

Was Ffroid a philosopher ? As he might have put, gods rust his hole, moist certainly.

You are korrekt, a pseudonym. Has to be. I'm sure that the same human behind the persona in question is behind various others. As "Schimpff," the same obscure regentlemen in question at least pretended to present a "neo logical positivism." A painful case. Of what I cannot say.

Ffroid's logical positivism was solid but decidedly untimely. Of which, I am convinced, he was completely aware, hence the marginal irony. The "joke" is this collision of abrasively ascetic positivism with a backgrounded mystical-ironic skepticism. *If* one is going to play the game of philosophy as if a game of chess, *then* one commits to the bit, goes at it unrepentantly. Ffroid's command of the material was founded on a deep sense of the futility of the endeavor. And of every endeavor.

If one saw only the logical positivism, one might mistakenly imagine an pitiably closed-off and earnest (and perhaps autistic) prisoner of theory. I suspect that our "hero" enjoyed the strange harmony of this "positivism" with a (mostly) concealed infinite irony. This infinite irony is familiar to *us*. We have already discussed what De Man wrote about Schlegel, and so and and so and. The point, I suppose, is that Ffroid-Schrimpp-whomever is one of us, self-consciously leaving graffiti for us, as we ourselves have both discussed

leaving graffiti for others.

The stuff I found on this guy, under various pseudonyms and in a variety of styles, was made public between 15 and 10 years ago. I looked but have not found any more recent traces. So our graffiti artist is dead or retired. Or working on some crazy novel. Which may be out there, but I can't find it. Of course we are swamped with bot-written novels. The dead internet prophecy has been fulfilled. Basic income gives us free time, but most of us aren't motivated to do "art." You will remind me that people still need and have friends for actual conversation. And I agree. But look how artificial companions are becoming more popular. The left has embraced android rights activism, etc. I remain undecided. I just don't know. At some point, the bots are going to be (maybe) behaviorally indistinguishable. Revealing perhaps that we have always been bots ?

Ffroid often wrote about himself in the way that I am writing about him now. He even used fictional letters, fictional interviews. So this genuine letter, if undated, *could pass as the work of Ffroid*. Indeed, he insisted on the quasi-universality of "the black flower." Probably lonely as an artist at least (apparently married though), he insisted on a virtual community that might not appear empirically within the narrow span allotted to creatures such as we are. Sober among the drunk, but "drunk" nevertheless on "a gleam in the eye." One of his many symbols for a transcendence that refused to formulate itself. Or continually reformulated itself in a barrage of elusive metaphors.

If we could tell his ghost that he wasn't original, that ghost would take it as a compliment, I think. For total originality is also an abyss of loneliness, a complete erasure. The "gnosis" depends, he said, on the iterability of signs. The "gnosis" is the "life" of the signs. Immortality through "dead" signs. Through the repetition of the same enough gnosis in new but equally mortal flesh. Gnosis presupposes the life of the signs, lives in the life of the signs. Lives in the space between signs and the emptied subjects from which they erupt.

## 2

I did indeed create a little mob of representatives. I always wanted distance from my avatars. I never got a tattoo. I sometimes resented being stamped with a proper name, a toe tag, like some chipped dog with a tendency to jump the fence. There would be no point in saying so if I didn't hope for the ideal reader. For an altar ego, repetition with variation. Not me but me enough. As I am not you but you enough. But not just any you, not all of you. A muted pose thorn for the necessarily marginal. I give ye my esoteric doctrine, a cosmic irony stolen from others. Or a flame from one melting candle to the next.

What is it to put up a sign ? Out on the highway, seen mostly by the wrong kind of fool, not my kind. I have conversed with the Serious, uptight moderators, constipated incoherent pseudo-mystics, rancid "rationalists" with limp logic. These are those who fit in.

I'm fonder, ultimately, of the maniacs who said something surprising, only to get banned, sometimes justly, for their bad manners. But often enough for their irritating novelty. My "complaint" is that they fell asleep in their costume. Took it for their final flesh. Captives all. (I just like the phrase "captives all." I too must be captive, if captivated by a sense of being a captain.)

Was my logical positivism a prank ? No. But it was funny. I think of Stavrogin. Of Shakespeare. Let me show the ascetic rationalists how the job should be done. Then I'll show the purveyors of mysticism how it should be done. In the process, I will have demonstrated how "transcendent pessimism" should be done. Such is my vanity, if you still trust the earnestness of these sentences.

### 3

—So the object is a system of faces. An ideal manifold. Being is time is the showing/hiding of such manifolds in various "articulated" situations.

—Why showing-hiding ?

—I can't see one side of the coin without not-seeing the other. The coin (if we ignore the edge) is a (to simplify) a manifold or unity of its two sides. The coin is never completely present.

—Is that it ?

—Yes. But it's maybe worth stressing that it's the

“idea” of the coin that “glues” the sides of the coin together into *a* coin. *And* the coin is an interpersonal between-us entity because this “idea” is itself “in the world” or “between us.”

—And no consciousness, right ?

—Correct. Just world-from-perspective. Or the from-a-point-of-view-ness of reality which is manifest, for instance, in the aspects or partial showings of this or that object.

—So time is the lifestream ?

