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# Union of Egoists

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## **What is a UnionOfEgoists.com?**

This is an informational resource provided by Kevin I. Slaughter of Underworld Amusements and Trevor Blake of OVO, initiated in February and publicly launched April 1st of 2016. The website initially focuses on providing historical, biographical and bibliographical details of a few their favorite Egoist philosophers. It is also integrating the archives of egoist website i-studies.com, the former project of Svein Olav Nyberg, and the EgoistArchives.com project of Dan Davies. Further, it will be home to Der Geist, a Journal of Egoism in print 1845 – 1945. UnionOfEgoists.com will be the best resource for Egoism online.

## **What is a Union of Egoists?**

“We two, the State and I, are enemies. I, the egoist, have not at heart the welfare of this “human society;” I sacrifice nothing to it, I only utilize it; but to be able to utilize it completely I transform it rather into my property and my creature; i. e., I annihilate it, and form in its place the Union of Egoists.”

– Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*

## **What is Egoism?**

“Egoism is the claim that the Individual is the measure of all things. In ethics, in epistemology, in aesthetics, in society, the Individual is the best and only arbitrator. Egoism claims social convention, laws, other people, religion, language, time and all other forces outside of the Individual are an impediment to the liberty and existence of the Individual. Such impediments may be tolerated but they have no special standing to the Individual, who may elect to ignore or subvert or destroy them as He can. In egoism the State has no monopoly to take tax or to wage war.”

–Trevor Blake, *Confessions of a Failed Egoist*

# IN MEMORIAM

**Nietzsche  
Stirner  
Cervantes**

**Diderot  
Danton  
Bizet**



## The Eagle and The Serpent

A Journal of Wit, Wisdom and Wickedness.

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### OUR MEMORIAL ISSUES.

EACH issue of THE EAGLE AND THE SERPENT will have memorial quotations from the immortal free spirits born in the month. We present herewith the names which will be honored in this program :

#### *November.*

SWIFT, JULIAN, SCHILLER, SPINOZA, D'ALEMBERT, BUCKLE, G. ELIOT.

#### *December.*

HEINE, BEETHOVEN, MILTON, NEWTON.

Will our friends assist us in making these editions worthy of the names they commemorate, by sending free-spiritual quotations from the authors indicated? We wish also to invoke the assistance of interested readers in making translations from the French of Chamfort, Stendhal, and others.

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BEHIND THE POLITICAL SCENES

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ISSUED ON THE FIRST DAY OF EACH MONTH.

### John Henry Mackay's Appreciation of Stirner.

(From *Max Stirner, sein Leben und sein Werk*, pp. 161-4 & 190-2.)

Translated by Thomas Common.

The significance of "The Sole One" is still, as it was fifty years ago, divined and felt rather than known. How could it be otherwise in times when, in fact, everything totters to which we have hitherto clung, when we are zealously striving to replace the old estimates of worth by new ones, when the old stale wine is being again and again poured into new bottles instead of being poured away, and when we are still so little convinced of the absolute worthlessness of most of the estimates of worth!

We are a generation living betwixt night and day. Half awakened, we still rub our somnolent eyes, and are afraid to look into the light.

We cannot separate ourselves from the old abodes of our ideas, although they collapse over our heads; we are too cowardly to forsake the old home and commit ourselves to the sea of self-consciousness that can alone bear us to the other shore; we have not yet any genuine confidence in the future, although (or rather because) we have no longer confidence in ourselves.

We no longer believe in God; assuredly it is so. We have become atheists, but we have remained "pious people." We no longer pray in presence of the church bogey; we kneel before the sanctuaries of our heart.

We still get into estatic states as formerly, and the wretchedness of our awakening is the same. Only we awake more frequently, and our condition is that of reeling betwixt intoxication and doubt; it is no longer the holy, eternal ecstasy of the first "true" Christians.

Then this man comes amongst us.

