Twitter Thread by K. Chen



K. Chen
@tznkai

This sounds insane and yet it's pretty much what happened.

> For context, the far right exploded in size because a dude claimed his ex gf slept with a games journalist to get a positive review, and white nationalist oppurtunists used that as a launch point for the "alt right" which directly lef to Trump's election, which mishandled covid.
>
> — Charredasperity (@TheZeroVirus) December 30, 2020

If we're being extremely sober-minded about this, in a tight election there's always multiple causes and movements are caused by a complex interplay of factors etc etc.

But it's also true a far right tumor grew within gamer communities and metastasized.

https://t.co/8YunFDxnvY

> Not to minimize the impact of Gamergate on those affected, but its an incredible stretch to say that it led to 2016. Its way easier to explain it with intra-GOP dynamics such as the Tea Party and the 2013 immigration bill
>
> — klaus on netflix propaganda account (@akaashkolluri) December 31, 2020

To me the big mystery of 2016 is always going to be how did Trump, who has no redeeming characteristics, get a perfectly normal number of votes? Why did multiple parts of our political immune system fail? A large part is that the GOP qua Party was weaker than we thought.

Gamergate and its spawn did a couple things to the immune system. It directly stressed it by creating a dangerous identity in a way it turns out it could not handle, and it revealed flaws that other bad actors took advantage of.

If you time-traveled and you eliminated Eron Gjoni before he hit "publish" would Donald Trump still be elected in 2016? I honestly don't think so, because it was such a close election. But the dominoes would still be in a place for a different trigger that could have happened.

People have been attacking the media for a long time. Making the media into a vagina-haver and allies conspiracy out to destroy you for liking boobs was something of an innovation.

https://t.co/JLkgnDfCax

> I'd say that GamerGate proved that anti-media messaging could resonate with people, which Trump eventually used to win.
>
> — Corn Woman \U0001f33d (@WomanCorn) December 31, 2020

Like you can describe that identity in a few different ways, all of which are terrible and reductive and yet true because the various gate movements and alt right identities are just various grievances that glommed together.

And to indulge in a little bothsideism, as a treat, attacking people for what they like is a very bad way of doing (left) politics and honestly everything else.

There are real stakes, even in the culture war but you really get the feeling it's just people being mean about what bands the other cliques are into.

This is very true and makes politicizing hobbies incredibly dangerous. On the other hand I'm increasingly convinced that we can't stop people from self-radicalizing themselves along their hobbies.

https://t.co/lRGsITiYwi

> Corollary: given the passion ppl feel in hobbies that become part of their identity, the reaction may also be unhinged
>
> — mark safranski (@zenpundit) December 31, 2020

You can studiously make something as apolitical as possible and people will spontaneously see their own lives and politics, and say so online, and then other people will get mad at you for that. They will generate memes and multi-hour YouTube streams about your agenda.

I'm pretty sure people who spontaneously organize into communities dedicated around parasocial relationships with fictional personae are in fact exactly who runs politics.

https://t.co/9IR6G5JFbg

> observing culture war stuff for years has taught me that fandom as a subset of the population needs to be kept as far away from politics as possible
>
> — Keyboard failure error - press F1 to continue (@Aelkus) December 31, 2020

I only disagree with @aelkus's notion we ought to keep fandom-types away from politics insofar as ought implies can and I don't think we can.

Also I'm not sure fandom can be quarantined so much as it is spontaneously generated by a human mind given the right factors.

Humans evolved over millions of years to thrive in small communities surrounded by wilds and in a tiny fraction of that time we've started existing in massive communities surrounded by each other.

So everytime human sociality misfires I wonder if its just a firmware problem.

Like Marx, they were right about everything except for time, specifics, and causation.

https://t.co/pRWGT68BMn

> The craziest part of it all was, at base GG did have a legit complaint, IMO. Video games journalism was an absolute farce of retyped press releases and reviews that were absolutely influenced by publishing concerns. The particulars were off, I\u2019d argue, but the sentiment correct
>
> — Boner Pills for Algernon (@HarryMudd1974) December 31, 2020

I stole that joke from @ZachWeiner in an SMBC comic I can't remember the magic search string for.

