

Autour de " La Soci t  du Spectacle" Guy Debord- 1967
For ensemble, one performer and one lighting engineer.

14 minutes ca.

Lucio Capece

Part I.

Duration 7 minutes.

The room should be dark with no lighting.

Two microphones should be placed at the centre of the room, level with the audience.

The "performer" holds several small pieces of paper. Some are printed with selected phrases from "La Societéé du Spectacle", others are blank. He also holds a small light.

The ensemble plays amplified.

1. The musicians (but not the performer) each play one sound and after it a silence.
The sound and the silence are then repeated throughout the seven minutes.
The silence should be a natural consequence of the sound.
The musicians do not pay attention to each other. They concentrate on the sound and the silence that they produce.
All the sounds should be played at an intensity between ppp and mf.
2. While the musicians are playing the performer walks towards the audience and speaks to one chosen member of the audience at a time, very quietly and close to her/his ear.
He selects one of the pieces of paper and either reads one of the chosen phrases from "La Societé du Spectacle" or produces a sound with his mouth when he has one of the blank pieces of paper in his hand.
Once he has spoken to one member of the audience, he chooses a further one.
He gives the paper with the phrase that he has read to the person to whom he has read it.
He should walk and read at a relaxed pace.
He uses the small portable light to help him.
3. At a regular and relaxed rhythm, the lighting engineer projects spotlights directed to the stage. The spots highlight the seemingly irrelevant aspects of the proceedings. For example: The leg of a performer, a corner of the room.
The spoken phrases or the instruments should never take the central attention.

Part II

Duration: 7 minutes.

4. After seven minutes the performer goes back to the stage and he pronounces on his own microphone the phrase:

"You are invited to read or not, using the microphones or not, the phrases that have been given to you"

The lights turn on, on the whole room.

5. The audience can choose to read or not read the given texts, using the microphones or from the place where they are positioned.
The musicians and the performer stay in silence, listening to the audience or to the silence that might be in the room if nobody reads.
Whatever happens, the musicians and the performer leave the stage seven minutes after the lights were turned on.

About "The Society of Spectacle"

1. In societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation.

6. Understood in its totality, the spectacle is both the result and the project of the dominant mode of production. It is not a mere decoration added to the real world. It is the very heart of this real society's unreality. In all of its particular manifestations – news, propaganda, advertising, entertainment – the spectacle represents the dominant model of life. It is the omnipresent affirmation of the choices that have already been made in the sphere of production and in the consumption implied by that production. In both form and content the spectacle serves as a total justification of the conditions and goals of the existing system. The spectacle also represents the constant presence of this justification since it monopolizes the majority of the time spent outside the production process.

12. The spectacle presents itself as a vast inaccessible reality that can never be questioned. Its sole message is: "What appears is good; what is good appears." The passive acceptance it demands is already effectively imposed by its monopoly of appearances, its manner of appearing without allowing any reply.

15. As indispensable embellishment of currently produced objects, as general articulation of the system's rationales, and as advanced economic sector that directly creates an ever-increasing mass of image-objects, the spectacle is the leading production of present-day society.

23. The root of the spectacle is that oldest of all social specializations, the specialization of power. The spectacle plays the specialized role of speaking in the name of all the other activities. It is hierarchical society's ambassador to itself, delivering its official messages at a court where no one else is allowed to speak. The most modern aspect of the spectacle is thus also the most archaic.

24. The spectacle is the ruling order's nonstop discourse about itself, its never-ending monologue of self-praise, its self-portrait at the stage of totalitarian domination of all aspects of life.

25. Separation is the alpha and omega of the spectacle.

28. The reigning economic system is a vicious circle of isolation. Its technologies are based on isolation, and they contribute to that same isolation. From automobiles to television, the goods that the spectacular system chooses to produce also serve it as weapons for constantly reinforcing the conditions that engender "lonely crowds." With ever-increasing concreteness the spectacle recreates its own presuppositions.

30. The alienation of the spectator, which reinforces the contemplated objects that result from his own unconscious activity, works like this: The more he contemplates, the less he lives; the more he identifies with the dominant images of need, the less he understands his own life and his own desires. The spectacle's estrangement from the acting subject is expressed by the fact that the individual's gestures are no longer his own; they are the gestures of someone else who represents them to him. The spectator does not feel at home anywhere, because the spectacle is everywhere.

36. The fetishism of the commodity – the domination of society by “intangible as well as tangible things” – attains its ultimate fulfillment in the spectacle, where the real world is replaced by a selection of images which are projected above it, yet which at the same time succeed in making themselves regarded as the epitome of reality.

61. The agent of the spectacle who is put on stage as a star is the opposite of an individual; he is as clearly the enemy of his own individuality as of the individuality of others. Entering the spectacle as a model to be identified with, he renounces all autonomous qualities in order to identify himself with the general law of obedience to the succession of things.

72. The unreal unity proclaimed by the spectacle masks the class division underlying the real unity of the capitalist mode of production. What obliges the producers to participate in the construction of the world is also what excludes them from it. What brings people into relation with each other by liberating them from their local and national limitations is also what keeps them apart. What requires increased rationality is also what nourishes the irrationality of hierarchical exploitation and repression. What produces society’s abstract power also produces its concrete lack of freedom

132. The chronicle is the expression of the irreversible time of power. It also serves to inspire the continued progression of that time by recording the past out of which it has developed.

146. The irreversible time of production is first of all the measure of commodities. The time officially recognized throughout the world as the general time of society actually only reflects the specialized interests that constitute it, and thus is merely one particular type of time.

154. Although the present age presents itself as a series of frequently recurring festivities, it is an age that knows nothing of real festivals. The moments within cyclical time when members of a community joined together in a luxurious expenditure of life are impossible for a society that lacks both community and luxury. Its vulgarized pseudofestivals are parodies of real dialogue and gift-giving; they may incite waves of excessive economic spending, but they lead to nothing but disillusionments, which can be compensated only by the promise of some new disillusion to come. The less use value is present in the time of modern survival, the more highly it is exalted in the spectacle. The reality of time has been replaced by the publicity of time.

158. The spectacle, considered as the reigning society’s method for paralyzing history and memory and for suppressing any history based on historical time, represents a false consciousness of time.

189. In this age of museums in which artistic communication is no longer possible, all the previous expressions of art can be accepted equally, because whatever particular communication problems they may have had are eclipsed by all the present-day obstacles to communication in general.

190. Art in its period of dissolution – a movement of negation striving for its own transcendence within a historical society where history is not yet directly lived – is at once an art of change and the purest expression of the impossibility of change. The more grandiose its pretensions, the further from its grasp is its true fulfillment. This art is necessarily avant-garde, and at the same time it does not really exist. Its vanguard is its own disappearance.