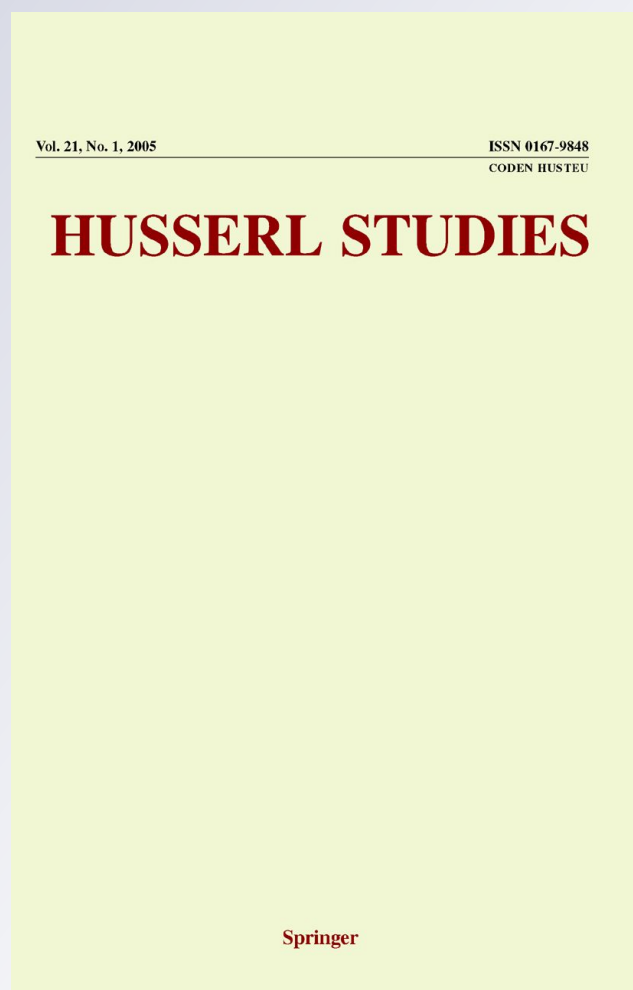
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Michael D. Barber: The Intentional Spectrum and Intersubjectivity: Phenomenology and the Pittsburgh Neo-Hegelians

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In this ambitious monograph Michael Barber uses insights from phenomenology in general, and Husserl and Levinas in particular, to mediate the ongoing debate between John McDowell and Robert Brandom that began in 1997. He wishes to consider their work in relation to each other and to show how phenomenology can illuminate and supplement their insights concerning perception, intersubjectivity and philosophical responsibility. In this three-way dialogue on a variety of issues, the phenomenological approach can show that the finely grained arguments of McDowell and Brandom emerge from an often implicit background reflecting broader philosophical values, strategies and commitments. For its part, phenomenology can learn from them about the usefulness of its constitutive methodology, the breadth of the intentional spectrum it encompasses, and the value of the ethical approach to intersubjectivity developed under its auspices (pp. xv–xvi). It is assumed that that we cannot accept the idea that developed perceptual awareness contains a non-conceptual given and that, therefore, phenomenology is not committed to this position, though it has much to say about the non-conceptual and notionally separable moments in such awareness.

Barber begins by running through the opposing arguments of the debate, focusing on inferentialism, representationalism and intelligible empirical content. According to Brandom, one cannot make a representational reference to the world apart from an inferential network of anticipated and interrelated linguistic terms and propositions, so that inferentialism precedes representationalism. Under pressure from McDowell, however, he admits that one can start with both representationism and inferentialism, whilst contending that McDowell wrongly assimilates a strong inferentialism that is prior in explanatory terms to a hyper-inferentialism or linguistic idealism that would collapse experience into an inferential chain. To ensure that language is appropriately linked to the world, Brandom posits the

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“scorekeeper” model of discursive practice. A second person is needed to take the critical and normative stance of assessing whether perceptual statements by an observer and reporter are justified, whether he or she is entitled to the observational authority claimed in these statements. Barber’s exposition of these ideas is sure-footed in the main, though it would help if the idea of an “anaphoric chain” were explicated more extensively (pp. 2–5, 261 n. 18, 262 n. 27).

