

# Unified Conspiracy Theory

## From RationalWiki

The **Unified Conspiracy Theory** is a conspiracy theory, popular with some paranoids, that all of reality is controlled by a single evil entity that has it in for them. It can be a political entity, like "The Illuminati", or a metaphysical entity, like Satan, but this entity is responsible for the creation and management of *everything* bad.

The Church of the SubGenius has adopted this notion as fundamental dogma.

Michael Barkun coined the term "superconspiracy" to refer the idea that the world is controlled by an interlocking hierarchy of conspiracies. Similarly, Michael Kelly, a neoconservative journalist, coined the term "fusion paranoia" in 1995 to refer to the blending of conspiracy theories of the left with those of the right into a unified conspiratorial worldview.<sup>[1]</sup>

This was played with in the Umberto Eco novel *Foucault's Pendulum*, in which the characters make up a conspiracy theory like this...except it turns out to be true.

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## See also

- List of Conspiracy Theories
- Maltheism
- Crank magnetism

## (In)Famous proponents

- David Icke
- Alex Jones
- Lyndon LaRouche
- Jeff Rense

Some dare call it

**Conspiracy**



**Secrets revealed!**

- America Under Siege
- CW Leonis
- Doug Rokke
- Guillotine
- List of conspiracy theories
- Majestic 12
- Pravda.ru
- Shakespeare authorship
- Society of Jesus
- Tupac Shakur

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## External links

- Flowchart guide to the grand conspiracy ([http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3048/2983450505\\_34b4504302\\_o.png](http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3048/2983450505_34b4504302_o.png))
- Conspiracy Kitchen Sink (<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/ConspiracyKitchenSink>) , TV Tropes

## Footnotes

- ↑ Michael Kelly: The Road to Paranoia ([http://www.newyorker.com/archive/1995/06/19/1995\\_06\\_19\\_060\\_TNY\\_CARDS\\_000370096](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/1995/06/19/1995_06_19_060_TNY_CARDS_000370096)) , *The New Yorker*, June 19, 1995

*This conspiracy theories-related article is a **stub**.  
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Category: Conspiracy theories

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# Crank magnetism



## From RationalWiki

“ A birther, a creationist, an anti-vaxxer, and a conspiracy theorist walk into a bar. They are the same person. ”

*Not to be confused with crank ideas about magnetism*

**Crank magnetism** is the condition where people become attracted to multiple crank ideas at the same time. Let's put it this way, take a tax protester in the United States. There's a very good chance such a person will also be a Christian fundamentalist, a racist, a conspiracy theorist, a birther, a teabagger, a creationist... this is the general idea. You know that saying about not being so open-minded your brain falls out? People with crank magnetism didn't pay attention to that. Its potential opposite is the stopped clock, where otherwise overly credulous people actually find some crankery that they won't believe in, and may even actively denounce it.

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## How?

You would think that one odd or crank belief is enough to satisfy people. Consider it a small character flaw, a homage to the irrationality of the human condition. However, people who like conspiracy theories usually like *lots* of them. Creationists are most likely to be on the right-wing and credulous, while a New Ager is likely to hold beliefs from every corner of the spiritual globe. This suggests that there must be an underlying mechanism or ideal that attracts people to these ideas *in general*, rather than just the merit of the individual beliefs themselves. People fond of the theory of memetics would recognise this as a memplex (a complex array of ideas of cultural significance that work together to reinforce each other) where a central idea allows others to

### Style over substance

### Pseudoscience



### Popular pseudosciences

- Alternative medicine
- Astrology
- Creation science
- Homeopathy
- Supernatural
- Ufology
- Woo

### Random examples

- Audio woo
- Journal of Cosmology
- Journal of Scientific Exploration
- Magic
- Ufology
- Wegman Report

### Resources

- Pseudoscience portal
- List of pseudosciences

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attach themselves very easily.

Another possibility is simply that if one accepts one crank idea, there is logically no reason not to accept any other idea based on the same type of pseudo-reasoning. If the "evidence" and arguments in favor of homeopathy are accepted by a person, it makes sense that they would believe in astrology as well, seeing as it uses the same form of arguments and standards of "evidence."

