

OBDURACY AND IDENTITY: STIRNER'S EIGEN-CENTRIC CRITIQUE OF IDEOLOGY

Roland Theuas DS. Pada
University of Santo Tomas, Philippines

*In this essay, I explore the idea of obduracy and identity as an essential component of Max Stirner's critique of ideology in *The Ego and Its Own*. I begin this exploration by revisiting Stirner's controversial metaphor for the ancients, moderns, and the free by replacing these concepts with the suitable equivalents, which are atavism, spiritualism, and egoism. My goal in this essay is to point out that obduracy is the fundamental 'drive' that makes the ego realize that an ideology is not of its own. I point out that the obdurate subject in the phase of atavism, spiritualism, and egoism is aware that the ownership of an ideology is not of their own. From this, I hypothesize that Stirner, despite the lack of discussion on identity, implies that the obduracy towards ideologies is marked by the necessity of identity. I conclude my essay by locating the position of Stirner's critique as an epistemic and meta-cognitive process that occurs before ideology.*

Keywords: Atavism, Critique of Ideology, Egoism, Identity, Obduracy, Spiritualism.

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to revisit Stirner's concept of obduracy as a basis for articulating his critique of ideology. My paper aims to traverse the discussion of Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* as an attempt to highlight the unique interpretative dimension of Stirner's ideological critique. The impetus for the inception of this discourse was based on the revitalized discourse on the critique of ideology. The urgency of revisiting the critique of ideology has become a necessity in an age driven by effervescent forms of information and the prevalence of movements that could have either catastrophic or progressive effects in our current milieu. With the ubiquity of connectivity and the dissemination of information in what Schwab refers to as the 4th Industrial Revolution (Schwab 2016, 64), the swift adoption of movements for causes (whether for a good or a bad cause) has rapidly proliferated in this current day and age. One can only look into various events, such as political protests, riots, and cancel culture, and see the rapid adoption of causes driven by ideologies that move people into action. For example, protests such as the BLM protests and civil unrest, the January 6 Trump riots, and the multitude of anti-COVID-19 protests around the world are among the evidence of

swift ideological adoption from the populace. This paper will not investigate the validity or morality of these movements, for they are subject to their respective ambiguities and potentials for instrumentalization.

Johann Kaspar Schmidt, or Max Stirner (pseudonym), was the German philosopher involved in the post-Hegelian group of philosophers referred to as *Die Freien* (Mackay 2005, 85). Stirner's relative obscurity from this group, which involved much more popular thinkers such as Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, understates the importance of Stirner's work and its possible and current contributions to the critique of ideology in philosophy and social criticism. Stirner's primary opus, *The Ego and Its Own* (Stirner 1995), presents a critique of ideology by proposing an introspective reflection on ideas and how they affect the *individual*. Stirner's critique of ideology revolved around the critique of Feuerbach's critique of religion and how Feuerbach simply relegated the function of ideology to religion. Stirner's critique delved deeper into the heart of the problem by reinterpreting religion as an ideology. Stirner argued that our belief and conviction in the supposed reality of ideologies had a similar effect to that of religion. Contrary to Feuerbach, Stirner argued that the divine characteristics of religion do not reflect humanity as a deity; they are mere exaggerations of qualities that humanity will never attain. For Stirner, we supposedly believed in ideologies in the same manner that we believed religion offered a greater reality than what we are currently experiencing. A similar position is shared by Heidegger's deconstructing of ontology (Heidegger 1996, 17) and Derrida's *metaphysics of presence* (Derrida 1997, 13). The reception of *The Ego and Its Own* was mixed. Feuerbach found Stirner's work interesting and ingenious; however, Feuerbach did not appreciate Stirner's depiction of idealised forms as unequal to human characteristics (Welsh 2010, 17). Marx and Engels dedicated a significant section of *The German Ideology* (Engels & Marx 1970) to discussing Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own*. Marx and Engels declare that Stirner's refutation of the abolition of property and insistence on ownership (*Eigentum*) make Stirner a bourgeoisie (Engels & Marx 1970, 100-101).

