

Have Faith and Question Everything: Exploring One Year of QAnon Posts

Abstract:

QAnon is an influential conspiracy theory that centers on a nefarious “deep state” network. At the core of the movement is Q, an unknown individual claiming to have classified access. This article examines one year of Q’s posts. These posts are read by followers, who follow the “crumbs”, find new information, and bake them into conspiratorial narratives. Faith is one key theme, scripture and spiritual language gesturing to an apocalyptic battle between the children of light and the children of darkness. Skepticism is another key theme, a stress on the enlightened individual who employs free-thought to uncover the truth. These twin themes champion the questioning individual who constructs counter-narratives while supporting a tight-knit community that employs powerful religious narratives. This unique blend contributes one explanation for QAnon’s ability to mobilize an increasingly large and diverse following.

Keywords:

QAnon, Q, conspiracy theory, online movement, religious right, extremism

Contents:

<i>The Genesis and Rise of Q</i>	4
<i>First Steps to Q Research</i>	7
<i>Faith</i>	9
<i>Skepticism</i>	13
<i>Faithful Skeptics</i>	18
<i>Conclusion</i>	22

This article investigates QAnon, a movement centering on the anonymous Q and their online posts concerning a vast covert war between the “deep state” and President Donald Trump. Q has become an increasingly influential figure over the last few years, particularly in the run up to the 2020 US elections. Across social media, QAnon content has millions of views and QAnon fan accounts have thousands of followers. On a more traditional political level, QAnon placards, posters, and apparel now appear at protests and political rallies. Q-affiliated statements have been retweeted over 200 times by Trump, who has claimed he knows little of the movement besides their fervent support (Kaplan, 2020). A candidate vowing support for QAnon was recently nominated for Senate (Sonmez and DeBonis, 2020), while another is expected to win her seat in Georgia (Rosenberg and Steinhauer, 2020). And a book compiled by Q followers, *The Great Awakening*, reached #1 in the Censorship category on Amazon last year (Collins, 2019).

The rise of Q has had significant sociopolitical fallout. On an immediate level, there has been violent acts and threats. One Q-follower with mental health issues killed his own brother, who he believed was a lizard (Somner 2019). Another, who blocked the Hoover Dam with an armored truck and demanded the release of a report, was recently convicted on terrorism charges (Ruelas, 2020). Yet alongside this physical violence is a far broader but less perceptible erosion of political consensus and evidence-driven claims. QAnon seems to constitute a parallel world with its own logic of truth. Of course, this is not a new phenomenon—the media-driven splintering of politics (Pariser, 2012; Rone, 2019) and the rise of fake news, pseudoscience, and alternative facts has been noted by many scholars (McIntyre, 2018; Kaufman and Kaufman, 2018; Farkas and Schou, 2019). But QAnon has amplified and epitomized these dynamics to a new degree, producing a situation in which prominent politicians have openly endorsed Q-beliefs, middle-class mothers have attended

#savethechildren rallies, and Facebook friends have shared Q-inspired narratives around Satanic cabals and the harvesting of children's blood.

The shock of QAnon, then, is not about its new effects, but the scale and intensity of these effects. If Hofstadter (1964) diagnosed the “paranoid style” in politics more than fifty years ago, that style has now been coupled to a powerful post-truth motor and accelerated by the affordances of networked media. These conditions have allowed Q-inspired conspiracies to move from the fringes to the mainstream, where they are taken up and defended by a diverse population of “normal people.” When anti-vaxxing, anti-masking, climate change and COVID-denial all find a new engine in the meta-theory of QAnon, then this conspiracy is no longer an eccentric oddity but a dangerous reality with concrete repercussions for public health, environmental sustainability, and racial equality (Argentino, 2020a; Doward, 2020; Dyer, 2020).

Yet if Q's influence is increasingly acknowledged, it is often depicted in the media with broad brushstrokes: a bewildering phenomenon, composed of bewildering beliefs, that has crawled out of the underbelly of the internet. As a result, QAnon is patronized as a bizarre curiosity and Q followers derided as crazy (Hoysted, 2020). Of course, the labelling of believers as conspiracy theorists has long been deployed as a tactic for exclusion and dismissal (Husting and Orr 2007). And yet to dismiss this movement or simply ban online groups (Frenkel, 2020) is both dangerous and ineffective, playing directly into the QAnon narrative that free speech will be censored and “the truth” increasingly seen as unwelcome. Instead, this essay strives to understand the movement by beginning where Q followers begin—with the “crumbs” written by Q. Following the methodological cues of Theweleit (1987) in

privileging the source material, one year of Q posts on qanon.pub – an “official” archive of Q posts – are analyzed, aiming to draw out key motifs that reappear across these texts.

This essay begins by providing a primer on QAnon and briefly surveying existing academic literature. The second section explains the textual material and the methodology used to engage with it. The remaining sections unpack two key meta-themes drawn from Q’s posts. Faith is the first theme, scripture and spiritual language gesturing to an apocalyptic battle in the present between the children of light and the children of darkness. Skepticism is the second theme, a stress on the enlightened individual who employs critical thinking and draws her own fact-based claims. The final section explores how these twin themes contribute towards a movement premised on thinking for oneself and critical knowledge creation, yet also rooted in powerful religious narratives and a tight-knit assembly of Q-followers. This unique blend of elements contributes one explanation for QAnon’s ability to reach beyond the typical niche of conspiracists and mobilize a large and diverse following.

The Genesis and Rise of Q

QAnon began on 4chan’s “Politically Incorrect” board, a particularly virulent space on a website that already has a reputation for being a cesspool of the internet. A new thread had been set up in response to a cryptic remark from Trump. “You guys know what this represents?” Trump had asked at a dinner for military leaders, “Maybe it’s the calm before the storm” (Johnson, 2017). On October 28, 2017, the anonymous user who would later identify as Q posted in this “Calm before the Storm” thread. Q claimed to have access to classified or insider information. Indeed, Q’s original moniker, Q Clearance Anon, is a loose allusion to the Q level security access associated with the United States Department of Energy (Energy.gov, 2020). It’s worth noting that QAnon was not the first “anon” on the

board to make these claims. Throughout 2016 and 2017, users such as FBIAnon, CIAAnon, and WH Insider Anon had all stepped forward claiming to possess insider information and even conducting “ask me anything” sessions, allowing users to quiz them on their knowledge of classified political events (Zadrozny and Collins, 2018).

