

Missing Mother of Order

Sven Loven





MISSING MOTHER OF ORDER

Words within grey -- quotations from Max Stirner's
Der Einzige und sein Eigentum

Words within blue -- written by Sven Loven,
with quotations from Max Stirner
translated to English

Hey. I wanted to share a story with you.

First, introductions...
I'm an artist.
I've never been scared of Specters, Spooks, Spirits or Geists.



All that changed after I met Max.



Max, last name Stirner, has been dead a long while, but in his time he wrote a book called Der Einzige und sein Eigentum.

Der Einzige

und

sein Eigentum.

It's a fun read, and happened to piss a bunch of people off. People still get pissed about it today, so I guess that it succeeded in staying somewhat relevant. The book is an intimate tome, one in which the reader is made to come in close quarters with the writer's thoughts. Some people dismissed it as Idealistic, while others found it a shockingly honest exposition on freedom. What Max tells us he wants to be free from is ghosts, the spirits that haunt us throughout our lives, be they ideals, ideas or structures we take to be real.



Ja, es spukt in der ganzen Welt! Nur in ihr? Nein, sie selber spukt, sie ist unheimlich durch und durch, sie ist der wandelnde Schein leib eines Geistes, sie ist ein Spuk. Was wäre ein Gespenst denn anders als ein scheinbarer Leib, aber wirklicher Geist? Nun, die Welt ist »eitel«, ist »nichtig«, ist nur blendender »Schein«; ihre Wahrheit ist allein der Geist; sie ist der Scheinleib eines Geistes.



The story of his book starts off with a child, someone seeking to assert themselves in the world. Because everyone and everything the child meets with responds in kind, it finds itself in a state of constant collision. This perpetual state of conflict is something that all of us come to understand as we mature. As Max puts it, the "combat of self-assertion is unavoidable."



Von dem Augenblicke an, wo er das Licht der Welt erblickt, sucht ein Mensch aus ihrem Wirrwarr, in welchem auch er mit allem anderen bunt durcheinander herumgewürfelt wird, sich herauszufinden und sich zu gewinnen. Doch wehrt sich wiederum alles, was mit dem Kinde in Berührung kommt, gegen dessen Eingriffe und behauptet sein eigenes Bestehen. Mithin ist, weil Jegliches auf sich hält, und zugleich mit Anderem in stete Kollision gerät, der Kampf der Selbstbehauptung unvermeidlich.

Max thinks that kids always want to get to the bottom of things, to see how they work. He thinks that this is indicative of how we each start our quest for liberation. When we can smash things, peek into hidden places, poke through what is covered up, we feel more safe in the world. If we realize that our will can be stronger than the rod of our parents' punishments, we overcome our weakness and no longer fear their authority. The seeds of revolutionary sentiment begin when we find our courage -- "the more we feel ourselves, the smaller appears that which before seemed invincible."



There's a soft spot in many hearts for the mischievous child, and sometimes we look on free-spirited children in an enviable light, as they seem to exist comfortably with few boundaries. Even more so, the child that chooses to rebel and assert itself can become a representation in our minds of an idealized freedom. As Max puts it, "only the freedom one takes for himself rides in full sails." When a child realizes its power, it ascends the first steps of becoming its own man. It so happened that these ideas about children and freedom reminded me of a movie, which had a very iconic poster.



In the movie, a mischievous child is left forgotten in his home. The missing mother, who gave order to his life, inadvertently leaves him to face society without the aid of family or friend. Faced with the antagonism of a hostile world outside the walls of his house, the child chooses combat as a means of self-assertion. Establishing his might within the perimeters of his property, freedom is realized in an act of violent autonomy.



mit Ihr sie nicht nehmet, und die Diebe und Betrüger obenein zur Verantwortung zieht. In ihrer Schlaueit wissen sie es wohl, dass die gegebene (oktroierte) Freiheit doch keine Freiheit ist, da nur die Freiheit, die man sich nimmt, also die Freiheit des Egoisten, mit vollen Segeln schiff. Geschenkte Freiheit streicht sogleich die Segel, sobald Sturm oder – Windstille eintritt; sie muss immer – gelinde und mittelmässig angeblasen werden.

