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## Max Stirner's Egoism and Nihilism

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by

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Note: this document was written in 1981, based on the literature available at that time. I revised and converted it to HTML in 1996, and revised a lot more in 2015. I didn't want to rewrite it from scratch, nor leave the old one circulating, so as a blend of old and new this is a final update. Send any comments to [alfalfaville@gmail.com](mailto:alfalfaville@gmail.com).

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ABSTRACT

During the early 1970s a 'revival' took place of the philosophy of Max Stirner, born Johann Caspar Schmidt (1806-1856), whose book **Der Einzige und Sein Eigentum** has been called a 'revolutionary anarchist manual', a 'Banker's Bible', a 'structural model of petit-bourgeois self-consciousness' and other names since its appearance in 1844.

The revival produced the most comprehensive study of Stirner in English to date, R. W. K. Paterson's 1971 **The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner**. While Paterson undertook to review **Der Einzige** as substantive philosophical discourse, paradoxically, and theologically, he would conclude that Stirner was doing metaphysics, to the point of a solipsistic frivolity.

This study examines the fascinating but ultimately unsuccessful, if not buffoonish, case against Stirner by Paterson. I conclude that we should rethink Stirner not as metaphysician but as social critic and educator, a "root", ground-level or primal thinker, more relevant today than ever. And that his ideas and principles are ready to be spread and put to work now in criticism, current events and art.

In this revision my purpose is to de-trivialize Stirner, tweak the paradigm further and introduce new material, with a view to reviving Saint Max where he belongs -- in the company of heretics such as Chamfort, Nietzsche, Mark Twain, Ambrose Bierce, George Orwell, Joseph Heller and George Carlin, to name a few.

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## I. Overture to the Nihilistic Egoist

When writing this paper in 1981 I used the 1973 Dover James J. Martin edition, a reprint of the Byington-Tucker 1907 - 1913 version of **The Ego and His Own**, widely available on the internet in 2015. [1]

In a 1973 review entitled *The Revival of Max Stirner*, Lawrence Stepelevich of Villanova University noted the republication of **Der Einzige**, along with new interest in the Young Hegelians in pre-1848 German thought, asking, "are we witnessing the beginning of another cycle of interest in Stirner?" [2]

Since John Henry Mackay's original biography in 1898 -- the original Stirner "revival" in German -- interest in the man and his philosophy waxed and waned until the 1960s. Notable between the world wars were Sidney Hook's **From Hegel to Marx** in 1936, and Karl Löwith's **From Hegel to Nietzsche** in 1941. [3] Paving the way had been Martin Buber's 1936 *Question to the Single One*, and Albert Camus' brief treatment of Stirner in **L'Homme Révolté**, translated as **The Rebel**. Henri Arvon also presented Stirner to post-war France in his **Max Stirner, Aux Sources de l'Existentialisme**. [4]

Since Karl Marx had excoriated Stirner at fulsome length in **Die Deutsche Ideologie**, written in 1846, modern Marxists took up the refrain, notably in Hans Helms' imposing 1966 **Die Ideologie der Anonymen Gesellschaft**, which attempted to identify Stirner with modern capitalism. In the same vein was Hans Heinz Holz' **Die Abenteurliche Rebellion**. [5]

John P. Clark III [6] also called attention to a Stirner revival. Stepelevich announced the "first comprehensive study of Stirner's philosophy ever to appear in English" -- R. W. K. Paterson's **The Nihilistic Egoist - Max Stirner**." Another significant work of the 70s revival was sociologist John Carroll's **Breakout from the Crystal Palace**. [7] This paper will focus in detail on Paterson's 1971 book.

Paterson at the outset states that partisan and parenthetical critique of Stirner has to date produced little real understanding of his true place in the history of philosophy. He offers **The Nihilistic Egoist** as --

in fact the first full-scale presentation of Stirner's philosophy in English, although more than a century has elapsed since his death... I shall maintain that nearly all of the earlier literature of Stirner has been in large measure vitiated by a basic misunderstanding..., and that only with the rise of existentialist philosophies in Europe during the last forty years has it been possible to undertake an illuminating appraisal of his true contribution to the development of European thought. [8]

A promising start. While Stirner was not exactly a pre-existentialist, he has "clear bearings within the existentialist world-view, even if it must eventually be defined in

opposition to most 'existential' standpoints." While existentialists have portrayed alienated man's "rootlessness, his isolation, his sense of spiritual dispossession," this estrangement has "infected humanity at its centre and has spread to every phase of modern life"; but wherever it is manifest, "human estrangement and its products can be attributed to an original and basic denial." (NE, viii-ix)

The past participle *infected* gives us early on a clue about just where Paterson is coming from. He expands on his tidy critique of existential philosophy:

For the moralist, it appears to be a denial of all ideals and principles of conduct. For the theologian... another, perhaps the ultimate, denial of God... Now, in the aetiology of nihilism Stirner's case history stands unique. His one great book must be the only sustained attempt to present a philosophy of unsparing nihilism systematically and without reserve.

He goes on to paint a picture of stand-alone, metaphysical negation --

For Stirner, this is the nihilism of the nihilistic egoist. Resting as it does on an ontology of negation, in which vacuity, purposelessness and disintegration are the constitutive concepts, his total egoism is essentially grounded in a world view which is starkly nihilistic... formulated in the unabashed first person with classical directness and lucidity.

While the figure of the 'nihilistic egoist' has been "lapidated by philosophers from Plato to Marcel," and also portrayed by novelists such as Balzac and Gide, nevertheless "seldom, if ever, has he been allowed to speak for himself."

If Stirner's Good News had been that we can be free of absolutes and their generic equivalents, Paterson's will be that we can go back to the absolutes. Not feeling obliged to argue his own position, Paterson's designating Stirner a nihilist is somewhat of a proclamation, and proclamations often beg the question.

[Stirner's] entire philosophy is centred on the concept of 'self-possession', to be understood in its most literal sense as the self-love and self-assertion of the particular historical human being who was Max Stirner. Although his personality is not an engaging one, therefore, it is indissolubly infused with the substance and meaning of his philosophy. The substance of his message is not so affected by the intellectual fabric of [his] age... for he is essentially occupied in restating a truly perennial philosophical position, but the conceptual apparatus with which he worked was mainly supplied by the conceptual artificers of his day... (NE, viii-x)

Paterson seems to say he will identify Stirner's philosophy with Stirner and pursue a context-free analysis. As he begins his scrutiny of the figure of **Der Einzige** and its property or "ownness" [Eigentum], [9] Paterson will offer "an intimate, circumstantial, and unexpurgated view of the workings of the nihilistic mind". If this leads more

people to "reconsider Stirner's contribution to modern thought, more light will be shed on one of the darker corners of the moral universe." (NE, x)

Should Stirner's "accents announce a sinister reef", still no one will "gainsay that the warning bell is often an irreplaceable aid to navigation." Thus a tentative venturing towards Stirner's treacherous waters of estrangement is "an intellectual obligation which we cannot shirk." (NE, xiii) After this melodramatic launch, Paterson gets down to dissection, unable to resist one of Hans Helms' more obscure finds, a 1903 article from a Berlin *Archiv Für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* by one Ernst Schultze, entitled "Stirnerian Ideas in a Paranoid Delusional System".

Here we read that Schultze -- whose qualifications are that he attacked Stirner -- felt unable to reach an opinion as to Stirner's emotional normality. If the book "escapes psychiatric condemnation, this is only because its author is prepared to extend to others the boundless egoistic irresponsibility which he claims for himself." It doesn't bother Paterson that a psychiatrist would form a medico-legal judgment about someone he'd never met. It appears Schulze may have had an agenda.

Paterson intends to go Schultze one better -- to "argue... that precisely such an extension is excluded, when the fullest implications of Stirner's concept of The Unique One are developed. [10]

**Der Einzige** is, Paterson claims, "translucently intelligible as a categorical document without recourse to the intellectual matrix in which it historically figured." And is to be understood as "essentially an act of self-designation" which is merely "silhouetted" by "circumjacent movements". Say again, Pat?

Moreover, despite its inner freedom from the intellectual resolves of its own or any other time, his philosophy in fact reflects, both by its choice of issues and by its metaphysical idiom, the German and European crisis of consciousness which it sought to abjure. (NE, 20)

Reflected here is one of Marx' accusations, that "Saint Max" reflected the alienation he attacked. There are at least two implications of this context-free method. One is that Stirner's *categorical* or *perennial* philosophy can be studied apart from its time; the other is that Stirner has no relevance to today's world. Why? This kind of solipsistic metaphysics doesn't have any reality outside philosophy. This tradition of *metaphysicalizing* Stirner, I will argue, is trivialization and straw-manship.

Paterson goes on to list contemporary philosophical literature with which Stirner was 'conversant', with a hurried discussion of his retorts and debts to Hegel and Feuerbach. [11] In his chapter "Descent into the Vacuum," the trajectory of Stirner circa 1842-1845 is characterized thus:

In less than three years Stirner traversed a direct and unerring route from a commonplace if militant liberal humanism, by way of a recklessly defiant individualism, to the relaxed and arrogant form of nihilistic egoism in terms of which he finally settled his philosophic identity... In his journalistic writings we can see [his] early radical

concern, his passionate detestation of social convention and political authority yielding gradually but inevitably to a self-centred disregard of moral and religious prescriptions, and then at last to the solitary and calm self-possession of the nihilist. (NE, 46)

This early Stirner, in 1842-3, reviewing his friend Bruno Bauer's **Last Trumpet**, "describes the 'self-sufficiency of the free man', who brings down a whole world in his murder of God, and whose work of self-creation cannot be distinguished from his work of destruction". In this early Stirner --

for every reference to the self-appropriation or the 'reckless and licentious will' of the sovereign individual,... there are twenty references to 'the truly and completely human', as constituting 'my best and true self', to the 'God within oneself', or even to 'morality and rationality' as the highest faculties of the free spirit. For the philosophical voyage on which he was now embarking Stirner had to travel lightly,... jettisoning redundant burdens -- morality, social justice, reason, and humanity -- which even at the start served only as ballast and which had to go overboard if he was to carry to its destination his purely personal freight... to the very brink of that total nihilism into which his immediate course lay to plunge. (NE, 49-50)

Stirner's four significant essays are these from 1842-3: *On the False Principle of Our Education and Art and Religion* appeared as supplements to the Rheinische Zeitung, prior to Marx's stint as editor-in-chief. Then appeared his review of Eugene Sue's sentimental liberal novel **The Mysteries of Paris** (later excoriated in Marx & Engels' **Holy Family**); and later *Preliminary Remarks on the State Founded on Love*. All are part of Stirner's **Kleinere Schriften**, [henceforth **KS**], now available on the web.

*False Principle* introduced Stirner as educator, emphasizing the need for the raw, imparted material of learning to undergo transformative annihilation -- that it might rise again in the 'free person' as will and creativity, the reborn task of education being thus to produce 'creators' rather than 'creatures.' [12]

While *False Principle* relies heavily on the Hegelian concept of 'Spirit', nevertheless an "astonishingly precocious miniature of the Unique One" is hatched:

The vacuous, impenetrable self of the 'free person', who negates and consumes the world in the act of exploiting and enjoying it, is the embryo of that 'creative nothingness' in which the identity of The Unique One is centred and from which he emerges to disembowel and caress the physical and social universe in which he alights... Stirner's educational essay is not yet a testament either of nihilism or egoism in the sense to which he was later to carry these concepts, but already his moral and social dissent has taken the form of a capricious individualism. (NE, 52)

In the essay *Art and Religion* Paterson finds that "it was as yet only man's expropriation of the divine to which [Stirner] was determined to put an end", as he abandoned his early influence by Feuerbach.

In retrospect we see how ominous Stirner's deepening interest in theology was to prove for his unwary allies on the Hegelian left. His atheism was in the end to be... a denial of philosophy also, and a destruction down to the last shreds of anything that a Feuerbach or a Bauer might seek to nominate in the place of God... The weapons of classical atheism were now his, even if for the moment he restricted his target-practice to the approved targets.

But isn't philosophy whatever philosophers do? And why publish a book then? A common-sense approach would be that Stirner's positions, or at least expressions, had evolved from the previous year. Mackay's laudatory and pioneering biography of Stirner suggested that the *False Principle of our Education* "takes its place fearlessly beside **Der Einzige**." [13]

Summing up Stirner's review of Sue's **Mysteries of Paris**:

...Sue is too parochial to conceive a man who might be 'superior to virtue as well as vice, to morality as well as sin', a 'character of steel' who has the nerve to live 'as a self-created man, fabricating his own identity from his own creative power in reckless disregard of both impulse and belief'... To the self-created man, who refuses to submit his merits or shortcomings to the reckoning, the whole arbitrary distinction between 'virtue and vice, morality and sin' is nothing but a futile obsession, an enfeebling *idée fixe*, and of it he makes a public and wholesale mockery. Stirner's self-created man, in short, is the settled and confident amoralist.

