

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)

Anti-Copyright



# Theory of Der Einzige

Stirner, Bataille, and Anarchic Abnormality

Adam C. Jones

Adam C. Jones

Theory of Der Einzige

Stirner, Bataille, and Anarchic Abnormality

November 10, 2022

<https://happyhourathippels.wordpress.com/>

“*Theory of Der Einzige: Stirner, Bataille, and Anarchic Abnormality*” by Adam C. Jones, published on November 10, 2022, on Happy Hour at Hippel’s.

[usa.anarchistlibraries.net](http://usa.anarchistlibraries.net)

November 10, 2022



# Contents

Introduction . . . . .	5
Uniqueness as Base Matter . . . . .	8
The Uniqueness of the Body . . . . .	13
The ' <i>Ich</i> ' and Consumption at the Limits of German Idealism . . . . .	16

is consumed is finite, unique life *through* the unique position of consumption. Blumenfeld provides by far the most detailed exposition of Stirnerian consumption:

“Consumption rather names the process by which I dissolve the separation between myself and my expressions. To consume is to annihilate the fixity and externality of ideas and things that are products of myself yet stand above me. To “consume myself” is thus to continually negate and recycle my own self-expressions of who I take myself to be. In consuming myself, I change who I am and who others take me to be; I block myself from becoming fixed in an identity. By dissolving the independence of my thoughts and relations, I return them back to my power for free play.”<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Jacob Blumenfeld, *All Things are Nothing to Me* (Zero Books, 2018), 24.

proper to the egoism of *Der Einzige* and its abandonment of the forms of capture which drive us to shed our particularity before an essential calling which reproduces the rationalities of dominant objectivity (as well as the objects themselves) through our labour:

From now on the question is not how a person can gain life, but how he can squander, can enjoy it; or not how he is to produce the true *I* in himself, but how he is to dissolve himself, to live his life to the full.

“What else would the ideal be but the sought-after, always distant ? One seeks for himself, so he doesn’t yet have himself; he strives for what he *should* be, thus he *is* not this. He lives in longing, and lived for thousands of years in it, in *hope*. It’s something else altogether to live in—enjoyment.”<sup>35</sup>

The philosophers have only interpreted the world, under various presuppositions which elevate and ossify it into rationalities and essences of the hierarchy, the point, however, is to enjoy it for ourselves. *I* invoke myself as Unique, not as an implicit identity with the essential to be consummated, but as a life to be enjoyed by *me*. Even the base materiality of my self is not contained by any self-positing, but rather it is through me that my life passes through the moments of its finitude, the question is a matter of practical orientation to this finitude in the absence of any such glorification or sublation of myself into a general, universal totality, be it historically-developing *Geist* or the Species as a whole with its essence of Humanity (exemplified by Feuerbach). Stirner begins and ends the book with a declaration that his *Sache* is based on nothing other than itself, with the dual meaning of *Sache* as ‘matter’ and ‘what matters’ being the very baseness of his particularity as a finite life. What

---

<sup>35</sup> UP, 333.

[**Note:** As something of an update, here is a section of a paper I’m currently working on as part of a wider chapter, in which I explain Max Stirner’s concept of ‘The Unique’ via Georges Bataille’s notion of Base Materialism, simultaneously positing links to Stirner as a thinker of the body in relation to the anarchist philosophy of disability (presented by my good comrade Will over at <https://revoltingbodies.com>). Hopefully this incomplete but nonetheless expository piece will help to answer some of the notional ambiguities around Stirner, as well as address the ontological misreadings so prevalent in the anglophone literature.]

## Introduction

The first thing that can be said about The Unique is that it does not correspond to any kind of discursive mapping of the ontological into categories, hierarchies, or taxonomies of beings. This is a point made explicit from *Stirner’s Critics* in which he responds to Szeliga, Hess, and Feuerbach on just such an interpretation, that “one cannot build a philosophical system with it as a “principle,” the way one can with being, with thought, with the I.”<sup>1</sup> With this clarification, the ontologization of the Unique inaugurated in the anglophone tradition by Paterson is undermined by Stirner itself. Paterson’s ontologization of Stirner relies on the presupposition that *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* contains a “system” by which the phenomenology of Stirner’s personal solitude is translated into the “cosmic” uniqueness of the Unique taken as ‘The Unique One’.<sup>2</sup> As such, it is a system which produces a “purely metaphysi-

---

<sup>1</sup> Max Stirner, *Stirner’s Critics*, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/max-stirner-stirner-s-critics> . Hereafter SC.

