

48. Response to the Report on My Essay (1995)

"Dear Professor Clarke,

"This Report poses a problem for me. To put it as succinctly as possible, I find it confusing not to mention badly written. It therefore does not in the least make the assignment question clearer to me.

"I realize that my challenge to the philosophy department of Concordia University is unusual. However, there is the suggestion in the Report that I am somehow acting in bad faith. Let it be said here and now that my increasing resistance and opposition to Professor Joós's books – the ones that were used in the two courses I took with him – antedate the severe rupture and emotional turbulence which led to my carrying on with these two courses alone. I pride myself on my integrity, my independence of spirit, and my unwillingness to be cowed by whatever forces align themselves against me. Only cogent arguments have the power to make me rethink a matter and, as it were, amend the error of my ways.

"I regret having inconvenienced, nay, having created a great deal of extra work for the person who took the time and trouble to assess my essay. It would indeed be a burden on my conscience were I to believe that I had acted in bad faith. Of course I won't deny the element of anger and resentment in all this but neither will I – nor have I reason to – admit it as the predominant factor. On the contrary, I believe that I have legitimate grounds for being critical of and antagonistic towards academic formalism and complacency. At least, I take it upon myself to be such a critic and antagonist, knowing full well there is a price to be paid.

"I am unhappy with the assessment. I am unhappy with the grade I received. I put a tremendous amount of work into this essay. I do not believe that I have been dealt with fairly.

"The following is a detailed response to the evaluator's report that, taking it up point-by-point, reproduces it in its entirety. It is therefore quite long (some fifteen pages). It is also complex and, for various reasons, even confused and confusing. I therefore doubt that anyone will take the time to read it. Nevertheless I submit it to you as both testimony and evidence that the evaluator's report is poorly written, personally insulting, and downright obfuscating. I further claim that it suffers from greater deficiencies than it accuses me of.

"One final thing: in order to deal with the problems I have encountered in

responding to this unusually long report, I take the liberty of putting three question marks in brackets (???) where the comments most perplex me."

date: 9 Dec. 1994

**to: Murray Clarke, Graduate Program Director, Philosophy
Report on "A Hermeneutical Questioning of a Question" by Michael Hunter, a paper in PHIL. 668W "Hermeneutics" for Dr. Erno Joos**

1. The paper is dictated by the assigned question, "Is it true that the purpose of both Nietzsche and Heidegger was – besides their teachings – to fight conceptualization?", and its specification, "Try to justify this judgment – or argue against it – with the help of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* (and Heidegger's writings if you are familiar with Heidegger's philosophy)."

At my request, the instructor specified the course materials as being "the background of Hermeneutics – then some Ricoeur and Gadamer – my own book on Nietzsche contains a theory of Hermeneutics. This theory was further enlarged. Several sections of *Being and Time* were explained to support my theory. For interpretation Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* has been used and assigned."

These directions are what 100% of the evaluation for the course is being based upon. There is no oral examination upon this paper being given, as there would have been for 50% if the student had made it possible for himself to continue attending classes until the end of the course.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

I would like to know precisely what is the theory of hermeneutics in the book called *Poetic Truth and Transvaluation in Nietzsche's Zarathustra*. Is it at any point readily outlined and identified? Does it exist as a theory independent of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*?

If it does not exist as a theory independent of this work or an interpretation of it, how are we to understand it? How is it to be recommended as a theory? How is it to be differentiated from simply a particular way of approaching a particular text?

2. This paper is not concerned with giving an exposition of hermeneutics at all, but with exercising it upon a particular text. I take it that this is permissible by the assignment.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

My assignment is to examine and determine whether it is possible to make

sense of the assignment question. Insofar as it is a self-imposed assignment and challenges the authority of the assigner, it holds to the view that the search for the truth is the preeminent task.

3. The paper barely even mentions Nietzsche or Zarathustra. I take it that this is not permissible, and is a deficiency, according to directions.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

According to directions, yes, but not according to what I just said. In order to understand or at least try to understand the assignment question which, to render it in its most basic form, is, *Is it true that the purpose of both Nietzsche and Heidegger was to fight conceptualization?*, it is necessary to look into Professor Joós's work and determine, if possible, what 'fighting conceptualization' means.