—Yes. Time is existence is being is personal continuum. “Personal continuum” expresses the subject-like “incarnate” character of world-from-point-of-view. Perspectivism, phenomenism, redundancy theory of truth. I tire of saying it. I wait for someone to echo it in paraphrase. One stranger seemed to get it, more or less, but wasn’t sufficiently invested in foolosophy to hang around and develop it with me. Before that, another guy seemed to get it, and to be into philosophy, but he was eager to play prophet. To politicize what for him was means rather than end.

—The earlier guy was eager to be one of these cultural leaders ?

—Yes. So, from my POV, conceptually able but young in worldly wisdom. But that’s me as grizzled detective, thinking a talented young person is barking up the wrong tree. The person in question might even succeed at getting some attention. Hard to say. Lots of competition. But the product itself is hollow. To

me it's unrealistic wishful thinking, dressed up in an academic style that disguises its emptiness. The logic goes like this: if only people understood all this beautiful theoretical stuff, then they'd all be good. As if developing the skill of handling trendy theory wasn't a class indicator, a status indicator, a performance of superiority.

—So the “problem” is their naivety about themselves ?

—Yeah. No integration of the shadow. No serpent wisdom.

—But that serpent wisdom is poison.

—It is. A toxic medicine. Like drinking that worm juice in *Dune*. Which presumably gives you visions of The Wheel.

—So what is to be done ?

—Nothing. Who knows ? My point is that it's a personal problem, not something to evade in a cheap slogan or expensive inflated slogan. I think of early Heidegger, before the famous book came out. There's something escapist in completely universal knowledge. Kierkegaard. Others. Life is a first-person affair. The “artist” is out there in the woods.

—But it's clear that the “vision of the Wheel” is quasi-universal.

—Yes. Elitist, esoteric, and so on. We take friends as we take lovers. Because they stand out as if illuminated. The self-promoting theorists, eager for the spotlight, show that they know this without want-

ing to know it. One can of course claim that self-promotion is a by-product of promotion of the Cause, on which the promoter incidentally is an expert.

—I don't hear resentment or hatred.

—Good. That's a low state. All of this is part of The Wheel. Christ on his Mother Matrix Cross. The black flower springs from a pile of shit. Entanglement of authentic beauty and its source and foil.

—Are you a mystic ?

—Not really. Just a poet. But people don't understand poetry, don't understand the mystic. Some do, but mostly people accept the usual pragmatic ignorance.

—That too, I guess, is part of The Wheel.

—You guessed it. Idle talk or "the one" is that into which we are thrown. And from which we only occasionally emerge, as poets with distinctive voices. Distinctive within the range of intelligibility.

—Have some great poets been put in the loony bin ?

—Probably. Or you might say that greatness manages to connect the shit to the flower, to build a mythic bridge. If only for the few. But surely some genuine poets were just unlucky.

—Are you a genuine poet ?

—I sometimes feel like one, but of course the recognition of a few would help. I've told you about some of the good spots of my personal life. I don't live

without affection. I can make women laugh. That's something. But my "serious" work is of course more abrasive and questionable. In our age, it's a risk to commit to the bit. To become a public personality. You need some financial independence to really say it like Kerouac, etc.

—Hence the pseudonyms, the irony ?

—Yes. But the irony is also part of the art, because I don't finally identify self and art. Though of course the art hints at an implied self. I can understand why Plato used dialogues. Why Kundera wrote novels with differing characters. That polyphony "is" perhaps the "message." The "transcendence" can't be directly expressed, for reasons that are probably obvious.

—Any fixity loses the *movement* and "agility" of "irony."

—That's it. Irony as parabasis, as the continual possibility of negation as distance from this or that expression. De Man on Schlegel. Hegel on Schlegel. Old forgotten stuff, but not forgotten by everyone.

—I think you just need a friend who reads that kind of thing.

—Yeah, man. Who really reads it, gets it, wants to reactivate it, play with it.

—But also with logical positivism ?

—Sure. Less important, but that would be good. Throw in math. I like math too. But the main thing is the "irony," a "gleam in the eye." The guy I men-



tioned earlier was smart. We had good conversations on “logical positivism” stuff. But soon he was off on a trendy “scientifically spiritual” quest. I’m sure he found me as grizzled detective as unlovable as I found him as a candidate for world-saving spirituality purveyor. After a polite but honest exchange, there’s been radio silence. Every once in a while, I check in on what he’s up to. Same basic mission, though the theory changes. While I have kept at the plow, developing my “logical positivism.”

—As a work of art.

—You nailed it. A work of art. For a few weirdos. Ascetic abrasive abstemious. Sober. No world-saving. No practical value. The consumer gets a brown paper bag. But I think the useless art is fairly solid, if untimely. Or because untimely.

—*Because* untimely. Yes. But you may wait forever for the ideal consumer.

—Don’t I know it. But that’s part of The Wheel. I’m laying my eggs like an insect. Leaving graffiti for the few. Or dreaming that I’m leaving graffiti for the few. Plenty of cranks dream a similar dream.

—FWIW, I think your manners are proof enough that you aren’t a crank.

—You are a sweetheart, my friend.

—On the other hand, this imaginary dialogue is a bit creepy.

—So it’s like that ?