In a similar manner, Max believes that one's power is one's property, that power gives one property.

Through power one becomes oneself -- one becomes one's own property.



Meine Macht ist mein Eigentum.
Meine Macht gibt Mir Eigentum.
Meine Macht bin Ich selbst und bin durch sie mein Eigentum.

Now, if one can establish one's might, with it comes one's property. One can realize one's self as unique, and establish this uniqueness as one's own to develop. We can reject the aspirational phantasms and spirits that plague and haunt us -- of being Human, of being a Man, of being an Ego like all others. But Max tells us that one thing we cannot escape is society. Society is our original "state of nature".

Nicht die Isoliertheit oder das Alleinsein ist der ursprüngliche Zustand des Menschen, sondern die Gesellschaft. Mit der innigsten Verbindung beginnt unsere Existenz, da Wir schon, ehe Wir atmen, mit der Mutter zusammenleben; haben Wir dann das Licht der Welt erblickt, so liegen Wir gleich wieder an der Brust eines Menschen, seine Liebe wiegt Uns im Schosse, leitet Uns am Gängelbände und kettet Uns mit tausend Baden an seine Person. Die Gesellschaft ist unser Natur-Zustand. Darum wird auch, je mehr Wir Uns fühlen lernen, der früher innigste Verband immer lockerer, und die Auflösung der ursprünglichen Gesellschaft unverkennbarer.

As we begin life in close union with another, so this conjunction predicts our later conditions. We live in unison with our mother before we take our first breath outside the womb. When the light of the world pierces our eyes we are still forced to rely on the breast of another for nourishment. The fragility of infants elicits affection from our caretakers -- indeed, a mother clasps her child with the bond of "a thousand ties." Reaching maturity we continue to find it necessary to live with others to meet our needs. As Plato supposes, the origin of the city can be found in the fact that we each do not suffice for all our wants; what we individually lack can be found in the fruits of others.

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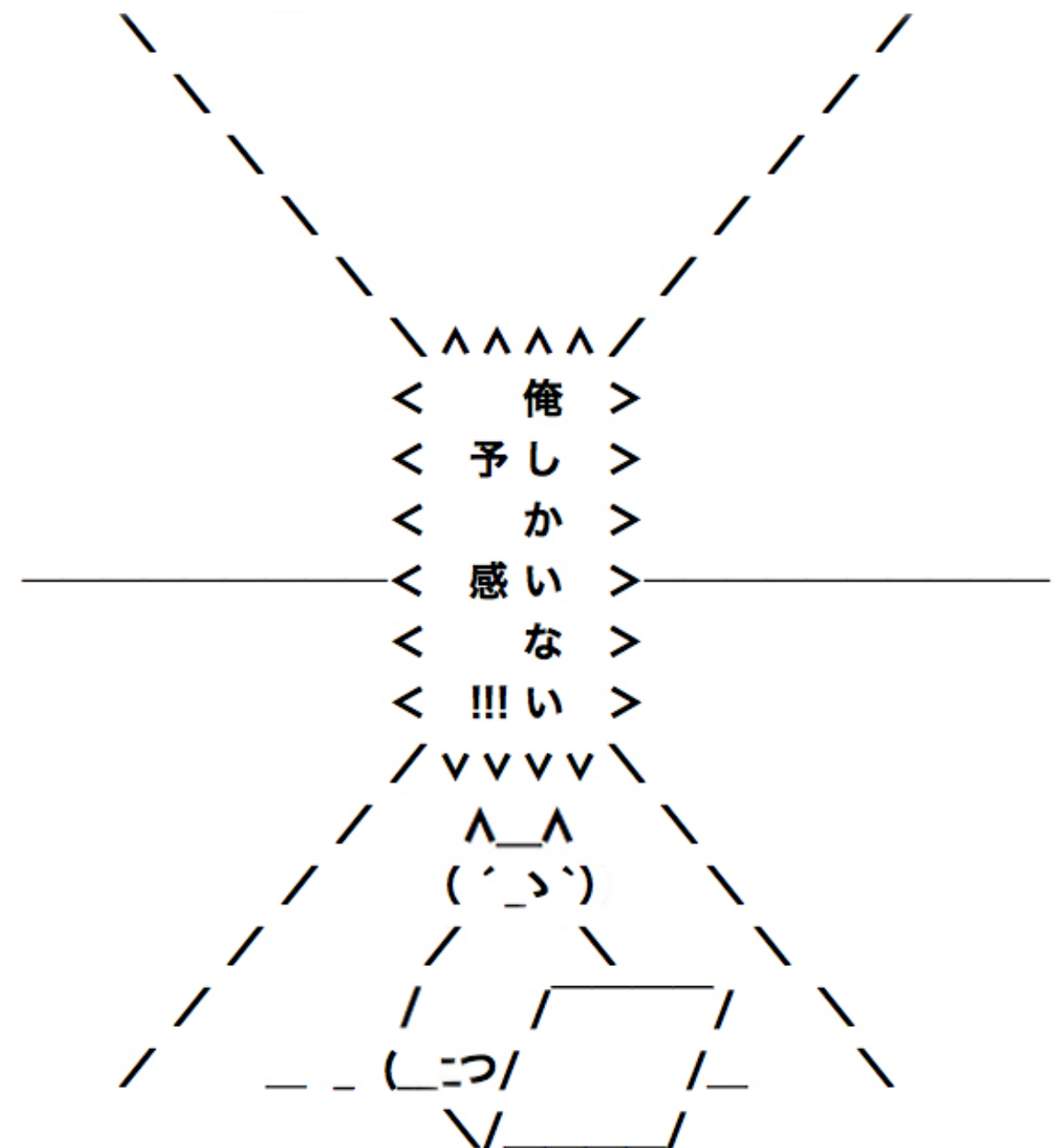



