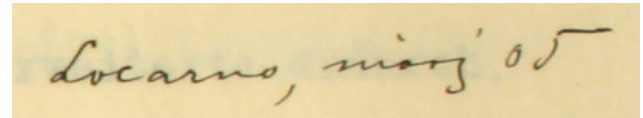


Glosses on Stirner's "The Unique and Its Property"

A comparison of the anarchistic-dualistic world view of liberalism with the monistic world view of critical communism.

by Eugen Dietzgen.



Stirner is only stimulating and witty in his negative criticism of the spectral belief in the creative power of the aprioristic or pure mind. In contrast, he completely fails to become fruitful and obsessed as soon as the positive critique of his subject is demanded. Here it has long been outdone, especially by Marx-Engels' historical materialism and Dietzgen's epistemology.

Because Christianity, liberalism and utopian communism did not know how to see through the spook of the pure spirit and its slogans of God, freedom, morality, law, state, society, authority, etc., but used it and its creatures as welcome comrades in arms to humiliate and gag the individual, Stirner declares war on this spook and its representatives. However, Stirner does not believe that he has discovered a victorious method of struggle by following Marx-Engels' process of sobering up the aprioristic brainwashing by means of historical factual evidence as a necessary concomitant of that direction, which is founded in their social living conditions and therefore only disappears with them. Nor did he think of forging a powerful weapon against outdated views by, like Dietzgen, inspired by historical materialism, extending it more deeply into the world view by revealing the human spirit no longer in its social character but also in its cosmic natural context. For it is only through cognitive-critical research that the purely deductive abstractions are proven to be fantasies at the same time as the pure spirit. Stirner does nothing of the kind, but simply demonstrates the harmfulness of pure slogans for the trusting individual, without any idea of the social and

cosmic origin and ground of those slogans. He therefore necessarily remains in the same spooky circle of thought as his opponents. And accordingly he recommends as a radical remedy - like all anarchists since then - to place the consciously egoistic self, i.e. the individual and his psycho-physical power, above society as an individual power and peculiarity on the world throne, where this autocrat and superman enjoys more individual rights over nature and society without duties. (See pp.189, 199, 213, 219, 248, 251, 274, 300, 347, 417. Reclam's edition)

Stirner's remarks can only be fully understood by following the most advanced currents of thought under whose influence his work was written. These include, in particular, Babeuf's, Proudhon's and Weitling's speculative communism, then the approaches of Marx-Engels' critical communism in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (März 1844), which Stirner understood purely ideologically, as well as Hegel's dialectic, and finally Feuerbach's real humanism (*Wesen des Christentums* 1841) and Bauer's idealistic humanism (*Allg. Literaturzeitung*).

In this period of Sturm und Drang, Stirner deserves to be called one of the wittiest minds of the liberal intelligentsia because of his precious mother wit and his artistic imagination.

In his futile struggle with the ideological-speculative way of thinking, the rafter of the pure spirit, he coins many a flash of thought that seems modern, like a flaming call to self-confidence and self-thinking, very self-reliance and self-liberation against the servile humiliation of the personality of the religious philosophical, liberal and social ghosts. (See pp. 45, 78, 81, 86, 93, 96, 157, 177, 198, 220, 326, 342, 344, 419, 427.) The significance of Stirner's work lies in this spirited wake-up call of self-feeling, because he thereby at least stimulates lively doubt in any authority spook that the aprioristic constructions of the divine-clerical, moral-liberal and social-human ideology have created.

Stirner also finds warm and apt words about the proletariat, but without grasping its historical determinacy in its role as a social class and economic category. (See pp. 134, 135, 136, 138, 143, 201).

Throughout Stirner's book, alongside his strong side of witty persiflage of ideologically speculative slogans, there is his weak side of no less ideologically fantastic glorification of pure egoism.

The reader searches in vain for any positive stopping point in this lofty song of egoism. There is no ground and no limits. Stirner is not satisfied with egoism as an indispensable and healthy weapon against the hypocritical, sentimental and servile self-denial preached by priests of every variety. No, Stirner's conception of egoism is so exaggeratedly fantastic that it loses all contours and becomes just such a spook as the Pfaff-liberal freedom, legality, humanity, authority, etc.

Just as Christianity idolizes the spirit of God, liberalism the spirit of man, Hegel the absolute idea, Feuerbach human love, so Stirner idolizes self-love. In his egoism, direct and indirect blur to the most remote personal interest, so that love, self-sacrifice, self-denial, and even self-annihilation then find a place in it. (See p. 339).

It is Stirner's own anti-dialectical view of abstract concepts that gives him such a confused idea of egoism and of the importance and power of the individual, detached from society, and thus puts his followers, the anarchists of all shades and the superman à la Nietzsche, on tenterhooks with all sober logic.

Experience teaches us that obsession begins as soon as we allow ourselves to be so taken in by slogans that we merely believe in them without having consciously analyzed them and reconciled them with the empirically verifiable facts. With naïve belief, the imagination immediately begins to play confused games. Then the intellectuals among the confessional and liberal priests know how to play a sometimes caressing, sometimes artistic jingle of words that allows the sophisticated among them to play tricks on the gullible. It is a confusing music that the leading priests play for the believing sheep, partly consciously and partly unconsciously fishing in the mud. Stirner is just such an unconscious fisherman. Incidentally, Nietzsche in particular, who even surpasses his teacher in the confusion of abstract concepts. As perfect in form as "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" is, for example, where

would the reader be able to extract even one fruitful, scientifically controllable, clear and new thought from the jingling of these words?

Because morality, order, legality, the state, etc. have so far been turned into a popauz[?], therefore, Stirner judges, away with the dangerous junk!

