

## The German Ideology by Marx and Engels

# III

# Saint Max <sup>[45]</sup>

“Was jehen mir die jrienen Beeme an?”

[“What are the green trees to me?” — a paraphrase (in the Berlin dialect) from Heine’s work *Reisebilder*, Dritter Teil “Die Bäder von Lucca”, Kapitel IV]

Saint Max exploits, “employs” or “uses” the Council to deliver a long apologetic commentary on “*the book*”, which is none other than “*the book*”, the book as such, the book pure and simple, i.e., the perfect book, the Holy Book, the book as something holy, the book as the holy of holies, the book in heaven, viz., *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*. “The book”, as we know, *fell* from the heavens towards the end of 1844 and took on the shape of a servant with O. Wigand in Leipzig <sup>[46]</sup>. It was, therefore, at the mercy of the vicissitudes of terrestrial life and was attacked by three “unique ones”, viz., the mysterious personality of *Szeliga*, the gnostic *Feuerbach* and *Hess*. [*Szeliga*, “*Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*”; *Feuerbach*, “*Über das ‘Wesen des Christenthums’ in Beziehung auf den ‘Einigen und sein Eigenthum’*”; *Hess*, *Die letzten Philosophen*] However much at every moment Saint Max as creator towers over himself as a creation, as he does over his other creations, he nevertheless took pity on his weakly offspring and, in order to defend it and ensure its safety, let out a loud “critical hurrah”. In order to fathom in all their significance both this “critical hurrah” and *Szeliga*’s mysterious personality, we must here, to some extent, deal with church history and look more closely at “the book”. Or, to use the language of Saint Max: we “shall episodically put” “into this passage” a church-historical

“meditation” on *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* “simply because” “it seems to us that it could contribute to the elucidation of the rest”.

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;  
and the King of Glory shall come in.  
"Who is this King of Glory? The War-Lord strong and mighty, the  
War-Lord mighty in battle.  
"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;  
and the King of Glory, shall come in.  
"Who is this King of Glory? The Lord Unique, he is the King of  
Glory,” (Psalms, 24:7-10).

## 1. The Unique and His Property

The man who “has based his cause on nothing” [here and below Marx and Engels paraphrase the first lines of Goethe’s poem *Vanitas! Vanitatum Lanitas!*] begins his lengthy “critical hurrah” like a good German, straightway with a Jeremiad: “Is there anything that is not to be my cause?” (p. 5 of the “book”). And he continues lamenting heart-rendingly that “everything is to be his cause”, that “God’s cause, the cause of mankind, of truth and freedom, and in addition the cause of his people, of his lord”, and thousands of other good causes, are imposed on him. Poor fellow! The French and English bourgeois complain about lack of markets, trade crises, panic on the stock exchange, the political situation prevailing at the moment, etc.; the German petty bourgeois, whose active participation in the bourgeois movement has been merely an ideal one, and who for the rest exposed only himself to risk, sees his own cause simply as the “good cause”, the “cause of freedom, truth, mankind”, etc.

Our German school-teacher simply believes this illusion of the German petty bourgeois and on three pages he provisionally discusses all these good causes.

He investigates “God’s cause”, “the cause of mankind” (pp. 6 and 7) and finds these are “purely egoistical causes”, that both “God” and “mankind” worry only about what is *theirs*, that “truth, freedom, humanity, justice” are “only interested in themselves and not in us, only in their own well-being and not in ours” — from which he concludes that all these persons “are thereby exceptionally well-off”. He goes so far as to transform these idealistic phrases — God, truth, etc. — into prosperous burghers who “are exceptionally well-off” and enjoy a “*profitable* egoism”. But this vexes the holy egoist: “And I?” he exclaims.

“I, for my part, draw the lesson from this and, instead of continuing to serve these great egoists, I should rather be an egoist myself!” (p. 7)

Thus we see what holy motives guide Saint Max in his transition to egoism. It is not the good things of this world, not treasures which moth and rust corrupt, not the capital belonging to his fellow unique ones, but heavenly treasure, the capital which belongs to God, truth, freedom, mankind, etc., that gives him no peace.

If it had not been expected of him that he should serve numerous good causes, he would never have made the discovery that he also has his “own” cause, and therefore he would never have based this cause of his “on nothing” (i.e., the “book”).

