

Meme Magic. A brief history of contemporary world

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I have to admit I'm a devil. I didn't know that. **Gabriella Pasquali Carlizzi**, a mystic seer told me few years ago and it was a revelation. This lady boasted of being a sort of advisor for the the secret services. She had five minutes of celebrity time when she used to go on television to accuse an imaginary cult called "the red rose" of committing ritual crimes of an esoteric nature. All the unsolved crimes in the history of Italy were committed by the red rose.

I was once in a web forum on cold cases and a guy was explaining some of the crimes according to this lady's theory. I expressed my doubts about it. At this point Mrs. Carlizzi herself intervened and told the person I was speaking to not to listen to me because I was Lucifer (actually she said I was Luis Cifer, maybe because my name is Luigi). I was quite amazed and expected that the other members would make fun of this bizarre statement. Not at all. A first user immediately confirmed. He said that I was running a blog called "Tarantula" and that I had started it on 11.11.2007. This is a figure that can be read according to Kabbalah as 11-11-9, because 7 plus 2 gives 9. 9 is 3 times 3. The reference is to the satanic trinity "dragon, antichrist and false prophet" of the book of Revelation. 11 represents justice, therefore the act of doing justice through execution, in the ritualistic of the Order of the Golden Dawn...

A second user noticed that I was born in the same year as the founding of the Church of Satan, the year that Anton la Vey called the first year of the Satanic Era.

This experience was interesting. It made me think of a famous mockery by the **Luther Blissett Project**. In the '90, a brunch of italian artists, writers and activists adopted and shared the same identity, that of **Luther Blissett**. They defined themselves "cultural jammers" and played elaborate media pranks as a form of art. In one of their most successful pranks, in 1997, they created a mass paranoia by informing the press agency of satanic masses held in the woods around the city of Viterbo. There was even video footage of a (rather clumsy) satanic ritual being broadcast on tv, until Luther Blissett claimed responsibility for the whole racket. The most important thing is that the population of Viterbo really began to see a series of evidence that there were many Satanists in the city. The story stands on its own feet and keeps walking on its own legs.

Coming back to me, few years later I was lazily zapping from channel to channel on television when I came across a popular television show that deals with finding missing persons and analyzing mysterious crimes. They were discussing a famous case. A girl named **Elisa Claps**, 16, disappeared on September 12 1993 in the Italian city of Potenza. "Potenza" is an italian word that means "Power". Her body was found in the crawl space of the Trinity Church on March 17, 2010. Surprisingly no one had yet advanced an esoteric track, so I thought of doing an experiment. I wanted to see if it was possible to create a coherent esoteric reading using only the data found in the media. The girl was born on January **21**, 1977. She disappeared on September **12** and was found in **March 2010**. 21, 12 and 2010 are **3**. March is the third month too. The perfect number! It is God or Satan and she was found in the Trinity Church!

Let's look at the day of the murder: 12.09.1993 which corresponds to $1+2+9+1+9+9+3= 34= 3+4= 7$.

Another perfect number! The spiritual one! And the girl's age was 16, that is $1 + 6 = 7$! While 17 (the day of the founding) is $1 + 7 = 8$, that is the Power, the City! So, a number that has often been found written on the walls of the city: 53, is $5 + 3$, that is still 8! And the 5th and 3th letters are E and C, like Elisa Claps! It was a ritual crime! I really was a demon! So I wrote a mail to the show's editorial staff listing my lucubrations. I didn't know if they were going to trash it or give it credit. To my surprise and dismay, the next installment of the show was focused on my esoteric reading. The experiment was successful! Not only that! They had even identified something I hadn't thought of. For example, the body had been found in the crawl space of the church and this has a triangular shape, so again a trinity!

All these episodes have in common the fact that there is someone who puts a fake news into a social system and others confirm it by bringing new elements that have never been in his mind (of the person who started it). This brings us straight to the core concept, that of "**hyperstition**". Hyperstition is a neologism coined by the **Cybernetic Culture Research Unit** at Warwick University in the UK, during the 90s, and it is composed of the words "hyper" and "superstition".

