

The “Stirner Wasn’t A Capitalist You Fucking Idiot” Cheat Sheet

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The Egoist milieu is a strange and tangled beast, one sharply divided between some of the older readers of Stirner and the new batch of whipper-snappers. Heated debates rage across the internet(though I'd prefer to see them in the streets) about just what the hell Stirner was trying to get across in his masterpiece *The Ego and His Own*.

The trenches seem to be dug on generational lines: older readers of Stirner, primarily Gen X, seem to believe Stirner is an Arch-Capitalist or Grand Villain who advocates unlimited competition is any way possible; younger readers see Stirner as an advocate of an Egoism that defies the laws, morals, and rules of the wealthy, inspiring the poor to begin working for their own interest.

Of course there are others who are universally laughed at for their sheer idiocy(Paul O' Sullivan comes to mind) who somehow think Stirner was an advocate for white nationalism. If you ever meet them in the real world you are advised to spit in their face while yelling "NICE SPOOKS NERD."

I digress.

What's always puzzled me about this divide is that the older folks reading Stirner never appeared to make it to the end of *The Ego and His Own*, or even bothered to read Stirner's explanation of some of his more difficult concepts in *Stirner's Critics*. They saw him criticize communism, laughed, and figured that Stirner MUST be a capitalist because how much he was talking about Communism sucking ass.

What these people fail to remember is that the Communism Stirner was preaching against was the same kind Kropotkin and Bakunin were, the Marxist variety that was obsessed with total control and seizing State power. Stirner correctly saw that Marxism didn't liberate the poor but fetishized them. They would forever remain "the proletariat" rather than becoming the Unique Individuals they always were. A quick tour of the Soviet Union bears this out. Still, Stirner was no capitalist, and the second half of *The Ego and His Own* involves his concept of Union as well as the foolishness of the "shopkeeper society" he saw around him.

I don't think it's a big jump to assume that the older variety have never actually bothered to READ Stirner, and after the 45th online debate about "you can't have both Communism and Egoism" I got tired of digging out copies of *The Ego and His Own*, going through it, and providing the quotes these knuckle-dragging capitalist swine never bothered to actually read.

It occurred to me others were tired of this as well.

So, in an act of Egoistic love, I've compiled the quotes here for you to freely use and study whenever the spook of "Free Markets" or other vile garbage dares despoil the name of Saint Max. Expect this page to updated as more quotes are mined and more arguments are made.

In the War of All Against All we are advised to act in our own interest, and only a fool would misconstrue his Bosses' interest as his own. Enjoy!

"Stirner was totally opposed to Socialism in any form!"

*"Egoism, as Stirner uses it, is not opposed to love nor to thought; it is no enemy of the sweet life of love, nor of devotion and sacrifice; it is no enemy of intimate warmth, but it is also no enemy of critique, nor of socialism, nor, in short, of any actual interest. It doesn't exclude any interest. It is directed against only disinterestedness and the uninteresting; **not against love, but against sacred***

love, not against thought, but against sacred thought, not against socialists, but against sacred socialists, etc.” – Stirner’s Critics

“Stirner is opposed to foolish ideas like love and working together!”

“But “the egoist is someone who thinks only of himself!” – This would be someone who doesn’t know and relish all the joys that come from participation with others, i.e., from thinking of others as well, someone who lack countless pleasures – thus a poor sort. But why should this desolate loner be an egoist in comparison to richer sorts? Certainly, for a long time, we were able to get used to considering poverty a disgrace, as a crime, and the sacred socialists have clearly proven that the poor are treated like a criminals. But sacred socialists treat those who are in their eyes contemptibly poor in this way, just as much as the bourgeoisie do it to their poor.

