

non serviam

self-ownership & self-enjoyment

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Sid Parker:
Ernst Jünger's
Eumeswil

Svein Olav Nyberg:
Ken MacLeod
– An Egoist With
An Eye On The Sky

Luke Rhinehart's *The Dice Man*

A letter from Paul Kerin

Hi Svein,

Thanks for another interesting article. I don't have a review for you, but I do have some quotes on hand from a great novel I think many egoists would appreciate and enjoy: *The Dice Man* by Luke Rhinehart.

«My aim is to bring about a psychic state in which my patient begins to experiment with his own nature - a state of fluidity, change and growth, in which there is no longer anything eternally fixed and hopelessly petrified.» -- Carl Jung

«It seemed to me that there were two quite different meanings of failure. The mind knows when it is blocked and when it has found a solution. A child trying to solve a maze knows when he fails and when he succeeds; no adult need tell him. A child building a house of blocks knows when the collapse of the house means failure (he wanted to build it higher) and when it means success (he wanted it to fall). Success and failure mean simply the satisfaction and frustration of desire. It is real; it is important; the child doesn't have to be rewarded or punished by society in order to prefer success to failure.

The second meaning of failure is also simple: failure is failure to please an adult; success is pleasing an adult. Money, fame, winning a baseball game, looking pretty, having good clothes, car, house are all types of success which primarily revolve around pleasing the adult world. There is nothing intrinsic to the human soul in any of these fears of failure.

Becoming the dice man was difficult because it involved a continual risking of failure in the eyes of the adult world. As dice man I «failed» (in the second sense) again and again. I was rejected by Lil, by the children, by my esteemed colleagues, by my patients, by strangers, by the image of society's values branded into me by thirty years of living. In the second sense of failure I was continually failing and suffering, but in the first sense I never failed.

Every time I followed the dictates of the die I was successfully building a house or purposely knocking it down. My mazes were always being solved. I was continually opening myself to new problems and enjoying solving them.

From children to adults we cage ourselves in patterns to avoid facing new problems and possible failure; after a while adults become bored because there are no new problems. Such is life under the fear of failure.

Fail! Lose! Be bad! Play, risk, dare.»

«Woman represents the triumph of matter over mind, while man represents the triumph of mind over morals.»
—Oscar Wilde



cyber-attitude of identifying «self» with «mind», or – worse – with the «information» that the mind is somehow supposed to be equal to.

To sum up: Ken MacLeod is of interest to students of Stirner and other professed egoists for two reasons: One of them is his intelligent and rather unbiased explorations of political systems that lie close to heart to most of us. The other is a trend which Ken may or may

not be aware of himself, of probing ever more deeply into what it means to be a human – and perhaps more specifically what it means to be a «me». For both of those reasons, I recommend his books to you.

Ken MacLeod lives in West Lothian, Scotland, and maintains an excellent weblog at <http://kenmacleod.blogspot.com>.

Non serviam! – «I will not serve», is known from literature as Satan's declaration of his rebellion against God. We wish to follow up on this tradition of insurrection.

In modern times, the philosophy of the individual's assertion of himself against gods, ideals and human oppressors has been most eloquently expressed by Max Stirner in his book *Der Einzige und Sein Eigentum* (The Ego And Its Own).

Stirner, whose real name was Johann Kaspar Schmidt (1806-56), lived in a time dominated by German Idealism, with Hegel as its prominent figure. It is against this background of fixation of ideas that Stirner makes his rebellion. Stirner takes down these ideas from their fixed points in the starry sky of Spirit, and declares all ideas to be the ideas of an Ego, and the realm of spirits and ideas to be the mind of the thinker himself. His heaven-storming is total. Even

the idealist tool – dialectic, and the supreme ghost of Idealism, [Absolute] Spirit – are stripped of their status of intrinsic existence, and are taken back into the Ego himself. This is most clearly seen in Stirner's main triad: Materialist – Idealist – Egoist. And the triad stops at its last link. Any further progress cannot negate Egoism, for – progress has been taken back into the individual, as his – property.

