

*Max Stirner*

# Stirner's Critics

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(343) There have appeared in opposition to *The Ego and Its Own* by Max Stirner the three following great treatises:

- A critique by Szeliga in the March issue of the *Norddeutschen Blatter*.
- “On *The Essence of Christianity*” in Relation to *The Ego and Its Own* in the last issue of *Wigand’s Vierteljahrsschrift*.
- A brochure: *The Last Philosophers* by Moses Hess.

Szeliga appears as an exponent of Critical Thought, Hess as a Socialist, and the writer of the second treatise as — Feuerbach.

It may be useful, even if not for the sake of the above critics, to reply nonetheless to other readers of the book.

The three critics agree with one another about those words which are the most salient, namely about “Unique” and “Egoist.” It would therefore be of service to use this unity and to address, to begin with, the points that they touched upon.

...

(344) Feuerbach allows himself to be no more precise in his Treatment of the “Unique One” than to view it without further ado as a “sole individual” which is “selected from a class or species and who is set up as holy, unapproachable by all the others.” In this selection and setting up “is the essence of religion. This man, this ‘Unique One,’ ‘Incomparable One,’ this Jesus Christ, exclusively and alone is God. This oak, this place, this grove, this bull, this day is holy, not the rest.” He concludes: “Strike down the ‘Unique One’ in heaven, but also strike out of your head the ‘Unique One’ of this world.”

...

Stirner speaks of the Unique and says immediately: Names (345) name you not. He articulates the word, so long as he calls it the Unique, but adds nonetheless that the Unique is only a name. He thus means something different from what he says, as perhaps someone who calls you Ludwig does not mean a Ludwig in general, but means You, for which he has no word. What Stirner says is a word, a thought, a concept; what he means is no word, no thought, no concept. What he says is not what is meant, and what he means is unsayable.

One has always flattered oneself that one was talking about the “actual, individual” man when one spoke about man. But was that possible so long as one wanted to express this man through something general, through a predicate? Doesn’t one have to, in order to indicate a thing, instead of taking refuge in a predicate, rather rely on pointing, whereby the intention, i.e. what is unexpressed, is the main thing. One of the critics [Feuerbach, F.G.] rested content with the “true, whole individual, who nonetheless does not become free of his connection to the “species.” Another is satisfied with the “spirit” which is similarly a determination, and not the complete lack of determination [Szeliga, F.G.]. Only in “the Unique” does this lack of determination appear to have been reached, because if one grasps it as a concept, i.e. as something expressible, it appears as entirely empty, as an indeterminate name, and thereby points to its content outside of or beyond the concept. If one fixes it as a concept — and that is what my opponents do — one must seek to give a definition of it, and in doing that one must necessarily end up with something different from what was intended. One would distinguish it from other concepts and grasp it as, e.g.

“the sole, perfect individual,” whereupon it would be easy then to show that it is nonsensical. But can you define yourself? Are you a concept?

(346) “Man” as a concept or predicate does not exhaust what you are because it has a conceptual content of its own and because it lets itself stipulate what is human, what is “a man,” because it can be defined; for that reason you can have absolutely nothing to do with it. Certainly, as a man you have your share of the contents of the concept of Man, but you do not thereby have it as You. The “Unique One,” by contrast has no content whatever; it is indeterminateness itself. Content and determination come to — through you. There is no development of the concept of the Unique. No philosophical system can be built out of it, as it can out of Being, or Thinking, or the I. Rather, with it, all development of the concept ceases. The person who views it as a principle thinks that he can treat it philosophically or theoretically and necessarily wastes his breath arguing against it. Being, Thought, I — are merely indeterminate concepts which take on determination through other concepts, i.e. through the development of the concept. The Unique One however is an indeterminate concept and through no other concept can be made more definite or take on a “more precise content.” It is not the “principle of a line of thought,” but a word or concept to which it is impossible to give content as a word or concept. The development of the Unique is your and my self-development, an entirely singular development, for your development is absolutely not my development. Only as a concept, i.e. only as “development” is it one and the same. For that reason, your development is as distinct and singular as mine.

Because you are the content of the Unique One, there is nothing more to be thought about its own content, i.e. about the conceptual content.

It cannot be said by the word, Unique One, what you are, any more than (347) one can say what you are by the name Ludwig that was given to you by the Christener. With the Unique One, the realm of absolute thought, i.e. thought with its own proper content, is foreclosed, as the concept and concept-word disappears with the contentless name: The name is the word empty of content to which a content can only be given by thought.