Paterson is, though, surely correct that Stirner began to distance himself from the humanistic tropes or styles of other Young Hegelians. Stirner's articles in the Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung were written just two years before **Der Einzige**, the chef d'oeuvre which would address, notes Mackay, a wider public. Stirner over two years evolved from journalistic opinion to philosophy, which he had studied at Berlin University, even attending lectures by Hegel. [14]

Thus, Paterson intones, began the journey to "the bottom of the abyss where the only echoes to be heard were his own." (NE, 57)

In Stirner's case we have the spectacle of a man initially professing two themes, an abrupt individualism and a rapacious scepticism, either which on its own might have been harnessed in the service of a profound moral concern or of some notable social purpose... In Stirner's case, however, a singularly truculent individualism was from the start irrigated by an explosive scepticism which would not rest until it had dissected and discredited every cause which reason or history could propose; reacting organically on each other, these

turbulent elements, by an irresistible internal alchemy, transformed what had been an intense political and cultural engagement into a callous and self-centred frivolity, from within the ark of which he could subsequently write, 'Away then with every cause which is not wholly and entirely my cause!... Thus from January 1842, given his drive to intellectual destructiveness and moral self-sufficiency, it could be surmised that he would plunge, step by cynical step, ever more deeply into the abyss of nihilistic egoism which had seemed from the outset to beckon him. (NE, 59-60)

Alas! All is abyss. The reader should ask him or herself if Stirner was claiming that all these causes were false, or simply asking whose causes are they, which sounds a lot like critical thinking, something Paterson spends little time on. Since **Der Einzige** is virtually free on the internet in both languages, the reader can compare and judge.

## ENDNOTES to CHAPTER I

[1] I occasionally departed from Byington's translation, based on the Reclam version in German (ed. Ahlrich Meyer, 1972). My EO page references are to the Dover edition, which I have lost in the mists of time. The current Kindle edition preserves the Dover edition's pagination; and the reader can easily search within a Kindle or PDF document.

[2] Lawrence Stepelevich, *The Revival of Max Stirner*, *Journal of the History of Ideas* (35), 325.

[3] John Henry Mackay, **Max Stirner: Sein Leben und Sein Werk** (henceforth Mackay), 1898.

[4] Martin Buber, *Question to the Single One*, in **Between Man and Man**, 1975; Albert Camus, **The Rebel**, trans. Anthony Bower, 1966; Henri Arvon, **Max Stirner: Aux Sources de l'Existentialisme**, 1954.

[5] Hans Helms, **Die Ideologie der Anonymen Gesellschaft**, 1966; Hans Heinz Holz, **Die Abenteurliche Rebellion**, 1976.

[6] John P. Clark III, in *The Personalist*, 67.

[7] John Carroll, **Breakout From the Crystal Palace**, 1974 / 2010. Sociologist-philosopher Carroll significantly contributed to the 70s revival and arguably "got" Stirner, especially in his chapter 4, *Critique of homo economicus*. Carroll incisively zooms in to "interest as the principal guiding value in human life," supplementing and encompassing "the twin value orientations of **Der Einzige**, enjoyment and realization." Stirner showed how *ideology* is diametrically opposed to *interest*, which "is the parameter in the *Aufhebung* of pure hedonism into Stirner's theory of self-realization."

(48; cf. EO, 125-6)

Carroll in 2009 published a second edition of **Breakout** in e-book format, priced near to \$100 on Kindle. In revising this paper I have omitted my minimal discussion of Carroll; I still recommend his 70s print editions, found at reasonable cost online.

[8] Paterson, vii-viii. Henceforth cited as NE.

[9] For Eigenheit I shall follow Byington's "ownness". For **Der Einzige** only "the unique one" seems to fit, with or without caps.

[10] NE, 17. The promised argument is in his chapter "The Egoist," discussed below.

[11] Alienation was a key Young Hegelian topic that has influenced many important thinkers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See Nicholas Lobkowicz, **Theory and Practice**, 1967, esp. parts 2 and 3; also his *Karl Marx and Max Stirner* in F. J. Adelmann, ed., **Demythologizing Marxism**, 64-95.

Stirner's epistemology is sophisticated but simple, a post-Hegelian critique of "Man", "Right", "God" and so on, normative and faith-based ideas that we invest in emotionally and cognitively. In 1985 Stepelevich covered the Hegelian roots of Stirner in his excellent article *Max Stirner as Hegelian*, in Journal of the History of Ideas, (46) 597-614.

[12] See Stirner's 1842 essay, *The False Principle of Our Education*, trans. Robert Beebe, 1967, 11 & *passim*. The rest are incorporated in **Max Stirners Kleinere Schriften; und seine Entgegnungen auf die Kritik seines Werkes; aus den Jahren 1842-1848**, ed. John Henry Mackay. Paterson wrote a thesis on the subject of *Max Stirner's Philosophy of Education*, but I have not located it (NE, 51).

[13] *Art and Religion* was, as Mackay noted, very close to **Der Einzige**. The time has come, we read in it, to let art "skip circles around the total seriousness of the ancient beliefs -- because Christianity has lost the gravity of its substance, which must now be given back to the gay poet [den fröhlichen Dichter] as a jovial comedy is now set up." Religion "remains as the most hackneyed thing possible [dem Schaalsten zugänglich], and every unimaginative booby [phantasielosen Tropf] can and will have religion..." (Kunst und Religion)

[14] Mackay, ch. 2-4.

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## II. Oratorio: Total Atheism

Paterson complains that Stirner's book "takes the form of a systematic and absolute denial of every principle by which the hearts and minds of men have been moved." In his second chapter he would show how Stirner "took it upon himself to demonstrate, with harrowing thoroughness, exactly what is involved in the full denial of God" (NE, 207).

The radical atheist, says Paterson, rejects not only God-as-Subject, but all the alleged divine attributes as "ideal conceptions", and as having "any inherent claims" on anyone. Just what *inherent claims* are is not made clear, but let's not belabor Paterson's devotion to *absolute claims*. Such a rejection of absolutes had been Feuerbach's definition of true atheism, defining "exactly the standpoint of Stirner." (NE, 198, 209)

Thus the denial of God is not merely the denial of Allah, or of Jehovah, or of Christ: it is the denial that there is any absolute over us, requiring and deserving our devotion. Now, if we ask what it is that is being claimed when different adherents of religion [make claims as to the divine], the answer to this question will furnish us with a definition of those attributes which are essentially involved in the idea of 'God', regardless of the identities of the particular claimants who are competing for this title. If the adherents of these different religions are really engaged in meaningful dispute, they must be engaged in making the same claim, albeit on behalf of different candidates... God is always and at least the adequate object of worship. (NE, 207-208)

Surely religions are not like borough elections and absolute claims not quite like mining claims. If one gets rid of the God, is one entitled to keep any of the attributes? [1] Worship then is a "total engagement and surrender of the whole person," who in this moment "recognizes the worthlessness of what he is surrendering in comparison with the transcendent glory of the reality to which surrender is made."

Yes, Stirner does seem to dispute all that for himself. Only the Creator, Paterson adds, is the proper object of holy 'dread' or 'awe'. The atheist is unable to "shudder," or in Rudolf Otto's phrase, "feel horror in the true sense of the word" --

Horror, dread, awe, adoration -- these are the responses of the man who feels himself comprehended by the MYSTERIUM TREMENDUM ET FASCINANS, which cannot be comprehended by him because it eternally transcends him. The atheist by contrast limits his concern to what can be... grasped or appropriated by him. (NE, 208, 212)

What's not quite shudder-inducing is the truism that Stirner is attacking the sacred. Stirner's point was, I think, that such sacredness or holiness is of the Hirngespinst.

## 11.

Paterson never considers if those who shudder holily are not themselves capable of heinous acts, massacres, torture, and mayhem (the shudder as the *frisson, chez Sade?*).

... A man who did not recognize this or any other ideal perfection would be precisely the HOMO IRRELIGIOSUS of whom Stirner set out to be the definitive exemplar. The profoundly irreligious man, the total atheist, as we have seen, is the HOMO CALCULANS, into whose calculations, inevitably, only objects of finite utility, of conditional and therefore measurable worth, can gain entry. (NE, 209)

The total atheist is, then, a total materialist. Now wait -- can't I be a spiritualist and an atheist too? What if I just reject monotheism? We are told that Stirner, unlike Sartre, did not at all find it embarrassing that God does not exist. [2] **Der Einzige** "must be the most uncompromising of atheistic manifestos. It self-consciously sets out to define the *ne plus ultra* of radical atheism" (NE, 192).

[His] denial of 'God' is a denial that his existence has any intrinsic or final worth. His denial of the idea of 'God' is a denial that life has any objective or global meaning. It is an affirmation of meaninglessness and worthlessness as the constitutive features of ultimate reality, and at the same time it is an affirmation of motivelessness and wantonness as the dominant traits of the individual atheist: knowing all his choices to be equally gratuitous, he does not pretend to justify them by appeal to some fictitious standard of objective reason, for the atheist's denial of transcendence is also a denial of reason as an objective standard transcending, and therefore in the last analysis alien to, the particular concrete individuals between whom it purports to arbitrate. (NE, 212)

Unfortunately for this idea, godless existentialists, Camus in **The Stranger** for one, would argue that existence *does* have *intrinsic and final* worth without God and without any extrapersonally binding morality -- simply because life is its own justification! But with Paterson it gets more shrill --

What the total atheist denies... is that our experience has any ultimate moral or metaphysical meaning... If the idea of 'God' is the idea of a unifying principle which transforms our centrifugal experiences into a coherent whole, then the atheist's denial of God is a denial of the possibility of any such ideal unity. In Stirner this... is carried to its extreme... [as] the realization of the whole can be accomplished only by suppressing the reality of the part... What he wants to preserve is the pure exteriority of the unrelated parts, their impenetrable identity as parts; what he wants to preserve is the exclusive being of the irreducible individual who articulates himself as purely this particular individual. (NE, 214)

Apparently a nihilistic egoist would sell his own mother for parts. The real Stirner didn't -- his mother would outlive him (Mackay, ch. 1-2).

## 12.

[For] the calculating egoist... there is nothing that he would not sell. The full rejection of religion, Stirner claims, is thus the rejection of human dignity, freedom, justice and love, as eternal ideals demanding our unqualified homage and raised above all considerations of selfish expediency. If atheism is to complete itself, it must become denial of all men's social and moral ideals. (NE, 216)

Here we see Paterson's polemical straw man. Stirner surely did deny absolute ideals, but not necessarily human dignity, social justice, love, and so on. In fact Feuerbach and others in the Young Hegelian circles in Berlin had already accused him of this in 1845. Stirner attempted to set them straight --

Egoism, as Stirner proposes it, is no antithesis to love, nor to thinking, it is no enemy of a sweet life of love, nor of devotion and sacrifice... It is directed not against love, but against sacred [heilige] love; not against thinking, but against sacred thinking; not against the socialists, but the holy socialists, and so on." [3]

What supports his view that "everything sacred is a tie, a fetter"?

In everything *sacred* there lies something 'uncanny' [unheimlich], i.e., strange, wherein we are not quite at home and comfortable. What is sacred to me is not my own; and if for me another's property were not sacred, I would view it as mine when the occasion arose... Or, on the other hand, if I look upon the face of the Chinese emperor as sacred, then it remains foreign to my eye, which I shut at the sight. (EO, 37)

This is the core epistemology, refusal of the 'sacred' as mystification. "Yet nothing is sacred or holy except by my declaring it so -- through my decree, my judgment, my kneeling..." Wherever is found the Holy, says Stirner and later Nietzsche, what we find is the *human, all-too-human*.

For small children, as for animals, nothing sacred exists, since in order to make room for this idea one must have already come so far in one's understanding to distinguish 'good and evil', 'warranted and unwarranted', and so on. Only at such a level of reflection or comprehension -- which is the proper standpoint of religion -- can unnatural reverence [Ehrfurcht], produced through thinking only, take the place of natural fear [Furcht]. This sacred dread involves taking something outside oneself for mightier, greater, more entitled, superior and such. This is the attitude whereby one recognizes the power of something alien -- not merely feeling it, but expressly acknowledging it; one admits, yields, surrenders, lets oneself be bound (devotion, humility, servility, submissiveness, etc.). Here troops the entire pack of 'Christian virtues.'

Once we understand how human beings think, claims Stirner, we understand how and why they refuse to think (a book could be written about Stirner and Wittgenstein).

Everything towards which you cherish any respect of reverence deserves the name of sacred; you yourselves also say that you would feel a 'holy dread' of laying hands on it. And you give this tinge to the unholy too (gallows, crime, etc.) -- you have a horror of touching it. Therein lies something that is uncanny -- something unfamiliar or not your own. (EO, 72)

Through this making abstract, fear into dread, we mystify, alienate the object. Good and evil based in fear requires these alienated concepts.

...In fear there always remains the attempt to free oneself from it through cunning, deception, tricks, and such. With reverence, the story is different. Here not only is something feared but revered [geehrt]: what is feared has become an inward power which I can no longer flee. I honor it, am captivated by it, belong to it. By the honor I pay, I am fully in its power; I do not attempt liberation any more. (*ibid*)

When in the grip of alienation [Entfremdung], a person --

is no longer creating, but rather learning (knowing, investigating), being occupied with a fixed object, losing himself in its depths without returning to himself... Morality too is such a sacred idea... One does not venture to go after it asking if it might not itself be a fraud. Morality remains exalted above all doubt, unchangeable. (EO, 72-3)

He announces that "man has killed God", published the year Nietzsche was born --

What has gone unnoticed is that man has killed God in order to become -- sole God on high'... The fear of God was shaken long ago, and a more or less conscious 'atheism', marked on the outside by a widespread 'unchurchliness', has involuntarily become the mode; but what was taken from God has been added to the account of Man. (EO, 154)

"Our atheists," Stirner concludes, "are a pious lot."

