

**Beyond the Prophylaxis of Illusion :**  
**A Revaluation of Nihilism .**

By

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Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
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DAVID P. CONROY

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
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## Abstract

The thesis being undertaken here will set out to examine and explore the terrain of nihilism as sketched by both Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Stirner. Accepting Nietzsche's diagnosis that God is dead and, that as a consequence of this event, religion has become a hollow, spectral eunuch, this study will discuss the vision unfurled by the assumptions of nihilism.

It has almost been de rigueur to dismiss nihilism as l'improviste with the judgement that it provides for only despair and offers no alternative outside that of suicide. However, in light of the thought of both Nietzsche and Stirner, this study will strive to demonstrate that the creative possibilities of nihilism have been far from exhausted or even properly considered; an attempt will be made to bring light to the side of the issue which is usually ignored and left in darkness. Through analysis and consideration of the two main proponents of "nihilistic" thought, a reevaluation of nihilism and its consequences will, hopefully be accomplished.

## Acknowledgements

I owe my deepest gratitude to Professor George Knysh for his interest, encouragement, suggestions and criticism throughout the various working stages of this study.

I would also like to thank Professor Ken Reshaur and Professor Victor Doerksen for agreeing to sit on my thesis committee. Their queries and recommendations before and during the thesis defence could only have an extremely positive impact on the entire work; the onus for any deficiencies to be found within the following pages resides solely on my own shoulders.

I am also indebted to my parents whose patience with and understanding of the various vicissitudes invariably involved when I write, broaches the domain of saints.

And finally I would like to thank Carol whose contribution cannot be expressed in mere words.

## One

### Introduction

Je ne chante pas ce monde ni les autres astres  
Je chante toutes les possibilites de moi-meme hors  
de ce monde et des astres  
Je chante la joie d'errer et le plaisir d'en mourir  
- Guillaume Apollinaire,  
"Le Musicien de Saint - Merry ".

The Intellectual history of all hitherto existing society has been the struggle to establish and impose certainty, unity, structure, meaning and aim where there is only doubt, confusion, chaos, nothingness and void.

In a cosmos of howling and buzzing amorphia, we continually strive to install form and constancy where there is none. Our dream is stability and rationality; our reality is fluctuation and absurdity. "Philosophers and plain men alike are inclined to believe that there is an objective order in the world, which is antecedent to any theories we might have about the world; and that these theories are true or false strictly according to whether they represent this order correctly (1)." Based upon the premise that behind the world and environment apparent to our senses there is an "order" or "something" in back of physical phenomena which guides, underlies, directs and arranges the things and entities of this reality, we determine and establish our notions of true and false, good and bad, right and wrong. The world is

interpreted according to this absolute metaphysical syntax which we believe controls all.

Some claim that the discovery and understanding of this objective infra-structural order is beyond our limited and mortal comprehension; others assert that given enough time, study and information this global and cosmic cryptic code will be cracked and all will be revealed. Yet despite these claims there is nothing which concretely or conclusively proves or nullifies the basic assertion, that such an underlying unifying structure exists. Without anything in the way of definitive or ultimate proof, the inclination to believe or disbelieve in such a precept would appear to reside in the area of faith and conjecture with no definite assurance of certainty or verity. If one denies that there is a grand unity underlying all of existence, and rejects the possibility of the existence of any transcendent value, one approaches the terra firma of nihilism. Not only the form, but the content of truth is repudiated; One finds nothing true and severs all "ultimate" meaning from existence.

Underneath the various myths and legends which have become the fons et origo and vertebrae of our civilization and culture, there lies the primal and fundamental assumption of the existence of an objective order and organization behind the world of appearances. It is through the means of such a belief, that we structure and systematize the world and chaotic miasma of being which surrounds us. These myths and

tenets allow mankind to establish a relatively stable mooring in the overwhelmingly turbulent, kaleidoscopic and orderless stream of information that continually bombards human sense perception and consciousness.

Pausing amidst the torrent and fury of this manifesto incognito, it should be noted that the preceding and following speculations are derived from the existing tradition of interpretation dealing with nihilism and its concerns. This interpretation is presented in order to introduce and immerse the reader in the metaphysical milieu within which nihilism functions.

The basis for this interpretation was initially formulated and subsequently developed after reading Colin Wilson's The Outsider and Albert Camus' The Rebel. Both of these works essentially deal with a similar topic - the revolt of and rejection by the individual against the concerns and obligations of the community or society. Unlike past insurrections against the confines of society, such a revolt is seen to stem from a conviction of the utter absurdity of existence and the inherently relative and deceptive nature of all forms of social structure.

The nihilist perspective feels that one of the main "foundational" myths which plagues us, is our notion of "society". Society and its institutions, are fundamentally mythic edifices which have been created, maintained and perpetuated to prevent the penetration and intrusion of chaos

and formlessness into our existence. In order to stave off almost overwhelming feelings of terror, helplessness and ennui, we concoct and fabricate these incredibly complex and intricate, yet artificial structures around ourselves. These structures and institutions do not exist to be efficient or effective in their stated exoteric objective, but rather function mainly to achieve their esoteric objective, the provision of reassurance and comfort. From their installation, we derive the patterns of life that we follow: these structures dictate and provide for a particular type of existence. Anything will do rather than to gaze down into the fathomless abyss. "There is no "real" world out there, given, intact, full of significance. Consciousness is constituted by random, virtually infinite barrages of experience; these experiences are indistinguishably "inner" and "outer". The mad are aware of the buzzing confusion. The sane have put structure into it (2)."

To ward off the darkness that is both inside and outside, and provide some order to this constant disarray, we, as individuals and as a culture, project and create myths and structures to dispense some sort of stability to our social environment; a prophylaxis of illusion serving as a sheath against the maelstrom of existence, keeping our lives relatively free from infection by the void. "All men and women have these dangerous, unnamable impulses, yet they keep up a pretence, to themselves, to others; their respectability,

their philosophy, their religion, are all attempts to gloss over, to make look civilized and rational something that is savage, unorganized, irrational (3)." We import into the physical world, a structure and order that we desire to be there. The transcendent interpretation of the world is the result and fulfilment of the human desire for and projection of aim, unity and purpose in the physical realm.

Rather than face the unsettling whispers and premonitions that occasionally intrude into our fragile palace of crystal, we enthrall ourselves with trivial, arcane matters. Our speculative resources are monopolized and delicately concentrated on the realm of reality that we have fabricated (4). Questions are seldom asked about the 'ultimate' ideas which lie behind our civilization and culture. Our creation, "truth", is taken to be absolute, never to be questioned, and as a result spurious inquiries are undertaken to legitimize, if not to justify, its imposition. Like Gregor Samsa, the protagonist of Franz Kafka's short story "The Metamorphosis", who wakes one morning to find himself transformed into a gigantic insect, we busy ourselves with frantic and petty activity in order to avoid dwelling upon a multitude of potentially upsetting and unsettling thoughts and realizations (5). "When you have to attend to things of that sort, to mere incidents of the surface, the reality . . . fades. The inner truth is hidden (6)."

Experience swells over us in such floods that we must

break it down, select from it, extract, pattern and correlate and impose meaning upon it (7). A large part of this processing is done and predetermined by the culture around us. Our perceptual armature is shaped and moulded by external cultural and social forces and their inherent bias and values. Indeed, it is no great revelation to state that our cultural environment shapes and sculpts our beliefs and perceptions. "A culture is constituted by the meaning it imposes on human experience. It imposes that meaning by every means at its disposal, and by so doing it shapes human life into a manageable sequence. A culture comes into being and endures through its ability to create a myth (8)." The origin of this myth-making process is the void upon which we place our delicate structures and institutions. Culture both originates and terminates in the void (9).

Human existence, experience and consciousness are inherently chaotic, like a radio randomly scanning and searching a myriad of possible frequencies. The interactive structures of society and culture serve as a filtering process, where pre-determined signals are selected and other frequencies are rejected. The ingrained values and goals of a particular culture or society determine the criteria for this choice. The sensory and inner bombardment invariably continues unabated, but we are only attentive to and process that sense of reality which our milieu prescribes.

In doing this we unsuccessfully attempt to tame a raging

storm. The strain of such a prefabrication results in the constant reshaping of our perceptions and beliefs concerning reality. We build walls of sand against the tide of the eternal sea. The tide washes in, the walls crumble, and we build more walls. They also crumble, so we build more walls and the circle is set. Our struggle against the forces of eternity is inevitable, as is our defeat. Whether it is building sand walls against the ocean or castles in swamps, our structures never appear to have the benefit of stable or firm environments or foundations. Our collective struggle is a cycle of absurdity, akin to that of Sisyphus, whose task of eternal torment in the Underworld was to constantly push up a hill a large stone that, just as constantly, rolled back down before he reached the top.

With the instruction and sanction of culture, activity artificially gains purpose, aim and meaning. Those who recognize and question this cultural slight-of-hand are usually pronounced mad or irrational because of their refusal or inability to acknowledge and conform to the tapestry of reality created by society. But just who are the lunatics? Those who recognize that this world is chaotic, absurd and without meaning, or those who perceive themselves to be sane and well adjusted in this chaotic and absurd world (10)? Is it the individual or the collective who is afflicted by schizophrenia? If the world is a ball of confusion perhaps only the insane are truly "in tune" with it, and the "sane"

the ones who are hopelessly out of touch and living a life of fantasy in their attempts to derive structure and order where there is just morass. In the attempt to procure a more realistic picture and idea of the "truth" one is face to face with the void. This is an experience which can lead either to madness or wisdom and where it is impossible to tell which is which. The pursuit of purpose only yields a vision of chaos and the knowing silence of the sphinx.

Yet we find it difficult to survive and function in the world, without the supposition that there is or ought to be one or another source of external authority, sanction and significance be it God, Humanity, the State or Social Order. Common wisdom would have it that any rule is better than no rule at all. "It is a general tendency of the human mind, ... , to imagine, and to seek to identify a purposive armature, a basis for significance, in the world itself, something objective to which men may submit and in which they may find a meaning for themselves (11)." Such fictions provide a degree of meaningfulness and purpose amidst the whirlwind blur of light and noise of experience which is not readily apparent or perhaps existent; a sense of aim and meaning is imparted which allows for a temporary form of triumph or transcendence over the eventual death we all face as individuals.

Obviously one cannot deny the utility of these fictions and illusions. They prevent a great deal of angst, turmoil,

panic and, on a more mundane level, ensure that public transport, sewer maintenance and garbage collection occur at relatively frequent intervals. These concoctions are necessary, if we are to survive the infinite fluctuation of the physical world, but, in so doing another gradation of absurdity is layered into the terror of existence: functional illusion becomes reality. However, it should be remembered that these illusions are only tools, devoid of any value in themselves, and valuable only when useful to an individual. These illusions, ideas or truths are dead, letters, words, or materials that we can use up as we desire (12). They have value in and for the individual, not in and for themselves.

Man has repeated the same mistake over and over again: he has made a means to life into a standard of life; instead of discovering the standard in the highest enhancement of life itself, in the problem of growth and exhaustion, he has employed the means to a quite distinct kind of life to exclude all other forms of life, in short to criticize and select life. I.e., man finally loves the means for their own sake and forgets they are means: so that they enter his consciousness as aims, as standards for aims (13).

These means or "tools" seldom retain the neutrality or objectivity that they allegedly have, since man often "animates ideas, projects his flames and flaws into them; impure, transformed into beliefs, ideas take their place in time, take shape as events: the trajectory is complete, from

logic to epilepsy . . . whence the birth of ideologies, doctrines, deadly games (14)." Once such tools become fixed, external absolutes, they become a common pathway that leads only to fanaticism, then despair - and, eventually the gallows; conviction creates crucifixion. "In every mystic outburst, the moans of victims parallel the moans of ecstasy. . . . Scaffolds, dungeons, jails flourish only in the shadow of faith - of that need to believe which has infested the mind forever (15)."

With the zealotry and infusion of belief, a stratification occurs whereby some ideas or fictional necessities gradually ascend, assault the gates of heaven and claim the status of absolute and transcendent value. Like a pastiche of an Olympian soap-opera they jockey for position and prestige. Through the passive resignation of previous ideals or a violent attack upon other forms of divinity, the notion of transcendent truth, another aspect of societal myth, changes. Due to their human origins, their proverbial feet of clay, these ideas and truths are unable to obtain immortality and complete omnipotence. As a result of internal kinesis, schism and velocity, these new ruling spirits begin to decay and rot upon reaching the throne. Their human origins betray their divine aspirations and pretensions.

At their core is the nothingness and void from which they came and which they have tried to conceal, replace or

usurp; they are born of illusion. Their origins are revealed and their delusions exposed; the sky begins to fall as the cracks in its paint begin to flake. They are creatures of convenience, arbitrary judgements, that are devoid of value in themselves - which they have claimed under the pretext of being external absolutes. As their fall continues and doubt increases, the possibility of the existence of any 'true' values or absolutes seems quite remote. Nothing appears to be true, the world is unmasked as valueless, and man seems superfluous. The cycle of nihilism begins. Indeed, nihilism is the sole logical outcome and consequence of all such moral valuation.

"What does nihilism mean? That the highest values devalue themselves (16)." There are no answers which the sceptical mind can accept as valid; "The answers men formulated in the past, which identified the ultimate meaning of God, the kingdom come in Heaven or on Earth, the future perfection of society, the Marxist Millennium - these abstractions are all human and therefore fallible constructs. The anthropomorphic projection of value, of telos, is, when viewed from the perspective of nihilism, born of illusion (17)." Value is invented and interpreted according to the need and desire of humankind. It does not exist in the world *a priori*, only *a posteriori* when projected, infused and diagnosed therein by humanity.

The result of nihilism is that the world now looks

meaningless to us. "The only world is the world of appearance with its aimlessness, its chaotic change, its falsity and unreality. We have placed the highest value in the conceptions of end and purpose, unity and truth, and we have inserted these values into the world: now we have to take them out again, and the world looks worthless to us (18)." Nihilism is not only a phenomenon that can be diagnosed and described but also a stance and attitude to be adopted by all (19) in order to successfully overcome the feeling of meaninglessness. "That which is falling should also be pushed (20)!" Thus spoke Zarathustra.

That our age and highest values were infected by nihilism and slowly decaying, was the diagnosis of the German Philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 -1900). Throughout the later part of his career, Nietzsche foresaw and warned of the oncoming and eventual triumph of decadence, decline and nihilism. In the midst of a century within which a multitude of paeans to progress and prosperity were being sung, and the outcome of any given social or political theory was the linear material and spiritual advance of mankind, Nietzsche's voice sounded a lonely, yet distinctive expression of dissent.

The themes which were at the centre of Nietzsche's matrix were not the staid, routine ones being dissected and disseminated by the contemporaneous metaphysicians of academia, the then accepted and respectable face of

philosophy. In place of large, abstract and systematic metaphysical constructs, the locus of Nietzsche's inquiry was the unique experience of the lone individual struggling for self-realization amidst the pandemonium of existence. Though largely ignored by his contemporaries and the public at large until after he had slipped into the shadow of silence and insanity, Nietzsche's speculations directly foreshadowed the concerns and dilemmas of Twentieth-Century thought. If Marx dominated the first half of the Twentieth century, Nietzsche conquered the second. For him, an unrelenting inquiry and examination of the encompassing world would only further reveal the emptiness and nothingness of the truths and values held to be sacrosanct.

The meaninglessness of all traditional Western values was epitomized, for Nietzsche, in his diagnosis of the death of God in the souls of his contemporaries. With the death of God - God being the touchstone and foundation from which Western ethics and values drew their support and substance - the whole moral fabric of society crumbled. However, despite this diagnosis and revelation, lip service was still being paid to the ideas and constructs of religion and the morality derived from Christianity. Yet the world was no longer the familiar entity that it had once been. Without recourse to a higher transcendent being, man alone becomes responsible for the provisions of notions of morality and value.

"Whither are we moving (21)?" was one of the pivotal questions that Nietzsche had raised in his postmortem of society's highest values. If we continued to let things develop as they are, he felt that we were inevitably heading towards the ascension of nihilism as the ruling milieu. "Nothing is true and Everything is permitted" would be the slogan scrawled on the open spaces in desecrated and deserted temples, churches, and courts of law, as all sorts of atrocities were being committed. If passively allowed to reach its fullest flowering, nihilism would result in eternal moral, social and metaphysical chaos. "Cast into a world drained of all value by a general upsurge of meaninglessness, Nietzsche proposed to create a new and higher ideal of moral culture by which an authentic dignity would be vouchsafed for a self-chosen few (22)." The nihility of the void that he had uncovered and gazed into repulsed him. He sought to overcome and conquer it.

In order to avert the triumph of nihilism, a new basis for ethics, and value, not grounded in supernatural revelation, was to be established or created. Nietzsche believed that the task before Mankind was the revaluation of all previously known moral values. Through this revaluation, nihilism was to be eventually transcended.

A precursor to this nihilistic line of inquiry can be found in Max Stirner (born Johann Caspar Schmidt: 1806 -1856) who travelled and mapped similar metaphysical terrain prior

to Nietzsche's later excursion (23). Nearly fifty years before Nietzsche, Stirner stared deep into the same void and reported the meaninglessness and devastation in its depths. Through different means of deduction, he too believed that the value structure of society had been rendered null and void. For him, there was no truth, no causal necessity that the mind could grasp outside the concrete reality and being of the individual ego, "I", or the Unique One. Everything external to the person of this concrete individual was empty speculation. The highest values never had and never would have any meaning that could be realized. They were merely tyrannical abstractions of the concrete individual; convenient and expedient fictions. There was no "higher" transcendent realm, just the relative existence of the Unique One.

Unlike Nietzsche, however, Stirner did not see the need for the revaluation or recreation old values. It is probable that he would have felt that all that such an action would accomplish, would be the fabrication of a new prison out of the smouldering ashes of an older one in which the entity of "God" was replaced on the throne by another succubus. Whereas Nietzsche despaired of the conclusion that his "nihilistic" vision quest led him to and desperately sought to find a way to go beyond or to overcome it, Stirner was quite content with the conclusions and destination he had reached. Far from mourning the prostration of the old values

and viewing this as a call to supplant them with a higher ideal and transfigured morality, Stirner listened attentively to their cacophonous plunge, and saw it as a liberation which was in no way to be followed by a new term of servitude (24). As this moral and metaphysical armageddon claimed the world he would be the one fixed point, the 'laughing heir', who would henceforth make his way without regard to values or morality be they old or new. This infinite nothing was an opportunity to be exploited, not surmounted. For Stirner this void was inhabitable and presented unlimited potential, possibilities and prospects.

This study will attempt to examine and explore the terrain of nihilism as mapped out by Nietzsche and Stirner. Essentially, nihilism postulates that the traditional values by which we have lived, and "values" per se, are bankrupt, void of aim, meaning and purpose. There is no absolute or fixed truth, of any kind, no causal necessity that the mind can grasp. They have all been revealed as ghosts, just as it was disclosed that the Emperor had no clothes and precious little else. Accepting Nietzsche's diagnosis that God is dead and that as a consequence of this event, religion - the root source of morality and values which infuses all other types of social theorization - has become a hollow, pale, spectral eunuch, the ensuing discussion will consider the vision unfurled by the assumptions of nihilism.

It has been almost routine and de rigueur to dismiss

nihilism extemporaneously with the claim that it provides for only despair and offers no solution or consolation outside that of suicide. However, in the light of the thought of Nietzsche, and particularly, Stirner, this lucubration will strive to demonstrate that the creative possibilities of nihilism have been far from exhausted or even properly considered. Through an in-depth analysis of the main proponents of "nihilistic" thought, a revaluation of nihilism and its consequences will, hopefully, be accomplished.

The discussion will be divided into three parts. The first part will serve to introduce and examine a working definition of nihilism. Some attempt will be made to differentiate between the various forms of nihilism, since once a base meaning is accepted a whole host of different conclusions are possible (25). Such clarifications are necessary given the endemic usage of the term nihilism as a harsh pejorative and condemnatory epithet. To best facilitate this elucidation, it is necessary that the metaphysical strain of nihilism personified by both Nietzsche and Stirner be distinguished from the political strain of Russian revolutionary groups during the 1850s and 1860s. Accordingly, a brief description and interpretation of this lone political manifestation of "nihilism" will be undertaken at the beginning of this first section. The discussion will then turn to develop an operative concept of nihilism, drawing from the distinctions and formulations made in the

later works of Nietzsche and, in particular, the posthumously published collection of notes entitled The Will to Power.

The second part will consist of an extended examination of the core concepts and concerns of the nihilistic outlook as espoused by Stirner. This will be accomplished by a scrutiny of the central ideas of his chief work, Der Einzige und sein Eigentum (The Ego and His Own) (1844). Through a study and exegesis of these concepts the revaluation alluded to in the thesis title will be undertaken. An attempt will also be made to place Stirner within the larger context of the Young Hegelians; since it was from this movement that Stirner derived much of his metaphysical armature and direction.

Though both Stirner and Nietzsche start out from the premise that reality is in actuality a formless void of chaos without any higher purpose or transcendent meaning, their conclusions and final speculations are quite different. Where Nietzsche despairs, Stirner laughs in contentment. While Nietzsche calls for a revaluation of all values in order to ascertain the actual worth of these values and transcend their incipient nihilism, Stirner resolves to cast aside all belief in such transcendent absolutes and live in the nothingness that is the real being of the individual ego, "I", the Unique One.

In light of Nietzsche's inconclusive struggle with the void, it is interesting to examine how another thinker who

travelled the same terrain viewed and dealt with the same problem. Given the striking affinity that can be found, and keeping in mind the significant divergences which also exist, the use of Nietzsche's work to illuminate an examination of Stirner is extremely fecund. When examined in the light provided by the work of Nietzsche, Stirner's work is loosened from the categorization of epigoni of Hegel and achieves a relevancy and clarity that it previously did not possess (26).

The third component will serve as a conclusion and will re-iterate the major points reached in the essay corpus. It will be maintained, throughout, that nihilism, as a school or body of thought, offers an interesting and unique perspective on the perennial dilemma of morality and meaning. An attempt is made to escape the opiate of illusion, rather than continue the endeavour of trying to establish the foundations of new temples to new absolutes on forever shifting ground.

For nihilism, most, if not all, visions of society are based on "false" perceptions. They attribute and inscribe significance and omnipotence to what are essentially, at base, assumptions or hopes. Through intent or ignorance, they choose to disregard the possibility that the universe may ultimately have no real absolute meaning. Our society and culture are the result of an imposition of structure on that which is basically formless, in that there is no real

"hard" ground on which to establish a firm or solid foundation.

"Even if there seems no room for hope, truth must be told (27)." The truth, which nihilism believes to be an affirmed, if highly unpleasant one, is that meaninglessness is the guiding principle of our lives and that there is no stable value or purpose that we can cling to. This is an affirmation which both fascinates and dismays, since we seem unable to overcome our deep-felt resistance to living with incongruity and ambiguity. Sometimes in the quest for authenticity, stability is mistaken to be the truth. If the truth is the chaos and void that nihilism postulates, the fact will at some point have to be faced and consequences drawn from the realization that existence seems inevitably chaotic, random and ultimately absurd.

## Notes

### One Introduction

1. Arthur C. Danto, Nietzsche as Philosopher (New York; The Macmillan Company, 1965). p. 72.
2. Michael Novak, The Experience of Nothingness (New York; Harper & Row Publishers, 1970). p. 12. "Every pulsation of consciousness heightens the contrast between the outer and inner world, one bustling with frantic but senseless activity and the other shadowy and insubstantial like the scenario of a dream." - Charles I. Glicksberg, The Literature of Nihilism (London; Associated University Press, 1975). p. 130.
3. Colin Wilson, The Outsider (London; Pan Books Ltd., 1963 -originally published in 1956). p. 12. "You believe in the Palace of Crystal, eternally inviolable, that is in something at which one couldn't furtively put out one's tongue or make concealed gestures of derision. But perhaps I fear this edifice just because it is made of crystal and eternally inviolable, and it will not be possible even to put out one's tongue at it in secret.  
It's like this, you see: if instead of a palace it was a hen-house, and it began to rain, I might creep into the hen-house so as not to get wet, but I should not take the hen-house for a palace out of gratitude because it protected me from the rain. You laugh; you even say that in that case it doesn't matter whether it's a hen-house or a mansion. No, I answer, if not getting wet was all one had lived for." - Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Notes From Underground [trans. Jessie Coulson] (Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books Ltd., 1972 - translation based on the edition published in 1864). p. 42.
4. For example, such matters as Politics. Except that Politics does not really reside in the area of furtive speculation. Politics also allows for the possible creation of new and quite powerful myths. Indeed, in our secularized society, some forms and manners of politics and in particular, specific political creeds, inspire intense, violent fanaticism and the apoplexy of common sense. With politics one can create the illusion of substance and meaning. "Politics is the realm of illusion. Politics is the restless man's mysticism. It has its own magic, rituals, symbols, doctrines. Politics is the art of power, yes, but it is primarily

the art of shaping human consciousness. The primary locus of politics is human consciousness. Who controls minds controls guns." - Novak, op. cit., p. 89.

5. "But there was the same silence all around, although the flat was certainly not empty of occupants. "What a quiet life our family has been leading," said Gregor to himself, and as he sat there motionless staring into the darkness he felt great pride in the fact that he had been able to provide such a life for his parents and sister in such a fine flat. But what if all the quiet, the comfort, the contentment were now to end in horror? To keep himself from being lost in such thoughts Gregor took refuge in movement and crawled up and down the room." - Franz Kafka, "The Metamorphosis" in The Complete Stories [trans. Willa and Edwin Muir], ed. Nahum N. Glatzer. (New York; Schocken Books Inc., 1971). p. 106.
6. Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books Ltd., 1973 - originally published in 1902). p. 49.
7. Novak, op. cit., p. 23.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 15. " `But what was this world created for?' said Candide. `To drive us mad,' replied Martin. "  
- Francois-Marie Arouet (Voltaire), Candide or Optimism [trans. John Butt] (Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books Ltd., 1962 - translation originally published in 1947). p. 95.
11. Danto, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
12. Max Stirner, The Ego and His Own {Der Einzige und sein Eigentum} [trans. Steven T. Byington] (New York; Boni & Liveright, Inc., 1921 - translation based on the edition originally published in 1844). p. 373.
13. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power [trans. Walter Kaufmann & R. J. Hollingdale] (New York; Vintage Books, 1968). pp. 194 - 195. [s. 354]
14. Emile M. Cioran, A Short History of Decay [trans. Richard Seaver] (New York; Viking Press, 1975 - originally published: Precis de decomposition, Editions Gallimard, 1949). p. 3.

15. Ibid., pp. 3-4.
16. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 9. [s. 2]
17. Glicksberg, op. cit., p. 119.
18. H. A. Reyburn, Nietzsche: The Story of a Human Philosopher (Westport, Connecticut; Greenwood Press Publishers, 1948). p. 387.
19. Robert C. Solomon, "A More Severe Morality : Nietzsche's Affirmative Ethics" in Nietzsche as Affirmative Thinker, ed. Yirmiyahu Yovel. (Boston; Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986). p. 71.
20. Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One [trans. R. J. Hollingdale] (London; Penguin Books, 1961 - translation based on 'complete' edition first published in 1892. note: Parts 1 to 3 were originally published in 1883 - 1884. Part 4 was available in a 'private' edition prepared by Nietzsche in 1885 [40 copies printed, only 7 distributed] but not publicly available, due to his family's fear of confiscation on the charge of blasphemy, until 1892). p. 226. [ "Of Old and New Law-Tables" s. 20]
21. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science [trans. Walter Kaufmann] (New York; Vintage Books, 1974 - translation based on the second edition of 1887). p. 181. [s. 125]
22. R. W. K. Paterson, The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner (London; Oxford University Press, 1971). p. 161.
23. There is some doubt as to the exact degree of influence, if any, that Stirner might, or might not, have had upon Nietzsche. George Woodcock, in his study Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements (New York; World Publishing Co./Meridian Books, 1962, pp. 94-105), briefly states, without further elaboration, that : "There is no need to point out the resemblance between Stirner's egoist and the superman of Nietzsche: Nietzsche himself regarded Stirner as one of the unrecognized seminal minds of the nineteenth century (p. 95)." Unfortunately, there is no source cited by Woodcock for Nietzsche's alleged estimation of Stirner - though it might be Woodcock's reading or interpretation of a comment made by Ida Overbeck discussed in the ensuing paragraphs -, nor does this comment (or one similar to it) appear anywhere else in relevant critical literature, leaving the verity of it in question.

Sir Herbert Read, in his essay austerey titled "Max Stirner", contained in the collection of essays entitled The Tenth Muse: Essays in Criticism (London; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957, pp. 74-82), perhaps best personifies the tendency of most of the literature which focuses upon the question of the relationship between Stirner and Nietzsche. While commenting upon how the "vitality" of Stirner's text survives translation, he asserts: "...it is easy to detect the influence it had on Nietzsche's style (its influence on his thought is still more obvious) [p. 76]." Following this statement, Read goes on to quote a passage from Stirner with the indication that by so doing readers (no pun intended) will "hear the very voice of Zarathustra [Ibid.]." Many of the commentators upon the combo of Stirner and Nietzsche seem to follow the chain of logic demonstrated by Read in his assessment. Given the remarkable, and, some might say striking, stylistic and philosophic similarities and affinities between these two metaphysical incendiaries, it is felt that Nietzsche must have, at some point, undertaken a considerable and sympathetic study of Stirner's text.

In the collection Conversations with Nietzsche: A Life in the Words of His Contemporaries [trans. David J. Parent] Sander L. Gilman, ed. (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1987 pp. 113 - 114) one finds a hint of such an occurrence in a reminiscence by Ida Overbeck (wife of Franz Overbeck, professor of theology and colleague of Nietzsche's during his stay at Basel and close friend for most of his life). It reads: "Once when my husband was out he (Nietzsche) conversed with me for a while and named especially two odd fellows he was then studying and in whose works he detected a relationship with himself. He was very elated and happy as always whenever he became conscious of inner relations. Some time afterwards he saw a volume of Klinger (Friedrich Maximilian Von Klinger {1752 - 1831}, dramatist and novelist, author of Sturm und Drang [1776]) in our apartment. My husband had not found Stirner in the library. "Ach," he (Nietzsche) said, "I was very disappointed in Klinger. He was a philistine, I feel no affinity with him; but Stirner, yes, with him!" And a solemn expression passed over his face. While I was watching his features intently, his expression changed again, and he made something like a gesture of dismissal or defense: "Now I have told you, and I did not want to mention it at all. Forget it. They will be talking about plagiarism, but you will not do that, I know." Nietzsche had before the fall of 1874 characterized Stirner's work to his student Baumgartner as the boldest and most consistent since Hobbes. It thoroughly accords with Nietzsche's nature that he could

have studied Stirner sympathetically at so early a time. ... What impressed him about the men he revered was always their strong personality, which he hoped to counterbalance with something similar from his innermost being. But this inner core was leading him on quite other paths. That Nietzsche and Stirner seem to us so diametrically different, and actually are, is obvious! But we are not thereby doing justice to Nietzsche and are not giving him the attention and respect he wishes and may demand. Nietzsche paid innermost attention to Stirner. He neither proceeded from him nor stayed with him; yet he did not underestimate him, but considered him an unprejudiced thinker, which he could so very well be, and felt affinity with him. It was the simplest sense of reality that moved my husband to note that Nietzsche had known Stirner. Stirner represents a very specific element in Nietzsche, though a small one if you wish, but for Nietzsche great and significant because of the scantiness of this element which he happened to be pursuing." This memory was extracted from the cobwebs in the period (starting circa 1890) when the fame and myth of Nietzsche (under the careful aegis of his sister Elisabeth Forster-Nietzsche and others) was increasing, and many of his acquaintances were being dredged for any information or anecdotes that they might have. The preceding quotation is not corroborated by any other primary or secondary literature reviewed for this essay.

As Gilman notes in the introduction to his assemblage of remembrances, some of these accounts bear only a passing resemblance and association with the truth. Both the passing of time and the incorporation of these recollections into particular prefabricated and almost mythic portrayals of Nietzsche, require that one have some apprehension over their relationship with the reality of Nietzsche's life. Some of these reminiscences were made years after the fact when various factions were trying to make their personification, interpretation and mythologizing of Nietzsche's work and life as the "definitive" one; for example, the remembrance cited above, which concerns the period between 1880 to 1883, first appeared in 1908 in Carl Albrecht Bernoulli's (a pseudonym of Ernst Kilchner, a theologian and cultural historian) two volume study Franz Overbeck und Friedrich Nietzsche: Eine Freundschaft. Bernoulli's study, the response of the so-called "Basel" group which was centred around Franz and Ida Overbeck, presented the Overbecks in a more positive light than the generally unfavourable depiction and characterization of them to be found in the literature being produced by the "Weimar group", whose leadership resided in the hands of Nietzsche's sister, Elisabeth Forster-Nietzsche. In this study,

both Bernoulli and Overbeck were extremely critical of both Peter Gast (Johann Heinrich Koselitz, Nietzsche's lifelong friend, unofficial secretary and adviser and one of the chief curators of the Nietzsche Archives) and Nietzsche's family. They also presented a contrary picture of Nietzsche than was to be found in the Weimar groups chronicles, in which they implied that Nietzsche's insanity permeated all of his philosophy (Gilman, "Introduction" op. cit., p. xxiv). Both groups were keen on manipulating the Nietzsche legend to fit their own particular hagiographical purposes, and were not afraid to distort the facts or sacrifice the truth to suit these aims.