He does not come with the condescension of the priest—he is not in the service of God, or of any idea whatsoever; nor with the fussiness of the teacher—he leaves us to believe or reject what he says; nor with the anxiety of the physician—he lets us live or die, for he knows that our fancy is our disease. Nor does he come like the philosopher who tries to catch us in the net of a new system of speculation. He despises the philosopher's language, the hideous, obscure, and unintelligible language, used as a privilege by those who only want to talk among themselves; he makes for himself a language of his own, for he knows that all knowledge can be intelligible when it wants to be intelligible.

He does not speak of us; he hardly even speaks to us.

He speaks of himself, and always of himself only; and we see how this ego of his strips itself of one fetter after another, until it stands free and unconquerable, in proud self-splendour, as its own master, the last on the field which it has finally won.

It is nothing more nor less than the declaration of the sovereignty of the individual, his incomparability and his uniqueness, that Stirner announces. Hitherto one had only spoken of his rights and duties, and where they begin and end; Stirner, however, declares that we are exempt from the latter, and have control over the former. We must make our choice. And since we cannot go back into the night, we must enter into the day.

For we know now that we are all of us egoists. When we survey our actions, we see that some of them have carried us further, much further, than our consciousness wishes to acknowledge, while others have got us entangled in discords quite incapable of being harmonised. Henceforth it will be in vain for us any longer to attempt to deceive ourselves and others concerning the motives of our conduct. Now that we have acknowledged them, what else remains for us but to accommodate ourselves to them?

The result will teach us what we have to thank Stirner for, if the example of those who have so lived their life has not yet shown it to us.

It is our final acknowledgment. Let us no longer stand up against it.

For verily, not too early does the day dawn, after this all-too-long night.

He has raised the bowed head, and put a sword into the languid hand. He has removed our faith and given us certainty.

He has again reminded us of our true interests, of our profane, personal particular-interests, and shown us that it is precisely their pursuit, and not sacrificing ourselves to ideal,

sacred and external interests, to the interests of all, that brings back the happiness to life, which we seem to have lost.

Since he has dissected the state of the politician, the society of the socialist and the humanity of the humanist, and has made it obvious that they are limitations to our individuality, he has given the death-blow to all authority—at the same time destroying the majority's and collective body's sovereign will and privilege—and in place of the citizen, the worker, the man, comes the ego, in place of the incorporeal annihilator, the real creator !

But not that only. Since he devotes the other part of his work to the most thorough investigation of the conditions under which alone the ego is able to develop itself to its uniqueness, he exhibits it to us in its power, its intercourse, and its self-enjoyment—the medium of its force and its final victory.

And in place of our weary, sore-tortured, self-tormenting race, comes the proud, free race of the "sole ones," to which the future belongs.

He did what he has done for himself, because it was a pleasure to him.

He demands no thanks, and we owe him nothing.

He has only reminded us of our indebtedness to ourselves ! —

*That is what* he has done ; how he has done it is not less worthy of admiration.

If *originality* and *force* are signs of true genius, Max Stirner was a genius of the first rank. He sees the world and men entirely with his own eyes, and everything stands before him in the clearest light of actuality. Nothing can perturb or deceive his penetrating gaze ; neither the night of the past, nor the crowd of desires of his own age. His is an absolutely original work, and there is none that could have been written with more impartiality and freedom from prejudice than "The Sole One and His Prerogative." There is nothing, absolutely nothing, which Stirner accepts as established and given, unless it be his own ego. Nothing bewilders him, confuses him, or imposes on him *a priori*. He thus appears as the genuine child of that critical age, only so infinitely in advance of it, that he begins where the others leave off. This impartiality gives to his words that self-intelligible assurance which so bewilders one person and acts so triumphantly on another.

The *logic* of this thinker is also incomparable. The rigid consistency of his conclusions does not shrink from any, not even from the ultimate consequences. He does not leave it to the reader to extend his thoughts to the limit of their sphere, he does it himself. Conceptions which hitherto appeared unimpugnable, he decomposes one after another, and lets them crumble to dust.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is not with the outer form of the Christian conception of things, of the rotten, crumbling church of the present day that this battle has to do, but with that spirit which, in ever new forms, continually constructs new strongholds of absolutism, the spirit of Christianity which, like a gloomy vapour, hangs over the past.