According to McDowell and Barber, Brandom’s attendant causal account of perceptual stimuli thins out the standpoint of the first-person perceiver, the very standpoint that he has to admit to prevent an infinite regress of scorekeepers checking scorekeepers. Brandom’s explanations of perceptual activity leave out our intentional relationship with the world and would not suffice even for animal perception, since he only admits external stimuli causing constant and hence reliable differential responses. We are left with a scientific and “sideways-on” view of a world of inferentially articulated empirical claims working over these responses, even if we accept that human beings must be able to follow up on the inferential consequences of concepts (pp. 12–18). Though Brandom replies that McDowell is only interested in a single mind confronting an alien reality, the latter argues that we must admit the “head-on” perspective of the perceiver to make room for intelligible empirical content. Conceptual capacities are drawn on in receptivity, so our intuitions are constrained by the already conceptualised objects that they deliver. Perceivers engage rationally with commonsense objects, relying on concepts inherited from their communities and functioning as part of their second nature in Aristotle’s sense. It then takes no voluntary or deliberative work for objects to appear as conceptualised. Barber adds that the way seems to be left open for a phenomenological elaboration of this viewpoint, the execution of which is left for a subsequent chapter (pp. 30–33).

Barber also considers sympathetically McDowell’s defence of realism through his disjunctivist account of perception. The sceptic arguing from illusion can claim that deceptive appearances are indistinguishable from veridical perceptions because they are the same phenomenologically. On this view, the experiential intake or mere appearance is the “highest common factor” available in both cases. But McDowell argues that the sceptic is wrong to generalise from cases in which there is such a factor and conclude that it exhausts the epistemological significance of all nondeceptive experiences. For the disjunctivist, the non-deceptive case is not ordinarily a mere appearance falling short of the fact itself. Appearances do not have to be conceived generally as intervening between the experiencing subject and world; the sceptical problem arises from the sort of explanatory theorizing that Wittgenstein eschewed (pp. 45–53).

Barber here introduces A. D. Smith as a Husserlian direct realist who is sensitive to the difficulties presented by the argument from illusion, whilst agreeing that the claim that we are only immediately aware of sense data is a theoretical presupposition. In his response, Smith provides a phenomenology in which objects grasped as really there are located in a three dimensional spatiality, in which their perspectival availability presupposes the ability of the perceiver to move, and in which they check our bodily movements through their resistance. These dimensions form the non-conceptual dimensions to perceptual consciousness, and if the

phenomenological approach cannot prove transcendence, it can nevertheless persuasively block arguments denying it, defending common sense like the disjunctivist. Smith argues further that perception gives cognitive access to entities in the world, and that we can register their features even when we lack concepts to classify them, though he does not address the ensuing problem of the intelligibility of empirical contents (pp. 53–61).

Several arguments have been advanced recently for non-conceptual contents. One is that the distinction between signitive intending and intuitive fulfilment cannot be properly drawn without it. Barber does not agree. The presence of such intuitive contents does not imply that they are bare givens apart from conceptualisation (pp. 64–71). A second argument is that perceptual discrimination exceeds the capacity of concepts to keep up with it. But for McDowell we can distinguish a shade never seen before from others by way of the unexpressed concept “that shade.” By extending the notion of concept to include perceptual demonstratives, he undercuts the argument that we can have a perceptual hold on something for whose appropriate concept we must forage. Yet Husserl would not always have concurred. In *Logical Investigations*, a demonstrative can succeed a straightforward percept (Hua XIX/2, pp. 553–556; 2001b, pp. 197–199), though in his mature view the developed consciousness can hardly encounter unfamiliar objects that are not apprehended within a logical structure as there for explication (Hua XXXI, pp. 23–24; 2001a, p. 296).

This point aside, Barber’s interest is in what Husserl can add to McDowell by way of a phenomenological elaboration. Even to deploy the term “that shade” is to separate one colour from its neighbours and to have effected a passive synthesis in which the shade has been brought into a contrastive relationship with the colours proximate to it and on its horizon. If it is objected that a constitutive methodology allows receptivity to make the “notionally separable” contribution that McDowell decries, he has done this himself with his distinction of receptivity/sensibility and spontaneity (pp. 73–76).

