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This is a short introduction, and I recommend read The  
Unique and Its Property, Translation by Wolfi Landstreicher

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# An Introduction to Egoism

Am Dampierre

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Egoism is the Philosophy put out by Max Stirner, and 19<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher. His thought is that of anti-politics, putting out a attack on anything and everything which presents itself as a “Fixed Idea” or “Phantom” as he puts it. These Fixed Ideas are social constructions which are alien to us, and by being outside of ourselves alienate us from the desire of our Egos or “Einziges”

The commodification of our Einziges therefore leads to a alienation of the self from the self. The logical solution then would be the destruction of the commodification and ergo, the destruction of capitalism, in this Egoism as put out by Stirner is inherently anti-capitalist.

Stirner also warns of laws, rules, and other restrictions on the self, put out by the state to control the Einziges of the Individual. These things restrict us, they take the morals and ethics of religion and force them upon every citizen. The state says who can or cannot do things, it even says who is or isn't human. Therefore we must be Anarchist, destroying any form of authority or hierarchy there is.

The state also works with capital, a horrible combination, to chain us up further. It gives funding to corporations, re-

stricts who may or may not own capital (Usually those of a white, male, and wealthy background). They put those who they deem “Inhuman” into prisons and force them to work for free or very little, sometimes pennies, and steal their labor. We become that which is Illegal, we become Inhuman, we become Monsters to Society itself, we take it as our enemy and attack it, slash at its fat belly any chance we get. This is the fate for the Egoist, because through the states enforcement of “Humanity” as the same as “Law Abiding” or “Moral” we are thrust into the Epitaph of “Monster”.

He also made the point to critique Humanism and all its offshoots. Humanism being nothing but religious thought packaged into something that seems “Logical” and “Compassionate”, like stated before in a state under “Humanism” it alone can decide who is or isn’t human, and cast those who they say aren’t into the pit. For this we must be against the notion and ideal of “Human”, we aren’t simply humans, we are individuals.

Stirner points out that the title of “Human” tells us nothing about each other, likewise with other titles, such of Nation, Gender, Sexuality, and even our names. Stirner is blatantly against these things, telling us we are utterly Unique and will never be fully realized by our “Titles”, we should then abandon them and live our in our “Ownness”. We must instead seek to express ourselves to the best of our ability without such things, simply living with our Ownness.

Ownness to Stirner was a odd thing, it is us, and at the same time is things which lie outside of what we consider “Us”. Almost anything can come into our “Ownness” by turning it into our “Property”, but not in the traditional sense. Property was something which we use, constantly, consuming and using, and destroying, and creating, always. We only keep something as our Property so long as we have to power to protect it, or more so the power to keep using it. We must take everything within ourselves, like a thief we shall take all in our sights. If

something ceases being of use to us, we destroy it, consume it, or simply give it away, it means nothing to me at that point anyways. So almost anything can be in our "Ownness", be it material or immaterial. The most obvious example is things which we hold onto, our cloths, diaries, phones, etc. But it is also thoughts, the immaterial, Philosophy, Gender, even the Spiritual.

This idea of "Property", once examined and taken within us shows that the fixed idea, the Phantom of "Property" that the capitalistic world sets our falls apart quickly, like cards blown by a swift breeze we can blow it apart with out own ever-consuming Ownness. The "Property" which Capitalist try to peddle us makes our own Property(Our Ownness) into a commodity to sell to use, forcing us to toil away day after day for something that's already ours, we must simply take it, become that Thief! Become the Inhuman Criminal and steal which is yours!

Our "Ownness" is a part of us, it is our Einzige or Unique. Our Einzige is totally Unique, and is so for everything in existence and beyond. Such things like language cannot even scratch the surface in describing that our Einzige in and the Uniqueness which it holds. Even calling it "Einzige", "Ego", or "Unique" can be considered not full, for it isn't nameable, it isn't something we can explain, it is nothing, but it is everything. Something which Stirner called "The Creative Nothing", "A Nothing out of Which Everything is Created". We are this Creative Nothing, and his Philosophical Thought revolves around it. You must explore yourself, become the Aristocratic Hermit, and discover deep into your Creative Nothing. And anything which tries to stop you, must be destroyed.

This is all well and good, but what about that which is Alien to us? Our own Alienation comes from many things in our lives, this set out and created by Society, Civilization, Religion, Capital, and State. These Fixed Ideas haunt our heads, holding ourselves back from experiencing our Einzige. We are totally

defined by these Phantoms in our current state, and to Stirner the only way to break free from them is to either “Banish” them or “Consume” them.

When we feel we should no longer be defined by such Phantoms, that we desire to stop the alien from chaining us, we banish it. We tear it from us and throw it out, totally destroy it. We become Iconoclasts, and ravage the Sacred Alter of Phantoms, freeing ourselves so that we may be free. This sounds easy enough but is a difficult task to be fulfilled. Take Gender, today Trans people banish their previous gender, destroy the phantom, and thus the icon of their own alienation. Obviously this is a difficult task in itself, but if our trans siblings can do it then we very well can as well.

We might also very well enjoy the phantom which haunts us, which alienates us. A close companion, we decide instead to bring it into ourselves, to “Consume” it and make it our own. Instead of merely destroying it we pull it into us, examine it closely and decide whether or not to bring it into ourselves. The Icon then becomes our Tool, a Tool to use as we please. This is examined by Sexuality, we look at another and then them deeply, we simply can banish our love! So instead we take our object of our desire and bring it into us, and make it ours. This is done easily, and can very much easily turn into a habit, rationalizing our behaviors and own phantoms with “I need it” or “I want it”. Half-assed logic will lead only to downfall, we must closely examine that phantom to decide if we do or don’t need it, then take our action.

Stirner emphasized the fulfillment of the Einzige, destroying and attacking all that lies in its way. What it desires is always beneficial to us or others. But he takes a Nihilistic stance in this, rejecting everything, attacking everyone, and finally once the slaughter has been finished, laughs in our faces declaring that “Everything is Nothing to Me”. This core thought of rejecting everything that is a fixed idea, be it morals, ethics, or things like love or freedom is crucial to his philosophy. If we

are to examine the phantoms in our lives we must also treat everything around us as if it is nothing, treat it as if it means nothing to us, for it is already ours.

The Egoism of Max Stirner is a interesting philosophy, it can be used as a tool of critique of almost everything, and as a vehicle for self development and changing the world view of the individual. It can improve the quality of ones life. If not, it means nothing to me anyways.