

THE (UN)CIVIL SOCIETY



SPECTACLE INC.

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Separation Perfected

The spectacle is
a constructed relation
between economy
and nation

mediated by image

It is a language

Of containment

The Spectacle is

the focal point

of our vision

a synthesis

of consciousness

a reality constructed

from the domain

of delusion

And functions

with collusion

the unification

it achieves

Is universal separation

Commodity as Spectacle

Waged like an
everlasting war
the Spectacle is for
all to equate satisfaction
with non action
Humanized Corporations
of commodity
Form dichotomy
has taken charge
through economy
Forced trade of labor for wage
time is coerced
we are both use and value
In the blockchain Of exchange
This blackmail Does prevail
through consumption of illusions
that form the fusion
Between systems of production
We serve to buy
we must submit or die
So we blindly
live this lie

Unity and Division in Appearance

All the “isms”
That create the schisms
In our world today
are global brands
whose purpose and desire
Does require individuals to
be contained
allegiance is maintained
through Fallacious
archaic opposition
and reinforced
by systemic oppression
Enthusiasms is aroused
while distractions
are maintained
Through an endless
succession of competitions
everything from
sports to elections
While maintaining the appearance
Of both unity and division

Subject and Representation

We live in a state
of visual siege
Where the subject defends
its ideological monopoly
through promoting
family, private property
The moral order and patriotism
to maintain domestic tranquilly
Our violent myths are represented
And displayed as images of normalcy
Football a metaphor for War
Advertising that upholds
false standards of beauty and happiness
And politics as theater for the dumb
We are subject to these illusions
As modern means of conditioning
Through perpetual presentation
so that we will embrace
an ideological lie
Whose origin
can never be revealed.

Time and History

Time is a commodity
traded as currency

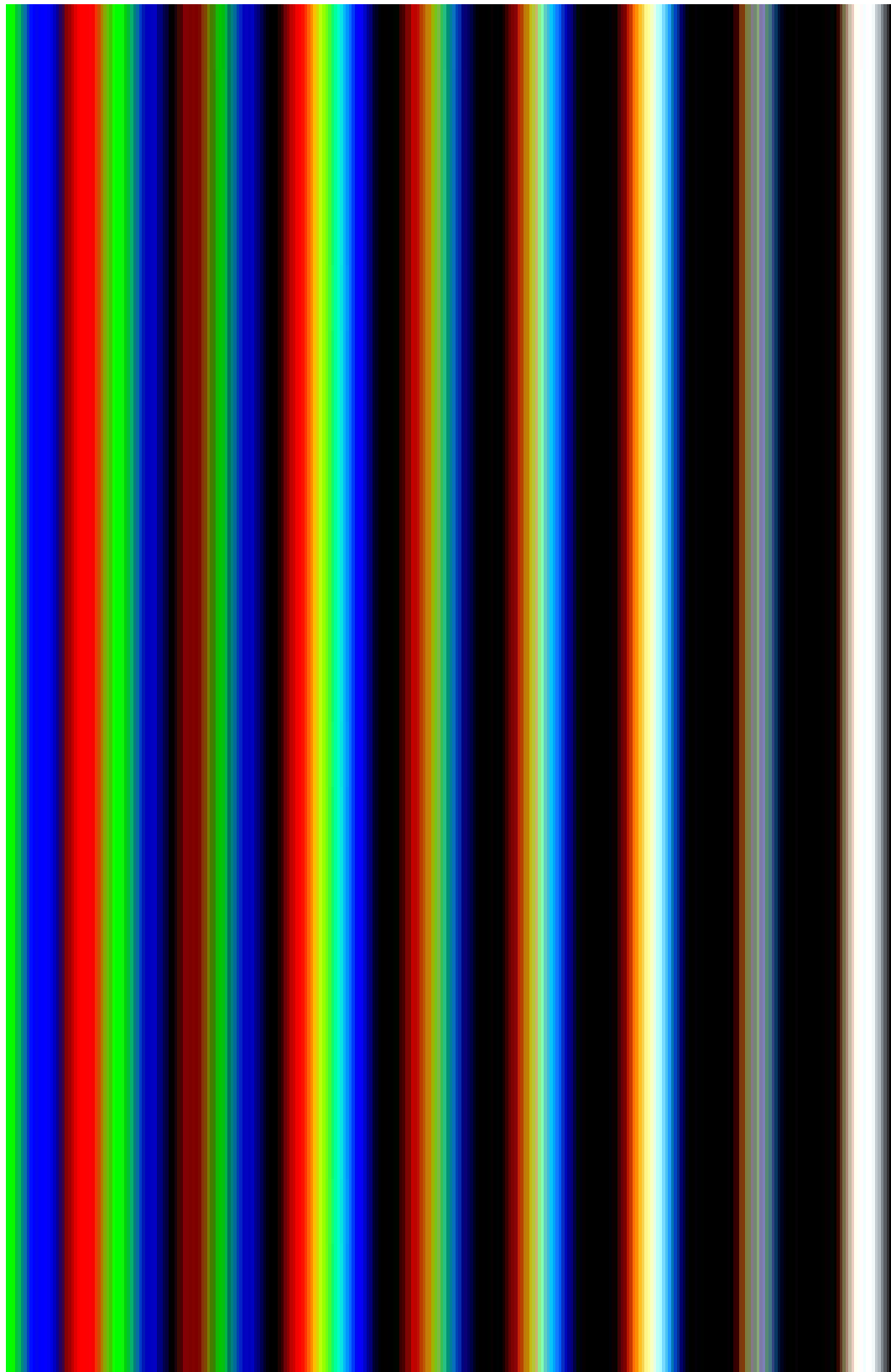
This exchange of existence
Has become our new pseudo-nature
created through alienated labor