## Conspiracy nuts

What does drive a conspiracy theorist to simultaneously believe the JFK assassination conspiracies, the moon landing hoax and anything claimed by the 9/11 truth movement? All conspiracies are united by one common thread: distrust of the "official" or "government endorsed" story. This leads us to the common idea that allows other conspiracies to attach themselves as well. Someone with a distrust of the government will likely reject any and *all* stories or reports directly issued by state agencies or other authorities that are seen as part of the establishment. Thus, *any* conspiracy will seem more plausible to the conspiracy theorist because this is what they would prefer.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Creationism

Creationism, and activism to promote it in schools (like the "Teach the controversy" campaign), often goes hand-in-hand with right-wing ideas such as global warming denial. These two positions are mostly politically motivated, and holding them requires the active rejection of known fact. The links between global warming denial and creationism are less obvious than with conspiracy theories. However, both seem to hold the view that science is merely the opinion of one group (often assumed to be politically motivated) and can be voted away. If enough people believe something, it must be true. Thus, common arguments for skepticism of global warming and evolution often revolve around "56% of Americans reject it, so it must be false".

Creationism and global warming denial can also be linked with conspiracy theories by the "distrust of government" meme. As the US government is officially secular under the Establishment Clause, the religious right are likely to distrust the government.

## Alternative medicine

All that holds the various strands of alternative medicine together is simply not being mainstream medicine, yet practioners and followers of one brand, such as homeopathy, will frequently find value in others, such as chiropractic and vitalism. They may consider themselves united against the common enemy of Big Pharma; vaccine hysteria in particular is a symptom of this mindset.

In February 2010, the Skeptical Inquirer published an article, "The One True Cause of All Disease" by Harriet Hall,<sup>[2]</sup> dealing with this phenomenon. In keeping with crank magnetism, alties tend not to recognize contradictions between their practices, and rarely dispute one another's methodologies or claims (though there are exceptions)<sup>[3]</sup>.

## Vindication of all kooks doctrine

Anti-creationist blogger The Sensuous Curmudgeon coined the more unwieldy term "vindication of all kooks doctrine" to describe a similar phenomenon.<sup>[4]</sup> The Curmudgeon described it as the idea that a crank in one field will view the perceived victory of a crank in another field against the "scientific establishment" as validating

their own crankery. He gave the example of the Discovery Institute latching onto the Climategate incident. Orac of Respectful Insolence saw fit to call it the "vindication of kooks" corollary to the law of crank magnetism.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Cultic milieu

In academic sociology, a similar notion to crank magnetism exists, namely Colin Campbell's concept of the "cultic milieu," which attempts to show a network and shared culture and literature that exists between various clusters of cultic groups and views. The initial impetus for a variety of groups including Scientology, the Human Potential Movement, some hippie Christian movements and the turn towards alternative medicine was the shared oppositional subculture of the 1960s; in the 1990s, the militias, Posse Comitatus and tax protestor movements drew on a shared milieu of an oppositional right-wing subculture. This can also cause *exceptions* to crank magnetism; a randomly-selected astrologist is less likely to also be a young-earth creationist than a homeopath, since YEC is part of a different milieu (a milieu that at times outright *opposes* all fortune-telling other than Biblical prophecy).

## See also

- Project Blue Beam
- Salem Hypothesis

## External links

- Mark Hoofnagle's definition ([http://scienceblogs.com/denialism/2007/06/crank\\_magnetism\\_1.php](http://scienceblogs.com/denialism/2007/06/crank_magnetism_1.php)) at Denialism Blog
- Creationism and global warming denial demonstrate crank magnetism: Creationism and Global Warming Denial: Anti-Science's Kissing Cousins? ([http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/politics/2374/\\_creationism\\_and\\_global\\_warming\\_denial%3A\\_anti-science's\\_kissing\\_cousins](http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/politics/2374/_creationism_and_global_warming_denial%3A_anti-science's_kissing_cousins)) , Lauri Lebo; The Creationist Consensus on Global Warming ([http://scienceblogs.com/deltoid/2006/07/the\\_creationist\\_consensus\\_on\\_g.php](http://scienceblogs.com/deltoid/2006/07/the_creationist_consensus_on_g.php)) , Deltoid; Creationism, global warming denial, and scientific integrity (<http://www.sciencemeetsreligion.org/blog/2010/03/creationism-global-warming-denial-and-scientific-integrity/>) , David H. Bailey. (See also E. Calvin Beisner and Roy Spencer for further evidence).