For Stirner, the solution to the «alienation», or «self-alienation» of Idealism, is in self-expression, or – ownership. What cannot be one's own cause, the cause that is not one's own, is not worth pursuing. As Stirner says «Away then, with every cause that is not altogether my cause!»

This is the philosophical starting point of *Non Serviam*.

—Svein Olav Nyberg

Editor's Word

Svein Olav Nyberg

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This issue is somewhat overdue. While I was waiting for a last contribution, I suddenly became a father, and then a father once again. In the meanwhile, more than four years have passed. And in the same meanwhile, planes have come crashing into the World Trade Center, the US has invaded Afghanistan and Iraq in turn, and London's subways have recently been bombed. And last week, New Orleans turned into a stage for a wet version of Mad Max.

The war debates have followed the usual party lines: Moralists on the one side arguing against the war on some high ethical principle, usually the magic sovereignty of the State, and moralists on the other side arguing the case for the war, setting their case on a moralism that's at least equally lofty, like the magic responsibilities of some «international community» of States to win the entire world for democracy.

States, those beasts which Stirner termed my «eternal enemies». Are they any less so now?

All the while, few dare to be honest enough to address their own interests. If anyone brings self-interest into the debate, they do so to demonize the opposition. Don't we all know that the real reason for this war was to make Dick Cheney rich through his company Haliburton? Don't we all know that the real reason islamist terrorists commit their suicide bombings is that they are trembling with hormones

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at the thought of the 72 beautiful virgins they'll be fucking for eternity?

What we don't hear about is how patriotic US youth act self-interestedly and vote with their feet by not joining the military; the US military are getting about a third as many recruits as they need for their Iraq war. What we don't hear about is how extreme acts of altruism suicide bombings really are: Young men giving their lives for a Moral cause they truly believe in, for a cause they think will benefit Mankind. Such silence, when it is so plain to see that the egoist is the peaceful beast, and that the moralist is the raging homicidal monster. Such silence. The usual silence.

*

In this issue, Stephen Clark comments to Morten Blaabjerg that the egoist in *The Matrix* was the traitor, Cypher, whereas Neo, the hero, was an idealist for Zion's cause. The almost eschatologically Christian Matrix sequels support that viewpoint, and revisiting *The Matrix*, we will notice that it is Cypher who goes beyond the apparently obvious choices when it comes to choosing between values. The obvious choice is eating gruel in the real world, rather than eating veal in the illusory world. But Cypher dares to ask the harder question Neo &

Co never do: What difference is it to him that the one is labelled «real» and that the other is labelled «illusion»?

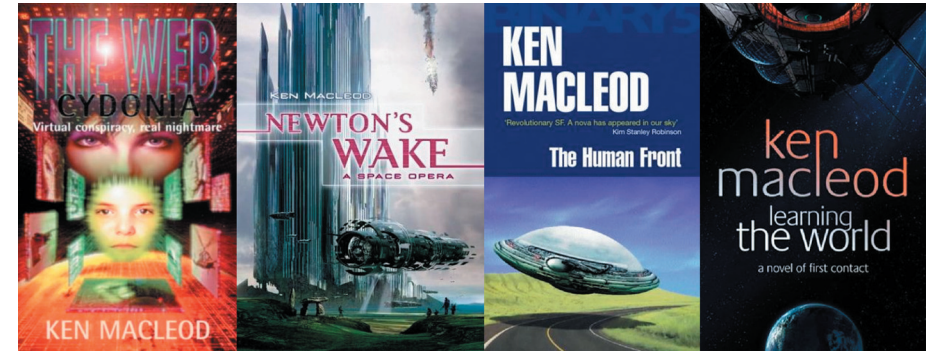
Hans Trygve Jensen is the bearer of sad news: Helge Kongshaug, a prominent Scandinavian Stirnerite and author of two booklets on Stirner is dead.