From the extravagant lack of criticism he deduces the right of unfruitful negation. For this reason, however, Stirner cannot move on from faith to knowledge. The cosmically and socially dependent nature not only of the individual, but also of those abstract concepts has remained a mystery to him. And so he wriggles helplessly in his own snare. Because by means of those slogans, undigested by the liberals and himself, mischief is done with the individual, they have no right to exist for Stirner at all and fall to the mere power of himself, the Unique. And such obsession is taken seriously by the anarchists and by Nietzsche and his disciples!

Accordingly, Stirner's book results in the canonization of the pure self. This is the fixed idea of the "Unique" and his unenviable "property", as we now want to show more clearly.

We are certainly, with Stirner, staunch opponents of the pfäffisch [?] or uncritically used buzzwords, but we are not throwing out the baby with the bathwater. If Stirner himself had not remained caught up in pfäffian [?] concepts, he would have made short work of the absolutely sacred nature of the great buzzwords by examining and clarifying their relatively sacred, i.e. salutary, nature, depending on place and time.

It is understandable that the fundamentally utopian statements of Babeuf, Proudhon and Weitling did not set the most prominent apostle of anarchism on a new course. The same applies to Bruno Bauer's romantic articles. But Hegel's dialectic and Feuerbach's theses would have had a more fruitful effect on him with a little more historical and cognitive-critical sense than merely negating criticism - however justified this was in part on Stirner's part.

In his search for a positive world view, Stirner does not come to a clear conclusion about the position of the individual in relation to society and nature due to a lack of research into the laws of thought and society. This is the final reason why he is powerless to extract the justified core of the slogans he criticizes. It is therefore only a consistent act of pure despair and a bow to the unconquered ghosts when he always hides them behind the armor of a knight of pure egoism.

He does draw attention to the interaction between mind and body and both in relation to society and nature, i.e. their interdependence (see pp.100, 111, 195, 358-374, 397). But he gains no clarity about the meaning of the sea or about the interdependent role of the individual factors in this relationship, because he does not see their equally real social and cosmic unity above the factual reciprocity and opposite nature of the phenomena. However, it is this overall context of all phenomena that forces man to divide the individual contexts into genera, species, classes, families etc. according to their significance. In order to orient himself in the cosmos. Stirner lacks an understanding of the dialectic of things and thoughts. This is why he does not realize that the human individual, including mind and body, as a product of nature, is so inseparably and universally linked to nature that its growing peculiarity and night is conditioned by the increasing insight into and exploitation of this natural dependence. He further fails to recognize that such insight and exploitation is not owed to the individual as an individual, but as a member of society and nature, because the individual can only exist, develop and gain and exercise power as such. And finally, it remains alien to him that a society and its egos are primarily determined in the historical nature of their being by the level of development of the social productive forces. Engels came to this realization through his study of the English Revolution, Marx through his study of the French Revolution, and both already at the time of Stirner. If Feuerbach had proven that it was not God (spirit consciousness) who created man and human existence, but that man created God in his own image, Marx, who was also trained in social science, had further demonstrated: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but conversely their social existence that determines their consciousness".

Marx had already found the illuminating sentences almost verbatim among the oldest French socialists, as Mehring reports in Volume II, "Aus dem Nachlass von Marx, Engels, und Lasalle", p. 89: "If man is formed by circumstances, then circumstances must be formed humanly. If man is social by nature, he develops his true nature only in society, and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of the individual, but by the power of society. Developing the same idea further, Marx wrote in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*: "Only when the real individual man takes back the abstract citizen into himself and as an individual man has become a generic being in his empirical life, in his individual work, in his individual relationships, only when man has organized his own forces as social forces and therefore no longer separates the social force from himself in the form of political force, only then is human emancipation accomplished" (see Mehring "Aus d.Nachl.Bd.I. p.352).

Stirner derided Marx's word *Gattungswesen*, which is certainly explained here clearly enough as a conscious social force, p.205 as an empty abstraction, because in his ideological bias he did not know what to do with its content. Stirner also ignored the other approaches to critical communism that Engels presented in the same journal in his "Outlines of a Critique of National Economy".

"I have set my matter on nothing (but myself)". Stirner begins and ends his book with this bold sentence.

Not nature, which produced the human individual, and not society, which enables him to live, are the decisive powers, but the individual, who recognizes the former only insofar as they serve him. But if they do not do him this favor, the individual places himself above nature and society and becomes a superman. "Why won't you take the courage to really make yourself the center and the main thing? Were you snapping at freedom, your dream? Are you your dream? Don't start by asking about your dreams, your ideas, your thoughts, because that is all "hollow theory". Ask yourself and about yourself - that is practical, and you want to be "practical" - - - so turn to yourself rather than to your gods or

idols. Bring out of yourselves what is in you, bring to light, bring yourselves to revelation says Stirner p.189 and 190.

And how does he think he can make this possible? Simply! "I secure my freedom against the world to the extent that I make the world my own, i.e. 'win and take' it for myself, be it by whatever force it will, by that of persuasion, by entreaty, by categorical demand, yes even by hypocrisy, deceit, etc.; for the means I need for this depend on what I am" (p.195). And p.196: "My freedom only becomes perfect when it is my power; but through this I cease to be a mere freeman and become an owner. Why is the freedom of nations a 'hollow word'? Because the peoples have no power! With a breath of the living I I blow peoples over, even if it were the breath of a Nero, a Chinese emperor or a poor writer".

