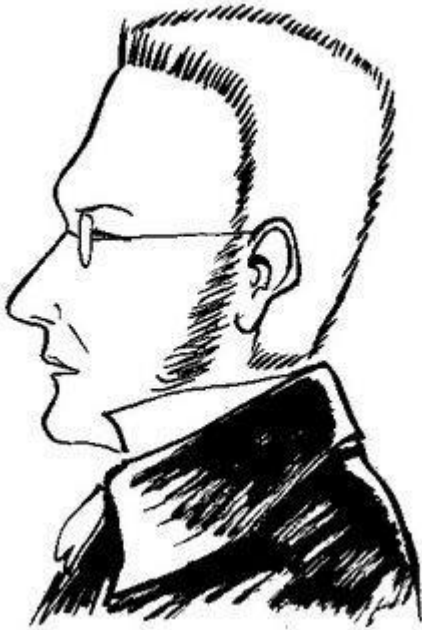


Stirner, Feurbach, Marx and the Young Hegelians - David McLellan



A summary of Stirner's ideas and their strong impact on his fellow Young Hegelians. McLellan asserts that Stirner's influence on Marx has been under-estimated and that he "*played a very important role in the development of Marx's thought by detaching him from the influence of Feuerbach*", his static materialism and his abstract humanism. Stirner's critique of communism (which Marx considered a caricature) also obliged Marx to refine his own definition. Stirner's concept of the "creative ego" is also said to have influenced Marx's concept of "praxis".

Source; originally a chapter in *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*; David McLellan, MacMillan Press, UK, 1980.

MAX STIRNER

1. STIRNER'S LIFE AND WORKS

MAX STIRNER - whose real name was Kaspar Schmidt - was an only son of Protestant parents, his father being a Bayreuth flutemaker who earned a comfortable living. He died, however, two years after Stirner was born in 1806, his wife remarried a dentist and the family moved to west Prussia. When Stirner was aged twelve he was sent back to Bayreuth and lived there for the next six years while attending the grammar school. He went to the University of Berlin at the age of twenty and entered the philosophical faculty where he attended, among others, the lectures of Hegel. He stayed there two years, spent the next year at the University of Erlangen and then interrupted his studies to stay at home for some time, possibly owing to the incipient madness of his mother.

By 1832 he was back at the University of Berlin, but two years later he only obtained a limited *facultas docendi* and, when after further studies he failed to get a post in a state school, Stirner started

teaching in a private girls' school where he remained until he gave up the job in 1844 just before the publication of his book.

In 1837 Stirner had married the niece of his landlady, but she died a year later in childbirth, and in 1843 Stirner married again, this time Marie Dahnhardt to whom he dedicated *Der Einzige*. She was comparatively wealthy, but the money was lost when the creamery that Stirner had bought with it in 1845 failed the year after, and she left him the same year. Stirner worked as a hack translator of Jean Baptiste Say and Adam Smith, but he was twice imprisoned for debt and died destitute in 1856.

Stirner is a man of a single book, *Der Einzige and sein Eigentum*, and the whole of Stirner's productive period is contained in the years 1842-4. Being a teacher and not immediately connected with the university Stirner did not come into contact with the Young Hegelians until quite late. What inspired him to his brief spell of creation was the group of young radical intellectuals formed in Berlin after Bruno Bauer's dismissal from his post and known as the *Freien*. They used to meet almost nightly in a wineshop belonging to a certain Hippel, and Engels in his comic poem *Der Triumph des Glaubens* gives this description of Stirner as he appeared at these gatherings :

'For the time being he is still drinking beer,
Soon he will drink blood as if it were water;
As soon as the rest cry savagely "Down with kings!"

Stirner immediately goes the whole hog: "Down with laws too!"

Stirner cannot have joined the group before the end of 1841 as this was the time that Marx, who apparently never met Stirner, left Berlin. During this period Stirner wrote several short articles for newspapers, among which a very laudatory review of Bruno Bauer's *Posaune*, and also two longer articles published in the supplement to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, one on education as the development of the self and the second, in which the influence of Feuerbach is evident, on the very Hegelian subject of the relation between art and religion. Stirner also published two articles a little later in the *Berliner Monatsschrift*, a review edited by one of the *Freien*, the first rejecting any ideas of the state, while in the second, a commentary of Eugene Sue's popular novel *Les Mysteres de Paris*, Stirner elevates the self at the expense of any fixed moral norms.

