

Unceasing Consumption

The blue light from your device fights against your body's natural functions, preventing sleep and dreams, leaving you stuck in reality, and preventing creative expression. This is similar to how society conditions us to live a certain way under the current political and economic system. In turn, leaving you in a consumption limbo because your device keeps you awake. Still, you are soon drawn back to the device that enabled you to stay sharp and awake in the first place—your phone—containing advertisements, school shootings, monotonous media, political propaganda, etc. They all coagulate into this disgusting metamorphosis of Capital, which attempts to commodify and normalize but not in the economic sense concerning literal products of labor that can be sold on the market. The advertisements shown to you wish to make you view life through the lens of currency and commodities, which creates a breeding ground for Capital to infiltrate your being fully. School shootings and other forms of tragic news implemented in your media at random moments during said consumption attempt to condition you to this randomness and spontaneousness, ultimately desensitizing you from such tragedy and making you believe it's normal. Monotonous media attacks your mind, and you slowly lose interest in reality and form a connection to the capitalistic heaven, ceaseless consumption. With such desensitization, commodification, and attacks on your cognitive ability, there is a direct correlation between negative and positive peace-building, even if the positives are simply a shroud of fallacies.

To begin on the journey to understanding how the fundamental role of social media under capitalism may assault our attempts at peace-building, we must focus on how it may contaminate the psyche of whoever may be indulging in said media. For example, on the topic of social media, we have the seventh-largest social media network in TikTok. The main idea behind TikTok is that it may allow you to consume endless amounts of short videos to stimulate your need for creativity. It is made excruciatingly apparent that capitalism does not care for the arts, nor does it wish for you to pursue something of that nature. Therefore, the need for a creative stimulus can be found elsewhere in the domain of TikTok. Short videos and a seemingly infinite “For You Page” allow you to destroy your attention span without realizing it until you struggle in class or other facets of your life.

In conjunction with said psychological attack, we may also analyze the notion of commodification and how that may correlate to our peace-building struggle. To commodify means to turn something into a commodity. This is a vital organ to the machine, which is capitalism. Social media provides life and energy to this organ-machine by allowing corporations and companies to advertise and corrupt the minds of those viewing it. It constructs a haven for Capital in the subject's mind, which helps Capital to make the subject view all sentimental things and activities through the eyes of currency and monetary value. This will then cause someone to acknowledge the attempts of peace-building as something to raise profit off of solely, profit which will then be harbored in one's pocket for something otherwise. The subject may also likely disregard the idea of peace-building if they believe there is no way to make money for themselves. All in all, when the introduction of commodification plagues the attempts of peace-building, there is an overall negative effect.

Lastly, there is the case of desensitization and the shroud of ideology, creating a false sense of peace. Social media allows you to post whatever you want, and with this comes consequences. With the spontaneous and random nature of the videos given to you to watch, there is a very high chance that you'll see a regular post about something perhaps animal related—a simple picture of a cat. Then, out of nowhere, you might get hit with a post about the most recent school shooting and be shown a surveillance video displaying a censored picture of a dying child. His screams echo throughout the hallway he has walked through countless times, just to be cut short by the rapid firing of bullets. Nonetheless, as you are shown these videos, you are inadvertently conditioned to normalize this suddenness and disorder. The sunglasses of ideology are being put over your eyes. How ordinary these disgusting acts are, is debated in your mind, but no one around you seems to care, for they have also been conditioned as well. You think to yourself that perhaps this is what life is. School shootings, for example, are simply a normal byproduct of modern society. Therefore, these sunglasses put a cloth over your eyes and show you a reality that is not normal compared to the actual reality even beyond that. Moreover, with this shroud, you are made to believe that peace-building isn't necessary in this world. All the wrong we are surrounded by is simply another symptom of modernism. Along with this possibility, there is also the idea that even with this shroud, you might believe in peace-building. Nevertheless, creating peace somewhere you cannot view is impossible. Social media aids in this ideological transformation and destroys the soul inside peace-building with its conception and execution. Ultimately, we are faced with a very real and challenging situation. The question of how we may escape from these times of disillusionment is pending in many minds as we speak. We as a collective must recapture the territories of our mind from the machinist mode of Capital.

Capitalism insists that we act according to the machine. We must take action and work as a collective to build up our communities stricken by poverty and stray away from the consumer image which we have been conditioned to take up. Ultimately, it is a long and treacherous path to build peace, but as we have done many times, we can have a historical epoch.