If Saint Max had looked a little more closely at these various causes” and the “owners” of these causes, e.g., God, mankind, truth, he would have arrived at the opposite conclusion: that egoism based on the egoistic mode of action of these persons must be just as imaginary as these persons themselves.

Instead of this, our saint decides to enter into competition with “God” and “truth” and to base his cause on himself —

“on myself, on the I that is, just as much as God, the nothing of everything else, the I that is everything for me, the I that is the unique.... I am nothing in the sense of void, but the creative nothing, the nothing from which I myself, as creator, create everything.”

The holy church father could also have expressed this last proposition as follows: I am everything in the void of nonsense, “*but*” I am the nugatory creator, the all, from which I myself, as creator, create nothing.

Which of these two readings is the correct one will become evident later. So much for the preface.

The “book” itself is divided like the book “of old”, into the Old and New Testament — namely, into the unique history of man (the Law and the Prophets) and the inhuman history of the unique (the Gospel of the Kingdom of God). The former is history in the framework of logic, the *logos* confined in the past; the latter is logic in history, the emancipated *logos*, which struggles against the present and triumphantly overcomes it.

## The Old Testament: Man <sup>[47]</sup>

# 1. The Book of Genesis, i.e., A Man’s Life

Saint Max pretends here that he is writing the *biography* of his mortal enemy, “*man*”, and not of a “*unique*” or “real individual”. This ties him up in delightful contradictions.

As becomes every normal genesis “a man’s life” begins *ab ovo*, with the “child”. As revealed to us on page 13, the child

“from the outset lives a life of struggle against the entire world, it resists everything and everything resists it”. “Both remain enemies”

but “with awe and respect” and “are constantly on the watch, *looking for each other’s weaknesses*”.

This is further amplified, on page 14:

“we”, as children, “try to find out the *basis of things* or what lies behind them; *therefore*” (so no longer out of enmity) “we are trying to *discover everybody’s weaknesses*”. (Here the finger of *Szeliga*, the mystery-monger, is evident.)

Thus, the *child* immediately becomes a *metaphysician*, trying to find out the “*basis of things*”.

This *speculating* child, for whom “the nature of things” lies closer to his heart than his toys, “sometimes” in the long run, succeeds in coping with the “world of things”, conquers it and then enters a new phase, the *age of youth*, when he has to face a new “arduous struggle of life”, the struggle against reason, for the “*spirit means the first self-discovery*” and: “We are above the world, we are spirit” (p. 15). The point of view of the youth is a “heavenly one”; the child merely “*learned*”, “he did not dwell on purely logical or theological problems” — *just as* (the child) “Pilate” hurriedly passed over the question: “What is truth?” (p. 17). The youth “tries to master thoughts”, he “understands ideas, the *spirit*” and “seeks ideas”; he “is engrossed in thought” (p. 16), he has “absolute thoughts, i.e., *nothing but thoughts*, logical thoughts”. The youth who thus “deports himself”, instead of chasing after young women and other earthly things, is no other than the young “Stirner”, the studious Berlin youth, busy with Hegel’s logic and gazing with amazement at the great Michelet. Of *this* youth it is rightly said on page 17:

“to bring to light *pure thought*, to devote oneself to it — in this is the *joy of youth*, and all the bright images of the world of thought — truth, freedom, mankind, *Man*, etc. — illumine and inspire the youthful soul.”

This youth then “throws aside” the “object” as well and “occupies himself” exclusively “with his thoughts”;

“he includes all that is not spiritual under the contemptuous name of external things, and if, all the same, he does cling to such external things as, for example, students’ customs, etc., it happens only when and because he discovers spirit in them, i.e., when they become *symbols* for him”. (Who will not “*discover*” “*Szeliga*” here?)

Virtuous Berlin youth! The beer-drinking ritual of the students’ association was for him only a “symbol” and only for the sake of the “symbol” was he after a drinking bout many a time found under the table, where he probably also wished to “discover spirit”! — How virtuous is this good youth, whom old *Ewald*, who wrote two volumes on the “virtuous youth”, [Johann Ludwig Ewald, *Der gute Jüngling, gute Gatte und Vater, oder Mittel, um es zu werden.*] could have taken as a model, is seen also from the fact that it was “made known” to him (p. 15): “Father and mother should be abandoned, all natural authority should be considered broken.” For him, “the rational man, the family as a natural authority does not exist; there follows a renunciation of parents, brothers and sisters, etc.” — But they are all “re-born as *spiritual, rational* authority”, thanks to which the good Youth reconciles obedience and fear of one’s parents with his speculating conscience, and everything remains as before. Likewise “it is said” (p. 15): “We ought to obey God rather than men.” [The Acts of the Apostles 5: 29] Indeed, the good youth reaches the highest peak of morality on page 16, where “it is said”: “One should obey one’s conscience rather than God.” This moral exultation raises him even above the “revengeful Eumenides” and even above the “anger of Poseidon” — he is afraid of nothing so much as his “conscience”.