The third argument for non-conceptual contents is that they lie on the fringes of conceptual awareness. McDowell responds that the actualisation of conceptual capacities is not confined to bringing things into focus. Elaborating on this, Barber gives the example of a dog starting to bark. The focal content stands out against a background of indeterminacy to which conscious conceptualisation does not appear to extend. This surplus content of a horizon, moreover, is intrinsic to any experience of an object. But McDowell can always inquire, like Husserl, into the unthematized meanings in the horizontal background. Subsequent acts of reflection can turn up the chirping of crickets and hum of traffic in the background, and later again the rustling of leaves. Exploring the outer horizon turns up a whole set of experiences emerging from memory as already conceptualised. The phenomenologist can also refer to the bodily syntheses and kinaesthetic expectations involved in the experience, and to what is held in retentional and recollective grip, none of which comprise the non-conceptual content of non-justificatory givens that McDowell opposes. The elucidation of these richer dimensions complement and make explicit what is implicit in his underdeveloped analyses (pp. 74, 79–85). These pages show Barber at his most acute in descriptive phenomenological terms.

If McDowell is better at allowing for sensory and intellectual structures of intentionality functioning holistically, Brandom shows a greater sensitivity to the social and intersubjective dimension of knowledge. McDowell sees in scorekeeping the spectre of perceiving subjects individually incapable of achieving standing in the space of reasons, whilst keeping one another under surveillance. Yet Brandom's account rightly incorporates a sceptical moment in relation to less critical or less informed perceivers, and it does not preclude the authority of the individual perceiver. He is open to knowers who can identify Toltec shards and the sex of hatchlings without being able to explain or justify their procedures. The scorekeeper can recognise individual skills, and need not always suspect the other's knowledge, being able to admit that his or her scorekeeping standards are inappropriate in certain circumstances (pp. 87–93).

Barber argues convincingly that McDowell is an exemplary scorekeeper, since he evaluates other philosophers' sceptical scorekeeping approach to commonsense perceiving. He shows that sceptics overlook the Wittgensteinian certainties that their very questioning presupposes and he reasserts what is involved in commonsense perceptual entitlements. In these ways he exemplifies Brandom's reflective awareness of an interpersonal structure of justification characteristic of philosophy itself. Following Gadamer, Brandom is aware of the importance of tradition for scorekeeping. We undertake more commitments than we can acknowledge, and different traditions contain a vast raft of collateral commitments and hypotheses that inferentially underpin the claims made by their inheritors—hence the importance of the self-critical examination of one's norms (pp. 94–100, 109).

McDowell is himself sensitive to the social and linguistic constitution of the perceiver, but he argues that corrigibility and heightened sensitivity to others' viewpoints can lead to individuals without confidence in their own resources. Barber's response is that such accountability actually produces strength. This is a reason for his turning to Levinas, who takes ethical intersubjectivity as underpinned by an experience of the other that all discursive relationships presuppose, epistemic ones included. Giving a theoretical response to someone's work is inseparable from the summons by the other to be treated responsibly. My responsibility to the other does not begin with some decision of mine, but is already there asymmetrically before any deliberative present that I can recuperate reflectively. Brandom's epistemic responsibility is one that follows on the assertions one makes, in that I ordinarily have to be able to justify them to another. But if it is allowed that this is preceded by and bears the trace of my ethical responsibility to the other, how does one move to the epistemic and symmetrical status of holding others accountable?

Levinas does this by positing the third person, served by the other whom I myself serve. At this level I must compare and weigh claims and search for principles governing our relationships. This surpasses the other-I dyad without stepping back from responsibility. If we apply all this to Brandom, according to Barber, we can appreciate that for the scorekeeper to hold another accountable epistemically, she or he must already have been pried away from the experience of being held accountable herself in the ethical relationship. An experience of being responsible to many others must have widened her responsibilities beyond the dyad. Barber adds that one can conduct epistemological discussions independently of Levinas'

genealogy, but only at the price of compartmentalizing one's philosophising off from one's ethics. It is easily imaginable how the whole normative language of responsibility can be traced back to an original experience of being held ethically accountable by others. This runs counter to Brandom's desire to avoid confusing conceptual and moral normativity, though he admits to a natural hope for their mutual illumination (pp. 112–121).