... The Unique One is the straightforward, sincere, plain-phrase. It is the end point of our phrase world, of this world in whose “beginning was the Word.”

The Unique One is the declaration of which it is conceded with all openness and honesty that it — declares nothing. Man, Spirit, the True Individual, Personality, and so forth are assertions or predicates that puff up with their fullness of content, phrases with the highest wealth of thought. The Unique One is, in contrast to these holy and exalted phrases, the empty, the unassuming, the entirely common phrase.

Indeed, the critics guessed something of this sort about the Unique. They insist that it is a phrase. But they then want to claim further that it is a holy, elevated phrase, and to oppose its claim. It wants, however, to be nothing but a common phrase, only that it should thereby be what is actual, what has the power to make the phrases of the opponents no longer exist, and that it bring to shame this multitude of phrases.

(348) The Unique One is a word and with a word one must still be able to think something. A word must still have a thought content. But the Unique One is a thought-less word; it has no thought content. — But what is the content, then, if it is not thought? One who does not exist in replica, consequently who also cannot be expressed. For if he could be expressed, truly and fully expressed,

he would have to exist for a second time; he would be there as the “expression.”

Because the content of the Unique One is no thought content, it is also, therefore, unthinkable and unsayable, but since it is unsayable, this entire phrase is therefore — no phrase.

First of all, then, if nothing is said of you, and if you are only named, you are recognized as you. As long as something is said of you, you would be known only as this something (Man, Spirit, Christ, etc.). The Unique One, however, expresses nothing because it is a name and says only that You are You and not other than You, that You are a singular You, or You yourself. You are predicate-less throughout, thereby at the same time without determinations, without a calling, without measure, etc. . .

Speculation was directed to find a predicate which would be so general that everyone would be comprehended by it. Moreover, such a predicate certainly shouldn't express what one ought to be, but rather what one is. If “Man” were therefore this predicate, there would have to be understood by it not something that each person is supposed to be — for if this were the case whoever had not yet become it would be excluded — but something that each person is. This ‘What’ alone is clearly the expression for what is common to everyone, for that which each has in common with the other, but it is not the expression for the “each one”. It does not express who each one is. Are you fully comprehended when one says (349) that you are Man? Has it thereby been expressed what you also are? Does that predicate “Man” fulfill the duty of predicates to fully express the subject, and doesn't it leave out, in contradiction to the subject, precisely the subjectivity; doesn't it say not who but only what the subject is?

If the predicate of a particular person is to be grasped in itself, therefore, the individual involved must appear as a subject, i.e. not merely as what he is, but as who he is.

How, though, can you appear as who you are if you yourself do not come forward? Are you a double of yourself or do you exist as only one? You are nowhere outside of yourself; you do not exist twice in the world. You can only appear if you appear alive.

“You are individual” — isn't that a judgment? If you appear in the judgment, “You are Man,” as not what you are, do you appear as you actually are in the judgment “You are Individual?” The judgment, “You are individual,” is nothing other than “You are You,” a judgment which the logician calls a nonsensical judgment because it judges nothing, says nothing, because it is empty, or a judgment which is no judgment. — (In the book, p. 232 the nonsensical judgment is understood so that it appears as “infinite” or “indeterminate”; here, by contrast, it is understood as the judgment of identity.)

What the logician treats scornfully is of course the unlogical or only “formal logic.” But it is still, logically viewed, only a phrase. It is logic as a vanishing phrase.

The Unique wants only to be the last, the dying phrase of you and of me, wants only to be that statement that collapsed by its own meaning: an assertion which is no more, a silent, dumb assertion.

You — Unique! What is there in this of thought content as a content of judgment? Nothing — whoever still wishes to derive from (350) the Unique as from a concept its own thought content would want to then assert of you that the Unique is what you are. He would thereby indicate that he believes in phrases. Since he does not recognize the phrase as a phrase, he would show

that he is looking in the phrase for the phrase's own content.

You, unthinkable and unexpressible, are the content of the phrase, the real phrase, the living phrase. You are the Who, the That of the phrase.

In the Unique, science can dissolve into life, in which its that becomes a Who and What which is no longer sought in words, in logic, in predicates.

