

FIVE YEARS

and its Cooperative Post-Rhizomatic Free Association Politics of Self-Management



EL DIARIO DE BETA-LOCAL - SPECIAL EDITION FOR FIVE YEARS BY MARC HULSON AND ESTHER PLANAS - BETALOCAL.ORG

Extract from the text “Free Association” by Marc Hulson, 2009

1. The owner of a bar and exhibition space in Vienna told me he'd been reading a book about cocaine. In it the author claims that David Bowie intended the name Ziggy Stardust as code for Sigmund Freud: Ziggy is an established diminutive for both Sigmund and Siegfried, while Stardust is slang for cocaine. I haven't been able to verify my friend's claim anywhere else but it is definitely the case that Jean Genie is a reference to Jean Genet. So why not.
2. The London based artists' association Five Years was named in 1998 by a friend I collaborate with periodically on text and performance work. We were talking in her studio about the idea of a block of time in which change might occur: a Five Year Plan, say, or prison sentence. The song Five Years by David Bowie, from the album The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars, also immediately sprang to mind. Five Years is a free association – each member acts with creative autonomy in relation to the group.
3. In 1938 the Marxist Psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich fled Austria for the U.S. Reich had begun working as a Psychoanalyst in Vienna with Freud's blessing and was a respected analyst for much of his career. However in later life he was virtually disinherited by the analytic community due to his eccentric ideas about sexuality. He believed he had discovered a primordial cosmic energy called 'orgone energy', which was responsible for the biological expression of emotion and sexuality. He believed he could harness this energy as a therapeutic tool. He also believed he could harness it to control the weather and to do battle with UFOs over the Arizona desert. Reich was arrested and imprisoned by the US authorities in 1956. He died shortly afterwards.
4. Another Viennese émigré to the U.S. was the architect and designer Frederick Kiesler, who moved to New York City in 1926. One of the designers of the Shrine of the Book, which houses the Dead Sea Scrolls in Jerusalem, Kiesler was derided by his colleagues: "If Kiesler wants to hold two pieces of wood together, he pretends he's never heard of nails or screws. He tests the tensile strengths of various metal alloys, experiments with different methods and shapes, and after six months comes up with a very expensive device that holds two pieces of wood together almost as well as a screw". Among other multifunctional items of furniture, Keisler designed very beautiful fold-out couches, which are still manufactured by the Austrian firm Whittmann.
5. In 1908 the Viennese artist Richard Gerstl, who had been instructing Arnold Schoenberg in painting, had an affair with his wife, Mathilde. Schoenberg stopped the affair and as a result Gerstl committed suicide in his studio. He burnt most of his work, destroyed his diaries and correspondence, then hung himself in front of the studio mirror. He also stabbed himself for good measure. He was 25 years old. 66 works remain. He was unknown in his lifetime. His work now hangs in the Belvedere. Each year Schoenberg marked the day of Gerstl's death with a G in his diary.
6. Rock'n'Roll Suicide is a song on the album The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars.
7. In 1910, when Willhelm Reich was 12 years old, his personal tutor had an affair with his mother. When the affair was discovered, Reich's mother committed suicide by drinking a bottle of household cleaner, dying in agony over the course of three days. Reich's father was devastated and in 1914, on the pretence of going fishing, he stood for hours up to his knees in a freezing cold lake, as a result of which he died from pneumonia and tuberculosis. Reich's sense of guilt was profound: he said "the joy of life [was] shattered, torn apart from my inmost being for the rest of my life!"
8. Willhelm Reich was an important influence on Viennese Aktionists such as Otto Muehl. In 1970 Muehl founded a commune, 'Friedrichshof, inspired by Reich's theories. The mission was to equivocate 'Psychoanalysis' through 'Aktion-Analyse'. In its heyday Friedrichshof numbered around six hundred converts. 'The enemy of the commune was 'monogamy' – its central tenet was to mobilise revolutionary potential through the release of sexuality from the fetters of bourgeois convention. Promiscuity was a requisite of membership, regulated by an imperative to find a new partner every four hours. Inevitably, with such a rate of new couplings, even in a commune of 600, repetition set into the chain quite rapidly. In 1987 Muehl bestowed upon himself the right of 'first night' with the commune's grown up children. Muehl was arrested in 1991 and sentenced to seven years in jail.
9. Although Freud's theories investigated the potentially harmful impact on the psyche of social imperatives, with respect to the repression of sexual desire, his own love life was conventional, in the sense that it was devoted to one woman. During their engagement, he was separated from his future wife Martha Bernays from 1882 to 1886, while she was away from Vienna, living with her mother in their hometown of Wandsbek in Germany. Throughout those four years Freud wrote to her constantly, amassing some 900 love letters. He also sent her packets of cocaine, telling her it would bring colour to her cheeks.
10. Lady Stardust is a song on the album The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars.
11. Text from the comic 'The Invisibles':
"The Invisible Army thrives on secrecy and constant change. Each cell operates independently, and each members place within his cell is fluid, ever shifting. When King Mob brought his cell to America, leadership passed from him to ragged Robin, who has become his lover. In the compound of billionaire Invisible Mason Lang, they planned carefully their next moves in the war against oppression and conformity."
12. The Tuesday 29 Psychogeometry /Berlin 2006