From here Barber turns to McDowell's Wittgensteinian quietism. Philosophical questions are not to be answered as posed; rather, one should question the framework in which they are posed so as to exorcise them. This is the strategy pursued against scientism, though McDowell runs the risk of appearing antipathetic to science itself. His self-professed task is not to refute the reductionistic programme of "bald naturalism," but to show a more satisfying alternative, namely, the closing of the mind-world gap by refraining from the presuppositions of the naturalistic interpretation of sensibility. The nature of the space of reasons can be reconceived in terms of an Aristotelian second nature in which concepts are deployed from the start. The human perceiver is a seamless whole whose unity must not be lost sight of. Against the charge that he is engaging in constructivism, McDowell responds that his view is a modest and naturalised Platonism: meanings are irreducible to causal effects but are naturalised as part of second nature. This is not a promissory note for a proper response, merely a dislodging of the question that posits a dualism of reason and nature as a pressing issue (pp. 129–138).

For Barber, one could well describe McDowell's work as an effort to vindicate the Husserlian lifeworld against its theoretical obfuscators. But if McDowell has lived up to the standards of the philosophical tradition by not taking for granted the mistaken suppositions it has transmitted, it would be consistent to provide an account of the concepts that provide an alternative way of seeing things, instead of just presenting them as given—almost dogmatically assumed—without conceptual articulation. To conclude that the rediscovered lifeworld requires no further philosophical examination is to succumb to a paradoxical reflective inertia. It is to take for granted the realm of common sense, which is characterised by a tendency to protect itself against reflection. Barber is on firm ground in this criticism, and he adds that McDowell has begun such an elaboration—drawing on Aristotle, Kant and Gadamer—in his ideas of initiation into ethical thinking and second nature, of the rationality that permeates our animal being, and of the difference between human beings (who relate to a world) and animals (which relate to an environment). McDowell's view of his own philosophy is more minimalist than it really is (pp. 139–145).

Barber maintains that Husserl is able to elucidate Brandom's approach no less than McDowell's. Brandom is happy to appropriate Heidegger's categories of *Zuhandensein* and *Vorhandensein* in his social and inferential pragmatism. We can acknowledge social and practical engagements in the world without pejoratively linking *Vorhandensein* to objectivism in the Heideggerian fashion, recognising the importance of propositional speech and discursive practices. But Barber maintains that one could interpret Brandom as implicitly employing the method of free variation to find the structures of discursive practice that holds across a multiplicity of discourses, such as commitment, entitlement, endorsement, inferentially

articulated concepts and perspectival adjudication. In the end it becomes difficult to imagine how one might have any discourse without these features being in place. The scorekeeper has in actuality made an eidetic claim (pp. 157–169).

Brandom actually makes a better start in characterising the pre-theoretical world when he begins with Heidegger rather than with human beings responding dispositionally to stimuli, like certain animals and measuring devices. But if we accept that the pre-theoretical stratum of *Zuhandensein* is already characterised by socially shaped norms and is already thoroughly linguistic in character, then Husserl's lifeworld would capture better what Brandom sees as the pre-theoretical domain, whilst the former's understanding of the philosophical attitude opened up by the reduction would capture the theoretical domain. Husserl would insist that norms governing the realm of philosophy not be assessed merely in terms of their practical usefulness, but he is well aware of the social basis of these norms. This awareness only gets obscured because of his emphasis on the personal, individual responsibility of the philosopher, who is responsible also for the critical examination of sociality. Like McDowell, he converges with the philosophical scorekeeper by being as critical of claims as possible and not taking anything for granted.