Nor does the remaining concrete textual proof (i.e. Nietzsche's writings and correspondence) bear out the contention of Ida Overbeck or the allegation of Woodcock et al. Nietzsche was always pleased to discover like-minded thinkers, and willing to communicate this knowledge in both his published works or his personal correspondence. For example, such was the case when he accidentally discovered the works of Dostoyevsky (the relationship between Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky is discussed further below in Chapter Two, footnote 86). If Nietzsche "did not underestimate Stirner", he would not have slighted Stirner's reputation by purposely ignoring or not documenting the influence of his work. The last couple of sentences in the preceding extract also do not bode well for its verity. If Stirner represents a small, though significant element in Nietzsche's metaphysical make-up and arsenal, and was considered by Nietzsche to be an unprejudiced thinker, he surely would have been alluded to somewhere in Nietzsche's body of work. If he had studied Stirner to any extent, Nietzsche would have mentioned, in either his correspondence or published corpus, his agreement with or opposition to the concepts found in The Ego and His Own. Given the conspicuous stylistic and philosophical similarities, Stirner would certainly have been placed alongside other influential figures in Nietzsche's intellectual development, such as Richard Wagner and Arthur Schopenhauer. After falling under the sway and shadow of Wagner and Schopenhauer, Nietzsche eventually broke with them and would probably have done the same with Stirner, noting publicly the divergence in their respective paths.

Though one might "hear the very voice of Zarathustra" when reading Stirner's The Ego and his Own, nowhere in the corpus of his written work does Nietzsche cite or even mention this work or its author. It is the conclusion of R. W. K. Paterson in his seminal study of Stirner, The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner (pp. 145-149), that Nietzsche had little or no direct

knowledge of The Ego and His Own. Paterson's conclusion on this point reads : "On the whole, however, it is more probable that Nietzsche's knowledge of Stirner was derived, at second hand, from Lange's History of Materialism, the same work in which Mackay (John Henry Mackay, author of Max Stirner: sein Leben und sein Werk (1898), whose enthusiastic efforts recalled Stirner's work and name from the limbo they had been residing in since his death) first encountered Stirner's name. Nietzsche's admiration for Lange was well known, and although he might well have come across references to the author of Der Einzige in other writings, there seems no reason to suppose that his immediate knowledge of Stirner's ideas went any further than the impressionistic outline provided in a work such as Lange's. In fact, if we confine ourselves strictly to the overt evidence discoverable from Nietzsche's recorded life and writings, we are driven to the somewhat disappointing conclusion that he probably only ever possessed the vaguest knowledge of Stirner's philosophical ideas, gained at second hand as a young man, and to all appearances he never felt moved to enlarge this early knowledge for utilization in his own philosophical program (p. 149)."

24. R. W. K. Paterson, op. cit., p. 161.

25. Glicksberg, op. cit., p. 96. The standard definition of nihilism usually includes some reference to the various revolutionary groups within Russia in the 1860's. However, this paper will strive to argue and demonstrate that the application of the term "nihilism" for this purpose is somewhat invalid. While the term might have limited applicability to a small group of individuals within the period of the 1860's, its usage as a sweeping characterization which incorporates both these figures and the revolutionary terrorists of the 1870's, is a generalization which renders the word meaningless. Through a brief examination of the Russian example, and the individual cases of Nietzsche and Stirner, this essay will strive to uncover the often neglected "positive" and creative aspects of nihilism; hence "revaluation". Indeed, it might be argued that the Russian example proves the impracticality of applying or translating the essentially individualistic and introspective nihilist vision within a practical political framework.

In spite of the overall intention of this study, it must be noted that there appear to be many interesting parallels within the triad of Stirner, Nietzsche and the Russian nihilists which will require further study in order to establish the exact nature of the apparent

links that exist between them. Throughout much of the 1840's, the radical or progressive literary and philosophical circles within Russia consciously aped and assimilated the ideas emanating from Germany. Hegel and his disciples cast a long shadow in those days and their debates and contentions were eagerly followed within Russia. The materialist side of the Hegelian dialectic and, in general, the postulations of German school of materialism had an especially powerful impact on the Russian intelligentsia. For example, Vissarion Grigorevich Belinsky (1811 - 1848), a literary critic who had a considerable amount of influence upon the blossoming Russian radical intelligentsia, was, throughout his short life, a champion of progressive Hegelianism and German philosophy. One writer who was under Belinsky's sway was, Ivan Turgenev, the author who first used the term nihilism to describe the new breed of intelligentsia then emergent in Russia. It is interesting also to note that Turgenev studied in Berlin from 1838 to 1841, and was a great admirer of Hegel. During this period, other notable figures in Russian radical and literary circles, such as Alexander Herzen, Nicholas Chernyshevsky, and Michael Bakunin were also under the sway of Hegelianism and the ideas emanating from the Young Hegelians.

One might describe these parallels as the result of a general intellectual atmosphere within which the Russian nihilists, Stirner and Nietzsche developed their philosophic visions and responses. Though seemingly divergent, all three seem to have some deeper and more direct ties than have been previously thought existent. The general milieu within which nihilist thought operates has both a specific and general nature. Individual thinkers exist within a specific context; the philosophy as a whole inhabits a more general context. In order to better understand the specific vision, it is necessary to sketch an outline of the general context within which these ideas operate.

26. Stirner's work was rediscovered in the closing decade of the nineteenth century, during the period in which Nietzsche's stature and fame had begun to increase. "Stirner's book might have disappeared from the face of German philosophy for more than a generation, but the nihilism which was its seminal ingredient had been irreversibly secreted within the germinating ideology of the age, in the organic evolution of which it was henceforth play a latent but essential part." (Paterson, op. cit., p. 150.)
27. Colin Wilson, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

## Two

### The Name of the Game

Like a piece of esoteric intellectual flotsam, nihilism has remained on the fringes of political and philosophical discourse, occasionally being injected and reintroduced into the central current. A precise meaning has never really been assigned to the term since it has been used to classify and castigate a variety of ideas and people. In a very general sense, it usually indicates a viewpoint which postulates that all values and beliefs are unfounded; that there are no real objective grounds on which to base "truth"; and, as a result of this, that life is essentially meaningless and without purpose.

In the past, the term has been used to denote the more extreme positions held by some Sceptics and Medieval rationalists; to categorize various "negative" trends amongst the Eighteenth century French Encyclopedists; and as a means of attacking members of the Idealist school by members of the Realist school (i.e., Friedrich H. Jacobi's polemics against Johann G. Fichte) (28). "In the Middle Ages the word was used (if at all - D.C.) to designate a person who doubted the divinity of Christ and other articles of christian faith (29)." It is even possible to trace nihilism as far back as the sophist Gorgias of Leontini, a contemporary of Socrates, whose famous dictum - "Nothing exists; if anything did exist,

it would be unknowable; and if it existed and were knowable, the knowledge of it could not be communicated to others" - imparts a truncated and capsulized form of this extreme position (30).

The tenets of Buddhist philosophy, characterized by Nietzsche as "the weary nihilism that no longer attacks" (31), have also fallen under this categorization. In Buddhism, the passive rejection of the physical world and all its envoys strikes a nihilistic-like pose: life is seen as an empty dream, action is futile, and striving for happiness, fulfilment, or perfection betrays the fact that one is still the slave of illusion (32). There is only flux and constant change, no permanence or stability. One must give up the web of illusion that composes the world in order to find true happiness and contentment. The physical manifestation which we know and physically inhabit contains no ultimate or absolute reality. Instead, there is only layer after layer, like skins on an onion, of illusion and deception.

Arthur C. Danto depicts part of Buddhist belief being that: "Reality has neither name nor form, and what has name and form is but a painful dreaming from which all reasonable men would wish to escape if they knew the way and knew that their attachment was to nothingness (33)." The way to escape this painful dreaming is through resignation and withdrawal from this sphere: "For action - has no meaning, action binds one to existence: but all existence has no meaning (34)."

Like all else in the world, individuals are also in a state of permanent change with no underlying or fixed structure. We, too, are layers of deception, without substance or core of certainty. To escape this futile masquerade, one should cease all strife and struggle, and instead spend one's time in ascetic contemplation. The final goal and truth is Nirvana: a transcendent state of calm, peace and enlightenment.

The most well-known and notorious instance of 'nihilism' occurred during the turbulent history of nineteenth century Russia. Ivan Turgenev (1818 - 1883), in his novel Fathers and Sons (1862), introduced the phrase "nihilist" when depicting Arkady Nikolayevich Kirsanov and Yevgeny Vassilievich Bazarov, two fictional representations of typical Russian university students and self-proclaimed members of the social group known as "new men". The expression "nihilist" caught the fancy of the public and was thereafter used to classify any and all radical or revolutionary ideas and factions.

Upon their first appearance on the Russian scene, several years before the publication of Turgenev's book, the "New People" or "nihilists" as they came to be known, whose numbers consisted mostly of university students, were assigned the status of social curiosities rather than potential assassins (35). This initial assessment was based upon observation of their youth and distinctive notions of haute couture rather than their proselytization of a new, radical metaphysics. In

order to achieve and assert for themselves a separate and distinct identity, the "new people", like many past and future generations of youth culture, adopted an idiosyncratic style of dress and deportment.

The true Russian nihilist wore his baggy trousers tucked into unpolished and clumsy boots, his peasant blouse of cheap cotton was held round the waist by a leather strap; and a so-called plaid, or rug, was hung over one shoulder. The hair was worn long and the face overgrown with beard and further obscured with dark glasses. ... The female counterpart ... also dressed with deliberate plainness: heavy boots showed under sombre black skirts topped by high-necked blouses; the hair was worn short; and there were, of course, the dark glasses and, worse still, the cigarettes (36).

Alongside this conspicuous apparel, the 'nihilist' demeanour affected a studied ignorance of all accepted manners and social graces. Their behaviour tended to be loud, boisterous and crude. In conversation they were contemptuously familiar with their elders (37) and shockingly rude or abrupt in the manner in which they spoke, especially when refuting traditional ideas in the sphere of religion, art and sexual morality (38).

Turgenev's novel opens in May 1859 and Arkady, who has just graduated, is returning from university to his father's small estate in the country accompanied by his friend and erstwhile idol, Bazarov. Bazarov's abrupt and rude manner, along with his political and philosophic outlook, immediately

rankles Arkady's uncle, Pavel Petrovich Kirsanov, a retired army officer and old-fashioned dandy who lives on the estate with Nikolai Petrovich Kirsanov, Arkady's father. Shortly after encountering one another, Bazarov and Pavel begin to quarrel. In their arguments Turgenev reflects the ideological conflict that was occurring between Russian radicals and the liberals during the 1860s (39). Before the commencement of these verbal skirmishes, which eventually culminate in an indecisive duel between the two adversaries, Arkady outlines Bazarov's position for a seemingly indifferent Pavel:

Pavel stroked his mustaches. "And Mr. Bazarov himself, what is he?" he asked condescendingly after a pause. ...

"He's a nihilist," Arkady repeated.

"A nihilist," said Nikolai. "That comes from the Latin word *nihil*, nothing so far as I can tell; it must mean a person who - who acknowledges nothing."

"Say rather: who respects nothing," Pavel put in and began buttering his bread again.

"Who examines everything from a critical point of view," Arkady observed.

"And isn't that exactly the same thing?" asked Pavel.

"No, it isn't the same thing. A nihilist is a person who does not bow to any authorities; who doesn't accept any principle on faith, no matter how hallowed and venerated the principle is."

(40)

Since its reintroduction into the common parlance by Turgenev, and its subsequent association with the vanguard of

the Russian revolutionary movement of the 1860s, nihilism has been used predominantly as a term to demarcate a social or political doctrine rather than a philosophical one. Indeed, this designation has resulted in a subtle shift of meaning and nuance whereby the philosophic school of nihilism has come to be, somewhat erroneously, clustered amongst the various radical and extremist factions emergent in Russia during the reign of Alexander II. This connection has attached persevering stigmata to the term, in that the sine qua non of nihilism has come to be characterized as being a rabid, sanguineous and fervent exultation and penchant for violence.

However, the nihilistic Weltanschauung of Nietzsche or Stirner bears only a superficial resemblance and similarity to the revolutionary credo, aims and goals espoused by chief figures of the Russian movement, such as Dimitry Pisarev (1840-1868), Nicholas Dobrolyubov (1836-1861), Nicholas Chernyshevsky (1828-1889) and Sergei Nechaev (1847-1882). While both schools share a superficially comparable outlook, in transposing the metaphysical approach to political practice, the Russian faction took the implications of their negativistic vision on a much different route than Nietzsche and Stirner. An argument can be made that the expression "nihilism", as a moniker for the Russian movement, is in fact a misnomer. Before ushering in the conception of nihilism under discussion here, it would be beneficial to undertake a

brief examination of the form of nihilism - catalogued by Arthur C. Danto as the nihilism of negativity (41) - exemplified by the Russian example.

Both the reign of Alexander II and the period commonly designated as the 1860s, were inaugurated in 1855 following the death of Tsar Nicholas I. Nicholas, who inherited the throne in 1825, was an unrepentant autocrat who tolerated no infringement or reduction of his authoritarian powers (42). He had ascended to the throne in the midst of the failed Decembrist uprising, in which a group of discontented military officers in favour of constitutional reform had tried, unsuccessfully, to implement their wishes with the use of force. This incident deeply affected Nicholas and throughout the rest of his reign he attempted to eradicate any hint of free thought and independent moral belief, since he considered such occurrences a threat to the order of things placed in his care by God and a challenge to his own position. Accepted rules and customs were to be obeyed by all so that this divinely sanctioned order might flourish undisturbed. In order to accomplish this, nearly every aspect of daily life was controlled or monitored through the agencies of various bureaucratic departments created by Nicholas. Any person suspected of or even remotely construed as being subversive, was dealt with quickly and harshly. "He (Nicholas) both promoted a negative, preservative view of government and attempted to enforce positive adherence on the

part of Russian intellectuals to the tripartite official slogan "Orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality", although in this last he was not very successful (43)."

In 1854, Russia had become immersed in the Crimean War against England and her allies. Outside of the diplomatic and territorial disputes involved, a tremendous amount of symbolic significance was invested in this conflict. In the period between 1815 and 1848, Russia had exerted a considerable amount of influence and prestige in the diplomatic and power structures within Europe. Before the war began, it was commonly believed that despite Russia's relative backwardness in many areas when compared with the major European powers, Russia was one of the more armipotent countries on the continent. This impression was partially justified by the large standing army that had been maintained by both Nicholas and his predecessor, Alexander I. At stake in the Crimea was the reputation of and *raison d'etre* for Nicholas's regime; the belief that Russia was strong because of the highly centralised administration in place.

As the war progressed and the tide turned against Russia, it became quite apparent that Russian bureaucratic and autocratic government was incapable of keeping pace with its European counterparts. The hopeless incompetence of the war effort revealed the hollowness of the military and governmental bureaucratic structure. It was only the corresponding ineptitude of the Allied command which

prevented an embarrassing defeat.

After the death of Nicholas, the succession of Alexander II outwardly heralded a new beginning, a clean break with the preceding dark years. The Crimean War had revealed to Alexander and other Russian statesmen, the need for reform to alleviate the structural defects and social conditions which had so heavily contributed to Russia's defeat and backwardness. "After the conclusion of the Crimean War in 1856 there ensued a period of external peace and of internal preparation for the far-reaching reforms - including the expansion of the sphere of local self-government, the reorganization of the courts, financial reforms and the institution of changes in the country's military establishment - promulgated in 1861 and the years immediately following (44)." After years of repression under Nicholas, the atmosphere appeared to blossom with hope and optimism. The genesis of much of this new buoyancy was Alexander's apparent intention to ameliorate the condition of the peasant through the abolition of the institution of serfdom. Such an action had long been the desire of Russian liberals. There was a lot of talk, and even more rumours, of upcoming and ongoing reforms. "The current of radicalism, held back by the advance of reaction during the preceding thirty years, came flooding in. Writers, thinkers, journalists, though still deprived of direct political activity, began to crystallize into distinct groups with radical, liberal or

reactionary allegiances (45)."

The terms "nihilism" and "nihilist" were not introduced by the Russian extremist movement itself but were indiscriminately applied to it, radicals and terrorists alike, by outsiders - often in a pejorative sense (46). After its introduction into the political atmosphere of Russia, "the expression was at first a literary and polemical fashion - a ghost conjured up by fearful liberals and reactionaries, as they saw the deep, violent repercussions that the reforms had induced among the younger generation of intellectuals (47)." Long after Turgenev's pronouncement, nihilism became the standard label affixed, both in Russia and abroad, to anything that was deemed revolutionary, anarchist and Timonistic (48). The radicals themselves, on the whole, preferred to be called by some other name, such as Populists, revolutionaries or 'honest men' (49) and strenuously objected to the label of nihilist. Despite this, no matter what label or tag was invoked, the doctrines they espoused were fairly similar.

In later years, various Russian revolutionaries tried, in innumerable ways, to distance themselves from the designation of "nihilist". Writing retrospectively under the pseudonym of "Stepniak", Sergei Kravchinsky (1852-1895) an active participant in the campaign of terrorism during the 1870s, represented the 'sixties as being the age of nihilists while the 'seventies were the age of revolutionaries. He

characterized the first group as a small cadre of intellectuals striving to realize their own goal of absolute individualism and personal freedom. The second coterie are depicted as being a group dedicated to the emancipation and liberation of all, in particular the long suffering peasant.

Kravchinsky made this distinction on the basis that: "The Nihilist seeks his own happiness at whatever cost. ... The Revolutionist seeks the happiness of others at whatever cost, sacrificing for it his own (50)." He goes on to assert that it was through the aegis of Fate that the former (nihilists), "who [were] not known and who could not be known in any other country than [their] own, should have no name in Europe, and that the latter (revolutionist), having acquired a terrible reputation, should be called by the name of the other (51)." Though their aims and goals were miles apart, the label 'nihilist' was applied to "Revolutionary" and "Nihilist" alike without distinction. In light of this, it is interesting to note that in a letter to Konstantin Sluchevsky shortly after the publication of Fathers and Sons, Turgenev stated that wherever one found the word nihilist in the novel one should read: revolutionary (52). One might surmise that Turgenev substituted the word 'nihilist' for 'revolutionary' because of the possibility of suppression by the powerful government machinery of censorship then in place.

Turgenev, unlike many of his contemporaries, did not

have any real desire to deal with topics that were political in character. Though interested in politics, he was essentially apolitical in his art, preferring to avoid partisanship and remain "a detached diagnostician in a period when the politically minded were calling for polemic and propaganda (53)." When writing, he paid attention to the politics of the day as much as a writer who is called upon to depict a contemporary situation or circumstance must (54). Outside of his work, "he was painfully preoccupied with the controversies, moral and political, social and personal, which divided the educated Russians of his day; in particular, the profound and bitter conflicts between Slavophile nationalists and admirers of the West, conservatives and liberals, liberals and radicals, moderates and fanatics, realists and visionaries, above all between old and young (55)."

Despite this engrossment, Turgenev was not, by inclination or temperament, a preacher who wished to lecture and convert his readers. "He was concerned, ... , to enter into, to understand, views, ideals, temperaments, both those which he found sympathetic and those by which he was repelled (56)." Though he dealt with social and political issues, he chose to relate them through themes such as nature, emotions and personal relationships (57) rather than engage in allusions and masked allegory. "Acts, ideas, art, literature were expressions of individuals not of objective forces of

which actors or thinkers were merely the embodiments. The reduction of men to the function of being primarily carriers or agents of impersonal forces was .. deeply repellant to Turgenev..(58)."

But, by the early 1860s the atmosphere in Russian literary circles had changed. There was a movement afoot amongst the more radical and generally younger literati, such as Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, dictating that writers consciously use their art to precipitate and agitate for social change and reform. Literature should serve and be sympathetic to social and political ends of the 'correct' type - i.e., those that reflected their own views on such matters.

The only thing that could reconcile us with literature is the wail of despair in which there rings a sombre discontent, a sharp reproach and the piercing call to a truer and more active life. Such a call would have to bear not on literature alone but on society as a whole. It will come from a realization that there is no time for sterile elegance in the face of so many living issues. We are choked by effete, idle speech that makes one sink into drowsy complacency and fills the heart with delectable dreams.. (59).

Art, these "new men" felt, was something, that should reflect and deal with society and its problems, instead of being a concoction of escapism and aesthetic gobbledegook. It should be true to life, having a direct link with life and its issues and reflect the proto-socialist critique of the

status quo. Artists and poets should descend from their self-created and self-perpetuated adytum and mingle amongst the great unwashed. Their creations should communicate an intimacy with reality and impart their understanding, however limited, of it.

For Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov and others like them, the plans for the abolition of serfdom being discussed, advocated and supported by the older Russian liberals did not go far enough. In their opinion these acts were doomed to be piecemeal and ineffective. The scope and intent of such measures completely ignored what the radicals saw as the real root cause of injustice in Russia. Any effort at reforming the system of government and justice was bound to fail if it enlisted these very same organs to assist in the achievement of this goal. Any change agreed to by the Tsar and his ministers was bound to be of a purely cosmetic, inconsequential and superficial nature. To believe otherwise was sheer naivete and foolish hope. In order to create a just and healthy society, what was needed was a violent overthrow of the Russian status quo and the implementation of new governing structure (60). The existing political order and structure was to be rejected and a new society was to be created. The supporting infrastructure of tradition, religious belief and other cultural artifacts were also marked for destruction.

You must not forget even for a moment

that Alexander II is the Tsar, the autocrat...You will soon see that Alexander II will show his teeth, as Nicholas I did. Don't be taken in by gossip about our progress. We are exactly where we were before...Don't be taken in by hope, and don't take in others...No, our position is horrible, unbearable, and only the peasants' axes can save us. Nothing apart from these axes is of any use (61).

The turmoil and upheaval which seemed to vex the literary circles was also occurring in the larger context of Russian society. "The Emancipation Edict (which technically abolished the institution of serfdom in Russia) was signed by Alexander II on February 19, 1861, on the anniversary of his accession to the throne (62)." Within a short space of time, it became clear that the peasants were still serfs in all but name. "The land they were allotted was either of poor quality or else insufficient to support them and their families; where this was not the case an excessively heavy financial burden was placed upon them in the form of long-term redemption payments (63)." Dissatisfaction and mistrust ran high amongst both the peasants and the intelligentsia.

Later on that same year, **Land and Freedom**, the first large-scale secret political organization since the Decembrist uprising of the 1820s, was formed. Shortly after this, a plethora of violently worded pamphlets and manifestos calling for revolution began to circulate. Leading radical figures were detained, arrested, imprisoned, tried and

exiled. In the midst of this alarm and suspicion, a series of fires broke out all over St. Petersburg which authorities attributed to university students and revolutionaries. Something, for all intents and purposes, appeared to be happening.

Turgenev observed these occurrences both in the microcosm of the Russian literary world and the larger macrocosm of Russian society. He sensed a new defiant mood amongst Russian youth:

He declared that he felt it everywhere. He was repelled and at the same time fascinated by it. A new and formidable type of adversary of the regime - and of much that he and his generation of liberals believed in - was coming into existence. Turgenev's curiosity was always stronger than his fears: he wanted, above everything, to understand the new Jacobins. ... They seemed to him a new, clear-eyed generation, undeluded by the old romantic myths; above all they were the young, the future of his country lay in their hands; he did not wish to be cut off from anything that seemed to him alive, passionate, and disturbing (64).

This perception of a newly emergent mood served as the model upon which Turgenev based Fathers and Sons. Through the viaduct of his writing, he wished to explore, analyze and attempt to comprehend the arguments that were swirling about in the ideological debate of the late 1850s and early 1860s. "The root of the conflict lay, in his opinion, in the differences between the generations of the 1840s and the

1860s. The earlier generation was of the gentry class, drew its ideas from German romantic philosophy and English liberalism, and favoured reforms, though gradual ones instituted from above. On the other hand, the generation of the 1860s sprang from the *raznochintsy* (men of various rank), who placed their faith in the natural sciences and materialism. With no respect for traditions and no belief in reform, they favoured fundamental change, and revolution if necessary (65)."

Bazarov was a composite created by Turgenev of the various ideas and attitudes then prevalent among the younger generation. If there was one tenet in his creed to which he rigidly adhered, it was the program of negation to be carried out against all previously accepted social traditions and political values. This attitude dictated that in order to cure the ills in society, one had to tear down all that had existed hitherto. Freed from these dark fetters, the brave new world of the revolutionaries' dreams would flower forth, untarnished and unsullied by the dissipation and corruption of the old world. In his zeal for destruction, Bazarov's program left little or no room for thoughts or ideas about the creation and establishment of the new world that would replace that which had been destroyed.

"We act on the strength of what we recognize to be useful," said Bazarov.  
"At present the most useful thing of all is renunciation - we renounce."  
"Everything?"

"Everything."

"What? Not only art, poetry - but also -  
it's terrible to say it . . . "

"Everything," Bazarov repeated with  
ineffable calm. . . .

"But allow me to say," Nikolai put in, "  
you renounce everything or, to put it  
more precisely, you destroy everything .  
. . so it will be necessary to build  
too."

"That's not our concern. First we have  
to clear the ground (66)."

In the aftermath of the depiction and description of Bazarov in Fathers and Sons, a veritable paroxysm seemed to seize the intellectual and radical establishment of Russia. Turgenev's novel became the epicentre and focus of a great deal of debate and controversy at both ends of the political spectrum. Those on the Right felt that Turgenev was sympathetic and pandering to the rapidly surfacing revolutionary element. The response from the radicals was as notable for both its viciousness and virulency. They branded Turgenev a reactionary and castigated him for what they believed to be a cruel and needless caricature of the youth movement and its ideals (67). Central to this furore was his depiction of Bazarov. People were unsure as to how they were supposed to understand him and Turgenev's rendering of him. Was he angel or devil? Martyr or fool? Hero or villain? Was Turgenev for and against this charismatic enigma and what he represented?

Many of Turgenev's contemporaries added their voices, both pro and contra, to the growing din. For example,

Alexander Herzen (1812 - 1870), a writer of significant influence and the publisher of the widely read journal Kolokol (The Bell), in an article on Bazarov, attempted to further define and clarify the exact nature of nihilism. He was concerned to show that although nihilism was ostensibly on the surface a negative doctrine, it was in fact a positive one.

Nihilism . . . is logic without structure, it is science without dogmas, it is the unconditional submission to experience and the resigned acceptance of all consequences, whatever they may be, if they follow from observation, or are required by reason. Nihilism does not transform something into nothing, but shows that nothing which has been taken for something is an optical illusion, and that every truth, however it contradicts our fantastic ideas, is more wholesome than they are, and is in any case what we are duty bound to accept (68).

Many of the radicals, in order to counter what they felt to be an inherent libel in Turgenev's sketch of the young radicals, sought to clarify their own position in order to differentiate and distance themselves from what they saw to be a potentially poisonous albatross. Chernyshevsky, in his book What is to be Done?: Tales of New People (1863), written while he was incarcerated in the Peter and Paul Fortress, attempted to render a more accurate picture of the "new people's" ideals and manners in his depiction of the character, Rakhmetov and the model seamstresses' cooperatives

formed by the novel's heroine, Vera Pavlovna. Though only a peripheral figure, Rakhmetov emerges as the novel's true hero. Through a detailed description of his regime, routine and past, and despite Chernyshevsky's often laboured and lifeless prose, Rakhmetov comes across as an extremely disciplined and highly moral person with an undeviating dedication to 'the cause' - which is understood to be the revolutionary transformation of Russian society (69).

The exception amongst the radical circle was Dimitry Pisarev, who wrote for The Russian Word - a bitter rival to the leading radical journal The Contemporary, for which both Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov wrote. Pisarev was completely captivated by Bazarov, and, for all intents and purposes, adopted him as his own. In a variety of articles and essays, Pisarev attempted to codify and coagulate the pulsations of revolutionary ferment and militancy that seemed to radiate from this striking and singular character: "If Bazarovism is a disease, then it is a disease of our time, and must be endured to the end, no matter what palliatives and amputations are employed (70)." It was his view that nihilism was not a term of opprobrium but an accurate and realistic description of the attitude and beliefs of the young intelligentsia (71). Starting from the position formulated and hinted at by Bazarov, Pisarev went much further than any of his contemporaries dared. With a single-mindedness and vehemence characteristic for the times,

Pisarev sought to clarify his interpretation of the logical consequences of Bazarovism:

If authority proves mendacious doubt will destroy it, and this will do immense good. If it should prove indispensable or useful, doubt will subject it to radical criticism and re-instate it. In a word, here is our ultimatum: what can be smashed, must be smashed. What stands the blow is good; what flies into smithereens is rubbish. In any case, hit out right and left: no harm will or can come of it (72).

For Pisarev the main function of the younger generation was the relentless criticism and, if necessary, repudiation of all obstacles that might prevent them from freely exercising of their will and desires. "Politically this led to an important result. The Nihilists on the Russkoe Slovo (the journal which Pisarev wrote for) put their trust and hopes mainly in themselves. They refused to believe either in the ruling classes or even in a myth of the 'people' and the 'peasants' (73)." For true freedom to exist, all restrictions on the individual had to be removed. To liberate the people would still leave the individual in fetters. If the autonomous individual was freed then the larger society would be free, for the needs and desires of the free-thinking and free-acting individual coincided with those of the society. Social development was attained by the realization of individual development. Once unfettered from the chains of conformity and tradition the individual could

begin the construction of the new liberated social reality. This emancipation of the person was to be accomplished by the dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge. To this end, Pisarev, whose scientific knowledge was mostly cribbed second- or third-hand from materialist popularizers such as Buchner, Vogt and Moleschott (74), regularly informed his readership of the latest discoveries and theories which fit into the parameters of his crude scientific materialism.

While the faith and conviction of such leading figures as Chernyshevsky and Pisarev is not in doubt, the majority of the Russian 'nihilists' seemed to be engaged not in the struggle to overthrow the status quo and society, but rather the perennial delight of youth culture throughout the ages: shocking their elders. After a few years, many members of the nihilist subculture eventually returned to accepted manners of dress, cut or grew their hair -dependent on their sex -, becoming normal functioning members of society and often rabid anti-nihilists in the bargain. However, a small minority held fast to their faith and were later, following logically on the nature and implications of their beliefs, to become the core of the movement of revolutionary terrorism that was to begin in the 1870s (75). Yet for the majority, nihilism was just another style and aspect in a long line of fickle intellectual fads.

May God grant you health and the rank of  
a general, and we will just feast our  
eyes on you, gentlemen - what was it

again?"

"Nihilists," Arkady said very distinctly.

"Yes. First there were Hegelists and now nihilists." (76)

Though they asserted and proclaimed otherwise, these prophets of the profane, sought to sanctify and codify all that they held to be true. The veneer and rhetoric of negation masked a blind and fanatic belief in their own ideals. The negation of the present system was merely a means of implementing their own desires and conceptions; In their attack on conventional belief they adhered to an orthodoxy more rigid and strict than their opponents. Though their name would seem to imply a belief in nothing at all or destruction, the Russian nihilists were dedicated and passionate in their beliefs, which consisted of an eclectic potpourri involving revolution, the Russian peasant, a crude form of materialism, the ideal of progress, science and the wit and wisdom of Chernyshevsky (77).

The Russian radicals preached the destruction of the status quo in order that they might establish and implement their own arrangement. No sooner had they cast off the idols of their parents than they were searching to establish graven images of their own. One faith simply replaced another. Contrary to their opponents' and detractors' claims, the Russian "nihilists" believed in their own program and ideals with unrelenting conviction. They were not in love with destruction, only the allure of their vision of utopia.

Nietzsche characterized this as "Nihilism a la Petersburg (meaning the belief in unbelief even to the point of martyrdom)" as something which "always manifests above all the need for a faith, a support, a backbone, something to fall back on (78)." The "nihilists" promulgated the tenets of a "crude" materialism as a means of deriding and negating a host of other theories and perceptions, all the while treating these tenets as the new gospel of saving faith. In attempting to escape the fetters of tradition they immersed themselves in a new prison of faith.

The nihilists were not alone in their addiction to faith; most of the nineteenth century appears to have been gripped by the desire to believe in some or other form of salvationist enterprise be it science, religion, or political action. "Almost any European thinker of this epoch appears to us today as a kind of visionary, committed to one or another program of salvation, and to one or another simple way of achieving it (79)."

During the nineteenth century, the assumptions of the rationalist and materialist schools of philosophy exerted a considerable amount of sway and influence over most contemporaneous European thinkers. Man was believed to be a rational creature and the world was seen to be a complex machine which ran according to implacable laws (80). The common belief had it that through stringent observation of scientific principle and method, the truth about man and the

world surrounding him would eventually be discovered and divulged. With the accumulation of such knowledge and data, and the application of man's powers of reason, the nature of the universe would slowly be ascertained, as would humanity's ability to adjust to it. With such an ongoing dialectic in motion, continuing progress and improvement were felt to be guaranteed. New revelations would provide new inroads towards the establishment of utopia. There was a prevalent sense of optimism which purred and mushroomed in almost euphoric expectation.

Many construed each succeeding stage of civilization as being part of a definite linear advance to an elevated and more advanced plateau, with each consecutive juncture envisaged and interpreted as being higher and more evolved than the last. Civilization and humanity, through the developments of technology and the discoveries of science, were developing into higher forms. The golden age was thought to be in hand. Yet in the midst of this optimism, Friedrich Nietzsche (81) diagnosed the age to be nihilistic. Examining beneath the surface veneer and epidermis, he exposed a yawning abyss - nihilism; a silent, unseen, growing, multi-dimensional void that would eventually assert itself and dominate the future. At its most extreme, this nihilism is the belief that everything is false (82) and that existence is without goal or meaning; a buzzing, howling confusion of nothingness forever.

In a note written between November 1887 and March 1888, Nietzsche stated, with some perspicacity, that he was going to relate "the history of the next two centuries. I [will] describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: the advent of nihilism. This history can be related even now; for necessity itself is at work here. The future speaks even now in a hundred signs, this destiny announces itself everywhere; for this music of the future all ears are cocked even now. For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade: restlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect (83)". This affluxion of nihilism would encompass the whole of Europe and cause a tremendous crisis of belief and untold havoc for humanity. "Although the scenery of the world theatre might remain the same for a time, the play in performance would already be a different one (84)." But what exactly is this nihilism that Nietzsche prophesied?