What set Q apart from these other supposed insiders? QAnon’s emergence from the niche community of 4chan into the wider social media milieu was not a grassroots organic development, but a highly conscious campaign carried out by three individuals. As Zadrozny and Collins (2018) detail, two members of the 4chan community, Pamphlet Anon and BaruchtheScribe, reached out to Tracey Diaz, a YouTuber who had achieved a modest degree of success in covering the earlier Pizzagate conspiracy. Diaz, known online as Tracey Beanz, documents her early work on QAnon and the evolution of her channel in a long memoir titled “She Stood in the Storm” (Diaz, 2018). Her first Q Clearance Anon video, posted in November of 2017, has now garnered over 250,000 views, and her channel has gone on to boast 120,000 subscribers and 10 million views (Beanz, 2020).

QAnon’s spread was aided by a strategic understanding of the internet ecosystem, moving from the niche hate havens of “the chans” (4chan and 8chan) to alternative and then mainstream platforms. The trio set up a new group on Reddit (2018) called “Calm Before the Storm” or CBTS. Reddit’s popularity meant that Q’s posts could now draw upon a far wider community of conspiracy theorists to discuss, develop, and distribute these ideas. Over time, posts began making their way to a growing number of Q-dedicated groups on Facebook, where the content could be consumed and recirculated by an older and more diverse audience (Zadrozny and Collins, 2018). Eventually the movement leapt from the internet to a wider “real world” demographic. In 2018, t-shirts and posters stating “we are Q” and the

quintessential Q slogan “where we go one we go all” appeared at a Trump rally in Tampa Florida, triggering a flurry of posts in mainstream media outlets over the following week (Stanley-Becker, 2018).

The core elements of the Q ideology have been noted in many articles (Martineau, 2017; Collins, 2018; LaFrance, 2020). In essence, the narrative is that a secret network of actors, from Hillary Clinton to Barack Obama and conspiracy-theory stalwarts like George Soros and the Rothschild family, comprise a deep-state with a nefarious agenda. With its global tendrils in finance, governments, and corporations, this deep state or cabal orchestrates heinous acts and hides them by maintaining tight control over the mainstream media. In this sense, QAnon follows the post-war trend in which conspiracy theories are no longer linked to a small secret society, but associated with a highly dispersed “organisation, technology, or system” (Melley 2016, 8) that openly manipulates a population, if only they had the eyes to see it.

Echoing the earlier Pizzagate narratives (Tuters et al., 2018), Q followers believe that this cabal of powerful politicians, figures, and celebrities engage in pedophilia and child trafficking. Indeed, the movement has enjoyed a surge of exposure thanks to its co-option of the “save the children” slogan and hashtag (Roose, 2020). Typically associated with humanitarian campaigns and organizations, the phrase has enabled Q-inspired content to be widely and often unwittingly endorsed (North, 2020), finding sympathetic new audiences and providing an access point into the Q world.

While these theories spinoff in dozens of directions, from blood harvesting by celebrities to coronavirus as a hoax or bioweapon, the core protagonist of QAnon is Donald Trump.

Whether strategically selected or divinely appointed, Trump is the figure working to undo the

cabal's corruption before it destroys America and the world. Trump has long been aware of the deep state's dark schemes, deploying the power at his disposal—military, legal, financial—to orchestrate countermoves against them. Through Q's texts, and their own research, Q followers have ripped off their blindfolds and become aware of this reality, ushering in a period of "Great Awakening" that will ultimately sweep the world. While the monstrous evil carried out by the cabal currently goes unchecked, the time of judgement is rapidly approaching. The moment of reckoning is at hand, a flood of indictments and arrests that Q devotees refer to as "the Storm." In Q's words, nothing can stop it; it's going to be biblical.

First Steps to Q Research

How do we begin to research QAnon? The Q world has become sprawling, an entire ecosystem of theories, memes, hashtags, and channels. And many Q followers themselves are prolific media creators, producing hours of podcasts, interviews, and video commentary to wade through. This rapid expansion of the Q universe, with its myriad sects and multiplying media, poses a formidable research challenge. Mainstream media articles understandably respond by summarizing the narrative and stepping through similar talking points before segueing into personal anecdotes or local examples. The limited academic work to date has responded by focusing closely on single Q-inspired groups. For example, there is a preprint by Papasavva et al (2020), which refers to its interventions as a "first step" in understanding QAnon. The authors focus on a QAnon group on the lesser known hate haven of Voat. Applying sophisticated computational methods, they collect user comments and characterize their language, seeking to identify the prevalence of hate speech and the overall patterns of interactions throughout the group. Similarly, Procházka and Blommaert (2020) focus on one Facebook group, "QAnon Follow The White Rabbit," applying an ergoic frame to understand how its members transform media narratives. Q-followers employ a particular type of

reasoning in order to manipulate the interpretation of the “MAGA kid” incident and other contested events and issues.

This article takes a different approach, examining one year of posts direct from the source: Q. After all, one of the directives for Q followers is to concentrate not on who Q is but on what he or she is communicating. It is the “messages, information, intel, and facts that Q posts which are important,” stresses an introductory guide (Anons, 2018, p. 3), “Anons focus not on who Q is, but on what Q is saying.” Q’s “crumbs” or “drops” are the foundational texts of the QAnon movement, the rosetta stones that spawn countless discussion threads and inspire its devotees to hours of online investigation. What do these aphoristic and often cryptic posts actually say? What are the key themes and tropes embedded within them? And how might this thematic blend contribute to sustaining QAnon and mobilizing its broad audience? These are the questions pursued by this article.

As core material, this article draws upon Q posts between September 2019 and September 2020. While there are occasionally gaps in this period without a post, Q generally tends to post daily or even more frequently, with several drops occurring per day. The result is that this yearlong time period covers drops #3571 – 4764, 1193 posts altogether. Q posts originally on 8kun and Q followers then meticulously record each drop on “official” archives like <http://qanon.pub>, the source used here, and mirrors such as <http://qanon.app> and <http://qntmpkts.keybase.pub>. Each drop appears with a date-stamp, its original URL, and its number, with #1 being Q’s first post. To avoid driving additional traffic to these websites and these dangerous ideas, all Q quotes are referenced by this number, rather than an URL.