Like Brandom and McDowell, Husserl ultimately rejects a layer cake view of human existence, and Barber could have reminded us that he refuses to take conceptual and judicative acts as making up a kind of varnish that would overlie the original domain of sense without being interwoven with it (Hua III/1, pp. 202–203, 284–288; 1982, pp. 214, 294–297). This observation aside, Barber is well aware that Husserl's lifeworld is filled with the kinds of practical intentionality that are intertwined with linguistic intentionality whilst going beyond it. Ruth Millikan alights on some of these when she refers to bees searching for nectar, bodies re-establishing balance and coffee cups being safely transported to lips. Brandom refers to her mode of description as “one of the wonders of our philosophical age,” though Merleau-Ponty already sketched out such practical intentionalities where the body is not just a passive thing among things. Here too the scorekeeper could address commitments and entitlements in trying to capture philosophically what precedes philosophy (pp. 171–174).

Proceeding in zigzag fashion, Barber now turns to McDowell's alternative to major streams in modern ethics. His virtuous person knows what to do occasion by occasion—not by applying universal principles but by having the ability to see situations in a certain distinctive way. Here again he is Aristotelian and, like Levinas, abjures the possibility of an external, uninvolved standpoint for practical rationality. However, McDowell presents us with eidetic rather than empirical intuitions, including the idea that all virtues consist of reliable sensitivities to requirements. And he does not adequately appreciate the need for the administration of responsibilities though others, the importance of I-thou relationships in fostering vulnerability to correction by others, and heightened sensitivity to their differing points of view. To develop his position, McDowell must have adopted a theoretical stance, yet he does not give due regard to the need for a deontic scorekeeping standpoint, or the philosophical attitude consequent on the implementation of the phenomenological reduction. In the critical attitude, one's purpose is the careful and restrained testing of ethical commitments for their justifiability and the developing

of justifications for them that can withstand rational criticism. Such justifications are not meant to motivate people to act in ways for which they have not been equipped by their upbringing. Their principal purpose is not their practical significance (pp. 186–203).

Like Bernard Williams, McDowell is almost Nietzschean in discussing how the thought that only our community upbringing imbues us with a second nature and keeps us on moral track induces a kind of vertigo that makes us look for iron-rail psychological mechanisms or think that there must be deductive principles at work if we are acting morally. The search for external reasons is a strategy of concealing the fragility of the rational basis of one's own commitments, and one can then accuse the "non-principled" opponent of irrationality. But for Barber, it is not credible that the only motivations for believing in universalisable reasons are to paper over fragile commitments and to charge opponents with irrationality. Reason-giving cannot be compared to giving a bluff as in a game of cards, or to a desperate search for knockdown principles, as if discourse were a version of pugilism (pp. 189–191, 202–205).

In McDowell's view, it is only those brought up with modern doubts and anxieties that evince a deterioration of confidence in the ethical beliefs in which they were raised, and who then search desperately for external foundations. Barber counters that one can very well give a justificatory account to another when the self-preservation of one's own moral practices and beliefs does not require it. A generous going out to the stranger may reflect an overflowing of confidence in one's own moral practices, in which one is so secure (as was Aristotle) that one feels free to take the risk of reaching out to another. Furthermore, Barber nicely observes that it is an open historical question whether the interest in giving a philosophical account of one's commonsense beliefs originated in modern fears, or rather—as was argued by Husserl in "The Vienna Lecture"—in the capacity of the confident Greeks, Plato in particular, to refuse to take their norms from naïve experience or the unexamined life (p. 206).

In the final chapter, "Phenomenology, the Intentional Spectrum and Intersubjectivity," Barber begins with Husserl's view of philosophy as originating in responsibility. It is a call demanding a kind of rigorous commitment comparable to a religious vocation. McDowell exemplifies such responsibility in insisting on direct engagement with the world and in refusing to entertain questions whose hidden premises make answering them impossible. Likewise, Brandom's articulation of the features of the scorekeeper who decides whether to endorse the other's claims exemplifies the responsible philosophising advocated by Husserl (pp. 218–219). It is through phenomenological reduction that Husserl strives to be radically philosophically responsible. Reduction uncovers the lifeworld that is there in the certainty of experience before anything is studied by the natural sciences. They are not self-founding, since the lifeworld is the unspoken ground of the cognitive accomplishments of philosophers and scientists alike.