Joining the Tuesday 29 is an experience somewhere between induction into a secret society and participation in an intensive workshop environment where new members are summoned to month -long "initiation ceremonies" which combine elements of occult ritual, hypnosis sensory bombarding and intense, collaborative creative activity. Following initiation, members return periodically to repeat and develop the more advanced stages of the process. The point of the work produced in this secret environment is not his aesthetic value: it is not indeed for exhibition. The purpose of making this collaborative work is that it should influence each member's individual practice, which through the public exposure then serves as an unconscious vehicle for the furtherance of Tuesday 29's aims as an organisation. Our decision to include this work in the exhibition is complex. Since the turn of the millennium, factional conflicts have become rife, apparently for the first time in the history of Tuesday 29 (the precise length of that history is unknown to any but a few senior members). These disputes have spread like a virus throughout the membership, and have centred on a growing sense of unease over possible corruption and distortion of the organisation's message. There have also been related suggestions of exploitative and unethical employment of certain of the "teaching" methods used during the initiation of the new members. The implication is that some person or persons in the small but potentially very powerful administrative layer are both abusing their positions and even attempting to sabotage the organisation. As rumours and allegations have Proliferated, factions have formed and tempers have frayed: there have even been death threats –something previously unthinkable in an organisation so vehemently opposed to violence in any form, and a measure of the gravity of the gravity of the crisis.

