

4.3. “We like raves, but...” Shituationism as a way out of the dilemma of hedonism

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Abstract

Shituationism is a rave theory born in the current crisis. It is a position against the dilemma of political hedonism and its temporary zones of exclusivist happiness. These only live through the cliché of the adventurous. We propose instead: Aim at being boring! Raves can have much more potential than temporary hedonist comfort. Boringness could be an aesthetic that does not aim at recognition and visibility. So unspectacular that it breaks out of the order of the spectacle. In our investigation we want to show what can be learnt from the current generation, the rave and internet generation. We sing the hymn for superficiality.

Keywords: Hedonism, Situationism, Rave, Social media

Post scriptum

Us sitting in old chairs and talking about old times now sounds almost as absurd as us speaking about the potentials of rave and the dilemma of hedonism at an academic conference. But that happened, and now we sit down for the post scriptum: what remains to be said about rave. The constant voice of the cars. And a different sound coming in. A sound system has been constructed, basically from nothing, like out of nowhere. It goes there, underneath the big streets, crossing the sound of the cars, through the pedestrian tunnels of the suburbs. And we go there, expecting nothing, and then there are like 2000 people. Or in the mountains that surround the metropolis: signs written on the trees with spray cans, and cryptic maps are spread out, so complicated that even the police didn't find the way. Neither did some of the ravers, getting lost in the forest together, crashing with a car's sound system, satellite raves. The metropolis of Athens more than a decade ago. Police repression was the first hit against this scene, commercial attitudes and the zombie hybrid culture of peace and love and wasted youth was the final strike. And now, in the current crisis, the dark tunnels and similar spaces host the many homeless and hungry people instead of hedonists. And the fascist mob is hunting there also. It is out of these tragic ruins of the rave scene, that we start to formulate this report.

Five years ago, lying down on the hot metal deck of a ship heading to an island close to the Turkish coast, we created a rave collective. It came to be a small number of people all living in precarious situations, with different levels of education and different skills, spread over various cities, creating the myth of being somehow connected, playing sounds and sharing sounds, thinking and writing about their environment. It was a bit of a desperate act

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and the only thing that here and now matters about it, is that it remained a platform for collaborative acting and thinking, instead of becoming one of these profit orientated little companies of the scene that maintain the divisions and hierarchies between organisers and consumers for the purpose of financial profit. It was our little nomadic tree house and cyberzine within the rave capitals and culture factories. The chastity belt that kept our network from transforming itself into something commercially useful, like from joining the alternative economies of the Berlin city model (this wholesale myth, this meta-commodity), was the underlying ideology of what we called shituationism. A tragic version of situationism, a serious joke that always choked on itself. It is the idea of holding up the potentials of rave situations, but with a criticism of political hedonism.

Political hedonism could be roughly described as the idea that the temporary zones of exclusivist happiness, like at parties, form situations, that point at the utopia of happiness for all. It is of course mostly popular in Berlin. We criticize this idea as temporary hedonist comfort zones, as a dilemma instead of a perspective. It is the weekend as a time zone of freedom, enforcing the normativity of five days work, two days clubbing. Not only is that approach temporary and exclusivist, the situations only live through the cliché of the adventurous. We propose instead: Aim at being boring! Raves can have much more potential than temporary hedonist comfort. This opens a new and better problem: how to extrapolate the potentials of rave itself instead of just subordinating it to a cult of freedom and happiness with the weekend as a model for utopia.

What can we learn from the current generation, the rave and internet generation? Social media, the pretty surfaces that allow me to be connected to you and everybody else, which have this connectivity and communication as a function, constitute their own section of reality, instead of just being a means of transmission. We all know that, maybe this is why we added the word social in the term. Even if there are no images or media that are not social.

The modifiable surfaces, the interactive pictorial spaces, the interfaces of the web, join the profane representations of the world and the sacred untouchable images of art. Large parts of life are now lived there, in that architecture of intimacy, through a dislocation of nearness into a pictorial space. It even serves as a factory space for the superfluous, who work there in a occupational therapy of valuing and spreading cultural goods.

The endless wealth of the net is offered in the mode of art, inexhaustible, and generates potentials. In the crisis of social media lies the potential of contact. This possibility seems to be more rooted in the conditions of the social than those of the media.

And in more general terms. To be able to let go, to have the possibility of falling into something, to achieve that state. To get in contact, the closely approach towards the found state, is a construction of unity, and not an excavation of unity. To chose what is wanted and what is not wanted. Nearness is critical of the image, because it seeks to construct its relation to things, instead of accepting the appearance. Nearness does not end at the surface, it happens there. The so-called union, the sexual one, is only a rubbing on the surfaces of erogenous zones, for example concave and convex zones. Penetration is only the according myth, culturally stylized though the related industrial products, like the romantic and pornographic films, texts and images. All this might be also a reflex against the many divisions and dispositions of society, which appear complex and irresolvable.

Putting oneself in the lived reality of the collective artwork that is rave, generates an order of nearness and distance. Inside this the mode is superficiality. The purpose of the rave situation is to enable on the basis of 'a room full of people is listening to music' a situation of

multifaceted potential. The superficiality, in its organic visuality, is shaped through the universal language of action and reaction. The basis is the process of negotiation of what one does want and doesn't want. Even if there would be an Orwellian abolishing of language, there still could exist cracks in the architecture that would point to cracks in the order. Every dark room can be a darkroom and doesn't need a sign that declares it, and every darkroom allows for deviancy. The black square of Malevich is a two-dimensional darkroom. The uniformity of the rave situation is the basis for precise deviance. Entrusting oneself to the concept: After setting the time frame, sound and light and crowd then create the rugged line of the evening with different perspectivization and microscopic examination by the participants of the rave. That way everyone is part of the personnel, operating the ambience. And yet there is the rhythm service, the tone service, the sound service, the light service, the fog service, the drink supply, the door control, the operators who work everything out with the state so everyone else can feel like having nothing to do with it. Of great importance also the wardrobe, where everyone molts oneself and is welcomed. And finally the people who remove the incrustation that remains.

Immediacy should not be associated with penetration or permeation or immersion, it has to be located on the surface, on surfaces that rub. The surface of the respective organ is the sensor: erogenous zones, the remaining skin (if something like that, skin that is not erogenous zone, even exists), eyes, language apparatus. immediacy carries too much of firm immovability, it is not fitting for grasping the relation of living beings to their surroundings. Superficial visuality in this sense is essentially organic, we do not talk about images as being static, but of surfaces that are transformed by the users. A club is an interface. That is why the screen generation finds themselves in the club. An old situationist once said: Superfluous of all realities, unite in superficiality, we have a world to win, online and offline!

We think we saw old Guy Debord at the conference, at least the guy in the white suit looked one hundred percent like him. He was standing next to the people serving black and red caviar to underground music scenes scholars at the conference dinner. Later we were DJing there, playing Regressverbot and King Deluxe, with a 400 watt sound system in the small bar with the parquet floor where nobody was allowed to dance for conservational reasons, it was just us and the workers and some champagne. Everything was possible.

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