Radical Nihilism is the conviction of an absolute untenability of existence when it comes to the highest values one recognizes; plus the realization that we lack the least right to posit a beyond or an in-itself of things that might be "divine" or morality incarnate (85).

The meaning of nihilism implied by Nietzsche bears only a superficial resemblance to the sense imparted in the

Russian case. It is not the negation and usurpation of traditional social and political belief but the annihilation of all belief, terminating in the creed of "Nothing is true, Everything is permitted (86)." He sees nihilism as a cancer that attacks the root of all culture and civilization, rather than a soapbox foundation for a ragtag political ideology attempting what amounts to remedial social change. It is a historical movement that has governed the past and will define the future. "Nihilism is that historical process whereby the dominance of the transcendent becomes null and void, so that all being loses its worth and purpose (87)." It is the most pressing problem of our age; it is the root from which all others stem. "What does Nihilism mean? **That the highest values devaluate themselves.** The aim is lacking; "why?" finds no answer (88)." All prior aims and goals have become null and void. Those values which we once adhered to and believed in have lost the qualities which we have revered them for. That which had been the cornerstone of our society and culture has disintegrated and become meaningless. There are no absolutes onto which we can grasp for guidance or reinforcement; being is without meaning, without purpose.

The one event which epitomizes the devaluation of the highest values is the discovery that God is dead. The 'God' Nietzsche refers to is the historical God of the Judeo-Christian tradition. "But more importantly, in a wider philosophical sense, God symbolizes the whole Platonic-

Christian realm of transcendent reality and its supersensible, absolute values that have dominated the Western tradition (89)." In Die Frohliche Wissenschaft (The Gay Science) (Books I - 4, 1882/ Book 5 - 1887), Nietzsche first proclaims, through the cry of the Madman, the occurrence of this event.

Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: "I seek God! I seek God!" - As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? or emigrated? - Thus they yelled and laughed. The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. We have killed him - you and I. All of us are his murderers" (90).

In announcing the "death of God" Nietzsche was not revealing any great or profound secret to the public, startling though it may be, since Georg Hegel had reached and stated the same conclusion some seventy-five years earlier (91) albeit in a more tactful and diplomatic, if obscure, turn of phrase. However, unlike Hegel, Nietzsche did not foresee the probability of the resurrection of divine as the omnipotent spirit in the abyss of nothingness. Nor is Nietzsche denying the possibility of the existence of God or claiming that he has slain God or has drawn up a plan to

eliminate him.

Instead, he has found Him dead in the souls of his contemporaries (92). "Nietzsche is also claiming that "we killed him", and that the news of the murder has not yet reached the consciousness of the general public, who continue to live on "in the shadow of the dead God" (93)." This "represents a repudiation and comprehensive critique of the whole Platonic-Christian tradition of transcendence as well as a diagnosis of nineteenth-century civilization that - while no longer believing in this tradition - still gave it lip service (94)."

Nietzsche will often ascribe several layers of meaning to a word, contingent on context, which may not always be readily apparent. Nihilism is a two edged sword for Nietzsche in that it is the collapse of all traditional values and also the demand for freedom from imposed values, whose authority is now questionable (95). Nietzsche does not base his metaphysics on the murder of God, but rather upon the repercussions of its aftermath.

**New Struggles.** - After Buddha was dead, his shadow was still shown for centuries in a cave - a tremendous, gruesome shadow. God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. - And we - we still have to vanquish his shadow, too (96).

Though rid of the Christian God, people feel obligated to cling more firmly to Christian morality (97). We live in a period of transition, in the shadows of the dead God, still influenced and controlled by the leftover and lingering effect of such a belief (98). Eventually, we will have to make a breach from this shadow. The diagnosis of the death of God is not resolved by simply acknowledging the madman's announcement; the resonances go much deeper than this. "The death of God is simply a signal point in a long process whose ultimate consequence and conclusion is the destruction of the foundation of truth itself. And as truth becomes in Nietzsche's understanding increasingly impossible, so also must die all that which depended on it, in particular the language that made it possible and that was a part of it (99)." "The time has come when we have to pay for having been Christians for two thousand years: we are losing the centre of gravity by virtue of which we lived; we are lost for a while (100)." In a world that has lost its meaning, language becomes a meaningless buzzing (101). Communication becomes an exercise of stultiloquence where our moral behaviour and moral language seldom meet.

Yes, the words I heard, and heard distinctly, having quite a sensitive ear, were heard a first time, then a second, and often even a third, as pure sounds, free of all meaning, and this is probably one of the reasons why conversation was unspeakably painful to me. And the words I uttered myself, and which must nearly always have gone with an effort of the

intelligence, were often to me as the buzzing of an insect. And this is perhaps one of the reasons I was so untalkative, I mean this trouble I had in understanding not only what others said to me but also what I said to them. It is true that in the end, by dint of patience, we made ourselves understood, but understood with regard to what, I ask of you, and to what purpose? And to the noises of nature too, and the works of men, I reacted I think in my own way and without desire of enlightenment (102).

Where there is no certainty there can be no definite meaning of any kind. The distinction between veridical and delusory becomes marginal to the point of non-existence. Words and dialogue merely become an exercise in killing time, an exchange of sound, since they do not relate to the lives we are leading.

For the longest time, God has been taken to be the supreme metaphysical manifestation of human presumptions of truth, aim, unity and purpose; the central guiding force behind the entire universe. The language that we have used has also reinforced this perception, since it is a language of assumption; it is the 'loaves and fishes' of metaphysics - from a paucity of detritus and leftover scraps we have constructed our universe. Since the grammar of our language is built upon an implicit relationship between subject and predicate, we extrapolate this subject-predicate relationship into the real world in the form of 'thing' and the 'action' of a thing, of 'being' and 'doing' (103). "The word and the

concept are the most manifest ground for our belief in this isolation of groups of actions: we do not only designate things with them, we think originally that through them we grasp the true in things (104)." We have really thought that in our language we possess and express a knowledge of the world (105).

The structure of our language has given us the illusion that we have fully described something or discovered some truth about it when we merely have given it a name. This name represents our perception of an object, not the object itself. "If I make up the definition of a mammal, and then, after inspecting a camel, declare "look, a mammal", I have indeed brought a truth to light in this way, but it is a truth of limited value. That is to say, it is a thoroughly anthropomorphic truth which contains not a single point which would be "true in itself" or really and universally valid apart from man (106)." The concepts and names of things have been assumed to refer to eternal truths. Yet, the existence of a word does not guarantee the 'actual' existence of that which it refers to; it only represents the imposition of an anthropomorphic image or metaphor on the actual world. For example, let us return to the example of the definition of mammal. Any such definition is an attempt to metamorphose part of the external world into something understandable to man. "[Our] method is to treat man as the measure of all things, but in so doing [we] again [proceed] from the error

of believing that [we have] these things (which we intend to measure) immediately before [us] as mere objects. [We forget] that the original perceptual metaphors are metaphors and [take] them to be things in themselves (107)."

"Nothing, in fact, has hitherto had a more direct power of persuasion than the error of being as it was formulated... for every word, every sentence we utter speaks in its favour!... 'Reason' in language: oh what a deceitful old woman! I fear we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar..(108)." Language is one of the basic components of the shadow of God. If left unchecked it will perpetuate this shadow for "thousands of years".

Both the ideas and language that we use cooperate in their depiction and interpretation of the world: a change in one will necessitate an alteration the other. With the death of God our basic notions as to what constitutes the "truth" needs to undergo a radical re-definition. That which we had held to be the ultimate absolute truth has been revealed to be a lie. Our frame of reference, the horizons which we had established and defined ourselves by, have been revoked. Once again we will have to ask the most fundamental of questions: What is truth? Only to find the answer: "Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins (109)."

If God is taken to equal truth, the death of God signals a time when truth will become increasingly impossible. The language that we use, which is based on this foundation will begin to decay. "Instead of life, men have in their language merely the accoutrements of a hollow idol (110)." All our previous notions of truth have been based on an imaginary world. These false, transcendent values which have deprecated the life and reality of the apparent world, have fallen. Such a realization will precipitate a crisis of unimaginable proportions; a return to the Hobbesian state of nature.

Outside of the semantic crisis, the death of God signals the onset of a profound climacteric for our system of morals and values. God is the pinnacle of Christianity and Christian belief and with his demise this system crumbles. One cannot retain Christian morality if belief in the Christian God is dead.

Christianity is a system, a consistently thought out and complete view of things. If one breaks out of it a fundamental idea, the belief in God, one thereby breaks the whole thing to pieces: one has nothing of any consequence left in one's hands. Christianity presupposes that man does not know, cannot know what is good for him and what evil: he believes in God, who alone knows. Christian morality is a command: its origin is transcendental; it is beyond all criticism, all right to criticize; it possesses truth only if God is truth - it stands or falls with the belief in God (111).

Western culture, which has primarily been a Christian one, is synergistic in nature; a change in one part of it will necessarily affect and show up in another part (112). By giving up Christian belief one forsakes all claim on the right to Christian morality; to repudiate all belief in God, is to repudiate all Christian derived morality. Christianity is not a metaphysical smorgasbord, where one chooses that which one will sample and ignores that which does not capture the palate or entice the eye. It has its own internally consistent structure; one cannot dissociate christianity into individual components and rebuild it at will to suit particular needs or preferences.

God has been the foundation that has provided the sustenance from which all our values drew their strength and sanction. These values can exist and be held to be true only to the extent that this initial premise - God - is held to be true. However, this assumption, upon which mankind based its actions and truths, for particular historical and logical reasons, has ceased to be and there is nothing else (113). What we used to call morality can no longer exist since the presuppositions which made it possible no longer exist. All that supports these values is God's shadow; but this only makes them appear more hollow and worthless.

**There are two kinds of deniers of morality - "To deny morality" - this can mean...to deny that moral judgements are based on truths. Here it is admitted**

that they really are motives of action, but that in this way it is errors which, as the basis of all moral judgement, impel men to their moral actions.... Thus I deny morality as I deny alchemy, that is, I deny their premises: but do not deny that there have been alchemists who believed in these premises and acted in accordance with them (114).

The truths and presuppositions upon which our morality was based on do not exist any more and there is nothing else in their place. The framing context within which they operated no longer continues; their founding premise has been invalidated. The whole structure has been revealed to be a lie. It has been advanced that truth consisted of notions of aim, unity and purpose. The truth which Nietzsche asserts is that there is no order or structure objectively present in the world prior to the form that we give it. "When truth enters into a fight with the lies of millennia, we shall have upheavals, a convulsion of earthquakes, a moving of mountains and valleys, the like of which has never been dreamed of. The concept of politics will have merged entirely with a war of spirits; all power structures of the old society will have been exploded - all of them are based on lies: there will be wars the like of which have never yet been seen on earth (115)."

Through our previous postulation of truth we had attempted to graft a sense of meaning, purpose and aim onto our lives. "This meaning could have been: the 'fulfilment'

of some highest ethical canon in all events, the moral world order; or the growth of love and harmony in the intercourse of being; or the gradual approximation of a state of universal happiness; or even the development toward a state of universal annihilation - any goal constitutes some meaning (116)." All these notions allow a sense of achievement to be granted to our mortal existence. Otherwise the question why? would have no answer. However, we now begin to contemplate that there might be no aim or achievement inherent in existence. "Thus, disappointment regarding an alleged aim of becoming as a cause of nihilism: whether regarding a specific aim or, universalized, the realization that all previous hypotheses about aims that concern the whole "evolution" are inadequate (man no longer the collaborator, let alone the centre, of becoming) (117)."

We have attempted to posit a totality and unity in and underneath all events, in order that we might have the feeling or reassurance of being in the context of, and being dependent on, some entity or whole that is infinitely superior to us. Some supreme form of domination and administration, be it God, Science, Progress, Harmonic Convergence - that demands our devotion. "But behold, there is no such universal! At bottom, man has lost the faith in his own value when no infinitely valuable whole works through him; i.e. he conceived such a whole in order to believe in his own value (118)." Nietzsche asserts that nihilism is the necessary and

inevitable result of any such attempt at moral valuation.

For why has the advent of nihilism become necessary? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals - because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these "values" really had (119).

"Nihilism stands at the door: whence comes this uncanniest of all guests? ... It is in one particular interpretation, the Christian-moral one, that nihilism is rooted (120)." The whole Christian interpretation of the world is destroyed by the tools of its interpretation; nihilism is at the very heart of its values and beliefs. God is killed, according to Nietzsche, with the weapons of morality and values, which he created. Christianity fosters a "sense of truthfulness" or "will to truth" which ultimately reveals the falsity of the "true" world, that God is dead. Man places himself as the centre from which this inquiry will begin. Once man posits himself as the subject, everything else becomes the object, including God. All becomes the object of man's knowledge. Questions are asked and raised, and the sanctity of established beliefs challenged. Through the developing methodology and inquiry of science, this drive to question gains a taste for verifying and empirically grounding notions of "truth". Nothing is true until scientifically proven. The belief in "truth" begins its

ascension: "Belief in truth begins with doubt as to all truths believed in hitherto (121)." This belief in or will to truth, starts a process of investigation and examination which eventually leads humanity to the transcendent. Over time, this will to truth acquires a scientific conscience and an insistence upon intellectual cleanliness which ultimately leads it to question the presuppositions that it is based upon - God is truth.

But science is also a perspective and interpretation of the world. Like the religious viewpoint, it presupposes an order and structure behind the world of experience. The religious impulse still persists under the designation of "science". The name of God is changed to truth, and the pious and ascetic quest continues. Man still tries to bring himself into conformity with the judgements of a higher reality, ideal or assumption.

No doubt, those who are truthful in that audacious and ultimate sense that is presupposed by the faith in science thus affirm another world than the world of life, nature, and history; and insofar as they affirm this "other world" - look, must they not by the same token negate its counterpart, this world, our world? -

But you will have gathered what I am driving at, namely, that it still a metaphysical faith upon which our faith in science rests - that even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is

divine. - But what if this should become more and more incredible, if nothing should prove to be divine any more unless it were error, blindness, the lie - if God himself should prove to be our most enduring lie (122)? -

Our values are merely deceptive fancies: built over our heads to mask the aimlessness and incoherence that is reality ("The supreme values in whose service man should live, especially when they were very hard on him and exacted a high price - these social values were erected over man to strengthen their voice, as if they were commands of God, as 'reality', as the 'true' world, as a hope and future world. Now that the shabby origin of these values is becoming clear, the universe seems to have lost value, seems 'meaningless' - but that is only a transitional stage [123]"). These values engage in a fatal dualism, where the apparent world ('the world of becoming') is devalued and made inferior to the realm of perfection beyond it, the "true" world. A higher reality is posited over the one which we inhabit. Meaning and value is denied the apparent world and placed in the 'eternal' realm of the 'true' world; the apparent world is then judged according to these standards.

Given..., that becoming has no goal and that underneath all becoming there is no grand unity in which the individual could immerse himself completely as in an element of supreme value, an escape remains: to pass sentence on this whole world of becoming as a deception and to invent a world beyond it, a true world. But as soon as man finds out how that world is fabricated solely from psychological needs, and how he has absolutely no

right to it, the last form of nihilism comes into being: it includes disbelief in any metaphysical world and forbids itself any belief in a true world. Having reached this standpoint, one grants the reality of becoming as the only reality, forbids oneself every kind of clandestine access to afterworlds and false divinities - but cannot endure this world though one does not want to deny it.

What has happened, at bottom? The feeling of valuelessness was reached with the realization that the overall character of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept of an 'aim', the concept of 'unity', or the concept of 'truth'. Existence has no goal or end; any comprehensive unity in the plurality of events is lacking: the character of existence is not "true", is false. One simply lacks any reason for convincing oneself that there is a true world. Briefly: the categories 'aim', 'unity', 'being', which we used to project some values into the world - we pull out again; so the world looks valueless (124).

In order to create this world of unity, aim and purpose transcendent, conceptions of eternal unchanging ideas - God, Spirit, Being, Good - were posited acting as the absolute standards by which the 'apparent' world was to be judged. "All are more or less concealed forms of a 'Beyond' which judges and reduces this world, the only reality the human being has, to something inferior, to something that should not be. All forms of a Beyond are absolute standards that take all "value" out of this world and proclaim it to be nothing (125)." When this true world was created the apparent world was made inferior and subservient to its values. We have projected our own highest qualities and noblest aspirations into these transcendent absolutes. "The result

is that man is left in a state of spiritual poverty; he has impersonalized all of his own best attributes and kept for himself only the baser drives - guilt, revenge, and despair (126)." Our faith in these creations and categories of reason is the cause of nihilism. "We have measured the value of the world according to categories that refer to a purely fictitious world (127)." All our notions of truth are also based upon this fictitious realm.

However, with the devaluation and abolition of the true world, we find the apparent world meaningless. "The belief in the absolute immorality of nature, in aim- and meaninglessness, is the psychologically necessary affect once the belief in God and an essentially moral order becomes untenable. Nihilism appears at that point, not that the displeasure at existence has become greater than before but because one has come to mistrust any "meaning" in suffering, indeed in existence. One interpretation has collapsed; but because it was considered the interpretation it now seems as if there were no meaning at all in existence, as if everything were in vain (128)." The very possibility of meaningful criteria distinctions is abolished with the dissimulation of the "true" world (129). Such was our faith in this 'one' interpretation that we are unable to construct another to take its place. We are now set adrift in an aimless becoming.

## How the 'Real World' at last Became a Myth

### History of an Error

1. The real world, attainable to the wise, the pious, the virtuous man - he dwells in it, he is it. (Oldest form of the idea, relatively sensible, simple, convincing. Transcription of the proposition 'I, Plato, am the truth.')
2. The real world, unattainable for the moment, but promised to the wise, the pious, the virtuous man ('to the sinner who repents'). (Progress of the idea: it grows more refined, more enticing, more incomprehensible - it becomes a woman, it becomes Christian . . .)
3. The real world, unattainable, undemonstrable, cannot be promised, but even when merely thought of a consolation, a duty, an imperative. (Fundamentally the same old sun, but shining through mist and scepticism; the idea grown sublime, pale, northerly, Konigsbergian.)
4. The real world - unattainable? Unattained, at any rate. And if unattained also unknown. Consequently also no consolation, no redemption, no duty: how could we have a duty towards something unknown? (The grey of dawn. First yawnings of reason. Cockcrow of positivism.)
5. The 'real world' - an idea no longer of any use, not even a duty any longer - an idea grown useless, superfluous, consequently a refuted idea: let us abolish it! (Broad daylight; breakfast; return of cheerfulness and *bon sens*; Plato blushes for shame; all free spirits run riot.)
6. We have abolished the real world: what world is left? the apparent world perhaps? . . . But no! with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world! (Mid-day; moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; zenith of mankind; Incipit Zarathustra.) (130).

Implicit within this formulation and underpinning all of Nietzsche's attack there is a sense of structural optimism. Nietzsche does not reject the concept of structure, but

rather the specific structure currently in place. Nietzsche believes that such concepts are necessary for existence to continue - but such a necessity does not commute the powers of the absolute upon them: "But that a belief, however necessary it may be for the preservation of a species, has nothing to do with truth, one knows from the fact that, e.g., we have to believe in time, space, and motion, without feeling compelled to grant them absolute reality (131)." The choice of one form of structure or value should not immediately negate the possibility or validity of another structure; both are equally illusory.

This sense of underlying optimism also permeates Nietzsche's formulations concerning truth. He rejects any and all concepts of absolute truth; but maintains that truths are errors which are necessary for the survival of humanity: "Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live (132)." Such illusions as truth or other forms of structure for reality are necessary for survival: "There is only one world, and this is false, cruel, contradictory, seductive, without meaning - We have need of lies in order to conquer this reality, this "truth", that is, in order to live - That lies are necessary in order to live is part of the terrifying and questionable character of existence (133)." Due to their necessity for survival, Nietzsche does not deny their existence. What Nietzsche does refute is any absolute foundation or transcendent claim that

such objects might demand. These concepts are like a suit. The existential necessity of such a suit is affirmed; what is refuted is the idea that suit "a" is the suit - each suit is seen as being equally valid.

It is also interesting to note that Nietzsche does not appear to conceive of an universal assault on values. In one note he states: "My philosophy aims at an ordering of rank: not at an individualistic morality. The ideas of the herd should rule in the herd - but not reach beyond it: the leaders of the herd require a fundamentally different valuation for their own actions, as do the independent, or the "beasts of prey", etc (134)." It is the apparent role of these leaders of the herd, to be the legislators of value: "Genuine Philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators: they say, 'thus it shall be!' They first determine the Whither and For What of man, and in so doing have at their disposal the preliminary labour of all philosophical labourers, all who have overcome the past. With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer (135)." The herd is to labour under the harness of illusion, while the leaders of society create and legislate its values.

Yet despite this consideration, Nietzsche feels that the shadow of God is still venerated, for there is no real awareness of the full implications and consequences of this

occurrence. Many have not realized or acknowledged that God is dead. They continue under the umbrella of his shadow. People look upon the void, shudder, recoil and pretend that nothing has happened, that everything is as it once was. A passive and anaesthetic attitude toward existence is adopted (136) in that old values are adhered to even though they are no longer believed. Such an attitude is the most sinister form of nihilism since it involves the negation of our actual existence, in order to maintain the pretext of an fictitious one, which has been proven to be false. All these values are the result of considerations of utility, and are designed to increase human domination over the world. We have projected these imaginary essences (be they God, Science, Progress, etc.) into the physical world in order to render the world beneficial for ourselves.

However people will not simply cast off morality, even if they think that it is no longer grounded (137). Morality has interpenetrated our being to the extent that we "would rather will nothingness than not will (138)." Our horror of the void is such that we need a goal - even that of annihilation. Morality, though flawed, provided humanity with meaning, a sense of purpose (139). The cycle of birth-life-death was furnished with an interpretation which concealed the void, banishing a sense of meaninglessness. The sentence of eventual death, under which we are placed when born, was endowed with significance and its

arbitrariness commuted. The abolishment of the transcendent world and its values does not solve the problem of the human spirit, but only brings into grim relief the pathos and poignancy of the human situation (140). The death of God and the fall of morality does not stifle or signal an end to the human desire for transcendent guidance. Many wait, alongside Estragon and Vladimir, for Godot at the roadside unsure of his existence and the quality of his mercy. Will he come and save us from our fate? Does even he exist? Near the end of his pronouncement, Nietzsche's madman realizes that his message is falling upon deaf ears.

"I have come to early," he said the; "my time is not yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering; it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars - and yet they have done it themselves (141)."

There is no assurance that people will recognize that the lives they lead and the values they advocate are becoming increasingly discordant and absonant (142). Rather than look upon the void, people will continue on as if nothing has happened. Despite this lack of acknowledgement, the situation remains the same. With the collapse of the Christian belief in God, the whole of European morality also collapses. The sun which had been used to light every aspect

of our lives has been eclipsed; what we once saw is no longer illuminated by the same light.

The consequences of this event are universal and cataclysmic. Both the world and the universe, as we know them, change irreparably. All that was hitherto no longer has any familiar meaning. We have destroyed those moorings which provided both stability and assurance: the possibility of such circumstances occurring again seems very remote. The absolute authority which controlled and guided our lives is gone, yet our conscience continues to fear this figure. The fear of punishment, imbued and inbred after years of subjection, and guilt over our actions lingers on even though the chastiser is gone (143). God is dead, but his presence lingers on.

But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him (144).

This passage should not be dismissed as a manifestation of a blossoming tendency or predilection on the part of Nietzsche towards verbose and muddled poetic rhetoric or that the insanity and mental paralysis that isolated him in the last decade of his life and finally silenced him was starting to make itself visible and painfully apparent. Beneath the patina of poetic flight and spray of images, Nietzsche is beginning to consider some pertinent aspects of life in the light of the postmortem of God. In the shadow of this occurrence the world has changed, but, the question is, to what?

We have done that which we once thought impossible. Our lives have changed irrevocably from what they once were. Suddenly, all constraints have been removed ("wipe away the horizon") and all previous limits have been abolished. The definite sphere of rules and guidelines within which our lives once operated have been obliterated. Our previous guideposts of unity, value and understanding are no longer valid. Dislocation has begun to set in. We have started to drift from our previous anchorage into the chasm of infinite nothing. All sense of regularity has been nullified. The world has been thrown into chaos and its order upended with the murder of the omnipotent. We are thrown into an uncertain transience, a mad maelstrom, where there is no real perception or indication of direction ("Whither are we moving? ... Backward, sideward, forward, in all

directions?"). We are in a free fall through the heart of an immense darkness, the void, the infinite nothing. "After the death of God, we will not know how we stand toward anything that used to give us constancy and meaning (145)."

This is a vision of a world without any unifying or directive principle; it is a vision of a meaningless world, in which there are no inscribed purposes or true values; it is a vision of a world which is strictly no 'world' but rather a moral and metaphysical chaos (146). Where do we run to now? To whom do we turn for guidance? Where do we find meaning at this point? The axis and focus have shifted, but whereto? All the rules, foundations, and truths which had been accepted beforehand have become null and void. They too have died or ceased to be. The all-encompassing map which had previously been used for guidance and comfort - in that we knew where we stood in relation to all around us - has been overthrown and must be buried alongside its deceased architect.

That which once seemed stable and permanent has been demystified and debased. The environment around us has become a full of uncertainty and intrigue. The relationships and ways of interconnecting with this sphere have been revealed in a new, penetrating, harsh and alien light. Nothing is certain any more. Night has fallen and we are unable to find our way about because our source of light has been extinguished. We must rely on artificial measures to

preserve and illuminate the patterns of our normal life ["light lanterns in the morning"] (147) since our moral sun is in the throes of an eclipse. Humanity faces the dilemmas of existence without the security and comfort of its heaven-derived morality and values.

Where do we go from this point? "Whither are we moving?" With the death of God all that surround and encompasses us is transformed into a shapeless and formless void of chaos and nothingness. Without the instructive, reassuring and comforting presence of our now dead deity we are face to face with nothingness. We have killed the king and law-giver without a thought as to who or what will take over this role. In its aftermath, we are stunned and shocked by the arrogance, audacity and barbarity of our act. The murder of the divine induces a state of catatonic-like stupor in the minds and bodies of the assassins of God.

How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was the holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it (148)?

We are besieged by an almost unreal guilt and apprehension. This act of ultimate or metaphysical

rebellion, as Camus classifies it (149), does not end with the liquidation of its omnipotent foe. We have now wandered out upon more complex, fragile terrain. Once one has killed God, what does one do? Does one simply kill one God to replace it with another? Is there anything that can fill such a gap and provide the same level of guidance and assurance? Can a new interpretation stand where another has failed? Should we try to fill the place of God so that we are worthy of our action? Or does one attempt to soldier on without the benefit of any guiding light? No matter what the response, things cannot be continued in the same manner as they before. The foundation on which our civilization stood has been reduced to rubble. The main prop has been kicked out, so the rest of the structure begins to fall.

"The capacity to get free is nothing; The capacity to be free, that is the task (150)." For in a world without God or idols of any sort, man is alone and without master (151) - learned or otherwise. Without anticipation or calculation, we are confronted with the full terror that this freedom brings, implies and entails. We are bereft of the patterns of behaviour we once used to follow - we no longer know how to act towards others or ourselves; our legends and myths are now merely collections of words. We have destroyed the horizons by which we defined ourselves, our relations to each other and the world in which we live. There no longer appears to any "definition" in our world, all appears

ambiguous. "Without myth every culture loses the healthy natural power of its creativity: only a horizon defined by myths completes and unifies a whole cultural movement (152)." The type of freedom under discussion here is that which is without moral or other restraint; not the curtailed, immured, and phantasmic freedom with which we are more commonly familiar. If anything, this unrestrained freedom frightens humanity; it loses the will to create and the ability to cope.

In the face of this horrifying liberty, surrender and submission are the preferred routes taken. In a world without divine guidance or sanction, people begin to feel alone and powerless. They are 'free' in the negative sense, "alone with (their) selves and confronting an alienated, hostile world (153)." This a freedom too horrible and too demanding to bear. As the Grand Inquisitor informs Christ in Ivan's 'poem' in Book Four of Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov : "I tell you man has no more agonizing anxiety than to find someone to whom he can hand over with all speed the gift of freedom with which the unhappy creature is born. But only he can gain possession of men's freedom who is able to set their conscience at ease (154)."

He who cannot maintain his position above the law must in fact find another law or take refuge in madness. From the moment that man believes neither in God nor in immortal life, he becomes "responsible for everything alive, for everything that, born of suffering, is condemned to

suffer from life." It is he, and he alone, who must discover law and order (155).

People will deliver their freedom over to those who will 'set their conscience at ease' and relieve them of this responsibility that they would rather not face. Adrift in this new, unlimited, boundless sea, people find terror amidst the elation of liberty. For in the chaos and nothingness there is nowhere to call home. In the midst of our lives we have awoke to find ourselves in a dark wood, with the previous day's pathway and all other roads completely lost and gone. One is helpless and perpetually afloat in a chasm of despair. There is no one to blame and no one to appeal to. Every choice and resulting consequence are solely our responsibility. This is the implicit terror: We are really alone and no one cares. There are no limits or instructions to tell one when to stop or when to go. The only rules are the ones we create. It is now entirely one's own choice. Their inherent morality, immorality, injustice, justice, creative or destructive power resides exclusively in our conception. In the horizon of the infinite, as Nietzsche would have it, there are no longer any familiar markings or boundaries to indicate the pathway.

We have left the land and have embarked.  
We have burned our bridges behind us -  
indeed, we have gone farther and  
destroyed the land behind us. Now,  
little ship, look out! Beside you is the  
ocean: to be sure, it does not always

roar, and at times it lies spread out like silk and gold reveries of graciousness. But hours will come when you realize that it is infinite and that there is nothing more awesome than infinity. Oh, the poor bird that felt free and now strikes the walls of this cage! Woe, when you feel homesick for the land as if it had offered more freedom - and there is no longer any "land" (156).

The full consequences of the death of God have yet to make any real impact upon our collective psyche. We are still at the beginning of our journey, the sea is calm and the memory of the land we have left remains strong. Yet there will come a time when the vast immensity of this ocean will frighten us. Adrift with no tangible horizon in sight, we will begin to fathom how disturbing infinity is. Freed from the physiological constraints of our previous boundaries we retain their mentality: we collide with the walls of this new cage. Our newfound freedom overwhelms us; it inhibits and fetters us - we keep seeing and long for the shadow of the dead God.

When beliefs were shattered before the death of God, it was a process where the conclusions or interpretations we had drawn were proved incorrect or revealed to be contentious. The interpretations were derived from a fundamental presupposition which was assumed and remained unquestioned. The source for such interpretations remained relatively fixed and stable - i.e., the concept of God. But we have gone

further than that now. We have shattered the source from which we generated our world vision and the possibility of going back to this state of affairs ("God is dead. God remains dead."). The highest values never had, no longer have and will never have any meaning that can be realized. They are stripped of all worth. They are crucified, buried and quite dead. There is no resurrection, and no one waits outside the tomb in silent vigil; There is only nothingness. We have been cast from the garden into an indifferent and hostile world whose full terror we do not completely comprehend.

Much less may one suppose that many people know as yet what this event really means - and how much must collapse now that this faith has been undermined because it was built upon this faith, propped up by it, grown into it; for example, the whole of our European morality. This long plenitude and sequence of breakdown, destruction, ruin, and cataclysm that is now impending - who could guess enough of it today to be compelled to play the teacher and advance proclaimer of this monstrous logic of terror, the prophet of gloom and an eclipse of the sun whose like has never yet occurred on earth (157)?

This darkening of the world, with ominous and even deeper shadows, does not fill Nietzsche with dread but with cheerfulness (158). Even though the world is not as brightly lit any more, the horizon is once again limitless. Though we have experienced a decrease in value from that which we used

to have, perhaps now are values are worth that much more, more faithful to existence as it is; perhaps "God is far too extreme a hypothesis (159)." Life is affirmed rather than judged according to false standards. Mankind has been liberated from a terrible tyranny. The landscape within which we exist has no preset definitions or rules that we have to obey. "There are no final answers, no final truths - there is only the endless challenge of the dialectic for man to create himself as a higher and ever higher type of being (160)." Any rule that we now follow is our own. We have been given a new unlimited space of freedom. This is a freedom which exists "beyond good and evil, independent of traditional moralities and their metaphysics. It is not based on a dualistic world order, but is meaningful for this life only, the life of the senses, of conflict and despair (161)." The dualism implicit in moral tradition has been negated and overcome.

Indeed, we philosophers and "free spirits" feel, when we hear the news that "the old god is dead", as if a new dawn shone on us; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, premonitions, expectation. At long last the horizon appears free to us again, even if it should not be bright; at long last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again; the sea, our sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an "open sea" (162).

Within Nietzsche's diagnosis of nihilism, he distinguishes between three types or stages; weak or passive nihilism, incomplete nihilism and strong or complete nihilism. The divisions between these three intervals are not static, in that each of them contains within it elements common to the others, while also destroying some and adding new ones - thereby overcoming the previous stage (163). The discussion above has essentially been an exegesis of the stages of weak nihilism and incomplete nihilism. Weak nihilism is the passive and weary state in which all belief in traditional values and goals has been lost. The collapse of these values results in an exhaustion and a profound sense of despair. Here one "judges of the world as it is that it ought not to be, and of the world as it ought to be that it does not exist (164)." In this state one either passively resigns in defeat from the world, or keeps following the traditional values, even though they no longer hold belief; or creates new idols and authorities to take the place of those which have fallen. One is trapped.