It is Stirner's achievement to have divested this spirit of its sanctity, to have unmasked it as the unsubstantial ghost of our imagination. While the most radical thinkers of his age Strauss, Feuerbach and Bauer merely groped with timorous criticism at the conceptions of sanctity, he decomposed them, and allowed them to crumble away.

He vanquishes Christianity in its ultimate consequences. It is annihilated. It lies behind us with the millennium of its humiliation, the smut of its fraternity, the innumerable horrors with which it has stained the page of history, with its falsehood, with its repudiation of all pride, of all individuality, of all genuine pleasure and beauty ; and although it still prevails among us in its final effects, Stirner has nevertheless removed it from us as a curse !

He stands on the boundary-line between two worlds, and a new epoch in the life of the human race begins with him—the epoch of freedom.

As yet we have not found any better name for it than that of anarchy : the order determined by reciprocal interest, instead of the lack of order under the sway of power which has hitherto prevailed ; the exclusive sovereignty of the individual over his personality, instead of his subjection ; his responsibility for his own actions, instead of his tutelage—in short, *his uniqueness*.—For it is on the foundation of the Christian view of things that the supports of all those conceptions rest which uphold the sway of power ; when Stirner has withdrawn

the ground from under them, they must fall, and with them falls that which they have supported.

So violent will be this bloodless and proportionally rapid-and-sure revolution of all the relations of life, that his immortal book will one day be compared only with the Bible in its wide bearings.

And as this holy book stands at the commencement of the Christian era to carry its devastating effects for two thousand years into almost the remotest corners of the inhabited world, so does the unholy book of the first self-conscious egoist stand at the entrance to the new age, under the first sign of which we live, to exercise as blessed an influence as that of the "book of books" was pernicious.

And if we would once more say what it is, how could we do it better than in its author's own words? It is this: "A violent, reckless, shameless, conscienceless, presumptuous—crime" perpetrated on the sanctity of all authority! And, hailing with joyous shouts the outburst of the purifying, emancipating storm conjured up by him, we ask with Max Stirner: "Do not the thunders roll in the distance, and dost thou not see how the heavens are ominously silent and becoming obscure?"

### Chamfort's Inspiring Suicidal Declaration.

Chamfort (1741-1794) like Danton, had hailed the Revolution with transcendent enthusiasm, and like Danton he found that there is no rest for a revolutionist but the rest of the grave. Each of these noble atheists owed his death to the honourable protest which he made against the villainous policy of the God-and-blood-intoxicated Robespierre. ... Friends secured Chamfort's release from prison but again a warrant issues for his arrest. Chamfort retired to his study, under pretext of making his preparations, shut himself in, and first with a pistol and next with a razor sought to kill himself. He only butchered himself fearfully. On recovering consciousness he dictated and signed with his own blood the following statement: "I, Sebastian-Roche-Nicholas Chamfort, declare I wished to die a free man, rather than be led again to a prison like a slave. I declare that if by violence I am dragged there in this condition I shall still have strength to finish the deed. I am a free man; never shall one make me enter a prison alive." Death ensued from his injuries.

Like d'Alembert, Mdle. de l'Espinasse, Delille, etc., etc., Chamfort was illegitimate—he never knew his father.

The *Britannica* says of Chamfort, "His Maxims are, after those of La Rochefoucauld, the most brilliant and suggestive sayings that have been given to the modern world... They have the advantage in richness of colour, in picturesqueness of phrase, in passion, in audacity." We have the honour of presenting to our readers the most considerable collection of Chamfort's epigrams that has as yet appeared in English.

## ONE THOUSAND FLASHES OF SAVING PENETRATION.

### The Wit, Wisdom and Wickedness of Chamfort.

12. To despise money is to dethrone a king.
13. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of man.
14. The world either breaks or hardens the heart.
15. He who has no character is not a man—he is a *thing*.
16. Love—agreeable foolery: ambition—serious stupidity.
17. The loves of some peoples are but the result of good suppers.
18. Prejudice, vanity, calculation; these are what govern the world.
19. The public! the public! How many fools does it take to make a public?
20. In politics and in gallantry really wise men do not fight for conquests.
21. Enjoy and give enjoyment. without injury to thyself or to others; this is true morality.
22. Intelligent people make many blunders because they never believe the world as stupid as it is.
23. Love pleases more than marriage for the reason that romance is more interesting than history.
24. You run the risk of being disgusted if you pry into the processes of cookery, government, or justice.
25. A man in deep mourning is asked: "Good God! whom have you lost?" "I?" says he, "I have lost nothing, I am a widower."