These sentences bring to mind Uncle Bräsig, who thought he had explained poverty when he called it *pauvreté*. Without violence there is no freedom, but how do I arrive at violence? Stirner's only answer to this is that violence is in me, the individual, who becomes the Unique by extracting it from himself. The will of the individual is sufficient for this act. Apart from the fact that Stirner has only preceded us with mere words for his person, for we hear from his biographer that he perished in poverty and misery despite his powerful ego, where in authentic history do we have such strong-willed and powerful individuals on the basis of their mere personality?¹ The "only" omnipotence of individuality is the rafter beyond which Stirner does not rise. It is his marker and that of all liberals, who in this respect are of the same nature as the anarchists and the confessionalists, in short the entire bourgeoisie, that they believe in the spook of the individual who is free in and of himself. The deepest reason for this dogma, which is worthy of the Pope's infallibility, is clearly revealed to us, thanks to the research of Marx Engels and Dietzgen, in the dualistic way of thinking of the bourgeoisie, which is

¹ [Handwritten note, author unclear] The role of the strongmen of brutal hordes, described in fables as overwhelmingly powerful, this 'unique' power of their physical violence and skill, has been reduced to its modest and dependent level by no one more thoroughly than Lewis Morgan in 'Ancient Society'. Therefore, we need not dwell on the exaggerated position of power of such strongmen.


distinguished by absolute opposites, which emerges from certain living or production conditions.

Marx and Engels demonstrated the significance of the individual as a social force more clearly than their predecessors, while Dietzgen deepened and further developed this demonstration, which is of such great significance for society or the conception of history, by revealing the significance of the human spiritual force as a cosmic force through the critique of knowledge. This paved the way for a scientific world view. Whether we believe, like the believers in God, in a supersensible being, or, like the liberal, in a supersensible human spirit, both amount to the same dualism and coincide in essence with the anarchistic confusion about the position of personality in relation to society and nature.

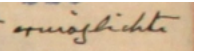
Religious dualism: God and nature; liberal dualism: supersensuous spirit and sensuous matter; anarchist dualism: individual and society or nature.

The dualistic relationship between believers in God, free spirits and anarchists is obvious. For the believers in God, the rule of the individual or man is a divine dogma, for the liberals it is a spiritual dogma and for the anarchists it is a postulate of the "free" personality. For all three, the above dualism blocks the insight into the monistic connection between the individual, society and nature and thus prevents a radical break with all spooks.

Stirner mocks the general, abstract freedom and clings to an equally abstract violence of the individual. But he does not make the slightest effort to uncover this violence and its no less than individual origin.

Engels, on the other hand, standing on Hegel's shoulders, unveils the Stirnerian eloquence and power of will in his *Anti-Dühring* with the following words: "Hegel was the first to correctly describe the relationship between freedom and necessity. For him, freedom is the insight into necessity.  'Necessity is blind only insofar as it is not comprehended'. Freedom does not lie in the dreamed independence from the laws of nature, but in the realization of these laws and in the resulting possibility of allowing them to act according to plan for certain

purposes. This applies both to the laws of external nature and to those which regulate the physical and spiritual existence of man himself - two classes of laws - which we can at most separate from each other in our imagination, but not in reality. Freedom of the will therefore means nothing other than the ability to decide with knowledge of the facts. Thus, the freer a person's judgment is in relation to a certain issue, the greater the necessity with which the content of this judgment will be determined; whereas uncertainty based on ignorance, which apparently chooses arbitrarily between different and contradictory possible decisions, thereby proves its lack of freedom, its being dominated by the very object that it should dominate. Freedom thus consists in the dominion over ourselves and over external nature, based on the knowledge of the necessities of nature; it is therefore necessarily a product of historical development. Cf. also the passage in the 4th edition of the same book, pp. 286-316, which speaks of "the leap of humanity from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom".

We see that Engels knows how to dialectically unite freedom with constraint and to explain the former to the investigation of the latter in its social and natural context as a historical or for everyone actually controllable and therefore scientific process. In the same way, Max demonstrates the individual force as a naturally necessary social force and the past great struggles between people as essentially social, as class struggles. This gave us examples of the fruitfulness of the critical-inductive method, which consciously starts from the facts and formulates them into laws or rules. With its help, Marx and Engel were able to work just as precisely in the fields of history, economics and politics as the narrower natural sciences do in their fields. On the other hand, the purely deductive method, which is based on the unmediated opposite between the supersensuous mind and sensuous matter and is therefore dualistic, has proven its scientific impotence because it has presumed to draw knowledge aprioristically, i.e. independently of the experiential material examined for its rules or generalities, i.e. from the pure mind. We must recognize the fantasies generated by the purely deductive method as an achievement in the past, because at the time they were a necessary social product that first led to progress  ;

today, however, these delusions are causing reactionary mischief as a result of changed social conditions, as even Stirner's example shows us.

The epistemological exploration of the critical-inductive method and the presentation of its fruitful and consistent monistic application to all areas of society and the world, this work by Dietzgen, arose as a consequence of the proletariat, whose emergence provided Marx and Engels with the insight into the laws of social movement and interrelationships, on the basis of which Dietzgen then proceeded to the epistemologically critically founded monistic world view.

Because the consistently dialectical-monistic or critical-inductive method of thought with a cosmic point could only be stimulated by the appearance of the proletariat as a class, because it therefore had this class as a precondition, we are entitled to call it the proletarian method. But this designation is also appropriate because all other classes in society, by virtue of their economic position, are necessary adherents of the dualistic or purely deductive method of thought in all abstract areas such as the state, society, morality, freedom, etc. If we summarize the ruling classes as a bourgeois class on the basis of their common opposition of interests to the proletariat, then the economic opposite between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is also manifested in the way of thinking: there the bourgeois, dualistic or purely deductive, and here the proletarian, dialectical-monistic or critical-inductive method. This applies even to the most advanced bourgeois natural scientists wherever they pass over from their narrower field to the so-called humanities.