Hyperstitions are ideas that, once "downloaded" into a cultural "mainframe", engender positive feedback. In other words, the information entered influences the system to the point that it generates an autonomous cultural process, without any guidance. An idea, a theory, even a worship or a culture is generated in an autopoietic way. The idea walks on its own legs. The process is sometimes even such that the fake news become true at the end, that is, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. A good example of it was when the already mentioned Luther Blissett had the fake news published that a well-known priest had been arrested for sexual crimes and he was then really arrested ten years later for sexual crimes.

Well, there is a large web subculture that attributes magical connotations to this eventuality. And here we are in the core of this speech: **I'm not talking about cults and the web, but about the web as a cult!** In fact, at the height of technological evolution, an archaic and magical thought is awakened. The best example is the theory that Trump was elected president of the United States thanks to a badly drawn frog known as "**Pepe the frog**". Pepe the frog is one of those icons continuously reproduced on the net that we know as "**memes**". Pepe's been almost entirely co-opted by the white supremacists who call themselves the "alt-right" in the social networks **4Chan** and **Redditt**. They've decided to take back Pepe by adding swastikas and other symbols of anti-semitism and white supremacy. There is no time to explain how the introduction of this mascot would may have magically influenced the election of Trump, because it is a complex story that includes even the cult of **an Egyptian frogheaded goddess known as KEK**, but just know that it is linked to the concept of Chaos Magik. **Chaos magic**, (or **chaos magick**) is a contemporary magical practice that gives a huge importance to the creation of **Sigils**, on which a chaos magician is going to gather and focus his will. Sigils are believed to allow one's project to enter the realm of reality. What about memes? As collective entities, created by the will of thousands around a single thought, repeated and refined, it was the utmost sigil. And "hypersigil" some said. According to Grant Morrison, an hypersigil is a well known artwork charged with the desire of multitudes, a collective entity that influences reality.

This is Pepe, an hypersigil created by 4chan and charged with the will of thousands of Trump supporters.

If you believe that this type of thought is bizarre but harmless, it is worth seeing a final example of the network's ability to create "hyperstitions", i.e. super-superstitions. It is the case of **Qanon**.

On October 28, 2017 someone calling themselves **Q** began posting a series of cryptic messages in a 4chan thread titled "Calm Before the Storm". Q claimed to be a high-level government insider with Q clearance (hence the name) tasked with posting intel drops — straight to 4chan in order to covertly inform the public about POTUS's master plan to stage a counter-coup against members of the "deep state". Within a short time, many other Q messages appeared that are believed to be the work of different individuals. A new theory was born, without any guidance. A cult was walking on its own legs. Q accused Clinton, Obama and numerous liberal Hollywood actors, politicians, and high-ranking officials of engaging in an international child sex trafficking ring (and has claimed that Donald Trump feigned collusion with Russians in order to enlist Robert Mueller to join him in exposing the ring, and preventing a coup d'état by Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and George Soros). This strange idea has not been confined to the net at all, but has dramatically spilled over into the outside world. In fact, in June 2018 a Q fanatic armed with a rifle blocked the bridge of the Hoover dam in Nevada with an armored van. Before being arrested, he cries out sentences that refer to QAnon and shows a sign in which he asks the White House to "publish the Oig report", the report of the Inspector General's office on Hillary Clinton's e-mails. On the same days, in Arizona, an impromptu right-wing militia explores the surroundings of Interstate 19, close to the border with Mexico, in search of "paedophile camps". They call themselves Veterans on patrol (Vop). But the clue event was on July 31, when an enthusiastic crowd welcomed Trump in Tampa, Florida, wearing QAnon t-shirts and raising signs saying "We are Q". Q commented, "Welcome to the mainstream. We knew this day would come."

The web allows the collective construction of worldwide theories in a way never seen before.

The final hyperstition: Do you know what the title of the novel published 20 years before by Luther Blissett was? "**Q**"! That's magic!