## Footnotes

- ↑ Ted Goertzel. Belief in Conspiracy Theories. (<http://www.jstor.org/pss/3791630>) *Political Psychology*, vol. 15, no. 4, 1994.
- ↑ [http://www.csicop.org/si/show/one\\_true\\_cause\\_of\\_all\\_disease/](http://www.csicop.org/si/show/one_true_cause_of_all_disease/)
- ↑ <http://www.healthnaturally.biz/Pseudo.htm>
- ↑ Discovery Institute: The Mask Falls Away (<http://sensuouscurmudgeon.wordpress.com/2009/11/28/discovery-institute-the-mask-falls-away/>) , The Sensuous Curmudgeon
- ↑ The "vindication of all kooks" corollary to the principle of crank magnetism ([http://scienceblogs.com/insolence/2009/11/the\\_vindication\\_of\\_all\\_kooks\\_corollary\\_t.php](http://scienceblogs.com/insolence/2009/11/the_vindication_of_all_kooks_corollary_t.php)) , Orac

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# Malthesim

## From RationalWiki

*Looking for Thomas Malthus?*

**Malthesim** (from "mal" meaning bad, or illness, and theism, from... well, theism) is the idea that God is just out to get us and that he or she or it is malicious, like a kid who keeps removing the pool ladders in *The Sims*. A Malthesit, therefore, is someone who believes that a god or gods exist, and that they are evil, malicious, incompetent, or otherwise causing the suffering of humanity. In essence, Malthesim is the idea that God exists and is not worthy of worship.

## In religion and fiction

- Most religions do not accept a malthesitic view of the world; however, many nonbelievers might argue that given the apparent capriciousness and insecurity of YHWH (especially in the Old Testament but also in parts of Revelation) that the Judeo-Christian tradition is malthesitic in nature.
  - This is especially prevalent in fringe offshoots of these religions, which often take divine command theory to its logical conclusion. An example of this would be the Westboro Baptist Church, which believes that God predestines people to sin, so he can punish them for sinning. It should be pointed out, however, that these beliefs are only malthesim from the perspective of outsiders; believers in this view of God honestly think that arbitrary whims are always good.
  - Malthesim has also influenced Jewish Theistic thought in the form of Holocaust Theology. Holocaust Theology (named so as a result of the Holocaust) is the idea that the Jewish God is not entirely worthy of worship, and is not entirely benevolent.
- Sethian Gnostics are semi-Malthesitic, as they believe the material world was created by an imperfect, evil sub-god named Ialdabaoth. Other branches of Gnosticism refer to this as the Demiurge. The *true* God that created all the non-material stuff is considered good however.
- The Cainites are another older Gnostic Sect who hold that the God of the Old Testament is essentially the Devil, and that Cain (who killed his brother Abel with the jaw bone of an Ass and created murder) is the first victim of this evil god (called in Gnostic thought the Demiurge) who punished Cain. Cain is actually worthy of worship because by creating murder, he allowed humans to reject it.
- The Church of the SubGenius often has a strong malthesitic streak to its deities.
- H.P. Lovecraft depicted a sort of malthesim where Azathoth, the creator god, was too stupid and/or insane to pay any attention to the universe, and lesser gods like Cthulhu were essentially out to cause death and

One of many articles on

### Religion



### The main players

- Christianity
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Judaism
- Sikhism

### Supporting actors

- Chrislam
- First cause
- Goddess
- Hinduism
- Mr. Deity
- Reincarnation
- Sikhism

### Critics

- Atheism
- Antitheism
- Secularism
- Humanism

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destruction wherever they manifested.

- Malthesim is a philosophy mostly applied to Judeo-Christian thought and Gnosticism (and this is especially true with older Gnostic Sects), it is also related in many ways to pagan faiths. There are numerous stories from Pagan Mythology and Semi-Mythical Pagan stories of heroes abandoning their gods because they are not worthy of worship.
  - This isn't quite Malthesim though, as Pagan Pantheons are often full of deities who are not worthy of worship.