Methodologically, the analysis takes a consciously bottom-up approach, allowing the content of the posts themselves to drive the study. Instead of beginning with a grand theory or comprehensive model, the study aims to focus first and foremost on Q’s words and allow themes to emerge. In this sense, the small study here follows in the footsteps of Klaus Thieleweit (1987, p. 24), whose seminal study “did not originate in theory” but rather in the source documents of the *Freikorps* men he investigated; central to his methodology is that “the material has taken precedence.” This textual approach has recently been used in a thesis on QAnon by Rose See (2019), who devotes a chapter to a line-by-line analysis of one Q post. In adjacent fields, a similar decoding of the jargon and myths of 4chan cultures (Tuters, 2018) has contributed to more nuanced, contextualized explanations of alt-right movements and online hate (May and Feldman, 2018).

To begin with, the full corpus of Q posts were thematically coded.¹ This involved reading the post itself and any hyperlinked media, such as screenshots, tweets, or linked video. After understanding the context of the post, the coder “tagged” each post with between 1 and 8 themes. Tags remained closely tied to the content of each post rather than being inferred, e.g. a post mentioning corruption would be tagged “corruption” but not Trump’s catch-all term of “swamp” unless that word was specifically mentioned. Methodologically, we employed a template based approach (King, 2004), which drew on a knowledge of US politics and key QAnon concepts, e.g. “msm” or mainstream media as a frequent trope—but also adopted the flexibility of this method in revising some tags during coding, e.g. “light vs darkness” and “darkness vs light” were all relabeled as “light vs darkness.” Posts featuring tweets from suspended accounts were not coded. The resulting list of themes can be seen in Figure 1 below.

1 An Excel document (xlsx) containing the post numbers, contents, and tagged themes is available here: https://www.dropbox.com/s/b8odj542wzbyuj/qanon_coding.xlsx?dl=0.



Figure 2: Cluster of faith and skepticism meta-themes encapsulating sub themes

“Have Faith”

One frequent command across these posts is the injunction to have faith. Across the collection of approximately 1000 drops, the word “faith” is mentioned 42 times and “God” 82 times. Drop #4249 consists of a single image of a lone figure looking across a wheat field, with the words of Mark 11:22 stamped in the center: “have faith in God.” Drops #4541 and #4542 reprint in full a letter from Carlo Maria Viganò, Former Apostolic Nuncio to the US, to Trump on Holy Trinity Sunday. In warning the President about the “deep state” and asserting that the children of light and the children of darkness are locked in a battle that can only be described as “biblical,” Viganò’s letter serves as a dog whistle for Q followers and a three-way bridge between their community, conservative Christians, and Trump followers. Drop #4739 is a type of public prayer, which begins by asking to “strengthen my faith, Lord.” The prayer asks for forgiveness of sins, for bravery to fight the “spiritual battles in my life” and for wisdom and discernment, before making a swift segue into a cosmic battle. “While evil still roams, the power of Your name and Your blood rises up to defeat and bring us victory

against every evil planned against us.” The prayer states that, “While malicious actions may disturb us,” its followers will use the “armor of God” in order to stand firm.

The Armor of God is a mainstay in Q’s messaging. The phrase itself occurs no less than 17 times over the year. Moreover, the well-known passage of scripture that mentions the armor of God, Ephesians 6:10-20, is posted in its entirety multiple times throughout this period. The passage enjoins the listener to put on a set of spiritual armor, stepping through each component, from the belt of truth, to the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit. Adorned in these defenses, the listener may go forth, equipped to do battle with the “powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil.”

Similar imagery of battle often reappears when spirituality, faith, or God is mentioned. Faith, in this sense, is not a state of inner unity with God, but an outward set of armaments, that protects the wearer and legitimizes their holy crusade. Q’s frequent mention of the armor of God recalls former U.S. President Harry Truman, who invoked the exact same phrase when describing America’s battle against communism (Spalding, 2007, p. 103). In both cases, faith works to expand the territory of the battlefield beyond politics narrowly defined and into everyday life, where it becomes a more fundamental issue touching on one’s beliefs, morality, and lifestyle. As drop #4545 stresses:

This is not about politics.

This is about preserving our way of life and protecting the generations that follow.

We are living in Biblical times.

Children of light vs children of darkness.

United against the Invisible Enemy of all humanity.

Yet if this battle is vast in scale, it is nevertheless simple to understand. On one side are the children of light; on the other are the children of darkness. This vast cosmic clash takes place between good and evil. Drop #4390 echoes this dichotomy, consisting of a single quotation from Proverbs 13:9: “The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is extinguished.” This clear dualism is characteristic of many conspiracy theories, one of many ways that the genre simplifies the messy complexities of the world into a simpler version of reality. As Michael Barkun (2013, p. 19) notes, these theories often exhibit a “sharp division between the realms of good and evil.” This is a Manichean universe, a struggle between the starkly delineated forces of light and dark.

Who is included in these forces of darkness? In the Q messages examined here, there are clear villains that are repeatedly singled out. Within this rogues gallery, democratic politicians such as Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Nancy Pelosi, and Joe Biden feature prominently alongside convicted sexual offenders and their associates such as Harvey Weinstein, Jeffrey Epstein, and Ghislaine Maxwell. George Soros, perennial figure within conspiracy theories, makes an appearance with a fake quote about destroying the United States. Certainly, then, there are clear scapegoats available to investigate and target. Yet there are also more nebulous forces. A number of drops (#3858, #3905, #4366, #4385) gestured to Antifa flags and funding, suggested fires and protests were coordinated by Antifa, and questioned what “organized group(s)” may be aiding them (#4799). These actors are undefined, their identities unknown. For followers of Q, these broader categories point to the limitless dimensions of evil: there are always more individuals to be identified, more organizations to be rooted out. The labors of the children of light are never complete.

Throughout the texts there is a clear link between God and America. “Do you think it's a coincidence they banned and prevent you attending Church _house of worship?” asks drop #4550, answering with two simple statements: “Anti-American. Anti-God.” Drop #4397 follows in this vein, presenting a triple call to prayer: “Pray for Strength. Pray for Guidance. Pray for America.” Indeed, American evangelicals, especially of a more fundamentalist stripe, have been one of the more recent groups to latch onto Q-inspired ideas. Pastors have spoken that many in their flock have been attracted to these ideas, repeating claims of child exploitation and satanic worship as true (Ohlheiser, 2020).