Since the bracketing of the natural sciences leaves consciousness taken for granted, a universal epoché is necessary in which we refrain at the theoretical level from participating in world belief and come to see the world as the correlate of conscious, intentional activity. Brandom pulls us back from naïve immersion in the

world, but a genetic phenomenology can disclose just *how* his scorekeeper must have already encountered it if empirical content is to be intelligible. Such an analysis discloses, as strata within judgements about perceptual objects, the turning towards them, the mobilisation of the senses and of kinaesthetic anticipations and the selection of what is perceived from its background, as well as the actualisation of conceptual capacities in receptivity—the very analysis of the horizons of perception that McDowell more clearly presupposes (pp. 220–225).

I do have a concern at this juncture that Barber is writing for an audience already familiar with Husserl's philosophically reflective procedure of epoché and reduction, and already having arguments to hand as to why this procedure is a radical one that makes world belief into a phenomenon. More could also have been said about how the sense of the world bracketed and explicated in *The Idea of Phenomenology* and *Ideas I* is deepened in the concept of the lifeworld in *The Crisis*. Because many readers familiar with McDowell and Brandom will be coming to Husserl and transcendental phenomenology for the first time, it would have been useful to set out and justify the developing theory and practice of epoché and reduction in greater depth.

Especially interesting for Barber is Husserl's expansion of the notion of intuition to acts in which eidetic objects appear as actual and self-given. As argued, McDowell's comments about intelligible empirical content and Brandom's claims about what is constitutive of warranted discourse are implicitly eidetic. Husserl not only recognises eidetic insight but also provides eidetic accounts of the objects, fundamental concepts and methods of the sciences. We can distinguish the overarching sciences of nature and spirit, and divide them into sub-disciplines like physics, biology, psychology and anthropology. By separating the overarching object types, Husserl endeavours to ensure that the natural sciences do not assume that their methods are the only ones admissible. All regional ontologies presuppose the subject to which the eidetic objects (nature and spirit) would be given, and by whom claims about them would be elaborated and evaluated. Husserl refuses to take for granted questions of eidos and of subjectivity. What emerges, according to Barber, is a spectrum of intentionality on the part of a subject often concealed from itself, extending from its passive syntheses at the juncture where mind meets world to the transcendental subject come to full self-consciousness (pp. 229–233).

Against this backdrop, McDowell is taken to be at his best when he returns to the pre-theoretical (if not pre-conceptual) pole of commonsense experience. Once we turn to the higher levels of intentionality, he is less adequate. He does not acknowledge that he is less than quietist in using a philosophical-theoretical intentional stance from which to affirm commonsense, and that this last domain offers the opportunity for further theoretical explanations. He also fails to recognise that the refutation of scientism depends *positively* on philosophy assuming a metaposition from which it can circumscribe the role of science and establish regional ontologies with their appropriate and limited intentional stances (pp. 233–234).

With Brandom things are the other way round, since his meeting point of mind and world consists of stimuli causally eliciting reliable differential responses. Yet insofar as a scorekeeper must assess empirical claims, Brandom could profit from a constitutive account that allows, as a stratum of intentional activity, the sort of direct

encounter with reality that McDowell makes central to the possibility of having empirical content at all. Nevertheless Brandom (like Husserl, in implementing the reduction) strives to be self-reflective about what takes place above the level of common sense and perception, especially the discursive domain in which their claims are introduced, examined and endorsed. The delineation of the scorekeeper perspective involves a self-reflective, eidetic portrayal of the attitude that anyone who enters discursive space assumes. The realm of discourse is an ontological region, but (like the realm of transcendental subjectivity) not just one a priori structure amongst others; it is an ultimate one, insofar as it comprises the locus for articulating the structures on which all the other ontological realms depend (pp. 234–236).

Influenced by Sellars, Brandom seeks to avoid reducing insight to norms, and Barber suggests that Husserl's idea of an insightful grasp of eidetic features attempts to explain this in first-person terms. First-person seeing is essential to Husserl's radical sense of philosophical responsibility, and it must also characterise the scorekeeper. One has to see for oneself, step by step, from the bottom up, before endorsing any claims, even the claims presenting the norms governing discourse. Emphasising first-person responsibility and insight is fully in accord with the traditional norms of philosophy. And we cannot even talk of non-discursive intentional relations with the world outside of a theoretical, reflective stance. What is needed is what Merleau-Ponty calls radical reflection, reflection on reflection, extending to the unreflective fund of experiences from which reflection emerges (pp. 236–238).

