

Egoism and Class Consciousness, or: Why Marx and Engels Wrote So Much About Stirner

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Abstract

Interest in *The German Ideology* has largely focused on the ‘chapter’ on Feuerbach—invariably the focus of the various abridgements in which the work is usually read. But this does not reflect the weighting of the text itself, which is dominated by Marx and Engels’s critique of the radical egoist philosopher Max Stirner. Which begs the question: just why did they spend so much time and effort writing about Stirner? In this paper, I will provide an answer—which comes down to three related points. The first concerns the critique of reason; the second, egoistic self-interest. On both of these two points, Stirner makes a novel contribution—contributions which Marx and Engels feel clear affinities with. However, Stirner can ultimately be seen to get these two points, as it were, *the wrong way around*. This then leads to the third point: Stirner’s misunderstanding of the nature of Communism. To clarify the nature of Communism, then, Marx and Engels were compelled to turn Stirner on his head.

This egoism is taken to such a pitch, it is so absurd and at the same time so self-aware, that it cannot maintain itself even for an instant in its one-sidedness, but must immediately change into communism. Friedrich Engels, letter to Marx, 19 November 1844.

The German Ideology is a strange work. The set of manuscripts now generally referred to under that title were originally authored by Marx and Engels when they were living in Brussels in around 1845–46.¹ According to the account given by Marx in his ‘Preface’ to *A Critique of Political Economy*, the manuscripts represented their attempt to:

work out in common the opposition of our view to the ideological view of German philosophy, in fact, to settle accounts with our erstwhile philosophical conscience. This resolve was carried out in the form of a criticism of post-Hegelian philosophy. (Marx 2000a: 426)



As such, the manuscripts contained (or were supposed to contain) chapters on the likes of Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer and Max Stirner. Certain of them were sent to a publisher in Westphalia, but ultimately ‘altered circumstances did not allow of its being printed’ (2000a: 426). Luckily this, according to Marx, did not bother either him or his co-author all that much. ‘We abandoned the manuscript to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly as we had achieved our main purpose—self-clarification’ (2000a: 426). What we now know as *The German Ideology* only saw the light of day in the early 1930s, through the efforts of researchers at the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow: most prominently David Ryazanov, who is usually understood to have constructed what we now know as the ‘chapter’ on Feuerbach.²

One obvious point about the text of *The German Ideology* is that—as one might expect, given its fractured and disputed history—it is incredibly uneven. The translation that I will be drawing on for this article, published by Prometheus Books, runs to 542 pages.³ Of these, the vast bulk comprise what is referred to as ‘Volume 1’, which contains Marx and Engels’s critiques of Feuerbach, Bauer and Stirner. The chapter on Feuerbach is about seventy pages long; the chapter on Bauer just twenty. This means that the chapter on Stirner runs to a sprawling 347 pages—thus dominating the work as a whole.

Despite this, most abridgements of *The German Ideology*—and certainly this is how *The German Ideology* is normally read, especially by lay people and students—draw almost solely on the chapter on Feuerbach.⁴ Even in the face of the textual controversies I have referred to in endnote 2 above, it is here that the interest of the work is normally assumed to lie: in the Feuerbach section, Marx and Engels give an exposition of historical materialism which is often thought to be unparalleled—as well as a rich description of what Communist society is supposed to be like. The Stirner chapter, by contrast, is easily dismissed as a dull, rambling tour through the work of an idiosyncratic post-Hegelian philosopher whose reputation today remains—rightly—obscure.⁵ The neglect has been systematic: there is no fully adequate scholarly edition of the Stirner chapter available in English, and what small literature there is on Marx and Stirner is often superficial and invariably brief.⁶

Now, on the one hand: it must be admitted that the received view of the Stirner chapter is, to a certain extent, accurate. The chapter takes the form of a detailed close-reading of Stirner’s 1844 book, his only major work *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (usually translated as *The Ego and His Own*). An acquaintance of Engels, somewhat associated with the circle of Left Hegelians in Berlin, Stirner has been read as an anarchist, a nihilist, and a precursor to Nietzsche.⁷ In truth however, he is perhaps best understood as attempting a radical critique of Hegelian philosophy while remaining nevertheless *within* the philosophical framework of German Idealism.⁸ If Hegel’s thought culminates with the triumph of reason in the form of the State, Stirner’s systematically denies the claims of abstract reason over the individual until eventually we are only left with ‘The Unique

One’—the absolute *I* that *I* am, and whatever ‘property’ I happen to be exercising my will over at the time.

This wildly ambitious argument is made within the context of a book in which the author fails to do himself many stylistic favours. Stirner often substitutes bombast for argument and (good post-Hegelian that he is) sets his work within an extremely crude historical-developmental framework—as Paul Thomas points out, this is seemingly intended to mirror Feuerbach’s *The Essence of Christianity* (Thomas 1980: 134–35), but in practise it does little other than to make his overall argument more difficult to summarize. Rather than correcting these failures (or at least steering clear of them), Marx and Engels’s chapter on Stirner mimics Stirner’s own mimicry of Feuerbach: their close-reading tracks the circuitous structure of Stirner’s book almost exactly, obliging the reader to discover the moments of genuine insight only by wading through a great deal of superfluous muck.

Meanwhile, they apply a heavy-handed irony which ends up being every bit as grating as Stirner’s caustic style. Marx can be a very funny writer, as both *The Communist Manifesto* and *Capital, Vol. 1* abundantly show—here, however, Marx and Engels attempt to mock Stirner by saddling him with a dense network of nicknames (‘Saint Max’, ‘Sancho’, etc.), which ends up feeling rather chortling and public-schoolboyish. They also spend a lot of time going on about someone called ‘Szeliga’, which it turns out is the alias of another post-Hegelian theorist—an army officer whose relationship to Stirner is never quite defined, other than that he is in some sense supposed to be the Quixote to Stirner’s Sancho Panza. Lacking the sufficient context of ‘knowing Marx and Engels’s mates’, the bit does not really work.⁹

In short then: the Stirner chapter is focused on a difficult, obscure thinker whose deeply controversial views are often presented in an unnecessarily obscure way (though see note 5 above). But then for some peculiar performative reason its authors set out—apparently deliberately—to repeat this thinker’s failings, possibly as a sort of ‘own’. It can be, to put it mildly, a bit of a chore to read.