4. The paper mentions nothing by Ricoeur, mentions and uses as its leitmotif a text by Gadamer as well as using him in the body, and uses three publications by Heidegger throughout. The text upon which the paper is focussed is pp. 129-141 of the Joos volume. This constitutes the section "Metaphysics on Trial," which is only the second of the eight sections making up only the third of the three chapters in the book.

While nothing in the directions dictates what scope of materials must be used, the scope of the Joos materials is a deficiency, for three reasons. Because the student missed most of the course, I would expect more of a demonstration of his having familiarized himself with the whole by himself, instead of possibly having just looked into the table of contents to see where the paper's topic seemed to be located, and then reading only that which, without his familiarity with the whole course as it transpired, there is no reason not to expect. As well, the absence of Nietzsche from the paper is directly due to this scope of study, since the treatment of Nietzsche is much more prominent in the first two chapters, while not completely absent from the last. Finally, many of the deficiencies in the student's study, as follow, would have been remedied by expanding his awareness of the text which he criticizes beyond only the twelve pages to which he has confined himself in some aping of the artificial naivety [*sic*] in some hermeneutical authors.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

It is obvious that the evaluator does not take me seriously when I set out in my essay to examine the assignment question.

The three reasons that the evaluator gives in order to charge me with an improper use of the Joós material might very well be expressed as one (i.e., that I did not analyse the whole of it but only one small part). However, I will

do my best to identify the points he raises.

1) There is the implication that it is more important to show a familiarity with the whole of Professor Joós's book (and because he has written another book closely associated with the one on Nietzsche's Zarathustra and, like the latter, uses it as a course text, perhaps a familiarity with the second as well) than to deal with the question in the most conscientious way. I focussed upon the particular section that I did for a very good reason. My essay states this reason (which I will deal with shortly).

2) There is the suggestion that I did not read the whole book and that I focussed on only one small part for perverse and mean-spirited reasons.

3) There is the follow-up remark that I do not deal with the greater part of Professor Joós's book devoted to an interpretation of Nietzsche's Zarathustra.

4) I am accused of aping the artificial naivety of some hermeneutical authors. In response to this comment (as well as the others), let me begin by stating that I read and studied all of Professor Joós's book on Nietzsche's Zarathustra as well as his other book called *Intentionality: Source of Intelligibility*. It was in fact by doing so that I discovered that there was only one section of the Nietzsche book that spoke directly to the matter of conceptualization. It seemed to me that, if there was a place this notion should become clear and shed light on the assignment question, it was in this section.

I'm not quite sure what the evaluator means when he claims that I am aping some other thinkers. If he means that I'm too much under the influence of someone like Gadamer, then all I can say is I would rather be under his influence than someone who resorts to facile and dogmatic statements.

I examined this unflattering feature of Professor Joós's books in the first essay I wrote critiquing his other book, *Intentionality: Source of Intelligibility*. This essay, due to its harshness, was not accepted by the Graduate Program Director. Nevertheless it has the merit of outlining the major flaws of his intentionality book. Among other things, I list eleven instances where Professor Joós insists – and does little more than insist – that subject-object dualism is an irreducible reality.

5. (p.1) The leitmotif for the study is to look for the motivating question behind the assignment question. This is an excellent route into the study, following the quote from Gadamer which takes up the whole page. There is no conclusion, in any clear, succinct, and summary form, at any point, however, of what the student's conclusion is as to what the motivating questions for the assignment question are. This is a deficiency.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Much might be written on what the motivating questions are behind an assignment question like Professor Joós's. Also on the larger issue of a professor's using his own published work in the classes he teaches. However, for the purposes of the assignment, I thought it best to limit myself to finding out whether the assignment question was in fact intelligible.

6. (p. 2) The initial focus upon the terms "fight conceptualization" is via the common dictionary definitions of the terms. The student concludes that this is silly, as it is; and that is good. It is a deficiency, however, that the student shortly hereafter concludes, after having considered the target text's own sense, that it has the same silliness as the dictionary sense, viz. that it says we must be violent towards what is indispensable to human knowing. Even if the sense were the same, the dialectic towards reaching it would disabuse it of such silliness.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

I will ignore the first part of this commentary since the word 'silly' or 'silliness' does not occur in my essay. Instead I will make bold as to say that, in the face of such bad analysis as the above, it is not an impertinence to ask the following questions. What if Professor Joós's book is in fact confused? What if the assignment question is even more confused? And what if the evaluator's report, seeming to be so concerned with defending this book and this question, is even more confused than they are?