For those coming to Q from a fundamentalist background, this is a much more active version of faith than the once a month (or once a year) attendance of church services that characterizes the nominal version of American Christianity (Pew Research, 2019, p. 6). For the fundamentalist follower of Q, the vast cosmic battle between the forces of light and dark predicted in eschatological texts is suddenly rendered real and present: the end-times are near. “It’s not a theory” stated one Q devotee who identifies as Christian (LaFrance, 2020), “it’s the foretelling of things to come.” Faith moves from a dry profession of doctrine to a code through which contemporary events—the Mueller probe, the Oregon protests, the presidential election—are interpreted in real time.

A strong current of millenarianism, anticipating a period of enormous societal upheaval where evil will be dealt with, runs through QAnon. This often blurs into the similarly named millennialism, the more distinctly Judeo-Christian beliefs surrounding the end times. Q’s frequent invocation of “it's going to be biblical,” combined with the apocalyptic language of darkness, light, punishment and justice, resonates strongly with Revelation, a Biblical book of prophecy which describes God’s return to the earth and his final judgement, as well as best-

selling books such as Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins' *Left Behind* series. The conceptual overlaps between conspiracy and eschatology have been noted by others. As Mark Fenster (2008, p. 227) observes, "many popular eschatological texts lean toward right-wing conspiracy theory, particularly in their militaristic patriotism, fears of a one-world government, virulent anticommunism."

One of the byproducts of this alignment is that both millenarianism and conspiracy theories impart a strong sense of the group and the enemy. As Andrew Wilson (2020, p. 1) notes, the division between "us" and "them" in conspiracy theories parallels the division between the "chosen people" and the "remnant" in millenarianism. There is the community of insiders, those who have woken up to the truth and been redeemed, and there are the outsiders, those who have refused this gift and condemned themselves. These themes slot neatly into a broader narrative where the Kingdom of God will be established on earth: the good will be rewarded and evil finally punished and vanquished. As one christian political scientist stated of these QAnon themes, there are "certain things that resonate with evangelicals, because it feels like part of a narrative we've been invested in for most of our lives" (Smith, 2020).

Across the corpus of Q texts, the injunction to "have faith" draws on this eschatological substrate. Having faith in the end times is a matter of waiting. "One step at a time" reassures Q in drop #4037. "It's only a matter of time" promises Q in drop #3634. Followers are instructed to trust in the broader plan, to have patience even when nothing seems to be happening. Indictments will come, justice will meted out. Drop #4087, for example, features a tweet from Mike Pompeo, who states "be sure of this: the wicked will not go unpunished." Drop #3724 expands on this point, stating:

It must be done right.

It must be done according to the rule of law.

It must carry weight.

It must be proven in the court of law.

There can be no mistakes.

Good things sometimes take time.

Attempts to slow/block the inevitable [Justice] will fail.

Followers of Q, then, must maintain their faith, retaining patience and steadfast belief in the face of difficulties. And yet, drawing from its eschatological roots, this is not a restful waiting, but a state of hypervigilance. “Prepare for the storm” states post #3880. “Be ready” cautions post #4006. “The enormity of what is coming will SHOCK THE WORLD.

Pray.” advises post #3728. Put on the armor of God so that “when the day of evil comes you may be able to stand,” states the scripture discussed above, instructing disciples to “be alert and always keep praying.” Q’s posts thus cultivate a mode of anxiousness, of alertness, of expectancy. The world stands on a “precipice,” and the next event may swiftly tilt into the “biblical” event of judgement and justice that followers eagerly await. Drop #4732 exemplifies this kind of eschatological anticipation, with one follower stating: “I’m not turning a blind-eye, I’m just waiting for justice to arrive! Let it be soon please!”

The injunction to “have faith” thus contributes strategically to maintaining the QAnon conspiracy. On the one hand, followers must practice patience, being unwavering in their belief even when the events foretold by Q fail to occur. On the other hand, having faith means watching and waiting. Followers should be open-eyed and ready, attentive to the small clues that signal the start of the storm, the vibration that will send the whole house of cards

tumbling down. Together, these injunctions urge followers to be patient but also nervous and expectant, holding up permanent paranoia as an ideal inner state to be cultivated.

“Ask Yourself Why”

Alongside Q’s command to have faith is a command to question and be skeptical. “Think” is mentioned 180 times across the corpus of posts and “why” occurs 230 times. These phrases often assert the importance of rationality. In Drop #4535, Q states that free thought is “a philosophical viewpoint which holds that positions regarding truth should be formed on the basis of logic, reason, and empiricism, rather than authority, tradition, revelation, or dogma.” Drop #4494 champions “logical thinking.” Drop #4336 speaks of “critical thinking.” And Drop #4312 quotes the definition of common sense as “the basic level of practical knowledge and judgment that we all need to help us live in a reasonable and safe way.”

Of course, whether conspiracy theorists engage in logical thinking and common sense is questionable—one recent study suggested that conspiracy believers have a less developed critical thinking ability (Lantian et al., 2020). And as See (2019, p. 67) notes, the criticality employed by QAnon followers is always highly selective: sources internal to the community are consumed uncritically, while mainstream media sources are carefully dissected “with the goal of confirming pre-existing perceptions.” However, the focus here is on taking these phrases at face value and exploring the imaginary they construct.

Placed together, these phrases elevate a particular way of engaging with the world, one predicated on reason and logic. Q followers are not to accept the version of reality handed to them, but instead to question it. Dominant narratives should be interrogated and deconstructed, a strategy that Q models by identifying individuals, zooming in on vehicle

license plates, locating financial links, tracking down government documents, and highlighting dubious portions of images. This work of screenshotting, searching, and document retrieval, carried out in what Q has termed the “Digital Battlefield” (#4509), constitutes a contemporary version of critical thinking. For outsiders of course, this thinking is tragically misguided, a form of apophenia (Steyerl, 2016) that mistakenly finds patterns where none exist. Yet for the Q faithful, these practices make sense of the data, establishing complex connections and suggesting surprising new relationships.