If 4% of voters shift its a damned landslide! In 2016 that's 5,466,771 people!
https://t.co/hqclrB9BSA

> No. Like 4% of voters even know what you\u2019re talking about.
>
> — Brad (@BradVocke) December 31, 2020

This is true, but GamerGate turned out to have been a particularized phenomena that was different in kind. To extend the tumor analogy, gaming communities have had damage from a smoking habit forever, but GamerGate was a time it became cancer.

https://t.co/scr0hZlvx9

> Thread, but I would take exception to anybody who works on the assumption Gamergate was the start of Right Wing poison in the gaming community. Misogyny, Racism & Sexism have been oozing throughout the gaming community since the first tabletop strategy session. It's not new. https://t.co/FrE2GM3uXs
>
> — DJ Kangal #PRESIDENTBIDEN (@DJKangal) December 31, 2020

I think we need to spend a lot more time on why the publishing practices of people who write about video games is somehow the same thing as little-l-liberalism than on whether GamerGate correctly identified the former as a problem.

https://t.co/0E8JEXOBCJ

> Lol, ok fair point. But my point does remain, like most other far right experimentations with authoritarianism, GG was sparked by the failures of \u201cliberalism\u201d
>
> The kind of liberalism that underpins democracies, not the thin gruel that is American liberalism.
>
> — Boner Pills for Algernon (@HarryMudd1974) December 31, 2020

Even if we assume GamerGate's core complaint was ethics in gaming journalism and that they were correct, how does that justify being mean to even one (1) woman on the internet let alone the creation of an entire cottage industry of YouTube streamers.

For my sins, I just searched "Zoe Quinn" On YouTube and sorted by views. Do not recommend.

I play video games, I think video games are art, I do not think video games are so important to the firmament of our society it justifies or explains creating an identity over it.

It'd be like my HOA not following bylaws being a sign of fascism.

https://t.co/JYCGQuT26b

> You don\u2019t see captive news orgs reporting favorably of on it subject because the business interests in that subject can directly influence favorable coverage not as a failure of the prevailing liberal culture?
>
> — Boner Pills for Algernon (@HarryMudd1974) December 31, 2020

Nota bene: HOAs in general are fascism and I'm only mostly kidding.

Like the problem with the legitimate complaint framing is that it relieves the recruit of any responsibility to have perspective. You could describe the fictional character here as having legitimate complaints about his life in the same way.

https://t.co/PDPdk9dDQF

I just don't see a huge moral difference between the guy who goes Red Pill because his ex was a bitch to him that one time and someone who decides America should elect Trump just because GameInformer was too chummy with the AAA publishers.

I don't know if I'd call them bad, or evil or anything like that, but I do hold them responsible for their own choices.

As I've said elsewhere I was also a nerdy shut-in who read a lot of problematic shit and at no point did I join the alt right.

https://t.co/i6HqCajY1f

> And yet, just like your HOA example, people do believe that and act on the basis of that belief no matter how erroneous. That\u2019s the point. I don\u2019t see the folks who fall for the Scientology personality test as being bad, same here with people who fell prey to GG\u2019s marketing.
>
> — Boner Pills for Algernon (@HarryMudd1974) December 31, 2020

https://t.co/IDtIohlY4L

> On the one hand, there but for the grace of God go I. On the other hand... wtf is wrong with you people?

— K. Chen (@tznkai) September 20, 2017

I think all the suburbs around here have an HOA, but if we could just get rid of it I would in a heartbeat.

https://t.co/C37dzR42Ht

> The worst (having worked for HOAs) is when the people trying to get their neighbors fined or overturn the latest HOA election are so bad that the fascism feels justified, even lenient. I can't think of anything (yard parking, ugly fence, etc.) that would get me to live in an HOA.
>
> — John Locke (@7tomorrow) December 31, 2020