Nein, die Gemeinschaft, als das »Ziel« der bisherigen Geschichte, ist unmöglich. Sagen Wir Uns vielmehr von jeder Heuchelei der Gemeinschaft los und erkennen Wir, dass, wenn Wir als Menschen gleich sind, Wir eben nicht gleich sind, weil Wir nicht Menschen sind.

Where we go wrong, Max believes, is in the search for community. "Community, as the goal of history hitherto, is impossible." Community, especially as predicated on the ideals held up by Liberalism, exists as a mirage. One could posit, for instance, that only someone infatuated with ideals and apparitions could believe that a community of equals might be able to exist. This manner of hypocrisy is best renounced, as it blinds us from our own selves. If we examine what we are comprised of, it becomes glaringly obvious that one can never equal another, as each "own" self is unique. Equality can only come between thoughts and concepts. We can reach an equality among each other in the realm of thoughts -- but it is only there, where we conceive of ourselves as thoughts, as concepts, as ideas, that we can attempt to come to identical standings. However, these thoughts are not who we bodily or mentally are. Neither you nor I are speakable... we are in fact, "unutterable". It is only thoughts that can be spoken and voiced, as our own selves can never truly be defined.



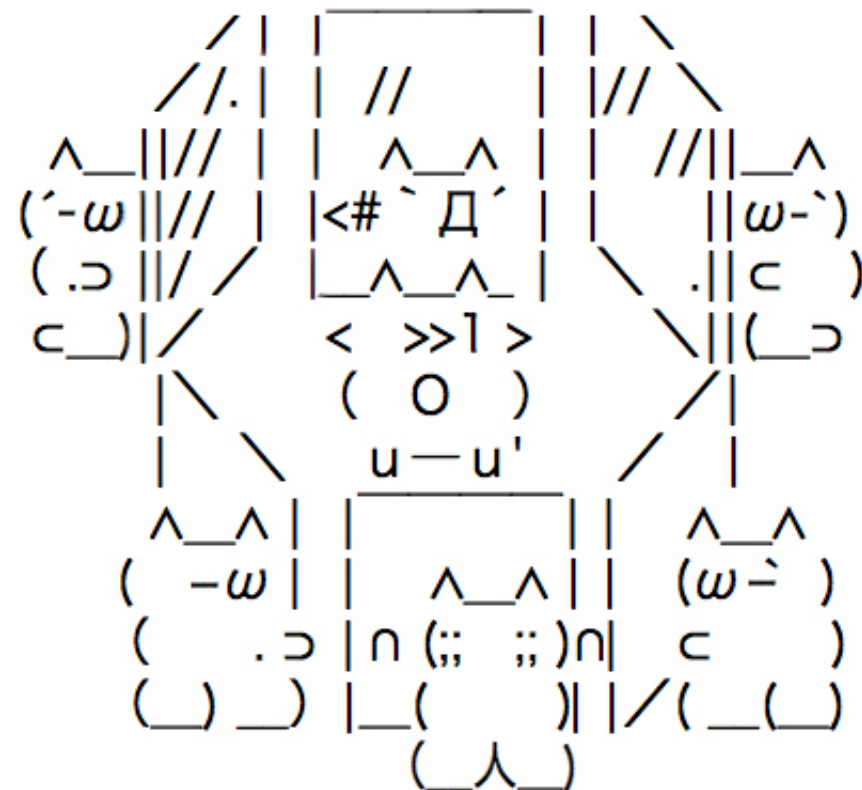
Everyone supposes that they must be given a destiny, that a goal must be striven for, outside oneself. Liberalism, as a product of the Enlightenment, concocts "the Human", and demands that we lay claim to our status as men, as Man. Max believes not in conceiving oneself as an Ego among other Egos, but simply recognizing oneself as the only Ego. "I am unique. Hence my wants too are unique, and my deeds; in short everything about me is unique. And it is only as this unique I that I take everything for my own, as I set myself to work, and develop myself, only as this. I do not develop men, nor as man, but, as I, I develop -- myself. This is the meaning of the -- unique one [Einzig]."





Ich bin aber nicht ein Ich neben andern Ichen, sondern das alleinige Ich: Ich bin einzig. Daher sind auch meine Bedürfnisse einzig, meine Taten, kurz alles an Mir ist einzig. Und nur als dieses einzige Ich nehme Ich Mir alles zu eigen, wie Ich nur als dieses Mich betätige und entwickle: Nicht als Mensch und nicht den Menschen entwickle Ich, sondern als Ich entwickle Ich – Mich. Dies ist der Sinn des – Einzigens.