In this way, the practices of Q and Q followers, who “bake” these crumbs into proofs, work to establish new forms of knowledge. But perhaps just as importantly, they work to erode established knowledge, rendering it suspect, unstable, perhaps even illusory. By creating “closed universes of mutually reinforcing facts and interpretations,” what is real for many becomes unreal to the QAnon community (Zuckerman, 2020). Whether the claims center around anthropogenic climate change or the real threat of coronavirus, the work that the Q follower must carry out is similar: to tear down the edifice of epistemological authority by producing a digital mountain of contradictory or even just confusing knowledge. Based on a common antipathy towards established knowledge, this work knits together the otherwise scattered pockets of the #QArmy, constituting what See (2019, p. 89) calls a “community of hermeneutic practice.” As Procházka and Bloomaert (2020, p. 24) observe, the work of “knowledge activism constitutes the main organizing principle of the Qanon community,” securing its “social cohesion in the face of a great internal diversity.”

Traceybeanz (Diaz, 2018), the YouTuber mentioned earlier who played a key early role in promoting Q, gestures to this theme of independent research when explaining her work on Q’s posts:

I researched them ON MY OWN. I did not take anyone else's research, and in many of my videos I stated that this was all open source information—it was freely available on the web for anyone to find. And this was the beauty of the Q phenomenon. The Socratic Method of asking questions and pointing people to research for THEMSELVES was an amazing thing to behold. It has awoken more people in a short amount of time than I ever dreamed possible.

Throughout the year of Q posts, the “Socratic Method” does appear repeatedly, albeit as a decidedly more steered version of the ancient technique. Q will often present a fact or figure and then immediately follow it with a question. Indeed, across the corpus of posts, the question mark character (“?”) occurs around 1700 times. Drop #4672, for example, lists statistics around downloads of an item before and after recent protests, before prompting the reader with a simple query: “Coordinated?” Drop #4673 states “Antifa.com redirect to Biden's donation page” and questions whether this is “Similar to BLM > DNC?” In one twist on this method, Q will present two seemingly opposed facts and ask followers to explain them. Drop #4651, for example, concludes with: “Events then. Events today. Reconcile.” Rather than serving up the answer discursively, these texts require active work from the reader.

Q summarizes this method as a way to “_ask ‘counter’ questions to initiate ‘thought’ vs repeat [echo] of MSDNC propaganda” (#4509). In the Q imaginary, the public has been force-fed lies from the mainstream media. Questions begin to interrupt this diet, providing a starting point for critical thinking and a route to recovery. On an immediate level, these questions serve to undermine the established experts and their established narrative. Whether

challenging protest accounts or climate change statistics, these questions work to contest the “epistemic authority” (Harambam and Aupers, 2015) of individuals and organizations who others regard as trustworthy and unbiased. After this doubt is triggered, a void opens up—what then, is the real explanation? Q’s statements function as “informational cues” (Uscinski et al. 2016) to those predisposed to conspiratorial thinking. These statements do not hand the reader an answer, but neither do they leave a response entirely open ended. Instead, Q’s prompts tend to lead the reader, step by step, to a “logical” if broad conclusion: that reference was a smokescreen, this group is secretly funded, that news was fake.

One key mode of questioning hinges on probability. Drop #4639 asks the follower to look at “Average number of fires 2018, 2019, 2020 [June - Dec]” and then follows up with the question: “Outside of standard deviation?” These kinds of queries invoke statistical likelihood as an objective criteria for determining the truth and guiding a researcher’s queries. Some behaviors and events lie within the bell curve of normalcy; others are outliers, unusual, suspicious. One of Q’s most frequent catchphrases is “coincidence?” Of course, there are no coincidences within the Q universe, nor within the wider constellation of conspiracy theory that preceded it. “Conspiracy implies a world based on intentionality, from which accident and coincidence have been removed,” stresses Barkun (2013, p. 41): “Anything that happens occurs because it has been willed. ” This is a logical world where things play out in a logical way. Everything has a reason. Effects can be traced back to causes, and if followers cannot always see the gossamer threads that link individuals, institutions, and events, it is because they are not looking hard enough, they are searching in the wrong place, or they have been intentionally misled by deep state actors.

One specific way skepticism and rationality is championed is through references to the Enlightenment. In drop #4408, Q speaks of the movement as a “new reason-based order instituting the Enlightenment ideals of liberty and equality”; followers should adopt these ideals by “undertaking to think for oneself, to employ and rely on one’s own intellectual capacities in determining what to believe and how to act.” These references to the age of reason suggest a new moment, a conceptual revolution in which the dogma of religion is shrugged off and a new imperative of scientific investigation takes its place. Longstanding doctrines can be disputed and experts can be challenged. Everything is open to scrutiny, debate, and debunking. In “What is Enlightenment” Kant (1784, p. 1) urged his readers to “have the courage to use one’s own understanding.” Across the corpus of posts, Q mirrors this call, urging followers to analyze, uncover, and question for themselves. “Read and discern for yourself” Q urges in drop #3912. “Think for yourself” commands drop #3964. “Research for yourself” asserts drop #4734. “Knowledge is power. Take ownership of yourself” states #4503. “Ask yourself, why?” prods drop #3582. Fed up with the de-facto explanations handed out by others, the enlightened figure dares to take the plunge, diving into the hard truths that lie under the surface of reality.

There is a parallel here to the alt-right motif of being red-pilled, a concept deriving from *The Matrix* in which the protagonist is asked to choose between swallowing one pill and forgetting everything, or swallowing the red pill and seeing how “deep the rabbit hole goes” (Wachowski and Wachowski, 1998). In the rhetoric of the radical right, this is not a pleasant experience, but it is a necessary one. Within these communities the red pill or enlightened figure is the individual who has seen past the manicured and massaged reality presented by the powers-that-be and seen things as they really are (Evans, 2019; Munn, 2019). In drop #4550, Q states that “You are being presented with the gift of vision. Ability to see [clearly]

what they've hid from you for so long [illumination]." From the alt-right to the newer formations of QAnon followers, then, the concept is remarkably similar: the "sheeple" have their comfortable lies, while "we" know the harsh truths. Propelled by their courage, the Q devotee plunges out of the darkness of ignorance and into the light.

