

Synthetic enunciation as counter-narrative: the satirical deepfake in *The Dor Brothers' Riot*

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In today's media ecosystem, generative artificial intelligence has radically redrawn the boundaries of cultural critique. Far from acting merely as a passive vehicle for disinformation, the deepfake emerges as a powerful apparatus of "synthetic enunciation". Using the viral short film *Riot* (The Dor Brothers, 2025) as a case study, this research explores the broader potential of deepfakes as a potent medium for political satire and their capacity to articulate visual counter-narratives that directly challenge the official discourses of political, economic and technological elites.

To achieve this, the research poses two guiding questions: What satirical resources can the deepfake, as an expressive medium, deploy to fuel its critique of the establishment? And what archetypes can it utilize to represent public figures in order to amplify a message that transcends factual reality?

From a theoretical perspective, we break down this "synthetic enunciation" into three axes:

- 1) Enunciation as performance, where the deepfake functions as a performative speech act; the act of fabrication itself is the message.
- 2) The emancipation of the enunciator, which transcends the indexical trace of reality to grant the creator absolute control over staging and gesture, turning leaders into puppets.
- 3) Enunciative complicity, a "reading contract" where both creator and viewer acknowledge the image's factual falsity to unveil a deeper ideological truth.

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Grounded in this conceptual framework, we conducted a shot-by-shot qualitative analysis of *Riot*, categorizing its visual content, satirical devices, their intended purposes, and the archetypes assigned to specific figures to examine how synthetic gestures and scenography subvert traditional codes of leadership.

Results indicate that the short film visually materializes the most extreme metaphors of contemporary polarization through hyperbole and absurd juxtaposition. Elites are stripped of their institutional roles and thrust into a hyper-real battlefield: Donald Trump mutates into a hyper-masculinized authoritarian warlord, while figures such as Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk epitomize the rise of a post-ideological “broligarchy”, a fusion of populist authoritarianism and techno-capitalist dominance where the aesthetics of power supersede traditional loyalty. Similarly, progressive figures like Kamala Harris are framed using tropes of urban looting, exposing the fracture of the social contract. The elites’ total detachment crystallizes in the frivolous selfie of the Trumps against a burning nation, a final image of the precession of simulacra, where the performance of the crisis replaces the crisis itself.

In conclusion, the visual analysis of *Riot* demonstrates how the satirical deepfake leverages the provocation of generative code to warn against the mutation of politics into a Baudrillardian spectacle of simulation. Depicting implausible scenarios through AI confirms that this format does not seek to pass as real; rather, it thrives in hyperreality and visual performativity, stretching the image to the point of absurdity through a hyperbolic enunciative gesture. Ultimately, the emancipation of the creator through the deepfake establishes a new maxim in contemporary critical media: the art of lying through form to reveal a truth in substance.

Keywords: synthetic enunciation, deepfake satire, political counter-narrative, visual performativity, artificial intelligence

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