But there remains a question, which as far as I know no one in the literature has convincingly answered. Just why did Marx and Engels write *so much* about Stirner anyway? People—especially people who are deeply committed to a particular political programme, as Marx and Engels were—do not write vast manuscripts about not-especially-prominent philosophers they disagree with just for their amusement. Above, I have quoted Marx as claiming that the main purpose of *The German Ideology* manuscripts was ‘self-clarification’. Why, then, did Marx and Engels feel compelled to ‘self-clarify’ by engaging with Stirner at *such* length?

In this paper, I will answer this question. In short, the answer I provide will come down to three related points. The first concerns the critique of reason; the second, egoistic self-interest. On both of these two points, Stirner makes a novel contribution—contributions which Marx and Engels feel clear affinities with. However, Stirner can ultimately be seen to get these two points, as it were, *the wrong way around*. This informs

the third point: Stirner's misunderstanding of the nature of Communism. To clarify the nature of Communism, Marx and Engels must turn Stirner on his head. This accounts for the length of the 'self-clarification' they pursued.

Providing this answer will take up the whole of the main body of this paper. Section I will be focused on Stirner; Section II on Marx and Engels's critique. In the conclusion, I will use my answer to draw out two key points of interest with regard to the coincidence that Marx and Engels believe exists between egoism and class-consciousness.

I. Three aspects of Stirner's thought

If Marx and Engels's mistake was to stick too closely to the structure of Stirner's book, I will not repeat it. Rather, I will summarize Stirner's thought by presenting what are—for the purpose of understanding Marx and Engels's critique, at least—the three most important aspects of it.¹⁰

I.i. 'Wheels In The Head'

Fundamental to Stirner's thought is a particularly sweeping critique of philosophical reason. Broadly speaking, Stirner understands all philosophy—indeed, all human activity—up to his as having been driven by a form of Platonic essentialism:

What haunts the universe, and has its occult, "incomprehensible" being there, is precisely the mysterious spook that we call highest essence. And to get to the bottom of this *spook* is to comprehend it, to discover *reality* in it (to prove "the existence of God")—this task men set to themselves for thousands of years, with the horrible impossibility [...] of transforming the spook into a non-spook, the unreal into something real [...] Behind the existing world they sought the "thing in itself," the essence; behind the *thing* they sought the *un-thing*. (EHO: 33)¹¹

Thus: 'the essence of human feeling, for instance, is love; the essence of human will is the good; that of one's thinking, the true, and so on' (EHO: 33).

The problem with this is that:

When one looks to the *bottom* of anything, searches out its essence, one often discovers something quite other than what it *seems* to be [...] By bringing the essence into prominence one degrades the hitherto misapprehended appearance to a bare *semblance*, a deception. (EHO: 33)

This results in a widespread condition of intellectual alienation in which these ‘essences’, once assumed to be real, have real effects on our behaviour:

The longing to make the spook comprehensible, or to realize *non-sense*, has brought about a *corporeal ghost*, a ghost or spirit with a real body, an embodied ghost. (EHO: 34)

Stirner’s critique of philosophical reason is thus to a certain extent analogous to Feuerbach’s critique of Christianity and religious thinking in *The Essence of Christianity* (as I’ve noted above, Stirner’s book quite openly takes its cues from Feuerbach). The difference is that Stirner turns Feuerbach’s critical eye back on itself, arguing that (for instance) Feuerbach’s ‘Man’ is just as much of a ‘spook’ as God is:

You are not to me, and I am not to you, a higher essence. Nevertheless a higher essence may be hidden in each of us, and call forth a mutual reverence. To take at once the most general, Man lives in you and me. If I did not see Man in you, what occasion should I have to respect you? [...] But it is not only man that “haunts”; so does everything. The higher essence, the spirit, that walks in everything, is at the same time bound to nothing, and only—“appears” in it. Ghosts in every corner. (EHO: 35–36)

Man, you see, is not a person, but an ideal, a spook. (EHO: 70)

Thus Stirner proclaims:

Man, your head is haunted; you have wheels in your head! You imagine great things, and depict to yourself a whole world of gods that has an existence for you, a spirit-realm to which you suppose yourself to be called, an ideal that beckons to you. You have a fixed idea! (EHO: 36).

Stirner defines a ‘wheel in the head’, a ‘fixed idea’, as ‘an idea that has subjected the man to itself’ (EHO: 36). Fixed ideas, he argues, constitute an illegitimate form of inherited *authority* over our thinking—he even goes so far as to liken them to demonic possession (EHO: 38). Nowadays, he would probably have used the term ‘ideology’:

Take notice how a “moral man” behaves, who today quite often thinks he is through with God and throws off Christianity as a bygone thing. If you ask him whether he has ever doubted that the copulation of brother and sister is incest, that

monogamy is the truth of marriage, that filial piety is a sacred duty, then a moral shudder will come over him at the conception of being allowed to touch his sister as a wife also. And whence is this shudder? Because he *believes* in those moral commandments. (EHO: 38)

I would prefer not to speculate as to why Stirner chose this particular example to illustrate his point. But certainly from an individual perspective, he believes, this sort of authority is unacceptable. A fixed idea is something we are unfree in relation towards: 'The mammon of the earth and the God of heaven both demand exactly the same degree of—self-renunciation' (EHO: 52).

We must therefore undo pretty much the whole of Western thought. If for Hegel the truth of reality is discovered in the triumph of reason, for Stirner it would rather be the sloughing-off of basically every Hegelian progression—from sense-certainty onwards. Stirner does not conceive himself as an instance of the essence 'Man', but as:

The Unique. I know nothing of the duality of a presupposing and a presupposed ego (an "incomplete" and a "complete" ego or man); but this, that I consume myself, means only that I am. I do not presuppose myself, because I am every moment just positing or creating myself, and am I only by being not presupposed by posited, and, again, posited only in the moment when I posit myself; that is, I am creator and creature in one' (EHO: 140).

This brings us on to Stirner's egoism.