The nihilistic question "for what?" is rooted in the old habit of supposing that the goal must be put up, given, demanded from outside - by some superhuman authority. Having unlearned faith in that, one still follows the old habit and seeks another authority that can speak unconditionally and command goals and tasks. The authority of conscience now steps up front (the more emancipated one is from theology, the more imperativistic

morality becomes) to compensate for the loss of a personal authority. Or the authority of reason. Or the social instinct (the herd). Or history with an immanent spirit and a goal within, so one can entrust oneself to it. One wants to get around the will, the willing of a goal, the risk of positing a goal for oneself; one wants to rid oneself of the responsibility (one would accept fatalism) (165).

According to Nietzsche we live in the midst of incomplete nihilism, a state of transition. This is the "intermediary period of nihilism: before there is yet present the strength to reverse values and to deify becoming and the apparent world as the only world, and to call them good (166)." Traditional values have collapsed, yet there still exists a longing for absolute goals and purposes. The transcendent idols have been found to be false, but we cannot break away from this addiction. Some accept the void and the emptiness that results from the fall of established values. Though dead, God casts a long shadow.

Nihilism is ambiguous, in that it is sign of both strength and weakness, both active and passive in form. Nietzsche sees the posture of active or "complete nihilism" as the means by which we will escape or overcome the incomplete nihilism within which we now live (167). In the transcending of nihilism, all known values would be transvaluated, made anew. This nihilism is a sign of strength, of the increased power of the spirit. We should

"push that which is falling". Strong nihilism is the ability to be free from traditional deceptions and to break their clutches. It affirms and values life as it is, not as our ideals wish it to be. To overcome nihilism, we must first recognize its presence and cast aside those values and beliefs which had become moribund. We must apply "the knife vivisectionally to the chest of the very virtues of the time (168)." In this fashion one will discover that which is dishonest, false, hypocritical and mendacious in the present value creations (169). One destroys and criticizes values and beliefs in order to find out if their essence is hollow or sound.

Through the ministry of strong nihilism, the necessary ground for the new conception of values will be created. "He who has to be a creator in good and evil, truly, has first to be a destroyer and break values. Thus the greatest evil belongs with the greatest good; this, however, is the creative good (170)." Values are never final, they must constantly be created. It is not new values which Nietzsche wishes to forge, but a new conception of value which places its worth in individual character and excellence rather than stringent adherence to rules and the positing of opposition - i.e., good and evil. The triumph of good and the annihilation of evil are no longer the task. These new values must rise above both morality and moral valuations.

After the Yes-saying part of my task had

been solved, the turn had come for the No-saying, No-doing part: the revaluation of our values so far, the great war - conjuring up a day of decision. This included the slow search for those related to me, those who, prompted by strength, would offer me their hands for destroying (171).

Complete or active nihilism is the destruction of all false values and perceptions, of illusion, no matter what the consequences. All accepted values must be put to the test and asked questions posed with a hammer. To do so would not hasten the advent of nihilism, but would rather recognize and deal with the problem. The transcendent world of absolutes is in articulo mortis, pretending it is otherwise will only serve to weaken us. We can no longer live under its fallen archways. He considers "that it is the measure of strength to what extent we can admit to ourselves, without perishing, the merely apparent character [of],[and] the necessity of lies (172)" for existence. Negation and destruction are the necessary foundation for all creative activity. "Actually, every major growth is accompanied by a tremendous crumbling and passing away: suffering, the symptoms of decline belong in the times of tremendous advances; every fruitful and powerful movement of humanity has also created at the same time a nihilistic movement. It could be the sign of a crucial and most essential growth, of the transition to new conditions of existence, that the most extreme form of pessimism, genuine nihilism, would come into the world

(173)." One destroys that which negates life, and is freed from its tyranny. The idols of the age must be sounded out, with a hammer if necessary, in order to determine their worth.

Without this negation and destruction, a revaluation of values is not possible. To try and escape nihilism without the revaluation of values will only serve to make the problem more acute and lead to chaos and despair.

To revalue values - what would that mean? All the spontaneous - new, future, stronger -movements must be there; but they still appear under false names and valuations and have not yet become conscious of themselves. A Courageous becoming-conscious and affirmation of what has been achieved - a liberation from the slovenly routine of old valuations that dishonour us in the best and strongest things we have achieved (174).

It must be noted that Nietzsche did not assume or believe that the revaluation of all values would automatically follow the death of God. The overcoming of nihilism is not an inevitable process. The tradition of Western thinking is such that a 'goal-less' orientation is highly antagonistic and counter to its most basic principles. The revaluation of all values and the overcoming of nihilism will take a conscious effort on the part of humanity. However, this voyage, like nihilism, is ambiguous; it might lead to a new dawn after the long twilight or it might result

in our being completely entangled in the web of nihilism. "Mankind does not represent a development of the better or the stronger or the higher in the way that is believed today. 'Progress' is merely a modern idea, that is to say a false idea (175). There is no final answer or definite conclusion that may be reached or even hypothesized.

**We aeronauts of the spirit!** - All those brave birds which fly out into the distance, into the farthest distance - it is certain! somewhere or other they will be unable to go on and will perch on a mast or a bare cliff-face - and they will even be thankful for this miserable accommodation! But who could venture to infer from that, that there was not an immense open space before them, that they had flown as far as one could fly! All our great teachers and predecessors have at last come to a stop and it is not with the noblest or most graceful of gestures that weariness comes to a stop: it will be the same with you and me! But what does that matter to you and me! Other birds will fly farther! This insight and faith of ours vies with them in flying up and away; it rises above our heads and above our impotence into the heights and from there surveys the distance and sees before it the flocks of birds which, far stronger than we, still strive whither we have striven, where everything is sea, sea, sea! - And whither then would we go? Would we cross the sea? Whither does this mighty longing draw us, this longing that is worth more to us than any pleasure? Why just in this direction, thither where all the suns of humanity have hitherto gone down? Will it perhaps be said of us one day that we too, steering westward, hoped to reach an India - but that it was our fate to be wrecked against infinity? Or, my brothers. Or (176)?

Out of curiosity, it must be noted that a standard dictionary (for example, Webster's Dictionary of the English Language [Wordsworth edition, 1989]) definition of nihilism describes it as: "Negative doctrines, total rejection of

current beliefs, in religion and morals; Philosophical scepticism that denies all existence; doctrines of extreme revolutionary party in Nineteenth century Russia finding nothing to approve of in the constituted order of things." For the purposes of our discussion, the conception of nihilism under examination within this study incorporates the following elements;

a) In light of the values that we recognize, life has become absurd and without foundation. The highest values had been projected into the formlessness of existence by humanity in order to fulfil the mortal need for security and stability. They do not reflect or represent any real or actual grand unity or order underneath the world of becoming;

b) One consequence of our faith in this particular interpretation of the world was a cultivation of a sense for "truthfulness". This will to truth has revealed to us the human origins of our values and the arbitrariness of their creation and imposition; the veil of the temple has been torn asunder to reveal only nothingness - the void. The Anthropomorphic projection of value is born of illusion;

c) After having inserted these values of aim and unity into the world, we now have take them out again and the world looks worthless to us. A yawning chasm has opened up between our values and our being. Existence has lost all notion of purpose and unity and all seems false;

d) This devaluation is epitomized by the discovery that God is dead. God and other eternal standpoints which have served as guiding posts for human action, understanding and morality have been obliterated;

e) With the rejection of this one interpretation of the world, which was taken to be the interpretation, all such interpretations and notions of the transcendent seem useless;

f) As a result of this, humanity is without anchor or centre of gravity, and the universe deprived of ultimate meaning. We are set adrift on an infinite sea with unlimited horizons, lost, alone and hopeless in a

forbidding void;

g) After the destruction of the dualistic description of the universe, and the banishment of the "true" world, humanity is left with the world of becoming. Life will now be lived according to the actuality of concrete reality rather than the strictures of abstraction. Morality can no longer rely on supernatural revelation. There is only the concrete world of becoming, everything else is illusion.

h) Besides being a pestilence which afflicts civilisation, nihilism is also an active stance that can be taken towards the world of decay. "Push that which is falling!" It is a sign of strength, where one poses questions with a hammer in order to overcome and transcend the meaninglessness of passive nihilism.

There are other possible shadings of meaning which might be attributable to the term 'nihilism', but they are not relevant to the current discussion.

## Notes

### Two

#### The Name of the Game

28. E. Lampert, Sons Against Fathers: Studies in Russian Radicalism and Revolution (London; Oxford University Press, 1965). p. 309. "The first philosophical use of the word nihilism presumably stems from Friedrich H. Jacobi. The word nothing appears quite frequently in Jacobi's letter to Fichte. There he says, "Truly, my dear Fichte, it would not annoy me if you or anyone else wished to say that what I set against Idealism - which I deplore as Nihilism - is Chimerism." - Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche (Volume IV: Nihilism) [trans. Frank A. Capuzzi] David F. Krell, ed. (San Francisco; Harper & Row, Publishers, 1983 - originally published 1961). p. 3.
29. Charles A. Moser, Antinihilism in the Russian Novel of the 1860's (The Hague, Netherlands; Mouton & Co., Publishers, 1964). p. 18.
30. Rose Pfeffer, Nietzsche: Disciple of Dionysus (Cranbury, New Jersey; Associated University Press, 1972). p. 70. Gorgias of Leontini is one of the participants in the discussion featured in Plato's Gorgias. His involvement in this dialogue with Socrates and others (Polus, Callicles and rather peripherally, Chaerophon) centres around his abilities and theories as an orator and rhetorician, rather than his philosophic beliefs.
31. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 18. [s. 23] For further discussion of the relation between Nietzsche and Buddhism see Freny Mistry, Nietzsche and Buddhism: Prolegomenon to a Comparative Study (New York/Berlin; Walter de Gruyter, 1981).
32. Glicksberg, op. cit., p. 11. "Now this, monks, is the noble truth of pain: birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, sorrow lamentation, dejection, and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful. In short the five groups of grasping (skandhas) are painful.  
Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the cause of pain: the craving, which tends to rebirth, combined with pleasure and lust, finding pleasure here and there; namely, the craving for passion, the craving for existence, the craving for non-existence.  
Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation

- of pain, the cessation without a reminder of craving, the abandonment, forsaking, release, non-attachment." - "The Sermon at Benares" in The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha [trans. not listed] ed. E. A. Burtt (New York; Mentor Books, 1955 edition). p. 30.
33. Danto, op. cit., p. 28. "Life is without sense or point, there is a ceaseless alternation of birth and death and birth again, the constantly turning wheel of existence going nowhere eternally; if we wish salvation, it is salvation from life that we must seek (Ibid.)."
  34. Nietzsche, The Will to Power op. cit., p. 96. [s. 155]
  35. Ronald Hingley, Nihilists: Russian Radicals and Revolutionaries in the Reign of Alexander II (1855-1881) (New York; Delacorte Press, 1967). pp. 15-16. The term "nihilism" had been used in Russia as early as 1829 by "the romantic critic Nadezhdin ..., though in a purely negative sense, to mean those who know nothing and understand nothing. Katkov gave it a new meaning, using it to describe someone who no longer believes in anything (Franco Venturi, Roots of a Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia [trans. Francis Haskell] (New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 1960). p. 326.)." Turgenev was the first to use it to label to the position and ideas of the young intelligentsia of the 1860's.
  36. Vera Brodov, Apostles Into Terrorists: Women and the Revolutionary Movement in the Russia of Alexander II (London; Maurice Temple Smith Ltd., 1977). p. 18.
  37. Adam B. Ulam, In the Name of the People: Prophets and Conspirators in Prerevolutionary Russia (New York; The Viking Press, 1977). p. 53.
  38. Hingley, op. cit., p. 16.
  39. Anthony V. Knowles, Ivan Turgenev (Boston; G. K. Hall & Co., 1988). p. 73.
  40. Ivan Turgenev, Fathers and Sons [trans. Barbara Makanowitzky] (New York; Bantam Books, 1959 - originally published 1862). p. 20.
  41. Danto, op. cit., p. 29.
  42. Moser, op. cit., p. 13. The account of the reigns of Nicholas I and Alexander II and the rise of revolutionary agitation given here is, by necessity, an extremely abridged one. For more detailed accounts concerning

these periods see Venturi, op. cit., pp. 1 - 128, 187 - 203; E. Lampert, Studies in Revolution (London; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957) pp. 1 - 45; Lampert, Sons Against Fathers: Studies in Russian Radicalism and Revolution op. cit., pp. 1 - 93; Ulam, op. cit., pp. 20 - 68.

43. Moser, op. cit., p. 13.
44. Ibid.
45. Lampert, Sons Against Fathers op. cit., p. 5.
46. Broido, op. cit., p. 18.
47. Venturi, op. cit., p. 326.
48. Ulam, op. cit., p. 131. "The term caught on in the West, and as late as November 1917 some quite respectable British and French journals informed their readers that the party which had just seized power in Russia was that of the "nihilists" headed by Lenin." (Ibid.)
49. Hingley, op. cit., p. 121. "It would be easy to quote a long list of protests and explanations made by Populists of different trends and different periods in order to point out how little the word launched by Turgenev applied to them. (Maxim Alexeyevich) Antonovich thought it necessary to write a long review of Fathers and Sons in the Sovremennik, which (as was rightly pointed out) passed a sort of legally reasoned sentence on the author for having falsified reality. And even in later years the Russian revolutionaries were amazed and shocked at hearing themselves called 'Nihilists'." (Venturi, op. cit., p. 326.)
50. Stepniak (Sergei Kravchinsky), Underground Russia: Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from life [trans. not listed] (Westport, Connecticut; Hyperion Press, Inc., 1973 reprint of 1883 edition originally published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York). p. 12.
51. Ibid.
52. Ivan Turgenev, Letter to Konstantin Sluchevsky 26 April 1862 as quoted/paraphrased in Anthony V. Knowles, op. cit., pp. 86-87. In a letter, fourteen years later, to the satirist Saltykov who had complained that the word 'nihilist' was being used by reactionaries to damn anyone they did not like, Turgenev wrote : "Tell me how could anybody be offended by being compared to Bazarov? Do you not yourself realize that he is the most sympathetic of

all my characters?" As for 'nihilism', that, perhaps, was a mistake. "I am ready to admit . . . that I had no right to give our reactionary scum the opportunity to seize on a name, a catchword; the writer in me should have brought the sacrifice to the citizen - I admit the justice of my rejection by the young and of all the gibes hurled at me . . . The issue was more important than artistic truth, and I ought to have foreseen this." Turgenev, "Letter to Saltykov-Shchedrin", 15 January 1876 as quoted in Berlin, op. cit., p. 38.

53. Victor S. Pritchett, The Gentle Barbarian: The life and Work of Turgenev (New York; Random House, 1977). p. 153.
54. Ivan Turgenev, Letter to the Countess Lambert (date not listed) as quoted in Pritchett, op. cit., p. 153.
55. Isaiah Berlin, Fathers and Children: The Romanes Lecture [Delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre 12 November 1970] (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1972). p. 6.
56. Ibid., pp. 5 - 6.
57. Ibid., p. 7.
58. Ibid., p. 48.
59. Nicholas Dobrolyubov, "Last Year's Literary Miscellanea" as quoted in Lampert, op. cit., p. 263.
60. Ulam, op. cit., p. 57.
61. "Letter from the Provinces" published under a pseudonym in The Bell, 1859 as quoted in Venturi, op. cit., p. 159. The author of this piece is not known. "Although it is far from certain, there is some reason for believing it was Dobrolyubov rather than Chernyshevsky himself, and in any case it was someone obviously well acquainted with the ideas of both men at this time." (Ibid.)
62. Ulam, op. cit., p. 77.
63. Knowles, op. cit., p. 69.
64. Berlin, op. cit., p. 23.
65. Knowles, op. cit., p. 75.
66. Turgenev, Fathers and Sons op. cit., p. 47.

67. Amongst those favourably disposed to Fathers and Sons, were the Tsar's secret police, the Third Section, who in a report to the Tsar on Russian activities in 1862 stated: "It must be in all justice admitted that the work of the well-known writer, Ivan Turgenev, had a favourable influence. Considered as one of the leaders of Russian contemporary talents, and enjoying the sympathies of Russian cultured society, Turgenev, with this novel of his and to the surprise of the younger generation who not so long ago applauded him, branded our half-educated revolutionaries with the bitter name 'nihilist' and shook the doctrine of materialism and its followers." (As quoted in Alexandra Tolstoy, "Introduction", in Turgenev, Fathers and Sons op. cit., p. v).
68. Alexander Herzen, Memoirs, vol. IV, pp. 208 - 209, as quoted in Moser, op. cit., p. 19.
69. Moser, op. cit., p. 50. "This athletic saint has just the right background, having attended university - but without finishing his course. He happens to be rich, but gives nearly all his money away. He systematically hardens himself by doing gymnastics and tough physical work, lives on a worker's frugal fare or on a boxer's diet of nearly raw beef; avoids alcohol and women; refuses to sleep with a blanket or mattress; never wastes time. In a marathon bout of reading lasting eighty-two hours he has sucked the essence of European political thought out of a stack of books bought at one of the French or German bookshops in St. Petersburg. In another fit of wilful martyrdom he once equipped himself with an ointment 'for healing wounds from sharp weapons', then proceeded to spend the night on a bed of nails, from which he arose in bloodstained underwear, having proved his powers of physical endurance." Hingley, op. cit., p. 47. For the particulars of the description see Nicholas Chernyshevsky, What Is To Be Done?: Tales of New People [trans. Nathan Dole & S.S. Skidelsky] (Ann Arbor, Michigan; Ardis Publishers, 1986 - facsimile reprint of the 1886 edition). Chapter 29, "An Extraordinary Man."
70. Dimitry Pisarev, as quoted in Philip Pomper, Sergei Nechaev (New Brunswick, New Jersey; Rutgers University Press, 1979). p. 33.
71. Ulam, op. cit., p. 132.
72. Dimitry Pisarev, Collected Works vol. 1, p. 66 as quoted in Lampert Sons Against Fathers op. cit., p. 312.

73. Venturi, op. cit., p. 327. "1. New People have acquired a passion for work for the benefit of society. 2. The private benefit of new people coincides with benefit for society and their selfishness contains the broadest love for humanity. 3. New people's reason is in perfect harmony with their feeling because neither reason nor feeling are distorted by chronic enmity for the rest of people." Dimitry Pisarev, "Thinking Proletariat" [trans. R. Dixon] in Selected Philosophical, Social and Political Essays (Moscow; Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958). p. 646.
74. Lampert, op. cit., p. 299. Ludwig Buchner (1824-1899) was a German physician who was one of the more popular supporters and expositors of "crude" materialism, exemplified by his major work Kraft und Stoff (Force and Matter) [1855]. Karl Vogt (1817-1895) was a physiologist, philosopher and author of Physiologische Briefe (1846) and Lectures on Man: His place in Creation, and in the History of the Earth (1863). Jacob Moleschott (1822-1892) was the author of Der Kreislauf des Lebens (The Course of Lives) [1852] and Physiologisches Skizzenbuch (Physiological Sketches).
75. For example, Sergei Nechaev first became acquainted with the 'nihilist' subculture and made his mark on the radical intelligentsia during his student days (circa 1865 - 1866). Nechaev's actions and ideals caused quite a stir amongst both establishment and radical circles with their deadly mixture of revolution and homicide. "Nechaev believed in the overthrow of the existing order, not because he had, like Herzen, a romantic faith in democracy or, like Bakunin, a still more romantic faith in human nature. He believed in revolution as a tenet valid and sufficient in itself; and he believed in nothing else. His originality and his historical importance lie in the unconditional quality of his belief, and in the manner in which he translated it into practice. He did not merely proclaim, he acted on, the hypothesis that morality does not exist, and that in the interests of revolution (of which he himself was the sole judge) every crime in the calendar, from murder to petty larceny, was legitimate and laudable. Even this might not have been so utterly disconcerting. But Nechaev carried logic further still. He applied these principles with equal alacrity to his enemies and to his so-called friends. He deceived everyone he met, and when he was no longer able to deceive, his power was gone. His audacity was unbounded; and he carried personal courage to the extreme limit of foolhardiness. He is an unparalleled and bewildering combination of fanatic,

swashbuckler and cad (Edward Hallett Carr, The Romantic Exiles: A Nineteenth Century Portrait Gallery [Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books, 1968]. p. 255.) The character Peter Verkhovensky and several of the incidents of Dostoyevsky's The Possessed (sometimes rendered as The Devils) were modeled after Nechaev and his ill-fated "People's Revenge" organization which culminated in the highly publicized murder of Ivan Ivanov.

76. Turgenev, Fathers and Sons op. cit., p. 20.
77. Hingley, op. cit., p. 57.
78. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., p. 289. [s. 347] "These Nay-sayers and outsiders of today who are unconditional on one point - their insistence on intellectual cleanliness; these hard, severe, abstinent, heroic spirits who constitute the honour of our age; all these pale atheists, anti-Christians, immoralists, nihilists; these sceptics, ephectics, hecticcs of the spirit (they are all hecticcs in some sense or other); these last idealists of knowledge in whom alone the intellectual conscience dwells and in incarnate today - they certainly believe they are as completely liberated from the ascetic ideal as possible, these "free, very free spirits"; and yet, to disclose to them what they themselves cannot see - for they are too close to themselves: this ideal is precisely their ideal, too; they themselves embody it today and perhaps they alone; they themselves are its most spiritualized product, its most advanced front-line troops and scouts, its most captious, tender, intangible form of seduction - if I have guessed any riddles, I wish that this proposition might show it! - They are far from being free spirits: for they still have faith in truth." - Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals (Zur Genealogie der Moral) [trans. Walter Kaufmann] (New York; Vintage Books, 1967 - translation based on the edition published in 1887). p. 150. [III s. 24]
79. Danto, op. cit., p. 29.
80. Alan Cassels, Fascism (New York; Thomas Y. Crowell Co., Inc., 1975). pp. 2 - 3.
81. To recite the chronology of Nietzsche's life would be an intolerable digression given that the specific focus of this essay is upon Stirner. Well-written and informed accounts of Nietzsche's life and work can be found in R. J. Hollingdale, Nietzsche: The Man and his Philosophy (Baton Rouge; Louisiana State University Press, 1965);

H. A. Reyburn, Nietzsche: The Story of a Human Philosopher (Westport, Connecticut; Greenwood Press, 1948); Ronald Hayman, Nietzsche: A Critical Life (London; Oxford University Press, 1980); Conversations with Nietzsche: A Life in the Words of His Contemporaries op. cit.; and Walter Kaufmann Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 1974 [Fourth Edition] - originally published 1950) pp. 21 - 71; the Prologue (pp. 3 - 20) and Appendix (pp. 424 -458) are also worth investigation in reference to the Nietzsche 'myth' and the legacy of Nietzsche's manuscripts in the care and hands of various editors.

82. Ronald Hayman, Nietzsche: A Critical Life op. cit., p. 9.

83. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 3. [preface 2] Whenever one is citing material from The Will To Power, the nature of this particular text must be raised. The Will To Power is a posthumously published collection of notes and fragments, spanning several years in their origin, edited and coagulated by persons other than Nietzsche according to an outline which is apparently contradicted and superseded by others drafted at later dates. The notes within this collection are varying stages of composition. Some are fairly lengthy and would appear to indicate that they contain fully worked out conceptions; some are quite fragmentary in their manner and would most likely have been fleshed if Nietzsche was going to use them; others appear to contradict notes within this sprawling work and even the rest of Nietzsche's published works. Part of these textual problems arise from the uncertainty of the source material; there have been several versions of The Will To Power, and all have been subject to some or other form of manipulation of structure or intent. Within this study, where possible, reference has been made to Nietzsche's published work in order to substantiate and affirm the interpretation being offered here.

**Postscript:** During the course of the oral defence of this thesis, it was brought to my attention by Professor Victor Doerksen, that the German edition of Nietzsche's Works edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe Berlin; De Gruyter, 1967) cites and discusses some of the textual manipulation that The Will To Power has been subject to. Though the translation by Walter Kaufmann of The Will To Power is not based upon this specific edition of Nietzsche's works, Kaufmann is quite aware of these textual concerns. It is also interesting to note that Kaufmann (in Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist,

Antichrist) praises Montinari's readings of Nietzsche's sometimes indecipherable scrawl as being "more reliable" than previous editors.

84. Heidegger, Nietzsche (Volume IV: Nihilism) op. cit., p. 5.
85. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 9 [s. 3]
86. Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals op. cit., p. 150. [III s. 24]. See also s. 602 The Will To Power. The expression "Nothing is True, Everything is Permitted" is often mistaken as a coinage of Nietzsche's derived from a reading of Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov (in a note to the above citation, Kaufmann asserts that Nietzsche in fact never read The Brothers Karamazov since it was only available in a mutilated French translation in 1888; see On the Genealogy of Morals op. cit., note 8, p. 150). The only parallel found in the text of the novel by Dostoyevsky is the argument propounded by Ivan Karamazov, that if people lost their faith in the immortality of their souls, everything would be permitted: "Only five days ago, at a certain social gathering, consisting mostly of ladies, he (Ivan) solemnly declared during an argument that there was absolutely nothing in the whole world to make men love their fellow-men, that there was no law in nature that man should love mankind, and that if love did exist on earth, it was not because of any natural law but solely because men believed in immortality. He added in parenthesis that all natural law consisted of that belief, and that if you were to destroy the belief in immortality in mankind, not only love but every living force on which the continuation of all life in the world depended, would dry up at once. Moreover, there would be nothing immoral then, everything would be permitted, even cannibalism. [Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov [trans. David Magarshack] Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books, 1958 -originally published in serialized form 1879-1880. p. 77]." The expression is usually traced back and attributed to the Order of the Assassins founded by Hasan-I Sabbah (1060?-1124) during the 1080s (for further information on the Assassins see Edward Burman, The Assassins: Holy Killers of Islam [London; The Aquarian Press, 1987; and Joseph Von Hammer-Purgstall The History of The Assassins [trans. Oswald Charles Wood] New York; Burt Franklin, 1968 reprint of original 1835 edition).
- Nietzsche was, however, aware of the work of Dostoyevsky since he had come across a copy of Notes from

underground, by chance, in early 1887. In a letter dated February 23, 1887, Nietzsche related to Overbeck about his chance discovery of Dostoyevsky in a book-store: ". . . I did not even know the name of Dostoyevsky just a few weeks ago - uneducated person that I am, not reading any journals. An accidental reach of the arm in a book-store brought to my attention L'Esprit souterrain (Notes from Underground), a work just translated into French. (It was a similar accident with Schopenhauer in my 21st year and with Stendhal in my 35th). The instinct of kinship (or how should I name it?) spoke up immediately: I must go back all the way to my first acquaintance with Stendhal's Rouge et Noir to remember an equal joy. (It is two novellas, the first really a piece of music, very strange, very un-German music; the second, a stroke of genius in psychology, a kind of self-derision of "Know thyself!") [Friedrich Nietzsche, "Letter to Overbeck - February 23, 1887", in The Portable Nietzsche (edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann) (Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books, 1985 reprint; first published in Penguin Books in 1976, originally published by the Viking Press in 1954.) pp. 454 - 455.] The volume in question contained a complete translation of the original 1846 version and an abbreviated version of both of Notes from Underground's two parts (Kaufmann, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist, op. cit., p. 505). "On March 7, 1887, Nietzsche wrote Gast that he had read, first, L'Esprit souterrain (translated, 1886: Notes from Underground); then La maison des morts (tr., 1886: The House of the Dead); finally, Humilies et offenses (tr., 1884: The injured and the Insulted - the first of Dostoyevsky's novels to be translated into French) (On the Genealogy of Morals, Kaufmann translation, op. cit., note 8, pp. 150 - 151)." Nietzsche was impressed by both Dostoyevsky's psychological acumen and its similarity to his own perspective. In 1889, in Twilight of the Idols he comments: "In regard to the problem before us (the criminal type) the testimony of Dostoyevsky is of importance - Dostoyevsky, the only psychologist, by the way, from which I had anything to learn: he is one of the happiest accidents of my life, even more so than my discovery of Stendhal (Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of The Idols (Gotzen-Dammerung) [trans. R. J. Hollingdale] (Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books, 1968 - translation based on edition published in 1889), p. 99. [Expeditions of an Untimely Man s. 45])."

While it is fairly certain that Nietzsche did not read The Brothers Karamazov, it is unknown if he was familiar with any other of Dostoyevsky's great novels. Though Nietzsche never mentions The Idiot, after his chance discovery of early 1887, the word "idiot" begins

to assume a extraordinary significance in his work (Kaufmann, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist op. cit., p. 340, note 2). For example, The usage of the word "idiot" in sections 29 and 31 of The Antichrist (written in 1888) would seem to indicate that Nietzsche "conceived of Jesus in the image of Dostoyevsky's Idiot" (Ibid., p. 341). "He may not have read the whole novel, but seems to have been acquainted with the central conception (Ibid., p. 340, note 2)." The similarities that exist between the works of Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche can only be classified as an interesting parallel and coincidence. While Nietzsche was aware of, and even admired, the works of Dostoyevsky, his indebtedness to them is of a limited nature. To definitively establish the type of the relationship between Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky lies beyond the scope and space allotment of this discussion.

87. Heidegger, Nietzsche (Volume IV : Nihilism) op. cit., p. 4.
88. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 9. [s. 2]
89. Pfeffer, op. cit., p. 73.
90. Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., p. 181. [s. 125]
91. Tracy B. Strong, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration (Berkeley, California; University of California Press, 1975). p. 11.
92. Albert Camus, The Rebel [trans. Anthony Bower] (New York; Vintage Books, 1956 - originally published in 1951). p. 68.
93. Strong, op. cit., p. 11.
94. Pfeffer, op. cit. p. 74.
95. Robert C. Solomon, "Nietzsche, Nihilism, and Morality" in Nietzsche: A Collection of Critical Essays Robert C. Solomon, ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana; University of Notre Dame Press, 1980 - reprint of 1973 Anchor Books edition). p. 202.
96. Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., p. 167. [s. 108]
97. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols op. cit., p. 69. [Expeditions of an Untimely Man s. 5]
98. Strong, op. cit., p. 61.

99. Ibid.
100. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 20 [s. 30]
101. Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd (Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books, 1968 - revised and enlarged edition). p. 83.
102. Samuel Beckett, Molloy in Molloy / Malone Dies / The Unnamable [trans. Patrick Bowles/Samuel Beckett] (New York; Grove Press, Inc., 1965 -originally published in 1955). p. 50. "Not to want to say, not to know what you want to say, not to be able to say what you think you want to say, and never to stop saying, or hardly ever, that is the thing to keep in mind, even in the heat of composition." (Ibid., p. 28.)
103. R.J. Hollingdale, "Appendix C" in his translation of Twilight of the Idols op. cit., p. 190.
104. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Wanderer and his Shadow (Der Wanderer und sein Schatten) [trans. R.J. Hollingdale] (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1986 - this translation based on the originally published edition of 1880 which was incorporated into the second volume Human, All Too Human with a new preface in 1886). p. 306. [s. 11]
105. Friedrich Nietzsche, Human, All Too Human (Menschliches, Allzumenschliches) [trans. R.J. Hollingdale] (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1986 - originally published in 1878, this translation based on edition published in 1886). p. 16. [s. 11]
106. Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Normal Sense" ("Uber Wahrheit und Luge im aussermoralischen Sinne") in Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the early 1870's [trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale] (New Jersey; Humanities Press Inc., 1973 - translated from the manuscript contained in Nietzsche's notebooks circa 1873). p. 85. [s. 1]
107. Ibid., p. 86. [s. 1]
108. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols op. cit., p. 38. [Reason' in Philosophy s. 5]
109. Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Normal Sense" op. cit., p. 84 [s. 1]
110. Strong, op. cit., p. 63.