Having discovered that “the spirit is the essential” he no longer even fears the following perilous conclusions:

“If, *however*, the spirit is recognised as the essential, *nevertheless* it makes a difference *whether* the spirit is poor or rich, and *therefore*” (!) “one strives to become rich In spirit; the spirit wishes to expand, to establish its realm, a realm not of this world, which has just been overcome. *In this way*, the spirit strives to become all in all” [1 Corinthians 15:28] (*what way is this?*), “i.e., *although* I am spirit, *nevertheless* I am not perfect spirit *and must*” (?) “first seek the perfect spirit” (p. 17).

“Nevertheless *it* makes a difference.” — *It*”, what is this? What is the “It” that makes the differences We shall very often come across this mysterious “It” in our holy man, and it will then turn out that it is the unique from the standpoint of *substance*, the beginning of “unique” logic, and as such the true identity of Hegel’s “being” and “nothing”. Hence, for everything that this “It” does, says or performs, we shall lay the responsibility on our saint, whose relation to it is that of its creator. First of all, this “It”, as we have seen, makes a difference between poor and rich. And why? Because “the spirit is recognised as the essential”. Poor “It”, which without this recognition would never have arrived at the difference between poor and rich! “And therefore *one* strives”, etc. “*One!*” We have here the second impersonal person which, together with the “It”, is in Stirner’s service and must perform the heaviest menial work for him. How these two are accustomed to support each other is clearly seen here. Since “It” makes a difference whether the spirit is poor or rich, lone” (could anyone but Stirner’s faithful servant [F. Szeliga] have had this idea!) — “*one, therefore*, strives to become rich in spirit”. “It” gives the signal and immediately “one” joins in at the top of its voice. The division of labour is classically carried out.

Since “one strives to become *rich in spirit*, *the spirit* wishes to expand, to establish *its realm*”, etc. “If however” a connection is present here “it still makes a difference” whether “one” wants to become “*rich in spirit*” or whether “*the spirit* wants to establish its realm”. Up to now “*the spirit*”

has *not* wanted *anything*, “*the spirit*” has not yet figured as a *person* — it was only a matter of the spirit of the “youth”, and not of “*the spirit*” as such, of the spirit as *subject*. But our holy writer now needs a spirit different from that of the youth, in order to place it in opposition to the latter as a foreign, and in the last resort, as a holy spirit. *Conjuring trick No. 1.*

“In this way the spirit strives to become all in all”, a somewhat obscure statement, which is then explained as follows:

“Although I am spirit, nevertheless I am not perfect spirit *and must first seek the perfect spirit.*”

But if Saint Max is the “Imperfect spirit”, “nevertheless it makes a difference” whether he has to “*perfect*” *his* spirit or seek “*the perfect spirit*”. A few lines earlier he was in fact dealing only with the “poor” and “rich” spirit — a quantitative, profane distinction — and now there suddenly appears the “*imperfect*” and “*perfect*” spirit — a qualitative, mysterious distinction. The striving towards the development of one’s own spirit can now be transformed into the hunt of the “imperfect spirit” for “*the perfect spirit*”. The holy spirit wanders about like a ghost. *Conjuring trick No. 2.*

The holy author continues:

“But thereby” (i.e., by the transformation of the striving towards “perfection” my spirit into the search for “*the perfect spirit*”) “ I, who have only just found myself as spirit, at once lose myself again, in that I bow down before the perfect spirit, as a spirit which is not my own, but a spirit of the *beyond*, and I feel my emptiness “ (p. 18).

This is nothing but a further development of conjuring trick No. 2. After the “perfect spirit” has been *assumed* as an *existing being* and opposed to the “imperfect spirit”, it becomes obvious that the “imperfect spirit”, the

youth, painfully feels his “emptiness” to the depths of his soul. Let us go on!

