

ARTICLE 2

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Freedom on the dancefloor Exploring de Beauvoir's authenticity at raves

From the first time I stepped into a rave, I analyzed the relationship between myself, the spatiality of the club/rave and its more metaphysical, yet equally tangible, forbearance. This has continued to this day. While this is an ongoing quest, I remain firm on some things. I am authentic. To me, it means thousands of things but ultimately, that I am truly at ease with my body and my surroundings - be it the people and the material space.

Simone de Beauvoir also turns to the lived body to define authenticity, which she defines as behaving transparently. However, she delves deeper into the subjective experience of authenticity. (Relating to sexuality, it is the awareness of one's own body and the Other in conjunction- a self-awareness that is inextricable from the experience.

De Beauvoir's description of the experience of authentic sex can appropriately detail the experience on the dancefloor. In particular regard to women, she emphasises that, if loved as equal instead of being subjugated, women would be able to forget the pressuring hunt for a constructed 'femininity'. She would be allowed to stay in the world and reciprocate that love with naturality.

"In an authentic sexual relation, each partner acts out of freedom, which especially in the woman's case means acting outside the socially imposed constraints that would objectify her."
(Beauvoir, 1974)

It is such acts of freedom that can take place in the rave space, where people are given the possibility to perform their identity unquestioned.

De Beauvoir focused on hyper-feminization as one form of social constraint over the female body, but we can easily expand this framework on all forms of overimposed sexual and gender norms.

This provides a momentary relaxation from identity performances that is often required of us on a daily basis. For people belonging to marginalised/oppressed communities, it means liberation from coercive social constructs, safety from acts of bigotry and violence.

De Beauvoir encapsulates this tension in the image of the young girl, whose spontaneity needs to be repressed by external societal sanctions. She posits that such restrictions are outdone when a lived body acts with spontaneity. The dancing body is the epitome of this rupture from the constraints.

Consulted resources

Beauvoir, Simone de *The Second Sex*. Trans. H.M. Parshley. New York: Random House, 1974.

Mirvish A., *Simone de Beauvoir's Two Bodies and the Struggle for Authenticity*, Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy, 2011.

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