In coarser times than ours one cherished a particular faith, demanded devotion to a particular sacred being, and did not look kindly on those who believed otherwise. However, since 'freedom of belief' has taken the field, the 'jealous God and sole Lord' gradually melted into a fairly general 'supreme Being', and humane tolerance is satisfied so long as everyone reveres 'something sacred.' (EO, 185, 279)

Here too is Stirner's rejection of Feuerbach, who has provided an ersatz liberation from God, and who "clutches desperately at the assembled substance of Christianity," to snatch it back to Earth from Heaven, retain the God-figure as an abstract figurine (EO, 31-2). Feuerbach, having humanized the divine, misses the point that "if God has tormented us, his 'Man' stands by to do so even more pressingly." (EO, 174) Despite grandiose claims made by Feuerbach for his new outlook (supposedly atheism,

materialism, 'sensuousness', de-alienation), Stirner charges him with setting up a new Being or Essence [Wesen] to lord over humanity -- an ethical refurbishing of religion. [4]

The conflict over essences or supreme Beings, in which Stirner's fellow radicals were embroiled, struck him as futile, creating a cult [Kultus] "to which service and worship are due":

Whether the One God or the three-in-one, whether the Lutheran God or... no God at all but 'Man' instead... it makes no difference to one who negates the supreme Being itself, to one in whose eyes the servants of the latter are all together -- pious folk: the most rabid atheist no less than the most believing Christian. (EO, 39)

Far from advocating "absolute atheism," these arguments seem to reject complacent atheism. Indeed atheism was widely accepted, a banality, as it had been in Sade's day.

After bloody combats this much has finally been attained, that opposing views... are no longer condemned as worthy of death. But why should I only dissent (think otherwise) about a subject? Why not push dissent to its last extremity, namely to the point of having no regard at all for the matter, thinking its nihilation, crushing it? Then the interpretation itself comes to an end, since there is nothing left to interpret. Why say that God is not Allah, not Brahman, not Yahweh, but -- God? Why not say instead that God is nothing but a deception?... To know and acknowledge essences [die Wesen] and only essences, that is religion; its realm is a realm of essences, spooks and ghosts [Gespenster]." (EO, 40, 338)

He's clearly not talking about bombing churches; it's an epistemological revolt within the phenomenology of mind. In his lectures on the Philosophy of History, Hegel had called the new principle of Spirit "the axis on which the History of the World turns. This is the goal and the starting point of History." [5] The critique of idealism is summarized thus --

For this reason the name of philosopher is not to be given to him who indeed has open eyes for the things of the world, a clear and undazzled gaze, a correct judgment about the world... But he alone is a philosopher who sees and demonstrates or proves the presence of heaven in the world, the supernal in the earthly, the divine in the mundane. (EO, 74, 84-86)

Mystifications become petrified in language, but they also become flesh. We don't ordinarily understand religion as not a direct line to God, a saint or Jesus, but mediated by society. We first go to church with our family; we learn to read the Bible at the behest of our elders; we make primary friends, or have influential teachers, or lovers, who influence us towards a religion or atheism. Few people study the main religions and then choose between them. At no point does pre-conditioning not mediate our beliefs or lack of them. For Stirner the issue is not how I got my beliefs, but what I do with them once I begin to think for myself.

All religion is a cult of society [ein Kultus der Gesellschaft], this principle by which social (cultivated) man is dominated. Neither is any God the exclusive God of an I, but always belongs to a society or community, whether that of a 'family' (the Romans' LAR and PENATES), of a 'people' (national God), or that of 'all men'... Consequently the prospect exists of extirpating all religion, only when one is prepared to antiquate society and all that springs from this principle. But it is precisely in communism -- because everything is supposed to be held collectively so as to establish 'equality' -- that the social principle plans its highest achievement and triumph so far. (EO, 310)

The terms *religion* and *cult* are synonyms. The cult of Jonestown in Guyana was a wannabe religion, conjured from the unholy holy of Reverend Jim Jones. As Jean Cocteau's "Liar" put it: "Imagine an unreal world, and make people believe it."

I am repulsive or odious to myself; I have a horror of, or loathe myself, am an abomination, or I am never enough to satisfy myself. From such feelings spring self-dissolution or self-criticism. Religiosity begins with self-renunciation and ends with complete criticism. I am possessed and want to be rid of the 'evil spirit'. How do I set about it? I fearlessly commit the sin that seems to the Christian the worst, the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Says Mark 3.29, 'But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.' I want no forgiveness and am not afraid of the Judgment. (EO, 184)

Paterson's review of Stirner's "total atheism" fails to put Stirner on the moral plane of Sade, whose atheism was anti-theism. Paterson's oft-stated idea that atheism is tantamount to meaninglessness I leave to Dr Alex Comfort to answer below.

To take a step past Stirner's debunking of religion and spooks would be to argue, as Nietzsche would soon do, and as common sense indicates, that religions are created and maintained by men for men. As they become human institutions they typically become authoritarian, and develop, in Nietzsche's phrase, the instinct to punish.

Control of the mind is practiced in all religions whether authoritarian or not. From the standpoint of freedom, it makes little difference if the Inquisition is religious or secular. Casanova was imprisoned by the Inquisition in the Leads in Venice not for sexual libertinism, but for occultism.

Most dystopian novels or films take place with a secular Inquisition in power, with mind control (psy-ops) and high technology replacing the old torture and isolation methods, though the latter are still essential. Fear never goes out of style, and there's always another pseudo-sacred cause to take the place of a decrepit one.

## ENDNOTES to CHAPTER II

[1] "They are rid of the Christian God and now believe all the more firmly that they must cling to Christian morality. That is an English consistency..." (**Twilight of the Idols**) Here is a good place to mention possible influence of Stirner upon Nietzsche, which has been speculated upon for more than a century.

Mackay comments: "Whether Nietzsche knew Stirner and to what extent he was influenced by him, is a question that continues to be expressed, even in one of Albert Lévy's own writings, but which has now been thoroughly answered... through the memoirs from the *Nachlass* of Franz Overbeck published in the *Neue Rundschau* of February 1906, namely that Nietzsche knew **Der Einzige** and shyly buried in himself the overwhelming force of its influence, until he was able to free himself of it in his own creating." (Introduction, trans. Hubert Kennedy, *op. cit.*)

If this is a minority opinion among Nietzsche scholars, let's consider a fragment of Nietzsche's **Nachlass** from summer 1888. In 1981 I pointed out that it's almost verbatim from **Der Einzige**. "Wer wäre das, der Recht dir geben könnte? / So nimm dir Recht!" The phrase easily comes up in a Google search.

[2] Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism as a Humanism" in Walter Kaufmann, ed., **Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre**, 353. Paterson's citation is at 222.

[3] *Recensenten Stirners*, 176.

[4] EO, 31ff. See Ludwig Feuerbach, "The Necessity of a Reform of Philosophy", in Zawar Hanfi, ed. and trans., **The Fiery Brook: Selected Writings of Ludwig Feuerbach**, 145. Also his **Essence of Christianity**, xl-xli.

[5] G. W. F. Hegel, "The Roman World", in **Lectures on the Philosophy of History**, trans. J. Sibree, 1956, 319.

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### III. A One-Urchin Chorus: Nihilism

"NIHILIST, n. A [German] who denies the existence of anything but [Stirner]. The leader of the school is [Stirner]."  
-- Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary* [1]

What sort of 'nihilism' was Stirner's own, then? In his chapter on "Stirner and Existentialism", Paterson reviews atheistic existentialism. The common ground of Stirner and existentialism, he tells us, is --

the vision of a world without God and hence without any unifying or directive principle; it is the vision of a meaningless world, in which there are no inscribed purposes or true values; it is... strictly no 'world' but rather a moral and metaphysical chaos. (NE, 266)

According to this passage a world requires "inscribed purposes or true values," lest it be nothing but meaningless chaos. Inscribed by who? He quotes theologian Helmut Kuhn, that the world of the atheistic existentialist is --

'a world without signs' and therefore 'something less than a world -- a mere congerie of obtrusive existents'; it is an unstable collocation of brute facts, inexplicable, purposeless, absurd; it is the obliteration of the world in the sense of a meaningful and familiar totality',... a dumb and massive plenitude without form or direction... In such a world the "individual has no role except to invent for himself a role." (NE, 173)

God then, is meaningfulness and godlessness meaninglessness. With this tidy equation we learn how the egoist, who *should* commit suicide, feels compelled 'to go on living with the threat of the deadly abyss, to dwell on a thin crust of ice', because 'nobody as yet has ever lived in the watery wastes beneath the ice,' according to theologian Thielicke. Stirner is advocating exactly that." (NE, 228)

There is of course a "leap" involved from nihilism to affirmation --

The movement in transition is a 'leap', not a development... For that reason any particular cause embraced, any objective pursued, any principle adopted in consequence of that transitional move remains unrelated to the move itself. It is something on which the chooser 'hits', a ground upon which he lands after his leap in the dark. [2]

Existentialism is, then, unable to pass moral judgment if it rejects "object and given standards in terms of which our lives can be judged." At this point Stirner and the existentialists would probably riposte no, just *unable to pass holy or absolutistic judgment*.

[Stirner] would reject the existentialist concept of authenticity, then, both because he rejects the ideas of personal integrity and dedication of purpose which are contained in this concept [of authenticity] and because in practice [it] tends to be used by existentialists, illicitly, as precisely the kind of moral standard or personal ideal which habitually excites Stirner's most vigorous loathing. (NE, 233-234)

As the tone of **The Nihilistic Egoist** alternates dinning and whimperious, a gripping psychological drama unfolds: the "final irony" of the existentialist's dilemma is that on one hand he has set his entire cause on himself -- and the "total meaninglessness of existence" -- but cannot "steel himself to enter and make his abode in the nihilistic void which has opened up beneath his feet." No, our nihilist must revert to the Gods he is trying to depose, creating a "philosophy of disloyalty" out of existentialism. (NE, pp. 240-241)

Stirner had said --

If I cannot or dare not write something, perhaps the primary fault lies with me" -- which follows from the fact that "if I am weak, then of course I only have weak means. (EO, 280, 165)

I cannot here further untangle what Paterson and the Siamese Helmuts take to be existential philosophy. What Stirner says is that when the theory by which I live becomes unliveable, I throw out the theory, not myself.

The moment I become a spectator and detach myself from life, looking at it as a kind of panorama that lies below me, all absolute values become confused and are sucked into the engulfing stream of events...

Meaninglessness, the essential nullity of everything, is for Stirner the governing and universal phenomenon, the key feature of the individual's experience, draining it of all significance and value. Indeed meaninglessness for Stirner is "the household demon which he himself unleashes, it is his personal mark which he deliberately stamps upon experience,... which he has freely chosen and wholly wills."

As a result "the metaphysical desert which he inhabits is ultimately a desert of his own creation; in looking into the abyss he is ultimately looking into himself." But still, the Stirnerian cannot commit suicide; he will hold out, living a meaningless and futile existence, "a life of permanent inconsequence." (NE, 242-243)

Paterson lays on the adjectives --

Rootless, vagrant, detached; frivolous, unstable, irresponsible; squandering his fluid and transient being in a consciously promiscuous career or deliberately gratuitous acts of repudiation: in the solitary and arbitrary figure of The Unique One is personified everything that is negative and destructive. On the grim, predatory features of the ruthless egoist Stirner has etched the hollow, dissipated features of the uncaring nihilist. (NE, 248)

Sounds pretty good to me, if Paterson exemplifies the alternative.

[**Der Einzige**] is the portrait of deliberate and controlled disintegration. It is the portrait of a cynical, sophisticated, and rootless opportunist, ambiguous and evasive in his refusal to define or commit himself, deviously artificial in his avoidance of private obligation or public role. The Unique One is a portrait of refined incoherence, studied irresponsibility, accomplished purposelessness,. He personifies the motiveless, the arbitrary, the gratuitous.

And the expected accusations of self-abuse --

If Stirner's portrait... is a documentary guide to the exploitation and abuse of others, it is also a study in the artistry of self-abuse, for The Unique One's enjoyment and consumption of the world is at the same time a consumption and dissolution of himself: his self-creation is an incessant self-destruction.