Next are two articles making this the promised literary issue of *Non Serviam*: The first one by the grand old man of English-speaking Stirnerian egoism, Sid Parker, with a review of Ernst Jünger's *Eumeswil*. I follow with an outline of Ken MacLeod's authorship. Missing are articles on other authors. Let those of *Non Serviam*'s readers who have read interesting books consider this an invitation to write a review. Or a letter, like Paul Kerin has done, telling us about Luke Rhinehart's *The Dice Man*.

Books I'd like to see reviewed include, but are not limited to:

John Henry Mackay's *The Freedom-seeker*. A book on the genesis of a «Stirnerian anarchist», written in a style very reminiscent of Paul Coelho.

Andre Gide's *The Immoralist*. Again a book on the genesis of an egoist - in this case someone a bit more reminiscent of a Nietzschean superman: A scrawny, intellectual librarian prone to disease wakes up and decides to work



ing the world. It is told through two viewpoints that eventually converge: The first and main one is the view from on board a generation starship so huge it is better called a worldship, primarily told through the blog of the adolescent female Atomic Discourse Gale. The second one is the viewpoint of Darwin, a humanoid bat on Ground, the main habitable world in the solar system the humans are migrating to. The novel, in my opinion MacLeod's best written novel so far, is a novel of contact; its main story line is how these two civilizations discover each other.

The politics of the human society in *learning the world* is a kind of contract based anarcho-libertarianism, but it stays mostly in the background, which has both the effect of making it feel very natural, but also leaves room for exploring other issues, in particular the meeting of alien minds. We get a fresh, new look at the old question «What is it like to be a bat?»

But Ken also asks what it is like to be a human. To me, this once again means the issue of identity - of what and who I am - and this time: in the face of arti-

ficial stimuli and sense enhancements. A paragraph I very much fell for was when Atomic Discourse Gale describes what happens when all her intimate communications gear becomes useless - no comms, no input:

I became very much aware of being me, and it felt strange. It was as if a wider, cooler mind had found itself inside my head, and was surprised to be there behind my eyes. And yet that larger mind was mine. [It's] not a secret, just a peculiarity, an anomaly, perhaps as random a feature of our minds as the ability to roll one's tongue is of our bodies. It solves no problem, conveys no insight, and yet leaves me with an impression of significance. It has an aftertaste, but no taste. That impression, that aftertaste, may be its empty secret: it may be a tiny glitch in the process by which our brains find meaning in sense. (p. 225-6)

This paragraph does of course have some resemblance to zen and oriental enlightenment, but is thoroughly materialist, individualist and non-religious. It also points away from the prevalent

is assimilated into the eater. Drawing a parallel to human interaction and meme swapping: Isn't this an exploration of human identity through stylizing those attributes? The question becomes particularly interesting toward the end of the book when ... but I really should not spoil the reader's fun. Enjoy those spiders and the subtle philosophical problems of mind they raise!

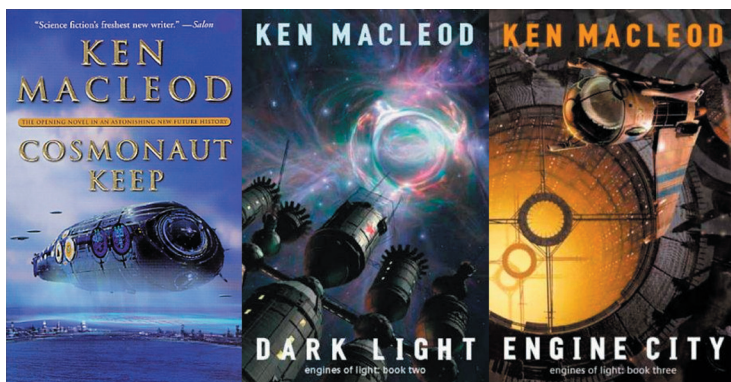
As an odd side note, I should perhaps mention that the person I identified with the most in the «Engines of Light» series was the semi-villain Volkov, a Trotskyite, a follower of an ideology you wouldn't see me associate with any time real soon. This might have to do with his strong willingness to nuke the gods to give them a hint not to meddle in human affairs.