“True, it is all a matter of spirit, but is every spirit the right spirit? The right and true spirit is the ideal of the spirit, the ‘holy spirit’. It is not my or your spirit but *precisely*” (!) — “an ideal spirit, a spirit of the beyond — ‘God’. ‘God is spirit’ [John 4: 24] (p. 18).

Here the “perfect spirit” has been suddenly transformed into the “right” spirit, and immediately afterwards into the “right and true spirit”. The latter is more closely defined as the “Ideal of the spirit, the holy spirit” and this is proved by the fact that it is “not my or your spirit but *precisely*, a spirit of the beyond, an ideal spirit — God”. The true spirit is the *ideal* of the spirit, “precisely” because it is *ideal*! It is the holy spirit “precisely” because it is — God! What “virtuosity of thought”! We note also in passing that up to now nothing was said about “your” spirit. Conjuring trick No. 3.

Thus, if I seek to train myself as a mathematician, or, as Saint Max puts it, to “perfect” myself as a mathematician, then I am seeking the “perfect” mathematician, i.e., the “right and true” mathematician, the “ideal” of the mathematician, the “holy” mathematician, who is distinct from me and you (although in my eyes you may be a perfect mathematician, just as for the Berlin youth his professor of philosophy is the perfect spirit); but a mathematician who is “precisely ideal, of the beyond”, the mathematician in the heavens, “God”. God is a mathematician.

Saint Max arrives at all these great results because “it makes a difference whether the spirit is rich or poor”; i.e., in plain language, it makes a difference whether anyone is rich or poor in spirit, and because his “youth” has discovered this remarkable fact.

On page 18 Saint Max continues:

“It divides the *man* from the youth that the former takes the world as it is”, etc.

Consequently, we do not learn how the youth arrives at the point where he suddenly takes the world “as it is”, nor do we see our holy dialectician making the transition from youth to man, we merely learn that “It” has to perform this service and “*divide*” the youth from the man. But even this “It” by itself does not suffice to bring the cumbersome wagon-load of unique thoughts into motion. For after “It” has “divided the man from the youth”, the man all the same relapses again into the youth, begins to occupy himself afresh “exclusively with the spirit” and does not get going until “one” hurries to his assistance with a change of horses. “Only when one has grown fond of oneself *corporeally*, etc.” (p. 18), “only then” everything goes forward smoothly again, the man discovers that he has a personal interest, and arrives at “the *second self-discovery*”, in that he not only “finds himself as spirit”, like the youth, “and then at once loses himself again in the universal spirit”, but finds himself “as *corporeal spirit*” (p. 19). This “corporeal spirit” finally arrives at having an “interest not only in its own spirit” (like the youth), “but in total satisfaction, in the satisfaction of the whole fellow” (an interest in the satisfaction of the whole fellow!) — he arrives at the point where “he is pleased with himself exactly as he is”. Being a German, Stirner’s “man” arrives at everything very late. He could see, sauntering along the Paris boulevards or in London’s Regent Street, hundreds of “young men”, fops and dandies who have not yet found themselves as “corporeal spirits” and are nevertheless “pleased with themselves exactly as they are”, and whose main interest lies in the ‘,satisfaction of the whole fellow”

This second “self-discovery” fills our holy dialectician with such enthusiasm that he suddenly forgets his role and begins to speak not of the *man*, but of *himself*, and reveals that he himself, he the unique, is “the man”, and that “the man” = “the unique”. A new conjuring trick.

“How I find myself” (it should read: “how the youth finds himself”) “behind the *things*, and indeed as *spirit*, so subsequently, too, I must find myself” (it should read: “the man must find himself”) “behind the *thoughts*, i.e., as their creator and owner. In the period of spirits, thoughts outgrew me” (the youth), “although they were the offspring of my brain; like delirious fantasies they floated around me and agitated me greatly, a dreadful power. The thoughts became themselves *corporeal*, they were spectres like God, the Emperor, the Pope, the Fatherland, etc.; by destroying their corporeality, I take them back into my own corporeality and *announce*: I alone am corporeal. And now I take the world as it is for me, as my world, as my property: I relate everything to myself.”

Thus, the man, identified here with the “unique”, having first given thoughts corporeality, i.e., having transformed them into spectres, now destroys this corporeality again, by taking them back into his own body, which he thus makes into a body of spectres. The fact that he arrives at his own corporeality only through the negation of the spectres, shows the nature of this constructed corporeality of the man, which he has first to “announce” to “himself”, in order to believe in it. But what he “announces to himself” he does not even announce” correctly. The fact that apart from his “unique” body there are not also to be found in his head all kinds of independent bodies, spermatozoa, he transforms into the “*fable*”: *I alone am corporeal*. Another conjuring trick.

