# To Wu Ming 1: What’s is the connection between Q and QAnon, if there is one? What does the Q in Qonspiracy mean?

# To both: Our conversation today is centred around QAnon but it also goes beyond it. QAnon is seen as a template for contemporary social-media-driven conspiracy fantasies that work simultaneously as games and a new kind of cults. What does it mean?

Differentiate Conspiracy theories vs. conspiracy myths:

coinage by Karl Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies (philosophical foundation of modern-day liberalism or neoliberalism): coinage of “conspiracy theory”, applied to ‘vulgar marxism’ (i.e. blaming of capitalism/upper class as conspiracy theory)

# 1) We are witnessing the rise of conspiracy theories about the Covid-19 pandemic. Looking at how the media cover this phenomenon, it looks like criticism of the way governments administer the emergency is an exclusive of the far-right or fringe esoteric groups. And yet there are public voices that are both active in fighting conspiracism and critical of many measures taken. What kind of critical approach could we adopt in this moment, if we want to avoid conspiracism and at the same time want to keep a critical eye on these events?

rhetoric of autonomy and freedom has become toxic, unfortunately; unholy alliance of libertarians and people who stress community and solidarity since 1960s counterculture is now untenable. Western culture is digging its own grave, literally, at this moment.

1. To Wu Ming 1: What’s is the connection between Q and QAnon, if there is one? What does the Q in Qonspiracy mean?
2. To Florian: You have been studying since some time the mutation of conspiracy myths from countercultural phenomena to conspiracy narrative appropriated by the alt-right and far right. How did this appropriation happen and how much these scenes are aware of each other?

Conspiracy myths work as hegemonic products. What I mean with that, they’re tools to reach a wider audience than the extreme right would normally reach. This is based on the strategy, lifted from Antonio Gramsci, of the New Right since the early 1970s to achieve cultural hegemony. First, this was tried to through intellectual discourse (and in Germany, Götz Kubitschek and his “Institute for State Politics” is a good example, as is Richard Spencer, the coiner of the term “ALt-Right” in the USA, with his “National Policy Institute”), trying to intervene into intellectual debates. But strategy was much more successful with pop culture, from Nazi punks in the 1980s, to the Alt-Right meme war of 2016, and now Internet conspiracy myths, reaching new milieus such as esoteric hippies, anti-vaccers etc.

Conspiracy myths work like products on a market: You design them, you fabricate them, and then you launch them to the marketplace and see whether it will be successful, and if it’s successful, you expand the product with additional designs/narratives etc.

Three such products:

1. “The Great Replacement” (based on Renaud Camus, Le Grand Remplacement, 2011): political and economic elites want to replace the white population of Europe with immigrants (originally: muslim immigrants) on a large scale, also known as “white genocide”. Charlottesville “You will not replace us, Jews will not replace us”.
2. QAnon, born on 4chan in 2017, factually as a follow-up to Pizzagate (2016) and older antisemitic conspiracy myths, theory of satanic elites that abuse and kill children in ritual sex acts. We could argue that QAnon gradually transformed from a conspiracy tale to a world-wide movement (or cult, or religion) which created new myths, such as…
3. “The Great Reset”, based on the theme of the World Economic Forum in 2020 and book by WEF leader Klaus Schwab “Covid-19: The Great Reset” - the idea that after the Covid-19 crisis, there would be reorientation of the global economy towards green capitalism. Taken up by the QAnon movement

Hermeneutics - myth -> nothing new, but often overlooked Nicola Gess, Halbwahrheiten (Half Truths)