111. Nietzsche, Twilight of The Idols op. cit., pp. 69 - 70. [Expeditions of an Untimely Man s. 5]
112. Strong, op. cit., p. 60.
113. Ibid., p. 13
114. Friedrich Nietzsche, Daybreak (Morgenrote) [trans. R.J. Hollingdale] (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1982 -translation based on the edition published in 1881). p. 60. [s. 103]
115. Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce Homo [trans. Walter Kaufmann] (New York; Vintage Books, 1967). p. 327. [Why I am a destiny s. 1]
116. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 12. [s. 12]
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid., p. 4. [preface 4]
120. Ibid., p. 7. [s. 1] "The end of Christianity - at the hands of its own morality (which cannot be replaced), which turns against the Christian God (the sense of truthfulness, developed highly by Christianity, is nauseated by the falseness and mendaciousness of all Christian interpretations of the world and of history; rebound from "God is truth" to the fanatical faith "All is false"; Buddhism of action - )." (Ibid.)
121. Nietzsche, Human, All Too Human (Volume Two - Assorted Opinions and Maxims [Vermischte Meinungen und Spruche]) op. cit., p. 218. [s. 20]
122. Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., pp. 282 - 283. [s. 344]
123. Nietzsche, The Will to Power op. cit., pp. 10 - 11. [s. 7]
124. Ibid., p. 13. [s. 12]
125. Joan Stambaugh, Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return (Baltimore/London; The John Hopkins University Press, 1972). pp. 1 - 2.
126. Richard Lowell Howey, Heidegger and Jaspers on Nietzsche: A Critical Examination of Heidegger's and

- Jasper's Interpretations of Nietzsche (The Hague, Netherlands; Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1973). p. 121.
127. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 13. [s. 12B]
128. Ibid., p. 35. [s. 55] "We see that we cannot reach the sphere in which we have placed our values; but this does not by any means confer any value on that other sphere in which we live: on the contrary, we are weary because we have lost the main stimulus. "In vain so far!" (Ibid., p. 11. [s. 8])."
129. Bernd Magnus, Nietzsche's Existential Imperative (Bloomington/London; Indiana University Press, 1978). p. 11.
130. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols op. cit., pp. 40 - 41.
131. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 269. [s. 487]
132. Ibid., p. 272. [s. 493] "Ultimate skepsis. - What are man's truths ultimately? Merely his irrefutable errors." - Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., p. 219. [s. 265]
133. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 451. [s. 853]
134. Ibid., p. 162. [s. 287]
135. Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil (Jenseits von Gut und Bose) [trans. Walter Kaufmann] (New York; Vintage Books, 1966 - translation based on the edition published in 1886). p. 136. [s. 211]
136. Allan Megill, Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1985). p. 33.
137. Michael A. Gillespie & Tracy B. Strong, "Introduction" in Nietzsche's New Seas: Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Politics M. A. Gillespie & T. B. Strong, eds. (Chicago/London; University of Chicago Press, 1988). p. 7.
138. Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals op. cit., p. 163. [III, s. 28]
139. "Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed

to suffering, does not repudiate suffering as such; he desires it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a meaning for it, a purpose of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, not the suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far - and the ascetic ideal offered man meaning! It was the only meaning offered so far; any meaning is better than none at all; the ascetic ideal was in every sense the "faute de mieux" par excellence so far. In it, suffering was interpreted; the tremendous void seemed to have been filled; the door was closed to any kind of suicidal nihilism. This interpretation - there is no doubt of it - brought fresh suffering with it, deeper, more inward, more poisonous, more life-destructive suffering: it placed all under the perspective of guilt. But all this notwithstanding - man was saved thereby, he possessed a meaning, he was henceforth no longer like a leaf in the wind, a plaything of nonsense - the "sense-less" - he could now will something; no matter at first to what end, why, with what he willed: the will itself was saved." - Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals op. cit., p. 162. [III s. 28]

- 140. Pfeffer, op. cit., p. 82.
- 141. Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., p. 182. [ s. 125]
- 142. Strong, op. cit., p. 13.
- 143. Ofelia Schutte, Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche Without Masks (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1984). p. 3.
- 144. Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., p. 181. [s. 125]
- 145. Strong, op. cit., p. 12.
- 146. Paterson, op. cit., p. 226.
- 147. Strong, op. cit., p. 12.
- 148. Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., p. 181. [s. 125]
- 149. Camus, op. cit., p. 23.
- 150. Andre Gide, The Immoralist [trans. Richard Howard] (New York; Vintage Books, 1970 - originally published 1921). P. 7.
- 151. Camus, op. cit., p. 70.
- 152. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy (Die Geburt der Tragodie aus dem Geiste der Musik) [trans. Walter

- Kaufmann] (New York; Vintage Books, 1967 - translation based on edition published in 1872 and subsequently revised in 1886). p. 135. [s. 23]
153. Erich Fromm, Escape From Freedom (New York; Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1941). p. 151
154. Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov op. cit., p. 298.
155. Camus, op. cit., p. 70.
156. Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., pp. 180 - 181. [s. 124]
157. Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., p. 279. [s. 343]
158. Karsten Harries, "The Philosopher at Sea" in Nietzsche's New Seas: Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Politics M. A. Gillespie & T. B. Strong, eds. op. cit., p. 36.
159. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 70. [s. 114]
160. Howey, op. cit., p. 98.
161. Pfeffer, op. cit., p. 86.
162. Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., p. 280. [s. 343]  
**"In the great silence.** - Here is the sea, here we can forget the city. The bells are noisily ringing the angelus - it is time for that sad and foolish yet sweet noise, sounded at the crossroads of day and night - but it will last only for a minute! Now all is still! The sea lies there pale and glittering, it cannot speak. The sky plays its everlasting silent evening game with red and yellow and green, it cannot speak. The little cliffs and ribbons of rock that run down into the sea as if to find the place where it is most solitary, none of them can speak. This tremendous muteness which suddenly overcomes us is lovely and dreadful, the heart swells at it. - Oh the hypocrisy of this silent beauty! How well it could speak, and how evilly too, if it wished! Its tied tongue and its expression of sorrowing happiness is a deception: it wants to mock at your sympathy! - So be it! I am not ashamed of being mocked by such powers. But I pity you, nature, that you have to be silent, even though it is only your malice which ties your tongue; yes, I pity you on account of your malice! - Ah, it is growing yet more still, my heart swells again: it is startled by a new truth, it too cannot speak, it too mocks when the mouth calls something into this beauty, it too enjoys its sweet silent malice. I begin to hate

speech, to hate even thinking; for do I not hear behind every word the laughter of error, of imagination, of the spirit of delusion? Must I not mock at my pity? Mock at my mockery? - O sea, O evening! You are evil instructors! You teach man to cease to be man! Shall he surrender to you? Shall he become as you now are, pale, glittering, mute, tremendous, reposing above himself? Exalted above himself?" - Nietzsche, Daybreak op. cit., p. 181. [s. 423]

163. Pfeffer, op. cit., p. 82.
164. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 318. [s. 585A]
165. Ibid., pp. 16 - 17. [s. 20]
166. Ibid., p. 319. [s. 585A]
167. Ibid., p. 19. [s. 28]
168. Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil op. cit., p. 137. [s. 212]
169. Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 1974 - fourth edition, revised, originally published in 1950). p. 112.
170. Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra op. cit., p. 139. ["On Self-Overcoming"]
171. Nietzsche, Ecce Homo op. cit., p. 310. ["Beyond Good and Evil"]
172. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 15. [s. 15]  
"For courage is the best destroyer - courage that attacks: for in every attack there is a triumphant shout. Man, however, is the most courageous animal: with his courage he has overcome every animal. With a triumphant shout he has even overcome every pain; human pain, however, is the deepest pain. Courage also destroys giddiness at abysses: and where does man not stand at an abyss? Is seeing itself not - seeing abysses? Courage is the best destroyer: courage also destroys pity. Pity, however, is the deepest abyss: as deeply as man looks into life, so deeply does he look into suffering. Courage, however, is the best destroyer, courage that attacks: it destroys even death, for it says: "Was that life? Well then! Once more!" - Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra op. cit., pp. 177 - 178. ["Of the Vision and the Riddle" s. 1]

173. Nietzsche, The Will to Power op. cit., p. 69. [s. 112]
174. Ibid., p. 521. [s. 1007]
175. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Anti-Christ (Der Antichrist)  
[trans. R.J. Hollingdale] (Harmondsworth, Middlesex;  
Penguin Books, 1968 - translation based on edition  
originally published in 1895). p. 116. [s. 4]
176. Nietzsche, Daybreak op. cit., p. 228. [s. 575]

### Three

#### Travels in Nihilon

Given the quasi-eschatological fervour and truculence of his philosophic attack and program, Max Stirner's life was markedly unimpressive and uninspiring, revelling in a mediocrity entirely at odds with his ferocious literary personality. He was born Johann Caspar Schmidt on 25 October 1806 in the town of Bayreuth, a then fairly obscure Bavarian town untouched by the fame later brought to it by Wagner and Richter (177). His parents, Albert Christian Heinrich and Sophia Elenora, were a lower-middle-class couple, of Evangelical Lutheran denomination. His father's trade was the manufacture of musical instruments. The misfortune which shadowed Stirner throughout his life started early. Six months after his birth, his father, without warning, died of a haemorrhage.

Outside of one or two trivial details, very little is known about Stirner's life and interests as a child; Most of the biographies of his life concur on what is known. When he was three years old, Stirner's mother married for a second time. Her new husband, Heinrich Friedrich Ballerstedt, had taken over a pharmacy business and shortly after their marriage the family moved to West Prussia. In 1818, when he was twelve, Stirner was sent back to Bayreuth to continue his education in the noted classical Gymnasium of the city, where

he appears to have been a capable and industrious pupil (178). By happenstance, the director of this institute was Georg Andreas Gabler, who would later succeed to the chair of the Philosophy department at the university of Berlin after the death of Hegel (179). Stirner passed his Leaving Examination, placing third in a class of twenty-five, and in 1826 was granted a Leaving certificate of the first rank, which included the commendation of 'very worthy' (180). With this promising start behind him, Stirner embarked upon what would prove to be a fairly lengthy, intermittent, and ultimately innocuous university career.

At the age of twenty, he went to the University of Berlin and entered the faculty of philosophy where he heard Hegel lecture on the history of philosophy, philosophy of religion and the philosophy of spirit (181). He also showed an interest in theology and attended lectures by Schleiermacher, Neander and Marheineke (182). After two years, following the custom of the times, Stirner registered at the University of Erlangen where he continued his studies in theology and religion. A year later, he entered the University of Konigsberg, where Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) had held court throughout much of his career as an academic and philosopher.

At this point, a break of three years duration appears in Stirner's academic progress. Though registered at Konigsberg, he never attended a lecture. The potent combination of ill-health and embarrassed financial

circumstances seems to have kept him tangled up for most of 1830. In 1831, though once again nominally registered at Konigsberg, Stirner was called away to attend to 'family affairs', most likely the increasing mental deterioration of his mother, who was slowly slipping into insanity (183). By 1832 he was back at the University of Berlin, hoping to complete his studies.

There were setbacks still to come. He fell ill, and as a result was forced to neglect several courses of lectures in order to prepare for his examinations in the time remaining. . . . Although he formally completed his studies in March 1834, it was late November before he was able to submit the written tasks demanded of him by his examiners . . . . After his oral examination in April 1835, his examiners reported him lacking in precise information except where biblical knowledge was concerned (184).

Stirner emerged from this fracas with only a limited conditional 'facultas docendi', and his ambition of teaching at a state-run Gymnasium as a Gymnasiallehrer shattered. After his graduation, Stirner was somehow able to extend his probationary year of teaching at the Berlin Konigliche Realschule to a year and a half. At the end of this residency, he was not appointed to or offered a salaried post at any state-run schools by the Prussian government. His exact activities during this interim period remain cloaked in shadows. In 1837, he married Agnes Butz, the daughter of his landlady (185). Any happiness he derived from this union was

short-lived, when, after less than a year of marriage, his wife died in childbirth (186).

In 1839, Stirner was able to obtain a teaching position at a privately-run school, Madame Gropius's 'Institute for the Instruction and Cultivation of Superior Girls' (187). The following five years was one of the few intervals in his life where Stirner was free from financial worries and relatively healthy (188). His teaching job demanded comparably little of his energies or time. His afternoons and evenings were essentially free and he could dedicate his spare time to the pursuit of various interests and studies of his own. He found himself once again living in Berlin, a city he knew from his student days, frequenting the coffee houses and taverns, seeking the company of intellectuals and litterateurs (189). It was during this period that the germination for Stirner's career as a philosopher began.

Toward the end of 1841, he began to attend the meetings of a loose-knit group of young journalists, teachers, officials and university students who were the nucleus of the left-wing of the Young Hegelian movement, who called themselves 'die Freien' ('the Free men'). They congregated regularly at Hippel's Weinstube on the Friedrichstrasse in Berlin where they would discuss, alter, amend and even refute the teachings of their nominal 'master', Georg Hegel. Their members, at one time or another, had included such illustrious luminaries and personages as Wilhelm Jordan, poet

of the Nibelungs; the rebellious theologian Bruno Bauer; the philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach; the young Karl Marx, while in Berlin completing his studies, had also attended and participated in a few of the discussions ; also enthusiastically taking part in the proceedings was Marx's trusty collaborator Friedrich Engels, who was completing his year of compulsory military service in Berlin at that time (190). During this period, Berlin was full of groups of radicals, young and old, exchanging, discussing or discrediting their respective criticisms of the government and society (191). Soon after his association with "die Freien" began, Stirner was a member of the provisional 'inner' planning circle which chiefly comprised Bruno Bauer, Ludwig Buhl, Eduard Meyer and Edgar Bauer (brother of Bruno) (192).

The boisterous behaviour and general rambunctiousness of 'Die Freien' alienated and offended a great many of their older contemporaries, who thought them to be a drunken rabble. The discussions and debates at Hippel's Weinstube were at times brilliant, extravagant, tumultuous, and on occasion, frivolous. In the midst of this brouhaha, Stirner would sit, silent, smiling and detached, smoking a cigar, on occasion uttering some wry and ironic remark and commentary on the antics of the metaphysical incendiaries that surrounded him (193). He never participated in the philosophical brawls which ended in upended furniture,

shouted curses at the metaphysics of an opponent or succumbed to the appeals of cynicism and vulgarity that others cherished (194). Stirner, remained quiet and reserved, creating neither bitter enemy nor close friend amongst 'die Freien'.

Stirner was quite amiable to all, willing and content to discuss any and all questions about philosophical matters, but never spoke of himself or revealed his own views. He placidly observed, absorbed, critically assessed and analyzed, and eventually refuted those views being discussed by other members of the group, when he had finished formulating his own philosophical outlook. "When it appeared, Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum (The Ego and His Own) turned out to be a scathing repudiation of every moral and social viewpoint he had heard expressed among 'die Freien'; but its very exhaustiveness as a catalogue of their intellectual follies and self-deceit is an irrefutable testimony to the part played by this fractious **Doktorlub** in animating Stirner to review his situation and compose his philosophical response to it (195)."

The "Young Hegelian" movement has its origins in the early 1830s. "In the years immediately following the death of Hegel in 1831, his disciples continued to present as united a front as they had during the lifetime of the Master (196)." Initially, this front of homogeneity was successfully maintained, and all basically agreed with the

view that Hegel's teachings represented the pinnacle and apex of all philosophy; that within them the complete unfolding and manifestation of 'Spirit' was revealed. As long as Hegelianism was seen to be favourably disposed to and did not attack the existent ideology and institutions of Prussia, the authorities were willing to let it flourish and even gave it a sympathetic hearing. The Hegelian movement, and, during their early stages, the Young Hegelians, adopted the political role of the 'loyal opposition', since they felt that their ideas of change and reform could be incorporated within the existing institutional framework. Hegelianism was seen to be the final answer, the final philosophic system, and all that was required of his younger followers and others was to work out its implications to their fullest flowering in those areas unexamined or undeveloped by Hegel. A fitting analogy for this situation was provided by one of the eulogists at Hegel's funeral who predicted that his Alexandrian empire of thought would now be shared amongst the various satraps diffused throughout the kingdom (197).

The mask of uniformity among the followers of Hegel existed for a relatively short period of time. Even before Hegel's death there was a considerable amount of dissension and strife amongst his followers. In the period after his death, the cleft caused by these differences of opinion concerning the correct interpretation of various tenets of the Master became increasingly public and solidified.

"People started to ask whether Hegel was not really a pantheist and the two questions most hotly debated were the immortality of the soul and the personality of God, questions that had already been raised before Hegel's death by Feuerbach in his anonymous book Gedanken uber Tod und Unsterblichkeit (Thoughts about Death and Immortality) (198)." The differing readings of Hegel's ideas were partially the result of ambiguities to be found within his published oeuvre, which consisted of works written for publication and notes collected and transcribed from his lectures.

The commencement of the ground swell that was to become the Young Hegelian movement was initiated in 1835 by the publication of David Friedrich Strauss's Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet (The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined) (199). It is Strauss who first divided the Hegelian movement into left, right and centre.

To the question whether and how far the Gospel history is contained as history in the idea of the unity of divine and human nature, there are three possible answers: namely that from this concept either the whole Gospel narrative or only a part of it or finally that neither the whole of it nor a part of it can be deduced as history from the idea. If these three answers or directions were each represented by a branch of the Hegelian School, then one could, following the traditional simile, call the first direction the right, as the one standing nearest to the old system, the third left and the second the centre (200).

The Life of Jesus had an electrifying effect upon Hegelian and other intellectual circles throughout Germany and Europe. Strauss's work was not particularly unique or original in its motif; instead it served to unite, in a direct and overt manner, that which had long been implicit in the separate developments in the fields of history, philosophy and biblical criticism (201). In his work, Strauss asserted that the Gospel narratives were not accurate or factual historical accounts - due to a multitude of internal contradictions and inconsistencies to be found within them - but rather were the products of a particular community in a particular age (202). "Myths were the poetry of an entire people inspired by philosophical experience or religious sentiment to express, unconsciously and spontaneously, in a concrete form the truth inherent in these experiences and sentiments (203)." The narratives expressed, in the encapsulated form of myth, the wishes, experiences, aspirations and desires of these people.

Strauss viewed the union of divine and human natures as the truth which was concealed within the myths of Christianity. Having repudiated the historical foundations for Christian theology, Strauss attempted a positive reconstruction of Christianity that would philosophically ground and incorporate the truth of this spiritual union (204). He postulated that the union of divine and human

nature was not solely manifest and exclusive to one individual, Jesus Christ, but that all of humanity embodied this union (205). God and humanity were seen to be synergistic; Strauss concluded that without God there could be no man, but it was also true that without man there could be no God.

Strauss argued that Jesus taught the revolutionary doctrine of the union of divine and human natures, but mankind failed to keep pace of the continuing revolution. Because of the myths associated with Jesus, mankind deified him, preserved the alienation of the spirit by stressing and worshipping his uniqueness. The great error - and to the Young Hegelians this error was now clearly the chief heresy of religion - was the continued alienation of spirit from man. In worshipping Jesus, man alienated from himself his true spirit, objectified it in one person, and was then victimized by it: man, unknowingly, was worshipping himself, his own spirit, his own image (206).

Though primarily intended for scholarly purposes, the work had an immediate and explosive effect upon German intellectual circles (207). Strauss was forced to resign by governmental and educational authorities from his position as a lecturer of theology at the university of Tubingen, and the reputation of The Life of Jesus effectively torpedoed any chance of a future academic appointment. The book accentuated the incipient schism within the Hegelian school, as various disciples either defended Strauss's interpretation

or attacked it as odious apostasy.

Among the more hostile critics of The Life of Jesus, was Bruno Bauer (1809 - 1882), a young teacher on the theological faculty at the University of Berlin who would later to take a leading role in "die Freien" and the radical Hegelian insurgency. At this point in his career, Bauer was aligned with the Hegelians of the right who held that the philosophy of Hegel adhered to and confirmed the Christian faith, traditional theology, and affirmed the existing institutional structure as the embodiment of the divine (208). Bauer was at the beginning of a promising career and had gained the approval and favour of influential theologians, such as Marheineke, and influential people in the administration of Prussian king Frederick William III, such as the minister of Public Worship and Education / Culture, Karl Freiherr von Stein zum Altenstein.

However, within a few short years, Bauer had shifted his allegiance from the conservative camp, and was espousing a radical criticism far in excess of Strauss's. "This gradual evolution began in 1839 when Bauer threw down the gauntlet in a pamphlet attacking Hengstenberg designed to show that there was an unbridgeable gap between the Hegelian approach to the Bible and that of the orthodox party. As a consequence of this, Altenstein, the Minister of Culture, who was well disposed to the Hegelian School moved Bauer to Bonn in order to shield him from attack but here Bauer felt even more out

of place and missed the society of his fellow Young Hegelians in Berlin (209)."

At Bonn, for reasons that are still unknown and uncertain, Bauer began to drift to the left, becoming more and more radical in his views. Before Bauer arrived at Bonn, there was a great deal of hostility and resentment amongst the staff there towards him. Altenstein had appointed Bauer to the theological faculty of Bonn because there was no Hegelian on it; the faculty at Bonn resented his appointment for precisely this reason (210). This less than congenial atmosphere only deteriorated. Playing upon Bauer's fragile and precarious financial circumstances, his foes at Bonn refused to pay for his trip and his inaugural lectures and were vague about payment in the future (211). Like many an academic at the beginning of their career, Bauer had been living an austere, hand-to-mouth existence for several years. The longer this predicament dragged on without resolution, the more desperate Bauer's plight grew. No relief appeared to be in sight after the deaths of Frederick William III and Altenstein, when two enemies of Hegelianism and rationalism of any form, Frederick William IV and Johann Albrecht Friedrich Eichhorn came to power.

"In 1840 he (Bauer) published (anonymously) Die Preussische Landeskirche in which he claimed that by the union of the Calvinist and Lutheran Churches in 1817, the state church that resulted had forfeited the right to

suppress criticism. Religion must henceforth not be something separate but immanent in the state, which was the ultimate seat of reason (212)." Bauer also felt that there was going to be a future conflict between theology and philosophy, in which the Prussian state, the seat of reason, would have to take the side of philosophy (213). In the same year, he also published Kritik des Johannes (Critique of St. John's Gospel) with the hopes that the demonstration of sound scholarship would influence and perhaps precipitate a favourable resolution of his situation at Bonn. Bauer distinguished the three synoptic gospels, which were intended as histories, from the gospel of John, which he saw as an artistic creation attempting to incorporate the philosophic views of a later historical period into the person of Jesus (214). An examination of this work would not reveal a 'historic' Jesus, but only the artistic interpretation / presentation of Jesus by one individual, rooting Jesus within the framework of a larger philosophic viewpoint. This gospel used Jesus as a vehicle by which to express a particular view and philosophic background. For the Anti-Hegelian and Anti-Bauer forces at Bonn and within the Prussian administration this work only confirmed their deepest suspicions about Bauer and Hegelianism in general.

Bauer's finalized his break with Christianity, the following year with the publication of Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker (Critique of the

Evangelical History of the Synoptic Gospels) [1841]. Like Strauss's The Life of Jesus, Bauer's study treated the gospels as human documents, the products of human creativity and consciousness, not as the inspired works of men to whom divine revelation had descended (215). Unlike Strauss, however, Bauer did not give the three synoptic gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke) equal weight and attempted to establish their chronological order. He concluded that the accounts of Matthew and Luke were based on the material within the gospel of Mark, which like the gospel of John, was also an artistic creation. However, Bauer went further than Strauss in his conclusions, broaching atheism.

The Gospels were held to be fantasies, the free poetic creations of the individual human evangelists, expressing neither divine truth nor historical truth but merely the private aims and characters of their writers. Christianity is to be understood as merely one of the products of the free human self-consciousness, whose self-motivating activity is the source of all artistic, moral, and intellectual constructions. The conclusion drawn by Bauer was that the nature of ultimate reality was to be found... in the infinitely subjective sphere as an activity of dissolution, criticizing and thereby overthrowing every presupposition which implies a limit to free human reflection (216).

Bauer held criticism to be the last act of Hegelian philosophy. Criticism would negate the ossified surface form to unearth the content of truth. Through the negation of

extraneous beliefs which had fastened themselves to Christianity, Christian truth would be freed from the mire of its past (217). "In the beginning, contradictions appear to dominate - but it would be a shoddy work that did not move through inner, living contradictions. At the end will be found the positive resolution (218)." Only through negation and criticism would progress be possible.

Bauer, like other disciples of Hegel, accepted Hegel's argument that self-consciousness united both subject and object, that the subject and object were parts of a larger whole (219). Once Self-consciousness realized itself in one form, this becomes a barrier to further development (220). Criticism would clear the ground, allowing self-consciousness to develop without restriction.

Bauer believed that God and religion were the objects while man was the subject. Man, then, in so far as he was self-conscious, was both the subject and the object of his consciousness. But man had objectified his own spirit as divine, had alienated his own spirit from himself and worshipped it as transcendent. On the basis of Hegel's philosophy, Bauer knew there could be no difference between subject and object - in the religious sense, no difference between man and God - and that if man subjected himself to something external, he was surrendering to his own alienation and doing violence to his own freedom (221).

Increasingly, religion became the focus for his wrath since it subjugates humanity to the form instead of the

content of truth. For him, christianity was a stage in the development of self-consciousness which had become fixed in the institutional structure; thereby becoming a prison which unnecessarily held up the advancement and development of self-consciousness. The self-consciousness of humanity had progressed past the institutional form of christianity and the emergence of true human freedom and a truly free human self-consciousness was being prevented. Institutional religion was only one level in the evolving spiritual development, not the highest spiritual development as the Hegelians of the right and the authorities would have it. Through criticism he felt that self-consciousness had the means by which to liberate itself from the tyranny of its own issue. Criticism became the means by which Bauer felt he would negate the existing barriers, clearing the way for that which would follow. The infusion of criticism into philosophy would precipitate the realization that in humanity the divine and human natures were united.

After the publication of his study on the Synoptic Gospels, Bauer's position at Bonn was terminated and he was forbidden to teach. He returned to Berlin, becoming affiliated with and taking up a leading role in the burgeoning Young Hegelian movement, in particular, the "Die Freien" faction. The dismissal of Bauer served as a catalyst for the radicalization of the Young Hegelians. It was at this point, that Bauer began to openly proclaim an atheism

similar to that of many other Young Hegelians - one which denied a transcendent God and the possibility of a spiritual existence apart from man (222). By 1843, Bauer, completely enamoured with his own theory of criticism, broke his connections with "die Freien". Following the precepts of criticism, Bauer felt that the critic must stand aloof from society and its causes, alone in his opposition to everything (223).

Within Young Hegelian circles, the replacement of theology with humanism was first strongly advocated by Ludwig Feuerbach in his seminal study Das Wesen des Christentums (The Essence of Christianity) which was published in 1841. Before this specific work, Feuerbach had declared war on theology in 1830 in the anonymously published - though his authorship of this piece was generally known - Thoughts about Death and Immortality, in which he had denied the possibility of personal immortality. The underlying aim of The Essence of Christianity could be said to be the humanization of theology - the repatriation of the human element into the transcendent equation. For Feuerbach, there was no distinction or difference between the divine and human element found in religion, they were identical.

Religion, at least the Christian, is the relation of man to himself, or more correctly to his own nature (i.e., his subjective nature); but a relation to it, viewed as a nature apart from his own. The divine being is nothing else than the human being, or, rather, the

human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man, made objective - i.e., contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being. All the attributes of the divine nature are, therefore, attributes of the human nature (224).

Christianity represents for Feuerbach the alienation of Man from himself. Through religion, man abdicates his own powers and qualities, and transposes them, and thus also his essential self, on to a sacred God beyond the human realm (225). Religion reveals the essence of man, but through the projection of essence this 'divine' quality is seen as belonging more to God than man. The essence of christianity was the essence of feeling; Feuerbach held that religion had an exclusively emotional character separate from rational and abstract thought.

Man - this is the mystery of religion - projects his being into objectivity, and then again makes himself an object to this projected image of himself thus converted into a subject; he thinks of himself as an object to himself, but as the object of an object, of another being than himself (226).

By setting God over Man as a distinct being, this self-projection becomes self-alienation. The postulations of theology and a transcendent God result in the separation of man from himself. By transferring the purified elements of human nature into a being who resides in a sphere beyond human conduct, man is devalued and designated as being

inferior. Religion made worse an already bad situation by further entrenching the separation and distinction of God from his human origins. The end result is that man is made the prisoner of his own creation. Feuerbach "wanted to turn men's interests away from a supernatural, illusory world to the real world of human existence. Christianity, he admitted, had reached a moment of truth when it proclaimed a religion of love; but it negated the truth when it set up a religion of faith that separated man from man. To return man to his true nature both as an individual and as a member of the human species, religious illusions had to be dissolved, theology had to be turned into anthropology, the love of God had to give way to the love of humanity (227)." Christianity was to be pensioned off by a revitalised humanism.

At their inception the Young Hegelians were primarily concerned with religion and other doctrinal issues. Yet underpinning and implicit in this focus on theology was a conscious and systematic attack upon the prevalent ideology and institutions of Prussian society (228). Inscribed within their immersion in radical theology and philosophy was a rejection of traditional authority and belief. They wished to pursue the 'Spirit' to its logical ends and saw the contemporary institutions, strictures and doctrines as barriers to this progress. The absolute realization of the divine Spirit had yet to be reached. The process of alienation engendered by the existing theoretical and

institutional structure, needed to be overcome. "Although some of its individual members took an active part in the revolutionary agenda of 1848, the group as such cannot be said to have contributed in any very effective way to the train of public events leading up to the national convulsion (229)." It was in this intellectual milieu that Stirner observed and formulated his own metaphysical vision.

In late October 1843, Stirner married for a second time. His bride was Marie Dahnhardt, a stereotypical example of George Sand's emancipated woman, and one of the few women undeterred by "Die Freien's" reputation for raucous and debauched behaviour. Though not a leading figure in the philosophic debate, her general congeniality, cigar-smoking and beer drinking put her in good stead with the group at Hippel's and had caught the eye of reticent Stirner. It was also generally known that she enjoyed the benefits of an inheritance of some considerable wealth (230). She had fled to Berlin to escape the suffocation of life with her family and had found refuge and happiness in the life offered by the various intellectual and literary circles to be found in the taverns and coffee houses.

It is around this period that Stirner began the composition and assembly of his single major work, The Ego and His Own. Before the unveiling of The Ego and His Own, Stirner had written and published a number of essays, reviews and articles in various newspapers and periodicals during the

period from 1842 to early 1844. For the purposes of publishing these pieces, he adopted the nom de plume of "Max Stirner", the nickname by which he was known among "Die Freien" and which he had borne since childhood because of his inordinately high forehead (231). These articles included

a very laudatory review of Bruno Bauer's Posaune (Die Posaune des Jungsten Gerichts uber Hegel den Atheisten und Antichristen - The trumpet of Last Judgement on Hegel, the Atheist and Anti-Christ [1841]), and also two longer articles published in the supplement to the Rheinische Zeitung, one on education as the development of the self and the second, in which the influence of Feuerbach is evident, on the very Hegelian subject of the relation between art and religion. Stirner also published two articles a little later in the Berliner Monatsschrift, a review edited by one of the Freien, the first rejecting any ideas of the state, while in the second, a commentary of Eugene Sue's popular novel Les Mysteres de Paris, Stirner elevates the self at the expense of any fixed moral norms (232).

The Ego and His Own was published in Leipzig in late 1844, in an octavo volume of about 500 pages. The book was passed by the censors, who felt that it was too 'absurd' to be taken seriously or considered dangerous. In many ways, Stirner was similar to Strauss in that his work was an ingenious amalgamation of the various theories then current within radical circles. The out lay and structure of The Ego and His Own was closely modeled after that of Feuerbach's The Essence of Christianity. The theory of radical criticism as

espoused by Bruno Bauer also seemed to run very deep through the pages of Stirner's work. Yet, Stirner's distinction lies in his extension and appropriation of his colleagues arguments into areas and ways unimagined by them. The theoretical armature of the Young Hegelians was taken by Stirner and given a direction completely his own.

When viewed with the benefit of hindsight, the articles leading up to The Ego and His Own outline the gradual evolution of Stirner's thought from a militant liberal humanism, by way of a defiant individualism, to the relaxed, detached and imperious form of nihilistic egoism that is his striking characteristic (233). To reach his final destiny, Stirner worked his way through the various 'radical' ideologies of his day, casting aside that which he found hypocritical and mendacious, keeping that which suited his vision and purposes. It was at this point that he was ready to compose and deliver his own addition to then current dissident movements - liberal humanism, philosophical socialism, and the philosophy of pure criticism - which he found to be infected by an ultimate compromise: the substitution of some transcendent ideal in the place of God (234). In such a fashion, these so-called atheists had revealed themselves to be quite pious at heart. The program of atheism, he felt, still needed to be carried through to its fullest conclusions.

It was Stirner's opinion that Bauer, Feuerbach and

others, in their effort to be free of traditional theology and other illusions, succumb to one final temptation. They all stop short of the crucial point by admitting the presence of a transcendent ideal such as 'humanity', 'community' or 'criticism'. For Stirner, commitment to any such ideals was yet another evasion of reality. The beliefs of Bauer, Feuerbach and others had lead them to unintentionally create a new structure which serves only as a replacement for the prison they have just demolished. It was Stirner's contention that people still remain shackled in the throes of deception and illusion.

Whereas fifty years later Nietzsche was to find God dead, Stirner actively and punitively set out not only to destroy this deity, but also every philosophical, political, theological or social doctrine that seemed to him, by positing something outside of the individual, whether absolute principle, political party, the state, or even a collective abstraction or classification like Man, to be starting the entire religious process all over again. Any religion was tantamount to slavery. The exaltation of man to the status of supreme creature is nothing but a final disguise for the Christian belief in a human incarnation of God (235).

The introductory paragraph of The Ego and His Own reveals the basic message of Stirner's book. Right from the beginning Stirner affirms the primacy of the ego, the free

individual driven by his own will (236).

All things are nothing to me. What is not supposed to be my concern! First and foremost, the Good cause, then God's cause, the cause of mankind, of truth, of freedom, of humanity, of justice; further, the cause of my people, my prince, my fatherland; finally, even the cause of Mind, and a thousand other causes. Only my cause is never to be my concern. "Shame on the egoist who thinks only of himself!" (237).

In the affirmation of the free individual, Stirner challenges and rejects all the causes and ideas which have ever "enslaved" men in their service (238). All of these are causes which are to be found outside of the individual and each have been submitted as being the ultimate concern of the lone individual; each takes the form of an eternal absolute placed above this world and the individual. All such isms are religious in nature and design - in that they crave worship and submission from their disciples. The one cause which is forbidden to the individual is his own: the egoist is viewed by all as an object of universal condemnation and horror. One is to devote oneself and labour for the concerns and interests of these various causes rather than strive towards the achievement of the more concrete concerns and interests of oneself.

With this in mind Stirner endeavors to inspect how these 'accepted' causes have acquitted themselves. Upon close examination of how they have managed their concerns, what

does Stirner find? "We find that, claiming the obsequious service of all, they themselves claim to serve only themselves, and it is universally assumed that they will be of service to nothing and no one but themselves (239)." God cares only for his cause, "but, because he is all in all, therefore all is his cause! But we, we are not all in all, and our cause is altogether little and contemptible; therefore we must `serve a higher cause'(240)." All such causes are to be rejected since they serve their own interests instead of the individual's. Stirner resolves to take a lesson from these great egoists and instead of further unselfishly serving them, be an egoist himself (241).

Away, then, with every concern that is not altogether my concern! You think at least the "good cause" must be my concern? What's good, what's bad? Why, I myself am my concern, and I am neither good nor bad. Neither has meaning for me. The divine is God's concern; the human, man's. My concern is neither the divine nor human, not the true, good, just, free, etc., but solely what is mine, and it is not a general one, but is - unique, as I am unique. Nothing is more to me than myself (242)!