A common feature of Liberalism that Max identifies are "polemics against privilege." He contends that Liberalism continually "fumes against privilege", appealing to rights as a reflection of the contest of power. For the Egoist who embraces Max's philosophy, the concept of rights "falls apart into nothingness" when it is subsumed by might. Any right can be explained as privilege, and any privilege a reflection of power. A right exists as a theoretical and social construct, placed in the mind of man by faith in phantasmagorical ideals. Power is something that one can be -- the powerful one, the owner of power. Rights, on the contrary, exist above us, are "absolute", existing in a higher figure from whose idealized form they flow unto us. "Right is a gift of grace from the judge; power and might exist only in me the powerful and mighty."



Recht – ist ein Sparren, erteilt von einem Spuk; Macht – das bin Ich selbst, Ich bin der Mächtige und Eigner der Macht. Recht ist über Mir, ist absolut, und existiert in einem Höheren, als dessen Gnade Mir's zufließt: Recht ist eine Gnadengabe des Richters; Macht und Gewalt existiert nur in Mir, dem Mächtigen und Gewaltigen.



It is here in our tale that we come to the word Liberty. In his Dictionnaire Philosophique, Voltaire defines it thusly: "Liberty then is only and can be only the power to do what one will". Later in history, liberty became differentiated from freedom as the rights of those participating in "the social contract" came to be progressively elucidated. The image of the word Liberty pictured is from the title of a newspaper published by Benjamin Tucker, who provided a voice for the American interpretation of Anarchist ideas. Tucker, a follower of Stirner, came to the conclusion that only two rights were worth recognizing, the right of might, and the right of contract. Though beginning his journey into political philosophy as a socialist, the periodical he published from the late 19th century into the beginning of the twentieth often agitated for Individualist Anarchism, becoming increasingly influenced by Stirner's ideas on Egoism.



Both Max and Ben looked on the state as an enemy. In Stirner's stark terms, the Egoist does not have the welfare of human society at heart, as to do so would be pledging servility to a constructed ideal. Nothing was to be sacrificed to it, either -- it was only to be utilized, to be transformed into the property of its user, treated as a creature to be tamed. The annihilation of the state was desired, and in its place the "Union of Egoists" would be formed.