How is it that the proletarians more easily arrive at a consistently uniform method of thinking and a clearer understanding of social and natural connections? Are the proletarians, as individuals, more profoundly and better-informed people? By no means! As a personality, the proletarian is just as capable as the bourgeois. What distinguishes him from the bourgeois in a spiritually advantageous way does not accrue to him as an individual in and of himself, but only as a member of a certain social class. As a member of the wage laborer class, the proletariat, it is his economic situation that leaves him the only alienable possession of his mental labor power in physical labor power, and thus

brings him the realization that his power and authority lie not in his individual strength in and of itself, but in its connection to the labor power of his class. The proletarian thus comes to the realization that he has to use his individual power for all social purposes, thereby becoming class conscious of the importance and power of his class in society. It is not difficult to imagine how the socialist aims of society and the means of labor necessarily arise from this class consciousness. Conversely, the bourgeois pursues the opposite individualistic representation of interests on the basis of private ownership of the means of production. If he unites with his class comrades, he does so under the pressure of proletarian organization only in a frontal association, whose "freedom" allows him to leave at any time as soon as the association violates his individualistic interests. He can - naturally at the expense of others - make use of the "freedom" of the association with the help of the aforementioned private property. Not so the proletarian. For him, his economic position necessarily requires him to join a society of equals who, in the common interest, use the means of production socially and secure for each member the greatest possible happiness in the freest development of his physical and mental powers. Because[?] no society - not even one without privileges - can exist without coercive laws, and because among equals two are more important than one, the majority determines cooperation and life through rules for everyone. The individualism of liberals and anarchists resists this, because they want to be more than equals, because they want to be supermen. Unfortunately, necessity prevails against all pious wishes. And this necessity consists in the fatal coercive laws of social labor, without which even the greatest genius cannot live. The liberal-anarchist dream of the individual and his property in and of itself, that of the individual freed from the bonds of society, would not even be realizable if nature supplied the greatest demands for food, clothing and housing free of charge and in abundance. Even then, binding laws would still be necessary to regulate the coexistence of people in such a way that it would be beneficial for the development of all.

In order to be able to use the proletarian, consistently monistic way of thinking and its critical-inductive method with certainty, we must first

have seen through and overcome the perversity of the liberal-anarchist egocentric, dualistic forms of thinking with their supposedly aprioristic, deductive method.

The primitive individual is helpless against the forces of nature, including other humans and wild animals. To protect and prolong his life, he is dependent on the help of his fellow human beings. Out of necessity, he therefore joins them. However, the overpowering forces of nature such as fire, wind, water and disease frighten him, as he does not know how to recognize and tame them. He feels his existence is threatened by them. He therefore seeks to use equally mysterious means against these mysterious forces. This is how the religious cult initially arose from the feeling of powerless dependence on nature. This remained natural religion as long as the forces of nature were not understood as more natural and made subservient. Then, however, social-cosmic power caused the individual religious pain. The religion of nature became a religion of the spirit, the glorification of nature and this world became the glorification of the spirit and the hereafter. This transformation was a consequence of the transformation from communist to private ownership of the means of production. As long as people lived in their primitive communist communities and expressed their individual power directly as social power, the religion of nature also prevailed. Only when the productive power of labor had increased to such an extent that individual communes were able to produce more products than they needed themselves did the exchange of products between the communes arise, i.e. outside the individual commune. The commune was still the owner of the exchange products in the interests of all commune members. However, as soon as products were sold outside the commune, the wedge of dissolution was driven into the original communism. As a rule, the individuals who were responsible for pleasing the gods of nature succeeded, on the basis of this official authority, in directing the exchange of products for their own account and transforming themselves from servants into masters of the commune, namely by bringing the means of production under their private control. With such private property, communism naturally disappeared. The way had been cleared for the development of

commodity production up to modern capitalism. The superiority of the individual over society was only made possible by private property, and this in turn was the fruit of a certain level of development of the productive forces. By means of private property, the power of the individual seemed to be owed less to social labor and the wider natural context than to his own individuality. The exchange products of such independent individuals necessarily took on the character of commodities. Thus the clear relationship of individual labor to social labor, as a part of the original commune, was transformed into the mysterious quality of the products of individual labor, the commodity. Individualism triumphed over communism. The gods of nature of consciously social people gave way to the supernatural gods of individuals who misjudged their own social and cosmic relationships. The individual ownership of productive forces led to the condensation of polytheism into monotheism. Ultimately, the pure spirit of the individual would be the god of "enlightened" capitalism. Just as the Virgin Mary of the Catholics gives birth to Christ without conception, so pure reason gives birth to thought without impregnation by sensuousness. The result is the unconditional, aprioristic "science" that today's universities still generally teach. Such science is characterized by the fact that it proceeds from a principle of the pure spirit that is placed at the top. It therefore remains theological. We will later contrast it with proletarian science, which proceeds from conscious presuppositions.

The inescapable connection between the individual and society arises, as already mentioned, from the individual's helplessness to protect and sustain his existence with his own work. It is therefore dependent on the support of other people. This dependence necessarily explains the social character of individual labor. Marx calls the realization of this character of individual labour the point at which the understanding of political economy revolves. And to have deepened and spread this insight is the great merit of Marx and Engels. It lies at the heart of Marx's chapter, [Handwritten note, author unclear] *it reveals the hermaphrodite nature of private property*, it provides the key to understanding the character of commodities, value, money and capital, indeed of the whole science of

society; it also teaches us the essence of the words: morality, law, state, authority, and so on.

It was Stirner's misfortune to regard these terms as mere buzzwords. Whereas the Marxist Dietzgen knows how to expose the spook as a sober social product. He says about morality p.129-130 "The essence of human mental work": "Morality is the summary epitome of the most diverse contradictory moral laws, which have the common purpose of regulating man's conduct towards himself and others in such a way that the future is also taken into account in the present, in addition to the one the other, in addition to the individual also the species. The individual finds himself deficient, inadequate, limited. He needs the other, society, to complete him and must therefore, in order to live, let live. The considerations that arise from this mutual need are what we call morality".