Q's Blend

Q's injunctions to "have faith" and "think for yourself" bring together a unique blend of faith and skepticism. On the one hand, there is a prominent theme of rationality, empiricism, critical thinking, and logical proofs. "Knowledge is power," states drop #3662, "Think for yourself. Trust yourself. Do due diligence." These slogans of autonomy and self-sufficiency distance themselves from a strictly Christian hope in divine sovereignty and shade into a more contemporary set of neoliberal beliefs. The neoliberal self is independent, a collection of skills and traits responsible for managing her own life (Gershon 2011). Trust in God is augmented by trust in oneself. On the other hand, there is a strong theme of faith, justice, judgement, warfare, and an undercurrent of fundamentalist Christianity running through Q's posts. Q followers are the children of light doing battle against the forces of darkness. Each must have faith, maintaining their beliefs and anxiously waiting for justice to be served.

For the reader scrolling through archives of Q's posts, these themes appear directly alongside each other. Eschatology and the Enlightenment are spliced together. While the emergent nature of QAnon and the gap in prior academic research make any discussion somewhat speculative, one byproduct of this blend seems to be a stronger community. Neoliberal invocations of the self are augmented with the overarching purpose and unified front of the religious right. Individuals are bound together into a moral community (Graham and Haidt, 2010) founded on the tropes of justice and warfare discussed above. These cosmic

mythologies establish a tight-knit “we” and blesses their work as important and urgent. Q followers are faithful patriots, an assembly of good citizens struggling against evil forces. “United We Stand” proclaims one Q slogan. “Where We Go One, We Go All” declares another. Q regularly showcases video greetings from Q followers around the world, from Rwanda and Ghana to the UK and Iran (#3927, #3935, #3938, #4051). Each Q follower may have to investigate the truth for themselves, but these “independent researchers” are all carrying this task together, producing proofs that are fed back into the QAnon “hivemind” via videos, articles, and forum posts, where they are then discussed, debated, and built upon (Zuckerman, 2019). This work—along with common hashtags, memes, slogans, and apparel—ties them back into the vibrant conspiracy theory community of the #QArmy.

Given this intersection of elements, defining Qanon as a religion (Argentino, 2020b) or dismissing it as a cult (Stanley-Becker, 2018) seems insufficient. To be sure, QAnon did not emerge *ex-nihilo*, nor is it entirely unique. There are some clear lineages to note. For Talia Lavin (2020), QAnon’s obsession with blood, ritual, and sacrifice are updates of antisemitic blood libel conspiracies (Rose, 2015) and the more recent “satanic panic” of the 1980s. For Megan Goodwin (2020), Q feels like an extrapolation of the New Christian Right, with its hyperpatriotism and conflation of progressive values with sexual deviancy. And yet there are also non-religious strands to QAnon, from the enlightenment imaginary explored earlier to a long-running paranoid style in American politics and the meme-driven racism of chan culture where it originated.

This ability to incorporate all these elements is not just due to QAnon as a “big tent” conspiracy theory (Roose 2020), but stems more precisely from Q’s writings. Q’s drops weave together faith and paranoia, spirituality and secular humanism into a seamless story. If

Habermas (2010) has asked “what is missing” today and suggested it might lie in a new marriage of faith and reason in our post-secular age, then QAnon, in a strange way, claims to step precisely into this gap. Granted, even this blending has a precedent. As Chrissy Stroop (2020) notes, the “cross-fertilization of more ‘secular’ anti-government and apocalyptic conspiracy theories with more ‘religious’ ones” has been underway for at least three decades, since Pat Robertson’s *New World Order* (1991) was published. Yet the scale and success of this blend marks QAnon as new in degree, if not in kind. This is a story that applies powerful religious concepts like righteousness, justice, and evil to present-day political figures and events. This is a story told through the video grabs, GPS coordinates, and Twitter threads of Q. And this is a story remixed and retold through the growing community of independent QAnon researchers, who step others through their “logical thinking” with the use of slides, screenshots, maps, and timestamps. Both the story itself, and the mechanisms of storytelling, then, stitch together a hybrid formation. Judging by the growing social and political influence of QAnon, this is a synthesis that has proven coherent and compelling.

Conclusion

This article has examined the QAnon movement through the texts of its central figure: Q. One year of Q posts were analyzed, highlighting two key meta-themes in the QAnon canon. Faith is one, scripture and spiritual language gesturing to an apocalyptic battle in the present between the children of light and the children of darkness. Skepticism is another, a stress on the enlightened individual who employs critical thinking and draws her own fact-based claims. These twin themes come together to forge a movement grounded in powerful religious narratives and amplified in a tight-knit community but also premised on neoliberal ideals of questioning established dogma and forging one’s own truth through online knowledge construction practices.

This blend of elements offers one possible starting point for those seeking to understand the QAnon movement and the powerful pull it seems to assert on its followers. It moves beyond framings of QAnon as either a fundamentalist cult or a fringe internet conspiracy. Of course, this study is an early and inherently limited intervention. More research is needed to investigate how Q's texts are adapted by followers, morphing as they encounter distinct online subcultures. Other work might adopt a temporal lens, examining how Q's narrative has shifted over the last several years. Indeed, as a field of research, QAnon is vast, chaotic, and always changing. This rapid evolution challenges the researcher to keep apace, acknowledging her limits while still striving to carry out critical research that provides depth and insight.

“The Great Awakening is not a conspiracy theory or a cult,” state the authors (Anons, 2018, p. 6) in their introduction to QAnon, “it is a sophisticated and coordinated information operation from within President Trump’s administration to enlighten the public about the true state of affairs of the nation and the world.” While countering this dangerous movement should be a key priority, the first step is to understand how statements like this make sense at psychological, social, and cultural levels—how these powerful mythologies come to be internalized, endorsed, and propagated. Engaging with its canon of texts and unpacking its key themes provides one starting point for grasping the logics that drive this movement and mobilize its followers.

References

Anons. (2018, September 19). *Q: The Basics—An Introduction to Q and the Great Awakening*. https://qanon.news/pdf/Q_The_Basics_V1.0.pdf

Argentino, M.-A. (2020a, April 9). *QAnon conspiracy theories about the coronavirus pandemic are a public health threat*. The Conversation. <http://theconversation.com/qanon-conspiracy-theories-about-the-coronavirus-pandemic-are-a-public-health-threat-135515>

Argentino, M.-A. (2020b, May 28). *In the Name of the Father, Son, and Q: Why It's Important to See QAnon as a "Hyper-Real" Religion*. Religion Dispatches. <https://religiondispatches.org/in-the-name-of-the-father-son-and-q-why-its-important-to-see-qanon-as-a-hyper-real-religion/>

Argentino, M.-A., & Amarasingam, A. (2020). The QAnon Conspiracy Theory: A Security Threat in the Making? *CTC Sentinel*, 13(7), 37–44.