<sup>2</sup> R.W.K Paterson, *Nihilistic Egoist*, (Oxford, 1971), 256.

cal solipsism, asserted and maintained within the metaphysical system in which The Unique One emerges as ‘the sole ego’.<sup>3</sup>

From the standpoint of reading Stirner ontologically, such solipsism has often been portrayed as incoherent in regards to the inherently social character of Stirner’s work as a thinker whom in so many ways seems to preach the asociality of egoism. Paterson himself describes the Unique as “a portrait of refined incoherence”,<sup>4</sup> and the difficulty of producing a coherent ontology from Stirner is stated most explicitly by John P. Clark when he concludes that the ego, as the ultimate reality, is beyond the descriptive powers of any words which might be used to express truths about it”.<sup>5</sup> Such a conclusion would seem to be shared by Stirner himself when he says that what he “says is a word, a thought, a concept; what he *means* is neither a word, nor a thought, nor a concept. What he says is not the meaning, and what he means cannot be said.”<sup>6</sup> However, where Paterson and Clark remark upon the inadequacy of Stirner’s ontology to express the Unique conceptually, the Stirnerian gesture is the expression of the limits of ontological discourse the map the Unique to concepts.

The failure of any ontologization of Stirner hitherto has been compounded by its idealism when it comes to the Unique. The sensuousness of individuality is bracketed out by such interpreters in favour of depicting the Unique solely in terms of a self-consciousness, a grasping of oneself as a concept of The Unique. For Paterson the goal of Stirner’s ‘system’ is to produce a self-consciousness of the Unique in a project by which Stirner critically begins a process of “distinguishing himself from everything that presents itself to his negating consciousness... As a consciousness, he transcends the entities of which he is

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 257.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 245.

<sup>5</sup> John P. Clark, *Max Stirner’s Egoism* (Freedom 1976), 29.

<sup>6</sup> SC.

(an “incomplete” and a “complete” *I* or human being); but that I consume myself means only that I am. I do not presuppose myself because in each moment I am really setting up or creating myself for the first time, and am only I, not by being presupposed, but by being set up [gesetzt], and again set up only in the moment when I set myself up ; i.e., I am creator and creature in one.”<sup>33</sup>

To clarify, that ‘myself’ is a ‘presupposition that is no presupposition’ for Stirner is “nothing less than giving precedence to a thought, or thinking something above all other things and thinking the rest from this *thing that has been thought*”,<sup>34</sup> for *I* am irreducible to my thought and what is presupposed of me. This is equally the case for the one whom posits themselves, for their expression is only the means by which they *consume* themselves, and through this consumption they *are*. The presence of an ‘I am’ is clearly resonant with transcendental apperception, a feeling of oneself as mere self. Yet Stirner’s *I* or *Einzig*e is not apperceptive because this is an active positing, rather than a precondition of experience which precedes the Stirnerian *I*. The active positing is itself inseparable from its consumption or dissolution for Stirner, and this cannot be extricated from any discussion of Stirner’s affirmation of his own finitude, which is the finite span of his life.

The Unique is not infinitely exclusive to everybody, but finite and transient in its exclusivity as a life, *my* life. Any dissolution or consumption of my finitude is equally of my uniqueness, and hence of my life. It is a positing of myself at the same time as it is my living expressed through that position. It is an act of the expenditure of my finite and only time upon this Earth, or as Stirner calls it, the *self-enjoyment* [*Selbstgenuß*] or ‘squandering’ of life. Self-enjoyment is the mode of living

---

<sup>33</sup> UP, 167-8. Translation Modified.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 362.

Stirner proclaims explicitly his distance from a thinker of the Absolute *Ich* such as Fichte:

“When Fichte says, ‘the *I* is all;’ this seems to harmonize perfectly with my statements. But it’s not that the *I* is all, but the *I* destroys all, and only the self-dissolving *I*, the never-being *I*, the—*finite I* is actually I. Fichte speaks of the “absolute” *I*, but I speak of me, the transient *I*.”<sup>30</sup>

As Blumenfeld points out, the fundamental ambiguity of Stirner’s *Ich* is the plurality of its functions. As he summarizes, at various points the *I* “*posits* itself, *dissolves* itself, *consumes* itself, *creates* itself, *destroys* itself, *enjoys* itself *swallows* itself, *empowers* itself, *reveals* itself, *uses* itself, *abuses* itself, *owns* itself.”<sup>31</sup> Yet Stirner’s processes are rarely explicitly portrayed in the text with the exception of one paragraph written mockingly in the Hegelese of Bruno Bauer.<sup>32</sup> In this excerpt Stirner describes the motions of invoking his *Ich* by way of presupposition or assumption [*Voraussetzung*]:

“I, for my part, start from a presupposition [*Voraussetzung*] in assuming *myself*; but my presupposition does not struggle for its perfection, like the “human being struggling for its perfection;’ but only serves me to enjoy and consume it. I consume nothing but my presupposition, and exist only by consuming it. But for this reason that assumption is no assumption at all; because since I am the unique, I know nothing of the duality of a presupposing and a presupposed *I*

<sup>30</sup> UP, 195.

<sup>31</sup> Jacob Blumenfeld, *All Things are Nothing to Me* (Zero Books, 2018), 23.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

conscious, placing himself above and beyond them.”<sup>7</sup> Yet this reduction of The Unique to a self-concept or form of consciousness is equally rejected by Stirner himself:

“do you *exist* only when you *think* of yourself, and do you dissipate when you forget yourself? Do you exist only through self-consciousness? Who doesn’t forget himself constantly, who doesn’t lose sight of himself thousands of times in an hour?

*This* self-forgetfulness, *this* losing of oneself, is for us only a mode of self-enjoyment, it is only the pleasure we take in our world, in our property, i.e. world-pleasure.”<sup>8</sup>

The Unique is not reducible to a grasping of a higher, a *greifen* [grasping], and hence not to a *begriff* [concept], of the self by itself as a form of self-consciousness which transcends and unifies the self. Nonetheless, if we turn back to the *Menschenleben*, we find a similar operation of grasping to that of the child of ‘getting behind’ the essences or ‘spooks’ which have become ossified: “As I find myself behind things, that is, as mind, so I must later also find *myself* behind *thoughts*.”<sup>9</sup> The act of ‘getting behind’ was shown to be the seeking for a ground of an oppressive reality in the mode of the child, and one that produced the *grund* in the sense of the rationality of those realities which became internalized upon the body and within the consciousness in the form of ideological and libidinal capture. The *grund* here was the world illuminated by thought, by ideality and essentiality, and structured according to hierarchies upon which the universal, the spiritual, or

<sup>7</sup> R.W.K Paterson, *Nihilistic Egoist*, (Oxford, 1971), 274.

<sup>8</sup> SC.

<sup>9</sup> Max Stirner, *The Unique and Its Property*, (Underworld Amusements, 2017), 34. Hereafter UP.

the essential stood over the particular, embodied individual—conditioning us to the habit of a higher nature. If Stirner defines Hierarchy as a “rule of the sacred” then the ground that escapes all hierarchy must be a ground itself profane, against “all the shining lights in the world of thought” which posit themselves as the illuminated ground of all things yet are little else than subjection, Stirner posits a ground which thought cannot recognize as its *dark ground*.

Whilst such a term carries resonances of the notion presented by F.W.J. Von Schelling in his claim that “Only in personality is there life, and all personality rests on a dark ground that indeed must therefore be the ground of cognition as well”,<sup>10</sup> I will show in the following that the most productive way to interpret the Unique and its Uniqueness is through another notion which plays a similar if not isomorphic function: that of *Base Matter* as illustrated in the work of Georges Bataille. It is through an encounter with Bataille’s base materialism that Stirner’s Unique will be articulated as an insurgent invocation of the grounding of all ideality and ontological mapping, its dark and anarchic territory upon which it erects its heavenly kingdom as well as its principled hierarchic government upon the Earth. Stirner’s Uniqueness will be shown to be his base materiality, the profanity of his particularity, and the anarchy of his body, and this will serve to further elucidate Stirner’s rejection of essentialism, and of normalizing forms of power such that his work enters into a conversation with recent anarchic developments in the philosophy of the body.

## Uniqueness as Base Matter

That I align Bataille and Stirner stems from the unity of their projects on the level of a fundamentally heretical orienta-

---

<sup>10</sup> F.W.J. Von Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, (SUNY, 2006), 75.

moment. Kant claims that “in the synthetic original unity of apperception, am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am.”<sup>27</sup> The fundamental condition of my experience of any object is its possibility of being *my object*, any such object of experience is unified as an object by the same unity of experience that renders it *mine*. To read Stirner’s *Ich* as unificatory is to read it as an apperceptive uniqueness. Such a reading is amicable to the ontologizing of the Unique, such as Paterson’s ‘private universe’ reading or Jenkins’ description of *Der Einzige und Sein Eigentum* as presenting “a vision of the ‘future’ individual unified within herself”.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, that uniqueness presents a ‘detachability’ from the empirical self further reinforces such a view, but ultimately it is the unificatory function which is the strength of such a reading.