I.ii. How to be an egoist

Egoism is the second fundamental aspect of Stirner's thought—indeed, in many ways the overarching purpose of *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* is to persuade the reader to cast off all the fixed ideas they have inherited from their society and become—once and for all—an 'egoist'. Anything less than this would be to remain the slave of the ghosts. In the opening of his book Stirner proclaims:

Away, then, with every concern that is not altogether my concern! You think at least the "good cause" must be my concern? What's good, what's bad? Why, I myself am my concern, and I am neither good nor bad. Neither has meaning for me. The divine is God's concern; the human, man's. My concern is neither the divine nor the human, not the true, good, just, free, etc., but solely what is *mine*, and it is not a general one, but is—unique, as I am unique. Nothing is more to me than myself. (EHO: xxiii)

Stirner's egoism entails a radical form of autonomy, in the literal sense of 'giving the law to oneself': to be an egoist, I must reject any concern which might have been imposed upon me from outside, which I have not determined for myself. For one thing, this means that Stirner's egoist has to be completely disinterested with regards to the concerns of others:

The societies were always persons, powerful persons, so-called "moral persons", ghosts, before which the individual had the appropriate wheel in his head, the fear of ghosts [...]. Liberty of the *people* is not *my* liberty! [...] The people is dead.—Up with me! (*EHO*: 195, 198, 201)

'Right', such as Hegel assumes is the governing principle of any society, is yet another 'wheel in the head, put there by a spook [...] Right is above me, is absolute, and exists in one higher, as whose grace it flows to me: right is a gift of grace from the judge' (*EHO*: 195). The good egoist must, therefore, refuse to recognize it. This even entails the rejection of private property rights:

Property is what is mine! Property in the civic sense means *sacred* property, such that I must *respect* your property [...] The position of affairs is different in the egoistic sense. I do not step shyly back from your property, but look upon it always as *my* property, in which I need to "respect" nothing'. (*EHO*: 231)

Indeed, as Stirner then goes on to proclaim: 'Pray do the like with what you call my property!' (*EHO*: 231). This brings us on to a second, perhaps more surprising, point: namely that in order to secure the radical autonomy of the true egoist, we must also according to Stirner purge ourselves of what—common-sensically—would be understood as our 'self-interest'. According to Stirner, society is confused, split between those who smugly assume themselves to be 'selfless', and others who bullishly declare themselves to be self-interested. In truth however, both are mistaken:

Who, then, is "self-sacrificing"? In the full sense, surely, he who ventures everything else for *one thing*, one object, one will, one passion. Is not the lover self-sacrificing who forsakes father and mother, endures all dangers and privations, to reach his goal? Or the ambitious man, who offers up all his desires, wishes, and satisfactions to the single passion, or the avaricious man who denies himself everything to gather treasures, or the pleasure-seeker? He is ruled by a passion to which he brings the rest as sacrifices. And are these self-sacrificing people perchance not selfish, not egoist? As they have only one ruling

passion, so they provide for only one satisfaction, but for this the more strenuously; they are wholly absorbed in it. Their entire activity is egoistic, but it is a one-sided, unopened, narrow egoism; it is possessedness. (*EHO*: 67–68)

Thus even in pursuing what we *take to be* our selfish interest, Stirner warns, we risk simply manifesting our ‘possessedness’ by fixed ideas: entities which, of course, we do not control for ourselves. Plenty of contemporary bankers or businessmen might consider themselves to be self-interested egoists, for example: but to the extent to which they are motivated to ‘succeed’ in relation to goals they have inherited from or had imposed on them by their society, they are not. Stirner would consider even the most self-consciously swaggering Ayn Rand superhero to be self-sacrificing. As he goes on to write:

When Fichte says, ‘The ego is all’, this seems to harmonise perfectly with my thesis. But it is not that the ego *is* all, but the ego *destroys* all, and only the self-dissolving ego, the never-being ego, the—*finite* ego is really I. Fichte speaks of the ‘absolute’ ego, but I speak of me, the transitory ego. (*EHO*: 168)

This helps make sense of the slogan Stirner adopts both at the outset and in closing *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, ‘*Ich hab’ mein’ Sach’ auf Nichts gestellt*’, often translated as ‘All things are nothing to me’, but more literally ‘I have *put my thing*’—set my affair—‘on nothing’. This is what Stirner’s Unique amounts to: a creature that, in its radical autonomy from everything outside it, has ceased not only to *be*, but even to seek, any *fixed* thing.¹² The Unique is an entity which only recognizes itself and what it owns. ‘My power is *my* property. My power *gives* me property. My power *am* I myself, and through it I am my property’ (*EHO*: 171).

This is why Stirner denies that there are—or ought to be—any such thing as private property rights. For him, ‘property’ is not a matter of right but rather *control*: it is whatever any given ego is able to exert their power over at any given time. If some other ego wants to utilize something I, at present, have control over, then so be it—if it so happens that I care enough to stop them, I will just have to mobilize whatever resources I have at my disposal to deter their incursions. At any rate, Stirner sees absolutely no point in enforcing a legal code which denies that this is all ‘property’ really amounts to:

For in practice people respect nothing, and every day the small possessions are bought up again by greater proprietors, and the “free people” change into day-labourers. (*EHO*: 231–32)

But the property of others should not really *bother* us: Stirner’s egoist only *really* recognizes itself—so why should it matter to me if someone else ‘takes’ something

that is mine? If I want it back, I can always steal it a second time from them: they are *nothing* to me! Likewise, no true egoist would ever seek to obtain for themselves more than they immediately need—they are not motivated by glory or regard; since the egoist only recognizes itself, it need not care what any other individual thinks of it (again: others are nothing!). It is in this way that the egoist is finally able to escape the alienation of ‘wheels in the head’:

Only as the property of me do the spirits, the truths, get to rest; and then for the first time really are, when they have been deprived of their sorry existence and made a property of mine. (*EHO*: 331)

Nothing is true save what the Unique One *decides* to think is true, solely for and through itself. Once the egoist has recognized this, all fixed ideas can melt away.