A stand-alone, *Newton's Wake* once again had me identifying mostly with the bad guy. This time Johnstone, a ruthless man of revolutionary bent whose main love in life is himself. The novel takes place in a «post-humanist» universe. That is: The computational capacity of the world has increased to the

point where the computers themselves can take over the evolution of computers and mind (including «uploading» human minds into computers), and run into the age of Artificial Intelligence that is now commonly referred to as the *Singularity*. Wars have been fought, and suddenly no-one knows where the AIs are; all that is left are their traces traces that are as if traces by a vastly superior and almost god-like alien civilization.

This time the question identity comes up in the form of whether you stay you if your mind is uploaded into a fast computer and has its abilities augmented by a factor of what we call «a lot». That is: It goes beyond the usual cyberpunk question of whether an uploaded mind is the same as the original mind, and asks whether an already uploaded mind stays itself if-when its capacities are expanded by some huge factor. An interesting question, and though I lean towards «no», the question is in no way resolved. For after all, it is again a question that has been drawn from real-life, present-day parallels.

Ken MacLeod's latest book is *learn-*



for his own benefit. He works himself up to robust health, and the strange tale goes on from there.

John Marmysz: *The Nihilist's Notebook*.

I'd also be very interested in seeing a «Stirnerian» review of «the other egoist» Ayn Rand's novels.

Also, if anyone has a sufficient knowledge of German to translate Stirner's review of Eugene Sue's *Mysterien de Paris*, a translation or offer of collabo-

ration would be more than welcome. I have tried to translate it, but found my knowledge of the German language to be insufficient.

To buy any of the books reviewed in this issue, please go to The Non Serviam Bookshop:

<http://www.nonserviam.com/magazine/shop/main.html>

—Svein Olav Nyberg
August 2005

Commentary to Blaabjerg

Stephen Clark

Morten Blaabjerg says:

«It all begins with Plato's theory of ideas. This is not a chair. It is the idea of a chair. A horse is not just a horse. It only becomes a horse with the idea of what makes a horse a horse. The things surrounding us, the world around us, only exist by the virtue of ideas, of concepts. In other words, one could say, reality is conditioned by our concepts of reality»

I'm puzzled by this suggestion or set of suggestions, which seem to turn on a misunderstanding of the term «idea». This does not mean «concept or thought» but «form or fact». Plato did not suppose that reality was conditioned by our concepts, nor that chairs and horses depend on us for their reality. He would

have found *The Matrix* quite interesting as an allegory (actually following the metaphor of the Cave in *The Republic*) of the need to wake up from private and from social dreams.

What the concluding moral of *The Matrix* is meant to be I don't know (maybe the sequels make it clearer, though I fear that they may become merely vulgar). But Neo isn't operating entirely for Himself: he's the champion of Zion. The one who operates entirely for himself is the traitor. Or else «acting for oneself» means something very different from the normal - and maybe more like what Plato meant as well.

Best wishes
Stephen Clark
Dept of Philosophy
University of Liverpool

Obituary – Helge Kongshaug (1945-2002)

Hans Trygve Jensen

Since the previous issue of *Non Serviam*, we've learned that one of Norway's foremost experts on Max Stirner, Helge Kongshaug, died on December 13, 2002.

Helge was born in Ålesund on the western coast of Norway in 1945. Later on, he moved with his parents to Oslo.

In the 60s and 70s, he worked as a journalist and got a chance to visit all of Western Europe and several parts of the US.

In 1980, he turned to teaching and taught journalism, philosophy and music history at different folk high-schools, both in Norway and Sweden.

Before he moved to Sweden in the mid 80s, he completed a main subject on Johann Gottlieb Fichte's philosophy at the University of Oslo.

In Sweden, he wrote two works on Stirner, *Den enda och hans om-*

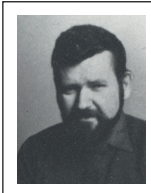
givning (The Ego And Its Surroundings) and *Förakt för makten –*

Max Stirners Existentialism (Contempt Of Power – Max Stirner's Existentialism), both

published by Victoria Förlag. Helge has also written several articles on anarchism, one called «Egoanarkis-men kontra existensialismen» (Ego-Anarchism Versus Existentialism). This article and the two books are available in Swedish on the web site Yelah.