"The inadequacy of the individual, the need of the community is the reason or cause of the consideration of the next, of morality. Now, as necessary as the bearer of this need is, as necessary as man is always individual, so necessary is the need an individual one, sometimes more, sometimes less intense. As necessary as the next person is different, so necessary are the necessary considerations different. A concrete morality belongs to the concrete human being. As abstract and insubstantial as general humanity is, so abstract and insubstantial is general morality, so practical and unsuccessful are the ethical laws that one tries to derive from this bold idea. Man is a living personality, who has his salvation and his purpose in himself, between himself and the world the need, the interest as mediator, who owes no longer and further obedience to any law, without exception, and is therefore subject to this interest. The moral duty and obligation of an individual never goes beyond his interest. But what goes beyond that is the *material* power of the general over the particular".

"If we determine the task of reason to be the determination of the moral right, then a unanimous, scientific result can be achieved on the condition that we first agree on the persons and conditions, on the limits within which the general right is to be determined, i.e. that we do not

seek rights per se, but determined rights for certain conditions, that we specify the task. The contradictory determination of morality, the unsatisfactory solution is based on the misunderstanding of the task. To seek the right without a given quantity of sensuousness, without limited material, is an act of speculation that believes it can explore nature without the senses at all. In the desire to obtain a positive determination of morality from pure acts of cognition or purely from reason, the philosophical belief in a priori knowledge manifests itself.

And Dietzgen writes about law on pp. 127-128: "Reason is as little capable of positive law on its own as any other speculative truth. Only when it is given sensuous material will it know how to measure the general and the particular, the essential and the non-essential in degree. The cognition of the right or moral, like cognition in general, wants the general. But the general is only possible within set limits as the general of a particular, given, sensuousness. If one makes any maxim, any law or right, a right "in itself", a right in general or in general, one forgets this necessary limitation. Right in general is initially an empty concept that only gains a vague content when it is grasped as the right *of man in general*. Morality, the determination of right, however, has a practical purpose. If we now allow the generally human, the non-contradictory right to be considered moral law, then the practical purpose is necessarily missed. An act or course of action that is universally, i.e. everywhere right, recommends itself and therefore requires no legal regulation. Only the determined law, adapted to particular persons, classes, peoples, particular times and circumstances, has practical value and is all the more practical the more limited, definite and precise, the less general it is."

Furthermore, what does the state, which Stirner summarily denied, mean, which individuals can blow over by virtue of their will? As is well known, nothing less than the execution of the ruling minority society, which, thanks to the private ownership of the means of life production, can and must impose its power on the majority as long as this rule and this private property are necessary for the growth of the productive forces to a level where the development of their personality is made

possible for all. At this point, after the victorious struggle of the proletariat driven forward by its vital needs, minority rule or the state disappears to make way for the rule of all. Where all rule, no one serves, and conversely, where all serve, no one rules. We refer the reader who wishes to learn more to Kautsky's "Erfurt Program" and Marx's "Capital". This will shed light on a further number of Stirner's catchwords.

The processing and illustration of the two sentences: The human individual is a social worker, and: Labor is an organism, - form the foundation of narrower Marxism. They provide the key to understanding critical communism as a social science and a conception of history.

Social labor produces what individuals need to live. The social production process is therefore the basis for the development of the individual. Individual development therefore depends on that of social labor. The organization of the production process is determined by the available productive forces, i.e. the means and methods of production. The degree of development of these characterizes a society and its members. It explains the introduction of private property, slavery, feudalism and capitalism. It justifies as a compelling necessity both the rule of minorities and the elimination of class rule by the proletariat. This realization was brought to us by narrow Marxism.

The Marxism expanded by Dietzgen culminates in the following sentences: The power of thought only works by linking with given material which, in the form of pieces of being, has the cosmos as an organism as its absolute precondition. All phenomena, including the power of thought and the human individual, are therefore organic members of the cosmos, and this natural, infinite and organic overall context is the final, unanimous explanation for all phenomena that has been sought for so long. Through the epistemological justification of these propositions, Dietzgen deepened the social view of Marxism and at the same time developed it further into a scientific world view. Herein lies the significance of Dietzgen's life's work.

The books Dietzgen left us are not thick/hefty. He was not a professional writer, and the struggle for existence left him only the leisure for occasional work. The little he wrote is all the more substantial for that. The fact that his importance for Marxism has not yet been fully recognized is partly due to Dietzgen's shy reticence and his over-reliance on the readers' perspicacity. Thus in all his writings, but especially in his last work "The Acquisition of Philosophy", he leads the reader, who is not intimately familiar with the positive products of the classical philosophers, to believe that it is more a presentation of them than of the author's own achievements. And yet the scientifically sobered cosmic doctrine and world view presented in it is Dietzgen's own work, to which his predecessors naturally took the steps, but without reaching its heights. In order for Dietzgen's cosmic-monistic dialectic to be placed at the service of the proletariat more than before, it seems expedient to point out here that it represents a fruitful deepening, supplementation and therefore further development of Marxism. It is not the place to go into this in detail here. We will only use Dietzgen's consistent monism to explain the concepts of religion, conscience, immortality and worldview, with regard to which Stirner and the bourgeoisie also struggle in vain for scientific clarity.

Anyone who wants to gain insight into the world and its phenomena must first understand the position of the human individual in nature. To do this, however, it is essential that we first gain insight into the power with which we gain clarity. This is the power of thought and cognition, the human mind.

By examining this power, we find that we are unable to think without material that has become sensuous to us - present or past. Thinking is therefore the linking of mental power with material that is sensually present or present and incorporated into memory. This is therefore an absolute prerequisite for thinking.

Confirmation of this fact can be found by anyone who examines for himself whether he can formulate any thought at all that has not always originally emerged in one form or another from a mental connection with sensuous material. If, for example, someone brings a concept that

we cannot somehow link sensually, we are not able to think of anything except that we hear or read the mere word and - apart from this sensuousness - repeat it later in a similar context, but in itself thoughtlessly, until we have experienced the sensuous brother of the concept in some form. Our thinking becomes all the clearer the more consciously we start from the empirical phenomenon, and vice versa, the more capable the less we adhere to it and allow the imagination, i.e. the usually unconscious and always inexact connection with sensuousness, to play a role. This is why the ideas of morality, freedom, justice, God and the devil etc. given to children, just like fairy tales, have such a powerful effect on the imagination, because children are particularly predisposed to uncritical reception due to their inexperienced thinking and lack of experience. What we experience in children, we also experience in the peoples of childhood: fantastic thinking fills them more than the scientific reference to controllable facts.