I.iii. Stirner's critique of Communism

These two aspects of Stirner's thought inform the critique of Communism that he gives over the course of the book. At times, Stirner displays a clear awareness of at least some of the central problems and contradictions of early industrial capitalism. For example in one extraordinary passage he states, in obvious anticipation of Marx, that:

The labourer cannot realize on his labour to the extent of the value that it has for the consumer. “Labour is badly paid!” The capitalist has the greatest profit from it [...] The labourers have the most enormous power in their hands, and, if they once became thoroughly conscious of it and used it, nothing would withstand them, they would only have to stop labour, regard to product of labour as theirs, and enjoy it. This is the sense of the labour disturbances which show themselves here and there. The State rests on the—*slavery of labour*. (*EHO*: 106)

Capitalism is thus clearly incompatible with Stirner's egoism. But according to Stirner Communism—which he also refers to as ‘Social Liberalism’¹³—would be a form of slavery too. The Communists, on his understanding, want to abolish personal property and turn it into something *impersonal*, belonging to society (*EHO*: 108):

We are freeborn men, and wherever we look we see ourselves made the servants of egoists! Are we therefore to become egoists too! Heaven forbid! We want rather to make egoists impossible! We want to make them all “ragamuffins”; all of us must have nothing, that “all may have”. (*EHO*: 107)

‘Society’ is thus established as the sole owner of property—and everyone in society will be obliged to work in *its* interests.

As the Communists first declare free activity to be man’s essence, they, like all work-day dispositions, need a Sunday [...] That the Communist sees in you the man, the brother, is only the Sunday side of Communism. According to the work-day side he does not by any means take you as man simply, but as human labourer or labouring man [...] If you were a “lazybones”, he would not indeed fail to recognize the man in you, but would endeavour to cleanse him as a “lazy man” from laziness and to convert you to the *faith* that labour is man’s “destiny and calling”. (*EHO*: 112)

It thus seems obvious to Stirner that Communism will not actually help alleviate any of the problems of capitalist society (far from it!)—in a socialist economy, free labour remains an oxymoron. The only way to *actually* help the worker escape capitalism’s excesses is—of course—egoism:

Communism rightly revolts against the pressure that I experience from individual proprietors; but still more horrible is the might that it puts in the hands of the collectivity. Egoism takes another way to root out the non-possessing rabble. It does not say: Wait for what the board of equity will—bestow on you in the name of the collectivity [...] but: Take hold, and take what you require! With this the war of all against all is declared. I alone decide what I will have. (*EHO*: 240)

This process would entail a form of struggle—socially-situated, but ultimately directed *against* society:

Property, therefore, should not and cannot be abolished; it must rather be torn from ghostly hands and become my property [...]. The poor become free and proprietors only when they—*rise*. (*EHO*: 242)

What results from this would not be anything recognizable as a State or even, really, a society—only a ‘Union of Egoists’ (*EHO*: 165) in which—presumably—every Unique One is finally able to exercise their will completely autonomous of the demands placed on them by everyone else.

II. Egoism for real egoists: Marx and Engels’s critique of Stirner

So what’s wrong with all this? Let us take Marx and Engels’s objections to these three points in turn.

II.i. But how do the wheels get in our heads to begin with?

Marx and Engels certainly share elements of Stirner's critique of philosophical reason. We have seen above how Stirner takes Feuerbach to task for replacing God with 'Man'—replacing one 'fixed idea' with another. This thought is echoed in the 'Theses on Feuerbach':

Feuerbach resolves religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations. Feuerbach, who does not enter upon a criticism of this real essence, is consequently compelled [...] To abstract from the historical process and to fix the religious sentiment as something by itself and to presuppose an abstract—isolated—human individual. (TOF: 172)

In short then: Marx rejects Feuerbach's humanism precisely as a Stirnerian 'fixed idea'. What matters for Marx is 'human practice and [...] the comprehension of this practice' (TOF: 173). In this context, 'Man' is simply an unnecessary—and misleading—abstraction.¹⁴

For all this however, Marx does not rage against 'wheels in the head' quite as fervently as Stirner does. But this is not because he is any less radical. Rather, it is because he (and Engels) foreground relations of production. In their chapter on Stirner, they constantly refer to their opponent as a 'Saint'. This is because on their understanding Stirner—in so far as *he* foregrounds relations of ideas—remains (unwittingly) an idealist, trapped in the realm of the 'holy'.¹⁵

Saint Max pays no attention to the physical and social 'life' of the individual, and says nothing at all about 'life', he quite consistently abstracts from historical epochs, nationalities, classes, etc. [...] he inflates the consciousness predominant in the class nearest him in his immediate environment into the normal consciousness of 'a man's life' (GI: 140).

For Marx and Engels, ideas always emerge *within and as part of* a particular practical context. In the 'Feuerbach' material they state their well-known view that 'Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life' (GLA: 47):

The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. (GLA: 47).

Stirner's railing against intellectual alienation and domination is all very well and good—but he fails to grasp this point and thus—but fails to indicate any practical steps by which 'fixed ideas' could be overcome:

He believes that any Berlin writer could abolish the "truth of money" with the same ease as he abolishes in his mind the "truth" of God or of Hegelian philosophy. (*GI*: 219)

The science fiction writer Philip K. Dick defined reality as 'that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away'. One helpful way of understanding Stirner is that he is someone who believes that literally nothing has this sort of 'Dickian' reality—everything that exists, only exists *for me* in so far as *I* believe in it. If I dared to stop believing in reality, it really would all melt away—just as, on Stirner's example, taboos on incest would. But the problem is that this is simply not true. As Marx and Engels note, people do not die of starvation because they believe are hungry—they die of starvation because they do not have any food (*GI*: 312). Relations of production are not only independent of isolated individuals, they are independent even of 'all of them put together' (*GI*: 263).¹⁶

II.ii. From individual to class interest

On Marx and Engels's account, Stirner's idealism carries over into his egoism. Stirner's egoist is supposed to 'set its affair on nothing', to be determined by no ideas and no needs other than the ones it has chosen for itself. This means that Stirner is unable to gain much insight into human beings as they actually are:

If the ego is divorced from all its empirical conditions of life, its activity, the conditions of its existence, if it is separated from the world that forms its basis and from its own body, then, of course, it has no other vocation and no other designation than that of representing the Caius of the logical proposition and to assist Saint Sancho in arriving at the equations given above. In the real world, on the other hand, where individuals have needs, they thereby already have a *vocation* and *task*; and at the outset it is still immaterial whether they make this their vocation in their imagination as well.¹⁷ (*GI*: 306)