Szeliga takes the trouble to show that the Unique, "measured by his own principle of seeing phantoms everywhere, becomes the phantom of all phantoms." It eludes him that the Unique is an empty phrase. That he himself, Szeliga, is the content of that phrase, he allows to escape from his attention.

The Unique One in heaven which Feuerbach puts along side the Unique One on earth is a phrase without the content that belongs to it (ohne Phraseneigner). The Unique One as a thought is called god. Just that has assured the continuity of religion, that it have the Unique One in thought or at least as a phrase, that it see him in heaven. But the Unique One in heaven is precisely that Uniqueness that no one can claim for his own, whereas the Uniqueness as Stirner refers to it, Feuerbach 'nolens volens' has to claim, although he must assign it a strange meaning if he would strike his Uniqueness out of head. If the Unique One in heaven were something in its own head instead of in Feuerbach's head, it would be hard for the Unique One to strike the Unique One (its Uniqueness) out of its head.

...

(351) The reviewers show still more anger to the "Egoist" than to the "Unique." Instead of trying to get close to the meaning of Egoism as Stirner understands it, they stick with the customary conception of it that they've had since childhood, and read off the list of sins familiar to all. See here Egoism, the ghastly sin — that's what Stirner "commends!"

Against the Christian definition, "God is love", the critics in old Jerusalem could rise up and cry out: Behold, it is a heathen god which is proclaimed by the Christians; for if God is love, then he is the god, Love, the love-god. What need have the Jewish critics to have further dealings with love and with the god who is love for they have spat on the love-god, on love, for a long time?

...

Feuerbach says: "There is a basic difference between the kind of love that's called self-seeking, selfish love, and what's called unselfish love. What? In short, this: In self-interested love, the object is your mistress, in unselfish love, your beloved. I enjoy myself both in one case as in the other, but in the former I subordinate the essence to the part, but in the latter, the part, the means, the organ, to the whole, to the essence. In the former, for that very reason I enjoy only a part of myself, but in the later I enjoy my self, my whole, entire essence. In short: In selfish love, I sacrifice the higher to the lower, a higher pleasure, consequently, to a lower, in unselfish love, though, a lower to a higher."

...

(354) Stirner ventures to say that Feuerbach, Hess, and Szeliga are egoists. With that, Stirner of course makes the identical judgment as when he says that Feuerbach does absolutely nothing but what is Feuerbachian, that Hess does nothing but what is Hessian, and the Szeliga does nothing save what is Szeli-ganian. Nonetheless, only Stirner has given to them the completely notorious title.

Does Feuerbach live in some other than his own world? Does he live perhaps in Hess's, in Szeliga's, in Stirner's world? Isn't the world, just because Feuerbach

lives in it, the world that surrounds him, the world that is thought, experienced, contemplated by Feuerbach? He lives not merely in the middle of it, but is its middle himself, is the middlepoint of his world. And as with Feuerbach, so no one lives in another than his own world; as with Feuerbach, so is everyone the center of his world. World is really only; what one is not oneself, but what belongs to one, what stands in a relationship to one, what is for one.

Around you everything turns: You are the middle of the outer world and the middle of the thought world. Your world extends as far as your power of conception, and what you grasp is your own by your mere grasping. You, Unique One, are Unique only together with “your Property.”

Meanwhile you do not avoid the fact that what is your own is at the same time its own or has its own being, a unique being like you. In this you lose yourself in sweet self-forgetfulness.

But if you forget yourself, do you then completely disappear? If you do not think of yourself do you altogether cease to be? When you look into the eyes of your friend, or contemplate some happiness which you might cause him, when you gaze at the stars, ponder their laws, or when you send affectionate greetings to someone who has the same feeling for you, (35S) when you loose yourself in the microscopic movements of some tiny form of life, when you without any thought of your own danger rush to save someone from fire or drowning: In such cases, you do not, of course, “think” of yourself, you “forget” yourself. But are you only when you think of yourself, and do you pass away when you forget yourself? Do you only exist through self-consciousness? Who doesn’t forget himself every minute; who doesn’t lose sight of himself a thousand times an hour?

This self-forgetfulness, this losing of oneself is indeed only a mode of our gratification, is only the enjoyment of our world, our property, our worldly enjoyment. Not in this self-forgetting, but in the forgetting of this, that the world is our world, does unselfishness, i.e. false egoism, have its basis. Before an absolute, a “higher” world, you throw yourself down and throw yourself away. Unselfishness is not self-forgetting in the sense that one does not think of oneself and is not engaged with oneself, but in another sense, that one forgets the “our” of the world, that one forgets that one is the middle point or owner of this world, that it is our property. The fear and timidness shown toward the world as a “higher” world is the most disheartened, “submissive” egoism, egoism in the form of the slave, who does not dare to grumble, who remains still and “denies himself” — it is self-denial.