Thus Stirner decides to dismiss every and any concern which exists outside the concrete reality of his own person - "All things are nothing to me." In doing so, he also places himself above conceptions of morality concerning good and bad ("What's good, what's bad? Why,... I am neither good nor bad"). For the unique individual such ideals have no

meaning. To submit to such conceptions is to acquiesce to concerns external to this unique 'I'. Notions of 'good' and 'bad' denote and imply specific value judgements from which the individual wishes to free himself in order to more fully devote and focus his energies on his own cause and concern. These codes of good and bad ask that we serve their cause not our own, which being our unique cause, is free from all such shadings of right and wrong.

Throughout the hundreds of pages which follow, the statement of "Nothing is more to me than myself" is the one theme to which Stirner will constantly return. Indeed, the concept of egoistic possession is at the heart and core of Stirner's philosophical matrix. It is this special sense of self-possession which Stirner believes makes the individual unique and free. Stirner denies the reality of such abstract concepts as Man and Humanity; the human individual, 'I', is the one thing of which 'I' have certain knowledge (243). Anything beyond this is an abstraction, an alienation of some essence of the individual, projected into the spirit realm.

This unique individual is the one entity which most philosophers have forgotten and neglected in their speculations. For example, in Hegelian thought, the context from which Stirner emerged, "the individual self was belittled in favour of absolute Thought or Spirit. Paradoxically, man was supposed to realize his true self or essence in proportion as he became a moment in the life of

the universal Spirit. An abstraction was submitted for concrete reality (244)." In Judeo-Christian notions of freedom, the very essence of man, was projected outside the human being in the concept of God, and man was enslaved: he was told to deny himself and obey (245). In the metaphysics arising from the left-wing Hegelians, the individual had to find fulfilment in and through such ideals as the 'State' or 'Humanity'. These writers hypocritically speak of the of the individual being 'free' under such circumstances. All such abstractions serve only to depersonalize the individual and alienate him from himself.

When one looks to the bottom of anything, i.e. searches out its essence, one often discovers something quite other than what it seems to be; honeyed speech and a lying heart, pompous words and beggarly thoughts, etc. By bringing the essence into prominence one degrades the hitherto misapprehended appearance to a bare semblance, a deception (246).

We have a tendency to create and imagine 'things at the back of' everything in the physical realm. We do not "try to get hold of things (e.g. to get into [our] head the data of history), but of the thoughts that lie hidden in things, and so, e.g., of the spirit of history (247)." In order to better comprehend the world around us, we intellectualize it, converting it into thoughts and ideals. Behind the objects of the physical world we create the presence of Spirit and other abstract ideas, which help clear some of the mystery

from the natural realm and reduce our fear of it. Through such a rationalization the physical world and its dangers is gradually overcome; it is no longer seen as a threat - we have conquered it with thought, with our mind. The randomness and brutality of the physical world is mapped into an overriding abstract structure. "Our fresh feeling of youth, this feeling of self, now defers to nothing; the world is discredited, for we are above it, we are mind (248)." We begin to associate ourselves with this spirit and grow to despise the earthly domain, since we see ourselves as being superior to it. Our focus is no longer upon the earthly domain but the intellectualized realm of ideas and spirit. We deal with the world according to our ideals rather than our interest, with ideas and concepts instead of 'things'.

We create this spirit realm in order to overcome the chaos of the physical reality we find ourselves entrapped in. Through the allure of the idealized nature and 'perfection', these abstractions begin to gain a stronger and stronger foothold. Instead of maintaining ourselves as individuals, we submerge ourselves into a general abstracted spirit or idea whose locus is beyond and outside of ourselves (249). We judge ourselves and actions according to the standards of this spirit or ideal. The Spirit creates itself out of nothing, in abstraction from the concrete reality of the physical world; "The first creation, on the other hand, must

come forth "out of nothing" - i.e., the spirit has toward its realization nothing but itself, or rather it has not yet even itself, but must create itself; hence its first creation is itself, the spirit (250)."

According to Stirner, our mistake is to have cut ourselves in two, body and beliefs, spiritual and material, surrendering our concrete reality to the whims and dictates of our abstract creation (251). The creation of the void, arising from nothingness, becomes the all in all for us. "The spirit is your ideal, the unattained, the other worldly; spirit is the name of your - God, 'God is spirit' (252)." The ideal or spirit obtains an aura of superiority and sacredness about itself. To sacrifice ourselves to it and serve its cause becomes our highest aspirations, since it is, in our view, a higher being than us. We become infatuated by the realm of the ideal, the sphere of ghostly faith, and the difference between it and ourselves. Yet, we have misunderstood this impulse towards self-dissolution.

If you are bound to your past hour, if you must babble today because you babbled yesterday, if you cannot transform yourself each instant, you feel yourself fettered in slavery and benumbed. Therefore over each minute of your existence a fresh minute of the future beckons to you, and, developing yourself, you get away "from yourself" - i.e. from the self that was at that moment. As you are at each instant, you are your own creature, and in this very "creature" you do not wish to lose yourself, the creator. You are yourself a higher being than you are, and surpass yourself. But

that you are the one who is higher than  
you - i.e. that you are not only  
creature, but likewise your creator..  
(253).

All the ideals by which we have been imprisoned are our own creations. We have perpetuated a deadly form of self-alienation that has destroyed our freedom. We exist in a haunted world, full of phantasms that we have unleashed. This realm of abstraction has been elevated at the expense of the concrete physical world.

Like Bauer, Feuerbach and other Young Hegelians, Stirner saw traditional religion as a process in which an individual projected and objectified one or other aspect of their own essence into a position of external authority over themselves. In general, it was the goal of the Young Hegelians to destroy the dependence on this alienated spirit. The rule of the divine, transcendent absolute was to be ended. The individual could only be free when the process of self-alienation was ended and the spirit was restored to himself.

However, Stirner went further than this in his criticism and accused his compatriots of thinking "theologically". All external absolutes and authorities were to be destroyed: divinity in all its insidious forms must be eliminated. Any authority, any abstraction, any truth which was external and raised above the lone individual was to be repudiated. "As long as you believe in the truth, you do not believe in

yourself, and you are a - servant, a - religious man. You alone are the truth, or rather, you are more than the truth, which is nothing at all before you (254)." The dependence on God or divine authority has been destroyed by Feuerbach, but the ideal of Man or Humanity has been placed in this empty throne creating a new dependence (255). We are still bound by ideals that stand above and separate from us (256). We remain the submissive captives of "fixed ideas". "What is it, then, that is called a "fixed idea"? An idea that has subjected man to itself (257)."

Man, your head is haunted; you have wheels in your head! You imagine great things, and depict to yourself a whole world of gods that has an existence for you, a spirit-realm to which you suppose yourself to be called, an ideal that beckons to you. You have a fixed idea (258)!

In Stirner's opinion, modern society is from top to bottom one great lunatic asylum, and the human race, almost without exception are its demented inmates, the consenting victims of their own obsessions and fixed ideas, "which they will flee to protect, with hysterical venom, against any one rash enough to suggest that they are nothing but illusions (259)." Fixed ideas abound throughout our society - morality, legality, Christianity, etc. Individuals think themselves free because the space encompassed by these ideas and the asylum is so great. The illusion is seamless and the

walls and guard-towers almost invisible. We question the form or interpretation of these ideas and values, but do not question the presupposition of or belief behind the value; we accept these external rules and only question their interpretation instead of their imposition. Our way of life, ideals and communication with one another is determined by these abstractions. Whatever the construct it circumscribes the discourse. In this situation we are acted upon and manipulated, and contained and enslaved by these sacred strictures; true freedom, communication and creation are denied by the confines of our ideas. Like the inmates of a prison, our manner of life is determined by the structure of confinement that we are in (260).

With the constant swirl of discussion of these abstractions enveloping about us, we never question the fixed idea at the centre of the vortex. The wheels in our head continue to churn while we grapple with the projections and offspring. "Whether a poor fool of the insane asylum is possessed by the fancy that he is God the Father, Emperor of Japan, the Holy Spirit, etc., or whether a citizen in comfortable circumstances conceives that it his mission to be a good Christian, a faithful Protestant, a loyal citizen, a virtuous man, etc. - both these are one and the same "fixed idea" (261)." Any idea or structure that claims to transcend the individual is a new god, a new religion; all are created by man's self-alienation, all claim mastery (262) and

contribute equally to this state of delusion.

Bauer, Feuerbach and other Young Hegelians thought they had solved the dilemma of mankind by merely eliminating God from the equation; If God is overthrown, mankind would be freed. Stirner felt that this new revolt against God is nothing but the latest in a long line of theological insurrections. Theology infects the thought of this latest batch of radicals and 'atheists'; they have yet to break the barriers of the realm of heaven.

At the entrance of the modern time stands the "God-man". At its exit will only the God in the God-man evaporate? and can the God-man really die if only the God in him dies? They did not think of this question, and thought they were through when in our days they brought to a victorious end the work of the Illumination, the vanquishing of God: they did not notice that Man has killed God in order to become now - "sole God on high". The **other world outside us** is indeed brushed away, and the great undertaking of the Illuminators completed; but the **other world in us** has become a new heaven and calls us forth to renewed heaven-storming: God has had to give place, yet not to us, but to - Man. How can you believe that the God-man is dead before the man in him, besides the God, is dead (263)?

Stirner feels that like many other perpetrators of the act of metaphysical rebellion, upon reaching the crisis point, Bauer, Feuerbach and others find a replacement for God in another absolute transcendent idea or ideal like "Humanity" or the "State". At the last possible moment they

admit to the presence of some other transcendent object in the scheme of things and the Supreme Omnipotent entity, 'God', merely metamorphosizes into a secularized absolute ideal. "The fear of God in the proper sense was shaken long ago, and a more or less conscious "atheism", externally recognizable by a wide-spread "unchurchliness", has involuntarily become the mode. But what was taken from God has been superadded to Man, and the power of humanity grew greater in just the degree that that of piety lost weight: "Man" is the new God of to-day, and fear of Man has taken the place of the old fear of God (264)." The more arcane and 'primitive' aspects and rituals of religion are trashed and a seemingly more logical and expedient liturgy is established. A new icon is substituted for the old one. Not a God in the sense of a personal deity, but an object grounded in the earthly realm such as 'Humanity', 'Society' or 'Morality'. One temple is burned and looted order that a new edifice may be fabricated.

By positing something like 'Humanity' or 'State' in the place of God, the framework of religion - slavery - is still perpetuated. The song remains the same, only the singing of it changes. "The HUMAN religion is only the last metamorphosis of the Christian religion.... It separates my essence from me and sets it above me, because it exalts "Man" to the same extent as any other religion does its God or idol, because it makes what is mine into something otherworldly, because in general it makes out of what is

mine, out of my qualities and my property, something alien - to wit, an "essence"; in short, because it sets me beneath Man, and thereby creates for me a "vocation" (265)." We are still bound by ideals that are separate and above us. Furthermore, we are asked to sacrifice ourselves for the betterment of 'humanity' or the 'state'.

Yet this humanizing of theology and religion has only worsened the situation and imprisoned the individual even more. The shackles and fetters which bite our flesh are now far more earthly. "If God has given us pain, "Man" is capable of pinching us still more torturingly (266)." The despotic rule of the absolute has been wrenched from the ghostly realm of spirit and infused into earthly forms. The corporeal world is overcrowded by this transfer of spirit from the metaphysical to the physical. Not only God, but all such abstractions must be demolished. The realm of thought and spirit created by the individual, must now be conquered by this individual.

As I find myself back of things, and that as mind, so I must later find myself also back of thoughts - to wit, as their creator and owner. In the time of spirits thoughts grew till 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; I refer all to myself (267).

In place of all this Stirner posits the unique individual, who is free from all social and moral constraint. Instead of turning to the various Gods and idols for rules, guidance and direction, the individual should turn to himself : "Bring out from yourselves what is in you, bring it to the light, bring yourselves to revelation (268)." The egoist refuses to subordinate his carnal interest to his spiritual interests, but pursues either as it pleases him. He refuses to be made a prisoner of concepts such as 'State', 'Humanity' or 'Man'. Anything existing independent of unique entity is rejected. He views all thoughts and values as his own creations, which he can and will annihilate at any given moment. Thoughts are the property, the tools, of some particular, concrete thinker. "I am not abstraction alone: I am all in all, consequently even abstraction or nothing; I am all and nothing: I am not mere thought, but at the same time I am full of thoughts, a thought-world.... But I, as I, swallow up again what is mine, am its master; it is only my opinion, which I can at any moment change, i.e., annihilate, take back into myself, and consume (269)."

The pathway to complete liberation is strewn with the corpses of religion, philosophy, liberalism, socialism, communism and humanism. These are ideals above which the individual must elevate themselves. "My self is my own

creation and my own property, its power is without limits and it belongs wholly to me (270)." The only thing which belongs to us is this self; it is the only thing which is really free. Any other type of freedom is an abstraction, an awaiting imprisonment or shackle. "Who is it that is to become free? You, I, We. Free from what? From everything that is not you, not I, not we. I, therefore, am the kernel that is to be delivered from all wrappings and - freed from all cramping shells (271)." The Egoist asserts and evaluates himself as an unity and refuses to identify himself with any 'higher being', whether it is transcendent or intrinsic (272). "I am neither God nor Man, neither the supreme essence nor my essence, and therefore it is all one in the main whether I think of the essence as in me or outside me (273)."

The egoist is fundamentally at odds with the 'State', 'family' or any other type of collectivist endeavour. The State's concern is with the concept or entity of 'the people', not the individual. By declaring the "equality of political rights", "the State is merely announcing that it has no regard for persons as such: individuals count as nothing before its laws (274)." Against this absolute sovereign the individual has no other rights or recourse other than those granted by it. "Never does a State aim to bring in the free activity of individuals, but always that which is bound to the purpose of the State (275)." Freedom

for citizens of a state is freedom to do as the State permits; all aspects are accepted or rejected by the State. In reality, Political or Civil Liberty merely means that the State has the freedom to do as it wishes. "It does not mean my liberty, but the liberty of a power that rules and subjugates me; it means that one of my despots, like State, religion, conscience, is free. State, religion, conscience, these despots, make me a slave, and their liberty is my slavery (276)."

When the State succumbs to that curious ailment known as "revolution", nothing substantive within the structure changes. For example, in the case of the French Revolution; "The Revolution was not directed against the established, but against the establishment in question, against a particular establishment. It did away with this ruler, not with the ruler -on the contrary, the French were ruled most inexorably; it killed the vicious rulers, but wanted to confer on the virtuous ones a securely established position, i.e. it simply set virtue in the place of vice (277)." Revolution frees a people or brings them liberty, but it cannot free the individual. "What dutiful man could act otherwise, could put himself, his conviction, and his will as the first thing? who could be so immoral as to want to assert himself, even if the body corporate and everything should go to run over it (278)?" If anything, Revolution is particularly repugnant to Stirner since to be a revolutionary

one must continue to believe in something, even where there is nothing in which to believe (279).

Therefore we two, the State and I, are enemies. I, the egoist, have not at heart the welfare of this "human society", I sacrifice nothing to it, I only utilize it; but to be able to utilize it completely I transform it rather into my property and my creature - i.e. I annihilate it, and form in its place the Union of Egoists (280).

The egoist regards the notion of universal and total obligation to society as being completely ludicrous. With such a demand of subservience, society reveals itself to be another disguise for 'the Supreme Being' and religion. 'Social duty' is merely a dream. Society gives us nothing and we owe it no obligations. To even consider that obligations are due to an agent or instrument such as the State, is a ridiculous idea to Stirner since: "society is no ego at all, which could give, bestow, or grant, but an instrument or means, from which we may derive benefit; that we have no social duties, but solely interests for the pursuance of which society must serve us; that we owe society no sacrifice, but if we sacrifice anything, sacrifice it ourselves ... (281)." Society should be viewed as chattel, to be used when it is expedient and convenient, with no obligation or duties to be rendered to it.

Every kind of social arrangement or relationship constitutes a potential threat to the self-possession of the

egoist (282) and this "ownness I will not have from me. And ownness is precisely what every society has designs on, precisely what is to succumb to its power (283)." The lesson the egoist derives from this is that he must create his own relationships.

As an egoist I enjoy all those possessions that my liberation has granted me; they are my property and I dispose of them as I wish. I am even master of my ideas and change them as so many suits of clothes. But this does not mean that I am solitary and isolated. For man is by nature social. Family, friends, political party, state, all these are natural associations, so many chains that the egoist breaks in order to form a 'free association' supple and changeable to varying interests (284).

These relationships, which Stirner calls 'associations', are both pragmatic and exploitive in design and content. The meaning the egoist draws from them is equal to that which he invests. His interest and participation in them will last only as long as the association promotes his ends. They are mere instruments, to be given up undutifully and unfaithfully when they are of no further use. To attach oneself on grounds of principle to any one group is to submit to the rule of an alien master who always tries to set up for its adherents a completely arbitrary ideal of perfection, the realization of which then become's one's overriding vocation (285). The egoist consumes his association, just as society consumes the individual (286).

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. But, as regards the sacrificing, surely "sacrifice" only that which does not stand in my power, i.e., I "sacrifice nothing" at all (287).

The egoist does not aspire to community but to 'one-sidedness'. "Let us not seek the most comprehensive commune, 'human society', but let us seek in others only means and organs which we may use as our property! As we do not see our equals in the tree, the beast, so the presupposition that others are our equals springs from a hypocrisy (288)." The governing creed for the egoist is "Get the value out of thyself (289)!" The egoist does not try to attain his value by 'revolution', since this simply "consists in an overturning of conditions, of the established condition or status, the State or society, and is accordingly a political or social act. . . (290)." The egoist does not desire to rearrange the circumstances he finds himself in, but rather exalt himself above them. The egoist asks why replace one establishment with another one? Why even expend the effort?

Why not do away with the idea of 'establishment' altogether?

Revolution results in new arrangements in which there is precious little in the way of significant change. It is by his personal 'insurrection' that the egoist attains value. Though insurrection "has indeed for its unavoidable consequences a transformation of circumstances, yet (insurrection) does not start from it but from men's discontent with themselves, is not an armed rising, but a rising of individuals, a getting up, without regard to the arrangements that spring from it (291)." Insurrection leads the egoist to no longer let himself be arranged, but to arrange himself, and set no hopes on the false promises offered by 'institutions' (292). It is an act incorporating both creation and destruction, avoiding the peril of stability. The insurgent strives to be constitutionless. Insurrection demands that the individual raise or exalt himself above the established order, rather than making arrangements. The purpose of insurrection is purely egoistic.

The egoistic individual is "the impenetrable core which resists conceptual dissolution because it transpires to be no mere philosophical concept, but an actual living reality (293)." Upon contact with this 'actual living reality' most thought and abstraction comes crashing noisily down to earth. "But I am neither the champion of a thought nor the champion of thinking; for "I", from whom I start, am not a thought,

nor do I consist in thinking. Against me, the unnameable, the realm of thoughts, thinking, and mind is shattered (294)." This personifies the strain of stringent and singular anti-intellectualism to be found within Stirner's work. The egoist he describes is in full revolt against all metaphysical idealism. He engages the invisible world of thoughts as he approaches everything else, and conducts his thinking on the logic of his whim. Moral and metaphysical concepts are used when convenient and are cast aside on the rubbish heap when they are no longer expedient or amusing. Philosophy is like any other activity "which you can give up when the humour wears off (295)." Philosophy is not unique, the individual 'I' is. It is interesting and useful because the individual finds it as such, not because it has any inherent value or interest on its own. Philosophy and the structures of myth mean nothing when compared to the corporeal reality that composes the egoist. This physical entity defies all metaphysical inquiry. **Questions are a burden on others and, more importantly, answers are a prison for oneself.**

This impenetrable core of thoughtlessness allows the egoist to escape the enslavement of thoughts and ideas. This core can be dissolved no further. The drive to question is halted and meets its end with this thoughtlessness. There are no further myths to uncover. The truth, such as it is, has been reached. This allows the individual to retain

control and possession of his 'ownness'. "It is not thinking, but my thoughtlessness, or I the unthinkable, incomprehensible, that frees me from possession. A jerk does me the service of the most anxious thinking, a stretching of the limbs shakes off the torment of thoughts ...(296)." "The owner can cast from him all the thoughts that were dear to his heart and kindled his zeal, and will likewise 'gain a thousandfold again', because he, their creator, remains (297)." Thoughts are creatures, obedient creatures, and they remain as so as long as they are compliant to the egoist's choice: they are expendable and finite property, and are annihilated as they are created, by the egoist. Subservience to thoughts or fictitious entities such as God or the State only serve to weaken the egoist's sense of uniqueness. "And only by this thoughtlessness, this unrecognized 'freedom of thought' or freedom from thought, are you your own (298)." This incomprehensible core restores and retains the individual's possession of himself.

I on my part start from a presupposition in presupposing myself; but my presupposition does not struggle for its perfection like "Man struggling for his perfection", but only serves me to enjoy it and consume it. I consume my presupposition, and nothing else, and exist only in consuming it. But that presupposition is therefore not a presupposition at all: for, as I am the Unique, I know nothing of the duality of a presupposing and a presupposed ego (an 'incomplete' and a 'complete' ego or man); but this that I consume myself, means only that I am. I do not

presuppose myself, because I am at every moment just positing or creating myself, and am I only being not presupposed but posited, and, again, posited only in the moment when I posit myself; i.e., I am creator and creature in one (299).

The description of the being of the individual egoist are not those of a fixed and stable reality. The egoist would hardly be leading a radically nihilistic existence if, having set out to destroy all previously existing and presupposed principles, he presupposed himself as the one static and given principle. Like everything else, the individual is in a constant state of flux. He starts from a presupposed concept of himself but quickly consumes this presupposition and exists only in this act of annihilation. "The world which emerges from his creative act is a world which reflects and carries forward the disintegration and meaninglessness of the original chaos, because it realizes and symbolizes the disintegration and meaninglessness of the person who is its capricious author and its perpetually absconding proprietor (300)." Nothing is sacred and nothing has meaning or value, not even the person of the egoistic individual. Stability is the basis from which enslaving religions begin.

The individual egoist posits himself and exists in the acts of creation and consumption. From this creative nothing the egoist proceeds and returns and while he exists his concern is only with himself. "Egoism and humanity

(humaneness) ought to mean the same, but according to Feuerbach the individual can "only lift himself above the limits of his individuality, but not above the laws, the positive ordinances, of his species." But the species is nothing, and, if the individual lifts himself above the limits of his individuality, this is rather his very self as an individual; he exists only in raising himself, he exists only in not remaining what he is; otherwise he would be done, dead (301)." To stifle or confine the development of the individual is to prevent his evolution; it is akin to killing him. The 'unique individual' or 'egoist', to which Stirner constantly refers, is the same 'I' as 'the Unique One'.

The Unique One chooses to live in the centre of the void created by his negation and nihilism. This unique individual lives without constraint or restraint. The Unique One can live in a world without God or Gods, without fixed meaning, without theological or metaphysical guidance of any sorts, and without commitments. He creates his own meaning and value as he sees fit and changes, alters or discards this value when it no longer suits his purposes or wishes. "If God, if mankind, as you affirm, have substance enough in themselves to be all in all to themselves, then I feel that I shall still less lack that, and that I shall have no complaint to make of my "emptiness". I am not nothing in the sense of emptiness, but I am the creative nothing, the nothing out of which I myself as creator create everything

(302)." The situation about him is created and dissolved in accordance with his desires.

.. I raise myself above truths and their power: as I am super-sensual, so am I super-true. Before me truths are as common and as indifferent as things; they do not carry me away, and do not inspire me with enthusiasm. There exists not even one truth, not right, not freedom, humanity, etc., that has stability before me, and to which I subject myself. They are words, nothing but words, as all things are to the Christian nothing but 'vain things' (303).

Truth is something which is to be used, not cherished. "And if it is used by man, it cannot be always used irrespective of consequences. Why should I die for the truth? What is there sacred about it? If love of the truth is set up as a rule to regulate human behaviour why am I bound to keep it, especially if I have seen to it that others will? The truth is a matter of the best policy and like all things expedient depends in several ways upon me, not vice versa (304)." One asks about the 'truth', but one does not ask of a higher truth - one which would be higher than you - because it does not exist. Truth, like thought, is a tool to be used by the egoist for his own purposes. "Wherever I put my hand I grasp a truth, which I trim for myself. The truth is certain to me, and I do not need to long after it. To do the truth a service is in no case my intent; it is to me only a nourishment for my thinking head, as potatoes are

for my digesting stomach, or as a friend is for my social heart. As long as I have the humour and force for thinking, every truth serves me only for me to work it up according to my powers (305)." By itself it has no value, it is only valuable if I find it so. It is a creature whose value lies in my essence, not its own. For "the truth is dead, a letter, a corpse; it is alive only in the same way as my lungs are alive - to wit, in the measure of my own vitality (306)."

You address yourself to thoughts and notions, as you do to the appearances of things, only for the purpose of making them palatable to you, enjoyable to you, and your own; you want only to subdue them and become their owner, you want to orient yourself and feel at home in them, and you find them true, or see them in their true light, when they can no longer slip away from you, no longer have any unseized or uncomprehended place, or when they are right for you, when they are your property. If afterward they become heavier again, if they wriggle themselves out of your power again, then that is just their untruth - to wit, your impotence. Your impotence is their power, your humility their exaltation. Their truth, therefore, is you, or is the nothing which you are for them and in which they dissolve; their truth is their nothingness (307).

As has been stated previously, thinking is like any other activity which you can give up when the humour or mood for it wears off. Nothing is worth your attention for its own sake.

Even freedom, the philosopher's stone of political theory, is surpassed by the uniqueness or ownness of the Unique One. Social and intellectual freedom are devoid of content and substance, whereas 'ownness' or "self-possession fixes one's attention on those concrete, substantive interests which are the very stuff of one's identity (308)." The thirst for freedom can never be satisfied, for the freer one becomes the more aware one becomes of the new constraints, and freedom cannot be partial, it must be complete, if it is to be 'freedom' (309). "If you think it over rightly, you do not want the freedom to have all these fine things, for with this freedom you still do not have them; you want really to have them, to call them yours and possess them as your property (310)." Stirner views freedom as being realized through owning - possession or 'ownness' (311). "As own you are really rid of everything, and what clings to you you have accepted; it is your choice and your pleasure (312)." One should not only be rid of what one does not want, one should also have what one wants. Freedom, for Stirner, is the condition of being rid of certain things and he points out that the very nature of life makes absolute freedom impossible (313).

One can get rid of a great many things, one yet does not get rid of all; one becomes free from much, not from everything. Inwardly one may be free in spite of the condition of slavery, although, too, it is again only from all sorts of things, not from everything; but

from the whip, the domineering temper, etc., of the master, one does not as slave become free. "Freedom lives only in the realm of dreams!" Ownness, on the contrary, is my whole being and existence, it is I myself. I am free from what I am rid of, owner of what I have in my power or what I control. My own I am at all times and under all circumstances, if I know how to have myself and do not throw myself away on others. To be free is something that I cannot truly will, because I cannot make it, cannot create it: I can only wish it and - aspire toward it, for it remains an ideal, a spook. The fetters of reality cut the sharpest welts in my flesh every moment. But my own I remain (314).

Liberty is something which cannot be granted, it must be seized. Though one might be nominally free to so as one pleases, without the necessary or adequate material resources one is still subjugated. One does not want the formal right to possess certain things, but rather the actual possession of them where they become one's own property. "Of what use is a freedom to you, indeed, if it brings in nothing (315)?" Freedom 'to have' is an abstraction, freedom or liberty consists in possession, in the ownership and disposal of a right. Freedom 'to have' is something which is granted by an abstraction when it gains a hold of an individual. When something is granted, like rights or the freedoms allowed by the State, one is acknowledging the authority of such an entity over oneself. It is by 'ownness' that one discards Gods and becomes free from them. "Ownness created a new freedom; for ownness is the creator of everything, as genius

(a definite ownness), which is always originality, has for a long time already been looked upon as the creator of new productions that have a place in the history of the world (316)." Freedom can be taken away from the egoist at any time, however only he alone can alienate himself and lose his sense of ownness. The Unique One prizes only himself, starts from himself and his own interests and uses any means available to him, by whatever might, persuasion, petition, demand, fraud, or hypocrisy to realize these interests. The means used are determined by what he is. If he is weak, so too are his means. "The own man is the free-born, the man free to begin with; the free man, on the contrary, is only the eleutheromaniac, the dreamer and enthusiast (317)."

Instead of vainly pursuing the phantasmal idea of perfect or absolute freedom, the egoist is content to accept such additions to his actual freedom as reflect the actual increase of his power which he accomplishes from the inalienable base of all his power and property - his indestructible property in himself (318). "But ownness has not any alien standard either, as it is not in any sense an idea like freedom, morality, humanity, and the like: it is only a description of the - owner (319)."

This does not mean, in the words of Fichte, that 'the ego is everything'. For "it is not that the ego is all, but the ego destroys all, and only the self-destructing ego, the never-being ego, the - finite ego is really I (320)." Only

'I', this transitory ego is real. The human race is merely a fiction over which the individual lifts himself. The individual exists in raising himself, not in remaining what he is. "Man with the great M is only an ideal, the species only something thought of. To be a man is not to realize the ideal of Man, but to present one-self, the individual. . . . I am my species, am without norm, without law, without model, and the like (321)." It is better that an individual make very little out of themselves, than allow themselves to be developed and acted upon by the might and teachings of custom, religion and other external strictures. The little that an individual makes of themselves is inherently superior to complying and being determined by the influence of "species". It is better to be an unruly, undisciplined, ill-tempered child than a compliant old man encased in a young body. No matter what comes of his decision, the individual is formed by his own will rather than being defined by others. Value and power are conferred upon the individual because of his uniqueness.

'What you have the power to be you have the right to.' I derive all right and all warrant from me; I am entitled to everything I have in my power. I am entitled to overthrow Zeus, Jehovah, God, etc., if I can; ... I am entitled by myself to murder if I myself do not forbid it to myself, if I myself do not fear murder as 'wrong' (322).

The Unique one rejects every and all forms of

consolation or compromise. The egoist is authorized to do everything he is capable of. "Nothing is true and Everything is permitted". The only limits on the actions of the egoist are his own capabilities. The only reality he recognizes is power. "Egoism does not think of sacrificing anything, giving away anything that it wants; it simply decides, What I want I must have and will procure (323)."

The egoist obtains what he wants through whatever means he sees fit. To realize his interest anything is allowed. "In this respect individualism reaches a climax. It is the negation of everything that denies the individual and the glorification of everything that exalts and ministers to the individual (324)." The egoist performs the most merciless and pitiless acts of desecration against the demands and concepts he finds in society. "Nothing is holy to him (325)!" The egoist is necessarily a criminal, and crime is his life. It is only against sacred things that there can be criminals; you against me can never be a criminal, but only an opponent (326).

Because 'crime' is essentially the defiance of what is held sacred - the defiance of property, of the family, of religion, the State, or mankind - it means that the egoist, to whom nothing is sacred, is by his very existence the most tireless, the most impertinent criminal. If, in his own interest, the egoist will realistically appraise and acknowledge the power exerted by other individuals, he will acknowledge nothing in them corresponding to 'merit', nothing which invests them with 'right' or 'authority';

for the authority of the universe itself is set at nothing by the slightest exertion of his power, even when this simply takes the form of closing his eyes and stopping his ears (327).

Nothing is sacred for the Unique One. In the perpetuation of crime the Unique One asserts himself and mocks everything that is held sacred. "Everything sacred is a tie, a fetter (328)." They attempt to bind and restrain the egoist. They have no value. The Unique One only asserts himself, not the sanctity of these 'sacred' things. He has no respect for them or the authority which tries to institute them. He denies all natural law and repudiates all moral principle. He obeys only the whims and dictates of his own will, whatever its consequences or implications.

Egoistic interaction with the world strives at appropriation of the world, at its conversion into the food for the personal enjoyment of the egoist (329). For him "no one is a person to be respected, not even the fellow-man, but solely, like other beings, an object in which I take interest or else do not, an interesting or uninteresting object, a usable or unusable person (330)." All powers and all others exist as the egoist's property, i.e., material for enjoyment. "I want only to be careful to secure my property to myself; and, in order to secure it, I continually take it back into myself, annihilate in it every movement toward independence, and swallow it before it can fix itself and become a "fixed

idea" or a "mania" (331)."

But how does one use life? In using it up, like the candle, which one uses in burning it up. One uses life, and consequently himself the living one, in consuming it and himself. Enjoyment of life is using life up (332).

Any thing outside of the individual is something which is to be used or consumed. Valuable or worthless, all is fodder for the whims and caprices of the egoist.

If I first said, I love the world, I now add likewise: I do not love it, for I annihilate it as I annihilate myself; I dissolve it. I do not limit myself to one feeling for men, but give free play to all that I am capable of. Why should I not dare speak it out in all its glaringness? Yes, I utilize the world and men! With this I can keep myself open to every impression without being torn away from myself by one of them. I can love, love with a full heart, and let the most consuming glow of passion burn in my heart, without taking the beloved one for anything else than the nourishment of my passion, on which it ever refreshes itself anew (333).

The Unique One does not aspire to find his true self or any other such goal. He takes himself as his starting point. This is to say that he accepts himself purely as he is, without fear or reprimand. He does not look to external sources for guidance. He is his own property, and can use himself accordingly. "If I am my own property, I shall ignore the Christian call to forgo my present enjoyment in

order to seek my 'true self', I shall spend myself as I please in this life and refuse to hoard my possibilities in order to make a down payment on an 'eternal life', since I shall refuse to treat my life as something 'sacred' or as something which I 'owe' to God or to my fellow-men (334)." The scale of the egoist's delinquency against those 'fixed stand-points', the Christian and humanitarian ideals, is generally a fairly precise measurement of his own self-possession and self-enjoyment (335). All notions of ideal worlds and ideals of human nature are consigned to the scrap-heap, along with the other moral and metaphysical offal that is constantly being thrust upon him. The egoist has no calling to fulfil.