Echoes of
ancient rhythms
Have been
incorporated
day and night shift
work and weekend

State mandated holidays
And the occasional vacation
Have become
A new sentence

In our modern prison of time
Even then when off the clock
When relishing in our perceived freedom
we spend our time consuming images
Of what the spectacle has to offer
Left to vicariously experience
A reproduction of what
is presented as life





Organization of Territory

Mass-produced
for the abstract space
of the market place

You are granted
the Freedom
to consume

We pledge
allegiance

To a system
For which it stands

To process
Through homogenization

Of urbanization
To achieve
spectacular separation

Take a knee
Raise your fist
Claim your space
To Resist

Consumption and Culture

Consumption
Is the presumption
For suppression
And oppression
that defined our
existence today
what if we embrace
this moment
To create independence
Not dependence
When there are
No more rules (of conduct)
Will my pretension
Adequately provide
A coherent account
of the social totality?
Is my fragmented methodology
Even workable within its
own limitations?
What will happen
when our consumption
Eventually engulfs
Human culture
And ingests our domain?

Ideology Materialized

The spectacle
is the face of any ideology
because it masks
the essence that lies underneath
All systems currently in place
Hold the goal to promote
the impoverishment, enslavement
and negation of real life.
materials that are our expression
Have become the separation
And estrangement between us
Through production
power and perception
Has become concentrated
obliterate the illusion of boundaries
between self and world
between true and false

Liner Notes

Late last fall, (*which feels like an eternity ago*) my daughter started middle school. As any modern pre-teen is want to do, she asked for a smartphone to presumably communicate with her parents (and friends). This simple request set off a spirited debate in our household. I must admit her argument for wanting to be connected to the world was passionate. I countered her arguments by pulling out my dogeared copy of the Situationist International Anthology, and started reading passages that reinforced my concern for her to be consumed by the expression and mediation of her social relations through objects. I am sure this exchange will be thrown back into my face “as her asshole father’s pseudo-Marxist bullshit” at some point before her adolescent journey is completed, none the less after our discussion was over I kept on reading.