A Kantian reading of the Unique One or the Unique *Ich* is complicated however by Blumenfeld, who points out that the functional character of Stirner’s *Ich* is not unificatory, but—once again showing its kinship with base matter—dissolutional:

“Whereas Kant’s I unifies experience, Stirner’s I dissolves it. This “I” weaves through the manifold of experiences as the process of their dissolution. “I”, however, does not name *the* process, but *this* one, *mine*.”<sup>29</sup>

Blumenfeld points out that Stirner refrains from saying *the* I, but always says *my* I. That it is exclusive to everybody precludes its absoluteness as a totality of I’s to which each is reducible and interchangeable, and this is the means by which

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>28</sup> John Jenkins, “Max Stirner’s Ontology” in *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 2014 Vol. 22, No. 1, 3–26, 5.

<sup>29</sup> Jacob Blumenfeld, *All Things are Nothing to Me* (Zero Books, 2018), 22.

normality by its very materiality—a materiality which for each is exclusively *mine*. The deviation from Bataille and the limits of this comparison exist at the limits of mine-ness, the uniqueness of an *ich* or I. Yet it is the *mine*, the singular particularity, which is base before the essential and the hierarchy of essential which posits its very source under the categorization of the inessential defined as its very negation. Base matter as has been described may provide a notional analogy with the creative nothing, the fuel of the dialectic and its proliferation of meanings, essences, and determinations. In naming myself as Unique I invoke it of myself, as that which dissolves the fixity of their capture as its material precondition. The first-person character of the invocation of my baseness affirms it as such.

## The ‘*Ich*’ and Consumption at the Limits of German Idealism

The question arises as to the *Ich* and its uniqueness in relation to the way in which the ‘mine’ indexes the destabilizing invocation of the base abnormality hitherto described. To read the *Ich* as an enclosing gesture, a function of the unification experience around a central ‘I’, seems to place it on a similar level as Transcendental Apperception in Kant. For Kant, transcendental apperception is notion that it must be possible for an ‘I think’ to accompany all of my experiential representations.<sup>25</sup> This is the transcendental unity of self-consciousness, an *a priori* condition of our experiencing anything being that it must bare the formal unity akin to the ‘I’ itself.<sup>26</sup> This transcendental unity of the ‘I’ is distinct from any empirical intuition of myself, any representation of myself as I appear to myself at any given

<sup>25</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), B131.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, B131-2.

tion towards Hegel. Both thinkers believed that the Hegelian system was an achievement by which thought subsumed everything within its discursive structures and strangled by it. Stirner situates the Hegelian moment as a consummation of the domination of thought’s structuring of the world and wishes to reclaim it for himself. Bataille by his own admission follows Hegel to his limits in order to follow it “into the NOTHING of unknowing” upon which its own ground has carried it through its motions of development.<sup>11</sup> As such it is unsurprising that an alliance can be posited between them on the matter of such a creative nothingness as the Unique as will be shown.

Bataille’s definition of Base Matter exemplifies such resonances in its description and its function:

“Base matter is external and foreign to ideal human aspirations, and it refuses to allow itself to be reduced to the great ontological machines resulting from these aspirations... disconcerting the human spirit and idealism before something base, to the extent that one recognized the helplessness of superior principles.”<sup>12</sup>

What is ideal as principle is ‘helpless’ for Bataille because, as Benjamin Noys explains:

“The ‘logic’ of base materialism is that whatever is elevated or ideal is actually dependent on base matter, and that this dependence means that the purity of the ideal is contaminated. The dependence of the ideal or elevated (the ‘high’) on base matter (the ‘low’) and the contamination

<sup>11</sup> Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share Volumes 2&3*, (Zone, 1991), 369-70.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, “Base Materialism and Gnosticism” in *Visions of Excess* (Minnesota, 1985), pp.45-52, 51.

this produces is systematically denied by the ideal, which splits off base matter as whatever is disgusting, vile, sub-human, etc. In this way it hopes to keep base matter in its place, as the base, but this splitting off can never be completely successful because base matter is at the basis of the ideal and the ‘higher values’.<sup>13</sup>

Base matter is the very basis of the hierarchical and the discursive, the very dark ground of that which becomes reified into the essential by discourse (which for Bataille is synonymous with what is rendered meaningful by dialectical development). It is the base particularity from which the universal ascends and constructs itself, what is not purified into the ‘high’ or the essentially Human is denigrated for its baseness, but a baseness posited by the hierarchy itself which it cannot disavow.

