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The Coming Together of Willful Self-Creators

Apio Ludd

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“Verein von Egoisten” – I’ve chosen to translate this as “association of egoists” in my translation of *Der Einzige und Sein Eigentum (The Unique and Its Own)*. But aware egoists, that is *willful self-creators*, associate not by forming permanent groups, but through an ongoing interweaving of activities, a ceaseless coming together and separating, each participating as suits *her own* project of self-creation. So to clarify this idea, I will here call the association of egoists *the coming together of willful self-creators*.¹

Many have the misconception that all egoists are loners (and that loners avoid relating). As if only those willing to *submit* themselves to a group actually relate or interact. I would argue the very opposite. When I submit to the group, I – as myself – relate to no flesh and blood individual. I submerge myself into the group identity and “relate” *as such* to other abstract identi-

¹ I love using the word “egoist.” It provokes people, and I love to do that. But I also want to make it clear that an *aware* egoist willfully creates himself in each moment and this self-creation (and self-devouring/enjoying) forms what I call her egoism.

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My Own #14

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ties. Only by separating myself out from all groups do I become capable of relating to others as my actual, ever-changing self. Even if I were a loner (and at times I am), I would be *creating* my interactions with others as I choose, because I can only exist as myself in relation to my properties, that is, in relation to the world I perceive and conceive, in relation to the others from whom I choose to distinguish and distance myself. These relations, these interactions I make with others would be how I create myself as a loner.

But most of the time I enjoy creating myself, my life, my world, together with others. I want to come together with them, to interweave my life and my world with theirs. I see this as my actual wealth, as my *property*, as essential to *my* willful self-creation and self-enjoyment. So I never submit myself to any group. Rather I seek out those who, like me, are out to create, devour and enjoy themselves with intention, and I look for the ways I can enhance my self-creative project by weaving it for awhile into theirs, by coming together with them for a time so as to increase each one's strength and each one's wealth.

In the worlds you and I share, the inter-individual worlds where your and my experiences correspond, each of us encounters a lot that stands in the way of our willful self-creation and self-enjoyment, that acts to suppress self-activity and to impose roles, identities, and static relationships on us, to make us parts of some group or another. In particular, you and I confront individuals playing the institutionalized roles that form the standardized relations of the fictions known as the state and the economy, and the industrial and post-industrial technological structures that form human beings into a *mass*.² Even

² Despite "personal" computers, laptops, etc., that you can carry with you, this is as true of cybernetic technology as of the factory. In fact, the internet creates a *global* human mass in which individuals are reduced to the same basic activity — the taking in and giving out of "information" — thus, being kept in formation. This technology has also effectively destroyed privacy, an essential aspect of free (or better, *own*) association.

though the activities of individuals form these institutions and create and maintain these technological structures, individuals get lost in these static and standardized systems of relationships so that the systems seem to form entities in themselves more powerful than the individuals who keep them alive. Even I, a willful self-creator, often crash up against these systems, forced in various ways to interact. I do so with hostility, in rebellion, and drawing all I can for *myself* out of this forced interaction, while doing whatever damage I can, and I escape as quickly as I can, so as not to be drawn in.

Herein lies the power in the coming together of willful self-creators. If you and I weave our worlds together in those instances where our interests, our pleasures, our battles, etc., correspond, then I increase my strength with your strength and you increase yours with mine. Against the seemingly overwhelming worlds of institutional power and technological massification, each of us becomes stronger, more capable of self-creation and self-enjoyment. But only so long as each of us remembers to move apart as soon as your interests, pleasures, battles and so on no longer correspond with mine. If you and I were to forget this, then our coming together, our association, would cease to be your own and my own, and would instead become a society, a community, a collectivity to which you and I belong. Our coming together remains ours, only because you and I can choose to separate at any time.