Stirner spent most of 1843 writing *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*. It was finished by April 1844 and published in November of that year. For all its apparent eccentricities the book is very obviously a product of its time and of the Young Hegelian movement in particular. The form of the book, dialectical and divided into triads, is Hegelian, as is also the careful attention paid to language and the roots of words. Inside the Young Hegelian movement itself, Stirner carried to an extreme their rejection of anything religious and their opposition to any 'system'. The familiar accusation of still thinking in a 'theological' manner, that is in an abstract manner which still left some ideas or principles outside, and in some way opposed to, the minds of men, and the accusation of lack of consequence and perseverance in drawing the full conclusion from premises both reach their culmination in Stirner who sees all his fellow-thinkers as 'spiritual' and 'religious' as compared to himself.

Stirner can thus be seen as the last of the Hegelians, last perhaps because he was the most logical, not attempting to replace Hegel's 'concrete universal' by any 'humanity' or 'classless' society since he had no universal, only the individual, all-powerful ego. Stirner took Hegel's views as his basis and then worked out his own philosophy by criticising everything that was positive in Hegel's critics, Bauer, Feuerbach and Marx - whose criticisms, according to Stirner, were never pushed far enough. Hegelianism was thus at an end : Stirner only used the form not the content of the Hegelian system and, like all the Young Hegelians, was most fascinated by the dialectic. But even this was only an outer shell, for Stirner was very weak on history as he had no room to allow for a historical development whether of the world spirit, selfconsciousness or the class struggle. Stirner was indeed a

solipsist and a nihilist but, for all his criticism of Feuerbach, he was still influenced by his naturalistic viewpoint. For Stirner's individualism left no room for any sort of morality, which had been on the side of freedom in Hegel. Since the ethical sphere was left empty it is not surprising that Stirner sometimes lapsed into a Feuerbachian naturalism based on natural values and needs.

Stirner's book is a difficult one because there is no rectilinear development and it often presents the appearance of notes taken at random and put down with no attempt at co-ordination. For example, at the beginning of the book we are offered two entirely different schemata of world history. Also Stirner's attitude to Bruno Bauer changes considerably in the course of the book, but no attempt is made to reconcile the two views. Indeed, what Stirner himself says on this point probably applies to most of the book: 'The foregoing review of "free human criticism" was written bit by bit immediately after the appearance of the books in question, as was also that which elsewhere refers to the writings of this tendency, and I did little more than bring together the fragments'.(1) The development is nevertheless progressive as the same points are returned to later and treated at greater length. A second factor complicating Stirner's exposition is his treatment of language. He tries continually to obtain new effects by translating foreign words into German, by giving their original meaning to words in current use and by etymological investigations into the roots of words. Of course, all this makes translation difficult.

The basic message of the book, as well as the style in which it is written, is best shown by quoting the first and last paragraphs of the preface:

What is not supposed to be my concern? First and foremost the good cause, then God's cause, then the cause of mankind, of truth, freedom, humanity, justice ... finally, even the cause of mind and a thousand other causes. Only my cause is never to be my concern. Shame on the egoist who thinks only of himself.(2)

And the last paragraph reads :

The divine is God's concern; the human, man's. My concern is neither the divine nor the human, not the good, true, just, free, etc., but solely what is mine, and it is not a general one, but is - unique, as I am unique.(3)

The layout of the book is clearly modelled on Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums*, being divided into two parts entitled 'man' and 'myself', which correspond to the two parts of Feuerbach's work that dealt respectively with God and man. The first chapter of *Der Einzige* describes a human life in a triadic form:

The child was realistic, taken up with the things of this world, till little by little he succeeded in getting at what was at the back of these things; the youth was idealistic, inspired by thoughts, till the stage where he became the man, the egoistic man who deals with things and thoughts according to his heart's pleasure, and sets his personal interest above everything. Finally the old man? 'When I become one, there will be time enough to speak of that'.(4)

Stirner then goes on to apply this to human history: antiquity was the childhood of the human race, the modern age adolescence and its maturity will be that immediate future of which Stirner's book is a precursor. The view of history as a gradual progress of philosophical thought is Hegelian, but in place of the reign of spirit, Stirner puts the supremacy of the self and its property. His analysis of the modern age is a sort of demonology of the spirits to which humanity has been successively enslaved.

Since Stirner's ideas can best be understood by comparing them with those of his contemporaries, the most revealing part of the book is his attitude to his fellow Young Hegelians. After dealing with

antiquity, in which nature and her laws were regarded as a reality more powerful than man, Stirner describes at greater length the modern, the Christian world, the kingdom of pure spirituality, whether in religion or philosophy, the latest manifestation of which - the philosophy of Feuerbach - is still 'thoroughly theological'.