Stirner, when he speaks of the ‘inhuman’, or the inhumanity of that which is impure against an ideal or essence of conduct or of being, speaks in strikingly similar terms. It is not that Stirner rejects the Human for the sake of the inhuman *as such*, but instead he rejects the very dialectic of the Human essence on the basis that humanization *creates dehumanization*; “Because the revolutionary priests and schoolmasters serve the human being, they cut off the head of *human beings*.”<sup>14</sup> The essence creates the monstrosity which demonstrates its impurity, and what it monsters is its baseness. The function of the Unique is to produce an unsettling point that not only resists such capture, but is the very ground which is captured and stratified by such hierarchy. Stirner explicitly states that he writes about ‘inhumanity’ or the profaneness of the actual human person not because he wishes to take their side in an affir-

---

<sup>13</sup> Benjamin Noys “Georges Bataille’s Base Materialism” in *Cultural Values*, 2:4, pp.499-517, 500.

<sup>14</sup> UP, 96.

through its inherent impurity to the normal as the essential is *already in revolt*, that Stirner rejects the judgements of crime and disease as two sides of the same coin, the matter of which is the anarchy of the body itself.

The anarchy of the body is everywhere in Stirner, we even find it in the figure of the child, whom by the standards of the 1840s would have been considered under the ableist regimes of idiocy and imbecility. Édouard Seguin’s *The Moral Treatment, Hygiene, and Education of Idiots and Other Backward Children* was only published a little over a year later in 1846, which as Conway reminds us, speaks of the abnormality of the child as:

“Possessing “a certain anarchic form of will”. The normal, desirable, adult will is “a will that can obey”. The will of the “idiot” is one which “anarchically and stubbornly says ‘no’”. Seguin’s recommendation [as Foucault points out] is that teachers should intervene in such a way that produces “a total physical capture that serves to subject and master the body.”<sup>24</sup>

This will which normalizing, curative power seeks to capture as subjected and mastered bears a striking resemblance to that which captures and subjugates the child in the *Menschenleben*, and even that egoistic maturity which rejects the obedience to the second nature—the habituality of subjection—which power curates for it. Pathology pathologizes the anarchic, and this is even true of Stirner himself whomst was treated as a paranoiac, insane abnormality by Ernst Schultze in 1903. Whilst Stirner may not be a partisan of the child as such in that he still believes in the cultivation of education, he nonetheless advocates for a maturity which embraces the abnormality that was lost with a new affirmation of the ways in which it strays from the essential and from

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

health... Neither “crime” nor “disease” is an *egoist* view of the matter, i.e., a judgment coming *from me*, but from something else, namely whether it violates the right, generally, or the *health* in part of the individual (the sick one) and in part of the universal (society). “Crime” is treated implacably, “disease” with “loving kindness, compassion;’ and the like.”<sup>21</sup>

What Stirner sees in Weitling is the transplantation of moral abnormality into the body itself in an extension of hierarchy, an inscribing of the broken law upon the body by an ontologizing machine akin to the torture device from Kafka’s *In the Penal Colony*. Stirner’s rejection of Weitling here is not simply an inter-leftist spat, but rather Stirner is here rejecting one of the main innovations of 19th century European criminological anthropology. As Foucault notes in *Abnormal*, the development of psychiatric power in Europe (France in particular) was shaped by the principle that political movements held a correspondence to healthy or unhealthy physiognomies, with Lombroso’s study of the supposedly high rates of “serious physical defects” amongst captured anarchists.<sup>22</sup> As the anarchist philosopher of disability Will Conway articulates this connection: “In abnormality, there is a thread that runs through to a political assertion of anarchy; and in anarchy, there is a thread that runs through to a medico-juridical assertion of abnormality.”<sup>23</sup> Weitling here stands at the latter as the figure posited on the side of discursive reduction, he seeks the ground of the anarchic body in categories corresponding to truths of the body’s abnormality. It is through the base materiality of *my* unique body, which

---

<sup>21</sup> UP, 250-1.

<sup>22</sup> Michel Foucault, *Abnormal*, (Picador, 2003), 154.

