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**REGULATION OF THE PERSONAL STATUS THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN AN INFORMAL YOUTH  GROUP ORGANISED ON THE BASIS OF THE INTEREST FOR THE ELECTRONIC "DANCE" MUSIC AND THE SAME WAY OF ENTERTAINMENT**

*Abstract:* The following text refers to the Skopje club scene, to be more precise, to the participants in the scene, their image, ideological foundation and system of values. Special attention has been given to the way they regulate their personal status and the way they form their identity. For that purpose an analysis of this group through the prism of the theory of the rituals of transcending has been conducted.

*Key words:* Electronic "dance" music, Skopje club scene, clubbers, system of values, ideological foudation, rituals of crossing over, reshaping of the consciousness, liminality, liminoidness.

In the second half of the twentieth century there is a musical creation a new kind, that of electronic instruments /machines/ which appeared (TECHNO; A Brief History of Techno), which accelerates the process of democratisationin the way of composing. The electronic instruments represent a foundation for the creation of a new trend in music - electronic music. From the electronic music in the beginning of the 80's one more musical trend sprouts - electronic "dance" music (John Savage, MACHINE SOUL - A History of Techno; The History of House).

The electronic "dance" music represents music intended for full-length night entertainment and dancing (Tasev, 09. 17. 1998: 55 - 58). It emerged contemporaneously in Detroit and Chicago, through two parallel trends known under the names techno and house, and therefrom it rapidly expands throughout the world splitting into a large number of subtrends (The Official altrave FAQ; Minoska, may 1996: 24 - 25). This music is massively accepted in the developed world's industrial centres, but also in those less developed. With that a new youth movement begins to develop, which shapes its own cultural samples. In its ideological foundation and system of values the standpoints and values of all the preceding progressive youth movements are sublimated, beginning with the free artists at the beginning of the twentieth century, then through the hippie culture and punk, the contemporary nomads etc., which develop up to present day. In the very music and in the ideological foundation elements of the culture of the ancient communities and striving for re-establishment of such social order and communication can be recognized (TECHNO; WHY TRIBAL FUTURE; The Traveler's Club).

In Macedonia this movement begins to develop in the beginning of the 90's and is quickly accepted by the youth, mostly ranging between 16 and 25 years of age. As a part of the world scene, the Skopje scene accepts the global system of values and the ideological foundation related to the electronic "dance" music as well, at the same time adding characteristics of its own to the new culture.

The scene is known as Skopje - clubbing, abbreviated to skclubbing, or just clubbing. The participants are known as clubbers. The group is divided into two major subgroups, known accordingly to the subtrends in the electronic "dance" music that they follow, as techno - lovers (технации), who much more often identify with the term clubbers, and goa - lovers (goadzhii) /goa - files, goa - trancers/, who deem that their parties are better if they take place outdoors in the country. The clubbers can easily be determined as an informal group of people, self - organised on the basis of their interest for a particular kind of music and entertainment (Popadich 1988: 12 - 15). The ideological foundation and the system of values are also elements that characterise the group. It is primarily striving for love, peace, togetherness, freedom, cultural tolerance, equality, respect, individuality.

The parties with electronic dance music are the best opportunity for the young people to regulate not only their own status in the group, but also their position towards the broader social community. They also represent a foundation for bringing into accord the personal system of values with that of the group.

The structure of the party, including the preparatory and the period after the finish, gives oportunity for this group to be examined through the prism of the theory of the rituals of crossing over.

