

“The Society of the Spectacle”  
Reseña sobre un texto de Guy Debord.

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## Guy Debord and the Situationist International; Environmental planning and Critical urban Geography

*“The most revolutionary idea concerning city planning derives neither from urbanism, nor from technology, nor from aesthetics. I refer to the decision to reconstruct the entire environment in accordance with the needs of the power of established workers’ council –the needs, in other words, of the anti-State dictatorship of the proletariat, the needs of dialogue invested with executive power. The power of workers’ councils can be effective only if it transforms the totality of existing conditions, and it cannot assign itself any lesser a task if it aspires to be recognized –and to recognize itself –in a world of its own design.”*

The Society of Spectacle, pg126.

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### 1. Origion of Situationist Internation and Guy Dobord

The Situationist International(SI) was consisted by avante-garde artiests intellectuals which are influenced by Dadaism, Surrealism. The group was not only focused on aspects of art and culture, but also a directual movement of society. The SI explained that in the paradigm of the Capitalism, the creativity of most people had become diverted and stifled, and society had been divided into actors and spectators, producers and consumers. To against the Capitalsim and escape the homogenized society, the Situationists insisted anarchist theory by their critique of modern culture, their celebration of creativity, and their stress on the immediate transformation of everyday life.

As for mention the Situationist International one of faomous person is Guy Debord who born in Guy Debord was born in Paris in 1931. As period of youth he lived with grandmother in Canne of Mediterranean towns. He studied Law in the University of Paris; after Drop out the Law, he became a revolutionary poet, writer and film-maker founding the Lettrist International schism with Gil J. Wolman. Finally in the 1960s he led the Situationist International group, which influenced the Paris Uprising of 1968.

The book of “the Society of the Spectacle” is masterpiece of his accomplishment. As above the mention the book focused on abuses of the Capitalism, and encourage people to have a view of Critical Self activeness in the aspects of the social politic and a urban geograpy. The book of contents is constructed to Separation Perfected, the Commodity as Sectacle, Unity and Diversion Within appearances, the Proletariat as Subject and Representation, Time and History, Environmental Planning, Negation and Consumption in the Cultural Sphere, Ideology in Material Form, totally 9 chapters. In the contents I will focus on the chapter of the Environmental Planning. The reason is that

to analyze the critical urban Geography the chapter have a relation with another article which is the Introduction of a Critical Urban Geography wrote by Guy Debord.

## **2. The problems caused by the capitalism**

In the two articles there are lots of common factors. At first, mass-products, commodities, unconsciousness, capitalism provide people being unconsciousness to mass-products or commodities. The commodities are possible to make contemporary societies homogenous and destroy the time-space distances. In terms of the industrialization of commodities the geography based on the site lost own characteristics and people became a subject without active objects.

In those articles, the Situationist International pointed problems of capitalism that, at first, capitalism had turned all relationships transactional, and that life had been reduced to a "spectacle". Second, in order to ensure continued economic growth, capitalism has created "pseudo-needs" to increase consumption. Finally, social alienation in the form of a hierarchy of masters and slaves has continued. People are treated like passive objects, not active subjects.

In the second consequence of three initial problems, 1) the workers are isolated in his own products and excluded from his colleagues; thus, live in an alien world: The workers only produce himself; he only produces an independent power. 2) People who are dazzled by the "pseudo-needs" to consummate without consciousness are not able to distinguish productions whether really need to or seem to want get with Pseudo-desires in the world of capital. 3) People, being not the active object, become another subject whom the capitalism controls to buy commodities, such as fed pigs. The success of this mechanism of capitalism makes people a totally separated person, and a subject to consummate Pseudo-needs , a subject without consciousness in a brutal society.

## **3. The Solutions depending from the Attack of Capitalism**

The Situationist International encourages people to play vandalism and sabotage, a method that is catalysts within the revolutionary process to destroy the manufactured spectacle and commodity economy. These ways would reorganize real life with the recognition of the brutal society; thus, the consciousness of real world would construct to real everyday life in each of people's minds.

The movement insisted that from the money, commodity production, wage labor based the capitalism of “Pseudo-needs”, “Communistic Society” liberate people to enjoy real needs, a criteria that the economy of profit is just one of happiness, not a totally delight. Therefore, individuals can construct the situation that feels delight unveiled from commodities- products

Finally, the group purpose that the Situationist International is not for only the individual situation, but it needs also to purpose a political society. The society can be completed by the “Workers’ Councils” which is "sovereign rank-and-file assemblies, in the enterprises and the neighborhoods". The council is managed by the normal people, and adopts a form of direct democracy and executes key decisions influencing everyday life. Moreover, the system of the council is constructed by local, national, international dimensions as well.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Situationist International, constructed by the art movements originally: progressive the avant-garde. They regenerated the anarchist; but, the different thing is that not only a theory, but also a practices as well to overcome the traditional systems of authoritarianism and bureaucracy. The movement pointed the criminal mechanism of the Capitalism that the characteristics influenced by the commodities is not able to getting own properties, and homogeneous; people become instruments to make specialized products motivated highest efficiency, such as, labor of division; Capital ruptures organic communications silently; in terms of the commodities people are encouraged to buy products; thus, people become passive subjects. The group purposes the alternative resolutions that construct the Workers’ Council centered in authority of labor; not dazzle from the attracting commodities; and, delight to their real pleasure in order to liberate from capital, and obtain life freely.