7. (p. 3) The student questions whether translating (new) Heidegger into the language of (old) metaphysics is right. It is a deficiency that he does not acknowledge the two steps prior to doing that which the Joos text demands.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

These two "steps" are the following: 1) "to acquire a correct understanding of metaphysics" and 2) "to formulate Heidegger's criticism in his own language . . ." It is then Professor Joós's third step "to translate that language into the language of traditional metaphysics" (129).

Given the above, I take it that Professor Joós assumes that one can carry out the second step without its being immediately countermanded and rendered null and void by the third. Or else he assumes that the second step is already the third in some hidden or potential sense and that, furthermore, Heidegger himself would acknowledge as much. For if it were the case that Heidegger refused to be appropriated by or reintegrated into the tradition, then Professor Joós would be guilty of overlooking an objection of no small

importance.

8. (p. 3) The student complains that the expressions are unclarified in the statement that Heidegger attacked classical 'metaphysics' because of its 'conceptualizing'. It is a deficiency that the student does not realize that this had been done in the rest of the book.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

It is a deficiency that the evaluator does not give a better idea of how and where this has been done. It is a deficiency that the task of clarifying this book or showing that it is in fact a lucid work is appealed to in principle more than in practise.

9. (p. 4) The student is correct that the complaint that some "learned to speak before having lived and experienced" cannot mean that anyone could speak without having any experience(s). It is not clear, then, why he thinks the author means that, either, instead of that it is fully possible for anyone to speak of *some* things when he has not had experience of *those* things.(???)

HUNTER'S COMMENT

It is not clear why the evaluator uses the word *some* when he makes the above comments. After all, neither does Professor Joós tell us that *some* people learned to speak before having lived and experienced nor that these people learned to speak before having lived and experienced *some* things but rather that "we learned to speak before we lived and experienced the things around us" (130).

10. (p. 4) Reaching the conclusion above (#6) is due to misinterpreting the relevance of power to conceptualization, in the author's claims within the target pages. This could have been remedied by familiarity with the author's much more extensive treatment of power even within the rest of this chapter, not to mention the book as a whole.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

First of all, the treatment of power by Professor Joós may be extensive but not as an analysis of conceptualization. Secondly, the evaluator is at fault by continuing to assume that I didn't read the whole of his book. As far as I can determine, he has based this assumption on my having decided to limit the analysis to a twelve-page section. Furthermore, he does so despite the fact that I give reasons for so limiting it not only at the beginning of my essay but also at the end.

At the beginning I point out that "in Part III of the book in a section called

'Metaphysics on Trial,' there are a number of scattered references to the specific matter in question (i.e., conceptualization). It must be said that their being so scattered makes the task of interpretation more difficult. Perhaps the best approach is to move slowly through the section, thereby carefully examining these references in their specific textual sites." At the end of the essay I conclude: "Nor can this study move into other parts of the book. Or at least it cannot do so without taking on the enormous task of closely analysing a book that shows little reason to warrant such an effort. It is enough to note that every single page and paragraph raises more questions than it answers. In light of all this, it must be the conclusion of this essay that both the assignment question and the related text are confused and that the former, upon scrutiny, proves unintelligible."

11. (pp. 4-5) The same may be said for his comments on the term 'experience'. Concluding that it must mean pre-predicative experience, since it is opposed to conceptualization, may be ill-founded since the thrust of this section is to heal that separation.(???) As well, besides importing a Pontian term, that term makes the student's conclusion here a tautology. Of course *pre-predicative* experience must *pre-cede speaking!*

HUNTER'S COMMENT

The evaluator should explain what he means by healing the separation between experience and conceptualization. For it is only by doing so that the term *experience*, so loosely employed by Professor Joós, would gain some measure of precision.

12. (p. 5) To student's claim that the statement that Socrates begins with dialectic and works towards a concept ignores the fact that dialectic must operate with a linguistically ordered world, see my #9. (???)