But why should the person who is poorer with respect to a certain interest be called more egoistic than the one who possesses that interest? Is the oyster more egoistic than the dog; is the Moor more egoistic than the German; is the poor, scorned, Jewish junkman more egoistic than the enthusiastic socialist; is the vandal who destroys artworks for which he feels nothing more egoistic than the art connoisseur who treats the same works with great love and care because he has a feeling and interest for them? And now if someone – we leave it open whether such a one can be shown to exist – doesn’t find any “human” interest in human beings, if he doesn’t know how to appreciate them as human beings, wouldn’t he be a poorer egoist with regard to this interest rather than being, as the enemies of egoism claim, a model of egoism? One who loves a human being is richer, thanks to this love, than another who doesn’t love anyone.” – Stirner’s Critics

“Stirner was in favor of free markets and competition!”

*“Is “free competition” then really “free?” nay, is it really a “competition” – to wit, one of persons – as it gives itself out to be because on this title it bases its right? It originated, you know, in persons becoming free of all personal rule. Is a competition “free” which the State, this ruler in the civic principle, hems in by a thousand barriers? There is a rich manufacturer doing a brilliant business, and I should like to compete with him. “Go ahead,” says the State, “I have no objection to make to your person as competitor.” Yes, I reply, but for that I need a space for buildings, I need money! “That’s bad; but, if you have no money, you cannot compete. You must not take anything from anybody, for I protect property and grant it privileges.” **Free competition is not “free,” because I lack the THINGS for competition. Against my person no objection can be made, but because I have not the things my person too must step to the rear. And who has the necessary things? Perhaps that manufacturer? Why, from him I could take them away! No, the State has them as property, the manufacturer only as fief, as possession.***

“But, since it is no use trying it with the manufacturer, I will compete with that professor of jurisprudence; the man is a booby, and I, who know a hundred times more than he, shall make his class-room empty. “Have you studied and graduated, friend?” No, but what of that? I understand abundantly what is necessary for instruction in that department. “Sorry, but competition is not ‘free’ here. Against your person there is nothing to be said, but the thing, the doctor’s diploma, is lacking. And this diploma I, the State, demand. Ask me for it respectfully first; then we will see what is to be done.”

This, therefore, is the “freedom” of competition. The State, my lord, first qualifies me to compete. But do persons really compete? No, again things only! Moneys in the first place, etc.” – The Ego and His Own

“Stirner was totally opposed to a market-less society/mass movements/class warfare!”

*“People introduced competition because they saw it as well-being for all; they agreed upon it and experimented collectively with it. This thing, this isolation and separation, is itself a product of association, agreement, shared convictions, and it didn’t just isolate people, but also connected them. It was a legal status, but this law was a common tie, a social federation. In competition, people come to agreement perhaps in the way that hunters on a hunt may find it good for the hunt and for each of their respective purposes to scatter throughout the forest and hunt “in isolation.”**But what is most useful is open to argument. And now, sure enough, it turns out – and, by the way, socialists weren’t the first ones to discover it – that in competition, not everyone finds his profit, his desired “private advantage,” his value, his actual interest. But this comes out only through egoistic or selfish calculations.***

But meanwhile, some have prepared their own depiction of egoism and think of it as simply “isolation.” But what in the world does egoism have to do with isolation? Do I become an egoist like this, by fleeing from people? I may isolate myself or get lonely, but I’m not, for this reason, a hair more egoistic than others who remain among people and enjoy contact with them. If I isolate myself, this is because I no longer find pleasure in society, but if instead I remain among people, it is because they still offer me a lot. Remaining is no less egoistic than isolating oneself.

*Of course, in competition everyone stands alone; but if competition disappeared because people see that cooperation is more useful than isolation, wouldn’t everyone still be an egoist in association and seek his own advantage? Someone will object that one seeks it at the expense of others. **But one won’t seek it at the expense of others, because others no longer want to be such fools as to let anyone live at their expense.**” – Stirner’s Critics*

“Stirner didn’t give a shit about the poor!”