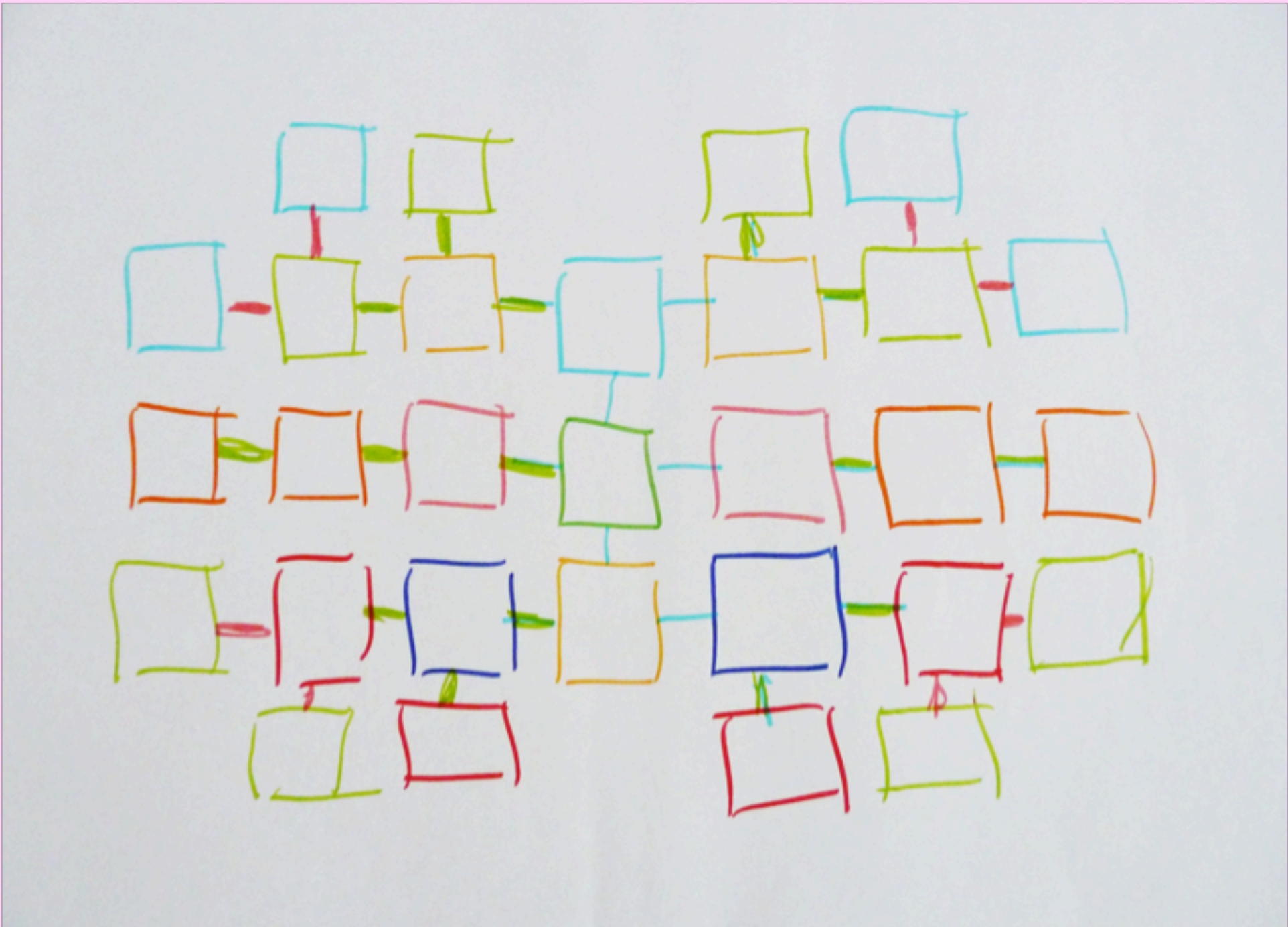


Diagram by Esther Planas (felt tip colours on paper)

As any thing made in post-modern times, the cooperative structure is a kind of Luxemburgist /German DIY / Rhizomatic Project.

Libertarian Marxists (e.g., Anton Pannekoek, Otto Rühle, Herman Gorter and Rosa Luxemburg) generally claim that the state can not be directed towards the free association because it can only act within the frame of capitalist society itself, leading towards a state capitalism (i.e., capitalism in which privative property is owned by state) which would seek to remain indefinitely, and never lead to free association. Most Libertarian Marxists claim that free association can only be achieved through the direct of workers themselves, which should create workers' councils (which operate under direct democracy) to take the means of production and abolish the state in a social revolution.[5][6] Although Luxemburgists are not opposed in principle to short-term participation within the state as long as the institution itself exists. "It follows from all we have been saying up till now that the communal relationship into which the individuals of a class entered, and which was determined by their common interests over against a third party, was always a community to which these individuals b longed only as average individuals, only insofar as they lived within the conditions of existence of their class – a relationship in which they participated not as individuals but as members of a class. With the community of revolutionary proletarians, on the other hand, who take their conditions of existence [...] under their control, it is just the reverse; it is as individuals that the individuals participate in it. [...] Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all natural premises as the creatures of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals. Its organization is, therefore, essentially economic, the material production of the conditions of this unity; it turns existing conditions into conditions of unity. The reality, which communism is creating, is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality is only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals themselves." Marx (German Ideology): The German Ideology/Section 12 Since anarchists, some Libertarian Marxists (mainly the Situationists) and other Libertarian socialists consider free association as an immediate task for introduction and maintenance of stateless socialism, most theorists of these ideologies have gone into great detail about how it will operate, unlike most Leninists and Democratic Socialists who tend to be more concerned with the "transition" than the final goal.