With the 90s near at hand, Helge decided to explore the Pacific Ocean and visited 13 different nations in the South Pacific, settling for a few years on the islands of Kiribati and Tuvalu. Struggling with bad health, he returned to Norway in the late 90s. Here he worked as a news editor for the web site «Sydhav på nettet» (South Pacific On The Net) until his death in 2002.

Helge is survived by his son, Karl.



Related links:

- <http://www.yelah.net/articles/kongshaug>
- <http://www.yelah.net/articles/exist>
- <http://www.yelah.net/articles/egoanark>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Gottlieb_Fichte
- <http://www.sydhav.no>

various ideologies as in *The Star Fraction*. Instead, he focuses more on sci-fi themes like *artificial intelligence* and post-humanism, and keeps his left- and right-wing anarchies as a background for the action. Not that his political exploration has turned static – for they haven't – but the political scenes don't change as often, and he lets us explore with him the difference between the two types of anarchism at a more leisurely pace, while keeping us in suspense about what the post-human superminds of Jupiter are up to.

Though MacLeod would not be content to be the cheerleader of a single philosopher, he marks territory pretty well when he makes a short list of philosophies under True Knowledge in *The Cassini Division*, a list including the man to whom *Non Serviam's* editor burns a stick of incense every friday night: Max Stirner, as well as Karl Marx and Charles Darwin.

MacLeod's next series is «Engines of Light», comprised by the novels *Cosmonaut Keep*, *Dark Light* and *Engine City*. The series starts off with the discovery of vast and complex civilizations living inside asteroids. Vast and fractally complex minds we get to know as the gods. Gods who think life on Earth is all too bothersome – too noisy!

To me, these novels were more mainstream science fiction, with philosophical ponderings on the themes of Contact (with superior alien civilizations), artificial intelligence and personal identity. But precisely the theme of personal identity in a futuristic setting, with minds barely distinguishable from ma-



Photo: Beth Gwinn

chines, is one of Ken MacLeod's fortes as an author, which again makes him worth reading to those who, maybe inspired by Stirner, find personal identity to be one of the most important philosophical topics.

The most interesting creatures in this series are introduced pretty late: The spiders. The spiders are fractally organized organisms, something which is best described by the structure of their hands: Each arm has a set of hands at the end, each hand has a set of fingers, each finger branches out to new «sub-fingers» – and so on. A fractal tree.

The spiders' minds are organized in the same way: When young, the spiders are very tiny, and they hatch in a myriad. Then, they start competing and also eating each other. When one spider eats another, the other spider's mind is not obliterated, but rather assimilated into the eating spider's mind, just like the matter of the eaten spider's body

Ken MacLeod

An Egoist With An Eye On The Sky

Svein Olav Nyberg

Dear reader: I know you. That is, I know most of you who read *Non Serviam* did not stumble upon Stirnerian egoism as a result of reading general philosophy. Rather, you found it via politics and political philosophy, through an interest in the possible foundations of anarchism, libertarianism, mutualism, objectivism and the like. You are political idealists who have found some peace in the anti-idealism of egoism; but yet, given the button that would dissolve the State, most of you would push it.

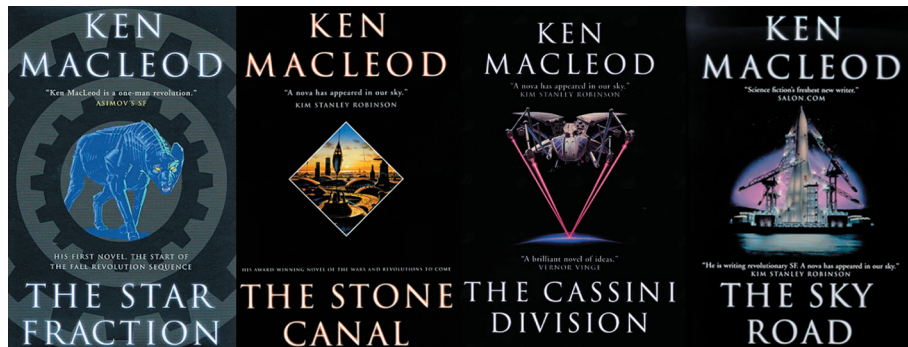
Ken MacLeod, author of nine books and some shorter stories, is one of you, and he writes for those who have the sound, child-like curiosity, those who wonder What if? – what if I pushed that button?