Our world and the holy world — in that lies the difference between affirmative egoism and self-denying, unconfessed, incognito, sneaking egoism.

How is this the case with perhaps Feuerbach’s example of the mistress and the beloved? In the first case, it is a business relation without personal interest (and must one not in numerous other disparate cases rest content with business relations; (356) Is one always able to take an interest in the person, in what has to do with the that one, to take a personal interest in some one?); In the second case, it is a personal interest. But what is the sense of the latter relation? Precisely, the one-sided interest in the person. If this personal interest disappeared from the relationship, the relationship would become senseless, for this interest is its sole meaning. Now what is marriage, which is praised as a “holy relation,” save the fixing of an interesting relation despite the danger of its becoming uninteresting and senseless? Indeed, it is said that it should not

become “nonsense.” But why not? Because nonsense is a “sin,” because we are dealing here with “holy matters.” Here, there should be no nonsense! There then we have the egoist who deprives himself of such nonsense and condemns himself to live in an uninteresting yet holy relationship. From an egoistical association there emerges a “holy union”; the interest which the people have in each other ends, and a disinterested union remains.

Another example of the uninteresting is work which is considered as one’s life-work, as a calling for man. From this notion of work comes the delusion that one must earn one’s bread and that it is a sin to have bread without having done anything for it: It is the pride of working for wages. Work has no value whatsoever in itself and is an honor for no man, as the workless life of Lazarus was no shame for him. Either you take an interest in the activity of work itself and it gives you no rest unless you are always actively engaged in it: Then work is something you desire, your special delight without its thereby being anything higher than the laziness of Lazarus, which, after all, was what he desired. Or you pursue through work another interest (357), some outcome or “compensation,” and you undergo it as a means which leads to some final end: Then it is certainly not interesting in itself, but then no assertion is made that it be interesting in itself, and you know that it is not something worthwhile or holy in itself, but that it is something unavoidable for the present, which you do in order to achieve certain results. But work which is viewed as the “honor of man” and as his “calling” is to be respected, is to be the crown of the national economy, and remains mistress of holy socialism where as “human work” it “ought to develop human abilities,” and where this development is a matter of the human calling, an absolute interest. (About this, more later on.)

The belief that something other than an interest can justify a sympathetic attitude toward something — this belief, that goes beyond interest, is what begets disinterestedness, indeed begets “sin” as one’s disposition toward one’s own interest. Just in the face of the holy interest your own interest is detested as “private interest,” “egoism,” a “sin.” Stirner gives a summary description on p. 224 of the difference between the holy and one’s own interest, viz.: “Against the one I can sin, but the other I can only squander.”

The holy interest is what is uninteresting because it is an absolute interest or an interest in itself whether you take an interest in it or not. You ought to make it your interest. It is not an interest that is originally yours, you do not give birth to it; rather it is an eternal, general, purely human interest. It is uninteresting because no cognisance is taken of you and of your interests; it is an interest without interestedness because it is a general interest or an interest of man. And where (358) you are not yourself the owner, but would be its disciple and servant, then for that reason Egoism which is in opposition to it and “disinterestedness” begins (darum hort ihm gegenüber der Egoism und die “Uninteressirtheit” beginnt.)

If you take only a holy interest to heart, you have begun to and will proceed to sacrifice your own interest. Call the interest that you follow today holy, and tomorrow you are a slave. All behavior for an absolute interest or for something worthwhile in and for itself is religious behavior, or simply religion. The interesting can be interesting only through your interest, the worthwhile can be worthwhile only by your giving it value. What is worth while despite you is something despicable.

The interest of any spirit, as that of society, of man, of the human essence, as



humanity in its entirety, its “essential interests,” is an alien and would be your interest. The interest of the beloved is your interest and only so long as it is interesting to you. It is when it ceases to be your interest that it can turn into a holy interest, into an interest namely that ought to be, although it is not yours. The relationship which was interesting until then now becomes uninteresting and disinterested.

