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In the Winter 1995 issue of the New York journal Anarchy there appears a piece by Michael William entitled Whatever Happened To L'Unique et son Ombre? Mr William is upset that the editors of this French publication, Dominique Fauquet and Alain Ajax, while claiming to be admirers of Max Stirner, have committed that most heinous of politically correct sins of writing some sympathetic words about Jean Marie Le Pen and contributing to "a far-right anti-free market journal" called Nationalisme et Republique. Not only this, but Dominique Fauquet has compounded the offence by arguing in "an extremely long text" that nationalism can be useful as a barrier to global homogenization and quoting Stirner to support her view. "What is this crap?" demands Mr Williams angrily.

In his Anarchy article Mr Williams contends that the quotation from Stirner used by Dominique Fauquet has been taken out of context and made to appear to support its opposite meaning. The quotation reads: "But the Germans will come into unison, i.e. unite themselves, only when they knock over their beehood as well as all the beehives; in other words, when they are more than — Germans: only then can they form a 'German Union.'" Mr William retorts that "the thrust of Stirner's argument on the page of his book is clearly anti-nationalist: 'And yet only individuals can enter into union with each other, and all alliances and leagues of peoples are and remain mechanical compoundings, because those who come together, at least so far as the "peoples" are regarded as the ones that have come together, are destitute of will.' Stirner mocked nationalism."

It is certainly true that Stirner mocked at nationalism and wrote of it: "This is the token of all reactionary wishes, that they want to set up something general, abstract, an empty, lifeless concept, in distinction from which the self-owned aspire to relieve the robust, lively particular from the trashy burden of particularities." However, while Stirner rejected the German nationalist creed, it is interesting to note that he did not at the same time reject nationality. The passages referred to by Mr William appear on pages 231-232 of The Ego and His Own (Dover edition). Had he turned to pages 244-245 he would have come across the following: "There is found to be a vast difference between pride in 'belonging to' a nation and therefore being its property, and that in calling a nationality one's property. Nationality is my quality, but the nation my owner and mistress... The Nationals are in the right; one cannot deny his nationality: and the humanitarians are in the right; one must not remain in the narrowness of the national. In uniqueness the contradiction is solved; the national is my quality. But I am not swallowed up in my quality — as the human too is my quality, but I give to man his existence first through my uniqueness."

It would seem, then, that Dominique Fauquet was not all that wrong in looking to Stirner for support, for if she regards her nationality as her property and and sees the parrot-cry "mankind is one" and its implication of universal standardization as a threat to her property, why should she not look around for allies in its defence? That some of these allies regard the 'Nation' as a kind of spook and worship with mumbo-jumbo does not affect their functional value as barriers to the threat she fears.

During a brief correspondence with Michael William regarding his article on L'Unique et son Ombre he kindly sent me a translation by Doug Imrie of a text by Alain Ajax, the companion of Dominique Fauquet, called Unique One or Zombie? In it I found the following passage which presents a most interesting interpretation of the 'Stirnerian' concept of property:

"... the property of the Unique One is of a totally different sort to the social and material property on which so many theories have flowered and all of the revolutionary projects have failed. If, during my walks, I find a tree that I encounter beautiful, it belongs to me, without for all that belonging to me materially and therefore juridically. It belongs to me because I am the one who can at that moment appreciate all its beauty, and because it arouses a unique emotion in me that has no social meaning. If you encounter the same tree at some other moment and are moved while looking at it, it belongs to you at that precise instant, and yet it is not common to both of us – your relationship with it is just as unique. Neither of us need to possess it materially to enjoy it.

"In the same way, if I appreciate the facade of the pretty 17th century house situated on the Ile Saint-Louis in Paris, it matters little to me that its legal owner is someone else; it belongs to me through my eyes and my imagining of its interior, which I will undoubtedly never see. And it pleases me that this house is there, always there, when I loiter on the banks of Seine. The calamity for me would be for it to disappear, replaced by some anonymous block of concrete, not that its material and legal owner is a bourgeois who has the money that I lack. And if I dream of possessing it more fully, it is never a dream of social conquest.

"If this text interests you, if it simply makes you think, or if you translate it and publish it, it belongs to you without ceasing to be mine for all that, but it does not belong to the indifferent or hostile reader who has not taken any pleasure in it"

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In his memoirs of Kenya, Black Laughter (1924), Llewellyn Powys writes: "Deep in his heart every Masai feels nothing but contempt for Europeans. Unlike the Kavirondo and Kikuyu they can never be persuaded to wear any article of the white man's dress. They hold that we've conquered them not by superior courage but by the invention of tricky weapons." It is true that the conquering white men may not have been superior in "courage" – that is, fighting ability – to the conquered Masai, but they, or rather some individuals among them, were superior in mental ability to invent the "tricky weapons" by means of which they won. What Masai did not understand is that power is not something that is confined to physical prowess. It is also intelligence. Therein lay the superiority of white men.

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If I have might I need claim no "right".

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Submission is not the result of powerlessness, but of insufficient power to be dominant.

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