<sup>23</sup> Will Conway, *Going Astray*, <https://revoltingbodies.com/2021/12/13/going-astray/>

mation of lowness against the higher (as if this higher *truly was its creator*, like Milton’s Lucifer), but because there is a unique ground which precedes all such diremptions into the rigidification of one’s identity into essences of oneself which serve as principles of governing a person and their body:

“While Stirner writes against the human being, at the same time and in the same breath, he writes against the inhuman monster, as opposed to the human being; but he doesn’t write against the human being who is an inhuman monster or the inhuman monster who is a human being — i.e., he writes for the utterly common unique, who is a complete human being for himself anyhow, because he is an inhuman monster.”<sup>15</sup>

The uniqueness of Max Stirner is not exclusive to himself. Rather, it is exclusive to *everybody*. It is not reducible to an exchange value, for it is inexchangeable, for it “isn’t possible to determine a universal valuation of my uniqueness”.<sup>16</sup> It is not inclusive of everybody insofar as it is the dark ground of all interdependence, the base matter of the relation of relation and structure. Uniqueness is like the structural mineness of how Bataille talks of the Big Toe, which as Noys shows is a Bataillean emblem of base matter:

“Base matter is what makes the very structure of the high/low opposition possible in the first place *and* what ruins it: without the base matter of the big toe we could not stand erect, and so we would be deprived of the high, ideal, etc., but because of

---

<sup>15</sup> SC.

<sup>16</sup> UP, 286.

this the high can never be as pure as it would desire.”<sup>17</sup>

The spurious infinity of purity and purity-seeking is exactly that which Stirner seeks to undermine in the Youth with a turn to a more fundamental *grund* that is equally fundamentally exclusive. Fundamental exclusivity, in that it grounds the relation of any dialectic such that they could be constituted as relation and made subjugated to its determinations, takes the form in both Stirner and Bataille of matter which cannot be expressed or captured logically as its fuel and operational limit. Namely, that which Bataille characterizes as the “*insubordinate*” character of base matter which is its “*nonlogical difference*”;<sup>18</sup> a pre- or non-discursive difference which serves to destabilize its logical and discursive confinements rather than stabilize them. As Noys notes, for Bataille matter is itself difference, and base matter itself is purely a functional notion as the “active flux of instability that ruins the closure of any discourse.”<sup>19</sup> This nonlogical difference serves as a tool of illustrating Stirner’s own explanation that “just as the concept and the conceptual world fades away when one uses the empty name: the name is the empty name to which only the view can give content... the unique doesn’t say anything because it is merely a name.”<sup>20</sup> The view is that of the ‘who’ of the Unique, the one who sees the nonlogical difference between themselves and their ‘higher’ essential nature unto which they are told to conform (or else). My uniqueness is my baseness, my materiality as my nonlogical difference which exceeds such classifications as ‘inhumanity’

---

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin Noys “Georges Bataille’s Base Materialism” in *Cultural Values*, 2:4, pp.499-517, 501-2.

<sup>18</sup> Georges Bataille, “The Notion of Expenditure” in *Visions of Excess* (Minnesota, 1985), pp.116-129, 129.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Noys “Georges Bataille’s Base Materialism” in *Cultural Values*, 2:4, pp.499-517, 511-12.

<sup>20</sup> SC.

which invert the order of creation at the same time as the world becomes polarized into higher and lower.

## The Uniqueness of the Body

As the nonlogical difference of my base materiality, my uniqueness is inextricably tied with my own material body, as the dark ground through which ‘I’ have my personality and my experience. It is the condition of possibility of the very conditions of possibility having their seat in my cognition, yet it does not exist *for* these conditions as that which is presupposed *for* their benefit as universal forms of experience. As the ground of all hierarchies and discursive formations of the pure and impure, the base matter of the uniqueness of a body consists in not its hierarchic abnormality (its inhumanity against the human), but its *anarchic* abnormality which hierarchy can only treat discursively, as a negation of itself which is to be corrected or negated (destroyed) outright. We can clearly see this in Stirner when he makes the proto-Foucauldian move of identifying both clinical and punitive forms of power in his critique of the communist Wilhelm Weitling and characterization of criminality as a remediable social disease:

“Weitling has to continue with “remedies against the natural remainder of human diseases and weaknesses;” and “remedies” always announce at the start that one considers individuals to be “called” to a certain “well-being” and will consequently treat them in accordance with this “human calling.” The *remedy* or *cure* is only the reverse side of *punishment*, the *theory of cure* runs parallel with the theory of punishment; if the latter sees in an action a sin against right, the former takes it for a sin *against himself*, as a wasting of his