According to Stirner, Feuerbach has merely changed the Christian conception of grace into his idea of a human species and religious commands into moral ones. But the Christian dualism between what is essential and what is non-essential in man remains; indeed, the situation is even worse than before for this dualism, since it has been brought down from heaven to earth, has thereby become even more inescapable: if Feuerbach destroys the heavenly dwelling of the 'spirit of God' and forces it to move to earth bag and baggage, then we, its earthly apartments, will be badly overcrowded. 'Feuerbach', says Stirner, 'thinks that if he humanises the divine he has found the truth. No; if God has given us pain, "man" is capable of pinching us still more torturingly'.(5) Men are still bound by ideals that stand above and separate from them. The humanist religion of Feuerbach is only the last metamorphosis of the Christian religion: 'Now that liberalism has proclaimed "man" we can now declare openly that herewith was only completed the consistent carrying out of Christianity and that in truth Christianity set itself no other task from the start than to realise "man", the "true" man'.(6) The only solution is therefore to do away with the divinity once and for all in any shape or form: 'Can the man-God really die if only the God in him dies?'(7) For a genuine liberation, we must not only kill God, but man, too. Stirner here, in a typically Young Hegelian manner, takes up Feuerbach's own starting point and turns it against its author who is accused of not having followed it through to its proper end. All philosophy for Stirner, as for Marx too, was idealism, but whereas for Marx the basis to which philosophy had to be reduced was socio-economic, for Stirner it was the ego.

Stirner now goes on to deal with the 'most modern among the moderns' - the *Freien* or Liberals, whom he divides into three classes : political, social and humane.

Stirner begins the first section with a characterisation of the changes that came over the political scene in the eighteenth century:

After the chalice of the so-called monarchy had been drained down to the dregs, in the eighteenth century people became aware that their drink did not taste human - too clearly aware not to begin to crave a different cup. Since our fathers were human beings after all, they at last desired also to be regarded as such.(8)

The new idea that gained ground at this time was that 'in our being together as a nation or state we are human beings. How we act in other respects as individuals and what self-seeking impulses we may there succumb to, belongs solely to our private life; our public or state life is a purely human one'.(9) The bourgeoisie developed itself in the struggle against the privileged classes by whom it was cavalierly treated as the third estate and confounded with the *canaille*. But now that the idea of the equality of man spread, the situation, as with Feuerbach's critique of religion, became much worse. For just as Feuerbach, by transferring the centre of religion from heaven to earth, had rendered its effects more immediate and obvious, so democracy renders more obvious the evils of politics. Stirner quotes Mirabeau's exclamation: 'Is not the people the source of all *power*?' He goes on: 'The monarch in the person of the "royal master" had been a paltry monarch compared with this new one, the "sovereign nation". This monarchy was a thousand times stricter, severer and more consistent'.(10) This liberation, the second phase of protestantism, was inaugurated by the bourgeoisie and its watchword was rationalism. But this merely means the independence of persons, liberalism for the liberals and a replacing of personal power by one that is impersonal. It is no longer any individual, but the state itself and its laws that are the despots. Laws and decrees multiply and all thought and action become regulated. In return for this slavery the liberal state guarantees our life and property, but this free competition means merely that everyone can push forward, assert himself and fight one against

another. The bourgeoisie also has a morality closely bound up with its essence, one that emphasises solid business, honourable trade and a moral life, disregarding all the time that the practice of this rests on the foundation of the exploitation of labour.

Under the heading of 'Social Liberalism' Stirner next deals with the doctrines of the communists. Whereas through the Revolution the bourgeoisie had become omnipotent and everyone was raised (or degraded) to the dignity of 'citizen', communism or social liberalism responds :

Our dignity and essence consist not in our being all equal children of our mother, the state, but in our all existing each for the other ... that each exists only through the other who, while caring for my wants, at the same time sees his own satisfied by me. It is labour that constitutes our dignity and our equality.(11)

Stirner's summary of the socialist doctrine is: all must have nothing, so that all may have. Under liberalism it is what he 'has' that makes the man and in 'having' people are unequal. But this society where we are all to become members of the *Lumpenproletariat* is even worse than the previous ones, for here 'neither command nor property is left to the individual; the state took the former, society the latter'.(12) The communist ideas show the same faults as those already criticised. They, too, have a dualistic view of man:

That the communist sees in you the man, the brother, is only the Sunday side of communism. According to the workday side he does not take you as man simply, but as human labourer or labouring man. The first view has in it the liberal principle; in the second illiberality is concealed. If you were lazy, he would certainly not fail to recognise the man in you, but would endeavour to cleanse him as a 'lazy man' from laziness and to convert him to the 'faith' that labour is man's destiny and calling'.(13)

Thus in the communists' glorification of society we merely have another in the line of deities that have tyrannised over mankind: 'Society, which is the source of all we have, is a new master, a new spook, a new "supreme being", which "takes us into its service and allegiance".(14)