THE ATAVIST, SPIRITUALIST, AND THE EGOIST

The core of Stirner's philosophical position lies in his idea of the self. In brief, Stirner's concept of egoism diverges significantly from the conventional understanding of egoism as selfishness or self-interest. Rather, the concept of egoism is the acknowledgement of the fact that any external stimulation to the self is subject to the mediation and assimilation of its internal processes. A similar concept is proffered by Sartre in his discussion of solipsism in *Being and Nothingness*. For Sartre, Solipsism is characterized as a reef since it inhibits the flow of the ocean without necessarily impeding the passage of water. As a natural semi-permissive barrier, it encourages the growth of marine organisms by inhibiting turbulent waves in a certain area (Sartre 1984, 309-312). I find this analogy fitting since it illustrates Stirner's egoist without the baggage of interpretation of the word "ego." The German word *eigen* is a reference to oneself and likewise presents a much clearer understanding in the context of *Einzig* and *Eigentum* (the only one and "ownness"). In a similar vein, we are also reminded of Heidegger's difficult concept of *Ereignis*. I borrow Richard Polt (Polt

2015, 411) and Daniella Vallega-Neu's translation (Heidegger 2012, xv-xvi), not Emad and Maly's awkward *enowning* (Heidegger 1999, xvii). *Ereignis* is an improved articulation of *Being and Time*'s idea of *vorlaufenheit* and *augenblick*, concepts that roughly translate to "moving forward" in an anticipatory sense and literally, the moment in the sense of blinking one's eye. *Ereignis*, therefore, is a temporal depiction of one's subjectivity in its experience of a moment as its own. The "own-ness" of the event (or any event) is the product of the conglomeration and aggregation of instances of oneself held together by its deliberate anticipative intentions. I find this segue to Heidegger useful since Stirner's *egoist* is concerned with maintaining that deliberate anticipative stance of the self, in the context of Heidegger's *Vorlaufenheit* (Heidegger, 1996, 224), through a critical form of introspection.

This anticipative stance of the Ego is found in the early chapters of *The Ego and its Own*, specifically, the resistance of the *egoist* (or future *egoist*) to be possessed by ideas or spooks (Stirner 1995, 41). Stirner refers to the odd developmental stages of humanity's ascent to freedom, namely the *ancients*, *modern*, and the *free*. These stages represent the transition from materialism, idealism, and egoism. In the latter parts of *The Ego and its Own*, Stirner would controversially refer to these stages as *Negroidity*, *Mongolidity*, and *Caucasian* (Stirner 1995, 62-64). Bradshaw suggests that these racial epithets were not necessarily aimed at demeaning the races; rather, they were aimed at insulting the representatives of materialism and idealism (Bradshaw 2021, 38). While the use of these words to denote Stirner's ideas is unpalatable and repugnant in this day and age, I think there are some merits in discussing these concepts for what they denote rather than how they are *denoted*. To avoid further controversy and uproar from the use of these terms, I will refer to them as the *atavist*, *spiritualists*, and *egoist*, respectively.¹

Following Feuerbach, Stirner views the *atavists* as materialists; they are concerned with the worldliness of reality and struggle with the transitory nature of the world (Stirner 1995, 20). The *spiritualists*, for Stirner, signify humanity's transition and reliance on ideas as a stable source of 'truth.' This tension provided clear goals, objective forms of morality, and a uniform idea of what is considered a *good life*. Stirner argues that *Spiritualists* have been constantly *improving* and *reforming* the *spirit* (idea/ideology) (Stirner 1995, 65) inasmuch as Socrates has founded ethics through the critique of the Sophists' instrumentalization of the mind (Stirner 1995, 21). Stirner further stresses that the *atavists* represented the dependence on things, while the *spiritualists* represented the dependence on thoughts (Stirner 1995, 63). Stirner presents an implicit hint of resistance that is experienced by humanity in these two phases. The *atavists* or the *ancients* struggled against understanding the "bottom of things" (Stirner 1995, 13) that, despite its consequences (the *rod*), we pursue with "imperturbability" and discover the *mind*. As confusing as it may seem, Stirner believes that this sense of imperturbability is driven by the desire to resist restrictions from either the limitations of the *atavists* or the *spiritualists*. The difference between these two points of resistance, however, is that the former is *real*, and the latter is a figment of the mind. The desire to resist both is what Stirner refers to as *obdurate courage* (Stirner 1995, 14). Stirner, however, laments the condition of how humanity has lost its ownership of its self in the pursuit of the spiritual:

But with that I, who had just now found myself as spirit, lost myself again at once, bowing before the complete spirit as one not my own but *supernal* [*jenseitigen*], and feeling my emptiness.