*(Note: In *The Ego and His Own* Stirner makes this amazing argument for the most naked of Communization in a massive run on paragraph, which is why I believe many haven’t read it. I’ll space it out here for ease of reading)*

“By what then is your property secure, you creatures of preferment? – and give themselves the answer, By our refraining from interference! And so by our protection! And what do you give us for it? Kicks and disdain you give to the “common people”; police supervision, and a catechism with the chief sentence “Respect what is not yours, what belongs to others! respect others, and especially your superiors!” But we reply, “If you want our respect, buy it for a price agreeable to us. We will leave you your property, if you give a due equivalent for this leaving.”

*Really, what equivalent does the general in time of peace give for the many thousands of his yearly income.? – another for the sheer hundred-thousands and millions yearly? What equivalent do you give for our chewing potatoes and looking calmly on while you swallow oysters? Only buy the oysters of us as dear as we have to buy the potatoes of you, then you may go on eating them.**Or do you***

suppose the oysters do not belong to us as much as to you? You will make an outcry over violence if we reach out our hands and help consume them, and you are right. Without violence we do not get them, as you no less have them by doing violence to us.

But take the oysters and have done with it, and let us consider our nearer property, labor; for the other is only possession. We distress ourselves twelve hours in the sweat of our face, and you offer us a few groschen for it. Then take the like for your labor too. Are you not willing? You fancy that our labor is richly repaid with that wage, while yours on the other hands is worth a wage of many thousands. But, if you did not rate yours so high, and gave us a better chance to realize value from ours, then we might well, if the case demanded it, bring to pass still more important things than you do for the many thousand thalers; and, if you got only such wages as we, you would soon grow more industrious in order to receive more.

But, if you render any service that seems to us worth ten and a hundred times more than our own labor, why, then you shall get a hundred times more for it too; we, on the other hand, think also to produce for you things for which you will requite us more highly than with the ordinary day's wages.

We shall be willing to get along with each other all right, if only we have first agreed on this — that neither any longer needs to — present anything to the other. Then we may perhaps actually go so far as to pay even the cripples and sick and old an appropriate price for not parting from us by hunger and want; for, if we want them to live, it is fitting also that we — purchase the fulfillment of our will. I say “purchase,” and therefore do not mean a wretched “alms.” For their life is the property even of those who cannot work; if we (no matter for what reason) want them not to withdraw this life from us, we can mean to bring this to pass only by purchase; nay, we shall perhaps (maybe because we like to have friendly faces about us) even want a life of comfort for them. In short, we want nothing presented by you, but neither will we present you with anything.

For centuries we have handed alms to you from goodhearted — stupidity, have doled out the mite of the poor and given to the masters the things that are — not the masters'; now just open your wallet, for henceforth our ware rises in price quite enormously. We do not want to take from you anything, anything at all, only you are to pay better for what you want to have.

*What then have you? “I have an estate of a thousand acres.” And I am your plowman, and will henceforth attend to your fields only for one thaler a day wages. “Then I'll take another.” **You won't find any, for we plowmen are no longer doing otherwise, and, if one puts in an appearance who takes less, then let him beware of us.** There is the housemaid, she too is now demanding as much, and you will no longer find one below this price. “Why, then it is all over with me.” Not so fast! You will doubtless take in as much as we; and, if it should not be so, we will take off so much that you shall have wherewith to live like us. “But I am accustomed to live better.” We have nothing against that, but it is not our look-out; if you can clear more, go ahead. Are we to hire out under rates, that you may have a good living? The rich man always puts off the poor with the words, “What does your want concern me? See to it how you make your way through the world; that is your affair, not mine.” **Well, let us let it be our affair, then, and let us not let the means that we have to realize value from ourselves be pilfered from us by the rich.***

*“But you uncultured people really do not need so much.” **Well, we are taking somewhat more in order that for it we may procure the culture that we perhaps need.** “But, if you thus bring down the rich, who is then to support the arts and sciences hereafter?” Oh, well, we must make it up by numbers; we club together, that gives a nice little sum — besides, you rich men now buy only the most tasteless books and the most lamentable Madonnas or a pair of lively dancer's legs. “O*

ill-starred equality!" No, my good old sir, nothing of equality. We only want to count for what we are worth, and, if you are worth more, you shall count for more right along. We only want to be worth our price, and think to show ourselves worth the price that you will pay." – The Ego and His Own

“Stirner was against revolution/communism!”

