

# Simulacra and Simulation and Conservatism - Postliterate - Medium

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The difference between socialist and conservative diatribes about modern society, I observed, diverges in this way: the whinings of the socialist exist merely as philosophical until one steps out into the world and sees them come alive; the whinings of the conservative die as soon as one steps out into the world.

The abstract theories of Marx about the commodity-form and about capital are left as abstract and philosophical until one goes into the world and observes poverty, hunger, eviction, joblessness — then suddenly all the theories come alive. Marx’s theories feel incomplete without this infusion of humanity into it, with all of its suffering but also its love. Conservative obloquies, however, register in the opposite way: it is precisely when one turns off the TV and observes the day-to-day lives of individuals under capitalism that all of that yelling about “groomers” seems to fade away.

Whereas Marx’s theories are Nietzschean in that they demand they be taken past the book and into human life, conservative concerns are Baudrillardian in that they can exist only in the television and as such must beg you not to turn it off (i.e., Marx is telling you to stop interpreting the world and start changing it; Tucker Carlson is telling you to stop trying to change it and just keep watching.) The polarizing anger conservative media evokes exists only in the logic of the television, and it dissipates into nothing outside of it.

This is best represented in social media, whereby events are displayed in a downward scrolling fashion and everything that happened later than a second ago disappears out of view in the opposite direction to the new. Things are seldom revisited, an endless stream of new images and texts.

The result is that conservative politics (but be under no illusions — parts of the left are certainly not immune to this) have been reduced to a set of short-lived symbols which are the current concern. Conservatism used to need strong values: a base of austerity capitalism, “small government,” “individual rights,” etc., in order to have a framework for caring about current issues or not. Today, that is no longer necessary: that which conservatism used to oppose on the basis of contradiction with clear principles can instead be framed as a wholly accessible mega-issue which encapsulates everything. All that we hold dear is constantly in danger of disappearing this very minute due to X current issue — thought-out, particular political values are thus no longer needed.

It is a hyperreal politics, in which the most passionate emotions are evoked in a false reality, rendering actual reality a pale imitation of it. This occurred most prominently during this year’s pride month where numerous times conservato-fascists stormed book clubs, parades and such in search of “groomers,” only to be greatly disappointed and later be met with the police; it also occurred most humorously in the final act of the “Pizzagate” conspiracy, where a man stormed a restaurant with a gun demanding children in a basement the place didn’t have be let free. The mind in such a situation *wants* it to be true, and this want will make the conspiracy much more real than reality.

This fragmented nature of politics into minute-long outrage cells acts as political pornography for people who may not have the time nor energy for theory. It stirs instant fervor, and it always plays out as short and conveniently as a television program should be. But the cell is not just pornographic in that it over-stimulates, but also that it simulates. The cell is simulated politics, politics in one-minute without all the critical thinking necessary for it be make sense. It does the politics for you; you can just watch.

The cells also, of course, always have a monetary aspect to it — there may not be a single popular conservative pundit or similar who does not peddle some product, be it merchandising with the promo code “GROOMERS,” “Liberal Tears” coffee mugs, or “Brainforce Pills.” It is nothing short of painfully humorous to see the logic of capital which is so defended by conservatives, turn their high ideals of liberty and truth into symbols to be bought and sold as cheaply as a T-Shirt.

Maybe the most insidious side of the cells is control. Who makes these cells and why is a question which may not have clear answer, as no single person may be responsible. But at the same time, it is so crucial it be answered in a time which sees them dominating so much of life.