As we have seen above, Stirner complains that even the self-consciously 'selfish' are in fact self-sacrificing—to the extent, at any rate, that their 'selfish' goals coincide with what society demands. Marx and Engels rightly identify that this argument is one Stirner must make in order to be able to claim that his 'egoist' is something radically new:

Since Saint Max wishes to present the "true egoist" as something quite new, as the goal of all preceding history, he must,

on the one hand, prove to the selfless, the advocates of [self-sacrifice], that they are egoists against their will, and he must prove to the egoists in the ordinary sense that they are selfless, that they are not true, holy, egoists. (*GI*: 260)

But Stirner's argument in support of this point is not one that Marx and Engels think all that much of:

The trick of proving to the "selfless" that they are egoists is an old dodge, sufficiently exploited already by Helvetius and Bentham. Saint Sancho's "own" trick consists in the transformation of "egoists in the ordinary sense", the bourgeois, into non-egoists. Helvetius and Bentham, at any rate, prove to the bourgeois that by their narrow-mindedness they in practice harm themselves, but Saint Max's "own" trick consists in proving that they do not correspond to the "ideal", the "concept", the "essence", the "calling" etc. of the egoist and that their attitude towards themselves is not that of absolute negation. (*GI*: 260–61)

As we have already seen above, Stirner believes the problem with really-existing 'selfish' people is that their *conception* of their 'self-interest' is the product of fixed ideas they have inherited from society—not something they have autonomously determined for themselves. Marx and Engels do not wish to contest this point—but they draw a different implication from it:

He [Stirner] asks: how is it that the ordinary egoists, the representatives of personal interests, are at the same time dominated by general interests, by school-masters, by the hierarchy? [...] If Sancho's question is translated from its highflown form into everyday language, then 'it now reads': How is it that personal interests always develop, against the will of individuals, into class interests, into common interests which acquire independent existence in relation to the individual persons, and in their independence assume the form of *general interests*? How is it that as such they come into contradiction with the actual individuals and in this contradiction, by which they are defined as general interests, they can be conceived by consciousness as ideal and even as religious, holy interests? (*GI*: 262)

Thus the 'self-sacrifice' Stirner identifies in the 'ordinary' egoist—their sacrifice of autonomy to what society demands—is revealed to be, simply: bourgeois class interest. But this should not, Marx and Engels claim, surprise us. 'Individuals

have always started out from themselves’, they state (*GI*: 263)—and, let us face it, where else *could* they start from? After all: individual human beings *really do* have real needs—real needs for sustenance and shelter and status and so forth. And the ways in which they must satisfy these needs are determined by nothing more nor less than relations of production—which, as Marx and Engels point out, individuals are of course alienated from (*GI*: 263). In bourgeois society, therefore, the interest of individual members of bourgeoisie will just be that of ... the bourgeoisie!

This point runs in the other direction as well. In truth, Marx and Engels point out, there is an exact coincidence between the egoistic interests of individual proletarians, and their interests as a class. ‘The communists’, they state, ‘do not oppose egoism to selflessness or selflessness to egoism’ (*GI*: 264). Rather, they recognize precisely that ‘egoism, just as much as selflessness, *is* in definite circumstances a necessary form of the self-assertion of individuals’ (*GI*: 264).

To put this point another way: capitalism is premised on the exploitation of the labour-power of individual proletarians, a process which as Marx had earlier put it produces ‘works of wonder for the rich’, but ‘imbecility and cretinism for the worker’ (Marx 2000b: 88). It is therefore in the egoistic interest of every individual proletarian that the whole capitalist system should be destroyed. Capitalism relies on the labour of the proletariat to reproduce itself. Thus: if every individual proletarian withdrew their labour, the system would collapse. What it means for the proletariat to obtain ‘class-consciousness’, is for the workers to realize this *as a whole*. Class-consciousness is therefore required for individuals to realize their egoistic interest: ‘In order, therefore, to assert themselves as individuals, they [the workers] must overthrow the state’ (*GLA*: 85).¹⁸

II.iii. *What Communism really is*

This thought can help us clarify what, for Marx and Engels, Communism *really is*. In the Stirner chapter, Marx and Engels engage in a fairly lengthy deconstruction of Stirner’s arguments against ‘social liberalism’. Here I will focus on what I see as the two most important aspects of it.

The first thing I want to highlight is that, as Marx and Engels point out, Stirner conceives of Society as if it were a person: ‘Who is this person that you call ‘All?’—It is “society!”’ (*EHO*: 107). This means that ‘society’ is conceived as, effectively, a big owner—the *sole* property-owner in a Communist society: ‘Let property be *impersonal*, let it belong to—society’ (*EHO*: 108). Since in such a society no *individual* will own anything, *everyone* will, as individuals, be impoverished. This much should be at least somewhat familiar from section 1 above. ‘After “Stirner” has transferred property to “society”, all the members of this society in his eyes at once become paupers and ragamuffins’ (*GI*: 222).

But from Marx and Engels's perspective, such an understanding of Communism is just *wrong*, a mere 'logical construction' produced solely 'with the aid of a few quotation marks' (*GI*: 221). Stirner believes that common ownership would mean having a single owner of property: society. This shows us that Stirner believes that, effectively, under Communism private property would persist in the hands of this new—universal—owner:

[Stirner] identifies [...] 'owning' as a private property-owner with 'owning' in general. Instead of examining the definite relations between private property and production, instead of examining 'owning' as a landed proprietor, as a rentier, as a merchant, as a factory-owner, as a worker—where 'owning' would be found to be a quite distinct kind of owning, control over other people's labour—he transforms all these relations into 'owning as such'. (*GI*: 222)

Stirner thinks he is able to secure this conclusion because, as Marx and Engels point out, he reduces private property to 'having', and then '[declares] the verb "to have" an indispensable word' (*GI*: 246). But of course, by 'private property', Marx and Engels mean something quite specific:

My frock-coat is private property for me only so long as I can barter, pawn or sell, it, so long [as it] is [marketable]. If it loses that feature, if it becomes tattered, it can still have a number of features which will make it valuable for me, it may even become a feature of me [...] But no economist would think of classing it as my private property, since it does not enable me to command any, even the smallest, amount of other people's labour. (*GI*: 247)

Private property is thus property that can 'enable me to command other people's labour'. From the above quotation, this sounds as if it means: property that can be exchanged for, or otherwise generate, a profit. On this definition, it makes perfect sense why individuals would need to maintain an exclusive right to their (private) property: anything less, and they would risk diminishing the profit they are able to generate from it.