26. We have three kinds of friends ; those who love us, those who are indifferent to us and those who hate us.
27. The best philosophy to employ towards the world is to alloy the sarcasm of gaiety with the indulgence of contempt.
28. In love all is true and all is false. It is the only thing on which you cannot possibly say an absurdity.
29. The ambitious one who failed in his aim and lives in despair reminds me of Ixion broken on the wheel for having embraced a cloud.
30. An Englishman condemned to be hanged received the King's pardon. "The law's on my side," he protested, "they shall hang me !"
31. Our happiness depends upon a multitude of circumstances which do not manifest themselves, which one does not, and can not speak of.
32. We may wager that any idea of the public, or any general opinion, is a folly since it has received the approbation of a majority of the people.
33. "The difference between you and me," said a philosopher, "is that you say to masked hypocrites 'I know you' while I leave them to think that they have deceived me."
34. Someone asked a child "Is God the Father, God?" "Yes."—And God the Son, is *He* God?" "Not yet, that I know of; but on the death of His father He cannot fail to come into the succession."
35. Mr. L. to turn Mrs. B. (for long a widow) from the idea of marrying, said to her "Don't you see, it's a grand thing to bear the name of a man who can commit no more stupidities."
36. Hope is but a quack who cheats us continually and I for one felt happy when I had lost my hopes. I should put on the gates of Paradise the words which Dante put over the entrance to Hell : Abandon hope, all ye who enter here !
37. The physical world appears to be the work of a powerful and good being, who has been obliged to leave the execution of a part of his scheme to a demon ; but the *moral* world seems to be the product of the whims of a demon gone mad.
38. Milton after the restoration of Charles II. was on the way to securing again a lucrative office which he had lost. His wife urged him. He replied : "You are a woman, and you want a coach ; as for me, I want to live and die an honest man."
39. Someone told M. "You are very fond of consideration." He replied in a way that struck me : "No, I have consideration for myself and that sometimes secures me the consideration of others."
40. A bright woman told me once that when choosing a sweetheart a woman pays more regard to what other women say about the man of her choice than to her own opinion of him.
41. One must be able to combine the contraries : love of virtue with indifference for public opinion : taste for work with indifference for glory : the care of one's health with indifference for life.
42. When one has been tormented and fatigued by his sensitiveness, he learns that he must live from day to day, forget all that is possible, and efface his life from memory as it passes.
43. A man passed all his evenings for 30 years with a lady other than his wife. He finally lost his wife; one believed he would marry the other, and recommended him to do so. He refused. "I should not know" said he "where to go to pass my evenings."
44. I asked R., a man full of wit and talent, why he had shown himself so little in the revolution of 1789. He replied : "It was because, for 30 years, I had found men so wicked privately and individually, that I did not dare to hope any good of them in public and taken collectively."
45. A young man asked me why Mrs. B. had refused the homage he offered, to run after Mr. L. who seemed to refuse her advances. I told him : "My dear friend, Genoa, rich and powerful, offered its sovereignty to several kings, who all refused it ; yet they went to war to possess Corsica, which produces nothing except chestnuts, but which was proud and independent."
46. Rousseau, it is said, had been favoured by the Countess of Boufflers, and had even gone so far as to neglect her, which put them in a bad temper with one another. One day someone remarked in their presence that the love of the human race extinguishes love of country. "For my part," said she, "I judge by myself and I feel it is not true. I am a very good Frenchwoman, and I none the less interest myself in the happiness of all." "Yes, I understand you," said Rousseau, "you are French at heart, and cosmopolitan as regards the rest of your person."

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He loves thee well who makes thee weep.