Stirner's 'self-possession' fares little better, underlining for the egoist the "incoherent nature of all his undertakings, born in tedium and executed in indifference":

The metaphysical disorder of this world is of course mirrored and embodied in the personal disorder of The Unique One himself, which is also an artificial and completely deliberate disorder. This immediate and symbolic transition, from the original natural, untotalized meaninglessness into the artificial totalization of meaninglessness which is the nihilist's chosen world, is the nihilistic equivalent of the existentialist 'leap' or 'conversion'... And of course the logical discontinuity of [this] transition from Nothingness to Nothingness, its sheer gratuitousness, is again reflected in the nihilistic personality of The Unique One, in his desultoriness and motivelessness, in his severance from others and the world, and in his chosen mode of being as a kind of rupture in the world, down which it perpetually vanishes to be 'swallowed' and 'consumed'... (NE, 245, 248-249)

Because to reject God and all absolutes is to affirm the meaninglessness of it all, and because Stirner rejects God and all absolutes, therefore Stirner affirms, with a vengeance, the totalized eschatological meaninglessness of everything under the sun and the kitchen sink too. The reader must agree a priori with Paterson's premises in order for these arguments to make sense. [3]

Let's note Albert Camus' consideration of **Der Einzige** in his book, *L'Homme Révolté*, known in English as **The Rebel** (henceforth HR). This work also painted Stirner a nihilist, but in a more humanistic light, and refutes Paterson on a key point. Camus agrees with Paterson that for Stirner "the only truth is the Unique, the enemy of eternity and of everything, in fact, which does not further its desire for domination." Indeed

the concept of negation which inspires his rebellion irresistibly submerges every aspect of affirmation. It also sweeps away the substitutes for divinity with which the moral conscience is encumbered. (HR, 62-63)

Thinking perhaps of Sade, Camus paints a picture of rebellion leading to the justification of crime.

[Stirner] attempted to justify crime (in this respect the terrorist forms of anarchy are directly descended from him) but is visibly intoxicated by the perspectives that he thus reveals. (HR, 64)

Justifying crime? Why, that's terrible! But it does raise nagging questions. To imply we must never justify crime, what does this mean? "Crime" is an abstract concept. Does it include state-sponsored crime? What about Vichy law, that of the Nazi occupiers of France? Is taking a paper clip, a crust of bread in Jean Valjean's case, a crime? What about the battlefield? Camus paints with a heavy brush. Do not men make laws, and therefore define crime?

He who denies everything and assumes the authority to kill -- Sade, the homicidal dandy, the pitiless Unique One, Karamazov, the zealous supporters of the unleashed bandit -- lay claim to nothing short of total freedom and the unlimited display of human pride. (HR, 282)

Camus opts for context-free as well, asserting that Stirner is a *metaphysical* rebel, then drops the subject. "Stirner laughs in his blind alley, Nietzsche beats his head against the wall. [4]

Camus does briefly juxtapose Stirner with Sade. While a comparison of both thinkers would be fruitful, it's beyond the scope of this paper. In *Boudoir*, Sade pointed out that murder is essential to the State and its abuse is to be expected. [5]

Paterson would like to invert Camus' maxim, which is cogent, that "a nihilist is not one who believes in nothing, but who does not believe in what exists." (HR, 69)

Philosopher Alan Pratt of Embry-Riddle University, in an online article, writes:

The critic Jacques Derrida, for example, asserts that one can never be sure that what one *knows* corresponds with what *is*. Since human beings participate in only an infinitesimal part of the whole, they are unable to grasp anything with certainty, and absolutes are merely "fictional forms"... American antifoundationalist Richard Rorty makes a similar point: "Nothing grounds our practices, nothing legitimizes them, nothing shows them to be in touch with the way things are" ("From Logic to Language to Play," 1986). This epistemological cul-de-sac, Rorty concludes, leads inevitably to nihilism. "Faced with the nonhuman, the non-linguistic, we no longer have the ability to overcome contingency and pain by appropriation and transformation, but only the ability to *recognize* contingency and pain" (*Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 1989). In contrast to Nietzsche's fears and the angst

of the existentialists, nihilism becomes for the antifoundationalists just another aspect of our contemporary milieu, one best endured with sang-froid. [6]

Following his discussion of freedom of the press, Stirner comments --

Every ego is from birth a criminal to begin with against the people, the State. Hence it is that it does really keep watch over all; it sees in each one an—egoist, and it is afraid of the egoist. It presumes the worst about each one, and takes care, police-care, that "no harm happens to the State," NE QUID RESPUBLICA DETRIMENTI CAPIAT. The unbridled ego—and this we originally are, and in our secret inward parts we remain so always—is the never-ceasing criminal in the State. (EO, 199)

### ENDNOTES to CHAPTER III

[1] Ambrose Bierce, **The Devil's Dictionary**, 172. Bierce had 'Russian' and 'Tolstoi' for my substitutions.

[2] NE, 229. Earlier (164) Paterson noted in regard to Stirner and Kierkegaard that "their common radicalism is the nihilism that arises from extreme isolation." Here is what Ayn Rand called psychologizing, or psychiatrizing, ideas one dislikes. Equating egoism and isolation is both a straw-man and reductio argument.

[3] EO, 325: "Only a few," Stirner quips, "are so imbecile that one cannot get ideas into them. Hence all men are usually considered capable of having religion."

[4] Camus, *op. cit.*, 62; henceforth designated as 'HR'.

[5] Sade, Aldonze Donatien François, "*Encore un effort, Français...*" authorial speech within his pornographic novel **La Philosophie dans le boudoir**.

[6] Pratt, Alan, article "Nihilism", [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#), retrieved Feb 2015. If the modern world is already nihilistic, we should start from there and quit whining.

In a similar way, Sade knew perfectly well that the world was already cruel. His innovation was scrolling out, at fulsome length, the many-splendored ways cruelty and murder could be cool. Besides, everybody does it or did it anyway, somewhere in the world. Sade wrote shock-porn to stand out from the other libertine writers, and in such a way that his writings would justify his misdeeds upon women. As for Paterson, he hints at comparing Stirner to Sade and others, but stops at cursory name-dropping.

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## IV. Sunday, Billy Sunday: The Nihilistic Egoist

"MINE, adj. Belonging to me if I can hold or seize it.  
 RESPONSIBILITY, n. A detachable burden easily shifted to the  
 shoulders of God, Fate, Fortune, Luck, or one's neighbor."  
 The Devil's Dictionary [1]

It's convenient for theists and for Marxists if Stirner is in essence a solipsist, because it justifies their *reductio* and lets them append "nothing but." For Thielicke, "freedom is identical with solipsism" -- what other kind of existence can there be without God? Without the holy-smelling all-smothering God-blanket?

Of course, Stirner is not literally a 'solipsist'. Because a glance at his book **Der Einzige** confirms "many references to other 'egos'", whom he "addresses in the second person or with whom he apparently aligns himself in the first person plural." (NE, 255)

Here Paterson is correct: the Other for Stirner is "indispensable" and **Der Einzige** does often use the familiar Du.

Neither divine nor human reason, but rather your and my temporally existing reason is real [wirklich], as and because you and I [Du und Ich] are real. (EO, 205)

But Paterson wants it both ways --

Thus when Stirner speaks of 'creating himself', he is presumably referring to this project of creating his own identity as 'The Unique One' within the terms of his personal metaphysical system... [in which] *the historical Max Stirner is converted into the metaphysical* [emphasis added -- LS] 'Unique One'; the fact of his personal remoteness and insularity is converted into the doctrine of The Unique One's cosmic 'uniqueness'; and so the actual solitude... is converted into the theoretical solipsism in and through 'The Unique One'... The solipsism... is a purely metaphysical solipsism. (NE, 255)

As a purely metaphysical solipsist, it's not surprising that Stirner denies --

the subjectivity of others by treating other persons as natural phenomena to be studied and manipulated without regard to their existential claims as persons... by reducing others to the status of objects." (NE, 257)

He quotes a famous passage:

For me no one is a person to be respected... but solely, like other beings, an object [Gegenstand] for which I have an interest or do not; an interesting or uninteresting object... a usable or unusable subject.  
(EO, 311)

This is solipsism? Paterson offers an analogy (actually a skit adapted from Marx) based on the ill-fated marriage of Stirner with bohemian Marie Dähnhart. This will prove that "in themselves, for their own sakes, the needs and interests of others count for nothing in his eyes."

Suppose that not for any ulterior reason but since he enjoys her wit and admires her erudition, Max "would describe himself as 'loving' Marie". This love, however, cannot be a love of Marie, in and for herself as a "loving and beloved subject", since Max "precisely denies Marie's own subjectivity. His love of her is not a love of the whole individual who is Marie, but a love of certain objective qualities", such as her ability to drink the other café Hegelians under the table. Should Max tire of her cigar-smoking, or should her wit leave her, then his love for Marie would cease and she would become a useless object to him; he loves, in other words, only what happens to "gratify him." (NE, 258)

While this seems plausible at first glance, Paterson implies, but does not argue, that Max could be loving Marie in a theologically correct way, as a loving and beloved subject, A SE and SUB SPECIE AETERNITATIS, perhaps giving her a necklace of absolutes. [2] But then, should Marie get religion and become a prude, the couple may have to decouple for good. In fact the separation of Max and Marie had more to do with her fortune lost in a dairy business venture, as Stirner was not much of a businessman. Not often however is philosophy a lucrative trade.

I can with joy sacrifice to [the friend] numberless enjoyments, I can deny myself numberless things for the enhancement of *his* pleasure... but *myself, my own self*, I do not sacrifice but remain an egoist and -- enjoy him... Selfish love is far distant from unselfish, mystical or romantic love... Love becomes blind and crazy by a *must* taking it out of my power (infatuation), or romantic by a *should* entering into it... Now the object no longer exists for me, but I for it." (EO, 290-292)

"The egoist's love for another is not accompanied by any sense of responsibility," Paterson complains. "Strictly speaking he does not care for the person whom he loves." (NE, 257, 265) While Paterson believes he has beat Stirner into a pulpit, what empirically goes on when lovers (must they be married first?) love the *uniqueness* of each other, and call it quits when the other has become boring, gotten religion, spent a fortune, or become someone else? Wouldn't that be a world like our current one?

The mindset reels...

According to one reading of the **Tao-Te-Ching**, "Failing virtue, man resorts to humanity; failing humanity, man resorts to morality." [3] Egoism, for Stirner, brings men closer to mutual understanding. [4]

The 'sacred' exists only for the egoist who does not acknowledge himself, for the involuntary egoist who... thinks he is serving a supreme being, and... is infatuated with something higher, in short for the egoist who would like not to be an egoist, and debases himself. However much he shudders and castigates himself, in the end he does it all for his own sake, and the odious egoism will not rub off him. For this reason I call him the involuntary egoist. (EO, 36-37)

Stirner, then rejects shuddering as inauthentic (as would most "shame" cultures). Instead, he attacks --

the hypocrisy, or rather self-deception of an 'unselfish love', an interest in the object for the object's sake... I owe my property [Eigentum] nothing, and have no duty to it, as little as I might have a duty to my eye; if nevertheless I guard it with the greatest care, I do so on my account... Antiquity was lacking in love as little as the Christian era; the love-god is older than the God of Love. But the mystical possessedness belongs to the moderns. (EO, 292-294)

Although Stirner protested the identification of himself with **Der Einzige**, for instance in his rejoinder to Moses Hess [5], critic after critic have ignored it.

If he ever admits any others to the metaphysical status which he claims for himself, the status of the pure Consumer to whom everything is merely pabulum, then manifestly he cannot identify himself as 'The Unique One'. It would, for example, be clearly inconsistent for a total egoist, who is determined to further only his own interests, to encourage others to behave towards him in the conscienceless, predatory ways in which he himself intends to behave towards them...

This is the "zero-sum" argument, or should we say assumption.

When Stirner says 'That which is right for you is right', he *should have* said "'That which is right for me is right for you,' because after all there is "no question of equality." (NE, 268)

This literalism carries over to Stirner's *union of egoists* [Verein].

One would have thought that a conscious egoist looking for associates to 'utilize and consume' would have given his fellow vampires a very wide berth, as being far too devious and knowledgeable for his Machiavellian purposes... The obvious 'associates' for the egoist, therefore, are not his fellow egoists but precisely those innocent and upright men of goodwill whose 'kindness, mercy and pity' Stirner rashly repudiates. (NE, 270)

How can the egoist take part in any sort of community? He quotes Stirner: "Community is an impossibility... No other man is my equal for I regard him, like all other beings, as my property." (cited in NE, 272)

**Der Einzige** begins with an observation about society:

WHAT is not supposed to be my concern! First and foremost, the Good Cause, then God's cause, the cause of mankind, of truth, of freedom, of humanity, of justice; further, the cause of my people, my prince, my fatherland; finally, even the cause of Mind, and a thousand other causes. Only my cause is never to be my concern. (EO, 3)

We start out with primordial, state of nature egoism. Paterson has not established any viable altruism -- he simply assumes it. Raw, involuntary egoism isn't what Stirner advocates, because it's already the default. It's not your free will, because your free will is conditioned from an early age -- by your parents, teachers, television, a brutal swimming instructor and a thousand other things. Here is a key passage --

Right collapses into its own nullity when it is swallowed up by might [Gewalt], when one grasps what is meant by 'might precedes right'... All *right* then explains itself as privilege [Vorrecht], and privilege itself as power, as -- superior power [Übermacht]. (EO, 209)

Paterson doesn't get anything related to dialectic, and here's proof --

The activity of appropriation [for the egoist] consists of a finite series of particular confiscations and reinvestments, each of which is specifically designed to preserve and enhance that fluid, finite totality which is simultaneously his 'property' and his extant, concrete identity, his being-in-the-world; and this totality is distinctively preserved as a totality-in-process-of-disintegration. The egoist's property is only insofar as it is a continuous becoming, and it is a 'becoming' only insofar as it is continuously becoming nothing. (NE, 281, 283)

Here is Stirner's appropriation of *Entfremdung*, demonstrating Wittgenstein's dictum against being bewitched by our own language-games.

