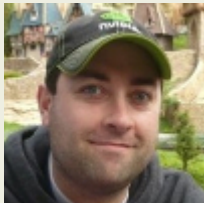


Politics is LARPing



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Many have reached the conclusion that the state and its political processes amount to nothing more, in reality, than an organized criminal gang. The oft-repeated cry against anarchism that, without government, ruling gangs would battle for power until one controlled everything, is rendered uniquely ironic by this realization. Congratulations! The state itself *is* the criminal gang that took over. The very penultimate fear you expressed as being the result of the absence of the state is... the state!

What is it, however, that obscures this reality from most people’s realization? Like any ruling gang that has accomplished total rule, the state can not simply operate by crude tactics that smaller criminal gangs use. Governments have met their need to convince entire populations of their validity with a very effective public relations scheme.

Unlike a street gang which is incredibly exclusive (of necessity) to participation, modern governments have adapted to the reality of their situation by preserving (and refining) a unique version of LARPing.

For those unfamiliar with the vernacular, “Larpers” are those who participate in Live-Action Role Playing. They are the nerdy people who dress up like they’re going to a renaissance fair and go out into the woods to do battle based on a system of damage point with assumed characters. By assuming this shared system of combat rules, and donning their character roles, they create a fantasy world within which they spend huge amounts of time and which becomes very important to them.

I certainly have no desire to poke fun at Larping. I have my own nerdy pursuits, which include the electronic variations of such “role-playing” games. The Larpers’ unique tendency to bring classic role-playing games out of the digital realm and act them out in reality has earned them a place of “nerdiness” even among nerds, but it is growing in popularity. This video trailer for the film “Knights of Badassdom” provides an entertaining

glimpse into the world of LARPing.

It is this same desire to assume fictional roles and immerse oneself in an arena of exclusive rules and knowledge that the state has come to depend upon, and to which it appeals. After all, the state itself is nothing more than a giant fiction that provides roles for certain individuals (government) to assume when taking actions. It provides a framework of complex rules and rituals by which one can become absorbed, and the application of which obscure obvious morality surrounding individual actions, such as violence. Participation is also encouraged by the availability of jobs, contracts and by the generally accepted notion that one's obsession in this political fiction is a "noble duty." Thus the political hobbyists reinforce their obsession with a healthy derision for all of those who share no such desire to be involved. Wikipedia's entry on LARPs provides a unique insight that, in my estimation, is as good a description of politics itself as I could ever write:

"While most LARPs maintain a clear distinction between the real world and the fictional setting, pervasive LARPs mingle fiction with modern reality in a fashion similar to alternate reality games. Bystanders who are unaware that a game is taking place may be treated as part of the fictional setting."

As a completely, and proudly, apathetic bystander to the political fiction we see being acted out around us my message to the political junkies is this: Do the world a favor and get a copy of "Grand Theft Auto V" to act out your violent fantasies, or a good role playing game so you can learn the complexities and rules of that system and have a different time-consuming hobby. After all, video games are a lot more entertaining, exciting and immersive than boring city council meetings and political debates! Wouldn't you rather go kill legions of digitally-rendered dragons and orcs than pound a bunch of lawn signs into people's yards? If that isn't convincing enough, please realize your role-playing game called politics is killing us... *literally*.