In social and personal affairs your interest is the primary thing, and all sacrifice is only for the sake of your own interest. In religious affairs, by contrast, the religious interest of the Absolute or of the Spirit, i.e. an interest which is alien to you, is the primary thing, and your interests have to be sacrificed to this alien interest.

Fraudulent egoism consists therefore in the belief in an absolute interest, in an interest that does not spring from the egoist, i.e. from one who is self interested, but from (358) an “eternal interest” which is imperious against the interest of the egoist and which firmly maintains itself. The egoist is “fraudulent” because his own interests, “private interests,” are not just ignored, but even damned, but it remains nonetheless “egoism” because he takes up this alien or absolute interest only in the hope that it will make him happy.

This absolute interest (Interessante) which would be interesting (interessant) though disinterested (ohne den Interessenten), which thus, instead of being a concern of a unique individual, is rather looking just for a “vessel for its glory”, or for men who would be its “tools and implements,” Stirner calls simply “the holy.” The holy is in fact the absolute uninterestingness (Uninteressante) for it lays claim to the interesting only if no one has an interest in it (sich kein Mensch dafür interessirte). It is also the “general,” i.e. subjectless interest, because it is not a unique interest, the interest of a unique individual. In other words: this “general interest” is more than you — is something “higher.” It exists also independent of you — it is something absolute. It is an interest for itself — something alien to you. The demand is put to you to serve it, and it finds you fully willing if you let yourself be infatuated.

In order to stick with Feuerbach’s touching definition of the mistress, is there any man or woman who gladly would prefer to be unchaste because nature drives leave him or her no peace? But, can it be said, do you indeed know, what unchastity is? It is a sin, a vulgarity, it shames us. Feuerbach though says that we would through unchastity sacrifice other interests which are still more important to us than this sensual pleasure. This is the way unreligious thought puts it, and it would make its sacrifice not to chastity but to some other judgment which it will not be able to sustain. What sort of interest is there in chastity? Without doubt, nothing natural (360), for nature argues for unchastity.

## Feuerbach

(379) Whether Stirner has read and understood Feuerbach’s *Essence of Christianity* can only be determined by a special critique of that book which we can’t run through here. We’ll restrict ourselves therefore to a few points. Feuerbach believes that he speaks in Stirner’s sense when he says: “That is the very sign of religiosity (380) of Feuerbach’s subjugation that he is still infatuated with an object, that he still wishes something, loves something — a sign that he has

still not raised himself to the absolute idealism of Egoism.” Hasn’t Feuerbach looked at the following relevant passages? *The Ego and Its Own*, p. 381\*: “The meaning of the law of love is perhaps this, that everyone must have something that stands over him (das ihm uber sich geht). That object of holy love is the spook.” Pg. 383: “Whoever is full of holy love, loves only the spook, etc.” Further, p. 383–395: e.g. “Not on account of my feelings does love become a matter of daemonic frenzy, but on account of the alien nature of the object — through the absolute love-worthiness of the object, etc.” “My love is my own just because it consists in a selfish and egoistical interest; consequently, the object of my love is actually my object or my property.” “I’ll stick with the old song of love and love my opposite”, thus my “something”.

From Stirner’s “I have based my affairs on nothing” Feuerbach extracts “the nothing” and thereupon brings it about that the egoist is a pious atheist. The nothing (das Nichts) is of course a definition of God. Feuerbach is here playing with a word with which the Feuerbachian Szeliga takes a great deal of trouble. Besides, *The Essence Of Christianity* has the following to say, p. 31: A real atheist is only someone for whom the predicates of God’s essence, for example, love, wisdom, righteousness, are nothing, but not someone for whom only the subject of these predicates is nothing.

Feuerbach asks: “How does Feuerbach allow the (divine) predicates to remain?” and answers, “Not as when they are predicates of God. Not at all. Rather as they are predicates of nature and humanity — as natural, human properties. (381) When they are transferred from God to humanity, they lose their very character of Godliness.” Stirner retorts: Feuerbach allows the predicate to persist as an ideal — as a definition of the essence of the species, an essence which is “imperfectly realized” in individual men and which only “in the mass of the human species” attains a perfect form, as the “complete essence of the perfect man,” thus as an ideal for individual men. Feuerbach does not allow these predicates to persist as Divinity to the degree that he no longer attributes them to God the subject, but he allows them to persist as predicates of humanity to the degree that he “transfers them from God to humanity.” Now Stirner had directed his attack precisely against this conception of man, and Feuerbach now comes back, entirely unphased, with his “humanity” and means to argue that if only the predicate were “human” or were transferred to humanity, it would all of a sudden become completely “profane, common.” These human predicates are, however, no more common and profane than the divine predicates and Feuerbach is still a far way from being a “true atheist” as he defines it. He also doesn’t want to be one.