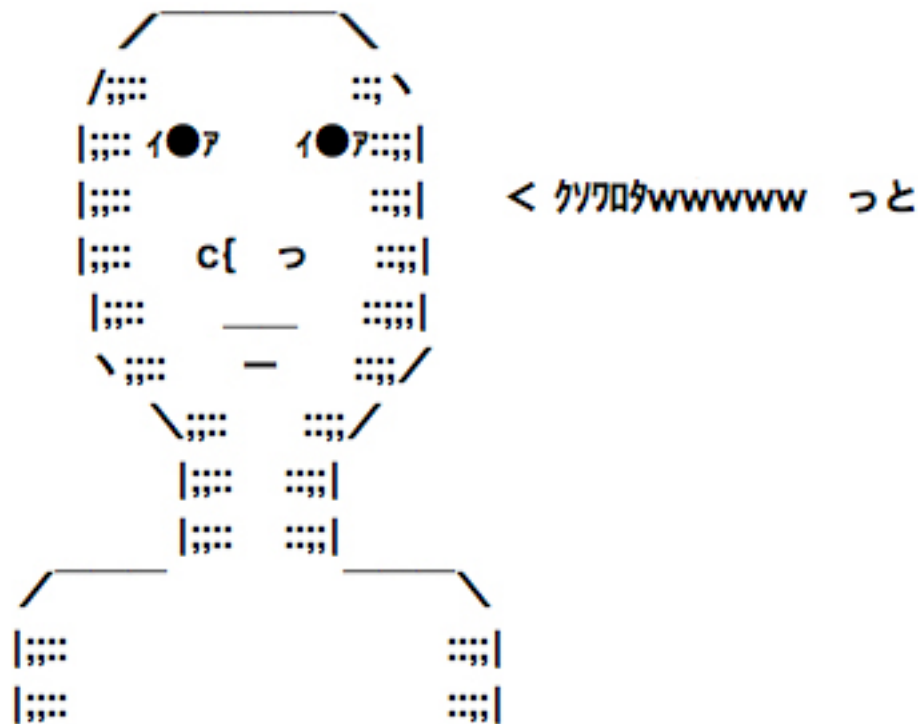


Darum sind Wir beide, der Staat und Ich, Feinde. Mir, dem Egoisten, liegt das Wohl dieser »menschlichen Gesellschaft« nicht am Herzen, Ich opfere ihr nichts, Ich benutze sie nur; um sie aber vollständig benutzen zu können, verwandle Ich sie vielmehr in mein Eigentum und mein Geschöpf, d.h. Ich vernichte sie und bilde an ihrer Stelle den Verein von Egoisten.

What would this Union resemble? That vision is not revealed in his book, though many have given their own interpretation. Some saw it as another iteration of Communism, while others later feared the self-interest that buttressed its system could swing towards the severity of Fascism. What is compelling to me is not necessarily the system that could be created from this Union, but the power envisioned in the freedom from Geists, the phantasms and ideals that bedevil our minds. Power, when a unique ego is freed from the haunting spectres of the mind, assumes a unique manifestation as the might of actualized assertion stemming from the "creative nothing" that is the unnameable self.

Pictured on the last page is a painting of a Child confronted with the "combat of self-assertion".

Overlaying this, the Geist of Liberty, itself an ideal to which so many willingly sacrifice. Lastly, an ASCII depiction of the cycle of modern life, the flickering samsara of which so many seek to escape. The power of the creative nothing, the name which Stirner bestows to the starting point of our individual consciousness, is that to he who views the world as nothing, all the world is his...the unique one's.



Eigner bin Ich meiner Gewalt, und Ich bin es dann, wenn Ich Mich als Einzigen weiss. Im Einzigen kehrt selbst der Eigner in sein schöpferisches Nichts zurück, aus welchem er geboren wird. Jedes höhere Wesen über Mir, sei es Gott, sei es der Mensch, schwächt das Gefühl meiner Einzigkeit und erbleicht erst vor der Sonne dieses Bewusstseins. Stell' Ich auf Mich, den Einzigen, meine Sache, dann steht sie auf dem Vergänglichen, dem sterblichen Schöpfer seiner, der sich selbst verzehrt, und Ich darf sagen: Ich hab' mein' Sach' auf Nichts gestellt.