The criticism of communism advanced by the humanist liberal, or disciple of Bruno Bauer, to whom Stirner next passes, is that if society prescribes to the individual his work, then even this does not necessarily make it a purely human activity. For to be this it must be the work of a 'man' and that requires that he who labours should know the human object of his labour and he can have this consciousness only when he knows himself as man, the crucial condition is self-consciousness - the very watchword of Bruno Bauer and his School. 'Humanist liberalism says: "You want labour; all right, we want it likewise, but we want it in the fullest measure. We want it, not that we may gain spare time, but that we may find all satisfaction in labour itself. We want labour because it is our self-development"'.(15) In short, man can only be truly himself in human, self-conscious labour. According to Stirner this view seems to say that one cannot be more than man. He would sooner say that one cannot be less: 'It is not man that makes up your greatness, but you create it, because you are more than man and mightier than other - men'.(16) Stirner concedes that among social theories, Bauer's ideas are certainly the most complete for they remove everything that separates man from man. It is in Bauer's criticism, reminiscent of Feuerbach, that Stirner finds the 'purest fulfilment of the love principle of Christianity, the true social principle', which he rejects with the question: 'How can you be truly single so long as even one connection exists between you and other men?(17) These are the same objections as Stirner brought against Feuerbach. For Bauer shares Feuerbach's humanism and sacrifices the individual man to the idea of humanity by maintaining that his vocation is to realise the human essence through the development of free self-consciousness.

Nevertheless, Stirner does admire Bruno Bauer with his extreme dialectic and proclamation of the perpetual dissolution of ideas. In fact, Stirner thinks that this must finally end up in his own position:

It is precisely the keenest critic who is hit the hardest by the curse of his principle. Putting from him one exclusive thing after another ... at last, when all ties are undone, he stands alone. He, of all men, must exclude anything that has anything exclusive or private; and when you get to the bottom, what can be more exclusive than the exclusive, unique person himself?(18)

Bauer does, indeed, in later numbers of his *Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung* reject this Feuerbachian humanism in favour of a 'pure criticism', and Stirner adds to this section a postscript in which he deals with Bauer's change of position as not going nearly far enough:

[Bauer] is saying too much when he speaks of 'criticising criticism itself'. It, or rather he, has only criticised its oversight and cleared it of its inconsistencies. If he really wanted to criticise criticism he would have to look and see whether there was anything in its pre-supposition.(19)

It still remains true that Stirner found himself closer in outlook to Bauer than to any other of the Young Hegelians and this feeling was reciprocated : Bauer was the only one, apart from Buhl, to attend Stirner's funeral and pay him this last mark of respect.

After thus dismissing the wiles of religion, philosophy and liberalism in their efforts to subdue the self, Stirner shows in the second part of the book the way to its complete liberation. It is not through attachment to other eternal ideas or values that the self is liberated, but by elevating itself above all the toils and snares of these ideas. My self is my own creation and my own property, its power is without limits and it belongs wholly to me. It is only in my own self that this liberation can be found, as Stirner points out, again in opposition to Feuerbach :

Feuerbach in his 'Grundsätze' is always harping on 'being'. In this he, too, for all his antagonism to Hegel and the absolute philosophy, is stuck fast in abstraction; for 'being' is an abstraction as is also 'the I'. Only I am not an abstraction: I am all in all, consequently even abstraction or nothing; I am not a mere thought, but at the same time I am full of thoughts, a thought-world.(20)

This is a complete inversion of Hegel. What in Hegel was attributed to the general is here applied to the individual. Stirner, too, could have claimed to have stood Hegel on his head. Later Stirner explicitly compares the ego to God, whom 'names cannot name'. But this liberty needs to be supplemented by property. The only thing that really belongs to me is my self: this, too, is the only thing that is really free. Any lesser freedom is really useless, for it always carries with it the implication of a future enslavement, as Stirner has shown in dealing with the different liberal doctrines. The only reason that men do not grasp their liberty is that they have been taught to mistrust themselves and depend on priests, parents or law-givers. But if they are sincere with themselves they will admit that even so their actions are governed by self-love. Dare therefore to free yourself from all that is not your self. In place of 'deny yourself' the slogan of the egoist is 'return to yourself'. In the past people have been shame-faced egoists, now they should come out into the open and grasp for themselves what before they thought to acquire by persuasion, prayer and hypocrisy. Liberty is not something that can be granted - it has to be seized.

The liberal state sees me simply as a member of the human race and it does not interest itself in my peculiarities: it merely demands that I subordinate my individual interests to those of society in general. But human society and the rights of Man mean nothing to me: I seem to have many similarities with my fellows, but at the bottom I am incomparable. My flesh is not their flesh and my mind is not their mind. I refuse to forget myself for the benefit of others. Others - nations, society, state - are nothing but a means which I use. I convert them into my property and my creatures, I put in

their place the association of egoists, that is to say, an association of selves of flesh and blood preferring themselves to everything else and having no inclination to sacrifice themselves to this species-man that is the ideal of liberalism. This species-man is plainly nothing but a concept, an idea, a ghost : the true self is without species, without norm, without model, without laws, without duty, without rights.