HUNTER'S COMMENT

To evaluator's attempt to clear away problems in Professor Joós's book by dubious means, see my response to No. 9.

Professor Joós wants to distinguish between conceptualization and experience without explaining their relation to language. As a result, it becomes impossible to see how he determines there can be experience without conceptualization or conceptualization without experience.

13. (p. 7) Student's presumption that "surely" "presumably" faith "can not be other" than conceptual, or it would be undirected emotion, would be chastened by the Nietzschean section of the book, wherein that set-off and that prescription are buffered. (???) Neither presumptuousness nor every

presumption becomes a virtue, just because Gadamer says presumptions are indispensable.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

The first of the above comments might be chastened for being obscure. The second for replacing the rather neutral term that Gadamer uses, namely, *presuppositions*, with one not nearly so neutral.

14. (p. 7) While student's complaint at dismissiveness towards phenomenologists would have been appreciable if he had not had the occasion also to study the *Intentionality* book, which makes the complaint here merely artificial and cranky, he does not give any suggestion of why the author should be taxed as holding the view that every re-interpretation, here of Aquinas, is a mis-interpretation. The author has only said that this one is. (???)

HUNTER'S COMMENT

I contend that Professor Joós's treatment of modern-day phenomenologists is rather dismissive. He states that philosophers from Brentano on do not recognize that intentionality is an intermediate entity between subject and object. ("The phenomenologists view intentionality according to their own bias which goes back to Franz Brentano . . ." [132].) He also states that this entity is a causal relation extending from the object to the subject. ("They overlook its true nature as something intermediate between extra-mental reality and the mind" [132].) He claims that this intermediate entity as causal relation is what one finds in Aquinas and is what has been overlooked by later theorists.

15.(p. 8) Student's complaint that author here says knowledge is explained by causality would have to look further than here for support. (???)

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Are the following passages in Professor Joós's book to be dismissed as evidence in support of the view that he has a causal-based theory of knowledge?

What is of interest to us here is a special form of intentionality, an intentionality that I call, following Thomas Aquinas, intentionality of a thing (*intentio rei*). It is a kind of immaterial reality which affects the intellect through the senses, and which is, therefore, an experience in the true sense of *Erleben*. Its product is an *intentio*

intellecta, the intention which supplies the full understanding of a thing (132).

In the metaphysical tradition we attribute to meanings an existence which is independent from physical reality; in this way meaning is turned into a suprasensible reality. Now we may wonder how the two realities, the physical and the suprasensible are united. The answer is *causality* (Joós's italics). Entities, which are grasped separately, are also united into a whole or a world by causality. Without causality neither the parts, nor the whole can make any sense (133).

16. (p. 8) The snarky, smarmy aside that surely the author's text is among the meritorious in his eyes is an attitude we've had enough of in the profession, and can do without more of it. This is even if it is true; but as it stands, nothing in the text points to that.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

I do not agree with the evaluator's harsh indictment of my remark. While being ironic and somewhat mischievous, it is not malicious. When I make the comment, "The text under present consideration [i.e., Professor Joós's] no doubt is representative of the latter," namely, the contrary of the "mere intellectual exercise" that he condemns, it is with the thought that the "harden[ing of] experience into concepts [so that] God, for example, becomes just another entity..." (132) is a sin that Professor Joós, a religious man, would not accuse himself of.

17. (p. 9) In this formulation of "our topic", viz. representation without experience, there is no textual argument for the supposition that this means taking over notions without their having been examined by thought and experience, nor that, in turn, this means conformism. Thought is not the vehicle; and other ways than by conformity are available.(???)

HUNTER'S COMMENT

The best I can do, given my difficulties in understanding the above comment, is to reproduce one of the passages in Professor Joós's book that bears upon conceptualization as "a kind of naming which leaps over experience" (130).

. . . [E]ntities can be turned into concepts, into abstract, lifeless notions whenever the attitude to reality undergoes a change, when our view of the world wheels around and we represent the world

before experiencing it?" (133).

Now the evaluator seems to be claiming that thought is not necessary to what Professor Joós is describing in the above passage. If so, he should explain how an "attitude to reality [that] undergoes a change" and a "view of the world [that] wheels around and [represents it] before experiencing it" is separate from thought.