"I am owner of my might, and I am so when I know myself as unique. In the unique one, the owner himself returns into his creative nothing, of which he is born. Every higher essence above me, be it God, be it man, weakens the feeling of my uniqueness, and pales only before the sun of this consciousness. If I concern myself, for myself, the unique one, then my concern rests on its transitory, mortal creator, who consumes himself, and I may say: All things are nothing to me."

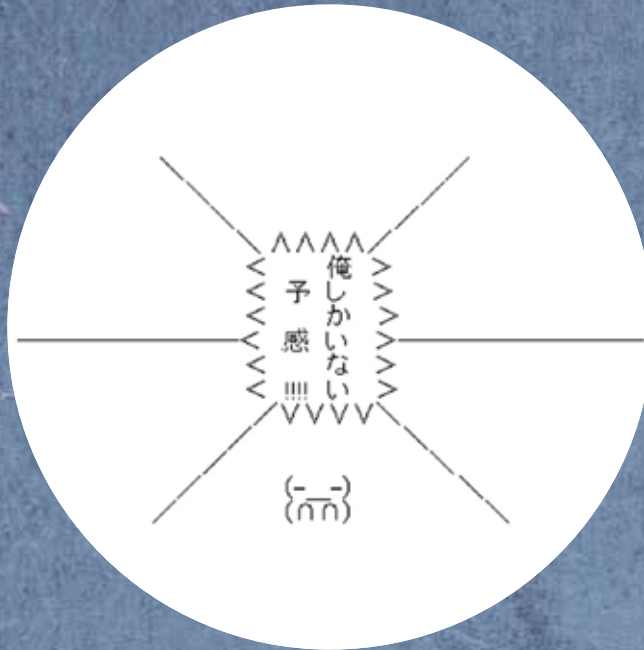
Footnotes

- 1.) Page 5, quote from the original German of *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum*, Max Stirner, p.37 mit Seitenzahlen nach Ausgabe Reclam 1972 sowie Seitenkonkordanz zu den Ausgaben Reclam 1893 und Wigand 1845 <http://www.lsr-projekt.de/msee.html>
- 2.) Page 6, quote from the English translation of *The Ego and Its Own*, Max Stirner, p.13 Cambridge University Press, 1995
- 3.) Page 6, quote from the original German of *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum*, p. 9
- 4.) Page 7, quote from the English translation of *The Ego and Its Own*, Max Stirner, p. 14
- 5.) Page 7, quote from the English translation of *The Ego and Its Own*, Max Stirner, p. 151
- 6.) Page 9, quote from the original German of *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum*, p.185
- 7.) Page 9, quote from the original German of *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum*, p.203
- 8.) Page 10, quote from the English translation of *The Ego and Its Own*, Max Stirner, p.271
- 9.) Page 11, quote from the original German of *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum*, p.342
- 10.) Page 11, quote from the English translation of *The Ego and Its Own*, Max Stirner, p.271
- 11.) Page 12, quote from the original German of *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum*, p.348
- 12.) Page 12, quote from the English translation of *The Ego and Its Own*, Max Stirner, p.275
- 13.) Page 13, quote from the English translation of *The Ego and Its Own*, Max Stirner, p.319
- 14.) Page 14, quote from the original German of *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum*, p.406
- 15.) Page 14, quote from the English translation of *The Ego and Its Own*, Max Stirner, p.186-7
- 16.) Page 15, quote from the original German of *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum*, p.230
- 17.) Page 17, quote from the English translation of *The Ego and Its Own*, Max Stirner, p.161
- 18.) Page 17, quote from the original German of *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum*, p.196
- 19.) Page 19, quote from the original German of *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum*, p.412
- 20.) Page 19, quote from the English translation of *The Ego and Its Own*, Max Stirner, p.324





Sven Loven is an artist born in Sweden and raised in NYC.
He hopes to one day understand the Spectacle.



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as it is and as it should be**

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