The thought of Right is originally my thought, or has its origin in me. But when it has sprung from me, when the 'word' is out, then it has 'become flesh', a fixed idea... Thus men have not become masters of this thought, 'Right', which they themselves created. Their creature has stamped them: this is absolute Right, that which is absolved or severed from me. Revering it as absolute, we cannot devour it again, and it takes away our power of creation; the creature is more than the creator, is now 'an und für sich'.' (EO, 205)

Appropriation, taking something as my property, this annihilates alienation. To say *I am human and nothing is alien to me*, this means everything is up for grabs as my property.

Sade and other libertines would applaud the following passage --

Where could one look without meeting victims of self-renunciation? Opposite me there sits a girl who for maybe ten years now has been making bloody sacrifices to her soul. Over the full form droops a deathly-tired head, and pale cheeks betray the slow bleeding away of her youth. Poor child, how often the passions may have beat against your heart, and the rich powers of youth have demanded their right! When your head rolled in the soft pillows, how awakening nature quivered through your limbs, blood swelled your veins, and fiery phantasies poured the gleam of sensual desire [Wollust] in your eyes. Then appeared the ghost of the soul and its bliss. You were terrified, your hands folded themselves, your tormented eyes turned their glance on high, you -- prayed. The storms of nature were hushed, a calm slipped over the ocean of your appetites... You fell asleep, to wake in the morning to a new struggle and a new -- prayer. Now the habit of renunciation cools the heat of your desires, and the roses of your youth grow pale in the -- anemia of your blessedness. The soul is saved, the body may perish! Oh Lais, oh Ninon, how right you were to scorn this pale virtue! One free grisette against a thousand virgins grown gray in their virtue! (EO, 62)

In fact Stirner completely rejected the notion of metaphysical egoism, whatever that means. He took his critics to task in 1845, the year after **Der Einzige** was published.

What in the world does egoism have to do with isolation? Do I as ego become an egoist when I run away from men? I may isolate or seclude myself, naturally, but am not a hair more egoistic in so doing than another who remains among men and rejoices in his association. More likely, I would isolate myself because I can find no more enjoyment in society; if I remain among men, it is since they still have much to offer me... The 'exclusivity' of the egoist, which one would like to pass off as 'isolation, detachment, seclusion' is on the contrary total participation in what is *interesting* by way of excluding the disinterested and uninteresting... The longest section of Stirner's book, the section on 'Mein Verkehr' -- relating to intercourse with the world and the union of egoists -- may as well have been written in vain." (Recensenten Stirners, 175)

#### ENDNOTES to CHAPTER IV

[1] Bierce, *op. cit.*, 166, 219.

[2] Commenting on a draft of this paper, Professor Sherwood Nelson remarked that "agnosticism would work as well as atheism for Stirner: the chief thing is the refusal of absolutes."

[3] J. C. H. Wu, trans., *Tao Te Ching*, 1961, 55.

[4] EO, 248.

[5] Recensenten Stirners, *passim*.

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## V. REQUIEM & SCHERZO FOR SOLIPSIST

*Jouis et fais jouir, sans faire de mal ni à toi ni à personne:  
voilà, je crois, toute la morale.*  
-- Chamfort

In my view the attempt by Paterson to hustle **Der Einzige** into metaphysics was a borrowed ploy, his agenda at one with that of the Marxists. The final chapter of **The Nihilistic Egoist**, "Philosophy as Play", is promisingly titled. Will it be a monaural replay of the monotheistic tune we are used to?

Certainly egoism is intimately tied in with the pleasure of thinking; my own view is that Stirner was ahead of his time, in tune with some of the most creative minds of the past two centuries. *Play* contrasts with the *spirit of seriousness*, and of course one must have the freedom to be at play. Here is a key passage of Stirner as educator --

Who is there who has never noticed that our entire education has the object of producing feelings in us, imparting them to us, instead of leaving their production to us come what may... Our equipment consists of 'elevated feelings, exalted thoughts, inspiring maxims, eternal principles', and such. The young are rushed through school to learn the old song, and when they have learned it by heart they are pronounced of age -- when they can twitter like the old. (EO, 65-66)

Egoism for Stirner is a conditioned, corporeal existence --

All that I do, think, express and manifest, is conditioned by what I am. The Jew can will one thing and present himself that way, and the same for the Christian... If you could change over into a Jew or Christian, you would bring out what is Jewish or Christian; but it isn't possible since in the most rigorous conduct you still remain an egoist, a sinner against that concept... You are indeed more than a Jew, more than a Christian, but you are also more than a human being. Those are all ideas, but you are corporeal [Du aber bist leibhaftig]... Let Shmuel be ever so Jewish, a Jew and nothing but a Jew he can never be, just because he is *this* Jew. (EO, 126-127)

Is more proof needed that **Der Einzige** is a ringing refusal of fascism and ethnic hatred?

I am I and you are I, but I am not this thought-of I... I am man and you are man, but 'Man' is just a thought, a generality. Neither you nor I are speakable [sagbar], we are unutterable [unaussprechlich], since only

thoughts are sayable and consist in speaking... I want to be full of thoughts, yet at the same time be thoughtless and preserve this state for myself, instead of freedom of thought. Language or 'the Word' tyrannizes us the most, since it brings us up against an entire army of fixed ideas. (EO, 311, 337)

The passage clearly rejects solipsism and focuses on the mystification that occurs through language. Stirner agrees here with Wittgenstein, that our confusions arise when "language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work." [1]

What a man is, he makes out of things; 'as you look at the world, so it looks back at you again'... Absolute thinking is that which forgets that it is *my* thinking, that *I* think and that it exists only through *me*. But I, as I, swallow up again what is mine, am its master, it is only my opinion [Meinung] which I can at any moment *change*, annihilate, take back into myself, and consume. (EO, 336, 339)

In any case one has to "know how to put everything out of mind, "if only to "be able to sleep." The torments of mind, thoughts, and spirit stop when the egoist decides --

A shake does me the service of the most careful thinking, a stretch of the limbs shakes off tortuous thoughts. A leap in the air tosses the incubus of the religious world from my chest, a jubilant shout throws off enduring burdens. But the stark significance of a thoughtless shout of joy could not be acknowledged during the long night of Thought and Faith. (EO, 334, 148)

What then is the meaning of the phrase **Der Einzige**? In the 1845 reply to Kuno Fischer we find Stirner saying it is only a phrase "with no thought-content"; it is "only a name" and names not the one it names. Indeed, "only if nothing is stated about you and you are merely named, are you acknowledged as you [als Du]." To paraphrase a buddhist sutra, because there is no ego there is egoism.

**Der Einzige** expresses nothing: it is a name only and says that you are you... Thereby you are without predicates, and at the same time undetermined [bestimmungslos], vocationless, lawless, and so on... You, the unique! What thought-content is there here? Whoever would derive from uniqueness, as from a concept, a specific content, and who intends thereby to express your nature -- such a person would only prove that he believes in phrases. (KS, 348-350)

As to the ludic argument, Paterson claims that Stirner --

...celebrates frivolity, irresponsibility, scepticism, and irreverence towards all things, and he does not seek to exempt himself from the eruption of absurdity over which he presides... In reducing all things to absurdity, perhaps he implicitly submits his own reductive activity this 'reduction to absurdity'. [And has] in effect destroyed any claims

to general validity, or even to general interest, which his metaphysical system might otherwise have enjoyed." (NE, 298-299)

What if it's not a metaphysical system at all? Then the argument is a straw man. We needn't take Stirner seriously, oh no. I hate to bring up *philosophical masturbation*, but it was inevitable. Here is Paterson imagining --

...a child playing with his pencil in the distinctive way which produces a 'doodle'; to play with snow may be to build a snowman; to play with a meccano set is to build a model bridge or tower. The complex game which Stirner is playing with and for himself is essentially creative in this sense. It is the private game of an artist whose artistry expresses itself in the form of an imaginative and grandiloquent self-portrait... the whole project, however, having been originally undertaken from the motives of self-gratification and self-release. (NE, 301-307)

Characteristic of orthodoxy, Paterson feels no need to argue his own standpoint, of theistic altruism we surmise, which he simply assumes as true. Against this pedantry we can cite Huizinga's reminder that "true play knows no propaganda. [2]

**Der Einzige**, he summarizes, is part of the nihilistic literature of the 19th century. Its "despairing and satanic chord" is the same as that of so many 19th century novelists, dramatists, poets, and philosophers." Weakly, Paterson denounces the view that Stirner was an architect of terrorism:

**Der Einzige** is the most purely personal, the most individualistic of books..., in no way a programme for active revolutionaries, but essentially a poem of metaphysical disenchantment for the cynical and introspective solitary; and thus Stirner's affinities are essentially with the Baudelaires and the Rimbauds rather than with the Neschayevs and the Seyss-Inquarts. (NE, 314)

The Unique One must be kept in solitary, and Paterson even adds that "The philosophy of the Unique One is profoundly indifferent to moral and social issues." Stirner had, with Alice in Wonderland, *nothing whatever* to say on the subject, and this fact is *very important*. "If there's no meaning in it," said Lewis Carroll's figure of the King, "that saves a world of trouble, you know, as we needn't try to find any." [3]

How did Paterson come up with this conclusion? He fibbed, or lied, in the bald-faced tradition of academics who ignore what doesn't fit the prefab paradigm. Because Stirner didn't beat the reader over the head with the political angles of his philosophy, scattering a few pithy remarks instead, Paterson denies anything is there to discover.

Just when we thought Paterson would never stoop, with the Siamese Helmuts, to a *detached, spectator perspective*, he warns us that **Der Einzige** should still be viewed as sin. Yes sin, even though Stirner thought he had shown that sin is "imaginary." [4]

To the religious believer... Stirner's account ought to shed a grim light on the nature and implications of 'sin', conceived as estrangement from God, from the ground and goal of our being; for in his proud

self-sufficiency, the Unique One is the archetype of the sinful individual. To live as a truly radical atheist is to live the life of the nihilistic egoist, to live in deliberately chosen estrangement from God and man. (NE, 317-318)

A 2010 Eurobarometer poll showed about 37% of respondents in Britain declaring a belief in God; about 33% declaring belief in some sort of spirit or life force; and 25% denying any spirit, God or life force. Perhaps Stirner's position isn't as solipsistic as Paterson would have us believe (Wikipedia article, *Demographics\_of\_atheism*).

## ENDNOTES to CHAPTER V

[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 132, cited in Brian R. Clack, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Religion*, 22; Mackay, KS, *Die Philosophischen Reaktionäre*, 183: "Stirner has had to fight with a language wrecked by philosophers, abused by believers in the State, religion, and sundry other causes, a language thus rendered capable of boundless conceptual chaos."

[2] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, 211.

[3] Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, in *Complete Works of Lewis Carroll*, 127.

[4] See EO, 359. Nietzsche made a similar remark in *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*: "Although the shrewdest judges of the witches and even the witches themselves were convinced of the guilt of witchery, this guilt nevertheless did not exist. It is the same with all guilt" (§ 250, trans. Kaufmann).

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## VI. CAPRICCIO & FINALE

Every little thing you do, Big Brother is watchin' you...

-- Mose Allison

The more corrupt the state, the more it legislates.

-- Tacitus

I've argued that **Der Einzige**'s Stirner is not the same figure identified in **The Nihilistic Egoist**. Namely Paterson's whimsical, metaphysical, infectious Stirner; his emasculating, erupting, inward, frivolous, devious, artificial, motiveless, arbitrary, gratuitous Stirner; his rootless, cynical, solipsistic, sophisticated, desultory, sinister, morally perverted, brutal, piratical Stirner; his vagrant, detached, fluid, grim, predatory, ruthless, Machiavellian, incoherent, spectatorial, rancorous, promiscuous, rashly repudiating, mephistophelian, self-abusing Stirner; his disloyal, impugning, solitary, disenchanted, essential, irrational, dissolving, estranged, absurd Stirner; his barren, rapacious, serpentine, passionately self-displaying, evasive, self-gratifying, uncaring, annexing, remote, insular, fickle Stirner; his tediously indifferent, doodling, destructive, rebounding, factitious, callous, explosive Stirner; nor his truculent, turbulent, disembowelling, caressing, abyss-dwelling, sub-arctic, and nocturnally leaping vampire Stirner.

Certainly Paterson tried hard to reduce the message to the man. It's everyday practice in academia and public opinion (to paraphrase author Stanton Friedman) that if you can't attack the argument, attack the man -- it's easier. Investigate by making proclamations; it's what politicians do, and nobody will read your source materials anyway. You don't need cogent arguments; just assume away and use all the fallacies, because a bunch of small, weak arguments will equal a cogent one in the minds of the readers who pre-agree with you.

A popular quip goes, "just remember that you are unique -- like everyone else." Stirner is unperturbed by this and revels in it. And nihilism? Intelligent destruction, Kingsley Widmer once remarked, "is a rigorously discriminating process." [1]

Paterson was sufficiently agitated by Stirner to draw a map of the strange terrain, with all sorts of 'wilde and dangerous beestes' at its edges. His boldly timid book might have been titled "In defense of the holy." [2]

I suggest there is no dogmatic atheism in Stirner, who speaks highly of Jesus Christ as insurgent, as would Nietzsche covering the same ground forty years later. Stirner also praised Catholicism for saving sensuality from Protestant extinction. Stirner didn't

just lampoon religion and humanism as *spooks* and 'wheels in the head'; he made arguments that resonate today with a great many people.