If parlor philosophers call the world only the content of consciousness, we now know that such an assertion is only half true, for in fact the world of appearances is present in consciousness as well as outside of it in sensuousness, and for us to be present at all. Consciousness registers nothing that was not originally perceived by sensuousness. However, the original being is the primary, just as we know that the human being, including mind and body, is a historical product of nature. We can indeed make new compositions and constructions in our consciousness, but the material for this, the building blocks, have always originally arisen from mental-sensuousness connections. The bourgeois philosophers do not abandon the aprioristic flight into the clouds to go back beyond being. On such a journey they then infallibly arrive at the supersensible goal, the belief in some kind of spook that their imagination fools them into believing. We, on the other hand, easily lead them ad absurdum, as long as we remember the irrefutable fact that thinking is a knowledge of being, a linking with some sensuous object. This appearance together with the power of thought, both together, i.e. subject and object, must be given before we can think. But if sensuousness is an absolute condition for our thinking, then it is simply mindless to want to go beyond it with the mind to where

there is no more thinking. In order not to become mindless, we must therefore come to terms with being per se from the absolute. We then know that the given being is available to us as absolute truth; we no longer search for absolute truth in general, but for the relative truth of particular phenomena. And we find this solely by consciously referring to the controllable piece of being that we make the object of our research. We leave the pondering and believing to the philosophers and theologians and instead pursue research and work with our minds and senses. The theological conscience is explained as an unclear, because unconscious, memory of mental-sensuous connections; it therefore belongs in the same category as faith and imagination, and is called conscience in contrast to knowledge.

It follows from the constraint of the mind to connect itself with particular pieces of being and to proceed from them in order to deduce the general, the rule or the law, that we ourselves first construct the concept of the cosmos as consisting of parts of being that organically follow one another in time and space and lie next to one another, limiting and connecting one another. We then recognize the cosmos as the all-connected and all-encompassing organic being, and the mind or consciousness as a piece of being whose peculiar power consists in serving as an instrument of orientation in the cosmic context. The given natural being is thus recognized as the primordial ground and the absolute condition of both our spirit and all other phenomena or substances and forces. We know this so positively through the above examination of the power of knowledge, which established that the power of thought can only express itself in and with a given natural beginning.

Now we have finally finished pondering the absolute truth. It is given to us as natural being, as the overall context of all phenomena that are accessible to the spiritual-sensuousness of man. What does not participate in the spiritual-sensuous nature of being cannot exist for us either. All spook vanishes and turns out to be fantasy, i.e. an unconscious linking of spirit and sensuousness, as soon as we examine it with our mind and senses.

The absolute and sober truth of the cosmos is recognized as the *per se* eternal, the infinite, all-encompassing and unified, the spaceless and timeless, the origin and endpoint of every phenomenon. The cosmos has all the attributes of the Godhead without the dualism that would lead us to believe in a supernatural spirit and a supernatural world in addition to the natural spirit and the natural cosmos.

If you look with open eyes, you will see that every phenomenon in nature is organically connected to countless others. Each of them has countless causes, but only one general cause, the cosmos. In the cosmos we finally possess the reliable, monistic and therefore logical beginning and end point for a consistent world view that harmonizes with all the results of science.

So what does our thinking, understanding, explaining etc. do? Obviously nothing other than describing cosmic phenomena in their narrower and wider contexts, classifying and organizing them for the purpose of orientation and use. The mind always works *post factum*, after sensuousness has provided it with the material. Prophesying also only makes sense if it is the conclusion from given material. Thinking, comprehending, explaining, recognizing is a formal description and classification according to the contexts of the phenomena at hand. We think, recognize correctly, when we know how to distinguish the essential or general from the secondary or particular in a particular object. And since sensuousness provides the touchstone, everyone can check whether we have thought correctly as soon as they compare the material of the particular object at hand. Where we can do this, we are independent of any authority.

We declare the cosmos to be an organism because we find universal confirmation that each of its phenomena is not what it is in and of itself, but only in connection with all other phenomena, the cosmos. A phenomenon is all the better understood the more precisely we know its connections. These constantly change with time and place and thus also the phenomenon. Because of this eternal movement, we are compelled to take a phenomenon that we want to examine out of the flow of connections, to fix it according to place and time. In this way we

establish its closer connections and create, so to speak, a snapshot as a landmark for later examinations. In this way we obtain names for concepts and limitations or distinctions in the unlimited cosmos. It is the cosmic organic connection of juxtaposed and successive, eternally changing phenomena that explains the work of the power of thought, on the one hand to create boundaries, and on the other hand to be not only a power of differentiation but also a power of unity.

As a part of the cosmos, the spirit is cosmic, sharing in the eternal and infinite nature of the cosmos, like every force and every substance. This general marvelousness is natural to the cosmos. However, as a cosmic member alongside other members and in comparison to the cosmos itself, the spirit is determined by place and time, limited and transient. Only the cosmos as the universe remains unchanging and stable despite the eternal change of its parts. The indestructibility of matter and the preservation of force find their explanation in the constant cosmos. This is an experiential postulate of the power of thought.