Ken's first four books ask that question in various ways. They are a series

called «The Fall Revolution», comprised by the novels *The Star Fraction*, *The Stone Canal*, *The Cassini Division* and *The Sky Road*. These books are thoroughly political – with a slant. Drawing on his knowledge as an activist on both the Marxist and the libertarian side of the political spectrum, he uses these novels to play ideologies out against each other.

Most spectacular is perhaps *The Star Fraction*, where he has divided countries, and even cities, like London («Norlonto»), into competing political systems. A meta-libertarianism where the market's main commodity is political systems, and voting is done with the feet. Even after his well-written latest novel, *The Star Fraction* remains my favourite among his novels.

In the remaining three books of the series, MacLeod doesn't dazzle us as much with his in-depth knowledge of



Eumeswil

A Note On Ernst Jünger's Eumeswil

Sid Parker

Ernst Jünger (1895–1998) was one of the most controversial figures in twentieth-century Germany.

At eighteen he ran away from home and joined the Foreign Legion.

Brought back by his father, at nineteen he became an infantry officer at the outbreak of the first World War. He was wounded several times and was awarded *Pour le Mérite*, Germany's highest medal for bravery.

After the war ended he wrote several books about his battle experiences in which he glorified the warrior as the new elite.

He became a «conservative revolutionary,» was active in the nationalist movement and was invited by Adolf Hitler (who greatly admired his war books) to join the National Socialists. Jünger refused.

When the National Socialists came to power he withdrew from politics, maintaining a detached attitude as an «internal emigrant.»

In 1939 he wrote his perhaps most famous work *On Marble Cliffs*, an allegorical story of the triumph of barbarism. It became a bestseller before the National Socialists, much

alarmed, suppressed it. Jünger, however, remained unharmed due, it is said, to Hitler's explicit instructions.

The second World War saw him back in the army with the rank of captain. He took part in the invasion of France, won another Iron Cross and spent most of his time as a staff officer in occupied Paris. Here he met many of the literary figures of the time.

Although he took no part in the plot to kill Hitler in 1944, he was on friendly terms with some of the conspirators. For this he was dismissed from the army.

When Germany fell to the victorious Allies he was regarded with suspicion by the British occupying powers and his books were banned. Undeterred he continued to write and refused to appear before a de-Nazification tribunal

on the grounds that he had never been a Nazi.

Once the ban on the publication of his works was lifted, he produced a steady stream of novels, essays and journals.

By now he had evolved far beyond his erstwhile political militancy, becoming more and more content to be an observer.



At eighty-five he wrote one of his last major works: *Eumeswil*. Although described as a novel it is difficult to fit into this category.

It is set in an unspecified future. Nations have disappeared, giving way to world government. This in turn has collapsed and been replaced by empires and city state.

Eumeswil is one of the city states and is ruled by a benevolent tyrant called the Condor. Its narrator is a young historian named Martin Venator who is also night steward at the tyrant's citadel, the Casbah. Here he records the observations of the tyrant and his entourage and develops them into reflections upon power and history.

Venator embodies Jünger's concept of «the anarch», whom he carefully differentiated from «the anarchist.» The anarch is

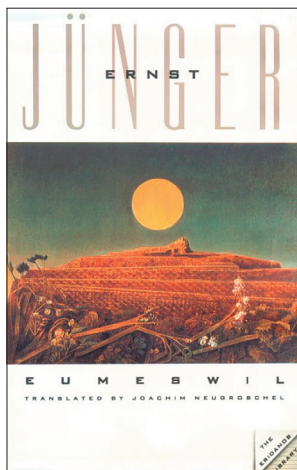
a self-owner, who is liberated from all ideologies, and intent on protecting himself from their blandishments.