Law, too, is something that is offered me from the outside. But I am sole judge of what my rights are : they are co-terminous with my `power', for `only "your might", "your power", gives you the right'.(21) The only thing that I have not got the right to do is what I have not authorised myself. The only law for me is that which exists in and through my self.

The worst enemy of the self is thus the state, for it is continually opposed to the will of particular persons : I can never alienate my will to the state, as my will is something continually changing. Even the best type of state is one where I am a slave to myself. Did I but realise it, my will is something that no force can break. This does not mean, however, that there will be complete chaos and each man will be able to do as he pleases. For if all men act as egoists and defend themselves, then nothing untoward will happen to them. Marx's view was too cosmopolitan for Stirner whose one passion was the individual person. Stirner considered that it was no use bettering the universal, the state, law, society. Progress was inductive, from below, from individuals. Although he shared with Marx the same criticisms of the Prussian state, the principles upon which these were based were different: Marx was a violent critic of any kind of atomism, from Epicurus's onwards. Stirner on the other hand wanted the state to dissolve into atoms.

The liberal state's aim is to guarantee a little piece of property to everyone. But in fact property falls a prey to the big owners and the proletariat increases and the attacks of the communists are justified. Stirner's criticism of the liberal state here was quite probably influenced by Marx's article 'Zur Judenfrage'; both have the same views on the dualism of the private and political spheres, the difference between corporations and free competition, and the essential features of the Christian state. The solution lies in the formation of an association of people who remain their particular selves, an association which would dispossess the proprietors and organise their wealth in common, each man bringing as much as he can conquer. By all means have associations to reduce the amount of labour needed but let the self and its unique power always have first priority. The supreme law quoted at all those who try to free themselves is that of love: `every man must have something that is more to him than himself'. This love is not to be a free gift, but is an injunction laid upon us. Certainly I may sacrifice all sorts of things for others, but I cannot sacrifice myself. The egoist loves others because this love makes him happy and has its basis in his egoism.

As an egoist I enjoy all those possessions that my liberation has granted me; they are my property and I dispose of them as I wish. I am even master of my ideas and change them as so many suits of clothes. But this does not mean that I am solitary and isolated. For man is by nature social. Family, friends, political party, state, all these are natural associations, so many chains that the egoist breaks in order to form a `free association' supple and changeable according to varying interests. Stirner admits that this `association of egoists' must be based on a principle of love, but it is an egoistic love - my love. The association is my own creation and I enter and leave when I please. I am the only person who attaches myself to the association.

The aim of the association is not revolution, but revolt, not to create new institutions, but to institute themselves. Stirner realised the self-contradictory notion of his `association of egoists' and in his replies to the critics of his book the element of association is minimised. The book ends, as it began, with an assertion of the uniqueness of the individual:

I am the owner of my might, and I am so when I know myself as unique. In the unique one the owner himself returns into his creative void out of which he was born. Every higher essence above me, be it God, be it man, weakens the feeling of my uniqueness and pales only before the sun of my consciousness of this fact. If I concern myself with myself, the unique one, then my concern is limited to its transitory, mortal creator which constitutes myself, and I can say: All things are nothing to me!(22)

2. STIRNER VERSUS FEUERBACH

Unlike Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach and Hess, Stirner had no positive doctrine to offer Marx: but he nevertheless played a very important role in the development of Marx's thought by detaching him from the influence of Feuerbach. This role of Stirner in detaching Marx from Feuerbach can best be made clear by showing firstly that Marx at the time of the publication of *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* was, and (more important) was regarded as being, a disciple of Feuerbach, secondly that Stirner's book was regarded as important and that his criticism of Feuerbach had wide influence and thirdly that the *Deutsche Ideologie* was composed in the context of this debate and comprises a criticism of Feuerbach which borrows elements from Stirner and a criticism of Stirner which tacitly admits the validity of his attack on Feuerbach but maintains that it no longer applies.

As regards the first point, there are many facts showing that Marx was regarded in late 1844 as being a disciple of Feuerbach.

This was certainly so in the eyes of Stirner: the only reference to Marx in *Der Einzige* is to his use of the term *Gattungswesen* in his essay 'Zur Judenfrage', and this term is one borrowed from Feuerbach (first chapter of *Das Wesen des Christentums*).

Feuerbach is referred to as a communist in *Der Einzige*.⁽²³⁾ The use of this word was at that time very loose and many did not distinguish it from socialism, but when in 1843 the Young Hegelian movement split, Feuerbach, at the height of his influence then and in the subsequent year, came to be regarded as the inspirer of the materialist wing in the same way as Bruno Bauer of the idealists.