Barkun, M. (2013). *A culture of conspiracy: Apocalyptic visions in contemporary America*. University of California Press.

Beanz, T. (2020). *Tracy Beanz*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/c/tracybeanz/about>

Collins, B. (2018, August 4). *What is Qanon? A guide to the conspiracy theory taking hold among Trump supporters*. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/what-qanon-guide-conspiracy-theory-taking-hold-among-trump-supporters-n897271>

Collins, B. (2019, March 5). *On Amazon, a Qanon conspiracy book climbs the charts—With an algorithmic push*. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/amazon-qanon-conspiracy-book-climbs-charts-algorithmic-push-n979181>

Diaz, T. (2018, May 17). *She stood in the Storm...* Steemit. <https://steemit.com/drama/@tracybeanz/she-stood-in-the-storm>

Doward, J. (2020, September 20). "Quite frankly terrifying": How the QAnon conspiracy theory is taking root in the UK. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/20/the-qanon-conspiracy>

Dyer, A. (2020, August 16). Racism, QAnon and "cold civil war": Inside the 20,000-strong Defend East County Facebook group. *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/watchdog/story/2020-08-16/inside-the-20-000-strong-defend-east-county-facebook-page-grown-as-a-reaction-to>

Energy.gov. (2020). *Departmental Personnel Security FAQs*. Energy.Gov.

<https://www.energy.gov/ehss/security-policy-guidance-reports/departmental-personnel-security-faqs>

Evans, R. (2018, October 11). *From Memes to Infowars: How 75 Fascist Activists Were “Red-Pilled.”* Bellingcat. <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/americas/2018/10/11/memes-infowars-75-fascist-activists-red-pilled/>

Farkas, J., & Schou, J. (2019). *Post-Truth, Fake News and Democracy: Mapping the Politics of Falsehood*. Routledge.

Fenster, M. (2008). *Conspiracy Theories: Secrecy and Power in Contemporary America*. University of Minnesota Press.

Francescani, C. (2020, September 23). *The men behind QAnon*. ABC News.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/men-qanon/story?id=73046374>

FreedomLab. (2020, August 12). QAnon and knowledge. *FreedomLab*. <https://freedomlab.org/qanon-and-knowledge/>

Frenkel, S. (2020, August 19). Facebook Removes 790 QAnon Groups to Fight Conspiracy Theory. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/19/technology/facebook-qanon-groups-takedown.html>

Gershon, I. (2011). Neoliberal Agency. *Current Anthropology*, 52(4), 537–555.

Goodwin, M. (2020, September 10). *QAnon Didn't Just Spring Forth From the Void—It's the Latest From a Familiar Movement* (A. Willems, Interviewer) [Interview].

<https://religiondispatches.org/qanon-didnt-just-spring-forth-from-the-void-its-the-latest-from-a-familiar-movement/>

Habermas, J. (2010). *An awareness of what is missing: Faith and reason in a post-secular age*. Polity.

Harambam, J., & Aupers, S. (2015). Contesting epistemic authority: Conspiracy theories on the boundaries of science. *Public Understanding of Science*, 24(4), 466–480.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662514559891>

Harris, S. (2005). *The end of faith: Religion, terror, and the future of reason*. WW Norton & Company.

Hofstadter, R. (1964, November 1). The Paranoid Style in American Politics. *Harper's Magazine*.
<https://harpers.org/archive/1964/11/the-paranoid-style-in-american-politics/>

Hoysted, J. (2020, August 14). Crazy, maybe. But media ignores QAnon at our peril. *The Australian*.
<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/commentary/bizarre-yes-crazy-maybe-but-the-media-ignores-qanon-at-our-peril/news-story/06608e77e53683fe8eff4543402f4302>

Husting, G., & Orr, M. (2007). Dangerous machinery: "Conspiracy theorist" as a transpersonal strategy of exclusion. *Symbolic Interaction*, 30(2), 127–150.

Johnson, J. (2017, October 6). Trump gathers with military leaders, says 'Maybe it's the calm before the storm.' *Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/10/06/trump-gathers-with-military-leaders-says-maybe-its-the-calm-before-the-storm/>

Kant, I. (1784, December). Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? *Berlinische Monatsschrift*.

Kaplan, A. (2019, August 1). *Trump has repeatedly amplified QAnon Twitter accounts. The FBI has linked the conspiracy theory to domestic terror*. Media Matters for America.
<https://www.mediamatters.org/twitter/fbi-calls-qanon-domestic-terror-threat-trump-has-amplified-qanon-supporters-twitter-more-20>

Kaufman, A. B., & Kaufman, J. C. (2018). *Pseudoscience: The Conspiracy Against Science*. MIT Press.

King, N. (2004). Using Templates in the Thematic Analysis of Text. In C. Cassell & G. Symon (Eds.), *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research* (pp. 256–270). Sage.

LaFrance, A. (2020, June). The Prophecies of Q. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/06/qanon-nothing-can-stop-what-is-coming/610567/>

Lantian, A., Bagneux, V., Delouvé, S., & Gauvrit, N. (2020). *Maybe free thinker but not a critical one: High conspiracy belief is associated with low critical thinking ability*.

Lavin, T. (2020, September 30). QAnon, Blood Libel, and the Satanic Panic. *The New Republic*.
<https://newrepublic.com/article/159529/qanon-blood-libel-satanic-panic>

Martineau, P. (2017, December 19). The Storm Is the New Pizzagate—Only Worse. *Intelligencer*. <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/12/qanon-4chan-the-storm-conspiracy-explained.html>

May, R., & Feldman, M. (2018). Understanding the Alt-Right: Ideologues, ‘Lulz’ and Hiding in Plain Sight. In M. Fielitz & N. Thurston (Eds.), *Post-Digital Cultures of the Far Right: Online Actions and Offline Consequences in Europe and the US* (pp. 25–36). transcript Verlag. <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839446706>

McIntire, M., & Roose, K. (2020, February 9). What Happens When QAnon Seeps From the Web to the Offline World. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/09/us/politics/qanon-trump-conspiracy-theory.html>

McIntyre, L. (2018). *Post-Truth*. MIT Press.