The inductive critique of the power of thought leads us to very cosmic dialectics, to the organic connection and interflow of all phenomena, it teaches us to grasp every phenomenon as an organic part of the cosmos and to place this as the given absolute truth and the unified primordial ground at the beginning and end point. Cosmos thus does not become an aprioristic fantasy, because it is the all-sided, soberly controllable reality. The concept of the cosmic organism consciously derived from the latter provides us with the basis for consistent monism. There remains the space for *a* cosmos that is given to us as the most primordial, as the natural boundary and precondition that cannot be transcended by us. To want to go beyond this ultimate condition of our being is as ingenious as the project to fathom a consciousness without any being. Only he who seeks this can want that, and perhaps seek a narrow-minded consolation in the fantasy of pure faith. Such a thinker is always closer to unconsciousness than to consciousness, which is not exactly a compliment to his power of thought.

"Afterwards, before anything else,
You have to get to work on metaphysics too!"

You can see that you have a deep understanding,
What does not fit into the human brain".

These words strike at the heart of purely deductive, unconditional 'science'. Or in another variation:

"I'm telling you: a guy who speculates,
Is like an animal, on dry heath,
Led around in circles by an evil spirit,
And all around lies beautiful green pasture".

The human mind can only form the abstract by summing up the impressions deduced from the concrete and determining what is generally true about it. We therefore only learn to understand them completely when we have experienced their preconditions, the concrete phenomena, in practice. All concepts are therefore more or less abstract and elastic. Because the pieces of being and our related experience process, the concepts also remain fluid and malleable. The green pasture of the concrete phenomenon becomes the arid pasture of the abstract, as soon as contact could be overlooked at all, is due to the circumstance that man, overwhelmed by the omnipotence of nature and the richness of its phenomena, out of the feeling of such bondage, considered the path of fantasy or faith to be the only one that led to the bliss of a world view satisfying the mind. The power of memory, which allowed him to collect impressions, failed him when it was necessary to remember the concrete sensuous origin of all impressions, especially when the great abstractions such as God, sensuousness, freedom, immortality etc. had already been given to him uncritically for generations in the form of dogmas or eternal truths. Only at a high stage of development, when the understood social and natural connections convinced him more and more clearly of the transience and only relative truth of all dogmas, did he re-establish this connection in one area after another. Many sciences had already made great progress before epistemology became scientific. An epoch-making advance in this direction is due to Kant, who established that experience, i.e. the intellectual-sensuousness connection, is the indispensable prerequisite of every science. However, Kant still left the answer to the so-called ultimate questions about the beginning and end of the universe and man to faith, because he was not clear about the

relationship of man to the cosmos. He was, historically understandably, still so caught up in the traditional belief, especially in the eternal moral law, that he did not even attempt to apply the only scientific method of spiritual-sensuousness to the investigation of metaphysical riddles. What Kant failed to do, Dietzgen, who was at a higher stage of social development, continued to do. The latter's "Essence of human mental work" is dedicated to the investigation of the scientific way of thinking. In this little work, Dietzgen states that the inductive or experiential method is the method peculiar to the power of thought, that we can only supposedly but not actually think differently, because reflection is nothing more than the memory, *mediated by a linking process*², of the originally sensuousness-derived spiritual inner world. However, apart from a few hints, Dietzgen has not yet gone beyond the standpoint of historical materialism in the application of this method, i.e. he has not yet moved from social contexts to cosmic ones. He undertakes the latter in his "Acquisition of Philosophy". Marx-Engels' dialectic, which presents itself as a doctrine of development through opposites to a higher unity, is now more deeply founded and further developed through the identification of the cosmos as the ultimate and highest organic unity, which monistically connects all other syntheses. Through this realization, dialectics became a doctrine of the organic cosmic connection and interflow of all phenomena. The narrower dialectic found its final explanation in the cosmic apex. The opposites were now recognized as only relative, and it is the work of the mind to examine them in terms of their relativity. In the cosmic primordial ground we find the explanation for the fact that all opposites are as mutually exclusive as they are dependent. The cosmic point of view shows us the opposites as absolute connections, which, however, as individual phenomena are in contradiction to each other in that they limit each other in space and time, through juxtaposition and succession in constant alternation. While Engels endeavors in "Anti-Dühring" to demonstrate the dialectical process not only in society but also in nature as a general one by means of many examples, Dietzgen demonstrates the dialectical movement for all phenomena as the natural one in an epistemologically critical,

² [Handwritten insertion, author unclear]

universal way, so to speak, by revealing the cosmos as an organism. And all investigations of natural and social science provide further evidence for Dietzgen's statement on a daily basis. Let us now supplement Stirner's negative critique of religion and worldview with positive ones based on verifiable facts. Dietzgen's criticism of knowledge is our guide.

Religion emerged from the feeling of human bondage to nature. Later, this feeling was joined to a greater extent by the equally irrefutable sense of infinity and the need for unity. Driven by his need to have an ultimate explanation for the phenomena of the world, but still unable to see through the connections between society and nature, man shifted the primordial ground to a super-, extra- or un-nature. This created the dualistic way of thinking, the absolute distinction between nature and supernature, which found its modern expression in the opposite of sensuousness and supersensible spirit. On the basis of this dualism, man became accustomed to seeing only the separation in the distinction, but not at the same time the connection and the equality. He thought metaphysically and not dialectically. Stirner suspected that the former was wrong, but he was unable to escape from metaphysics into physics. For we read in his book that he makes the self, the spiritual sensuousness of the individual, the highest and most powerful being. If we understand the highest being to be the most developed member of the cosmic organism, then the human individual is indisputably the highest being we know. But if every fellow human being is just such a supreme being, then two people are more powerful than one. The right of the majority among equals is derived from this role of power. But then society is in any case more powerful than the individual, and finally the cosmos is more powerful than society and any other phenomenon. Thus, in the final instance, it is not the individual who terminates the world of phenomena, but it is the cosmos that makes the self what it is, together with body and mind. The egoist who fails to recognize the relationship of connection and dependence between the individual and society-nature is harmful to the common good and to oneself, thus an obsessed egoist à la Stirner. In contrast, the person who recognizes the relationship is both selfish and charitable or a "free" egoist. Stirner is a Pfaff insofar as the Pfaffian view is characterized by the fact that some particular

phenomenon, here the Unique, is passed off for *the* phenomenon in general, for "dat Janze", as the Berliner says. This leads us into the nonsensical dualism between the particular and the general, whereas the critique of knowledge evidently proves that the latter has emerged from the former: the absolute is composed of the relative, the eternal of the temporal, the infinite of finite phenomena.