## In other philosophies

- Some atheist critics of religion take the position that if the god of the Old Testament exists, he is not worthy of worship, as he appears to be a moody genocidal nutjob. This position is called "Hypothetical Malthesim"
- A position which is sometimes mistaken for malthesim is Misotheism. Malthesim is the position that God is not worthy of worship because He/She/It/Them/Other is fallible being like humans. Misotheism is the active hatred of God.

## See also

- Examples of God personally killing people
- Fun:God's Love
- Divine retribution

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# Conspiracy theory



## From RationalWiki

“ *Modern political religions may reject Christianity, but they cannot do without demonology. The Jacobins, the Bolsheviks and the Nazis all believed in vast conspiracies against them, as do radical Islamists today. It is never the flaws of human nature that stand in the way of Utopia. It is the workings of evil forces.* ”

—John Gray, political philosopher<sup>[1]</sup>

“ *There's a similar kind of logic behind all [conspiracy theorist] groups, I think ... They don't undertake to prove that their view is true [so much as to] find flaws in what the other side is saying.* ”

—Ted Goertzel, sociology professor<sup>[2][3]</sup>

A **conspiracy theory** originally meant the "theory" that an event or phenomenon was the result of conspiracy between interested parties; however, from the mid-1960s onward, it is often used to denote ridiculous, misconceived, paranoid, unfounded, outlandish or irrational theories.<sup>[4][5][6][7][8]</sup> The problem is this results in rational conspiracy theories (like the Nazis themselves setting Reichstag fire) getting lost amidst the noise of newsworthy but ridiculous, irrational, or outlandish conspiracy theories such as New World Order or the Moon Landing Hoax.

Some dare call it

**Conspiracy**



**Secrets revealed!**

- Black helicopters
- Chemtrails
- Climategate
- Codex Alimentarius
- Denver Airport conspiracy theory
- Global warming conspiracy theory
- Men in black
- One world religion
- Paul Wellstone
- Shakespeare authorship

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## Scope and rationality

"A conspiracy theory is the idea that someone, or a group of someones, acts secretly, with the goal of achieving power, wealth, influence, or other benefit. It can be as small as two petty thugs conspiring to stickup a liquor store, or as big as a group of revolutionaries conspiring to take over their country's government." <sup>[9]</sup>

"Conspiracy theories as a general category are not necessarily wrong. In fact as the cases of Watergate and the Iran-Contra affair illustrate, small groups of powerful individuals do occasionally seek to effect the course of history, and with some non-trivial degree of success. Moreover, the available, competing explanations--both official and otherwise--occasionally represent dueling conspiracy theories, as we will see in the case of the Oklahoma City bombing." <sup>[10]</sup>

"A conspiracy theory that has been proven (for example, that President Nixon and his aides plotted to disrupt the course of justice in the Watergate case) is usually called something else—investigative journalism, or just well-researched historical analysis." <sup>[11]</sup>

"There is no a priori method for distinguishing warranted conspiracy theories (say, those explaining Watergate) from those which are unwarranted (say, theories about extraterrestrials abducting humans)" <sup>[12]</sup>

"Conspiracy theory is thus a bridge term--it links subjugating conceptual strategies (paranoid style, political paranoia, conspiracism) to narratives that investigate conspiracies (conspiratology, conspiracy research, conspiracy account). Conspiracy theory is a condensation of all of the above, a metaconcept signifying the struggles of the meaning of the category. We need to recognized that we are on the bridge when we use the term." <sup>[13]</sup>

## Theory of conspiracy and conspiracy theory

Because the term conspiracy theory has been used in the media to denote grand conspiracy theories involving hundreds or thousands of people as well as plausible things, such as Nazis themselves started the Reichstag fire,<sup>[14]</sup> there has been some effort by a few scholars to denote those conspiracy theories that are plausible from those that are irrational-delusional-paranoid ramblings.