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## EXTRACTS FROM NIETZSCHE.

*The Origin of the Sense of Sin.*

If any one cannot away with "mental pangs," the fault, roughly speaking, lies not in his "soul," but rather in his belly (I say, roughly speaking, which, however, by no means implies the wish to be roughly heard, roughly understood...). A strong and well-fashioned man will digest his experiences (including deeds and misdeeds) as he will his meals, even if he has to devour hard morsels. In case he fails to "get beyond" an experience, this kind of indigestion is physiological no less than that other—and, in many cases, merely one of the consequences of the other. — With such a view, one may, *entre nous*, nevertheless be the most determined opponent of all materialism...—*The Genealogy of Morals*, translation of W. A. Haussmann, Ph.D., p. 179.

*Should Philosophers Marry? The Value of "Virtue."*

The philosopher abhors *wedlock* and all that would fain persuade to this state—as being an obstacle and fatality on his road to the optimum. Who among the great philosophers is known to have been married? Heraclitus, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Kant, Schopenhauer—they were not; nay, we cannot even *conceive* them as married. A married philosopher is a figure of *comedy*, this is my proposition; and that exception, Socrates, mischievous Socrates, married, it seems, *ironice*, with the express purpose of demonstrating *this very* proposition. ... It is known what are the three great show-words of the ascetic ideal: Poverty, Humility, Chastity. And now let people for once examine the lives of all great productive and inventive spirits: to a certain extent all three will be found again in them. Not at all as their "virtues." This kind of man, what has it to do with virtues! But as the most essential, most natural conditions of their *best* existence, of their *finest* productivity. ... As regards the "chastity" of philosophers, the productivity of such spirits consists manifestly in something else than in children. Perhaps they also have somewhere else the continuance of their name, their little immortality. ... All artists know the injurious effects of sexual intercourse in times of great spiritual suspense and preparation; in the case of the most powerful among them, and those in whom the instinct operates with the greatest certainty, experience, fatal experience is not even necessary,—for in their case it is even their "motherly" instinct which, for the benefit of the work in preparation, will regardlessly dispose of all other supplies and advances of power,—of the *vigour* of animal life. In such cases the greater power will *absorb* the lesser.—Let us expound the above-considered case of Schopenhauer in the light of this interpretation, etc.—*The Genealogy of Morals*, pp. 144-151.

*A Sexual Appreciation of Luther, Goethe, Kant and Schopenhauer.*

Chastity and sensuality are not necessarily antithetical; every true marriage, every genuine love affair is past that antithesis. Wagner, it seems to me, would have done well to apprise his Germans once more of this *agreeable* fact by means of some fine, brave comedy, with Luther figuring as hero,—for among the Germans there always were and still are many slanderers of sensuality; and perhaps the greatest merit of Luther is that he had the courage of his *sensuality* (in those days it was called, delicately enough, "evangelical freedom.") ... But even in those cases in which that antithesis between chastity and sensuality really exists, it fortunately needs not at all to be a tragical antithesis. This might at least be the case with all better constituted and more cheerful mortals, who are not at all disposed, without further ado, to reckon their fluctuating state of equilibrium betwixt "angel and *petite bête*" among the arguments against existence; the finest, the brightest, such as Hafiz or Goethe, have even discerned an *additional* charm of life therein. It is just such "contradictions" that seduce to life. ... "Beautiful," according to Kant, "is that, which pleases *without interest*." Without interest! Compare with this definition that other one made by a genuine spectator and artist,—Stendhal, who somewhere calls beauty *une promesse de bonheur*. In this definition, at any rate, precisely that is *refused* and expunged which Kant emphasises in the æsthetic state: *le désintéressement*. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal? If, to be sure, our æstheticians will not tire to advance in favour of Kant, the old argument that, under the spell of beauty, one can behold even naked female statues "without interest,"—then I should think that we have a right to laugh a little at their expense. The experiences of *artists* in regard to this delicate point are "more interesting," and Pygmalion was, at any rate, *not* necessarily an "unæsthetic man." ... On few topics Schopenhauer talks with such confidence as on the effects of æsthetic contemplation. He claims that it tends to counteract just *sexual* "interestedness," in a way similar to that of lupulin and camphor. He never wearied of celebrating *this* escape from will as the great advantage and boon of the æsthetic state. Indeed, one might be tempted to raise the question whether his fundamental conception of "will and representation,"—the thought that redemption from will is only possible through "representation," may not owe its origin to a generalisation of even this sexual experience. (In all questions, by the bye, as to the philosophy of Schopenhauer, regard must be had for the fact that it is the conception of a youth of twenty-six, and partakes, consequently, not only of the specifics of Schopenhauer, but also of the specifics of that season of life.)—*Ib.* p. 131, etc.