18. (p. 9) It is difficult to see, and no help is given to help see, how it is true that stating "intentionality is a means to make sense" is to lift the notion from the medieval setting and make it modern without reinterpretation.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

It is difficult to see, and no help is given to help see, how Comment No. 18 relates to what I say about Professor Joós's passing look at intentionality. Of course he treats the subject at great length in his other book but this matters little since his main idea rests the same.

Professor Joós states that "if we take the case of intentionality in the middle ages – an example par excellence of the problem we wish to illustrate – then we must say that intentionality is a means to make sense of extra-mental reality" (133). First of all, I note that Professor Joós treats this "example par excellence" more as a solution to the problem than a problem itself. Secondly, that his high regard for "intentionality in the middle ages" leads him to treat it as the standard by which to examine modern-day theory. Thirdly, that he does so with little or no argument.

19. (p. 10) The complaint that it is conceptual freezing to say meaning arises from relating the sensible and suprasensible by causality, and that the modern challenge to causality should have been stated, could have been remedied by student's familiarity with the rest of the book.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Causality is a matter that Professor Joós only raises as a solution to basic epistemological problems. As the following passage from my essay indicates, I see it as a problem that he should have addressed.

Now we must pause and wonder why the notion of causality is not seized upon [by Professor Joós] as a classic example of conceptual freezing. After all, for a very long stretch of history, running from the Ancients to such towering figures as Hume and Kant, the idea of causal necessity as a universal law extending from the invisible to visible world went virtually unchallenged.

20. (p. 11) Thus, it is not now “the first time” to consider opposition between conceptual freezing and foundational concepts, as student complains and that more should have been said on it here. (???)

HUNTER’S COMMENT

First of all, it is unclear why the evaluator speaks of an opposition between conceptual freezing and foundational concepts since neither I nor Professor Joós does. In fact, the opposite is true to the extent that I suggest that there might be an affinity between them. (Once again, I refer to the example of causality.) Secondly, the evaluator is himself guilty of saying too little when, without specifying, he claims that the matter of causality has been raised earlier by Professor Joós.

21. (p. 11) The question of how the identity of nature and meaning can be so strongly opposed here when they are identified in traditional metaphysics, [sic] [evaluator’s sic] while still rehabilitating the latter, would be a good question since it is not handled elsewhere in the book, except for the assumption that definition, which is not set in opposition to entity, is the same as nature. (???)

HUNTER’S COMMENT

All I can say here is that Professor Joós distinguishes Heidegger from traditional metaphysics by claiming that Heidegger has a different approach to entities as entities. Professor Joós writes: “The consequence of this new approach is that we will not ask, as is done in traditional metaphysics – What is a thing? – but rather – What does it mean?” (134). Clearly the focus is on entities as entities and not as entities that emerge from Being and whose meaning is caught up in their being recognized and received as entities.

22. (p. 12) This one reliance on a study by Deeley [sic], for interpreting Heidegger at this point requires the observation that, for most other papers, this study’s removal from the context of any critical discussion among other presumably diligent and able students would be a deficiency. As I understand it, however, this naivety [sic] is what the instructor prefers from students, himself relying repeatedly only on Stambough in the book. So no criticism of the paper can be made for this.

HUNTER’S COMMENT

No comment.

23.(p. 13) I have always thought the distinction here, that meaning is temporally but not historically referenced, is specious; but it seems to accord

with the tradition of these texts.

HUNTER' COMMENT

With respect to meaning being extra-historical, there is the following passage from John Deely's book, *The Tradition via Heidegger*.

Beings-within-the-world generally are projected upon the world – that is, a whole of significance, to whose reference-relations concern, as Being-in-the-world, has been tied up in advance. When beings-within-the-world are discovered along with the Being of Dasein – that is, when they have come to be comprehended – we say that they have meaning [*Sinn*]. According to that analysis, meaning is that wherein the comprehensibility of something maintains itself – even that of something which does not come into view explicitly and thematically (103).