Adventurous explorers of the mind-body dichotomy are not fooled by the likes of Paterson, as Alex Comfort explains --

Seekers have from the Gnostics to Blake attributed [the rule-making activity] not to a God but to a pseudo-God, the projected matter of everything Kant was told before the age of five, in other words, *Nobodaddy*. It is a fantastic state we have reached when since the middle of the last century ethicists seriously argued that without belief in a legislating deity morality loses all rational sanction and must founder. [3]

Pace Paterson, Stirner articulates a sophisticated libertarian argument. The State, he claims, is a "web and plexus of dependence and attachment" --

Our societies and states are, without our making them, are united without our uniting, are predestined and established, have their own independent standing, are indissolubly established against us egoists. The present world struggle is, as one says, directed against the 'established order' [das Bestehende]. Yet one is prone to misunderstand this as if what is now established is to be exchanged for another improved establishment. But war might be declared against the 'established' itself, against the State (status), not as a particular State, or as the mere present condition of the same, not to aim at another (such as a 'people's state'); rather, the aim is towards men's union and uniting, this ever-flowing union of everything standing. (EO, 223)

Stirner attacked the "chartered" concept of freedom, with its permissions, dispensations and state-given rights.

It is not recognized that in the fullest sense of the word, all freedom is essentially -- self-liberation... Of what use is it to sheep that no one restricts their freedom of speech? They stick to bleating... We do not live in an egoistic world, but rather in one lacking all but the most ragged tatters of property, a world that is sacred through and through. (EO, 167)

In most schools, we are taught from an early age that government is good, and not a monopoly corporation run for the benefit of its directors and investors, with little regard for the old-fashioned public good. Debate on this point rarely comes up until college or university, where Marxists have long dominated political science, philosophy and sociology.

What is it that is called a 'fixed idea'? An idea that has subjected the man to itself... And is not all the stupid chatter of most of our newspapers the babbling of fools who suffer from the fixed ideas of

morality, legality, Christianity and such -- and who only appear to go about freely because the asylum in which they wander takes in so wide a space? Touch the fixed idea of such a fool and you will at once have to guard your back against the malice of these madmen [as they] stealthily assault the one who disturbs their notion. They steal first his weapon from him, then his freely given word, then plunge their nails into him from above. Every day now reveals the cowardice and vindictiveness of these maniacs -- and the stupid populace cheers every insane step they take. One must read the journals of our era, and hear the Philistines talk, to get the terrifying impression that one is shut up in a house of fools. (EO, 43-44)

"Stirner's maxim of 'get the value from yourself!' is a clever trick, born from impotence," complains Hans Helms, just a hundred pages into his massive exposé of everything Stirner. "On such a basis historical progress is just as definitely impossible as the said-perfect Unique One's social emancipation." [4] On a closer look, though, the freedom touted by Helms concealed the artillery and tanks of a heavy-armored approach to human liberation.

Stirner gives his own parable of the sower:

I [write] to create an existence for my thoughts in the world; even if I foresaw that these thoughts would wreck your peace and tranquillity, even if I saw bloody wars and the perishing of many generations sprouting from this seed of thought -- I would still scatter it. Do what you can and will with it, that is your concern and does not trouble me. You will perhaps have only trouble, strife, and death from it; very few will draw joy from it. (EO, 296)

The spirit of **Der Einzige** may be found in Walt Whitman's 1871 "Lessons":

There are who teach only the lessons of peace and safety; But I teach lessons of war and death to those I love / That they readily meet invasions, when they come. [5]

Here are a few things that are true about Stirner. He was a Hegelian who sought to pull an Aufhebung upon the master. He was against communism. He had no use for religion, in the sense of doctrines or beings with *normative claim* on us.

He deflated the *sacred* and *holy* in all its forms. He showed how fixed ideas are received ideas. He had no a priori respect for government, politicians and institutions, because to "Papa Staat" the individual is, as for Orwell, always a criminal (Verbrecher).

In principle he was a libertine, or at least a sensualist, who neither advocated masturbation nor opposed it (the union of egoists is more suggestive of group activity).

He held, with Cicero, that wisdom is to ask Cui Bono, because men are egoists in the state of nature, because society is primordially, paradoxically, both cooperation and dog-eat-dog.

As a man, Johann Caspar Schmidt may have been infuriating to those who knew him -- what philosopher isn't? He did not boast that his philosophy should be taken literally, nor as comprehensive. He paved the way for Nietzsche and other anti-authoritarian philosophers. He neither advocated riots in the streets nor opposed them a priori. He opened controversy, and didn't close any.

He did not preach violence or terrorism, and counsels us to look and see if those who do so are not coercive fanatics for a *holy cause*. He questioned authority to the Max. The egoist may support this cause or that one; nothing the true egoist does is predictable. If you try to predict him, he or she will do something else.

Paterson, leaning on theologians Buber, Scheler and the Siamese Helmuts, cherry-picked his passages to support solipsism and political irrelevance, reiterating points already replied to by Stirner. [6] It's not just that **The Nihilistic Egoist** was wrong on some key points, such as that it ignores the phenomenology of consciousness. [7] As the first comprehensive study of Stirner in English, **The Nihilistic Egoist** was a shambles through and through.

Stirner, I would argue, has been interpreted enough and should be put to work in political culture and the arts, in cinema and on the street, in art, to follow the example of Los Angeles' Robbie Conal. He has a place not just in philosophy but alongside the great dystopias in print or film — **We, Brave New World, 1984, Dr. Strangelove, Alphaville, Fahrenheit 451, Soylent Green, They Live!, Brazil** and others.

A glance at popular culture shows us not what matches Stirner literally, but what resonates with him. The filmic James Bond for instance lives by a seasoned, instinctive personal code, with unconscious maxims like "never refuse beautiful willing women". He alone is responsible for his choices, but not disposed to justify them to himself, nor to others by syllogisms or infinite regressions altruistic or egoistic. Because our egoism is primordial, yet totally conditioned, it comes out of -- nowhere.

Bond acts from the totality of his character (ownness). If he dives into the ocean to rescue a man who is ugly, he is certainly aware of sharks. As egoist he knows his decisions are arbitrary, and that weighing more than immediate pros and cons could entail circularities or infinite regressions, and he would never act, or not in time. But he does act, while other men just talk. Bond, like *Alphaville*'s hard-boiled spy Lemmy Caution, like *Chinatown*'s Jake Gittes and dozens of others, believes in nothing but the *immediate givens of conscience* -- his own.

At times chivalrous, other times cruel, Bond is always suave and witty. As an existentialist not unlike Kazantzakis' Zorba, he lives as if he would die any minute, or at least another day. With his mortality always in mind, Bond is HOMO CALCULANS, but authentically and adventurously so. An altruist in a Bond film would be a deceiver.

In an *unthinking* interpretation such as Paterson's, if Bond jumps into the water to aid a stranger who may drown, this means he is not thinking of himself; he acts altruistically or out of pity [Mitleid]. In his book **Daybreak (Morgenröthe)** from 1881, Nietzsche examines this question and counters that in such a situation, we are --

to be sure not consciously thinking of ourselves, but are doing so very strongly unconsciously [sehr stark unbewußt]... That at bottom we are thinking very strongly of ourselves can be divined from the decision we arrive at in every case in which we can avoid the sight of the person suffering, perishing or complaining... we decide *not* to do so if we can present ourselves as the more powerful and as a helper, if we are certain of applause, if we want to feel how fortunate we are in contrast, or hope that the sight will relieve our boredom. [§ 132]

Nietzsche wisely adds that "we never do anything of this kind out of *one* motive."

In saving the previously mentioned fellow, Bond could make a useful acquaintance or profit in some other way, and only leaps into action if he believes -- bets, really -- that he will succeed, deciding this in an instant. In Paterson's pompously understated debunking, the egoist would presumably laugh sarcastically at the fact the man could not swim. Nietzsche anticipates the argument --

What... distinguishes men without pity from those with it? ... The cautiousness of their pride [may] tell them not to involve themselves needlessly in the things of others... [or that] each should help himself and play his own cards... [or they] being soft-hearted is painful to them, just as maintaining a stoic indifference is painful to men of pity... They are a *different* kind of egoists from the men of pity... [§ 133]

The egoist "taker" can be a hero, but so can the egoist villain, for instance **Thunderball**'s Emilio Largo on the deck of his yacht. Bond and Largo are both model egoistic nihilists who abstain from going to church. What? Amazing -- the hero is a nihilistic egoist, and so is... the villain?! And the beautiful women? Also egoists!

It's fiction, but "artists," wrote Nietzsche, "at least fix an image of that which ought to be; they are productive, to the extent that they actually alter and transform; unlike men of knowledge, who leave everything as it is." (WP, § 585)

After many philosophic interpretations of Stirner, why not artistic ones? Stirner anticipated Bond's world-enjoyment (Weltgenuss), hedonistic and adventurous. [8] The archetype is perennial and primordial. We could describe **Der Einzige** overall as *ideosophy*, to coin a phrase opposite to doctrinal *ideology* or the shibboleth of *metaphysics*.

Ideosophy centers upon embodied thinking, thinking that does not forget that it is my thinking or your thinking. The emphasis is on wisdom and not on structure; wisdom comes in small packets, and isn't something constructed. Thus there is no system in Stirner.

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### POSTSCRIPT: Stirner Without Metaphysics

"The discourse in this country has completely disintegrated in the past few years, and has reached the point where as I listen to both sides, what I actually hear are dogs barking."

-- Lewis Black

DOCEO INSANIRE OMNES (I teach that all men are insane), wrote Horace a few years BCE. "Man in the present state of society," wrote Chamfort, just prior to the French Revolution, "appears to me to be more corrupted by his reason than by his passions." [9]

I've questioned in this paper how critics such as Helms and Paterson have tried to quarantine Stirner inside a metaphysical space and thus dismiss him. If the model of the mind as a personal metaphysical space were correct, it would be plausible to designate **Der Einzige** as *nothing but* a product of the historical Johann Caspar Schmidt, aka Max Stirner.

This strawmanship would apply universally, to everyone's thoughts and writings. If such metaphysical egoism held water, and every egoist was within his or her own solipspace, to coin a Newspeak term, what reason would there be to engage the world, meet others, publish a book?

There is a more sensible view, less tied to creaky Cartesian duality, later amputated down to materialism. Here is biologist - philosopher Rupert Sheldrake --

As the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead suggested, minds and matter are related as processes in time, rather than in space. The subject chooses among its potential futures, and the direction of mental causation runs from potential futures to the present...

Our conscious minds inhabit the realm of possibility... All self-organising systems are extended in time, shaped by morphic resonance [conditioning -- LS] from the past, and drawn towards attractors in the future. [10]

We can oppose such an authentic metaphysics to the superstitious metaphysics of theists and materialists. Whether in freedom or tyranny, there will be egoism. But why would the conscious egoist, considering his possibilities, and keen to spread the gospel of egoism, choose a future in which none are free? Did not Stirner realize that he was just one man? Read the book and it's clear he knew it perfectly well.

There is no egoism in the abstract, because egoism requires the other, requires a clash or cooperation between two or more egoists. Nor does freedom, or freedom of speech, exist in an absolute sense, but only in the context of an existing society with an existing hierarchy of power.

If egoism doesn't point to a dimension of human beings without which we can neither be nor be conceived, why have so many theists and philosophers devoted so much effort to understanding pride and hubris? The distinction was drawn by a pagan, Aristotle. The seven deadly sins as defined by all known religions, as well as Ghandi's *seven social sins or blunders* -- these are perennial and primordial, defining the human struggle not with nature but with our own nature. If the great religions originally preached altruism, it was in no small measure to keep egoism in check.

All of us know someone who doesn't like to hear the word *no* directed at them; doesn't like being contradicted; dismisses opposing points of view; sniggers at conspiracy theories. Their thinking, rather than free, supple and inquiring, is defensive and armored. Everybody knows somebody with a bear-trap mind. But as Mickey Spillane once quipped, *no* is the most important word in any language.

Many people can't bear the fact that other people think differently than they do. But to paraphrase Alan Watts, if you and I agree on everything, then I no longer know what I think. On the other hand if I never engage others nor let them engage me, then too I am developing neither my thinking nor myself.

Critical thinking, interested thinking, means taking a stand, showing up, blogging, making videos, calling the bluff of those who float their ignorance as knowledge, their lack of self-questioning as pride.

To get the value out of oneself is to develop oneself. To have a place in the world for one's creations and ideas is to *make* that place.

Any time we think critically we inevitably turn away from ourselves to look at the world, where we find institutions and government that shape our lives. As Chamfort noted, "Degrade themselves as they will, institutions (parliaments, academies, assemblies) sustain themselves by sheer bulk, and no one can do anything against them. Dishonour and ridicule slide off them like musket balls off the hide of a boar or a crocodile."

The great dystopian novelists and film-makers have never operated with the notion of mind as a metaphysical compartment in our brains, nor with laissez-faire for government as a principle of sanity. They have all known and emphasized that tyranny is always and inevitably a war for the mind.