Even though the Situationists rejected the idea that advanced capitalism's apparent successes—such as technological advancement, increased income, and increased leisure—could ever outweigh the social dysfunction and degradation of everyday life that it simultaneously inflicted, at this moment in our society it is pretty clear they were wrong. They were spot on was articulating the concept of the spectacle. Now more than ever we need to shift from passive individual participation on electronic platforms to first-hand fulfillment of authentic desire. To counteract the spectacle; the construction of situations - the making of moments of life deliberately constructed for the purpose of reawakening and pursuing authentic desires, experiencing the feeling of life and adventure, and the liberation of everyday may just free ourselves.

This project focuses on Guy DeBord’s “Society of the Spectacle”, who represented one half of the theoretical spirit, some may argue the mind (*where Vaneigem is the heart*) behind the Situationist movement. DeBord resonated with me because, when I go outside and see humans with neck bent down in a regressed fetal position engaged with their screen, so many instances of what he was theoretically describing that has become a functioning reality firmly embedded into the fabric of our lives - everything from shopping through Amazon, iPhone , Facebook and even influencers like the Kardashians.

As an active participant in what DeBord calls “Bureaucratic Community” whose job is to sell the totality of social labor as the only means of survival, I try to wage a daily battle to widen the margin of choice for those I serve. Because a bureaucracy has to create and subsequently limit the range of choice, be it through food (Coke or Pepsi), music (pop or country) or political candidates (Democrat or Republican) to include any other option may also include destroying the system itself. To cultivate a mind that can see beyond a binary based and limited system will hopefully inspire change.

Living in the heart of a Suburban Utopia, I have found the manifestation of the Spectacle to be true. In a seemingly new development, with the notions of instant community, and the unifying aspects of place is determined by what you consume while living in isolation is acute. While shopping about a month before the Coronavirus stopped the world as we know it a man passing me with his cart said to me "I can't understand how crowded this place is . . . we have to do something about overpopulation, I mean what is going to happen?" I looked him in the eye and said "we are standing in the middle of the illusion of abundance that the spectacle provides to keep us in line - when the shit hits the fan, and this store is looted and emptied within 72 hours we will resort to eating each other like the savages we are. What we know in this moment will die a hopefully quick and painless death and the Earth will continue to on go with it's business until it is consumed by our Sun when it turns into a supernova." He gave me a fist bump and said "I like the way you think". I thanked him for our moment of honesty, than turned my attention to my son to help him choose between which box of processed sugar and toxic dye he was more interested in consuming and satiating his consumer desires in that moment.

Now, that the Spectacle is paused, will we realize the human systems we have created are more fragile than we think. Is the patina of civility enough to sustain us? Or is that why the embrace of the distractions offered by the spectacle so compelling? If the goal of the spectacle is to offer distractions - sports, entertainment, too keep us consuming, while the mechanisms of the panopticon are to isolate individuals to self regulate behavior - it will be interesting to see how these ideas synthesize and manifest in our world as we move forward from this moment in time. Interesting times indeed . . .

The pandemic as lifted the veil on all sorts of obvious but seldom acknowledged social issues - wealth disparity, race and class inequity, police brutality . . . but few has been as comical as the distance between ordinary people and the celebrities who pretend to relate to them. Be it comparing being isolated in a mansion to a jail, or soaking in a tub and waxing eloquent about staying home is not a great look to say the least. The same can be said for the spectacle of sports, where athletes compete in empty arenas with piped in cheers. Although professional, players are acutely aware that they are mere performers on a sodden stage, offering distractions from the dumpster fires that are burning brightly.

Now that the consumption of culture has detached itself from the myth of unifying society, are we ready to launch our independence? But casual lies alone are for amateurs; the real authoritarian move is to construct an entire false reality—an unreality—around those lies. The question is will we still swallow them whole?

Thank You!!!!

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Greg Nelson
Sara Tips
Sara's Daughter
Holly Senn
Amy Ryken
Sean Griffefon
Food - Ear of Corn
PJM - Node Pajamo
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All Songs

Arranged, Performed, Recorded, Engineered, Mixed and Mastered
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*“Where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself
as an immense accumulation of spectacles.”*

-Guy DeBord