Rosa Luxemburg Theory Dialectic of Spontaneity and Organisation

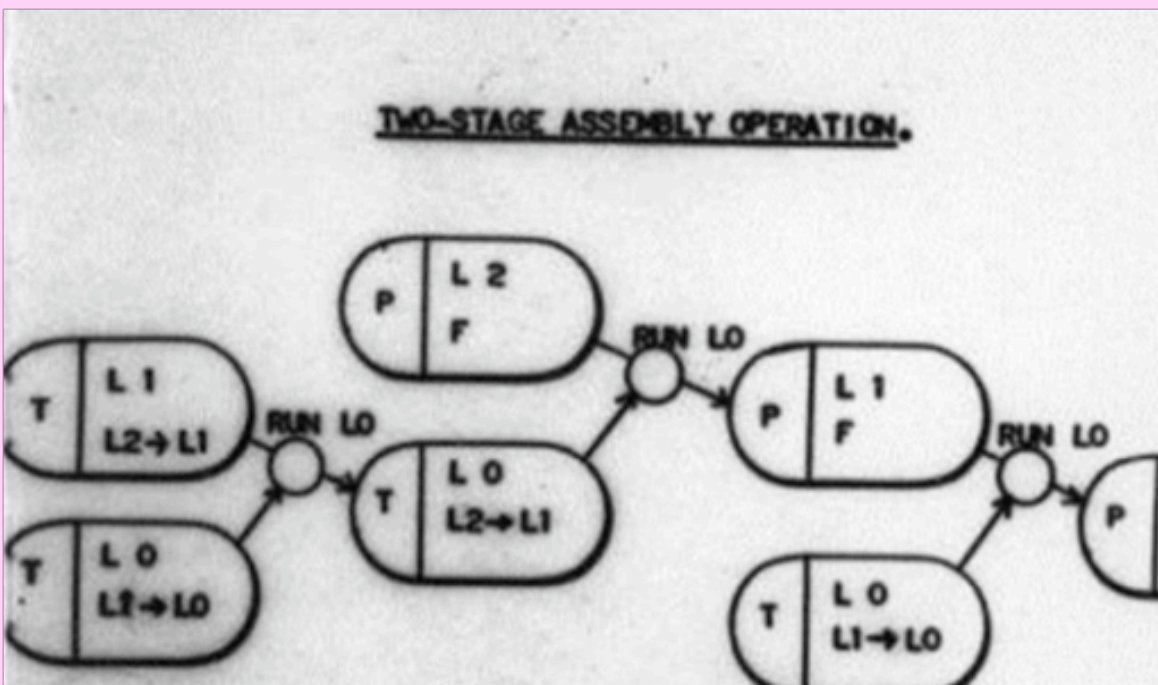
The Dialectic of Spontaneity and Organisation was the central feature of Luxemburg's political philosophy, wherein "spontaneity" is a grass roots approach to organising a party-oriented class struggle. Spontaneity and organisation, she argued, are not separable or separate activities, but different moments of one political process; one does not exist without the other. These beliefs arose from her view that class struggle evolves from an elementary, spontaneous state to a higher level.

Rhizome

As a model for culture, the rhizome resists the organizational structure of the root-tree system, which charts causality along chronological lines and looks for the originary source of "things" and looks towards the pinnacle or conclusion of those "things." A rhizome, on the other hand, is characterized by "ceaselessly established connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles." The planar movement of the rhizome resists chronology and organization, instead favouring a nomadic system of growth and propagation. In this model, culture spreads like the surface of a body of water, spreading towards available spaces or trickling downwards towards new spaces through fissures and gaps, eroding what is in its way. The surface can be interrupted and moved, but these disturbances leave no trace, as the water is charged with pressure and potential to always seek its equilibrium, and thereby establish smooth space.[1]