But under Communism, private property will be abolished—and so will exchange for profit. With this, the need to maintain *exclusive* rights over things will fall away. Or, to put this point another way: no-one is going to want to steal my old coat from me, because they can just make their own new coat instead. Stirner thinks that Communism would establish 'society' as a universal capitalist, impoverishing everyone. This gets things exactly wrong.

The second point I want to highlight is that, according to Marx and Engels, Stirner conceives of Communist society as an *ideal*—a realization of what the Communists *believe* to be ‘human essence’. Marx and Engels quote Stirner as stating the following:

Because in society the most oppressive evils make themselves felt, therefore the oppressed especially, and consequently the members of the lower regions of society, think they found the fault in society, and make it their task to discover the right society. (*EHO*: 108)

Communism is thus conceived of as a search for ‘essence’—an ideal society independent of history or anything else (*GI*: 231). From Stirner’s perspective, this just makes it seem as if the Communists are looking for the correct ‘fixed idea’; something they will never find. Moreover, they are looking for the correct ‘fixed idea’ of society corresponding to their fixed idea of *themselves*: as workers, they look to establish a ‘universal community of workers’ (*GI*: 232).

But this, according to Marx and Engels, is little more than Stirner’s own psychological projection. The ‘holy’ Stirner thinks everyone is yearning for essence—but he has no proof that any actual Communists are doing so:

We would [...] challenge Saint Sancho to indicate, for example, in Owen [...] a passage containing anything of these propositions about “essence”, universal community of workers etc. (*GI*: 232)

As Marx and Engels clarify in the material that has been assembled as the Feuerbach chapter, Communism is not a quest for abstract ‘essence’: ‘Communism is not for us a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself’ (*GLA*: 56). Rather, ‘We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things’ (*GLA*: 56–57). ‘The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence’ (*GLA*: 57), but that does not mean the end goal is the establishing of a ‘universal community of workers’—a society where, perhaps, every human individual currently toiling and dying in a factory ends up living much the same life, they just ‘technically’ get to be their own boss. Rather, Communism entails that the material conditions by virtue of which the proletariat exist at all must be eliminated—*all* classes will be eliminated, and men will be ‘altered’ on a ‘mass scale’ (*GLA*: 94).

II.iv. Turning Stirner on his head

In a letter to Marx, dated 19 November 1844, Engels mentions Stirner’s book—and makes clear its importance to the thought they are beginning to jointly develop.

According to Engels's gloss, '[Stirner] takes for his principle Bentham's egoism, except that in one respect it is carried through more logically and on the other less so' (LTM: 11). On the one hand, 'Stirner as an atheist sets the egoist above God [...] whereas Bentham allows God to remain remote and nebulous above him' (LTM). Stirner is, thus, 'riding on German Idealism, an idealist who has turned to materialism and empiricism'—in contrast to Bentham, who is 'simply an empiricist' (LTM).

On the other hand, though, Stirner is 'less logical' in so far as 'he would like to avoid the reconstruction effected by Bentham of a society reduced to atoms, but cannot do so' (LTM). For this reason, Stirner's egoism becomes 'simply the essence of present society and present man brought to consciousness, the ultimate that can be said against us by present society, the culmination of all the theory intrinsic to the prevailing stupidity' (LTM). But that, Engels concludes, is 'precisely what makes the thing important [...] the perfect expression of present-day folly' (LTM). 'While inverting it', he states, they must 'continue to build on it' (LTM):

This egoism is taken to such a pitch, it is so absurd and at the same time so self-aware, that it cannot maintain itself even for an instant in its one-sidedness, but must immediately change into communism.¹⁹ (LTM)

We are now in a position to see what this means. According to Marx and Engels, the real egoistic interest of proletarians is coincident with their class-interest. Given that in industrial societies the proletariat increasingly comprise a mass of the population, *if* every member of the working classes started acting like an egoist, they would—in their selfish egoism—collectively band together to seize the means of production, abolish private property, and establish a Communist society.

With private property abolished, class would no longer exist—and with this, the bourgeois State would also melt away. Everyone would thus—by not only Marx and Engels's, but also Stirner's, lights—be free to pursue what amounts to their individual fulfilment: a society where, through 'the connection of individuals', 'the genuine and free development of individuals ceases to be a mere phrase' (GI: 465). No longer would our lives, our selves, be dominated by fixed ideas inherited from a domineering society. In a sense, Stirner's 'Union of Egoists' would have finally become a reality—or else as near a reality as one can get to it without everything melting into a sort of ridiculous thin air. 'We are communists out of egoism also, and it is out of egoism that we wish to be *human beings*' (LTM: 12).

But of course, we would not have reached this point by proceeding as Stirner thinks we should: namely by rejecting the 'fixed ideas' *first*, and then assuming that material reality will somehow magically follow us in doing so. Rather, as Engels insists in his 1844 letter, 'we must take our departure from [...] the empirical, flesh-and-blood individual'. The 'wheels in the head', such as they are, start turning

because of how they are intertwined with the various material ways in which our society reproduces itself, and *will not* go away so long as the material base remains as it is (establishing this point is, incidentally, one of Marx and Engels's great achievements in the text that we now know as *The German Ideology*).

All of this, in my view, serves to explain why Marx and Engels dedicated so many pages to critiquing Stirner. If the point of writing *The German Ideology* manuscripts was self-clarification, then their Stirner critique seems to have helped them see at least two things: firstly, the extent to which Communism is in the individual—and not merely altruistic and collective—interest of the working classes; secondly, the fact that ideology is bound up with material production—that people believe the things they do because of how they are positioned in society. Naturally, this might not *justify* writing something so long, so drawn-out, so (often) dull. The Stirner chapter could still have used a good editor—probably it could have been compressed to thirty or so electrifying pages.²⁰ But this does explain why it exists in the first place.