Spirit is the essential point for everything, to be sure; but then is every spirit the 'right' spirit? The right and true spirit is the ideal of spirit, the 'Holy Spirit.' It is not my or your spirit, but just – an ideal, supernal one, it is 'God.' 'God is spirit.' And this supernal 'Father in heaven gives it to those that pray to him.' (Stirner 1995, 16)

Stirner's concern with the *spiritualists* is that they fail to realize that the spiritual realm is their own creation. Hence, the 'right' spirit is not necessarily an 'objective' spirit, but a spirit that they have either derived from another or have concocted for their own. The failure to recognize the ownership of the spirit is what Stirner believes is the failure of the *spiritualists* to ascend to the level of the *free* or of the *egoist*:

As I find myself behind things, and that as mind, so I must later find *myself* also behind *thoughts*, namely, as their creator and *owner*. In the time of spirits, thoughts grew until they overtopped my head, whose offspring they yet were; they hovered about me and convulsed me like fever-phantasies, an awful power. The thoughts had become *corporeal* on their own account, were ghosts, such as God, emperor, Pope, fatherland, etc. If I destroy their corporeity, then I take them back into mine, and say: 'I alone am corporeal.' And now I take the world as what it is to me, as *mine*, as my *property* [*Eigentum*]; I refer all to myself. (Stirner 1995, 17)

What Stirner, thus, proposes in the ascent to *egoism* or the new is the recognition of the fact that the idea or the *spooks* are from our own thoughts and are not from a higher plane of existence. The obduracy that humanity has experienced from the *atavists* and the *spiritualists* comes from the implicit desire to take control of reality. In the case of *atavism*, we become obdurate from the limitations of materiality, hence, we overcome this by elevating our grasp of the material world to the level of ideas or the *spiritual*. The level of the *free* or the *egoist* requires the obduracy of our obduracy towards the *spiritual*.

THE EGO AND OBDURACY

In this section, I will attempt to derive a concept of identity from Stirner's idea of the *egoist*. Obduracy, here, refers to one's own mind and its refusal to think otherwise. Being obdurate refers to our own resistance to external influence, unless we agree to such influence. To better understand the concept of obduracy, one can think of it as not only the recognition of the inherent recognition of our solipsistic tendencies, it is also our affirmation of one's own solipsism. There are certain limitations and issues that I have to address before I proceed. The concept of identity within *The ego*

and its own is not an explicit concept that could be grasped immediately; in fact, the explicit statement from Stirner, “I am nothing” (Stirner 1995, 225), presents a difficult position for me to elaborate on what identity means for Stirner. Moreover, as an admirer of Hume (Stirner 1995, 79), Stirner would most likely find the concept of identity as an attempt to merely spiritualize the material. Despite this, we are led to the idea of obduracy as a motive for Stirner’s idea of resisting nature and spirit. We are obdurate about nature because it resists us in organizing its effects, and hence, we subjugate it through the spiritualization of its essence. If we follow Stirner with our obduracy towards the *spiritual*, we begin to see the obduracy as a manifestation of an *own-dom*. We resist the world because we want to *own* the world and therefore, transform the material world into an idea or *spirit*. But when the *spiritual* is affirmed as a greater reality than the real, we become obdurate to the spirit because we recognize the spirit as not our *own*. Identity, therefore, in the context of Stirner’s *egoist* and obduracy, is the impulse and motive to *own*:

Not until I am certain of myself, and no longer seeking for myself, am I really my property; I have myself, therefore I use and enjoy myself. On the other hand, I can never take comfort in myself as long as I think that I have still to find my true self and that it must come to this, that not I but Christ or some other spiritual, ghostly, self (the true man, the essence of man, and the like) lives in me.

A vast interval separates the two views. In the old, I go toward myself, in the new, I start from myself; in the former I long for myself, in the latter I have myself and do with myself as one does with any other property – I enjoy myself at my pleasure. I am no longer afraid for my life, but ‘squander’ it. (Stirner 1995, 283-284)

What is not explicit in Stirner is the necessity of freedom in the idea of identity. Obduracy makes freedom apparent in our ability to recognize our *own-dom* of reality and ideas. A segue into other thinkers, such as Heidegger and Sartre, can further illuminate the relationship between identity and obduracy. For Heidegger, identity is transitive; it is in the constant process of *becoming* (Heidegger 1996, 220-221) and hence does not have a fixed or permanent identity. Despite this, identity is rooted in the ontical conditions of one’s thrown condition, meaning that one’s identity is shaped by physical, historical, and ideological forces that make one *care* about their *own-dom*. This means that, despite the transitive nature of identity in Heidegger, the *ego* or the self is still grounded in its particularity and pursues its *ownness* as its goal. In the case of Sartre, this ontical condition is a potential that is pursued by the ego that is not bound by a purpose or a goal from *without* (Sartre 1984, 56-58). The ego is nothing, which in the same sense as Heidegger, means that its identity is transitive and is compelled only by its own freedom to pursue its *ownness*.

