

Kloom wrote maybe 100 informal philosophy papers between 2024 and 2026. The name Kloom is one of many pseudonyms. Kloom wasn't a philosophy professor or even a grad student in a philosophy department. He claims that he was occasionally an adjunct mathematics professor. IMO, this is believable, given his scattered comments on mathematics, and graphics he produced and included in videos presenting his philosophy.

As he himself indicates, his philosophy is primarily a paraphrase and occasionally a synthesis of his influences. He repeatedly celebrated phenomenologists like Ernst Mach and J. S. Mill, on the one hand, and phenomenologists like Heidegger and Husserl on the other. He was trying to “resuscitate” phenomenism, which he took to be under-appreciated. Kloom’s videos influenced Rattner, which is why we talking about Kloom in the first place.

Rattner’s small but dense book *Phenomenism* incorporated Heidegger into the phenomenism of Mill. This book became moderately famous in the small world of academic philosophy. Rattner credits “Kloom” in a long footnote. Kloom’s videos directed him to Mill and Feuerbach, as Rattner was already reading the phenomenologists. In my opinion, Rattner’s *Phenomenism* is largely a careful elaboration of what is primarily already in Kloom. Rattner’s style is more academic, and he had the discipline to organize an entire focused book, in contrast to sporadic informal papers.

Of course, Rattner is a professional philosopher, an academic. He wasn’t doing philosophy “on the side.” Of course, Rattner is the younger man. His book came out when he was only 26. Yet the book has, in my view, a certain finality or maturity. In my judgement, it’s the kind of book that Kloom “should” have written and wanted to have written. But Rattner’s *Phenomenism* is focused exactly on phenomenism. Kloom, who sometimes focused on phenomenism, was also an “existential” philosopher. Rattner’s career, in contrast, has at least publicly been focused on phenomenism.

We might say that Kloom is the not-quite-presentable “influence in the closet” of Rattner. I should emphasize, however, that Rattner primarily uses Mill and Mach directly. Yes, he interprets them much as Kloom did. But, in my view, Kloom’s interpretation was “natural.” At least in retrospect.

Kloom as existentialist, like Kloom as phenomenalist, is primarily a paraphrase and only occasionally a synthesis of his influences. His “pessimism” is “transcendent” or “ironic.” He called himself a “gallows-humor pessimist.” His persona reminds me of Bukowski.

Kloom is not-quite-presentable because he writes but many think but do not say in their office, where “office” is both literal and metaphorical. Kloom is not earnest about politics in the least. This is not because he doesn’t think about politics, but because he doesn’t think that public political speech is effective or sincere.

One of his first favorite philosophers was Nietzsche, and he was never a “left wing” reader of Nietzsche. He is dangerously frank about his initial attraction to egoistic philosophers, to “evil” thinkers. He reads Emerson and Whitman as “anti-gurus” who help liberate some of their readers from “transference” and “projection.” Kloom connects this to the younger Heidegger’s concept of authenticity, but he emphasizes that Heidegger often functions as one more eventually inhibiting father figure.

I read Kloom as trying to escape the “We pose” altogether. He thematizes this “we talk” in able to get some distance from it. Rattner followed Kloom in insisting on the “situatedness” of perception and belief. But Kloom is a “reckless” relativist. In my view, this recklessness is “only” a matter of rhetoric. Kloom is “strategically rude” and “informal” in some of his papers.

Another personal judgement: Kloom comes off as a very “realistic” philosopher in the informal sense of “real.” If we recall that phenomenism and logical positivism were largely reactions against speculative indulgence, this is not surprising. But Kloom

extended his demystification to include truth and objective reality. Which suggests to some perhaps a theoretical indulgence. But Kloom replaces truth with the continual transformation of situated belief. And he insists that we have to have to share most of our beliefs to make sense to one another.

In short, Kloom is a pragmatic atheist with a dark sense of humor. Who is not afraid to study the gnostics. His “perspectival lifeworld realism” is a “radical pluralism.” So he’s an anti-reductive thinker. But also a person with a taste for the concrete. He’s a reader of Freud and Marx who is not a Freudian or a Marxist.

3

Kloom also writes fiction and something adjacent to poetry. He doesn’t make much of this work public. I suspect that some of it is risky. Burroughs and Joyce are both influences. Perhaps many forget how transgressive *Naked Lunch* and *Ulysses* were and even still are, simply because they are respectable through their fame.

I compared Kloom to Bukowski above. I gather that Kloom values being a face in the crowd. Hence the pseudonyms. For me the connection is Bukowski’s willingness to work a ordinary job. Bukowski, until his big break, didn’t live the life of a great undiscovered poet. In contrast, Henry Miller put himself in compromising situations, lived the life of the “decadent” artist.

If one hunts down the clues, as I have, one can discover that Kloom was a clean-shaved bald man, with clear-framed glasses, who always wore solid colors. He was (and is ?) married to a woman he met when he was only 19. So I imagine a man living a mostly civilized life while indulging in a wild imagination. A few comments indicate an uncivilized decade, his 20s, culminating in a marriage at around 30, where he began to settle down. Kloom was also working class, a first generation college student. He called himself “white trash with a library card.”

He was a musician in his 20s and 30s, singing drumming and playing guitar. He went to school for math in his 30s. Was apparently a “perfect student.” Won a fellowship when applying to grad school. But left with only an M. A., eventually somehow alienated from academia. But not too alienated to use that M. A. to work as an adjunct. He apparently loved teaching. Which makes sense, given his love of “explication.”

4

Kloom apparently vanished as “outsider internet philosopher” in 2026. Rattner’s *Phenomenalism* was published in 2034, and Rattner’s footnote indicates that he saw Kloom’s videos as an undergrad.

Why did Kloom vanish ? I can only hypothesize. One possible reason : more and more synthetic content flooded YouTube and Reddit in 2026. A buzzkill, I’m sure. Another possible reason : Kloom exhausted himself on the topic of phenomenalism, and he didn’t want to publicly present the rest of his philosophy on YouTube, as that would be something of a performative contradiction. Kloom may have turned from the screen to the typewriter, focusing his time and energy on a novel. In my opinion, Kloom would also publish this novel under a pseudonym. And this novel would be so risky that he’d have to self-publish it, on Amazon, etc. And perhaps he has already done so. But I haven’t found any novels that are plausibly by Kloom, and I haven’t searched with any seriousness. Because there’s too much stuff out there. Perhaps most of today’s self-published novels (along with too many house published novels) are also synthetic, generated by bots.

So we might say that Kloom arrived at the end of the great era of individual creativity. Even in academic philosophy, the use of synthetic thinking aids is more and more embraced.

I'll close by telling you who *I* am. Like Rattner, I saw some of Kloom's vids as a teen. I have always been more interested in novels than in philosophy, but I liked Kloom's philosophy because it was visceral and insisted on the reality of feeling-stained "lifeworld" situations. Kloom succeeded at etching the word "phenomenalism" into my memory. So I eventually noticed Rattner's *Phenomenalism* and bought it.

I've self-published two of my own novels, which almost no one has bought or read. I dropped out of my state university after the first year, disgusted by the widespread use of chatbots to cheat. My uncle was a plumber and offered me an entry level position, which I accepted. So I am a plumber who writes novels. My latest novel is about a plumber who writes novels.