A man is 'called' to nothing, and has no 'calling', no 'destiny', as little as a plant or a beast has a 'calling'. The flower does not follow the calling to complete itself, but it spends all its forces to enjoy and consume the world as well as it can - i.e., it sucks in as much of the juices of the earth, as much air of the ether, as much light of the sun as it can get and lodge.... A calling he (man) has not, but he has forces that manifest themselves where they are because their being consists solely in their manifestation, and are as little able to abide inactive as life, which, if it 'stood still' only a second would no longer be life (336).

The Egoist exists in the present reality, not an idealized nostalgic past or an idealized utopian future. He does not bother to live up to a calling or vocation, he

merely uses his powers to their fullest potential and capability. "Everything is my own, therefore I bring back to myself what wants to withdraw from me; but above all I always bring myself back when I have slipped away from myself to any tributariness. But this too is not my calling, but my natural act (337)."

The egoist, or Unique One, is free to do anything. "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law (338)." No idea can have reality or achieve corporeity. Ideals are like phantasms or ghosts. The individual no longer serves any external essence or absolute idea, but himself. "People have always supposed that they must give me a destiny lying outside myself, so that at last they demanded that I should lay claim to the human because I am = man. This is the Christian magic circle. Fichte's ego too is the same essence outside me, for every one is ego; and if only this ego has rights, then it is "the ego", it is not I (339)." I am not an individual amongst other individuals, but the sole individual; I am unique. It is as this unique individual that, I possess all, apply myself and evolve. The individual does not develop man, nor as man, but as I, I develop myself (340). As "I", I exert all my available power and accomplish all that I am capable of, without guidance or stricture from external absolutes. Everything about this I is unique.

With an ideal such as Humanity being consigned to the disembodied world of spectres, where it is slowly fading to

nothingness, Stirner addresses the eternal question of "What is Man?" He substitutes in its place a personal question, "Who is Man?" To which he juxtaposes the only answer in light of his argument, "I, this Unique one, am he". In the personage of the Unique One the ideal 'Man' finds its only possible realization. At the end of The Ego and His Own Stirner declares:

They say of God, "Names name thee not".  
That holds good of me: no concept  
expresses me, nothing that is designated  
as my essence exhausts me; they are only  
names. ... I am owner of my might, and  
I am so when I know myself as unique. In  
the Unique One the owner himself returns  
into his creative nothing, out of which  
he is born. Every higher essence above  
me, be it God, be it man, weakens the  
feeling of my uniqueness, and pales only  
before the sun of this consciousness. If  
I concern myself for myself, the Unique  
One, then my concern rests on its  
transitory, mortal creator, who consumes  
himself, and may I say : **All things are  
nothing to me (341).**

In the centre of the void stands Stirner in the personality of, I, the Unique One, defiant and dissolute. Proprietor of all that his power enables him to acquire. A person to whom all things are nothing, all causes are ghosts, and nothing is sacred. Someone who has consciously chosen to live in total estrangement from God and Man. He rejects all that is external to his concrete person. While others mourn the loss of value, he resolves to live on terms which do not compromise or enslave him, free from all restriction.

The immediate response to Stirner's incendiary attack was overwhelming. No one had been prepared for the contents of Stirner's book, since he had never revealed to any one the nature of his own ideas, or let on that he was actually writing such a work. "A tremor ran through the whole literary and philosophical world, erupting with astonished indignation at those points most sensitive to the impact of Stirner's tumultuous iconoclasm (342)."

However, this notoriety was exceptionally brief. By 1848, Max Stirner and his book had faded from the public limelight, and Stirner's life returned to its previous state of misfortune and mediocrity, somewhat worse for wear. After initially being regarded as a daring philosophical masterwork, The Ego and His Own was soon considered and judged to be the product of an extremely antisocial eccentric and crank. It was also the opinion of his contemporaries that Stirner, by the very nature of his philosophic narcissism and extremism, had painted himself into a corner and foreclosed all possibility or potentiality of further and future evolution or debate (343).

Prior to the publication of The Ego and His Own Stirner had left his position at Madame Gropius' school. There are two possible reasons which might explain Stirner's forfeit of his only source of steady and guaranteed income; [A] Stirner wished to fully enjoy his ephemeral fame and seemingly new career as philosophic enfant terrible which continued

employment at Madame Gropius' might irrevocably inhibit and [B] when it became known to his employers that Herr Schmidt was also one and the same as Herr Stirner, whose scandalous and 'immoral' book rejoiced and cavorted, with pagan abandon, in a militant and undisguised atheism and glorified 'senseless' violence and rebellion, it is unlikely that they would see such a person as exercising and exerting the proper influence and moral propriety to continue to instruct and cultivate 'superior' girls. Or at least not the type of superior girls they were interested in cultivating. Stirner fully expected his work to provide the material and the income of a long stable career as a man of letters. With this belief, and the financial and emotional support of his wife, he resigned from his teaching post.

When the aura of his fleeting fame began to ebb, Stirner translated several volumes of English and French economists - Jean Baptiste Say and Adam Smith - into German in order to earn a living. Unfortunately, while this was an exceptionally laborious task it was also a highly unprofitable and unremunerative venture. Neither this or the one other work he published before his death in 1856 (The History of Reaction published in 1852 under his real name), show any trace of the fiery and audacious individualism that characterized the author of The Ego and His Own. Indeed, The History of Reaction has been characterized as more accurately reflecting and mirroring the prosaic mediocrity and mundane

failure of the career of his alter-ego, Johann Schmidt.

In lieu of his expected literary career, Stirner attempted several ill-fated and sometimes preposterous business ventures in order to maintain or revive his failing financial fortunes. In one such instance he employed the remaining bulk of his wife's inheritance on a scheme for distributing milk in Berlin, which eventually went as sour as the milk which was poured down the drains when the venture failed and went bankrupt. All of Stirner's business efforts were marked by his lack of business experience and their inevitable and ultimate failure.

Stirner's last years were spent in Berlin, dwelling in poverty and obscurity, eking out a barely subsistence living by arranging deals between small businessmen. His wife, Marie Dahnhardt, left Stirner in 1846 and divorced him shortly thereafter in 1850. Except for two occasions on which he was imprisoned for debt, he was fairly successful in his efforts to avoid his creditors. This comprised the major activity of his life until his death on June 25, 1856. His death, like the majority of his life, is shrouded in obscurity. "In the May of 1856, in his lodgings with Frau Weiss in the Philipstrasse, he was stung in the neck by some kind of winged insect that must have been poisonous, for he fell into a violent fever, in which he lay for several weeks. He made what seemed a partial recovery, but the infection had entered his blood and he died in the early evening of 25 June

(344)." Amongst the few mourners at his funeral, was his compatriot from Hippel's, Bruno Bauer. His death passed unnoticed and unmentioned. It was not until some fifty years later, after Nietzsche had been discovered and elevated from the twilight-world, that Stirner emerged from limbo and again began to receive some attention and study.

In the aftermath of his resurrection, Stirner has often been placed within the European Anarchist tradition. Arguably, there is some similarity in Stirner's and the Anarchists' hostility to the structure of the State, and any form of centralized authority. However, such a classification, if anything, shows a basic failure to grasp the full impact and scope of Stirner's vision. Stirner's Unique individual could never subscribe or commit himself to the myriad of socialist and humanitarian ideals of man and society endorsed by the anarchists - no matter what the faction. Given that these are some of the "gods" he spends so much effort consigning to the rubbish heap, how could Stirner ever "have been historically confused with dedicated revolutionaries like Proudhon and Bakunin, who sought, by peaceful or violent means, to accomplish the emancipation of the human race and its regeneration within a framework of personal dignity and social equality (345)?"

## Notes

### Three Travels in Nihilon

177. George Woodcock, op. cit., p. 96.

178. Paterson, op. cit., p. 4. Paterson notes at the beginning of his description of Stirner's life that he is indebted to the account given in Mackay's Max Stirner: sein Leben und sein Werk. Other sources also acknowledge Mackay's work as definitive. Unfortunately, like some other important Stirner material, it has not been translated from German into English.

While most of the sources on Stirner adhere to a similar biographical account, their subsequent interpretations and exegesis of his thought tend vary considerably. R. Paterson's The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner is the seminal study of Stirner and issues relevant to him currently available in English. This study effectively contrasts the concerns and enquiries of Stirner with the similar locus of the Existentialists. Paterson also examines the seeming similarity of the position of Stirner and that of Anarchism; he contends, and demonstrates how various commentators have moulded and distorted the thought of Stirner to fit into this classification (for example, George Woodcock's Anarchism). Paterson's study is somewhat limited, however, in both its discussion of the relationship between Stirner and Marx and its analysis of Marx's criticism of Stirner. John Carroll, in his study Break-Out from the Crystal Palace: The Anarcho-Psychological critique; Stirner, Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky, contends that Paterson's account of the psychological significance of Stirnerian psychology is also deficient.

The Stirner-Marx debate has always been discussed from the vantage point of Stirner's importance on the evolution Marx's thought; Both Sidney Hook, in his study From Hegel to Marx, and David McLellan, in his work The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx deal with this question. McLellan's account is critical of certain textual questions contained within Hook's, and contends the usual account of the evolution of Marx's thought ignores the contribution, albeit negative, of Stirner. McLellan's summary of the criticism of Stirner contained within The German ideology is, in general sympathetic to Stirner and contains a more accurate reading of The Ego and His Own than Hook's assessment. Hook, like others before and after him, after indulging in what appears to be a merely perfunctory reading of The Ego and His Own,

erroneously treats Stirner as a member of the Anarchist school.

John Carroll's Study, Break-Out from the Crystal Palace, is an attempt to depict Stirner, Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky as representatives of what he classifies as the "Anarcho-Psychological" tradition. Throughout his study, he juxtaposes and contrasts this position with those of the liberal-rationalist and marxist-socialist traditions. Carroll contends that Paterson's refutation of the label of Anarchist for Stirner is due to a misinterpretation of Stirner's intent (This point is discussed further in footnote 343). His discussion of Stirnerian psychology raises many valid and interesting points.

Finally, Albert Camus's The Rebel, while not specifically concerned with Nietzsche and Stirner, is also an interesting discussion upon some related and relevant issues. Though Camus' existentialist humanism prevents him from reading Stirner in a positive light, his examination raises some pertinent points that need to be addressed in any study of Stirner and the possible implications of his vision.

179. William J. Brazill, The Young Hegelians (New Haven & London; Yale University Press, 1970). p. 208.
180. Paterson, op. cit., p. 4.
181. David McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx (London; Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1969). p. 117.; Paterson, op. cit., p. 4.
182. Brazill, op. cit., p. 208. According to Paterson (op. cit., p. 4) Stirner heard Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, a theologian and philosopher whose work was lost in the shadow of Hegel, lecture on ethics; Philipp Marheineke, a prominent member of the Hegelian Right, lectured on dogmatics, Church symbolism and recent philosophical theology; Johann August Wilhelm Neander, who was to become a leading adversary of David Friedrich Strauss (1804 - 1874) - author of The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined (Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet [1835-1836]), lectured on ecclesiastical history and Christian antiquity.
183. Paterson, op. cit., p. 5. Throughout this period Stirner's mother moved back and forth between various states of lucidity and various mental homes. In 1837, after the death of her second husband, Stirner's mother entered a private mental home in Berlin where she spent the rest of her life until her death in March 1859. (Ibid., p. 15.)

184. Ibid.
185. Ibid., p. 6.
186. Brazill, op. cit., p. 209.
187. Paterson, op. cit., p. 6. Note: A Gymnasiallehrer was a teacher appointed and employed by the Royal Brandenburg Commission for Schools. Stirner's conditional, and narrowly earned, degree enabled him only to gain employment at less prestigious and privately-run institutions like Madame Gropius's, not the state run Gymnasiums at which he wished so earnestly to teach.
188. Brazill, op. cit., p. 209.
189. Ibid.
190. Stirner joined "die Freien" near the end of 1841, after Marx had left Berlin (McLellan, op. cit., p. 118.). They never met or knew one another, though they had a mutual acquaintance in Friedrich Engels. Engels had spent many an evening at Hippel's seated beside Stirner (The only extant portrait of Stirner is a pencil sketch drawn by Engels, culled from the memory of these times after Stirner's death). "In a long letter to Marx, only a few days after the publication of Der Einzige, Engels wrote : 'You will probably have heard talk of, if you have not read, Stirner's book. . . . it is the egoism of Bentham, developed on the one hand with greater logic, on the other with less logic. . . . this work is important, far more important than [Moses] Hess believes, for instance . . . the first point we find true is that, before doing whatever we will on behalf of some idea, we have first to make our cause personal, egoistic . . . it is equally from egoism that we are communists . . . . Stirner is right to reject the "man" of Feuerbach . . . [since] Feuerbach's Man is derived from God.' Engels added that, while 'among all "die Freien", Stirner obviously has the most talent, personality, and dynamism', his book 'once more shows the degree to which everything emanating from Berlin is infected by abstraction (Letter to Marx, 19 November, 1844).' Engels' modified rapture must have been chilled by Marx's reply, for in his next letter we find him dismissing Der Einzige thus: 'As for Stirner, I entirely share your opinion. When I wrote to you, I was still too much under the immediate impression produced by the book; but, since I have closed it and have been able to reflect at greater length, I find in it what you find

(Letter to Marx, 20 January, 1845)' (Paterson, op. cit., pp. 102 - 103)." Marx and Engels would formulate their reply and refutation of Stirner's egoism and other aspects of then-current radical German metaphysics (primarily the Young Hegelians situated in Berlin who were centred around Bruno Bauer) in Deutsche Ideologie (The German Ideology). On the whole, it represents the most substantial criticism of Stirner and takes the form of a large and rambling page-by-page critique and commentary on The Ego and His Own which is liberally laced with crude satire and heavy handed pedantic. While Stirner offered Marx little in the way of positive doctrine, he played an important part in the development of Marx's thought by detaching him from the influence of Feuerbach (McLellan, op. cit., p. 129).

When The Ego and His Own was published Marx was and was viewed by many of the Young Hegelians to be a disciple of Feuerbach (Ibid.). For example, in Die heilige Familie (The Holy Family), written in the autumn of 1844, before the appearance of The Ego and His Own, Marx has high praise for Feuerbach and attributes to him "the overturning of the old system and the placing of 'man' in the centre of philosophical discussion (Ibid., p. 130)." Feuerbach's notion of 'man' was one of the chief grounds on which Stirner based his critique and attack. In Stirner's mind, Feuerbach's 'Man' was yet one more universal abstraction by which mankind would be enslaved; The doctrine of humanism was merely the final metamorphosis of Christianity.

Within the confines of The German Ideology, Marx and Engels distance themselves from Feuerbach in a manner which implied that they recognized the validity of Stirner's critique. In part one of this work, Feuerbach's conception of humanism and sensualistic materialism is rejected as idealistic and abstract, and in its place Marx and Engels posit a more materialistic and concrete concept. Their own criticism of Feuerbach appears to draw heavily upon elements of Stirner's attack (Ibid., p. 129). Indeed, the critique of Stirner appears to tacitly admit to the validity of his attack on Feuerbach, though it maintains that this attack no longer applies (Ibid.).

A large part of The German Ideology was devoted to criticism of Stirner, since Marx and Engels viewed Stirner as the most dangerous enemy of socialism at the time (Ibid., p. 131). Marx and Engels principal accusation against Stirner was that he replaced the abstractions of religion and philosophy with an abstraction of an even more monstrous aspect, the ego, 'I', the Unique One. They also found fault with his account of the social, economic and historical factors upon the development and actions of the individual.

Unfortunately, Stirner was never able to reply to these two critics since this work, completed in 1846, was not fully published until 1932. Marx and Engels tried to find a publisher for this work, but finding none they committed the manuscript, as they were to quaintly remark years later, having obtained their personal goal of self-clarification, to care and criticism of discerning mice. The larger question of the intellectual development of Marx and Engels, and Stirner's place and influence within this dialectic bears examination far beyond the scope and space of this particular discussion. (For further discussion of Marx and Engels critique of and relationship to Stirner see McLellan, op. cit., pp. 129 - 136; John Carroll, Break-Out from the Crystal Palace; The Anarcho-Psychological Critique: Stirner, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky (London; Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1974), pp. 60 - 86; Sidney Hook, From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx (Ann Arbor; University of Michigan Press, 1962 edition - originally published circa 1936), pp. 173 - 185.

191. Paterson, op. cit., p. 7.
192. Brazill, op. cit., Ibid.
193. Paterson, op. cit., p. 9. In his comic poem Der Triumph des Glaubens, Friedrich Engels included a description of Stirner's presence at these meetings :  
 "For the time being he is still drinking beer,  
 Soon he will drink blood as if it were water;  
 As soon as the rest cry savagely "Down with Kings!"  
 Stirner immediately goes the whole hog: "Down with laws too!" " (McLellan, op. cit., p. 118).
194. Brazill, op. cit., Ibid.
195. Paterson, op. cit., pp. 8 - 9.
196. McLellan, op. cit., p. 1.
197. Brazill, op. cit., p. 9.
198. McLellan, op. cit., p. 2. The much neglected Ludwig Anders Feuerbach (1804 -1872) was one of the more prestigious and influential members of the Young Hegelian circle during this period. He started his university career studying theology, but under Hegel's influence and tutelage changed to philosophy, though religious problems and concerns remained tremendously important to him throughout the rest of his life (Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, Nineteenth Century Philosophy {trans. Chester A.

Kisiel) [Belmont, California; Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1973 - updated English edition]. p. 51.) His most well-known and important work is Das Wesen Des Christentums (The Essence of Christianity) (1841).

199. Brazill, op. cit., p. 3. In his study, McLellan maintains that one cannot speak of a Young Hegelian 'movement' before 1840, "when the more and more radical position of the Hallische Jahrbucher fur deutsche Wissenschaft und Kunst, their principal organ, provided a rallying-point." (McLellan, op. cit., p. 6.) Though he posits that no 'movement' as such existed before 1840, McLellan does ascribe some influence to Strauss's study on the development of the movement.

David Friedrich Strauss was born on January 27, 1808, in Ludwigsburg, near Stuttgart. Strauss started his post-secondary education in 1821 at a seminary in Blaubeuren, spending four years there before commencing his university career at Tubingen in 1825. During the following five years he undertook a variety of philosophical and theological studies. After discovering the works of Hegel he made plans to go and study him at the university of Berlin, arriving there in 1831, shortly before Hegel died. After Hegel's death he continued his studies at Berlin. It was at this point that he decided to write a life of Jesus. In 1832, he accepted a position as a lecturer in theology at Tubingen, and there began his work on his study of the life of Christ.

Near the end of his career, Strauss, or rather the work he published in 1872 Der alte und neue Glaube (translated in 1873 as The Old Faith and the New) was the subject of Nietzsche's Unzeitgemasse Betrachtungen. Erstes Stuck: David Strauss, der Bekenner und der Schrifsteller (Untimely Meditations. First Part: David Strauss, the confessor and the writer), published in August 1873. Within this polemic, Strauss is vehemently attacked as the leading representative of an outlook which Nietzsche characterized as "pseudo-culture". Nietzsche was to later write "to his friend Gersdorff, [on] 11 February 1874 (i.e. six months after the publication of his essay): 'Yesterday at Ludwigsburg they buried David Strauss. I very much hope that I did not sadden his last months, and that he died without knowing anything about me. It's rather on my mind.'

However, Strauss to his friend Rapp, [on] 19 December 1873 [wrote]: 'First they draw and quarter you, then they hang you. The only thing I find interesting about the fellow is the psychological point - how can one get into such a rage with a person whose path one has never crossed, in brief, the real motive of this passionate hatred.' " - J. P. Stern, "Introduction" to R. J. Hollingdale's translation of Friedrich Nietzsche,

Untimely Meditations (Unzeitgemasse Betrachtungen)  
(Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1983). p. xiv.

200. David Friedrich Strauss, Streitschriften (1837) III, p. 95, as quoted in McLellan, op. cit., p. 4.
201. Brazill, op. cit., p. 98. Amidst all the controversy and furore surrounding the publication of Strauss's work, perhaps the most perceptive reviewer was Edgar Quinet (1803 - 1875), a French historian, philosopher and poet. "Quinet, a close student of German thought, observed that Strauss's work was neither original nor surprising, that the controversy surrounding its appearance was misleading since the work was the product of many minds, not one. Strauss, in Quinet's view, did not write as an original thinker inspired by a unique insight, but rather as a synthesizer who combined many disparate strands of German thought since Kant:  
'If this work [Life of Jesus] had been the product of the thought of one man, so many minds would not have been alarmed by it at once. But, when it is seen as the mathematical consequence of almost all the work accomplished on the other side of the Rhine during the last half century, and that each had brought a stone to this sad sepulchre, learned Germany trembled and fled before this work. . . . If one thinks for a moment of the intelligence that has thrived there in philosophy, in criticism, and in history, one is only surprised that this result did not appear long before this {Edgar Quinet, "De la Vie de Jesus par le Docteur Strauss", Revue des deux Mondes 15 [1838]}.' " (Brazill, Ibid.).
202. Paterson, op. cit., p. 28. "In adopting the mythical point of view as hitherto applied to Biblical history, our theologians had again approximated to the ancient allegorical interpretation. For as both the natural explanations of the Rationalists, and the jesting expositions of the Deists, belong to that form of opinion which, whilst it sacrifices all divine meaning in the sacred record, still upholds its historical character; the mythical mode of interpretation agrees with the allegorical, in relinquishing the historical reality of the sacred narratives in order to preserve to them an absolute inherent truth. The mythical and the allegorical view (as also the moral) equally allow that the historian apparently relates that which is historical, but they suppose him, under the influence of a higher inspiration known or unknown to himself, to have made use of this historical semblance merely as the shell of an idea - of a religious conception. The only essential distinction therefore between these two modes

of explanation is, that according to the allegorical this higher intelligence is the immediate divine agency; according to the mythical, it is the spirit of a people or a community. (According to the moral view it is generally the mind of the interpreter which suggests the interpretation.) Thus the allegorical view attributes the narrative to a supernatural source, whilst the mythical view ascribes it to that natural process by which legends are originated and developed. To which it should be added, that the allegorical interpreter (as well as the moral) may with the most unrestrained arbitrariness separate from the history every thought he deems worthy of God, as constituting its inherent meaning; whilst the mythical interpreter, on the contrary, in searching out the ideas which are embodied in the narrative, is controlled by regard to conformity with the spirit and modes of thought of the people and of the age." - David Friedrich Strauss, The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined (Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet) [trans. George Eliot] Peter C. Hodgson, ed. (Philadelphia; Fortress Press, 1972 - translation based on Fourth German edition, published in 1840). p. 65.

203. Brazill, op. cit., p. 109.

204. Ibid., p. 111.

205. Carroll, op. cit., p. 18. "When it is said of God that he is a Spirit, and of man that he also is a Spirit, it follows that the two are not essentially distinct. To speak more particularly, it is the essential property of a spirit, in the distribution of itself into distinct personalities, to remain identical with itself, to possess itself in another than itself. Hence the recognition of God as a spirit implies, that God does not remain as a fixed and immutable Infinite encompassing the Finite, but enters into it, produces the Finite, Nature, and the human mind, merely as a limited manifestation of himself, from which he eternally returns into unity. As man, considered as a finite spirit, limited to his finite nature, has not truth; so God, considered exclusively as an infinite spirit, shut up in his infinitude, has not reality. The infinite spirit is real only when it discloses itself in finite spirits; as the finite spirit is true only when it merges itself in the infinite. The true and real existence of spirit, therefore, is neither in God by himself, nor man by himself, but in God-man; neither in the infinite alone, nor in the finite alone, but in the interchange of impartation and withdrawal between the two, which on the part of God is revelation, on the part of man religion." - Strauss, op. cit., p.

206. Brazill, op. cit., p. 113.

207. Ibid., p. 7. The then current Prussian administration chose not to ban or censor Strauss's work after consulting Johann Neander, who was later to become a leading adversary of Strauss (Loc. Cit.). Since the book was a scholarly work in the field of theology, it was felt that its impact would be marginal outside of academia. While Strauss's work escaped suppression, the members of the "Young Germany" movement were not as lucky.

"The year 1835 was decisive for Young Germany as well as for the Young Hegelians. It was the year in which Theodor Mundt published Madonna, a work that combined criticism of society and religion with a plea for humanism. Mundt's book reflected the influence of Saint-Simon particularly in its vision of the religion of humanity as the foundation for a new era in the history of mankind. In 1835 another member of Young Germany, Karl Gutzkow, published Wally the Skeptic, also reflecting the influence of Saint-Simon by way of George Sand. His novel dealt with religious scepticism and rejection of Christianity, but it was, at least in the eyes of its conservative critics, a glorification of the life of the flesh.

If 1835 was a year of achievement for Young Germany, it was also a year of disappointment. For in that year the Prussian government and the German Confederation condemned and banned the works of Young Germany. The public reason for the ban, as the Prussian government order declared, was that the Young German authors were "against the revealed religion" and their works were "bold assaults on Christianity". The efforts of Metternich and Frederick William III were combined in this decision: they would defend the Vienna Settlement and the establishment of Christianity as the best assurances for preserving the kind of society they wanted. For they concluded that an attack upon religion was as dangerous to their regime as an attack upon the political order. If authority were questioned and denied in one area, the inevitable next steps would lead to the rejection of authority in all areas. ... One could not strike at the altar without also striking at the throne." - Brazill, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

It is interesting to note that Strauss is often placed within the radical contingent of the Young Hegelian movement on the basis of the theological views espoused in The Life of Jesus, but as the years passed he became quite conservative in both his theological and political orientation.

208. Ibid., p. 50.
209. McLellan, op. cit., p. 49. Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802 - 1869) was a leading theologian in German academic circles. He was a virulent opponent of both rationalism and Hegelian philosophy.
210. Brazill, op. cit., p. 183.
211. Ibid.
212. McLellan, op. cit., p. 49.
213. Brazill, op. cit., p. 185.
214. Ibid., p. 184.
215. Ibid., p. 187.
216. Paterson, op. cit., pp. 33 - 34.
217. Brazill, op. cit., p. 190.
218. Bruno Bauer, Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker I: xxiii - as quoted in Brazill, op. cit., p. 190.
219. Brazill, op. cit., Loc. Cit.
220. McLellan, op. cit., p. 59.
221. Brazill, op. cit., p. 190.
222. Ibid., p. 197.
223. Ibid., p. 199.
224. Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity (Das Wesen des Christentums) [trans. George Eliot] (New York; Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957 - translation based on 1841 edition and originally published in 1853). p. 14.
225. Carroll, op. cit., p. 19.
226. Feuerbach, op. cit., pp. 29 - 30.
227. Brazill, op. cit., pp. 147 - 148.
228. Paterson, op. cit., p. 27.
229. Ibid., p. 34.

230. Ibid., p. 9. The wedding of Stirner and Dahnhardt provides a glimpse of the bohemian existence being pursued by members of "Die Freien". The wedding "took place in his (Stirner's) lodgings, where the pastor arrived to find the bridegroom playing cards with his two shirt-sleeved witnesses, Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Buhl. When the bride arrived, late and casually dressed, it was revealed that no one had thought to acquire the rings necessary for the exchange of vows between the happy couple. The solemn purpose was accomplished, however, by the two copper rings from Bruno Bauer's large purse, which he produced with great presence of mind. The banter of the witnesses made good the absence of choir and congregation, and with fitting levity the two libertarians were united in holy matrimony." (Ibid., p. 9 - 10).
231. Brazill, op. cit., p. 210.
232. McLellan, op. cit., p. 118. For a much more detailed description and analysis of these articles see Paterson, op. cit., chapter 3, pp. 46 - 60. The Rheinische Zeitung newspaper appeared after the accession of Frederick William IV. After his succession to the throne he relaxed press censorship and instituted several other reforms ( an amnesty for political prisoners, "the publication of the proceedings of provincial diets was permitted and a commission uniting all the provincial diets was to meet every two years in Berlin" [McLellan, op. cit., p. 16]). "The instruction of 1819 that 'no earnest and circumspect search after truth is to be hindered' had not been respected by the censors and the new edict corrected this. The edict was promulgated in December 1841 and had as an immediate effect the founding of the Rheinische Zeitung, a newspaper that soon became notorious as a more popular counterpart of the Hallische Jahrbucher. Originally the foundation of the Rheinische Zeitung was favoured by the government as providing an opposition to the Kolnische Zeitung, a paper noted for its ultramontanism which at that time had a monopoly of the Catholic Rhineland. The new paper was also supported by many of the liberal-minded business men who wanted an organ to press for a customs union with Prussia. From the beginning, however, a more radical element had been present. The two directors of the paper, Oppenheim and Jung, were radical followers of Hegel and friends of Moses Hess, who, having just finished the first book to gain him public recognition, Die Europäische Triarchie, was the man chiefly responsible for organising support for the paper. He had hoped to be made editor, but his views were considered too extreme and he had to accept

a position subordinate to Hoffken, a disciple of the liberal economist List. Within a month Hoffken resigned in protest at the directors' interfering with the running of the newspaper and declaring himself 'no disciple of Young Hegelianism'. However, he was replaced by Rutenberg, one of the Berlin Young Hegelians recently dismissed from his teaching post for the propagation of subversive opinions. He opened his columns to the Young Hegelians who, helped by an exceptionally lax censorship, became the chief contributors to the paper. According to one of the later censors 'the editors, entering into relations with the Freien in Berlin defended . . . with growing audacity the ideas of the Hegelian left, openly proclaiming as a political dogma the necessity of destroying the Church and establishing a constitution and absolute liberty of the press' (McLellan, op. cit., pp. 16-17.)."

233. Paterson, op. cit., p. 46.
234. Ibid., p. 61. "Our atheists are pious people." - Stirner, op. cit., p. 193.
235. Karl Lowith, From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought [trans. David E. Green] (New York; Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964 - originally published in German in 1941). pp. 316 - 317.
236. Brazill, op. cit., p. 215.
237. Stirner, op. cit., p. 3.
238. Paterson, op. cit., p. 65.
239. Ibid.
240. Stirner, op. cit., pp. 3 - 4.
241. Ibid., p. 5. "And will you not learn by these brilliant examples that the egoist gets on best? I for my part take a lesson from them, and propose, instead of further unselfishly serving these great egoists, rather to be the egoist myself."
242. Ibid.
243. Woodcock, op. cit., p. 100.
244. Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy - Vol. VII: From Fichte to Nietzsche (London; Search Press, 1963). p. 302.

245. Ibid.
246. Stirner, op. cit., p. 42.
247. Ibid., p. 11.
248. Ibid., p. 10. Thus we "mounted to spirit, and strove to become spiritual. But a man who wishes to be active as spirit is drawn to quite other tasks than he was able to set himself formerly: to tasks which really give something to do to the spirit and not to mere sense of acuteness, which exerts itself only to become master of things. The spirit busies itself solely about the spiritual, and seeks out the "traces of mind" in everything; to the believing spirit "everything comes from God", and interests him only to the extent that it reveals this origin; to the philosophic spirit everything appears with the stamp of reason, and interests him only so far as he is able to discover in it reason, i.e. spiritual content." - Stirner, op. cit., p. 20.
249. Brazill, op. cit., p. 215.
250. Stirner, op. cit., p. 32.
251. "Against all that is not spirit you are a zealot, and therefore you play the zealot against **yourself** who cannot get rid of a reminder of the non-spiritual. Instead of saying, "I am more than spirit", you say with contrition, "I am less than spirit; and spirit, pure spirit, or the spirit that is nothing but spirit, I can only think of, but am not; and, since I am not it, it is another, exists as another, whom I call 'God'." " - Stirner, op. cit., pp. 32 - 33.
252. Stirner, op. cit., p. 32.
253. Ibid., pp. 38 - 39.
254. Ibid., pp. 372 - 373. "'And what is truth?' Pilate asked (John 18:38.)." What is belief? What is truth? For Stirner they are the phantasms of fearful minds - minds scared of reality as it is who wish and desire a reality as it should be. Truth is a continuation and expansion of the process of self-alienation in which the true self and the real world become secondary in nature and subservient to the measurements and demands of a fictional transcendent. Once again, the prophylaxis of illusion prevents the impregnation of individual consciousness by reality.  
 "I will answer Pilate's question, What is Truth? Truth is the free thought, the free idea, the free

spirit; truth is what is free from you, what is not your own, what is not in your power. But truth is also the completely undependent, impersonal, unreal, and incorporeal; truth cannot step forward as you do, cannot move, change, develop; truth awaits and receives everything from you, and itself is only through you; for it exists only - in your head. You concede that the truth is a thought, but say that not every thought is a true one, or, as you are also likely to express it, not every thought is truly and really a thought. And by what do you measure and recognize the thought? By **your impotence**, to wit, by your being no longer able to make any successful assaults on it! When it overpowers you, inspires you, and carries you away, then you hold it to be the true one. Its domain over you certifies to you its truth; and, when it possesses you, and you are possessed by it, then you feel well with it, for then you have found your - lord and master. When you were seeking the truth, what did your heart then long for? For your master! You did not aspire to your might, but to a Mighty One, and wanted to exalt a Mighty One ("Exalt ye the Lord our God!"). The truth, my dear Pilate, is - the Lord, and all who seek the truth are seeking and praising the Lord." - Stirner, op. cit., p. 372.