This brief segue fills in some of the conceptual gaps that were not explicit in Stirner. By pronouncing that the pursuit of the egoist is its *ownness*, we can understand such pursuit as a self-initiated desire. While we cannot limit the egoist to a mere *fixed idea*, it does not necessarily mean that the particularity to pursue its *ownness* does not come from *without*, but rather, from its own circumstances. As for the matter of

obduracy, the desire to resist *atavism* and *spirituality* itself is a product of the egoist's *ownness*. While individuals pursue the possession of the world, of the spirits, and of their own, it cannot be a pursuit of everything and nothing. Obduracy, therefore, is a manifestation of identity since it is motivated by the particularity of the egoist's circumstances. The egoist resists not just merely for the sake of resisting but for the sake of ownership. The egoist is the Master of Itself inasmuch as it can identify what is its own and what is not of its *own*. While social mediation can have its influence on the creation of one's ego or identity, its circumstances are singular and *unique*. Obduracy is another expression of the dialectical nature between the ego, the world and society. Obduracy, therefore, is the litmus test for reification. In an ideal situation, there would be some whispers of resistance to the hauntings of the *spiritual* or the ideal. These whispers of resistance are the obdurate desire to reject what is not one's own, because it neither serves the interest of the egoist, nor does it align itself with the circumstances of the egoist.

OBDURACY AND STIRNER'S CRITIQUE OF IDEOLOGY

Obduracy presents an interesting theorectico-practical critique of ideology that precedes philosophical themes from phenomenology, existentialism, post-structuralism, and critical theory. Stirnerian scholars such as Koch (Koch 1997) and Feiten (Feiten 2013) problematize Stirner's relationship with anarchism and post-structuralism. While Koch tries to extricate Stirner's *The ego and his own* from the tradition of anarchism with the admixture of Hegelianism to the poststructuralist tradition by arguing that Stirner creates a modern formulation of an attack against Western metaphysics and philosophy (Koch 1997, 102), Feiten investigates Stirner's (potential) relationship with anarchism (Feiten 2013, 135). My position on Stirner's alleged affiliation or imaginative affiliation is that any party to an authoritative interpretation of Stirner's thoughts and ideas negates the objective of the *egoist*. Stirner's thoughts and ideas lie with him, and his intentions are neither an endorsement of an ideology, but rather, a critique of ideologies in general. Reading from his contemporaries, we can see Stirner's critique resists reification and instrumentalization despite the best efforts of its interlocutors:

Above, "Stirner" refuted the communist abolition of private property by first transforming private property into "having" and then declaring the verb "to have" an indispensable word, an eternal truth, because even in communist society it could happen that Stirner will "have" a stomach-ache. In exactly the same way, he here bases the impossibility of abolishing private property by transforming it into the concept of property ownership, by exploiting the etymological connection between the words *Eigentum* and *eigen*, and declaring the word *eigen* an eternal truth, because even under the communist system, it could happen that a stomach-ache will be *eigen* to him. All this theoretical nonsense, which seeks refuge in etymology, would be impossible if the actual private property that the communists want to

abolish had not been transformed into the abstract notion of “property.” (Marx 1989, 101)

If we were to take Engel and Marx’s reading of Stirner as a canon, we would be obliged to merely take Stirner’s idea of *Eigentum* as a physical possession of the means of production rather than its intention of possessing its *own* idea. We can see an unfortunate instrumentalization of critique in the case of Engel and Marx, as they try to reject a Stirner’s egoist simply because it fails to mesh with their agenda of promoting a communist revolution. We are, of course, reminded of Stirner’s critique of ‘sacred ideas’:

Even a directory of the sacred ideas, one or more of which man is to look upon as his calling, is not lacking. Family, fatherland, science, etc., may find in me a servant faithful to his calling.