In 1845 there appeared an article by G. Julius, former editor of the *Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung* and friend of Bruno Bauer, entitled 'Kritik der Kritik der kritischen Kritik', in which Marx is treated simply as a disciple of Feuerbach. 'In his construction of human nature', says Julius 'Marx by no means does away with dualism: all he does is to transpose this dualism into the real material world in which he follows Feuerbach exactly'.

Bruno Bauer, too, in his reply to Stirner, entitled 'Charakteristik Feuerbachs', tries to show that Stirner is a refutation of Feuerbachianism as expounded by his disciples Marx, Engels and Hess, but that both are dogmatisms which must in turn be overcome by 'pure criticism'.

Hess, in particular in his essays in *21 Bogen aus der Schweiz*, made great use of the Feuerbachian idea of alienation and viewed his 'true socialism' as the realisation of Feuerbach's philosophy: and Marx and Engels were at this time closely associated with Hess.

At the time of the appearance of Stirner's book Marx had only published, apart from the two essays in 'Anekdoten' and some articles in the *Rheinische Zeitung*, the essays in the *Deutschfranzösische Jahrbücher* which are plainly under the influence of Feuerbach.

Finally, there is the evidence of Marx himself, his high praise of Feuerbach in the *Heilige Familie*, written before the appearance of *Der Einzige*, where Marx attributes to Feuerbach alone the overturning of the old system and the placing of 'man' in the centre of philosophical discussion.

As to the second point, that is, the importance of *Der Einzige* at the time and its criticism of Feuerbach: each of the groups attacked by Stirner replied at considerable length, Szeliga and Bruno Bauer both wrote articles, Feuerbach also replied. Hess wrote an essay 'Die letzten Philosophen', Marx and Engels wrote the best part of a book. Even as late as 1847-8 the young Kuno Fischer devoted his first publications to an attack on *Der Einzige*.

All acknowledged that Stirner was an adversary of note. Bruno Bauer wrote in his article that Stirner was 'the most capable and courageous of all the combatants' (that is of his 'pure criticism'). Feuerbach in a letter described Stirner as 'the most gifted and the freest writer it has been given me to meet'. Even Engels in his first letter to Marx discussing the book (19 November 1844) wrote that 'among the *Freien* it is plain that Stirner has the most talent, personality and energy'.

In view of this evidence, the fact that the book was very much a product of its time and that its interest has therefore largely disappeared should not obscure its great importance for its contemporaries.

The most influential part of the book was its criticism of Feuerbach on the grounds that his notion of 'man' was only yet one more universal abstraction to which men would be as enslaved as before. Indeed it was worse than the previous ones since they were at least idealistic and heavenly: now the tyranny had been brought down to earth and would thus be the more difficult to escape. Feuerbach had achieved the 'final metamorphosis of Christianity'.(24)

Ruge, at least, considered the book a decisive criticism of socialism. In a letter to Nauwerck he described the book as a liberation from the 'social dogmatism of artisans' and in a letter to Hess he refused Hess's request for collaboration on the grounds that Stirner has destroyed Hess's philosophical communism.

Finally, the only reason for Marx and Engels devoting such a large part (three-quarters) of the *Deutsche Ideologie* to a criticism of Stirner was that Stirner was considered by them as the most dangerous enemy of socialism at that time. There can have been nothing personal: it is very improbable that Marx ever met Stirner. The fact that the book was never published is, though not surprising, immaterial: Marx and Engels tried very hard to find a publisher.

As to the third point, that is, the treatment of Feuerbach and Stirner in the *Deutsche Ideologie*, Marx and Engels clearly separate themselves from Feuerbach in a way they had never done before, thereby implicitly accepting the criticism of Stirner. What is criticised in Feuerbach is his *Sinnlichkeit*, his static materialism. This is an aspect of Feuerbach's thought which only came to the fore in his reply to Stirner, as a means of defending himself against the charge of abstraction. To this Marx and Engels oppose their notion of 'praxis', best expressed in the first thesis on Feuerbach: 'The chief defect of all previous materialism (including that of Feuerbach) is that things, reality, the sensible world, are conceived only in the form of objects of observation, but not as human sense activity, not as practical activity (praxis), not subjectively'.(25) Given the circumstances in which the *Deutsche Ideologie* was written, it is impossible that Stirner not only compelled Marx to revise his position vis-a-vis Feuerbach but also contributed something to this revision through the idea of the 'creative ego' that he opposed to all abstractions. Certainly Stirner seems to have been in Marx's mind when he was composing the section on Feuerbach in the *Deutsche Ideologie*. There are many references to Stirner and even a parody of him in the well-known description of the future communist society:

In communist society, where no one has an exclusive sphere of activity, but can perfect himself in any branch that pleases him, society regulates general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, raise cattle in the

evening and go in for criticism after dinner, as I please, without ever becoming either hunter, fisherman or critic.(26)

The first unfavourable reference to Proudhon in Marx's writings appears in the *Deutsche Ideologie*, obviously in connection with Stirner's recent attack :

We invite St Sancho [Max Stirner] to show us, for example, in Owen (who, as representative of English communism can just as well count for `communism' as Proudhon, who is not a communist and from whose writings he has extracted most of the above phrases) a passage that contains something of the above phrases on `essence', general organisation of work, etc.(27)

Just as it seems clear that this coolness towards Proudhon is a result of Stirner's criticism (though never acknowledged), so to some extent in the case of Feuerbach. It is also likely that Marx's constant attacks on anything that appeared to be based on `morality' or `love' in true socialism was due to Stirner's ruthless criticism of all such notions.

3. STIRNER AND MARX

It seems doubtful whether any `direct influence' of Stirner on Marx in economic matters is provable. This can be seen from an examination of the dates : the principal work of Marx on alienated labour `as such' is the MSS. written in Paris in 1844. There is nothing new on alienated labour in the *Heilige Familie* and in the *Deutsche Ideologie*, and though the analysis of 1844 is repeated, it is only done so *en passant* and much more attention is paid to the historical side - its origin in the division of labour. Stirner's book was published about September 1844, certainly no earlier than August, the month by which the Paris MSS. of Marx were completed. So what this parallelism will show is that Marx was by no means the only person to be thinking of such things at this time.

Marx's theory as set out in the Paris MSS.(28) can be briefly summarised as follows:

1. *The product of man is not his own but turns into a hostile power that dominates him.*
2. *The act by which man produces is not free but forced.*
3. *Man's relation to nature is vitiated and he can no longer appropriate it as he should.*
4. *His relation to his fellow-men is also vitiated since he must be in a state of subjection vis-a-vis his employer.*

This idea is briefly anticipated in Marx's essay 'Zur Judenfrage', but only with regard to money, and not products. He says: `Under the sway of egoistic need man can only affirm himself and produce objects in practice by subordinating his products and his own activity to the domination of an alien entity, and by attributing to them the significance of an alien entity, namely money'.

What this involves can be seen more clearly by looking at Marx's ideas of what labour in an unalienated society would look like. In his notebooks Marx drafted out a few comments on the economists he was reading at the same time as the writing of the Paris MSS. The comment on James Mill contains a very interesting passage where Marx deals with what he called `free labour', whose preconditions were:

1. *that my production should be an objectification of my own individuality.*
2. *that my product should satisfy the needs of others, as, for instance, a composer and the singer of his song [My example, not Marx's].*
3. *that my product should mediate between you and the species, should be a completion of your essence, should be known and felt by you to be a necessary part of yourself and that therefore I should feel myself confirmed in my thought and in my feelings;*
4. *that in my exterior activity I should have created your exterior activity and thus have confirmed my*

common human essence. Given these conditions, says Marx, our products would be like mirrors in which we could see reflected our common essence.

Coupled with the section on Feuerbach in the *Deutsche Ideologie* is a long and wearisome attack on Stirner enlivened by only occasional bright spots, the sum of which is that Stirner is criticising a communism that no longer exists and never did exist. This latter at least is not true (see the essays of Hess in *21 Bogen aus der Schweiz* and of Marx in *Deutsch französische Jahrbucher*). It is worth while noting, too, that the writings referred to as a refutation of Stirner's attack on 'essence' in Proudhon are not those of Marx or Hess, but those of Owen. Though it is certainly true that the ideas in the *Deutsche Ideologie* are different from those criticised by Stirner, it is reasonable to suppose that these differences are, to a considerable extent, due precisely to that criticism.

The principal reason for this neglect of Stirner when treating of the development of Marx's thought is that Feuerbach is regarded as the last influence on Marx before the formulation of historical materialism in the *Deutsche Ideologie*. This misconception was started by Engels in his lucidly, too lucidly, written brochure *Ludwig Feuerbach und der 11 usgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie* (1886). Here Feuerbach is separated from the list of the Young Hegelians, Strauss, Bauer, Stirner, and treated afterwards, thus giving the impression that this was the chronological order. This is belied by the dates themselves : Feuerbach's last significant contribution to the Young Hegelian debate was 'Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft', published in July 1843, whereas *Der Einzige* appeared late 1844. This mistake has persisted even in very recent books none of which(29) give any place at all to the influence of Stirner and also treat the contribution of Feuerbach as coming after Stirner.(30)

It has been seen quite rightly that the 'Feuerbach' part of the *Deutsche Ideologie* brings this period of Marx's writings to a close, but what has not been seen is that it was the following and larger part entitled 'Sankt Max' that both compelled and enabled this culmination. The 'Sankt Max' may be too turgid to be worth while reading but it is worth while asking why it is there at all.