This is why we need national and world conversations about heresy. It's time to stop giving orthodoxy the benefit of the doubt. In America, did we spend two hundred fifty years of accumulating freedoms only to throw them away? I'm pointing out a massive identity crisis in the formerly free countries, in which daily we see attempts to legislate morality and political correctness.

Along with this goes news theater, "emergency" whittling away at individual liberty, and a criminal justice system out of control, "hanging the little thieves and letting the big ones run." (EO, 241) We increasingly see militarized police in the streets, lockdown of public places and essential public documents, including death certificates and autopsy reports.

More and more our world resembles Terry Gilliam's 1985 film Brazil. A complete contempt for freedom of speech and press is the norm in our form of government. As watch lists, terror lists, and unwarranted surveillance grow, we hear and see the approach of a Ministry of ~~Fear~~ Love.

In 2015 a new secular bigotry is attempting to dismantle the Constitution; we can recognize it by its flagrant, in-your-face double standard, and we've exported it to the rest of the world.

We now have agenda-driven wars. Americans and Europeans have been brainwashed to no longer ask, *did they attack us?* No, well they *might* attack us, or they *secretly* are *intending* to do so. Is this anything but projection, by those who crave perpetual war? "A state of war," wrote Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in **The Gulag Archipelago**, "only serves as an excuse for domestic tyranny." (III, 47)

Every day we see more attempts to spread or mandate *politically correct* viewpoints, to impose the feelings of some group or individuals over facts, logic and the rights of all citizens. When the public good and the Constitution are abandoned, and the clause "for all" is lost, only privilege and permission is left.

Can there be any national security without a free people and press and restrained government? Hasn't the phrase itself become Newspeak to silence timid opponents?

Stirner remarked that increasingly our world is a lunatic asylum that we don't recognize as such, because it takes in so wide a space (EO, 43). Orwell too would cringe at how hard-won freedoms are sacrificed to national security, the shibboleth of militarism -- INGSOC for Orwell.

As Western nations buy into this loss of identity and lose their way, with socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor, Orwell would cringe, or laugh, that *words* are being replaced if they are deemed racist or offensive. In the US, *redskin*, *brown-bag*, *peanut-butter & jelly*, even *three meals a day* are under attack. In the UK "blacklist;" in Sweden even the names of birds. [11] This is how petty and corrupted public discourse has become.

On the other hand it is self-righteousness performed in such a ham-fisted way, that comics, satirists and absurdists have no shortage of material for years to come. It's now illegal in some countries to deny the Holocaust, and offensive to question its details. To doubt, for instance, that 20,000 people were or could be incinerated in one day at Auschwitz, is not to raise a historical, empirical matter. No, this invites being demonized as a *Holocaust denier*.

Western nations have enacted laws prohibiting so-called hate-speech. Does anyone believe that it's possible to fairly apply such laws, which benefit some opinion lobbies

and not others? Anti-hate legislation, another baby goose-step toward **Fahrenheit 451** and **1984**, is promoted with the most liberal of intentions, across party lines, part of the insane "fighting over the spoils" that characterizes falling empires.

Without strong constitutional safeguards, governments do what bullies, gangs and corporations do, see what they can get away with -- government by trial balloon, or drone. And then there's *conspiracy theorist*, the most absurd insult of all. When G. W. Bush fulminated against outrageous conspiracy theories about 9/11, he forgot to mention that his official theory *was* a conspiracy theory -- unfortunately a bogus one. *Sacrosanct facts* cannot exist; if they do they are -- *spooks*.

In the first few pages of **1984** we read that there are no laws anymore in Oceania. Once the State is no longer restricted, then *law*, as Stirner argued, is no longer about the public good, but about *permission*. *Permission* judges and lawyers and bailiffs and police will exist, more than ever, of course. Without the Magna Carta, without the Constitution, law is but permissions and privilege, benefitting whoever is in charge.

Who directly benefits from subsidized or cooked-up terrorism are not the loose cannons, goofballs or patsies, the perpetrators, but the secret police, national police, on down to the informers. For centuries the secret police and military are the lackeys and henchmen of the élite. If there isn't an enemy, they'll create one.

Reading the news in 2015 one would think there must be a factory that churns out almost weekly domestic terrorists and mass-killers of various stripes -- just as many of us thought in the 1960s that there was a factory for lone assassins.

Few stop to ask what the motive of these easily manipulable people might be. Is their alleged crime understandable by logic and self interest? Government at all levels in recent years has been curiously eager to impair the ability of the public to have these crimes independently investigated.

We're supposed to believe that a depressed fundamentalist only has to visit the war-torn countries (in which the West has fomented the wars), find some jefe or imam who tells him it's a good idea to throw away his life by bombing or shooting someone in America, and the poor sap just says "sure, I'll do it." Doesn't his fanaticism explain everything?

Those organizations keen to foment war by the same token are keen to foment terrorism. Why is it so difficult to imagine that Western militarism, be it the intelligence agencies or NATO, are subsidizing terrorism, using all the tricks in the book, including bribery, drugs and mind control? And if they're not doing it directly, fomenting war is in itself a sufficient factory for fanatics and murderers.

It's time to wake up and smell the rats. As libertarian journalist Jim Marrs has noted, "they think we're all idiots."

We almost never hear the perpetrators speak for themselves. Oh sure there are rants on social media, which can be written by anyone. James Holmes, the alleged Aurora Colorado shooter, never looked anything but drugged, hypnotized or brainwashed, in

his court appearances, a parody of of the 1962 film **The Manchurian Candidate**. Once the useful idiot is dead, or locked away forever, case closed.

Trazodone reportedly had been given to the man who killed 12 people at a Navy facility in Washington, D.C. Could mind-controlling drugs have anything to do with -- mind control? The term seemed far-fetched in the 1960s, when we learned it had been going on for a decade at least; how far has it advanced?

Commercially available anti-depressants and other may be sufficient now to create hypnotizable subjects in the mold of Raymond Shaw or Sirhan Sirhan. Just add keyboard lackeys to concoct social media back stories, and spoon-feed as usual media outlets such as CNN, all of which, as Carlin noted presciently, are unofficial public relations firms for government and military, as they tout one or another of the *handful of permissible political opinions*, as Nietzsche put it.

How many of these subsidized or cooked-up evildoers will we be seeing? Just enough to destroy the rights of all Americans, shred the Constitution and confiscate legally owned firearms. Oh, and abolish national sovereignty. When faced with the evils of out-of-control government, what is the usually proposed solution? More government of course.

One thing the plutocrats have neglected to ask themselves is, are their insane schemes sustainable? Their two sleeping-giant foes are an informed and outraged public -- and redemptive chaos.

When it's not about destroying the Constitution, such as the road signs informing us how long on the 10 freeway to reach Santa Monica, the government can't even get that simple thing right. One primary reason to limit government is that it's incompetent in most things. Or to be generous in 50% of what it does. A score of 50% is a Fail grade.

The easy escape in 2015 of Chapo Guzman from the most secure prison in Mexico shows not only the absurdity of the war on drugs and corruption (collusion) in the Mexican government, but the brain-dead response in the US.

In Chicago officials have named him as Public Enemy Number One. They forget that if it wasn't Chapo it would be someone else flooding their city with heroin and cocaine. Government policies created Chapo and his ilk, and now we have systemic corruption. The bigger the government, the bigger the corruption; the more it would control, the more chaos it creates, and there's no two better examples than the so-called wars against drugs and terrorism.

Today more and more Americans and Europeans, young and old, feel their governments lie to them more often than not. Political correctness must, as Hitler, knew, focus on youth. This is why we see American schools being militarized, by our post-9/11 Ministries of Peace and Love -- FEMA, the FBI and Homeland Security in the forefront.

Formerly public agencies have adopted the bipolar CIA model. There is a "regular" agency and an extra-curricular one to take part in covert operations, often disguised as

"drills." Any public official can now be a part-time *spook*, if he or she will pledge allegiance to the false flag.

One obvious goal of global élites is to condition us to martial law. In **1984** we read that "Julia's unit in the Fiction department had been taken off the production of novels and was rushing out a series of atrocity pamphlets." Doesn't this portend 9/11 and Sandy Hook, with its amateur cast of crisis actors? Not for nothing did Orwell specify "news, entertainment, education and the fine arts" as the functions of the Ministry of Truth.

Orwell knew that Big Brother need not be a real person. He can be a dead person, one or more actors, or -- a *special effect*, as portrayed in the telescreen *Hate* event with the Goldstein character modeled on Leon Trotsky. Big Brother is really -- a *spook*. Nor does Winston Smith start out to be a rebel. It boils up within him. "Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull."

For these great lunatics are like the little so-called lunatics in this point too—that they assail by stealth him who touches their fixed idea. They first steal his weapon, steal free speech from him, and then they fall upon him with their nails. Every day now lays bare the cowardice and vindictiveness of these maniacs, and the stupid populace hurrahs for their crazy measures. One must read the journals of this period, and must hear the Philistines talk, to get the horrible conviction that one is shut up in a house with fools. (EO, 43)

The above not only refutes Paterson's notion that Stirner is indifferent to social issues, but also belongs on page one of the mini-book "Quotations from Saint Max" that I predict, I hope, we'll see carried in the streets, and soon, for insurrections to come.

The new millennium began with America's Reichstag fire -- the Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, that *new Pearl Harbor* wished for by the neocons. Immediately the usual suspects were indicted in the press: Islamic terrorists under the supposed control of Osama Bin Laden, himself a creation of US intelligence.

Following 9/11, the Military-Industrial Complex had a blank check to crusade against abstract *isms* -- first *communism*, now *terrorism*. Insurgents equipped or bankrolled by the USA are freedom fighters today and later, as they get religion, terrorists, depending on which geopolitical wind is blowing.

The spirit of 1776 is no longer a commemorative slogan; watch video of the April 2014 standoff at Cliven Bundy's Nevada ranch -- patriots on horseback.

Where there's power and money, habit overtakes long-term advantage and *becomes* advantage. It's no secret many large corporations are hated by most of their customers, and often by their employees, and government is the biggest corporation.

Forty years ago there should have been a national debate on whether all levels of government *could* have an effective war on drugs, or crime, or terrorism, and if it was not likely to become mired in incompetence, corruption or outright collusion with drug

entrepreneurs, as we see in Mexico and also here in the US. There was no such national conversation.

The insurrection that Stirner speaks of is the one that you and I create today, not the one that is co-opted tomorrow; because any resistance or insurrection can be co-opted, corrupted, infiltrated and overthrown [aufgehoben] in the same way a revolution can. Just add money and mind control, the secret police will provide the chemicals and weapons, and mainstream media will provide the disinformation.

When under the influence of doublethink, you can't see that it's doublethink. Is there any difference between *political* and *philosophical* correctness? As educator Stirner advocated "sharpening the oppositions" (EO, 208), rather than dumbing them down.

Nor can free speech consist of ad-hoc protests or slogans, as it exists only in relation to political power. As publisher Larry Flynt noted, "If you're not offending anyone, you don't need protection of the First Amendment." [12]

This close to Orwell's dystopia, if not there already, why would we *want* to be philosophically or politically correct? Agreeing with Stirner, Mark Twain excoriated "the moral sense" whereby Man, supposedly *homo sapiens sapiens*, believing himself the crown of creation, is rather "the unreasoning animal... incurably foolish... with the fantastic record of a maniac." [13]

If Stirner was onto something universal, to look around for his themes is to find them everywhere in popular culture. Let's consider one example, Joseph Heller's 1961 novel **Catch-22**, filmed by Mike Nichols in 1970. In all likelihood Heller had read Orwell but not Stirner. He didn't have to, if **Der Einzige** rings primordially true. [14]

It's not surprising that Stirner's ideas resonate throughout popular culture. [15] The late George Carlin, referring to political correctness, society, education, government, military, corporations, religion and mainstream media, remarked that "it's all bullshit and it's all bad for you." And still more resounding, "I don't believe anything the government tells me -- nothing, no-thing, zero."

Today we call *mind-sets* what Stirner called fixed ideas and wheels in the head. We call agendas or political correctness what he called causes. It's also fair to characterize **Der Einzige** as a scathing critique of human vanity.

Stirner's philosophy is a dialectic of both destruction and creation. What's to destroy is the tyranny of fixed ideas. What's to create is enjoyment of life, of this world. For Stirner, I am neither the cause nor the unmoved mover of my thoughts. They well up in me, they appear, again and again. What I do is make them mine, by the dialectical alchemy of Aufhebung. We start with *who* is there, the conditioned *me*.

I am neither the cause nor the unmoved mover of my thoughts. They well up in me, they appear, again and again. What I do is make them mine, by the familiar dialectic of Aufhebung. We start with who is there, the conditioned *me*. While tautologies go in a circle, and infinite regresses are an endless backlog, egoism as Stirner defines it phenomenates out of nothing.

"Man is an indifferent egoist," wrote Nietzsche in his notes compiled as **The Will to Power**, "even the cleverest thinks his habits more important than his advantage." If this is true for individuals, what about institutions? Stirner's discussion of *Papa Staat* alone is a template of rebellion we can apply right now to the nanny state, the surveillance state, the national security state, the military-industrial state, the corporate state, the international banking state, the European Union, and a hundred more conversations.