Here we come upon the old, old craze of the world, which has not yet learned to do without clericalism: that to live and work *for an idea* is man’s calling, and according to the faithfulness of its fulfilment, his *human* worth is measured. (Stirner 1995, 71)

While Stirner’s remark might seem to have been aimed at the critique of religion, we have to remember that religion itself is an ideology, and ideologies, as they come and go, can also take the form of religion. While we take it upon ourselves to peruse our own ideas and our own reading of religion, communism in its practice is a civil religion wearing the pelt of individual desires for revolution. We only need to recall the obduracy of the people who struggled against the instrumentalization of the communist revolution and how they were instrumentalized by the *spooks* that maintained revolution as an inevitable and *fixed idea*. We are reminded of these fascist tendencies in Stirner’s prediction of the future of communism:

The state exerts itself to tame the desirous man; in other words, it seeks to direct his desire to it alone, and to *content* that desire with what it offers. To satiate the desire for the desirous man’s sake does not come into the mind: on the contrary, it stigmatizes as an ‘egoistic man’ the man who breathes out unbridled desire, and the ‘egoistic man’ is its enemy. He is this to the state because it lacks the capacity to agree with him; the egoist is precisely what it cannot ‘comprehend.’ Since the state (as nothing else is possible) has to do only for itself, it does not take care of my needs, but takes care only of how it does away with me, makes out of me another ego, a good citizen. It takes measures for the ‘improvement of morals.’ – and with what does it win individuals for itself? With itself, with what is the state’s, with *state property*. It will be unremittingly active in making all participants in its ‘goods,’ providing all with the ‘good things of culture’; it presents them its education, opens to them the access to its institutions of culture, capacitates them to come to property (as, to a fief) in the way of industry, etc. For all these *fiefs* it demands only the just rent of continual *thanks*. But the ‘unthankful’ forget to pay these

thanks. – Now, neither can ‘society’ do essentially otherwise than the state. (Stirner 1995, 276-277)

This long passage provides us a glimpse into the outcome of communism, which, as we see in history, has sacrificed the individual for the sake of the *spiritual* or the ‘cause.’ While communism promises equality in terms of ownership of the ‘means of production,’ it does not necessarily include the equality of privilege in terms of leadership and political power. Stirner further adds:

Hierarchy is dominion of thoughts, dominion of mind!
We are hierarchic to this day, kept down by those who are supported by thoughts. Thoughts are sacred. (Stirner 1995, 68)

While ridiculed for the experience of *ownness* of stomach-aches, Stirner’s critique is quite potent. I say potent in the sense that it can interrogate any ideology without succumbing to its intention or ‘causes.’ If anything, Stirner has provided the hindsight that has plagued revolutions that toppled hierarchies only to erect new hierarchies. While humility might not be the strongest quality of Stirner’s *The ego and its own*, my reading leads me to the conclusion that Stirner’s *egoist* is not a character brimming with self-confidence in every instance. On the contrary, I think that the egoist is someone who succumbs to a suspension of judgment in pursuit of *ataraxia*² (Stirner 1995, 314) similar to a Pyrrhonian sceptic (Empiricus 2000, 11-12). Given the ubiquity of information dissemination in this day and age, ideologies carry significant power over the possession and thoughts of the people. What is implied in this is that the *ego* affirmation or negation of ideologies lies with its own obdurate tendencies. In other words, ideology is implicitly *dialectical* in Stirner’s egoist. If an *ego* accepts or makes an ideology ‘its own,’ it means that it was acquired dialectically. Hence, the responsibility and the burden of ownership for this ideology is for the *ego* to bear alone, regardless of whatever consequences the ideology brings when it is translated to the domain of politics. I think that Stirner’s work provides a unique solution to overcoming ideological encumbrances without succumbing to a critique that is drenched in the discourse of class-struggles, power, and morality.

THE LEGACY OF THE OBDURATE EGOIST

Despite Stirner’s entanglement with anarchism (Eltzbacher 1908, 102), as a dialectical Hegelian (Welsh 2010, 5), or even as the first poststructuralist (Koch 1997, 96), Stirner’s inquisition of the ownership of ideas presents a lasting and potent discourse on the critique of ideology. While it is not the objective of this essay to dispute Stirner’s associations with anarchism, Hegelianism, and poststructuralism, my concern with Stirner’s stereotypical reading is that it restricts the interpretative potential of his work if we merely see him as a figurehead for these genres. I think that Stirner’s critique of ideology ought to be read as a critique of reification. Not in the same manner as Marx’s preoccupation with class conflict, but more in line with Lukács’s understanding of reification as a form of self-deception (Lukács 1967, 172).

