

# PHILOSOPHY 704

Professor Ludwig von Booring

*Frederika Schultz, the assistant to the professor in this story, is a member of St. John. Occasionally, Boone College will ask other learned members of the community to sit in on selected lectures and offer an independent critique. Per Frederika's suggestion, the committee chose me for the initial class of Philosophy 704.*

*Pastor Arnold Schmidt*

At 8:00AM on Tuesday morning, Professor Ludwig Von Booring and his able assistant, Frederika Schultz, walked through the classroom door. The knowledgeable teacher stopped in front of his desk and tapped on the right front corner with his hand carved wooden pointer. Frederika, all bent over from the heavy load of books she carried, followed his command, and set the volumes on top of where he tapped. Straightening herself, she then walked over to the podium and waited for the professor to welcome the students.

Standing in front of the blackboard, the professor spoke, “Gutt morning, students.” Raising his pointer to the first name listed on the blackboard, the learned man continued, “I am, of course, Professor Ludwig Von Booring ... and this is my capable assistant, Frederika Schultz. As we begin another term of the school year, I want to remind you that you are in Philosophy 704. If you find that you are in the wrong class or that you have changed your mind about taking this class, you may leave.”

In response to Professor von Booring’s reminder, eight students got up to exit the classroom.

“Sit!” ordered Ludwig. “Sit!”

Five students sat immediately, while the three remaining upright murmured something about the professor saying they could leave.

“Sit!” demanded the professor. “Sit!”

Two of the exiting students then sat down and the last one standing appeared to be holding to his convictions.

The professor aimed his hand carved wooden pointer at the last student and said, “Sit!”

Reluctantly, he sat down, allowing the professor to continue with the class introduction.

“Since this is an advanced class in philosophy, we will study questions that have mystified mankind for eons. It is my belief that one cannot grasp the depth of such questions without first absorbing the collected wisdom of a wide variety of intellectuals. And so, this will be the format of our class lectures and discussions.”

Walking back over to the blackboard, Professor von Booring wrote the question for the first class. “Now, our question for today will be, ‘Why did the chicken cross the road?’”

He continued by drawing a chicken on the left side of two vertical lines that represented a road. “At this time, Frederika will read for you various opinions from a selection of noted individuals. You may proceed, Frederika.”

“Why did the chicken cross the road?” proposed Frederika, as she began citing the opinions before her.

The evolutionist, Genesis Goodwin says, “It was by pure chance. A random selection predicated on its necessity to find food for survival. There was no grand intellectual plan here.”

Prominent attorney, F. Law Money says, “Do we have any witnesses to this crossing? No. I submit to you that, if there was a crossing at all, it was someone who gave the impression of a chicken. We don’t even know if this alleged crossing occurred in daylight or the dark of night. There is a strong possibility that if it allegedly occurred at night, reliable identification is questionable at best. This whole charade could well have been the concocted story of some phantom chicken hater afraid to show his face in public.”

The philosopher and revolutionary, K. Comrade Redsky says, “The chicken was obviously seeking to escape from the capitalist bully of a farmer who was lining his pockets with the profits from the fruit of the chicken’s labor. The chicken could do nothing but advance to the inevitable conclusion that it must join its fellow oppressed and form a socialist society.”

Author and right-wing conspiracy theorist, D.C. Morales says, “The mere fact that we, as rational human beings, would assign any didactic significance to the *Gallus domesticus* and its predilections is a dire attempt to justify the existence of a multilayered educational bureaucracy. The chicken’s behavior, as so questioned, has little

relevance except as a prime example of pork barrel politics.”

Beverly Hills oil tycoon, J.D. Clampett, says, “It was mostly cause Granny had a powerful hankerin for some fricassee and we was fresh out of possum.”

“And so, there you have the opinions upon which we shall begin our discussion.”

“Thank you, Frederika.”

“May I say something, Professor?” asked Frederika.

“If you must, Frederika.”

“What if the chicken crossed the road because of a religious experience?”

“What are you talking about, Frederika? This is a chicken. Chickens have no souls. That is ridiculous.”

“Yes, sir, it would be ridiculous if we only took the literal meaning. But what if the chicken was a symbolic representation for mankind?”

“What?”

“There are many examples of a metaphorical relationship between the chicken and man, but I will cite only a few,” said Frederika. “First, there is

the schoolyard taunt of a timid child as being ‘chicken’ when it comes to a dare. Then there is the slang term for a young female of ‘chick’. Next would be the term for someone who’s in a frantic state as ‘running around like a chicken with its head cut off’. An overprotective mother carries the title of a ‘mother hen’. A grouchy old man is often called an old ‘rooster’. Lastly, there is an expression that the elderly often use, ‘we’re no longer spring chickens you know’.”

Going over to the blackboard, Frederika wrote the word ‘man’ on the left side of the road. Then she wrote ‘God’ on the right side of the road. Finally, she drew two horizontal lines that crossed the vertical lines of the road.

“So, you see, sir,” she continued. “With the metaphor that I have given, we have man on this side of the road and God on the other side of the road. Man, feeling lonely and guilt ridden in this materialistic world, has a desire to get closer to God. Now, the key word in this question is ‘cross’ for when the chicken crosses the road, we become aware of the bridge of the ‘cross’ that God gave to man so he could come to Him.”

“My, my, my, my,” said the professor. As he put his arm around his assistant, he continued,

“Dear sweet Frederika, you have so very much to learn. Why don’t you run down to the lounge and get me a cup of coffee?”

His able assistant bowed to him and left to do as he wished.

“My, my, my, my. Chicken, man, God. My, my.”

When Frederika left the room, the professor turned back to the blackboard and stared at her words and illustration. Though he thought it ridiculous, he couldn’t stop himself from going over to the blackboard. He followed the drawing and the words with his hand carved wooden pointer. His furrowed brow betrayed his mocking of his assistant.

“Chicken, man, God,” he mumbled to himself. “Chicken ... man ... God. Perhaps, if the chicken...” Then he realized that the entire class had been witnessing his intense study of the blackboard. “Uh, class dismissed.”