24. (p. 13-14) That meaning was said earlier to be suprasensible, was in the context of “traditional metaphysical systems”; and that now it is to be sensible is not born out by the text.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Professor Joós states at one point: “In the metaphysical tradition we attribute to *meanings* [my italics] an existence which is independent from physical reality” (133). At another point, while discussing Heidegger whom he claims can be translated into traditional metaphysics (and so presumably into an account that includes the notion of causality as force or power in nature), he states: “Indeed, causality holds the entities together and provides for the unity of their *meanings*” [my italics] (136). Are there one or two notions of meaning here? Are they connected? If so, surely not by causality since the latter would then be caught up in explaining what needs to be explained.

25. (p 14) Student's claim that author's claim that Being is always the being of an entity is contrary to Heidegger's claim that Being is not an entity, while stating that it is in accord, is not correct. The being-of an entity is not the same as being-an entity; classically, these would be property and substance, respectively. Restate it how you wish; but see them different.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Professor Joós claims that “Being in Heidegger is always the Being of an entity and the Being of an entity is its meaning...” (136). Heidegger claims that “‘Being’ cannot indeed be conceived as an entity;. . . nor can it acquire

such a character as to have the term 'entity' applied to it."

26. (p. 15) True, that to identify meaning with any particular entity is not to follow Heidegger; but not true, that this is to continue the tradition.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

The evaluator seems to be saying that Professor Joós follows neither Heidegger nor the tradition. I would say, on the contrary, that he not only follows the tradition but identifies Heidegger with it.

27. (p. 17) It is correct to recognize that the author identifies meaning with concept on p. 138, although only by apposition rather than argument. Argument from either is lacking.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

That Professor Joós identifies meaning with the concept ("[Traditional metaphysics] speak[s] of immaterial reality . . . as causes of both being and knowledge of being, ie. the concept (or *meaning*)" [my italics, 138]) in addition to causality ("Now we may wonder how the two realities, the physical and the suprasensible are united....Without causality neither the parts, nor the whole can make any *sense*" [my italics, 133]) gives an idea of how he runs a two-tracked discourse on meaning and, what is more, a repeated crossing of these tracks without issue.

28. (p. 18) Correctly identifying nothingness as relative nothingness rather than absolute nothing does nothing to impale the author's argument, which does not depend upon the absence of being.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Professor Joós does not recognize the essentially equivocal nature of Being in Heidegger. As a consequence, he does not recognize the always-*beyond*-metaphysical nature of Being which is also its always-*towards*-metaphysical nature. Nothingness in Being is therefore as integral to beings as it is to Being itself. When Professor Joós identifies Being with nothingness, he ignores the extra-logicality of Being and so makes it seem as if Heidegger ignores logic. ("It may sound paradoxical, but meaning emerges out of Nothingness, because Being itself is Nothingness" [138].)

29. (p. 19) It is correct to recognize that "entities disappear in total indifference" by the author is not consistent with that entities are "indifferent but do not disappear" by Heidegger.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

The evaluator is good enough to note that I pick up on a misreading of Heidegger. (Professor Joós: “. . . Heidegger teaches in his essay – What is Metaphysics? – that meanings arise after all entities disappear (*versinken*) in total indifference (*Gleichgultigkeit*)...” (139). Heidegger: “All things and we ourselves sink into indifference. This, however, not in the sense of mere *disappearance* [my italics].”

30. (p. 20) Also, that the constituting relations of dasein and the constituted relations of meaning are one.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Without realizing it, the evaluator makes a major concession here. It is essentially the admission that these constituting relations must extend beyond all oppositions such as the sensible/suprasensible one. It is therefore not in keeping with Professor Joós's project, namely, the one of, first, insisting upon subject-object dualism as an irreducible reality and, second, “translat[ing Heidegger's] language into the language of traditional metaphysics” (129).

31. (p. 21) The passage used to show that author suggests that mortality is a datum of knowledge does not do so; nor is it pointed out by student why it is supposed to suggest this. (???) So, the . . .

32. (p. 22) . . . later statement where author says differently is not inconsistent with anything else said.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Professor Joós makes a distinction between knowing that we are mortals and understanding what it means to be mortal. He asks in his book: “We all know that we are mortals, but do we understand what it means to be mortal?” (140). It seems to me that he is opposing an intellectual or merely conceptual grasp of human mortality to a more lived, felt, or personally aware one.