**Rituals of Crossing Over**
      The theory of the rituals of crossing over, which is given by Arnold van Genepp, enables one to divide the ritual of crossing over into three phases - separation, marginalisation, agregation or pre-liminality, liminality, post-liminality (Turner 1973: 94). With the first and the last phase the ritual subjects are segregated from their former places in the community and brought back again, with an internal transformation and external changes at new places. In the second phase - the liminality, activities that cause changes with the ritual subjects are performed (Turner 1986: 40 - 43).
      Victor W. Turner, who gives special attention to the phase of liminality (coming from liminal, meaning - at a point where one perception or condition blends or crosses over into another - translator's remark), develops a different opportunity for analysing the liminality with those activities that are dedicated to the usage of spare time and brings in a new term - liminoidness. With regards to liminoid he says that it represents a sort of a stratification, sparagmos, of the liminal, because many things that "stick together" in the liminal situation scatter to seek for separate destinies, like the specialised arts and the sports etc., as liminoid genres (Turner 1986: 47). It represents something that is alike to or similar with the liminal, yet not identical to it.
      Thus determined, the second phase brings closer the rituals of crossing over to the participants in the Skopje club scene, who with their characteristics of a non - structured or a primitively built community and relatively similar, or even identical individuals, which all together submit to the main ritual leaders (Turner 1973: 96) behave like "communitas" (Turner 1986: 50 - 56).

**Regulation of the Personal Status**
      Furthermore, through the three phases, separation - liminoidness - agregation, the party is represented as a ritual of crossing over, performed in spare time, by means of which the youth regulate their own social status.
**Phase of separation**. The first phase can start much earlier, with the very announcement of the party and depending on the assumed quality of the party, but nevertheless the main preparations are made prior to the party. The phase of separation is not distinctly detached from the every-day activities, and so more liminoid subphases can be distinguished, depending on the intensity of the preparations.
      During this period, those who plan to participate in the party perform a range of activities that, assumably, would provide them better entertainment through the course of the party. Primarily, a way is to be found (money or gratis ticket) for entrance, company, obtaining some stimulant substances (such as marijuana, ecstasy, LSD), for those who practise such kind of entertainment, followed by choosing suitable clothes, make-up etc.
The stylye of dress is adapted to the conditions. It is preferable for the clothes to give oportunity for free motion through the course of the full-length night party, and at the same time to emphasize the whole body or certain parts of the body. The way and style of shaping and colouring of the hair and the choice of make-up also differs greatly from the everyday ones or the style suited for different situations. More characteristic jewellery can not be found than the one that is heart-shaped, with a crafted or painted picture of an alien, rosary (beads). Much more attractive are the colours of the jewellery, especially with the goa - trancers, who practise the use of fluorescent colours, by which the atmosphere of the party is filled up. By means of these few elements the decision on individuality, equality, freedom, universality and gender equality are expressed.
      In contrast to the participants who come to "party", the DJ has to prepare well for the task that awaits him/her. The quality of the party mostly depends on his/her musical taste and the way he/she presents him/herself to the audience.
The phase of separation ends with entering the space in which the party takes place.

**Phase of liminoidness.** The liminoidness is conducted during the very course of the party. For the group liminoidness it is the time when the party is announced to begin. It is arranged in compliance with the legal regulations for the working hours of the night clubs and in most cases it is between 9 pm and 4 am. Individually, each one of the ritual subjects determins the time limitation of his/her own crossing over for him/herself.

The space where the party is held is usually decorated in a way that should provide a total disconnecting atmosphere from that of everyday life and entering a world different from reality as we know it. Weaker lightening is noticeable, and as light sources usually in use are UV lights, lasers, scanners, roboscanners, stroboscopes etc., As a part of the decoration canvases with written textual messages, drawings containing hallucinogenic mushrooms (magic mushrooms), the image of a heart, sun, cosmic landscapes, images from the Hindu mythology etc. At some parties the scent of incense sticks is perceptible, characteristic of Hinduism and Buddhism. Through the messages contained in these symbolic images one can distinguish the same elements contained in the ideological foundation as well, that is the strive for love, freedom, equality, perfection, oneness with the Universe, reaching of states of the consciousness different from those already known, meeting new forms of life and new worlds.

The music, however, comes first. Its influence is of particular significance, it stimulates dancing creating a situation in which there is a possibility of reaching a state of altered consciousness with the individual, although it cannot take full responsibility for such occurences (Rouge 1994: 84 - 147). The sonic wrapping, in the course of the party, gives opportunity for the participants, through dancing, alone or in a group, to reach a state of altered consciousness and feelings of merging with the Universe, an energy that circulates and fulfills.