### *The Dishonesty of Philosophers.*

What makes one regard philosophers with a half-distrustful, half-mocking glance is not that one again and again discovers how innocent they are—how often and how readily they make mistakes and lose themselves, in short their puerility and childishness—but because they do not behave themselves with sufficient honesty, while all of them make a loud and virtuous noise immediately that the problem of conscientiousness is in the least touched upon. ... They are all of them advocates who are unwilling to be called such; for the most part they are really advocates of prejudices which they christen truths.—*Beyond Good and Evil*, § 5.

### *Incorrigibility of the Idealist.*

An idealist is incorrigible: if one cast him out of his heaven, he makes an ideal out of his hell. One may disillusion him, and lo! he embraces the disillusionment no less ardently than he previously embraced his hope. In so far as his propensity belongs to the great incorrigible propensities of human nature, it may produce tragic events and ultimately become the subject of tragedies—which have to do precisely with the incorrigible, inevitable and unavoidable in human lot and character.—*Miscellaneous Opinions*, § 23.

### *Behind the Political Scenes.*

*Suggestions towards a New Science of Analytical Rascality and Political Psychology.*

What quantities of invalids, politicians, thieves might be advantageously spared.—*Emerson*.

Like almost all his contemporaries, La Rochefoucauld saw in politics little more than a chessboard where the people at large were but pawns, and the glory and profit were reserved to the nobility.—*Brittanica Encyclopædia*.

Politicians are a set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people, and who, to say the most of them, are, taken as a mass, at least one long step removed from honest men. I say this with the greater freedom because, being a politician myself, none can regard it as personal.—*Abraham Lincoln* in 1837.

As for the fine saying with which ambition and avarice palliate their vices, that we are not born for ourselves but for the public, let us boldly appeal to those who are in public affairs; let them lay their hands upon their hearts and then say whether, on the contrary, they do not rather aspire to titles and offices and that tumult of the world to make their private advantage at the public expense.—*Montaigne*.

### *An Unspoken Speech by Lord S——y.*

I am aware, dear ladies of the Primrose League, that the country has all but gone to the dogs under my guidance, but it is very thoughtless in you not to consider how I have fared personally. You know how much I am paid each year for mismanaging the country and I assure you that seven times that sum does not begin to represent how much I am ahead of the game since 1892—for there are my nephews and many other divisors and dividends. I see no reason for taking things so seriously.

Have I not been paid £40,000 since I last took the reins in my hands? But that is nothing—you ought to see Joe's trunk. *Selah*.

### *A C——n Manifesto Up-to-date.*

*Fellow Kynochers and Contract Fathers*—I do not have the slightest regret for all the blood that has been spilt in this most unnecessary and at the same time inevitable war. Our family have not spilt any of their precious blood I assure you. I found it necessary to purify one of the departments by having a relative submit a most disinterested offer. I shall carry out this policy of reform with unabated zeal, introducing it (through my wife, sisters, cousins, sons, nephews, aunts, next of kin, executors, assigns, or legatees) into any department which appears to need it. I hope you will conclude that Aus——n and myself are royal and therefore can do no wrong. Will brother Rhodes lead us in preying?

### *Chorus of Cabinet Officers.*

Do, dear bled ones, return us to power,  
We need that £5,000—and need it every hour.

### *Chorus of All Political Saints.*

I don't care a rap for you, dear people, but it will break my wife's heart if I am not returned—that would enable her to realize her fondest wish and enter smart society.