33. (p. 23) Regarding making foreconception a way back to lived experience, there is no reason suggested by student why his claim that locating conception in dialectic makes it sensible.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Professor Joós situates foreconception in dialectic when he asks: “Why not run the risk of calling the initial statement of dialectic a foreconception

(*Vorgriff*) which leads to the understanding of the meaning of a thing?" (140). In short, he employs it as a metaphysical notion – something that can be taken up in discussion and turned into a concept – whereas Heidegger is trying to articulate the coming-to-be or "presencing" of all beings.

34. (p. 23) Student's request for suggestions as to how the concept is later rekindled by return to experience, is answered throughout the whole book, outside of this twelve-page application.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

After suggesting that foreconception "leads to the understanding of the meaning of a thing," Professor Joós adds that this meaning then "turn[s] into a concept . . . severed from the initial experience" (140-41). This way of expressing the matter, in addition to Professor Joós's notion of an initial experience that, according to his basic stance, would keep the subject-object relation intact as an irreducible reality, runs counter to the Heideggerian notion that meaning is always-already implicated in a self and world not separated but constituting each other.

35. (p. 23) The first use of 'generalization' in apposition to 'conceptualization' by no means suggests that N. and H. were only concerned with over-generalization. This is a cranky imposition upon author.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Let us compare the assignment question with the last line of the twelve-page section I examine and, once again, is called "Metaphysics on Trial." The assignment question reads: "Is it true that the purpose of both Nietzsche and Heidegger was – besides their teachings – to fight conceptualization?" The last line of this section reads: "Those who are too much involved in the fight against conceptualization tend to forget that without *generalization* [my italics], ie. conceptualization, there is no understanding" (141). Does it not seem that Professor Joós takes Nietzsche and Heidegger to be "too much involved in the fight against conceptualization" and, as a consequence, forgetful "that, without generalization, ie. conceptualization, there is no understanding"?

36. (p. 23) That these dozen are the only pages directly relating to the question is false.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Although the evaluator continues to insist on this, he never cites a single passage from the rest of Professor Joós's book to back up his claim.

37. (p. 24) This is a good summary of the student's claims, including errors.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

I shall take the liberty of reproducing this good summary with errors.

The investigation of the section called "Metaphysics on Trial" reaches its conclusion here. Our task took the form of examining very closely the only part of the book which directly relates to the question, "Is it true that the purpose of both Nietzsche and Heidegger was – besides their teachings – to fight conceptualization?" The primary concern was to arrive at a full and proper understanding of the term *conceptualization*. At one point it was identified with conceptual freezing (i.e., concepts which do not remain open-ended). However, this particular line of thought was not pursued. For the most part, conceptualization remained as something ambiguously opposed to experience. At the same time the term *experience* itself was never clarified. Hence the problem of understanding grew rather than lessened. Also many other lines of thought opened up as fast as they petered out. This only succeeded in bringing further areas of confusion into the inquiry. Since the hermeneutical goal is one of understanding in a particularly conscientious and penetrating way, no value should be assigned to answering a question by reinterpreting it for that purpose. Nor can this study move into other parts of the book. Or at least it cannot do so without taking on the enormous task of analysing a book that shows little reason to warrant such an effort. It is enough to note that every single page and paragraph raises more questions than it answers. In light of all this, it must be the conclusion of this essay that both the assignment question and the related text are confused and that the former, upon scrutiny, proves unintelligible.

38. (p. 24) I hope that it is not to fall into student's crankiness to identify the text without which the author's alleged misinterpretations of Heidegger's text could not have been changed with student's own, as I claim he did himself. (???)

HUNTER'S COMMENT

I have no idea what this means.

39. Conclusion. This paper is rife with mistakes. Nonetheless the student satisfactorily handles the application of hermeneutic method within the

narrow scope he allowed himself. Several observations were insightful. Several critical argumentations [*sic*] would have been excellent but for seizing upon a focus of complaint which was not there. Use of Heidegger's texts was good.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

How could a paper "satisfactorily handle . . . the application of hermeneutic method," be almost excellent in some of its argumentation, produce several insightful observations, make good use of Heidegger's texts, and yet be "rife with mistakes"?