Barber defends Husserl's phenomenology against Karl-Otto Apel's accusation of methodological solipsism (pp. 238–250), and in his concluding section he considers John Drummond's objection that Levinas' development of the pre-theoretical side of Husserl's ethics underplays the essential role of cognition. According to Drummond, Levinas lacks an adequate sense of experienced moral obligation on the agent's side, and obedience to the Levinasian ethical imperative depersonalises moral action, since it divorces moral action from the agent's will to be happy in her own moral commitments. In line with the transcendental stress on autonomy, Drummond contends that we are called to a life of free, insightful agency in which reason, feeling, emotions and desires are ordered together in the pursuit of manifest and non-manifest goods, including the very ideal of free and insightful agency (Drummond 2002, pp. 40–41).

Barber responds that everyday ethical experience often draws us into responsibility to and for another—in the full Levinasian sense—without regard for our happiness. Where the pursuit of goals—including my own good will—might impact hurtfully on another, deliberation is immediately called for. Drummond himself affirms that I ought not to interfere with the other's efforts to achieve non-manifest goods such as autonomy, even at the cost of my own pursuit of goods. And if one is rightly able to justify at a theoretical level a demand for circumscribing one's own desire for happiness, why not also take account of the everyday experiences in which one finds oneself constrained in a correlative way? Furthermore, the detachment of obligation from inclination may merely reflect the different theoretical tasks of motivation and justification (pp. 250–254, 203).

Barber argues, further, that there is a sense in which the approaches of Drummond and Levinas are complementary. Drummond is correct in showing that Husserl's treatment of the objectivity of value goes beyond the individual's personal insight and must include other means for attaining objectivity, including intersubjective discussions. Levinas finds the intersubjective dimension not only in one's effort to determine objectivity but also in the ethical experience of the other's summons that precedes the discourse that seeks to establish objectivity. The very attempt to establish the objectivity of valuing presupposes at least *one* valuing, the valuing of the other person who prompts one to worry about whether one's valuing is objective in the first place (pp. 255–256). Furthermore, there need be no incompatibility between Husserlian ethics and certain versions of discourse ethics, since respect for insightful agency seems to represent the ultimate principle for each. Even a dialogical defence of the same ultimate principle must finally be embraced from the first-person perspective of my own responsible subjectivity, always anonymously transcendental and always anonymously transcendently intersubjective (p. 257).

And so we finish the final page, which ends almost as if in mid-sentence. The bulk of the book leads up to the thesis of the intentional spectrum, yet this idea is introduced and deployed rather rapidly. Soon the discussion switches back to levels at which intentionality is subverted or reversed. Intersubjectivity and what precedes it are important topics in their own right, but it seems to me that in many places they distract from what is really the major thesis of the work, the intentional spectrum within which Brandom and McDowell are to be located. It would have been more satisfying if the author had devoted a few more pages to tying together and further explicating the different strands of his main claim. The somewhat abrupt ending also reinforces an impression that so much ground has been covered that it is difficult to see the wood for the trees. On the other hand, the book's zigzag procedure does allow for an appreciation of the depth-dimensions of its major claims.

Barber's book is a substantial contribution towards showing what phenomenology has to offer the Neo-Hegelian approaches. A keen observer of lacunae in the accounts offered by Brandom and McDowell, the author comes across as a rational and judicious scorekeeper, and never as a partisan point-scorer. In this vein he is also faithful to the spirit and the letter of phenomenology as a responsible and co-operative enterprise. It was Husserl who remarked ruefully that we still have philosophical congresses where the philosophers meet, but unfortunately not the philosophies. The latter lack the unity of a conscious space in which they might exist for and act on one another (Hua I, p. 47; 1960, p. 5). Michael Barber has gone quite a distance to remedy this situation in the case of phenomenology and the Pittsburgh neo-Hegelians.

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