“The primary illusion,” says Feuerbach, “is God as subject.” Stirner showed, though, that the primary illusion is rather the idea of the “perfection of human nature” and that Feuerbach who champions this basic prejudice with all his might is therefore exactly like a true Christ.

“Feuerbach shows,” he goes on, “that the divine is not divine, that God is not God, but is only the human essence that is self-loving, self-affirming, and self-regarding to the highest degree.” But who is this “human essence?” Stirner has shown that the human essence is just like that ghost, which is also called MAN, and that you, a unique essence, are brought by the influence of the human essence to talk about your “self-affirmation,” to talk in Feuerbachian language. The point of contention (381) which Stirner raised is therefore once again completely evaded.

“The theme, the kernel of Feuerbach’s writing,” Feuerbach goes on, “is the overcoming of the split into an essential and unessential I — the deification, that is, the presentation, the regarding of the whole man from head to foot. Doesn’t the book have expressedly as its conclusion that the divinity of the individual articulates the revealed secret of religion?” “The only piece of writing in which the slogan of the new age, viz. personality, individuality, is something other than a meaningless flourish is precisely *The Essence of Christianity*.” But what “the whole man” is, and what “the individual, personality, individuality” is comes out in the following: “For Feuerbach, the individual is the absolute, i.e. the true, actual being. But why doesn’t he say, this exclusive individual? Because if he did that, he wouldn’t know what it is that he wanted to achieve — if he assumed the standpoint of the exclusive individual, which he in fact rejects, he would sink back into the standpoint of religion.” So it turns out that “the whole man” is not “this man,” not the common, offensive, self-seeking man. Of course Feuerbach would sink back into the standpoint of religion that he rejects if he described this exclusive individual as “the absolute essence.” But it wouldn’t be because he is talking about this individual; rather it would be because he describes that individual as something religious (“absolute essence”) or attributes his religious predicates to him, and because he in the second place “sets up an individual” as “holy and unapproachable by all other individuals.” The above charges therefore are irrelevant to Stirner, because Stirner says nothing about a “holy, incomparable individual which is or could be God.” It does not occur to him to deny that the individual (383) is a “communist.” Of course, Stirner has allowed the words “individual,” “particular person,” some validity only because they are all submerged together in the expression “Unique”. But he does that only for the sake of what he expressedly acknowledges in the section “My Power,” where he says on p. 275: “In conclusion, I still have to take back half of the style of expressions that I wanted to make use of only so long as etc.”

When Feuerbach, against Stirner’s statement, “I am more than man,” throws up the question, “But are you more than a male?”, one is being required in this case to get rid of one’s whole masculine disposition. He goes on as follows: “Is your essence, or rather — for the word, essence, offends the egoist, although he uses it himself — [Rather, Stirner only purifies it of the double meaning that it has, for example, for Feuerbach, in whose writing it appears as if he were actually talking about you and me, when he talks about our essence, whereas he after all is talking about an essence that is entirely subordinate, namely to the human essence which is thereby made into something dominant and superior. Instead of having you in mind, you — the essence, you, the you that you are, he occupies himself with humanity as “your essence” and has humanity instead of you in mind. Stirner employs the word, “essence,” for example, on p. 56, when he says, “You, yourself, with your essence are of worth to me, for your essence is not something higher, is not higher and more universal than you; it is unique as you yourself are because it is you”.] — is your I not masculine? Can you sever masculinity from what is called spirit? Isn’t your brain, the most holy and most elevated viscera of your body, masculine in its determination? Are your feelings, your thoughts, unmasculine? Are you, moreover, a beastly man, a dog, an ape, a jackass? What else is your unique, incomparable, your consequently sexless I (384), than an undigested residue of the old Christian supernaturalism?”