The concept of the rhizome (quoted from A Thousand Plateaus):

- 1 and 2: Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be
 3. Principle of multiplicity: only when the multiple is effectively treated as a substantive, "multiplicity" that it ceases to have any relation to the One
 4. Principle of asignifying rupture: a rhizome may be broken, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines
 - 5 and 6: Principle of cartography and decalomania: a rhizome is not amenable to any structural or generative model; it is a "map and not a tracing
- By its very nature, rhizome exhibits incompatibility with such critical hierarchal structures as domestication, monoculture-agriculture, division of labour and centralized government. Unlike hierarchy, rhizome cannot suffer exploitation from within because its structure remains incompatible with centralization of power. It provides a structural framework for our conscious organization of memes. Each node in a rhizome stands autonomous from the larger structure, but the nodes work together in a larger network that extends beneath it to the node without creating dependence.



“Co-op”

A cooperative ("coop"), co-operative ("co-op"), or cooperative ("coop") is an autonomous association of persons who voluntarily cooperate for their mutual social, economic, and cultural benefit.[1] Cooperatives include non-profit community organizations and businesses that are owned and managed by the people who use its services (a consumer co-operative) and/or by the people who work there (a worker cooperative). Cooperatives are based on the cooperative values of "self-help, self-responsibility, democracy and equality, equity and solidarity" and the seven cooperative principles:[13] Voluntary and open membership Democratic member control Economic participation by members Autonomy and independence Education, training and information Cooperation among cooperatives Concern for community Cooperatives are dedicated to the values of openness, social responsibility and caring for others. Such legal entities have a range of social characteristics. Membership is open, meaning that anyone who satisfies certain non-discriminatory conditions may join. Economic benefits are distributed proportionally to each member's level of participation in the cooperative, for instance, by a dividend on sales or purchases, rather than according to capital invested.[13] Cooperatives may be classified as worker, consumer, producer, purchasing or housing cooperatives.[14] They are distinguished from other forms of incorporation in that profit making or economic stability are balanced by the interests of the community.[13] Co-ops can sometimes be identified on the Internet through the use of the . Coop gTLD. Organizations using . Coop domain names must adhere to the basic co-op values. The United Nations has declared 2012 to be the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) [15]