Further, the man who, as a youth, stuffed his head with all kinds of nonsense about existing powers and relations such as the Emperor, the Fatherland, the State, etc., and knew them only as his own “delirious fantasies”, in the form of his conceptions — this man, *according to Saint Max, actually destroys all these powers* by getting out of his head his false opinion of them. On the contrary: now that he no longer looks at the world through the spectacles of his fantasy, he has to think of the practical interrelations of the world, to get to know them and to act in accordance with them. By destroying the *fantastic* corporeality which the world had

for him, he finds its real corporeality outside his fantasy. With the disappearance of the *spectral* corporeality of the Emperor, what disappears for him is not the corporeality, but the *spectral character* of the Emperor, the actual power of whom he can now at last appreciate in all its scope. Conjuring trick No. 3[a].

The youth as a man does not even react critically towards ideas which are valid also for others and are current as categories, but is critical only of those ideas that are the “mere offspring of his brain”, i.e., general concepts about existing conditions reproduced in his brain. Thus, for example, he does not even resolve the *category* “Fatherland”, but only his personal opinion of this category, after which the *generally valid* category still remains, and even in the sphere of “philosophical thought” the work is only just beginning. He wants, however, to make us believe that he has destroyed the category itself because he has destroyed his emotional personal relation to it — exactly as he has wanted to make us believe that he has destroyed the power of the Emperor by giving up his fantastic conception of the Emperor. Conjuring trick No. 4.

“*And now,*” continues Saint Max, “I take the world as it is for me, as my world, as my property.”

He takes the world as it is for him, i.e., *as he is compelled to take it*. and thereby he has *appropriated* the world for himself, has made it his property — a mode of acquisition which, indeed, is not mentioned by any of the economists, but the method and success of which will be the more brilliantly disclosed in “the book”. Basically, however, he takes” not the “world”, but only his “delirious fantasy” about the world as his own, and makes it his property. He takes the world as his conception of the world, and the world as his conception is his imagined property, the property of his conception, his conception as property, his property as conception, his

own peculiar conception, or his conception of property; and all this he expresses in the incomparable phrase: “I relate everything to myself.”

After the man has recognised, as the saint himself admits, that the world was only populated by spectres, because the youth saw spectres, after the *illusory world* of the youth has disappeared for the man, the latter finds himself in a *real* world, independent of youthful fancies.

And so, it should therefore read, I take the world as it is *independently of myself*, in the form in which it *belongs to itself* (“the man takes” — see page 18 — “the world as it is”, and not as he would like it to be), in the first place as my non-property (hitherto it was my property only as a spectre); I relate myself to everything and only to that extent do I relate everything to I myself.

“If I as spirit rejected the world with the deepest contempt for it, then I as proprietor reject the spectres or ideas into their emptiness. They no longer have power over me, just as no ‘earthly force’ has power over the spirit” (p. 20).

We see here that the proprietor, Stirner’s man, at once enters into possession, *sine beneficio deliberandi atque inventarii*, [without the advantage of deliberation and inventory — the right of deliberation and inventory is an old principle of the law of inheritance, which grants the heir time to decide whether he wants to accept or to reject a legacy] of the inheritance of the youth which, according to his own statement, consists only of “delirious fantasies” and “spectres”. He believes that in the process of changing from a child into a youth he had truly coped with the world of things, and in the process of changing from a youth into a man he had truly coped with the world of the spirit, that now, as a man, he has the whole world in his pocket and has nothing more to trouble him. If, according to the words of the youth which he repeats, no earthly force outside him has any power over the spirit, and hence the spirit is the

supreme power on earth — and he, the man, has forced this omnipotent spirit into subjection to himself — is he not then completely omnipotent? He forgets that he has only destroyed the fantastic and spectral form assumed by the idea of “Fatherland”, etc., in the brain of the “youth”, but that he has still not touched these ideas, insofar as they express *actual* relations. Far from having become the master of ideas — he is only now capable of arriving at “ideas”.

“Now, let us say in conclusion, it can be clearly seen” (p. 199) that the holy man has brought his interpretation of the different stages of life to the desired and predestined goal. He informs us of the result achieved in a thesis that is a spectral shade which we shall now confront with its lost body.