Melley, T. (2016). *Empire of Conspiracy: The Culture of Paranoia in Postwar America*. Cornell University Press.

Munn, L. (2019). Alt-right pipeline: Individual journeys to extremism online. *First Monday*, 24(6). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v24i6.10108>

North, A. (2020, September 18). *How #SaveTheChildren is pulling American moms into QAnon*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/21436671/save-our-children-hashtag-qanon-pizzagate>

Ohlheiser, A. (2020, August 26). *Evangelicals are looking for answers online. They’re finding QAnon instead*. MIT Technology Review. <https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/08/26/1007611/how-qanon-is-targeting-evangelicals/>

Papasavva, A., Blackburn, J., Stringhini, G., Zannettou, S., & De Cristofaro, E. (2020). “Is it a Qoincidence?”: A First Step Towards Understanding and Characterizing the QAnon Movement on Voat.co. *ArXiv:2009.04885 [Cs]*. <http://arxiv.org/abs/2009.04885>

Pariser, E. (2012). *The Filter Bubble*. Penguin Books.

Pew Research. (2019). *In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace* (p. 27). Pew Research Center.

Procházka, O., & Blommaert, J. (2020). Ergoic framing in New Right online groups: Q, the MAGA kid, and the Deep State theory. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.1075/aral.19033.pro>

QAnon, conspiracy theories, and Evangelicals. (2020, May 19). In *Faith Radio*.
https://myfaithradio.com/program_podcast/qanon-conspiracy-theories-evangelicals-worldwide-movement-prayer-repentance/

Reddit. (2018, January 11). *The Calm Before The Storm*. Reddit.
https://web.archive.org/web/20180111150259/https://www.reddit.com/r/CBTS_Stream/

Reyes, A. (2011). Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions. *Discourse & Society*, 22(6), 781–807. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926511419927>

Robertson, P. (1991). *The New World Order*. Word Publishing.

Rone, J. (2019). Fake profiles, trolls, and digital paranoia: Digital media practices in breaking the Indignados movement. *Social Movement Studies*, 1–17.

Roose, K. (2020, August 12). QAnon Followers Are Hijacking the #SaveTheChildren Movement. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/technology/qanon-save-the-children-trafficking.html>

Rose, E. M. (2015). *The Murder of William of Norwich: The Origins of the Blood Libel in Medieval Europe*. Oxford University Press.

Rosenberg, M., & Steinhauer, J. (2020, July 14). The QAnon Candidates Are Here. Trump Has Paved Their Way. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/us/politics/qanon-politicians-candidates.html>

Ruelas, R. (2020, February 11). *QAnon follower who blocked bridge near Hoover Dam pleads guilty to terrorism charge*. The Arizona Republic.
<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona/2020/02/11/man-who-blocked-hoover-dam-part-qanon-beliefs-takes-guilty-plea/4724161002/>

See, R. (2019). *From Crumbs to Conspiracy: Qanon as a community of hermeneutic practice* [Senior Thesis]. Swarthmore College.

Sommer, W. (2019, January 9). Qanon-Believing Proud Boy Accused of Murdering ‘Lizard’ Brother With Sword. *The Daily Beast*. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/proud-boy-member-accused-of-murdering-his-brother-with-a-sword-4>

Sonmez, F., & DeBonis, M. (2020, May 21). Believer in QAnon conspiracy theory wins Republican Senate nomination in Oregon. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/believer-in-qanon-conspiracy-theory-wins-republican-senate-nomination-in-oregon/2020/05/20/bf2d910a-9aaa-11ea-89fd-28fb313d1886_story.html

Spalding, E. E. (2007). "We Must Put on the Armor of God": Harry Truman and the Cold War. In *Religion and the American Presidency* (pp. 95–118). Springer.

Stanley-Becker, I. (2018, August 1). 'We are Q': A deranged conspiracy cult leaps from the Internet to the crowd at Trump's 'MAGA' tour. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2018/08/01/we-are-q-a-deranged-conspiracy-cult-leaps-from-the-internet-to-the-crowd-at-trumps-maga-tour/>

Steyerl, H. (2016). A Sea of Data: Apophenia and Pattern (Mis-)Recognition. *E-Flux*, 72. <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/72/60480/a-sea-of-data-apophenia-and-pattern-mis-recognition/>

Stroop, C. (2020, June 29). *Behind a Recent Stunt in Idaho Lies a Dangerous Theocratic Movement*. Religion Dispatches. <https://religiondispatches.org/behind-a-recent-stunt-in-idaho-lies-a-dangerous-theocratic-movement/>

Swinburne, R. (2005). *Faith and reason* (Vol. 13). Oxford University Press.

Theweleit, K. (1987). *Male fantasies: Women, floods, bodies, history* (Vol. 1). Polity Press.

Tuters, M. (2018). LARPing & Liberal Tears: Irony, Belief and Idiocy in the Deep Vernacular Web. In M. Fielitz & N. Thurston (Eds.), *Post-Digital Cultures of the Far Right* (pp. 37–48). transcript Verlag.

Tuters, M., Jokubauskaitė, E., & Bach, D. (2018). Post-truth protest: How 4chan cooked up the Pizzagate Bullshit. *M/C Journal*, 21(3).

Uscinski, J. E., Klofstad, C., & Atkinson, M. D. (2016). What Drives Conspiratorial Beliefs? The Role of Informational Cues and Predispositions. *Political Research Quarterly*, 69(1), 57–71.

Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L. (1998, March 29). *The Matrix*. https://www.dailyscript.com/scripts/the_matrix.pdf

Wilson, A. F. (2020). *'Conspiracy Theories, Millennialism, and the Nation: Understanding the collective voice in improvisational millennialism* [University of Derby].

<http://hdl.handle.net/10545/625070>

Zadrozny, B., & Collins, B. (2018, August 15). *Who is behind the Qanon conspiracy? We've traced it to three people*. NBC News.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/how-three-conspiracy-theorists-took-q-sparked-qanon-n900531>

Zuckerman, E. (2019). QAnon and the Emergence of the Unreal. *Journal of Design and Science*, 6.

<https://doi.org/10.21428/7808da6b.6b8a82b9>