*“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 (for such bestowal took place in “States” from the most ancient times, each receiving “according to his desert,” and therefore according to the measure in which each was able to deserve it, to acquire it by service), 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.*

“Now, that is truly no new wisdom, for self-seekers have acted so at all times!” Not at all necessary either that the thing be new, if only consciousness of it is present. But this latter will not be able to claim great age, unless perhaps one counts in the Egyptian and Spartan law; for how little current it is appears even from the stricture above, which speaks with contempt of “self-seekers.” One is to know just this, that the procedure of taking hold is not contemptible, but manifests the pure deed of the egoist at one with himself.

Only when I expect neither from individuals nor from a collectivity what I can give to myself, only then do I slip out of the snares of —love; the rabble ceases to be rabble only when it takes hold. Only the dread of taking hold, and the corresponding punishment thereof, makes it a rabble. Only that taking hold is sin, crime — only this dogma creates a rabble. For the fact that the rabble remains what it is, it (because it allows validity to that dogma) is to blame as well as, more especially, those who “self-seekingly” (to give them back their favorite word) demand that the dogma be respected. In short, the lack of consciousness of that “new wisdom,” the old consciousness of sin, alone bears the blame.

If men reach the point of losing respect for property, every one will have property, as all slaves become free men as soon as they no longer respect the master as master. Unions will then, in this matter too, multiply the individual’s means and secure his assailed property. – The Ego and His Own

“Stirner did not advocate Communism!”

*“**Abolishing competition is not equivalent to favoring the guild.** The difference is this: In the guild baking, etc., is the affair of the guild-brothers; in competition, the affair of chance competitors; **in the union, of those who require baked goods, and therefore my affair, yours, the affair of neither the guildic nor the concessionary baker, but the affair of the united.***

*If I do not trouble myself about my affair, I must be content with what it pleases others to vouchsafe me. To have bread is my affair, my wish and desire, and yet people leave that to the bakers and hope at most to obtain through their wrangling, their getting ahead of each other, their rivalry —in short, their competition — an advantage which one could not count on in the case of the guild-brothers who were lodged entirely and alone in the proprietorship of the baking franchise. — **What every one requires, every one should also take a hand in procuring and producing; it is his affair,***

his property, not the property of the guildic or concessionary master.” – The Ego and His Own

“We is a Spook/Stirner never advocated groups of any kind!”

(Stirner is against Society and so are we, however we desire UNION!)

”You bring into a union your whole power, your competence, and make yourself count; in a society you are employed, with your working power; in the former you live egoistically, in the latter humanly, i.e. religiously, as a “member in the body of this Lord”; to a society you owe what you have, and are in duty bound to it, are — possessed by “social duties”; a union you utilize, and give it up undutifully and unfaithfully when you see no way to use it further. If a society is more than you, then it is more to you than yourself; a union is only your instrument, or the sword with which you sharpen and increase your natural force; the union exists for you and through you, the society conversely lays claim to you for itself and exists even without you, in short, the society is sacred, the union your own; consumes you, you consume the union.

Nevertheless people will not be backward with the objection that the agreement which has been concluded may again become burdensome to us and limit our freedom; they will say, we too would at last come to this, that “every one must sacrifice a part of his freedom for the sake of the generality.” But the sacrifice would not be made for the “generality’s” sake a bit, as little as I concluded the agreement for the “generality’s” or even for any other man’s sake; rather I came into it only for the sake of my own benefit, from selfishness.[Literally, “own-benefit”] But, as regards the sacrificing, surely I “sacrifice” only that which does not stand in my power, i. e., I “sacrifice” nothing at all.” – The Ego and His Own