Conclusion

So what—if any—are the broader implications of the story sketched in this paper? One obvious thought is that there is something important that Marx and Engels's critique of Stirner can tell us about the nature of *egoism*. We often, commonsensically, associate egoism with selfishness: the egoist, on this understanding, would be the person who always seeks to maximize their own selfish interest—at the expense of others. It is one of the vital achievements of Stirner's own book to call into question this view. After all, as he points out, to always seek to get one-up over others is, ultimately, to define yourself on their terms: for the true egoist, the well-being (or otherwise) of others simply should not matter. Equally: to define oneself in terms of something like 'money', or 'status' (the sorts of things we would normally associate with someone's 'selfish interest') would for Stirner be to sacrifice one's autonomy to the sorts of things that can only be defined collectively, by the herd. The truly selfish egoist, then, would be someone who sought to make themselves entirely independent of others: to be reliant on others neither to satisfy their material needs, nor to recognize them as being anything at all.

Marx and Engels, by contrast, take a slightly different view. They identify Stirner's 'true egoist' as a purely ideal posit: as a creature which could never possibly have any sort of human, material existence. Given how we in fact (materially) are, we must necessarily exist in the world together. They do, however, agree with Stirner in at least two ways.

Firstly, they accept his thought that, when one seeks to maximize one's selfish interest, one by no means does so at the expense of everyone else. Rather, in class

society, the *real* selfish interest of any individual member of the proletariat lies with the interest of the working class—their real selfish interest, that is, would be to band together with their fellows to violently seize the means of production for themselves. Naturally, individuals do not always realize this—at least in part because they subscribe to the bourgeois illusion which pits all against all, turning society into a zero-sum game: they have not yet dared to take up the mantle of egoism. But if they had class consciousness, they would. On the assumption that the ‘true egoist’ was a proletarian, they would identify their egoistic interest with that of their class.

Secondly, Marx and Engels’s account intersects with Stirner’s because ultimately, what they think individuals ought to be (selfishly, egoistically) pursuing is not material gain or social status but rather a radical form of autonomy—a sort of self-possession. ‘Autonomy’ is perhaps the wrong word for Stirner, since the ‘nomy’ aspect, the idea of giving *the law* to oneself, would already be too substantial a limitation on our individual ability to decide things for ourselves. But certainly the ‘auto’ part of the concept is important—the goal, for Stirner’s ‘true egoist’, must be to be in no way reliant on others.

For Marx and Engels, at any rate, this kind of pure self-reliance would, for creatures like us, be impossible: it in no way takes into account the actual ways in which we reproduce our material lives. Nevertheless: they do think that we can have something almost as good, or indeed better (since, let us face it—a life lived alongside others, even if they can ‘possess’ us, is also able to provide us with a rich source of meaning). In a Communist society, we would all enjoy a form of sociality that we were nevertheless autonomous over—in the sense that we would be able to operate, over it, some degree of transformative control. As Marx and Engels state in the ‘Feuerbach’ chapter:

All-round dependence, this natural form of the *world-historical* co-operation of individuals, will be transformed by this communist revolution into the control and conscious mastery of these powers, which, born of the action of men on one another, have till now overawed and governed men as powers completely alien to them. (*GI*: 59).

Marx and Engels’s appropriation of aspects of Stirner’s egoism is important, in part, because it helps us to understand something about the historical materialist method that the concern of the ‘Feuerbach’ chapter (such as it is) is to outline. It is part of the beauty of Marx and Engels’s materialist conception of history that it needs have no, if any, moralism intermixed in with it. For Marx and Engels, socialists need uphold no high-minded ideals about the essential goodness of humanity or the beauty of collective action or anything like this. The socialist, then, perhaps *ought* to be allergic to the sort of nostalgia that leftist movements currently trade in around things like the

historical victories of the trade union movement, or the founding of the NHS. In fact, one could quite well assume a purely Hobbesian picture of human motivation, and from it get to communism regardless.

Of course this is not to say that Marx and Engels in fact *do* uphold such a Hobbesian picture of human motivation. After all, they assert in the ‘Feuerbach’ chapter that they will be taking their cues from ‘real, active men’—but how these ‘real, active men’ in fact are is, in the grip of various ideological delusions which are the ‘reflexes and echoes’ of their ‘life-process’ (Marx and Engels 1998: 42). Part of the problem here is that, as Stirner also recognized, people *cannot* in fact be assumed to start out as purely self-interested, atomized individuals. People in general share all sorts of sentimental delusions about how the world works, or what they owe to other people. The worker might believe that if they just work hard enough, they as an individual might manage to somehow ‘beat the system’: save up enough to retire early, perhaps, or realize the American Dream. Others remain piously committed to the idea that their ‘superiors’ got to where they are today through (their own) hard work, and thus that it would be unjust to forcibly wrestle their (unequal) wealth from them. Still others have abandoned any semblance of what was once their own egoistic interest to the fatalistic belief that everything is irredeemably dreadful, and so set out not to improve things for themselves, but to make everything as bad as possible for the various out-groups they have been conditioned to hate.

The question then is how, with such irrational, deluded actors at the bottom of it, historical materialism might ever be elevated to the rank of a science. The work here is something that Marx and Engels themselves might be said to have left incomplete, but which thinkers like Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer later took up: the central Frankfurt School question, for instance, of why the masses in Western Europe (and America) can always seemingly be induced to vote for their own oppression. Thus understood, the scientific credentials of historical materialism are contingent on *Ideologiekritik*.

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Notes

¹ Moses Hess also contributed a chapter, and some of the manuscripts are in the hand of Joseph Weydemeyer, a journalist and organizer in the Communist League. For more on the history of the text, see Carver and Blank 2014a.

² For more on the textual history of *The German Ideology* see Carver and Blank 2014a. Carver and Blank are keen to emphasize the ways in which *The German Ideology* as we now know it ought to be considered an editorial construction. This line has been followed by the editors of the MEGA² edition, published in German in 2017. Carver and Blank present their own reconstruction of what has been called the ‘Feuerbach’ chapter in their 2014b—complete with the crossings-out visible on the original pages (obviously, you could not really do this in an edition intended for the general reader, or even the more casual specialist); following a different order than the one given by Ryazanov guided by Marx and Engels’s original—if not always, seemingly, consistent—paginations. I would like, however, to relegate these controversies to the background here. Regardless of how it was constructed, or indeed what the original purpose of these manuscripts was, the Feuerbach chapter to my mind remains revelatory. The epistle to the Hebrews almost certainly was not written by St. Paul, but that does not mean it is not a singularly important text in Christian theology. There is space in Marx scholarship for detailed textual work; there is also space—I hope—for more expansive work where these questions are largely set aside, in order to set foot on the ground of real philosophical and political interest.