**unique thesis, p. 20.**

“The child  
was  
*realistic*, in  
thrall to the  
*things of*  
*this world*,  
until little  
by little he  
succeeded  
in  
penetrating  
*behind*  
*these very*  
things. The  
youth was  
*idealistic*,  
inspired by  
thoughts,  
until he

**Owner of the  
accompanying  
liberated shade.**

The child  
was  
*actually* in  
thrall *to*  
*the world*  
*of his*  
*things*,  
until *little*  
*by little* (a  
borrowed  
conjuring  
trick  
standing  
for  
developm  
ent) he

worked his way up to become a man, the egoistic man, who deals with things and thoughts as he pleases and puts his personal interest above everything. Finally, the old man? It will be time enough to speak of this when I become one.”

succeeded in leaving *these very things behind him*. The youth was *fanciful* and was made thoughtless by his enthusiasm, until he was brought down by the man, the egoistic *burgher*, with whom things and thoughts deal as they please, because his personal interest puts everything above him. Finally,

the old  
man? —  
“Woman,  
what have  
I to do  
with  
thee?”

[John 2:4]

The entire history of “a man’s life” amounts, therefore, “let us say in conclusion”, to the following:

1. Stirner regards the various stages of life only as “self-discoveries” of the individual, and these “self-discoveries” are moreover always reduced to a definite relation of consciousness. Thus the variety of *consciousness* is here the life of the individual. The physical and social changes which take place in the individuals and produce an altered consciousness are, of course, of no concern to Stirner. In Stirner’s work, therefore, child, youth and man always find the world ready-made, just as they merely “find” “themselves”; absolutely nothing is done to ensure that there should be something which can in fact be found. But even the relation of *consciousness* is not correctly understood either, but only in its speculative distortion. Hence, too, all these figures have a philosophical attitude to the world — “the child is *realistic*”, “the youth is *idealistic*”, the man is the negative unity of the two, absolute negativity, as is evident from the above-quoted final proposition. Here the secret of “a man’s life” is revealed, here it becomes clear that the “child” was only a disguise of “*realism*”, the “youth” a disguise of “*idealism*”, the “*man*” of an attempted *solution* of this *philosophical antithesis*. This solution, this “*absolute negativity*”, is arrived at — it is now seen — only thanks to the man blindly taking on trust the illusions both of the child and of the youth, *believing* thus to have overcome the world of things and the world of the spirit.

. Since Saint Max pays no attention to the physical and social “life” of the individual, and says nothing at all about “life”, he quite consistently abstracts from historical epochs, nationalities, classes, etc., or, which is the *same thing*, he inflates the *consciousness* predominant in the class nearest to him in his immediate environment into the normal consciousness of “a man’s life”. In order to rise above this local and pedantic narrow-mindedness he has only to confront “his” youth with the first young clerk he encounters, a young English factory worker or young Yankee, not to mention the young Kirghiz-Kazakhs.

3. Our saint’s enormous gullibility — the true spirit of his book — is not content with causing his youth to believe in his child, and his man to believe in his youth. The illusions which some youths”, “men”, etc., have or claim to have about themselves, are without any examination accepted by Stirner himself and confused with the “*life*”, with the *reality*, of these highly ambiguous youths and men.

4. The prototype of the entire structure of the stages of life has already been depicted in the third part of Hegel’s *Encyclopädie* and “in various transformations” in other passages in Hegel as well. Saint Max, pursuing “his own” purposes, had, of course, to undertake certain “transformations” here also. Whereas Hegel, for example, is still to such an extent guided by the empirical world that he portrays the German burgher as the servant of the world around him, Stirner has to make him the master of this world, which he is not even in imagination. Similarly, Saint Max pretends that he does not speak of the old man for empirical reasons; he wishes to wait until he becomes one himself (here, therefore, “a man’s life” = his unique life). Hegel briskly sets about constructing the four stages of the human life because, in the real world, the negation is posited twice, i.e., as moon and as comet (cf. Hegel’s *Naturphilosophie* , and therefore the quaternity here takes the place of the trinity. Stirner finds his own uniqueness in making moon and comet coincide and so abolishes the unfortunate old

man from “a man’s life”. The reason for this conjuring trick becomes evident as soon as we examine the construction of the unique history of man.