Throughout the book there are echoes, varying in strength, of Max Stirner's *The Ego and His Own*, together with some sometimes puzzling attempts by the author to distinguish his views from those of Stirner. «Puzzling» because these take the form of criticisms he does not clarify.

Several pages of *Eumeswil* are devoted to Stirner himself, and here Jünger displays a rather curious am-

bivalence. He writes, for example, that Stirner's life «was banal ... misspent in profession and business, a failed marriage, debts, a regular tavern table with the standard blabber preceding the German revolution, a high-level philistine - the usual stuff.»

Yet he remarked about Marx and Engels labelling him «Saint Max» «all derision contains a speck of truth ... the characteristic feature of great saints - of



whom there are very few - is that they get to the very heart of the matter. The most obvious things are concealed in human beings, nothing is harder to evince than what is self-evident. Once it is uncovered or rediscovered it develops explosive strength. Saint Anthony recognized the power of the solitary man, Saint Francis the power of the poor man, Stirner that of the man alone. At bottom everyone is «solitary»,

«poor» and «alone» in the world.»

And: «the discoverer has his delights - what had touched me so deeply?»

As a work of art, as a philosophical meditation, as a reaction to the «explosive power» of *The Ego and His Own*, *Eumeswil* is well worth reading.

[Eumeswil was originally published in 1980 by Klett-Coto of Stuttgart. The English translation, by Joachim Neugroschel, was published in England by Quartet books in 1995 and, at the time of writing, is still in print.]

«For the anarch, if he remains free of being ruled, whether by sovereign or society, this does not mean he refuses to serve in any way. In general, he serves no worse than anyone else, and sometimes even better, if he likes the game. He only holds back from the pledge, the sacrifice, the ultimate devotion ... I serve in the Casbah; if, while doing this, I die for the Condor, it would be an accident, perhaps even an obliging gesture, but nothing more.»

«The egalitarian mania of demagogues is even more dangerous

than the brutality of men in gallooned coats [i.e. the generals - SEP]. For the anarch, this remains theoretical, because he avoids both sides. Anyone who has been oppressed can get back on his feet if the oppression did not cost him his life. A man who has been equalized is physically and morally ruined. Anyone who is different is not equal; that is one of the reasons why the Jews are so often targeted.»

«The anarch, recognizing no government, but not indulging in paradisaical dreams as the anarchist does, is, for that very reason, a neutral observer.»

«Opposition is collaboration.»

«A basic theme for the anarch is how man, left to his own devices, can defy superior force - whether state, society or the elements - by making use of their rules without submitting to them.»

«... malcontents... prowl through the institutions eternally dissatisfied, always disappointed. Connected with this is their love

of cellars and rooftops, exile and prisons, and also banishment, on which they actually pride themselves. When the structure finally caves in they are the first to be killed in the collapse. Why do they not know that the world remains inalterable in change? Because they never find their way down to its real depth, their own. That is the sole place of essence, safety. And so they do themselves in.»

Eumeswil Quotes

«The anarch may not be spared prisons - as one fluke of existence among others. He will then find the fault in himself.»



«We are touching one a ... distinction between anarch and anarchist; the relation to authority, to legislative power. The anarchist is their mortal enemy, while the anarch refuses to acknowledge them. He seeks neither to gain hold of them, nor to topple them, nor to alter them - their impact bypasses him. He must resign himself only to the whirlwinds they generate.»

«The anarch is no individualist, either. He wishes to present himself neither as a Great Man nor as a Free Spirit. His own measure is enough for him; freedom is not his goal; it is his property. He does not come on as foe or reformer: one can get along nicely with him in shacks or in palaces. Life is too short and too beautiful to sacrifice for ideas, although contamination is not always avoidable. But hats off to the martyrs.»

«We can expect as little from society as from the state. Salvation lies in the individual.»