³ This is the most complete standalone version of the text available in English. It is a facsimile of the text found in the Marx-Engels *Collected Works*, vol. 5 (Lawrence and Wishart, 1976).

⁴ See, for instance, *GLA*. Though for an alternative construction of the text see *GIW*.

⁵ This is, of course, far from a consensus view. There is a small but vital literature on Stirner (and his Egoism). See for instance the essays collected in Newman 2011, as well as Beiser 2011, De Ridder 2008, Leopold 2006, and Stepelevich 1985, 2011, and 2020. De Ridder and Leopold both also feature in the Newman collection, as does Paul Thomas (see note 6 below). In Newman’s introduction to the 2011 collection, he describes Stirner as one of the most radical philosophers of all time, even likening the impact of his book to a ‘nuclear bomb’ (Newman 2011: 1)—in his view, Stirner is not only an important impact on anarchist thought, but the ‘missing link’ (Newman 2011: 10) in the radical post-Nietzschean, post-foundationalist tradition that links the likes of Heidegger, Bataille, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Nancy and Laclau. Here, I take no view on the exact degree of Stirner’s historical importance (or otherwise)—I have no particular horse in that race. This is a paper about Marx’s critique of Stirner, not really a paper about Stirner himself. Suffice to say, however, I do think that his encounter with Stirner was decisively important for Marx.

⁶ There are at least two exceptions. One is the work of Paul Thomas: see his 1975, 1980 and 2011. The subject matter of the 2011 paper cleaves especially close to that of this one—though see note 16 below for where my reading departs from his. The other is Lobkowitz 1969, which also takes seriously the question of why Marx chose to write so much about Stirner. Lobkowitz is far more charitable towards Stirner than I am however—believing Marx’s response to have missed the mark. Crucially, he reads Marx and Engels to be describing in *The German Ideology* a rigidly teleological theory of history, in which certain pre-existing laws will be realized. I think this is wrong though: see Section II below for one reading of what Marx and Engels are doing where this need not be implied. Other than that, the best treatment I have come across is given in Hook 1950, which covers all the main bases—although not in a great deal of depth. See also Wood 2014, and the chapter on Marx in Stepelevich 2020.

⁷ For more on the reception of Stirner, see Newman's introduction to his 2011.

⁸ For more on this point, see De Ridder 2008.

⁹ In her 2021, Sarah Johnson refers to the Saint Max chapter as a 'completed' work (Johnson 2021: 355), in contrast to Marx and Engels's critique of Feuerbach, which was barely even started. This cannot possibly be right—whether or not Marx and Engels ever intended to publish the document as is, the version that we have is so messy it barely even reads like a finished first draft. Johnson's article gives a somewhat different account of the development of the Saint Max chapter than I am giving here, dismissing the 'Feuerbach' chapter on textual grounds before showing how, in it, Marx developed the concept of a 'mode of production', which can help us see how he in fact help a non-teleological philosophy of history. Personally, however, I do not share her scepticism towards the Feuerbach chapter on textual grounds. See note 2 above.

¹⁰ Note that the main purpose of this summary is to illuminate what Marx and Engels are doing in *The German Ideology*, and thus to get a sense of how Stirner appeared in their eyes—it is not intended as Stirner scholarship *per se*. See note 5 above.

¹¹ Abbreviations used:

EHO = Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, trans. S. Byington (London: Verso, 2014).

GI = Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998).

GLA = Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. C. J. Arthur (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970).

GIW = Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology: A New Abridgement*, ed. T. Whyman (London: Repeater, 2022).

LTM = Engels, 'Letter to Marx, 19 November 1844', K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975–2004, Vol. 38: 9–14.

TOF = Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', in D. McLellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: selected writings, second edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹² The German, note, is more dynamic than its usual translation—it strikes me that Stirner's nihilism is more normative than it is descriptive.

¹³ Marx and Engels speculate that this is because 'liberal' was considered a pejorative by Berlin free-thinkers—much as it is in left-wing circles today (*GI*: 221).

¹⁴ It is for this reason that Althusser emphasized that, with the *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*, Marx adopted a 'theoretical anti-humanism'. See Althusser 2005. I have to say I think that in general, this particular pudding is usually rather over-egged.

¹⁵ As they claim at one point, 'The difference between "Stirner" and Hegel' is simply that 'the former achieves the same thing without the help of dialectics' (*GI*: 208).

¹⁶ The point might stretch to incest taboos as well, which at the very least have material reality in acting as a safeguard against inbreeding.

¹⁷ 'Caius' being a stock character from logic textbooks of the time—used as we would more typically use 'Socrates' now. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out as, for years, it

went completely over my head—despite, to my embarrassment, the MECW edition containing an explanatory note indexed to a reference to ‘Caius’ two pages earlier!

¹⁸ Here I depart from the view given in Thomas (2011: 137ff). He reads Marx’s criticisms of Stirner as being driven by a fundamentally distinct, essentially non-egoistic picture of what human individuals are—a much more familiarly ‘socialistic’ picture of the self, indeed. As I show here, however, this seems mistaken: what Marx and Engels are really doing, I hold, is *adopting* Stirner’s egoistic picture of the self, to show how it must *really* necessarily lead to Communism—were every egoist to take their individual self-interest seriously.

¹⁹ As a second letter by Engels to Marx, dated 20 January 1845, makes clear, Marx was not as gushingly enthusiastic about the work himself (though the letter where he set this lack of enthusiasm out has been lost), and Engels’s own enthusiasm did not last. Engels’s ‘immediate impression’ of the work would quickly give way to the critical view he expresses with Marx in the Stirner chapter. But in substance, their treatment is nevertheless curiously similar to Engels’s initial, intoxicated view: the shift here is not really of content, but of tone.

²⁰ Perhaps indeed it would have benefited (*contra* the tendency of more recent scholarship) from more of the treatment Ryazanov, et al. gave the ‘Feuerbach’ section. Though see *GIW* for an attempt at an abridgement.

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