Since every piece of the cosmos participates in its infinite nature, a limited infinity might seem like an absurd contradiction. However, this contradiction is resolved as soon as we consider the particular phenomenon in relation to the cosmos, in which the former is relatively limited in comparison to the absolute cosmos. We arrive at the concept of the infinite by means of finite phenomena precisely because the power of thought is always compelled to set limits which, to be more precise, are only formal limits. For we may always positively move one phenomenon towards the other, both downwards in the atomistic division and upwards in the cosmic aggregation, without ever arriving at a beginning or an end of the cosmos. In the same way, we gain the concept of eternity from incessant temporalities. What the variability of magnitudes up to the infinitely small and the infinitely large means in higher mathematics, the scientific role played by the atom in chemistry and the molecule in physics, the cosmic concept has exactly the same meaning for a scientific world view. The constancy of the fact that our mind can only proceed from the particular of sensuousness in order to arrive at the general of the concept, this uncovering of the peculiarity of the mental function is what gives us the basic method for every science, namely the critical-inductive method. We need to apply this method consistently in order to find that it leads to the dissolution of religion and all theological, purely deductive and dualistic philosophy. Religion will then find a substitute in the cosmic world view that satisfies both the cozy imagination and the understanding reason. The religious need for infinity and unity is satisfied by the insight into the cosmic organism. Speculative philosophy abdicates to epistemology. The human breast is freed from the nightmare of all spooks, because it can finally, freely and with modest pride, confess to being a conscious member of human society and the cosmos. Dietzgen's critique of knowledge completes the

victory of Marxism over all priests, philosophers, anarchists and followers of the dualistic way of thinking by deepening and supplementing the unified and organic conception of society of historical materialism with the monistic world view. It proves to us far more thoroughly than the many commendable references to the results of natural science, especially biology, which Haeckel presents, the social determinism of the cosmic context. Haeckel's monism suffers first of all from the fact that he believes he can uncover the nature of the power of thought through biological investigations. Haeckel does not realize that although his biological research provides us with evidence of the connection between the mind and the body, it can give us little insight into the nature of the power of thought itself. He overlooks the fact that the power of thought can only be investigated by examining its manifestations and its function, that it is the critique of the active power alone that can provide us with enlightenment. Apart from the fact that Haeckel devoted little effort to the study of social interrelations and their laws and therefore believed that he could eliminate social misery by means of intellectual education, in line with liberal thinking, when in fact intellectual training can only bear fruit on a certain economic basis, his monism is particularly haunted by a dualistic spook because he has not thoroughly dealt with the main result of philosophy, the critique of knowledge. This is quite clearly evident from his 19th thesis on the organization of monism, where he says: "For our modern science, the concept of God is only tenable (!) if 'God' is seen as the last unknowable cause of all things, the unconscious hypothetical 'primordial ground of substance'".

The reader can see from this that Haeckel is one of the biased thinkers who have not yet become aware of the absolute condition of thinking, the given, natural sensuousness of the cosmos. However, thanks to the observation of the sensuousness of the mind, we know that the law of causality is only a necessary way of explaining the human mind, which can be valid for the phenomena of the cosmos, but not for the cosmos itself, because the latter is its own cause and effect, without beginning or end, in short, the absolute.

We agree with *the natural unknowability* of the recognized ultimate cause of all things. But this natural marvelousness does not only apply to the primordial ground, the cosmos, but also to each of its phenomena, which are also unknowable. However, and this must be emphasized, all this is only a trivial-natural marvelousness, which is founded in the nature of our power of cognition, this being-appearance, which cannot go beyond being, which cannot allow being to merge into cognition either in general or in particular. Because Haeckel does not clarify this point epistemologically, there still remains in his monism a point of reference for the mystical belief in a supernatural cognitive power or cause. Dietzgen's critique of the power of thought, however, proves such a belief to be absurd nonsense. Haeckel is one of the most advanced and outspoken liberal thinkers. The proletarian, conscious of his social and cosmic context, is grateful to this outstanding scholar for his scientific research in the biological field, which provides important evidence for the world view of critical communism. However, Haeckel's monistic half-measure with regard to "the ultimate unknowable cause of all things" is supplemented by the enlightened proletariat with Dietzgen's epistemological monism. This, in conjunction with historical materialism, brings reconciliation to the so-called communist anarchist, who is concerned with the freest possible development of the personality of all.

The proletarian worldview overcomes, among all other contradictions, the opposite between egoism and altruism, for it is critical communism that makes the harmonious development of all the necessary condition of that of the individual. Only under its rule will individual powers be able to achieve their greatest development. The one will make all happy and vice versa. It will be a society of all and of the only one on the solid foundation of the means of production created by the proletariat and organized by capitalism and then consciously socialized.

The realm of godless freedom has thus dawned to declare the evolutionary revolution in permanence. The egoistic altruists drive out the clerical, liberal and social priests. The cosmic dialectic is taking root

in people's hearts and minds. Reality is enthroned as the victor and imprints its temple of domination on all words, concepts and actions that demand a course with the majority. The dialectically organized social work brings the freest validity to science and art through the elimination of existential worries. The proletariat is the bearer of this greatest of all previous cultural movements. The individual who consciously participates in it says to himself: I have based my cause on the insight into the laws of society and the cosmos, which teaches me to represent my personality, not in a struggle against, but in alliance with those social and cosmic contexts of which I am a proud and humble member.