Stirner's discussion of the nature of the *moderns* or spiritualists provides a dimension of understanding reification that moves beyond labor, economic value, and class struggles. The question of ownership in the spooks that haunt us, regardless of age and time, is a religious question that needs to be addressed by *obduracy*. Despite the transitive nature of the ego, its historicity presents its own resistance to the haunting of spooks or ideologies through the basic question of ownership. Is the idea that imposes upon me *my own* idea? Or is it someone else's will pretending to be *my own*?

With the constant proliferation of ideological causes in a society that is constantly connected to networks of information, we see this important need to revisit Stirner's critique of ideology. If a movement urges me to consume "green products", should I follow it because of its popularity and my desire to be a part of it? Or should I follow such a movement because it serves my goal and my purpose? If a kitten crosses a busy highway, do I save it because it would make an interesting post on my social media account? Or do I save the kitten because of my inherent feeling for the poor animal?

While Stirner's critique may not necessarily move people into action, enacting a glorious revolution against the oppression of the workers, Stirner, offers an essential dimension of autonomy and agency to the ego that ensures the success of any movement's future. I agree with Newman's reading of Stirner to the extent that Newman argues that Stirner's thoughts are not trapped within the narrow confines of materialism (Newman 2010, 325). However, moving beyond Newman (Newman 2010, 323), I think there is an epistemic and meta-cognitive dimension in Stirner's critique that goes beyond the discourse of political power. This is why it was necessary to revisit the transitions from *atavism*, *spiritualism*, and *egoism* since they correspond to the cognitive states that lead to the ownership of an idea. I am reminded of an earlier work that I had on Derrida's logocentrism, that in the act of reading, there is already an implicit function of writing at work as a re-inscription of the word (Pada 2007, 32). This function of re-inscription parallels the function of obduracy in the ownership of ideas. Stirner's transition from the *spiritualist* to the *egoist* marks the awareness of ownership of an idea. Obduracy is the product of one's identity that resists the *spiritualism* of an idea since it recognizes the *idea* as not its *own* idea. Derrida, perhaps, might be referring to obduracy in this passage:

"The Leipzig Council – Saint Max" (Stirner) also organizes, let us recall once more before coming back to it later, an *irresistible* but *interminable* hunt for ghosts (Gespenst) and for *revenants* or spooks (Spuk). *Irresistible* like an effective critique, but also like a compulsion; *interminable* as one says of an analysis, and the comparison would not be at all fortuitous. (Derrida 1994, 58)

Derrida's interesting choice of words (irresistible and interminable) supports my argument that the resistance, for lack of a better word, of ideology by the *egoist* is rooted in its obduracy towards the non-ownership of the idea. What is much more interesting is that the concept of obduracy meshes seamlessly in Derrida's discussion of writing under erasure (Derrida 1997, 19). Since identity has a relative permanence, the act of reading/writing is *interminable*.

The legacy of Stirner's critique is a reminder of our epistemic relationship with ideology. The *egoist*, as a product of obduracy towards *spiritualism*, is constantly seeking ownership of ideas. The goal is not of domination or subserviency, rather, it is the appropriation of the idea as *its* own. While we wander the marketplaces of ideologies in the form of social media platforms, news in its various forms, ideas of philosophers, and the campaigns of political parties, there would always be a quiet whisper of obduracy reminding us of the possibility of haunting from these spooks of ideology. Perhaps, we might agree with a protest movement but disagree with the use of needless violence or an agreement with the desire to remove the monopoly on energy, but disagree with the use of war as its justification. The idea of *ownership* in Stirner does not have to be understood as a bourgeoisie vs. proletariat struggle for domination; it is a process that works before and beyond class conflict and power.

NOTES

1. On a different note, the atavists and spiritualists are also referred to as the ancients and the moderns. While they do not necessarily depict a strict timeline, Stirner's readers should remain cautious with how Stirner oscillates between his historical references and ideological references. (Please revise all footnotes into endnotes).

2. To quote Stirner: "The critic may indeed come to ataraxia before ideas, but he never gets rid of them; he will never comprehend that above the bodily man there does not exist something higher – namely, liberty, his humanity, etc. He always has a 'calling' of man still left, 'humanity'. And this idea of humanity remains unrealized, just because it is an 'idea' and is to remain such. If, on the other hand, I grasp the idea as my idea, then it is already realized, because I am its reality; its reality consists in the fact that I, the bodily, have it." See Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, 314.

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