

The Real Problem with Conspiracy Theories

Editor's Pick. Written by Paul Rosenberg.

It seems that applying the tag “conspiracy theory” to something is the new way to get rid of it quickly. Evidently, people have been trained to stay away from anything given that title, assured that they will be embarrassed and ridiculed if they don’t gain some distance.

But, while this association trick is of some interest, it really isn’t our subject here. Our concern is the problem built into conspiracy theories, not how the words are used as a weapon.

I’ll pass up the easy criticism of wild, irrational conspiracy theories. While these criticisms are legitimate, the risk associated with such theories is fairly minor; any serious, independent observer can see through them. The real problem with conspiracy theories is not easy to see – it is implied rather than directly stated. I’ll give it to you in brief, and then explain it more carefully:

The real problem with conspiracy theories is not that they are scary – it’s that they are too comforting.

My concern with conspiracy theories is not whether they are true or false; it is their implication that the world is being controlled. There is a strange comfort in the idea that the world is controllable.

Read the full thing at FreemansPerspective.com »