255. Tatarkiewicz, op. cit., p. 68.

256. McLellan, op. cit., p. 121.

257. Stirner, op. cit., p. 45.

258. Ibid.

259. Paterson, op. cit., p. 70.

260. "The word **Gesellschaft** (society) has its origin in the word **Sal** (hall). If one hall encloses many persons, then the hall causes these persons to be in society. They are in society, and at most constitute a parlour-society by talking in the traditional forms of parlour speech. When it comes to real intercourse, this is to be regarded as independent of society; it may occur or be lacking, without altering the nature of what is named society. Those who are in the hall are a society even as mute persons, or when they put each other off solely with empty phrases of courtesy. Intercourse is mutuality, it is the action, the commercium, of individuals; society is only the community of the hall, and even the statues of a museum-hall are in society, they are "grouped". People are accustomed to say "they haben inne (occupy) this hall in common", but the case is rather that the hall has us inne or in it. So far the natural

signification of the word society. In this it comes out that society is not generated by me and you, but by a third factor which makes associates out of us two, and that it is just this third factor that is the creative one, that which creates society.

Just so a prison society or prison companionship (those who enjoy the same prison). Here we already hit upon a third factor fuller of significance than was that merely local one, the hall. Prison no longer means a space only, but a space with express reference to its inhabitants: for it is a prison only through being destined for prisoners, without whom it would not be a mere building. What gives a common stamp to those who are gathered in it? Evidently the prison since it is only by means of the prison that they are prisoners. What, then, determines the manner of life of the prison society? The prison! What determines their intercourse? The prison too, perhaps? Certainly they can enter upon intercourse only as prisoners, i.e. only so far as the prison laws allow it..." - Stirner, op. cit., pp. 227 - 228.

261. Ibid., p. 46.

262. Brazill, op. cit., p. 217.

263. Stirner, op. cit., p. 162.

264. Ibid., p. 193.

265. Ibid., p. 183.

266. Ibid., p. 182.

267. Ibid., p. 14.

268. Ibid., p. 169.

269. Ibid., p. 358.

270. McLellan, op. cit., p. 125.

271. Stirner, op. cit., p. 171. "What is left when I have been freed from everything that is not I? Only I; nothing but I. But freedom has nothing to offer to this I himself. As to what is now to happen further after I have become free, freedom is silent - as our governments, when the prisoner's time is up, merely let him go, thrusting him out into abandonment." - Stirner, op. cit., pp. 171 - 172.

272. Paterson, op. cit., p. 69.

273. Stirner, op. cit., pp. 34 - 35.
274. Paterson, op. cit., p. 74. "What is the meaning of the doctrine that we all enjoy 'equality of political rights'? Only this - that the State has no regard for my person, that to it I, like every other, am only a man, without having another significance that command its deference." - Stirner, op. cit., p. 108.
275. Stirner, op. cit., p. 237.
276. Ibid., p. 113.
277. Ibid., pp. 116 - 117.
278. Ibid., p. 118.
279. Camus, op. cit., p. 63.
280. Stirner, op. cit., p. 187.
281. Ibid., p. 130. This passage concludes with this sharp barb: " - of this the Socialists do not think, because they - as liberals - are imprisoned in the religious principle, and zealously aspire after - a sacred society, such as the State was hitherto."
282. Paterson, op. cit., p. 86.
283. Stirner, op. cit., p. 322.
284. McLellan, op. cit., p. 128.
285. Paterson, op. cit., p. 84.
286. Stirner, op. cit., p. 329.
287. Ibid., pp. 329 - 330.
288. Ibid., p. 327.
289. Ibid., p. 331.
290. Ibid., p. 332.
291. Ibid.
292. Ibid., p. 333.
293. Paterson, op. cit., p. 76.

294. Stirner, op. cit., p. 157.
295. Ibid., p. 368.
296. Ibid., p. 157.
297. Ibid., p. 378.
298. Ibid., p. 365.
299. Ibid., p. 160.
300. Paterson, op. cit., pp. 244 - 245.
301. Stirner, op. cit., p. 190.
302. Ibid., p. 5.
303. Ibid., p. 366.
304. Hook, op. cit., pp. 167 - 168.
305. Stirner, op. cit., pp. 373 -374.
306. Ibid., p. 373. "All truths beneath me are to my liking; a truth above me, a truth that I should have to direct myself by, I am not acquainted with. For me there is no truth, for nothing is more than I! Not even my essence, not even the essence of man, is more than I! than I, this "drop in the bucket", this "insignificant man"! " - Stirner, op. cit., p. 374.
307. Ibid.
308. Paterson, op. cit., p. 78.
309. Ibid.
310. Stirner, op. cit., p. 164.
311. Copleston, op. cit., p. 303.
312. Stirner, op. cit., p. 172.
313. Woodcock, op. cit., p. 100.
314. Stirner, op. cit., pp. 165 - 166.
315. Ibid., p. 164.
316. Ibid., p. 171.

317. Ibid., p. 172.
318. Paterson, op. cit., p. 78.
319. Stirner, op. cit., p. 180.
320. Ibid., p. 190.
321. Ibid.
322. Ibid., p. 197 - 198.
323. Ibid., p. 269. **Postscript:** During the course of the oral defence of this thesis, Professor Ken Reshaur pointed out that there would appear to be a similarity between Stirner's egoistic will unbound by all constraint and Hobbes' notion of the "last appetite". In chapter 6 ("Of the Interiour Beginnings of Voluntary Motions; commonly called the PASSIONS. And the Speeches by which they are expressed") of Leviathan, Hobbes describes his notion of the "last appetite" in the following terms: "In Deliberation, the last Appetite, or Aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof, is that wee call the Will; the Act, (not the faculty,) of Willing. And Beasts that have Deliberation, must necessarily also have Will. The definition of the Will, given commonly by the Schooles, that it is a Rationall Appetite, is not good. For if it were, then there could be no Voluntary Act against Reason. For a Voluntary Act is that, which proceedeth from the will, and no other. But if in stead of a Rationall Appetite, we shall say an Appetite resulting from a precedent Deliberation, then the Definition is the same that I have given here. Will therefore is the last Appetite in Deliberating. And though we say in common Discourse, a man had a Will once to do a thing, that neverthelesse he forbore to do; yet that he is properly but an Inclination, which makes no Action Voluntary; because the action depends not of it, but of the last Inclination, or Appetite. For if the intervenient Appetites, make any action Voluntary; then by the same Reason all intervenient Aversions, should make the same action Involuntary; and so one and the same action, should be both Voluntary & Involuntary." - Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (edited by C. B. Macpherson) [Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books Ltd., 1981 reprint - based on the original edition first published in 1651). pp. 127 - 128.
324. Camus, op. cit., p. 64.

326. Ibid., p. 213.
327. Paterson, op. cit., p. 81.
328. Stirner, op. cit., p. 225.
329. Paterson, op. cit., p. 88.
330. Stirner, op. cit., p. 328.
331. Ibid., p. 151.
332. Ibid., p. 337.
333. Ibid., p. 311.
334. Paterson, op. cit., p. 88. Echoes of this sentiment can be found in Donatien-Alphonse-Francois De Sade's Dialogue between a Priest and a Dying Man (1782), one of the earliest extant works by Sade in our possession. It is a short piece and consists only of the conversation implied by the rather austere title. The priest is attempting to administer the moribund man the sacrament of Extreme Unction. During the course of his efforts the dying man, repents but not in a manner he was expecting or accustomed to. The dying man tells the priest that he repents only the sins to which religion has led him. Religion has led him astray by teaching him to resist and despise the desires which Nature had implanted within him. His life would have been far more enjoyable if he had yielded to this voice.
- "By Nature created, created with very keen tastes, with very strong passions; placed on this earth for the sole purpose of yielding to them and satisfying them, and these effects of my creation being naught but necessities directly relating to Nature's fundamental designs or, if you prefer, naught but essential derivatives proceeding from her intentions in my regard, all in accordance with her laws, I repent not having acknowledged her omnipotence as fully as I might have done, I am only sorry for the modest use I made of the faculties (criminal in your view, perfectly ordinary in mine) she gave me to serve her; I did sometimes resist her, I repent it. Misled by your absurd doctrines, with them for arms I mindlessly challenged the desires instilled in me by a much diviner inspiration, and thereof do i repent: I only plucked an occasional flower when I might have gathered an ample harvest of fruit - such are the just grounds for the regrets I have, do me the honour of considering me incapable of harbouring any others." (Donatien-Alphonse-Francois De Sade, Dialogue

between a Priest and a Dying Man in The Complete Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom and other writings [trans. Richard Seaver & Austryn Wainhouse] (New York; Grove Press inc., 1966 - translation based on Sade's manuscript from July 1782). pp. 165 - 166.

There is no firm evidence that Stirner was conversant with the works of De Sade. Given the generally unsavoury reputation and immoral mephitic which surrounds the Marquis and his works, a reluctance on the part of Stirner to cite or acknowledge any influence or cognizance of De Sade is not surprising. Despite this seeming absence of a direct link, there does appear to be some interesting similarities between the characteristics and qualities of Stirner's "Unique One" and De Sade's Libertine Egoist (for ex., Dolmance [Philosophy in the Bedroom] and the Duc de Blangis [The 120 Days of Sodom]). However, further exploration and study of this question is necessary before the exact nature of the relationship or parallel between these two thinkers can be established. Unfortunately, the dictates of space prevent such an examination being engendered within the body of this work.

335. Paterson, op. cit., p. 89.

336. Stirner, op. cit., p. 344.

337. Ibid., p. 346.

338. Aleister Crowley, The Confessions of Aleister Crowley: An Autohagiography John Symonds & Kenneth Grant, Eds. (New York; Bantam Books, 1971 - originally published 1968). p. 3.

339. Stirner, op. cit., p. 381.

340. Ibid.

341. Ibid., pp. 386 - 387.

342. Paterson, op. cit., p. 93.

343. Ibid., p. 13.

344. Ibid., p. 16.

345. Paterson, op. cit., p. 141. Stirner's relationship with the Anarchists is reviewed quite expertly in Paterson, op. cit., Chapter 6, "Stirner and the Anarchists", pp. 126 - 144. Interestingly enough though Carroll, op. cit., lists Paterson as a source, he states: "It has been orthodox among intellectual

historians, and indeed among a number of anarchist theoreticians themselves, to regard Stirner as one of the seminal writers in what is conceived of as the anarchist tradition. He is credited as the father of 'individualist anarchism', as distinct from the 'mutualism' of Proudhon, Bakunin's 'anarcho-communism', or the 'anarcho-syndicalism' which has been attributed to Tolstoy and Gandhi. His unrelenting attacks on the structures of social authority, on the State, on political parties, on educational institutions, place him, as a theorist, unambiguously with the anarchists on the political spectrum." (Carroll, op. cit., p. 16.) Further on in this tome, Carroll refutes Paterson identification and categorization of Stirner as a Nihilist on the basis that he fails to distinguish "between social values, which Stirner does reject, and personal values, to which he is more overtly committed than any other philosopher (Ibid., p. 108, footnote 1)." While Stirner does highly prize "personal values", Carroll's brevity on this point raises more questions than it answers. The form of personal values espoused by Stirner require a considerable amount of distortion to fit into the "personal values" touted by so-called "individualist anarchists". Stirner's unique individual resolves to disregard any moral law, the dictates of conscience, and any form of behavioural confinement. Such an individual, who believes that his property is that which he can obtain by any means of power, persuasion, fraud, etc, would hardly be welcome in the atomised utopia swooned over by various individualistic anarchists. Implicit in Stirner's creed is a rejection of any and all guidelines save those of his own whim and appetite. Stirner's continual assertion that he is Unique amongst all other egos, that he is not like all others, would seem to imply a rejection of any form of equality or mutuality implicit or explicit within anarchist theory. The conception of other people as objects, fodder for his pleasure to be used as his caprice dictates would also appear to be counter to the anarchist Weltanschauung. His rejection of any conception of or bond with the rest of humanity would also seem to mitigate heavily against placement amongst the Anarchist tradition.

## Four

### Tomorrow Never Knows

The nihilist Weltanschauung asserts that all of our morals and beliefs are the result and perpetuation of illusion. As a result of the human need for stability and security, an empyrean organization and structure has been projected into existence which is simply not there. This realm of the ideal, the "true" world, is an abstraction. Such categories provide no real or absolute or true measurement of the world; they reflect only an anthropomorphic interpretation of it. All transcendent assessments are equally illusory; each is an attempt to satisfy the psychological needs of humanity. Underneath the formless surging of existence there is no grand unity from which value can be derived. Ultimately, nihilism finds existence is without meaning and purpose.

Nietzsche and Stirner understand the world to be devoid of any ultimate principle of aim and unity. There is no goal towards which society is progressing; Existence serves no goal nor evolves toward a specific end. To extrapolate such a directive into the world only serves to enslave humanity to a fictitious absolute. Against the standards of transcendent ideals, the world of becoming is debased. Value is taken from the concrete world and placed in a theoretical sphere; ideal reality rules over physical reality. When the humble origins

of the ideal world are exposed, it collapses and nothing appears to be true, since nothing can serve its functions or take its place. "Under the rule of religious ideas, one has become accustomed to the notion of "another world (behind, below, above)" - and when religious ideas are destroyed one is troubled by an uncomfortable emptiness and deprivation. From this feeling grows once again "another world", but now merely a metaphysical one that is no longer religious (346)." The questions "What is to be done?" and "How are we to live" tintinnabulate without answer.

Both Nietzsche and Stirner construe that there is a chasm that separates the values of humanity and its experience. After the anthropophagic frenzy of the various conflicts that have so far marked the Twentieth Century, it seems easy to concur with the assertion that this is not "the best of all possible worlds" and that the truths and values which have been accepted in the past have somehow, consciously or unconsciously, been cast aside on the rubbish heap of history. These traditional values seem no longer to provide the same degree of consolation and direction that they formerly did. An ill-fitting suit has been placed on existence and as the seams contort and the stitches rip apart, there appears no way to comprehend the entire cycle of life and death.

Nihilism postulates that the problem lies below the behaviour of particular actors within the system or the slight, but remediable, structural defects which appear within

the construction of the system. One must go underneath the surface dermis and layers of muscle and tissue. It is the skeleton, the core around which these individual elements coalesce where the disturbance lies. Exterior problems can always be cured and patched up, but the fundamental problems will still persist; The symptoms will be treated but the disease will linger and fester. Nietzsche and Stirner attribute the general sense of alienation, rootlessness, isolation and dispossession affecting the lives of individuals to the existence and persistence of delusional decrees. These investigators' heuristic fashion seeks to uncover and destroy the rule of all notions of transcendent morality or sanction.

In the aftermath of the "death of God", faced with random chaos and a now meaningless world, Nietzsche resolves to fill this vacuum in order that humanity not drift endlessly in the infinite. By the "Revaluation of all Values", he proposes to provide a new non-supernatural object around which moral endeavour could be based. The apocalypse is to be transformed into a renaissance (347). In order to forge this regeneration, the old order has to be completely annihilated; to leave something standing would only perpetuate the taint of the decaying chimera (348). Every idol must be sounded out with a hammer, in order to see if it is solid and strong or if its' entrails are bloated and hollow. Nietzsche believes that to attempt to escape nihilism without a revaluation of values would only make the problem more acute (349).

Through the pursuit of active nihilism, Nietzsche found "a justification for life, even at its most terrible, ambiguous, and mendacious; for this I had the formula 'Dionysian' (350)." Against the morality of the crucified Christian God Nietzsche opposes the qualities of the ancient Greek god of destruction and chaos, fertility and productivity. In place of the "weak", nihilistic Christian values he posits values of strength by which, in his view, health will be restored to a sickly culture. "To revalue values - what would that mean? . . . A courageous becoming-conscious and affirmation of what has been achieved - a liberation from the slovenly routine of old valuations that dishonour us in the best and strongest things we have achieved (351)."

It is interesting to speculate on how Stirner would have viewed the formulations of Nietzsche. It is more than likely that he would view any such attempt at rebirth to be somehow fruitless and counterproductive. Nietzsche's transfigured morality would be scorned as yet another example of the spectre of theology and religion which infests and infects most philosophical thought. This revaluation is only the latest attempt, by what Stirner saw as theology infested thought, to induce the individual to surrender himself to some external abstraction. Stirner would maintain that the void which results from the collapse of morality and value, is an opportunity to be exploited rather than transcended. The

Stirnerian 'unique' individual does not need the assistance of a transfigured morality in order to survive in the apocalypse of the moral infra-structure, only the concrete reality of himself. He does not need the approval of 'Dionysian' values to be creative; he is creative on his own without reference to any external standards or conceptions, no matter how liberating they might be. Without the strictures of society, humanity, religion and other envoys of the abstract, the individual is now free to exist according to his own interests and desires.

Farewell, thou dream of so many millions;  
farewell, thou who hast tyrannized over  
thy children for a thousand years! To-  
morrow they carry thee to the grave; soon  
thy sisters, the peoples, will follow  
thee. But, when they have all followed,  
then - - mankind is buried, and I am my  
own, I am the laughing heir (352)!

In their efforts to be free from the shackles of God, and other products of the human imagination, most critics and rebels, in the eyes of Stirner, succumb to one final temptation. All stop short at a crucial point and fail to follow their vision to its fullest expatiation by admitting the presence of a transcendent ideal such as "Humanity" or "Society". For Stirner, the commitment to the ideal of humanity is yet another evasion of reality. To end the process of alienation, the individual must relate everything to himself rather than an external abstraction such as

"State" or "Man". Nietzsche's attempt at the "revaluation of all values" would also be seen to be mired in self-deception, since this, unintentionally or otherwise, creates a new edifice which serves only to replace the prison that has just been destroyed. Even the Existentialists, who follow the same path as Stirner in their conception of being and inhabit a similar metaphysical terrain, would be judged as being unable to pursue their vision to its terminus. Scared of the void that they see rapidly approaching, they retreat to bury their heads in the sand.

On the one hand, the existentialist seeks to remain true to his original vision of the meaninglessness and futility of everything, since this fundamental cosmic honesty must be the basis of any attempt to live authentically; on the other hand, his stark personal reality is that he finds himself unable to appropriate the truth of nihilism existentially, unable to affirm it as his personal truth, the truth within which he will henceforth live: and it is at this point that he clutches at the artifice of commitment, hoping to save himself from nihilistic despair by a desperate leap towards faith that will restore meaning and purpose to his shattered world (353).

Viewed from Stirner's vantage point, such metaphysicians fall prey to internal contradiction. In their quest for an authentic, consistent existence, the Existentialists would appear to be lacking in self-consistency. Nearing the terminus of their vision, they recoil from a vision of nothingness which they have chosen to confront; and thus they

vainly endeavour to prevail over the nihilistic truth by which their situation is necessarily defined, hopelessly seeking sanctuary with Gods whom they are doomed to depose or simulate commitment to causes they know to be illusory (354). Stirner, on the other hand, is content to affirm and realistically will and live the truth of nihilism he pursues; he does not worry about being self-consistent. This may result in a "dead" end, but this does not bother or concern him. "Unlike Nietzsche, his nihilism was gratified. Stirner laughs in his blind alley; Nietzsche beats his head against the wall (355)." As the moral order collapses, Stirner's "unique" individual is content to make his way through the debris, creating and destroying value according to the caprice of his own will and desire. He accepts the reality of his situation and does not strive to answer any calling or obtain any ideal.

In the aftermath of the nihilist epiphany, some questions and problems come to light which need resolving or, at least, rethinking. There are several areas in which the recipes of Nietzsche and Stirner are fraught with difficulty. Chief amongst these is the implications of the nihilist position when extended beyond the locus of the individual to the level of society as a whole. Both Nietzsche and Stirner are somewhat ambiguous on the issue of the application of their vision within the larger whole of society.

Undercutting Nietzsche's assault on the present

structure of the Western christian world, is an implicit assertion that what he rejects is "this" structure, not all notions of structure. Given his understanding that the morals and structure of society is relative, he is concerned to show that the choice of one path does not negate the possibility of another. It is his belief, that for particular reasons the current values are antagonistic towards existence.

Also seemingly implicit within Nietzsche's attack is the notion that this is not a universal assault upon values. Given the concept of the "superman" found in Thus Spoke Zarathustra and the concept in Beyond Good and Evil that philosophers are the legislators of value (see s. 211), it would seem that Nietzsche conceives of an assault on the values of a small "ruling" elite within society. The proposed revaluation of values is seemingly to occur for the benefit and enrichment this new aristocracy, who will then legislate, create and dictate the values for the majority. Though Nietzsche's conception of freedom would appear to be situated within the locus of democratic thought, the anti-democratic nature of his entire philosophy must not be forgotten. The change in society that he appears to desire would seemingly occur only within a small portion of the population, while the rest would continue on their usual paths.

Stirner is also ambivalent on the exact application of

his position within the larger confines of society. If The Ego and His Own is taken to be a personal declaration of intent, by publicly stating his program, Stirner has seemingly negated its chances for successful completion. In their daily interactions, the citizens of a society believe and obey its strictures and obligations - a situation which Stirner's "Unique One" intends to exploit and manipulate without consultation for his own gain and benefit. For the egoist to achieve the full scope of his plan, it is crucial that those who deal with him, believe that, like themselves, he too adheres to such moral convention.

If The Ego and His Own is seen as an exhortation to one and all to behave in such an egoistic and nihilistic manner, Stirner loses the advantage of being the only one who ignores morality for his own benefit. "By encouraging others to become conscious egoists like himself The Unique one is inexplicably inviting them to share this advantage, instead of remaining the consistent egoist to the last and deploying against others the hypnotic abracadabra of morality, to which he himself would be safely immune but which might induce his naiver victims to subordinate their interests to his own (356)." Releasing from his sole possession such a tool of exploitation would go against the egoistic interest of the individual. There also remains the questions of whether the egoist would want others to treat him as he intends to treat them. Advocating that all exploit all hardly appears to be

in the interest of the individual who might find himself exploited by another.

If Stirner is exhorting everyone to become a conscious egoist, this would seem to presuppose both a stable and common moral ground upon which such a call could be anchored. His position then almost becomes that of an utilitarian, in that, by calling for the destruction of the delusions of morality by all individuals, he would appear to desire this great good for the greatest possible number of people. Such a desire would also appear to be inconsistent with Stirner's repeated statements that the egoist should concern themselves only with their own interest; and that "I", the individual egoist, am unlike all others egos but am instead unique. Also given Stirner's fervent attack upon all notions of community and common interest, the urging that all follow in his path is inconsistent with his assertion that the egoist concern himself with only his own interest.

The case of the Russian radicals might suggest that the theoretical vision of nihilism can not be coherently or effectively translated into a political platform. Its focus appears to be too firmly rooted within the locus and experience of the individual to allow it to be transposed into a program which addresses and resolves the concerns of the multitude. The liberation desired is for the self, not the masses; the role of the critic rather than that of legislator.

Stirner's outline for the social structure of mutually consenting egoists also seems fraught with difficulty. Why would an egoist knowingly enter into an association with other egoists, where all wish to achieve their own purposes? It would be more advantageous and desirous to an egoist to enter into association with those who were not so inclined. On the whole, the association of egoists appears to be a fairly unstable and makeshift structure with a minimal capacity for productive enterprise (357). The material benefits of adhering to obligation and morality are seemingly sacrificed in the egoists world. Humans are social in character, needing the company and assistance of others to survive and flourish. While Stirner's attack destroys many of the chains and fetters upon human endeavour, it also weakens those bonds which holds people together. On a social level, the implications of his position might be disastrous. In light of these ambiguities and concerns, the examination and elaboration of the Stirnerean dialectic can, and hopefully, will be developed further in the future.

The question remains also of the exact nature of the nihilist conception of freedom. With the loss of value and the onset of meaninglessness, all actions are reduced to the same level. "If everything is permitted, then it makes no difference what we do, and so nothing is worth anything (358). In considering oneself above the law, one might find oneself beneath it (359). The moral vacuum created by the

perceived "death of God" must be filled in order to maintain some relative form of order and prevent madness, endless atrocity, and moral anarchy. The nihilist kills God but not his need for Gods. A world ruled by the phrase "Nothing is True, Everything is Permitted" seemingly only knows a bizarre, perverse type of freedom. It is, as Albert Camus declares, the freedom of the blind. One strikes out in the dark but to no avail and with no real purpose - each spasm is equally futile. Voluntary action and involuntary action become seemingly indistinguishable. One steps into the void and experiences the freedom of the 'free-fall' or vacuum. One does not chose a course of action; without definition there is no real choice to be made. One merely takes a step without knowing where it will lead - a leap of faith. A freedom in which nothing is defined, nothing is differentiated becomes, in effect, a voluntary prison (360).

If nothing is true, if the world is without order, then nothing is forbidden; to prohibit an action, there must, in fact, be a standard of values and an aim. But at the same time, nothing is authorized; there must also be values and aims in order to choose another course of action. ... Freedom exists only in a world where what is possible is defined at the same time as what is not possible. Without law there is no freedom. If fate is not guided by superior values, if chance is king, then there is nothing but the step in the dark, and the appalling freedom of the blind (361).

The milieu resulting from the diagnosis of Nietzsche and

Stirner seems one in which despair and absurdity reign. Humanity finds itself lost in the middle of a vast expanse of desert and "the desperate and horrible thought has come that perhaps the whole of life is but a bad joke, a violent and ill-fated abortion of the primal mother, a savage and dismal catastrophe of nature (362)." The world, once the pinnacle of possibility, now appears desolate and barren. "Man is laid bare; more than that, he is flayed, cut up into bits, and his members strewn everywhere, like those of Osiris, with the reassembling of these scattered parts not even promised but only dumbly waited for (363)." Trapped in this mire, there appears to be no way out from its tightening grip. The predicament of Kurtz, where the veneer of civilized behaviour is subsumed by the immense darkness and barbarity of the jungle seems the fate of humanity. By revealing all moorings to be equally transient, nihilism places us inside a spiralling void of nothingness without hope.

Vladimir: Nothing you can do about it.  
Estragon: No use struggling.  
Vladimir: One is what one is.  
Estragon: No use wriggling.  
Vladimir: The essential doesn't change.  
Estragon: Nothing to be done (364).

Within this climate of futility, continuing the struggle seems pointless. If life is without meaning, Why continue the struggle if all is for naught? By destroying the metaphysical illusions of aim, unity and purpose within the

universe, the nihilist perspective appears to leave no reason for living. For the nihilist, the question of suicide needs to be dealt with further in order to achieve a less ambiguous resolution.

The gloomy absurdity of the situation is perhaps best illustrated by Camus' interpretation of the myth of Sisyphus. "The gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labour (365)." Like Sisyphus, humanity appears sentenced to purposelessly flailing about on a treadmill, perhaps believing that such action constitutes progress. Eventually, the deceptive quality of such activity is revealed and life appears an unfathomable but cruel joke.

It is the contention of Nietzsche and Stirner, that recognition of our situation provides the means by which we may overcome it; Nietzsche's revaluation begins to occur when we recognize the passive nihilism at work within our lives. The cure of the ailment begins by diagnosis. Camus maintains that if Sisyphus is conscious of his plight, it is no longer absurd but tragic. "Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that can

be surmounted by scorn (366)." The moment one is cognizant and accepts one's condition and fate, it can no longer be the source of anxiety and despair. One's situation and fate becomes wholly one's own.

Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. The universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy (367).

The perspective of nihilism is said to create a situation where "Nothing is True, Everything is Permitted". Usually this creed is interpreted as allowing for the liberation of "the most subterranean passions from the bounds of ethics and morality and a consequent disaster whose proportions cannot even be imagined, let alone predicted or controlled (368)." Without the restraint of morality and law there are no barriers preventing the horrific dystopian community imagined by de Sade in The 120 days of Sodom from coming into being; standard worst case scenarios will ostensibly be surpassed. Unleashed from their transcendent fetters, unspeakable monsters from the dark recesses of the human psyche, a veritable pandora's box of atrocity, will exalt the acts of crime into a new religion.

When the attack of Nietzsche and Stirner on morality is

linked with the nihilist rallying cry of "Nothing is True, Everything is Permitted", critics feel safe in assuming that the direct result of nihilism is the implementation of a Sadean nightmare on a universal scale. However, it should be noted that while Nietzsche and Stirner do attack the notion of morality and its strictures they do not do so in order to go to the other extreme. The God of Christianity is not usurped in order that a God of evil takes his place. Both are **amoralists** as opposed to **immoralists**:

I also deny immorality: not that countless people feel themselves to be immoral, but there is any true reason so to feel. It goes without saying that I do not deny - unless I am a fool - that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged - but I think the one should be encouraged and the other avoided for other reasons than hitherto. We have to learn to think differently - in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: to feel differently (369).

Stirner's attacks upon such 'sacred' concepts as piety and truthfulness are not an explicit advocacy of such behaviour or an inauguration of them into a new code of conduct, but rather they are an indication that even conventions such as these can bind the interest of the individual. All moral obligations, no matter how 'holy' and sacrosanct, are abstract chains which will dominate the being of the unique individual; They are all illusory fabrications

without any real sanction. Stirner's philosophy dictates that one "Do what thou wilt"; He neither prescribes nor advocates, believing that any such external directive dominates and subjugates the individual. Stirner is concerned with his own affairs; what others do is theirs.

What we currently view as chaos, through the filter of our presently entrenched values and bias, the nihilist posits to be the grounds for an unlimited vitality and freedom (370).

If nothing is true, then everything is permitted. That is, if we realize that everything is an illusion, than any illusion is permitted. As soon as we say that something is true, real, then immediately things are not permitted (371).

This is the crux of the creative stance of nihilism that tends to be overlooked or downgraded. If all is illusion, then each illusion is valid. Nor is one is bound to maintain a permanent commitment to any one particular illusion. Both Stirner and Nietzsche see this as an incredibly constructive position. Within it the individual has the ability "to transform the belief 'it is thus and thus' into the will 'it shall become thus and thus' (372)." Without the confinement of notions of absolute truth, the possibilities become endless. One is free to shape one's world according to one's own dictates. The canvas is blank, the paint and other materials are within one's reach, and the decision as to what

should be created is entirely one's own.

In conclusion, nihilism posits that the world we inhabit is without direction and without unity. It is ruled by meaninglessness rather than by ultimate purpose. In light of this revelation, nihilism advocates that we realize the reality of our situation and deal with existence on its own terms rather than those of an ideal world. Illusion will only serve to perpetuate the despair. D. H. Lawrence, in Lady Chatterley's Lover, a book more noted for its depiction of sexuality than its proselytization of nihilist beliefs, perhaps best sums up the positive and creative message of nihilism:

Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are now among the ruins, we start to build up new little habits, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future: but we go round, or scramble over the obstacles. We've got to live no matter how many skies have fallen (373).

## Notes

### Four Tomorrow Never Knows

346. Nietzsche, The Gay Science op. cit., p. 196. [s. 151]
347. Camus, op. cit., p. 66.
348. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 19 [s. 28]  
"Incomplete nihilism; its forms: we live in the midst of it. Attempts to escape nihilism without reevaluating values so far: they produce the opposite, make the problem more acute."
349. "Terribleness is part of greatness: let us not deceive ourselves." - Ibid., p. 531. [s. 1028]
350. Ibid., p. 521. [s. 1005]. "The word 'Dionysian' means: an urge to unity, a reaching out beyond personality, the everyday, society, reality, across the abyss of transitoriness: a passionate-painful overflowing into darker, fuller, more floating states; an ecstatic affirmation of the total character of life as that which remains the same, just as powerful, just as blissful, through all change; the great pantheistic sharing of joy and sorrow that sanctifies and calls good even the most terrible and questionable qualities of life; the eternal will to procreation, to fruitfulness, to recurrence; the feeling of the necessary unity of creation and destruction." - Ibid., p. 538. [s. 1050]
351. Ibid., p. 521. [s. 1007]
352. Stirner, op. cit., p. 227.
353. Paterson, op. cit., p. 238.
354. Ibid., p. 240.
355. Camus, op. cit., p. 62.
356. Paterson, op. cit., p. 266.
357. Within the novel Juliette, the Marquis de Sade attempts to portray an organization within which mutually consenting egoists would associate and endeavour to achieve their individual goals. The organization in question, "The Sodality of the Friends of Crime", even has a code of statutes which sets out the rules of

interaction within which every conceivable act, criminal or otherwise, is permitted and sanctioned (see Donatien-Alphonse-Francois de Sade, Juliette [trans. Austryn Wainhouse] { New York; Grove Press, Inc., 1968}. pp. 418 - 427.). Once again, this is another area in which the similarity between de Sade and Stirner would require further examination.

358. Stanley Rosen, Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay (New Haven & London; Yale University Press, 1969). p. xiii.
359. Camus, op. cit., p. 70.
360. Ibid., p. 71.
361. Ibid.
362. Hermann Hesse, Steppenwolf [trans. Basil Creighton - updated by Joseph Mileck] (New York; Bantam Books, 1969 - edition of the original 1929 translation - originally published in German in 1927). p. 51.
363. William Barrett, Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy (New York; Doubleday Anchor Books, 1962). p. 179.
364. Samuel Beckett, Waiting For Godot (En Attendant Godot) [trans. Samuel Beckett] (New York; Grove Press Inc., 1954). p. 14.
365. Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus and other essays [trans. Justin O' Brien] (New York; Vintage Books, 1955 - originally published in 1942). p. 88.
366. Ibid., p. 90.
367. Ibid., p. 91.
368. M. A. Gillespie & T. B. Strong, op. cit., p. 6.
369. Nietzsche, Daybreak op. cit., p. 60 [s. 103]
370. Schutte, op. cit., p. 3.
371. William S. Burroughs & Daniel Odier, The Job: Interviews with William S. Burroughs (Harmondsworth, Middlesex; Penguin Books Ltd., 1989 - originally published by Grove Books Inc., in 1974). P. 97.
372. Nietzsche, The Will To Power op. cit., p. 324 [s. 593]

373. D. H. Lawrence, Lady's Chatterley's Lover (New York; Grove Press Inc., 1959 - edition of the third manuscript version, first published by Giuseppe Orioli, Florence, 1928). p. 37.

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