One such effort is to call a plausible conspiracy theory a *Theory of Conspiracy*<sup>[15]</sup> while another is to separate the broad concept of conspiracy theory into the broad categorizes of warranted and unwarranted.<sup>[16]</sup>

Warranted conspiracy theories tend to be small in scope requiring only a small group or be reasonably easy to cover up. Here is a short list of *warranted* conspiracy theories with the ones that still theories in bold:

- Al-Qaeda or a group of some home grown nuts in the Timothy McVeigh mold were responsible for the 9/11 attacks
- Business Plot (Ie the plot to overthrow the US government in 1933)<sup>[17]</sup>
- **Al Capone was behind the Saint Valentine's Day massacre**
- CIA drug trafficking<sup>[18]</sup>
- The Dreyfus Affair<sup>[19]</sup>
- General Motors streetcar conspiracy<sup>[20]</sup>
- **Jimmy Hoffa was killed by the Mob and buried in an unknown location**<sup>[21]</sup>

- Iran-Contra Affair<sup>[22]</sup>
- **The Nazis set the Reichstag fire** <sup>[23]</sup>
- Operation Gladio<sup>[24]</sup>
- Operation Mockingbird<sup>[25]</sup>
- Operation Northwoods<sup>[26]</sup>
- Project MKULTRA<sup>[27]</sup>
- Sicilian Mafia<sup>[28]</sup>
- Tuskegee syphilis experiment <sup>[29]</sup>
- Watergate <sup>[30]</sup>

Unwarranted conspiracy theories on the other hand tend to gravitate to the grandiose to the point that they approach the asymptote of lunacy. The existence of warranted conspiracy theories especially when they are later proven to be true helps fuel a conspiracy mentality that sees conspiracies everywhere and anyone that denies said conspiracy is part of it.

## Questions to ask about a conspiracy theory

Don't count on converting a conspiracy theorist. However, some questions can determine if a conspiracy theory is warranted or not

1. How many people are part of this conspiracy? Are there enough of them to carry out the plan? What infrastructure and resources does it need? How much time and money did it take and where did this money come from? (For instance, the idea that the Nazi themselves set the Reichstag fire would only require handful of men and minimal amount of money to pulled off while something like the moon landing hoax would require tens of thousands if not more to carry out; the rock samples alone might require a decade to falsify and filming would take an airtight soundstage orders of magnitude larger than any known vacuum chamber)
2. Explicitly who gains what from the conspiracy and for what price? Is this the easiest way of gaining it? If not, why was it chosen over the easiest way? If it is an old conspiracy — who gains what from maintaining it?
3. How large is the supposed conspiracy and how likely is it to be covered up if has gone on a long time. If there are thousands of conspirators, and the conspiracy has gone on for decades, why have none of them defected? Why have none of them leaked the story? If many conspirators are dead, why have none of them told the truth on their deathbeds, or in their wills? (It should be noted that with government based conspiracy theories one can have issues with the fact there are things about WWI, nearly 100 years ago, that are still classified and therefore unknown to the general public nullifying these types of questions even with a skeptic.)
4. If there are *many* thousands of conspirators, how are they organized? Where are the secret conferences held? How do they keep track of membership? If they are organised through known channels or entities, how do they keep non-members who work there from uncovering the conspiracy?
5. There are many intelligence agencies associated with rival nations, with the ability to expose secrets. If, say, the US government is running a global conspiracy, why have the French, Russian, or Chinese intelligence agencies never revealed it, to cause a major scandal in the United States (If all intelligence agencies are involved, see #2)? If they have, when and where did they do so?

## Denial

“ Because the war in Afghanistan is a FALSE FLAG operation to DISTRACT Wikileaks with hundreds of thousands of pages of documents to go through. ”

Denial is strongly linked with conspiracies in two senses. In one, the conspiracy theorist is in denial of the "official story", which is more often than not the one supported by facts. However, in the second sense, anyone denying the existence of a conspiracy inadvertently proves that it must exist. Denial of on-going conspiracies can be taken as proof that said employees are "in on" whatever conspiracy they are busily denying. Usually, the more they deny, the more conspiracy theorists will take it as proof - because, well, "they *would* say that, *wouldn't* they!". Furthermore, if people do *not* deny the theory, this can also be taken as proof on the grounds that "it has never been denied". This applies equally to anyone involved in a large, perhaps mysterious, enterprise, such as "scientists", "the Army", "automobile manufacturers", "Big Science/Petroleum/Tobacco/Florists" etc. That this entire line of reasoning is circular hardly needs pointing out.