Stirner's economic ideas are not clearly formulated (in keeping with the style of the book) but still many parallels to Marx are obvious.(31) These are chiefly found in the sections on political and social liberalism.(32) In the former there is a passage on the omnipotence of money that is closely parallel to the passage in the Paris MSS. where Marx quotes Shakespeare (Timon of Athens) and remarks: 'What I as a man am unable to do, and thus what all my individual faculties are unable to do, is made possible for me by money.... In mediating thus money is a genuinely creative power'.

The passage in Stirner reads: "Money governs the world" is the keynote of the bourgeois epoch. A destitute aristocrat and a destitute labourer amount to nothing so far as political significance is concerned. Birth and labour do not do it, but money brings consideration (*Das Geld gibt Geltung*).'(33)

One place where Stirner seems to anticipate Marx is where he briefly mentions a doctrine which Marx will later make into one of the corner-stones of his economic theory - the doctrine of surplus value. Stirner says :

Under the regime of the commonalty (Burgertum) the labourers always fall into the hands of the possessors - that is of those who have at their disposal some bit of the state domains, especially money and land - of the capitalists therefore. The labourer cannot realise on his labour to the extent of the value that it has for the consumer. The capitalist has the greatest profit from it.

In the section on social liberalism (i.e. communism) Stirner has a passage analysing the bad effects of division of labour and the workers' deprivation of their products which is very like what Marx was writing at the same time:

When everyone is to cultivate himself into man, condemning a man to machine-like labour amounts to the same thing as slavery. If a factory worker must tire himself to death twelve hours or more, he is cut off from becoming man. Every labour is to have the intent that man be satisfied. Therefore he must become a master in it, too, that is be able to perform it as a totality. He who in a pin-factory only puts on the heads, only draws the wire, etc., works, as it were, mechanically, like a machine; he remains half-trained, does not become a master: his labour cannot satisfy him, by itself, has no object in itself, is nothing complete in itself; he labours only into another's hands and is used (exploited) by this other.(34)

Even the call of the Eleventh Feuerbach Thesis 'to change the world' finds its echo here :

When, for example, a branch of industry is ruined and thousands of labourers become breadless, people think reasonably enough to acknowledge that it is not the individual who must bear the blame, but that 'the evil lies in the situation'.

Let us change the situation, then, but let us change it thoroughly, so that its fortuity becomes powerless.(35)

It is difficult to show any direct influence of Stirner on Marx here, the more so as Stirner's book was to a large extent an amalgam of current cliches. What the above passages show is that the ideas of alienated labour and exploitation were by no means confined to Marx at this time, even among Germans. Both Stirner and Marx were probably much influenced by the ideas of Fourier.

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NOTES

- 1) M. Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, p. 190.
- 2) Ibid. p. 3.
- 3) Ibid. p. 6.
- 4) M. Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, p. 16.
- 5) Ibid. p. 227.
- 6) Ibid. p. 228.
- 7) Ibid. p. 202.
- 8) Ibid. p. 128.
- 9) Ibid. p. 128.
- 10) Ibid. p. 132.

- 11) M. Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, p. 156.
- 12) Ibid. p. 155.
- 13) Ibid. p. 160.
- 14) Ibid. p. 162.
- 15) M. Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, p. 173.
- 16) Ibid. p. 176.
- 17) Ibid. p. 177.
- 18) Ibid. p. 177f.
- 19) Ibid. P. 199.
- 20) M. Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, p. 453.
- 21) Ibid. p. 254.
- 22) M. Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, p. 496.
- 23) Ibid. p. 412.
- 24) M. Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, p. 229.
- 25) Marx-Engels, *Werke*, iii, p. 533.
- 26) Ibid. p. 83.
- 27) Ibid. p. 197.
- 28) MEGA, I, 3, pp. 29ff.
- 29) With the exception of H. Arvon, *Aux sources de l'existentialisme, Max Stirner*.
- 30) See S. Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, M. Friedrich, *Philosophie u. Okonomie beim jungen Marx*. R. Tucker has managed to write a whole book on *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* without once mentioning Stirner.
- 31) These are hinted at but not gone into in the book by D. Koigen *Zur Vorgeschichte des modernen deutschen Sozialismus* (Bern, 1901).
- 32) M. Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, pp. 128ff., 152ff.
- 33) Ibid. p. 150.
- 34) Ibid. pp. 157.
- 35) Ibid. pp. 158f.