Paterson's genteel debunking, cloaked in a stuffy objectivity, ironically was a sheaf of arguments for Stirner as educator, daring readers to explore the original. And yet paradoxically Paterson was *right* -- his book could do no other, as he began it from, under, through and out of -- *himself*, the eccentric egoist named R. W. K. Paterson.

The times are ripe for heresy. The swamp of orthodoxy doesn't stop its apologists from, along the lines of Paterson, desperately adding more orthodoxy as if it were laundry detergent, as if suds were substance, just as the profiteers of out-of-control government insist the solution to its own insane dysfunction is more government.

It's just empirical sense that orthodoxy, be it left, center or right, is a programme of mental delusion, and thus provokes the chaos it seeks to defeat. It can't stand up to scrutiny and knows it; self-deception, propaganda and fooling people are its only strategies.

In academia as in politics and popular culture, one-dimensionality still prevails uneasily. Exploration of the poetic dimension, the affective dimension, the emotional dimension have been largely taboo to many philosophers. In his book **Habits of Mind**, Antonio de Nicolás echoes points of both Sheldrake and Stirner --

Our inherited Protestant habits of mind thus establish a separation between the rational and the private. For starters, there is no room in this tradition for the development of emotional and affective technologies... The rational... was presumed to be primarily "disembodied objectivity," an assumption that has proved so costly in education, since theories have a quick way of becoming flesh. Our students are the embodied result of such theories, rather than their agents or choosers. [16]

Hitherto philosophers and critics have merely interpreted Stirner, but the point is to apply him. The embodied and disembodied fixed ideas haunting our world today are more deadly, to the living and to the future, than anything in Stirner's own century.

## ENDNOTES to CHAPTER VI & POSTSCRIPT

[1] Kingsley Widmer, **The Ways of Nihilism**, 129.

[2] In his 1979 book **Values, Education and the Adult**, Paterson is still at it, defending civilization with a definition of democracy as "the attempt to institutionalize or give political form to the principle of rationality in the conduct of social relations." (262) He cites a method of democratic education given by one F. D. Maurice, "instruction in Logic to our working classes."

We read that "since the workers speak and think and reason, they are all logicians in embryo: what they want in this, as in other cases, is to be taught what they are doing, to have their minds set in order about their own operations," because the worker has been "used to vagueness" (280). Less clear to Paterson and Maurice may be that the workers know quite well what their "own operations" are all about, and that the two pompous pedants could learn something from the proles.

In Paterson's **The Idea of God and the Reality of Evil** (2010), he's still still at it: "If God as conceived by theists exists, there exists Someone in whom we can always place absolute trust." A mighty big if! He proposes --

the outline of a theodicy. Of course, even if successful, a theodicy is far from removing all the objections to belief in God, far less establishing this belief as probably true. What a successful theodicy can do is to annul the principal and most intransigent objection to theism, and hence to draw most of the emotional sting that has made this ancient problem so desperate a stumbling-block to everyone seeking to acquire, or to preserve, the belief in God as a being who is perfectly wise powerful, benevolent and just -- that is, as a Being in whom it is reasonable to place absolute trust. (42)

The Google Books extract ends, and I'm not about to spend a red cent on more Paterson. Is there anything to do but laugh at the bizarre analogy to a jury trial, that weak (i.e., probably false) testimonies, if there are enough of them, strengthen a case being made (here, theism -- p. 32). So it's the *quantity* of testimonies, not their quality? Can't atheism use the same tactic? Evidently Paterson can't conceive of a jury with common sense, or emotions, nor the idea of cross-examination.

For still more gems see quotes from his 1998 book "The New Patricians" at [www.wikiquote.org/R.\\_W.\\_K.\\_Paterson](http://www.wikiquote.org/R._W._K._Paterson). I shudder to imagine any young person in a classroom with Paterson, if he drones on as he writes. His tweed-over-cassock'd use of the passive tense brings to mind a comment by Sheldrake, in his 2013 book **The Science Delusion** -- "Disembodied, objective knowledge was an ideal that set science apart from other forms of human knowing... In the popular image of science, and in much of science education, the passive voice is still employed to maintain the illusion of disembodied objectivity." (294-295)

[3] Alex Comfort, **I and That: Notes on the Biology of Religion**, 128.

[4] Helms, *op. cit.*, 108-109, and *passim*. The *reductio* carried out in "Sankt Max" -- by far the longest part of Marx' **Deutsche Ideologie** -- has been Stirner template from Dietzgen to Helms-Holz. In **Ideologie** the bibliography alone runs over 100 pages. Every facet of Stirner's influence or presence, every book, pamphlet or speech is noted and catalogued. With the latest Stirner revival on the internet, it's quite obsolete. Published in 1966, **Ideologie**'s innovation is that Stirner is to be viewed not as a prophet

of the petty bourgeoisie, rather as the prophet of the "middle classes" in general. Helms would have us believe that Stirner inspired the rise of all the major world corporations.

The ever-glib Helms asserts that there's "no difficulty in producing a catalogue of parallel passages in **Der Einzige** and **Mein Kampf**" -- then leaves this to the reader. If it can't be documented that Hitler knew of Stirner, nevertheless that possibility "can no longer be excluded" because Hitler himself "had articulated a specifically middle-class ideology." This seems dubious given Hitler's appeal to law and order, *resentiment* and revenge, appealing especially to workers, many of whom had been soldiers, although not communist ones. Hitler's National Socialism wasn't *really* socialism, Helms seems to say -- although actually it was.

Mussolini himself, Helms goes on, was a philosopher of the absurd and a fellow traveller of Stirner: "He spoke out in Avanti! in 1914 of a 'marvellous but absurd construction. Even the absurd can be marvellous. One has to think of Stirner's *Einzigen*'" (496-497). *Il Duce*, hardly a top-tier intellectual, once referred to Stirner! Just more guilt by association.

Helms also claims that Ayn Rand's 1961 book **For the New Intellectual** "resembles Stirner's ideology to a tee, translating it into modern jargon" (360), a glib Marxist notion easy to refute. The irrepressibly bombastic Helms even tells us what Adolf Eichmann *would have said to himself if he had read Der Einzige* (150). Even if Hitler cannot be shown to have read Stirner, nevertheless the possibility "can no longer be excluded" that he had received a dose of Stirnereinfluss. Helms considers it obvious that "Stirnerianism and National Socialism are variants of the same fascistic *Ungeist*." (5)

Marxist philoprop was never more strident. Helms' favorite teacher supposedly was Marxist economist Jürgen Kuczynski -- a US spy during World War II, who went to work for Stalin after the war, eventually becoming a speechwriter for Erich Honecker (successor to Walter Ulbricht in East Germany). Honecker, we read in Wikipedia's article on him, *privately regretted* the death of every escapee from East Berlin shot under his orders, though this is hard to take seriously.

As for comrade Holz, he chimed in with *Pravda*-like debunking for the "pure, metaphysical egoism" we are used to. "This particular saint Johann Kaspar Schmidt was a sort of sly tipster. One of course made light of him, but was deeply impressed by him all the same, and embraced his principles completely. There are acquaintances that one does not gladly encounter strolling under den Linden, but preferably in secluded places and back rooms. That the congregations of Stirnerians in that time were not scanty, may be clarified from the fact that Marx and Engels deemed it necessary to destroy the brain-phantoms of the Berlin prophet with bitter irony and polemic." It all blossomed "into its heyday as the foundation of National Socialism -- as has been shown in Hans Helms' exhaustive analysis," Holz backslappingly asserted.

[5] Walt Whitman, **Leaves of Grass**: Reader's Comprehensive Edition, 614.

[6] In his **Formalism in Ethics**, Scheler's bone to pick with Stirner is the latter's view that "the individualization of the person" must occur "by virtue of the lived body alone." Indeed his "value-individualism" had "morally vindicated 'living it up' in terms of bodily drives." Can we have details? No. The evidently prudish Scheler says that "theories of Stirner, Kant, and their successors have at bottom the same deficiencies: the disregard of spiritual individualism and the assumption that only the lived body individualizes the person." *Spiritual individualism* is okay, but not corporeal.

Scheler goes on: "Given its presuppositions, [Stirner's] type of egoism must come to forget precisely what it disregards: namely the inner and outer powers of ordering and uniting human drives (which pertain to what is more or less general in human nature according to universally valid norms [ET TU, PAT? -- LS] of men or the state or a people, and which are effective as consciousness of duty, as state or church authority, as mores, etc.) -- this is what creates the very condition for the liberation of the true seat of individuality, i.e., the spiritual personality of an individual or a people."(513-515)

Stirner had remarked, "the thinker is blind to the immediacy of things, and incapable of mastering them; he does not eat, does not drink, does not enjoy." (EO, 339) In **Man and People**, José Ortega y Gasset noted that Scheler had died from lack of sleep.

Martin Buber, in *Question to the Unique One* admonishes Stirner for omitting an "essential relation" in holding that the Other has "no primary existence". Paterson's analysis is that of Scheler and Buber, for whom "Stirner, a "pathetic nominalist and unmasker of ideas" has no idea of "the reality of responsibility." (211, 213).

[7] Stepelevich (1985), 610.

[8] Stirner expected that his egoism would be understood dialectically rather than metaphysically.

[9] Horace, Book II, Satire II; Chamfort (Sébastien Roch-Nicholas), **Products of the Perfected Civilization**, 111.

[10] Sheldrake, **The Science Delusion**, 227-228.

[11] Mikael Thalen, "Racist-sounding Bird Names Banned in Sweden," online article at [www.Infowars.com](http://www.Infowars.com), 20 February 2015; see also his 5 March 2015 article.

[12] Hustler publisher Larry Flynt, interviewed on CNN, 15 January 2015.

[13] Twain, Mark. "The Lowest Animal," in **Letters From The Earth**. And from a letter by Twain: "When I search myself away down deep, I find this out. Whatever a man feels or thinks or does, there is never any but one reason for it: -- & that is a selfish one" (letter from 1901 in Rasmussen, **Quotable Mark Twain**, 250).

[14] In **CATCH-22**, novel and film, we recognize Yossarian as anti-heroic egoist, whose philosophy was to "live forever or die in the attempt, and his only mission on each bomber mission being to come back alive." Yossarian's motto is very much like *down with every cause that is not my own*. Another stirnerian quip is that "they have a right to do anything we can't stop them from doing." (EO, 256 & *passim*)

Yossarian doesn't want to fly Col. Cathcart's arbitrarily imposed four more bombing missions, even if they're milk runs --

"Would you like to see our country lose?" Major Major asked.

"We won't lose. We've got more men, more money, and more material. There are ten million men in uniform who could replace me. Some people are getting killed and a lot more are making money and having fun. Let somebody else get killed."

As egoist, Yossarian is under his own flag, which he's not asking others to wave. Nor is he paranoid that far too many people are out to kill him: Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo certainly, but also his own unit.

"The enemy," retorted Yossarian with weighted precision, "is anybody who's going to get you killed, no matter *which* side he's on, and that includes Colonel Cathcart."

Prophetically, at the end of Nichols' film we see the parked B-25 bombers all branded "MM," corporate logo of shameless war profiteer Milo Minderbinder, who had begun --

contracting missions for the Germans, fighting on both sides in the battle at Orvieto, and bombing his own squadron at Pianosa. At one point Minderbinder orders his fleet of aircraft to attack the American base where he lives, killing many American officers and enlisted men (Wikipedia article, "*Milo Minderbinder*").

M & M is just -- the Military-Industrial Complex. Later in the book we learn Milo --

...had gone too far. Bombing his own men and planes was more than even the most phlegmatic observer could stomach, and it looked like the end for him. He had contracted with the Germans to bomb Milo's own camp.... Milo was all washed up until he opened his books to the public and disclosed the tremendous profit he had made.

**Catch-22**, today, inadvertently demystifies 9/11. If anything suggests Milo's cry of "We're gonna come out of this war rich!" the self-inflicted wound of 9/11 does so. It was, for the Bush II administration, a self-invitation to wage war in Afghanistan and Iraq, putting it all on the national credit card. Hasn't the USA been at war during more than 90% of its history? DENIQUE CUI BONO? Chamfort already answered this for us in the 1780s -- "The laws of secrecy and of the strongbox are the same."

Immigration-injection is another brazen antinational step by nihilist elitist and utterly plastic actor Barack Obama, as the US and its globalist allies have deliberately created Syrian civil war. Our so-called leaders still think, as Phil Ochs sang in the 60s, that we are the cops of the world, and if not stopped they will manufacture the crisis that allows them to declare martial law. Is the State, globalist now, by its monopoly of force, not *the* nihilist and destroyer par excellence? As blogger and Anti-media.org writer Carey Wedler has noted, "It's not left versus right, it's the State versus us."

*Papa Staat* calls his violence *law*, and that of the individual, *crime* (EO, 197). Today the *cryptocracy* (Jim Hougan's term) requires *closed books*, erosion of civil liberties, anti-cultural nihilism cloaked as multiculturalism, all drenched in authoritarian political correctness insanity. It's the perfect time for Stirner.

[15] Wolfgang Essbach, in his essay *A Language Without a Master -- Max Stirner's influence on B. Traven* (1987) made an excellent case for Stirner's influence on former anarchist and reclusive 20<sup>th</sup> century novelist B. Traven.

[16] Nietzsche, **The Will to Power**, tr. Kaufmann, § 363; Antonio T. de Nicolás, **Habits of Mind**, 22-23.

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