40. Recommendation. 1) This paper is a pass. It is not a less than well-done piece, as would be a C. Certainly it is not an A. Since graduate grades have no letter "shades", it must then be a B.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

This much at least is, if not right, clear.

41. Recommendation. 2) What got in student's way of an A paper was so manifestly his animosity towards the author and his work. This led student, again on the face of the paper, to make erroneous judgments because of going out of his way to look for deficiencies, and to create them when not found. That is to say, the student's attitude has impeded his learning in this way.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

I will not deny animosity towards Professor Joós. I will not even deny animosity towards the evaluator. But what I will deny is that I had to go out of my way to find deficiencies in Professor Joós's book. Let it be read by a dozen scholars in hermeneutics, phenomenology, and Heideggerian scholarship. What would be the result? Would they praise it? Perhaps. But if they did, it would be more out of politeness than respect.

Whatever clarity and argumentative force Professor Joós's book has depends on the repetition of certain key ideas. Ideas such as the subject-object split and the need to establish an intermediate relation. All in all, these ideas, common enough, are pretentiously decked out and put forward as some sort of epistemological breakthrough.

I also take umbrage at the suggestion that I would have learned more had I stayed in Professor Joós's class. Only one thing would have resulted there for me – severe depression.

The evaluator, I am sure, is doing the honourable thing of defending a colleague. I therefore cannot say he is entirely wrong. On the other hand, it

no doubt prevents him from admitting that not only is my treatment of Heidegger good but a challenge to Professor Joós.

41. (continued) In addition, I understand that the student has operated outside of official learning context, not only in this course, nor even only in another course with the same instructor, but even in the third graduate course for which he was registered. There is no reason to think that his lack of exposure to any context for learning in those other two cases would have had any less detrimental effect upon his learning than it had in this.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Let me tell you, Mister Evaluator, that though I may be troublesome at times, I have never acted fraudulently. Let the same be said of all members of the Department.

41. (continued) In view of that I recommend that, if student ever again finds it impossible for him to benefit from the opportunity for the mentoring of his learning by instructor and colleagues, which he in particular badly needs, then student be immediately deregistered from that course, instead of the entire department being obliged to bend over backwards to service his peculiar needs.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

It is good to know that there are people who know or think they know what you need better than you yourself. Mister Evaluator, I have all the mentors I need when I pick up the work of a truly great mind. Academics are inclined to forget what people like Descartes, Nietzsche, Spinoza, Peirce, Thoreau, and others went through and its relation to the persecution and ostracization they suffered at the hands of the educated class. The very ones who laud them to no end when they're no longer around to make nuisances of themselves.

41. (continued) The same applies to any efforts of his toward arranging singular tutorials. As it stands now, he has completed fully half of his graduate coursework [*sic*] without ever receiving such mentoring, correction, and direction. As it is, he may as well have stayed at home, and continued reading as he had done before.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

No comment.

42. Comment. The arrangements for this case have been a very heavy

imposition, involving upwards of ten hours of work on his paper and my commentary, quite apart from the time that was required for reading the author's course text.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Not only is it an oddity that the evaluator spent so much time on a B paper, but that he took so long getting around to reading Professor Joós's masterpiece.

43. Comment (continued) This involvement is, of course, at the expense of my own students. This is not right; . . .

HUNTER'S COMMENT

Perhaps it's not right to be an evaluator and at the same time a lawyer.

43. Comment (continued) . . . and this serves as a personal reason for recommending against repeating this sort of arrangement for him, in addition to the academic reasons set out above. We have no good reason to assign a premium to incompatibility and bad manners.

HUNTER'S COMMENT

You speak as one who has administrative responsibilities. Along with your bad writing, this concern gives you away. It is almost laughable to think that the Chair of the Department – someone who has shaken my hand and congratulated me for winning an award – would then take up the role of anonymous and objective evaluator and, wearing this ill-fitting and ill-beseeming mask, go about the task of not only criticizing my work but scolding me as if I were an errant schoolboy.

– I give up! I must've been out of my head! Gadamer, Professor Joós, intentionality, fighting – how many professors?

– Three.

– All at the same time? And then writing these monstrous counter-reports to get – God only knows I'm glad I was never faced with anything like this!

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