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Conspiracy Theories



Conspiracy theories are a common bogeyman, more often than not a they are ideas and explanations that go outside what is generally considered acceptable thought, that is, ideas that are outside the Overton Window. Let's take a look at the Overton window and the idea of conspiracy theories.

Conspiracy Theories Fallacy Icon

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The Overton Window

The range of acceptable opinions is sometimes called "[The Overton Window](#)". Basically, the Overton Window is the range of ideas that the public is willing to consider as a valid opinion. For example, there was a time that homosexuals were generally considered perverts and homosexual behaviour was illegal; the Overton Window at the time was on what type of punishment was appropriate and whether or not the State should bother with it. Over time, and thanks to the work of homosexual rights advocates, the Overton Window shifted to one of public acceptance, tolerance and even celebration of homosexual unions as legal marriages. It is no longer within the Overton Window to publicly call these people perverts and advocate punishments for their perversions, except where their behaviour involves children. Even there, we have people people who would like to push the window to accept paedophilia as somehow within the range of acceptable opinion.

Think what you like about LGBTQ** issues, there is no doubt that the range of acceptable opinion has changed within living memory and that there are people working actively to change those opinions to their advantage. Also, any idea, explanation or theory that is outside the Overton Window for that subject is going to be dismissed as a "conspiracy theory".

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My wife regularly chides me for talking about conspiracy theories; I admit that they are interesting even if I don't entirely believe them. Here are a few thoughts.

Many conspiracy theorists are outright hucksters trafficking in sensational ideas for fun and profit. One good example is Alex Jones and his website [Infowars](#). The fun part of his website is obvious, Jones clearly relishes exposing nefarious behaviour by government and corporate actors. He is very entertaining; everything on his site is outrageous and exaggerated. The World Economic Forum (WEF) wants to [strangle us into submission](#) and water pollution is [making frogs gay](#). There is a whole web page dedicated to [documenting Jones'](#) most outrageous rants.

With Jones, the profit part is more difficult to ascertain; nobody in his right mind would pay to run ads on his site. Also, he has been exiled from platforms like YouTube where he could get advertising revenue. However, if you look through Jones' website you see that he is selling nutritional supplements; so if you don't want you or your kids to go gay from the tap water, try these supplements.

And yet.....there is always some truth to Jones' rantings. Organizations like the WEF are [not entirely benign](#) and amphibians, like frogs, are [sensitive to endocrine disrupting chemicals](#) in waterways. The popularity of conspiracy theories in general and guys like Jones in particular is due to the [widespread distrust in public institutions](#). Like the character Howard Beale in the movie Network, we know that "[the air is unfit to breathe and our food is unfit to eat](#)" and that is not how it's supposed to be. Many feel mad as hell and don't want to take it anymore.

Conspiracy theories seem to actually comfort those who cling to them, the theories suggests that someone is responsible for the madness we experience in a changing world. It gives a sense that maybe things can be better, if only we get rid of the bad actors. As for the malign actors, take your pick, there are plenty of suspects: Freemasons, the Rothschilds, Klaus Schwab of the WEF, Big Pharma, Cultural Marxists – it doesn't matter who is to blame so long as we have a focus for our rage and frustration. Also, it's good business for the conspiracy theory hucksters.

Note that the term "conspiracy theory" is often used to silence, or attempt to silence, ideas that make the powerful uncomfortable or expose their malign behaviour. That people in power use less than honest means to maintain their positions should surprise no one. That they seek to cover up their misbehaviour should also not surprise us. Beware of those who are quick to dismiss uncomfortable facts, they don't have your best interests in mind.

So when you hear a conspiracy theory, look for the evidence and think for yourself. Yesterday's conspiracy theory can become today's fact – see this [progression in Forbes Magazine](#) on the Covid-19 lab leak theory. If you find conspiracy theories amusing, enjoy them; just be skeptical and look for the evidence.