> - "Yes, I feel it. The music makes me feel that way. They put on a good song, something in me begins to move and a beautiful feeling comes out…I feel as if the music is carrying me." (Independent Field Research /IFR/, informer Jana Velinova, 07. December 1998, Skopje).
> - "You feel free to express your feelings by dancing, in a way, and you understand it as conveyance of the energy or transforming the negative energy in you into positive. For example, I have accumulated everyday problem, all sorts of stuff, and now I have negative energy, and I go to a party and there I transform it into positive energy. I dance all the time, I spend that negative energy in a positive way, in that sense, I carry it over to the others." (IFR, informer Biljana Kochoska, 13. November 1998, Skopje).
> - "Well, I think that music is one of the ways of reaching through all kinds of rituals that exist." (IFR, informer Nikola Eftimov, 20. November 1998, Skopje).

Because of such states the DJ is often compared to the shamans from the ancient traditions, and his/her work is called techno-shamanism.

> "At the rave, the DJ is a shaman, a priest, a channeler of energy - they control the psychic voyages of the dancers through his/her choice in hard-to-find music and their skill in manipulating that music, sometimes with just a set of beats and samples into a tapestry of mindbending music. A large part of the concept of raves is built upon sensory overload - a barage of audio and very often visual stimuli are brought together to elevate people into an altered state of physical or psychedelic experience." - Brian Behlendorf (Techno Music And Raves FAQ)

The experiences of reshaping the consciousness and correction of the system of values confirm the assumption of Sherry Ortner, that the ritual exists for the purpose of obtaining a significant change in the consciousness. He concludes: "Reshaping of the consciousness or the experience that takes place in the course of the ritual represents a change in the relation between the subject and that, which, for the purpose of alleviation, we can call reality." (Mayerhof 1986: 32).

Thus, by means of the ritual a notion of the reality is established, and respectively a notion of self, creating a subjective psychological state that leads to a restructuring of the meaning. That is the task of the ritual and the way in which the ritual leads to a solution of the problem (Mayerhof 1986: 32 - 33).

The moments of increased state of being euphoric, which is expressed through exclamations and whistles, and the states in which the participant seem hypnotised or robotised create an impression of mutual binding and group reshaping of the consciousness.

These moments divide the liminoidness into more subphases. Thus, in the first liminoid subphase - separation, the common identities adjust to the newly created situation and equalisation of the individual subjects with the group identity of the communities is being done. By means of that the ritual subjects are being prepared for the second subphase - true liminoidness, in which by the agency of the music, through joint experience they reshape their own consciousness. The subphase of true liminoidness usually lasts very short time, up to a few minutes, but can be repeated more times over the course of the party and by means of that it can positively influence its quality. The third subphase - agregation, after the changes being done, takes back the ritual subjects in the previous condition and enables them to absorb the experience had in the true liminoidness. The possible sketch of the three subphases in the phase of liminoidness would look like this:

LIMINOIDNESS

(SKICA) - liminoidness, separation, true liminoidness, agregation, agregation

The limits between the three subphases are not clearly defined and they seem as a convoluted whole in the frames of the whole phase of liminoidness.
The stimulants also have a great impact on the experiences of the reshaping of the consciousness.

The phase of liminoidness ends with leaving the of the space in which the party has taken place. It happens sometimes that the party is ended ahead of time by the police, which works in accordance with the law for the regulation of the woking of the catering objects, by means of which the liminoidness is violently broken. Sush interruptions and poor organisation of the parties threaten to cause unwanted consequences in the consciousness of the participants.

**Phase of agregation.** The agregation takes back the ritual subjects into the everyday life, reality. It begins immediately after leaving the space where the party has taken place.
Part of the participants make efforts to extend liminoidness, after it has finished, in the phase of agregation. Divided into smaller companies they organise after-hour parties or morning outings in the country.

If the liminoidness has been succesfully accomplished, it could be expected for the participants who have attended a party for the first time to accept the group image, the ideological foundation and the system of values that go along with the electronic "dance" music. In the third phase the older participants confirm their identity in the group.

The phase of agregation, as well as in the separation, happens in the frames of the activities related to everyday life. Hence, a few liminoid subphases can be perceived here as well. The full sketch of the three phases, including the subphases, could look like this:

SEPARATION                          LIMINOIDNESS                          AGREGATION

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