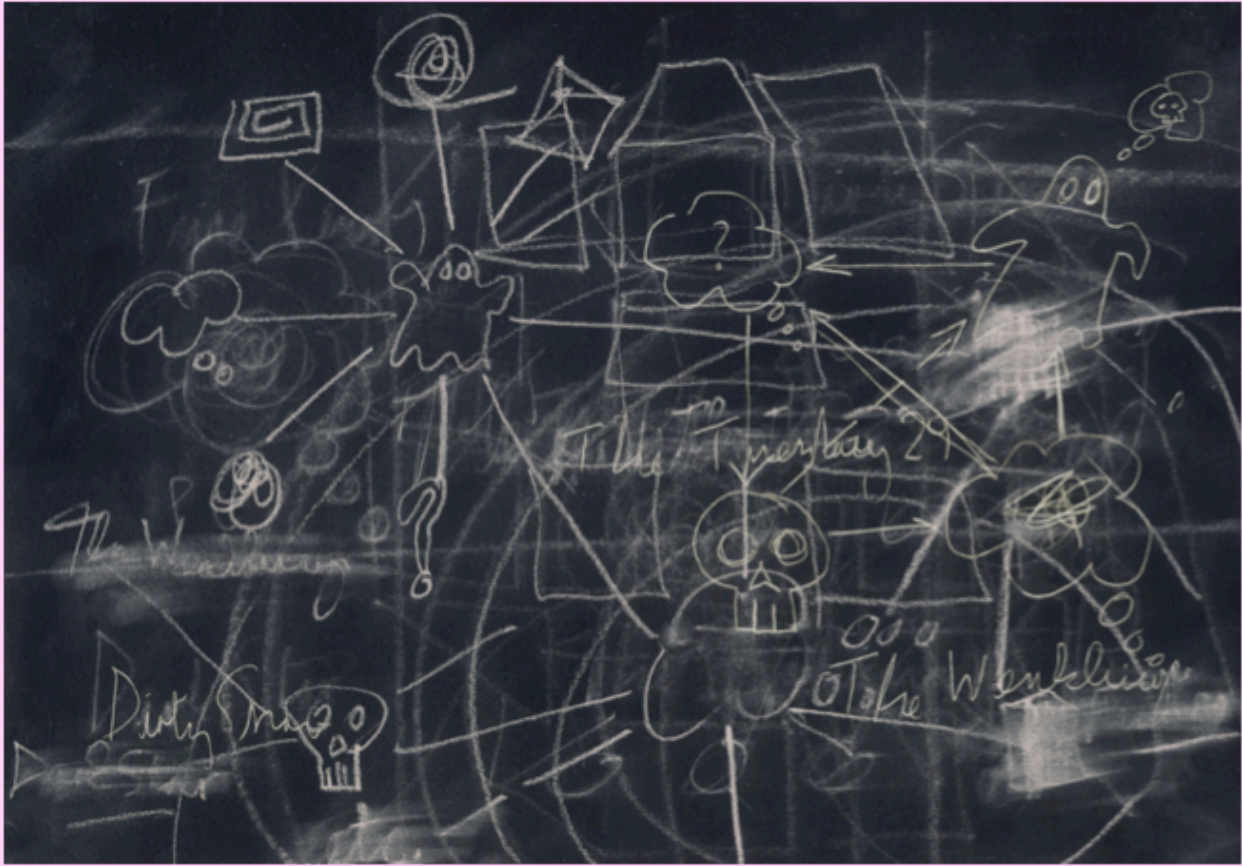


Diagram by Marc Hulson (Chalk on Board)

“Free association Oxford Dictionary

free association, noun
[mass noun]

1 In psychology the mental process by which one word or image may spontaneously suggest another without any necessary logical connection.

A psychoanalytic technique for investigation of the unconscious mind, in which a relaxed subject reports all passing thoughts without reservation.

2 The forming of a group, political alliance, or other organization without any external restriction: the right of free association

Derivatives

Free-associate

Verb

Free association (sense 1).

Free association (communism and anarchism)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_association_\(communism_and_anarchism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_association_(communism_and_anarchism)) - mw-headhttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_association_(communism_and_anarchism) - p-search

In the anarchist, Marxist and socialist sense, free association (also called free association of producers or, as Marx often called it, community of freely associated individuals) is a kind of relation between individuals where there is no state, social class or authority, in a society that has abolished the private property of means of production. Once private property is abolished, individuals are no longer deprived of access to means of production so they can freely associate themselves (without social constraint) to produce and reproduce their own conditions of existence and fulfil their needs and desires.

The concept of free association, however, becomes more clear around the concept of the proletariat. The proletariat is someone who has no property nor any means of production and, therefore, to survive, sells the only thing that he has, his abilities (the labour power), to those owning the means of production. The existence of individuals deprived of property, deprived of livelihood, allows owners (or capitalists) to find in the market an object of consumption that thinks and acts (human abilities), which they use in order to accumulate increasingly capital in exchange for the wage that maintains the survival of the proletarians. The relationship between proletarians and owners of the means of production is thereby a forced association in which the proletariat is only free to sell his labour power, in order to survive. By selling his productive capacity in exchange for the wage which ensures survival, the proletariat puts his practical activity under the will of the buyer (the owner), becoming alienated from his/her own actions and products, in a relationship of domination and exploitation. Free association would be the form of society created if private property was abolished in order to allow individuals to freely dispose of the means of production, which would bring about an end to class society, i.e. there would be no more owners neither proletarians, nor state, but only freely associated individuals. The abolition of private property by a free association of producers is the original goal of the communists and anarchists: it is identified with anarchy and Communism itself. However, the evolution of various trends have led some to virtually abandon the goal or to put it in the background in face of other tasks, while others trends consider free association as something that should guide the all practical activity of the contestation of the status quo.