OR

“It would be another thing indeed, if Hess wanted to see egoistic unions not on paper, but in life. Faust finds himself in the midst of such a union when he cries: “Here I am human, here I can be human” — Goethe says it in black and white. If Hess attentively observed real life, to which he holds so much, he will see hundreds of such egoistic unions, some passing quickly, others lasting. Perhaps at this very moment, some children have come together just outside his window in a friendly game. If he looks at them, he will see a playful egoistic union. Perhaps Hess has a friend or a beloved; then he knows how one heart finds another, as their two hearts unite egoistically to delight (enjoy) each other, and how no one “comes up short” in this. Perhaps he meets a few good friends on the street and they ask him to accompany them to a tavern for wine; does he go along as a favor to them, or does he “unite” with them because it promises pleasure? Should they thank him heartily for the “sacrifice,” or do they know that all together they form an “egoistic union” for a little while?

To be sure, Hess wouldn’t pay attention to these trivial examples, they are so utterly physical and vastly distinct from sacred society, or rather from the “fraternal, human society” of sacred socialists.” – Stirner’s Critics

“Helping people/wanting the best for people/desiring a better world/literally anything isn’t Egoism!”

*“Now, do you suppose unselfishness is unreal and nowhere extant? On the contrary, nothing is more ordinary! One may even call it an article of fashion in the civilized world, which is considered so indispensable that, if it costs too much in solid material, people at least adorn themselves with its tinsel counterfeit and feign it. **Where does unselfishness begin? Right where an end ceases to be our end and our property, which we, as owners, can dispose of at pleasure; where it becomes a fixed end or a — fixed idea; where it begins to inspire, enthuse, fantasize us; in short, where it passes into our stubbornness and becomes our — master.** One is not unselfish so long as he retains the end in his power; one becomes so only at that “Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise,” the fundamental maxim of all the possessed; one becomes so in the case of a sacred end, through the corresponding sacred zeal.*

I am not unselfish so long as the end remains my own, and I, instead of giving myself up to be the blind means of its fulfillment, leave it always an open question. My zeal need not on that account be slacker than the most fanatical, but at the same time I remain toward it frostily cold, unbelieving, and its most irreconcilable enemy; I remain its judge, because I am its owner.

...

Do you believe you have your thoughts for yourselves and need answer to no one for them, or as you do also say, you have to give an account of them to God only? No, your great and small thoughts belong to me, and I handle them at my pleasure.

The thought is my own only when I have no misgiving about bringing it in danger of death every moment, when I do not have to fear its loss as a loss for me, a loss of me. The thought is my own only when I can indeed subjugate it, but it never can subjugate me, never fanaticizes me, makes me the tool of its realization.

***So freedom of thought exists when I can have all possible thoughts; but the thoughts become property only by not being able to become masters. In the time of freedom of thought, thoughts (ideas) rule; but, if I attain to property in thought, they stand as my creatures.”** – The Ego and His Own*

The principles of Egoist-Communism or A Union of Egoists in Stirner’s own words

1. “I am not unselfish so long as the end remains my own, and I, instead of giving myself up to be the blind means of its fulfillment, leave it always an open question.”
2. “Freedom of thought exists when I can have all possible thoughts; but the thoughts become property only by not being able to become masters.”
3. “Not against love, but against sacred love, not against thought, but against sacred thought, not against socialists, but against sacred socialists, etc.”
4. “Free competition is not “free,” because I lack the THINGS for competition.”

5. "Let it be our affair, then, and let us not let the means that we have to realize value from ourselves be pilfered from us by the rich."
6. "You will make an outcry over violence if we reach out our hands and help consume them, and you are right. Without violence we do not get them, as you no less have them by doing violence to us."
7. "If men reach the point of losing respect for property, every one will have property, as all slaves become free men as soon as they no longer respect the master as master. Unions will then, in this matter too, multiply the individual's means and secure his assailed property."
8. "What every one requires, every one should also take a hand in procuring and producing."
9. "If a society is more than you, then it is more to you than yourself; a union is only your instrument, or the sword with which you sharpen and increase your natural force; the union exists for you and through you, the society conversely lays claim to you for itself and exists even without you, in short, the society is sacred, the union your own; consumes you, you consume the union."

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