If Stirner had said: You are more than a living being, or more than an animal, that would mean that still you are also an animal but you are not com-

pletely described by animality. Just as now he says: You are more than man, therefore you are also man; you are more than masculine, but are also masculine. Humanity and masculinity do not express you exhaustively, and it can therefore be a matter of indifference to you, what is presented to you as “true humanity” or “true masculinity.” With those pretentious propositions you have however allowed yourself to be martyred and martyred yourself. Nowadays, with them, the holy people still intend to capture you. Feuerbach is certainly no “animal semi-man,” but is he also nothing more than a human male? Did he write his *Essence Or Christianity* as a male, and does he have to be nothing more than a male in order to write this book? Wasn’t this particular Feuerbach necessary for that, and indeed could some other Feuerbach, for example, Friedrich — nonetheless still a male — have brought it off? Because he is this unique Feuerbach, he is also at the same time a male, a human being, a living being, a Frenchman, and so forth. But he is more than all that, for these predicates only have reality through his uniqueness: he is a unique male, a unique human being, etc., yea, he is an incomparable male, an incomparable human being.

So what does Feuerbach want to do with his “consequently sexless I?” Is Feuerbach, since he is more than masculine “consequently” sexless? Feuerbach’s holiest, most elevated organ is without doubt masculine, of masculine determination, as it is, among other things, also caucasian, German, and so forth. But all this is so only by virtue of the fact that he is a unique, a single (385) distinct being, an organ or brain as will not come forward again a second time in the whole world, however full the world might be of “organs,” organs as such or absolute organs.

And is this unique Feuerbach “an undigested residue of the old Christian supernaturalism?”

Consequently, it is also entirely clear that Stirner does not “sever his I,” as Feuerbach says, “in thought from his sensible, masculine nature” as also the refutation which Feuerbach gives on p. 200 of the *Quarterly* would collapse if Feuerbach did not present the Unique One in a reverse manner as without individuality, just as he depicts him as “sexless.”

“To realize the species is to actualize a predisposition, an ability, a vocation of human nature in general.” — Rather, the species is already realized through the existence of some capacity; what you, on the other hand, make out of this capacity, is a realization of your own. Your hand is fully realized according to the species, lest it not be a hand, but perhaps a claw. If, however, you develop your hand, you do not perfect it according to the standards of the species, you do not realize the species which is already thereby real and complete, so that your hand is what the species or the species-concept “hand” stipulates, and thus a developed hand. Rather you make it what and how you wish it to be and are able to make it; you build your will, your power, into it; you make the species-hand into a unique hand, into your own characteristic hand.

“Good is what is fit for man, suitable; bad, objectionable, what contradicts him. Holy is thus for him the ethical relation, e.g. marriage, which is by no means for its own sake; holy is only what is for the sake of man, holy only because it is the relation of man to man — thus the relation which is the self-affirmation, the self-enjoyment, [386] of the human essence.” Now, though, if one were inhuman, would this ethical condition be appropriate to him? This argument is so basic and so practical that already for hundreds of years it has filled the prisons with “inhuman types,” i.e. with people who would not find

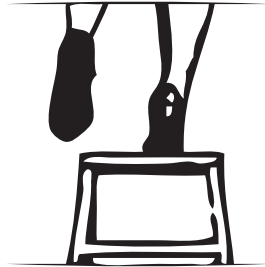
appropriate to themselves what nonetheless was appropriate to the "human essence."

Feuerbach is, to be sure, not a materialist (Stirner never said he was, but described him only as a materialist who bears the properties of idealism); he is not a materialist, for while he imagines that he is talking about actual men, he says nothing about them. He is also, however, not an idealist, for while he speaks without ceasing about the essence of man, an idea, he nonetheless imagines himself to be talking about "the sensible human essence." He asserts that he is neither an idealist nor a materialist, and that is granted to him herewith. But it is also granted what he himself wishes to be, and what he passes himself off as at the end: He is a "common man, a communist". Stirner has already viewed him as such, e.g. p. 413.

On the point on which everything depends, namely Stirner's assertion that the essence of humanity is not the essence of Feuerbach, or of Stirner, or of any other man, as little as the cards are the essence of a house of cards, on this point Feuerbach goes round and round; indeed, he hasn't the slightest inkling of it. He remains with complete complacency with his categories of species and individual, I and Thou, Man and the human essence.

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Author: Max Stirner  
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[http://www.nonserviam.com/stirner/bookshelf/stirners\\_critics.html](http://www.nonserviam.com/stirner/bookshelf/stirners_critics.html)  
Translated by Frederick M. Cordon. In German, entitled "Recensenten Stirners"; the text used in the translation is from Max Stirner's "Kleinere Schriften und Entgegnungen", John Henry Mackay, ed, Berlin, 1914.