A conspiracy theory becomes a total *crackpot* conspiracy theory when all evidence that might disprove the theory instead becomes co-opted as proof of the "cover-up" of said theory; requiring loyalty, resources, and competence on the part of the conspirators far in excess of what any actual conspiracy can muster.

## Dismissal

"Conspiracy theory" can be used as a snarl word to dismiss a valid worry that a group is up to something.

“ You know, what I think I might be upset over BushCo more than anything is the fact that talking about what they DID do is so amazingly far-fetched that I have to cast a new eye at the conspiracy people.

See, many, many years ago, I was seeing reports from citizens about a "Black CIA jetplane" that was taking prisoners secretly from the US to other countries for torture (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/may/31/cia-rendition-identity-torture-diego-garcia>) .

"Psssh" I said, "As if. We're America, you 'tards. We don't DO that."

A year later, the stories continue, with photos of the planes and tracking the tail numbers.

"Guys, what, photoshop or something? Please. Yeah yeah, the FAA won't talk about what plane that is. Still not true."

Then we find out that, yeah, we *are* having the CIA send people overseas for "interrogations".

Son of a BITCH. ”

—Wakshaani

Another example would be the discovery of COINTELPRO. People such as the Black Panthers and Abbie Hoffman suspected that the FBI had a covert program dedicated to tracking, discrediting and destroying them, however they were largely written off as paranoid radicals finding a way to blame THE MAN for their failures.

Then, lo and behold, the FBI reveals its COINTELPRO and proves that they were actually correct.

A skeptic must always seek out the truth, even if it does very occasionally end up proving those "nutjobs" right. Considering the sheer number of conspiracies, however, it's inevitable that one or two of them might just be right, but this by no means says that they are generally valid - as the disclaimer above says, once a conspiracy theory has been "proven" it ceases to be a conspiracy theory in this sense and just becomes a conspiracy.

Remember, you're not paranoid if They really *are* out to get you.

## What They don't want you to know

One of the most successful driving forces behind the spread and uptake of conspiracy theories is the entire concept that they're secret and forbidden pieces of information. This goes far beyond them being merely "juicy" like celebrity gossip but right to the heart of how we place value on information.

Things become valuable for their rarity, and occasionally for their utility, although a very common but highly useful thing is still cheap; contrast iron and wood for construction with gold and silver, which have useful electronic conduction properties or novel chemical applications but their price is derived from their rarity. If it wasn't for this rarity they would be just *used* rather than being held in high regard for specialist applications. The same applies to information - rarity increases value. And just as we can value useless things because they are rare, we can still value information that is rare regardless of its truth value. This is something that has wider reaching consequences in almost all forms of woo. Fad diet, for example, display this particular trope very well as healthy eating advice is simple, effective and *free* - but make it some "secret trick" and people will buy into it happily *despite a free and effective alternative being available*.

Within the realm of conspiracy theories, information is highly valuable - indeed, it is made valuable by becoming part of the conspiracy. "What They don't want you to know" is a phrase that is heard and seen *everywhere* in Conspiracy Land. Because if information is suppressed by Them to keep it away from *you* it must be secret, it must be rare, *it must be valuable*. It's the same force that drives people to brag about a band that only they have heard of, or say "I know something you don't know", even though this defeats the purpose; nothing is cooler than knowing something someone else doesn't. The problem with conspiracies is that people mistake such hoarding value for *truth* value, i.e., if information is suppressed by Them to keep it away from *you* it must be secret, it must be rare, it must be valuable, *it must be true*. Therefore the trope continues to be used to add value, and the illusion of truth, to information.

There are a few other subtle factors at play to enhance this. The idea of information being suppressed and withheld romanticises the idea of the conspiracy. If knowing something that others don't is a big, fat, multi-layered chocolate cake, then being the underdog and fighting against the people who want to stop you is the rich, orgasm-inducing, triple-chocolate icing that spells your name and shouts "happy birthday" with the load of sparklers that gracefully sits atop it. A figure of hate and mistrust to aim emotions at enhances the experience; the Illuminati, the mainstream media, it really doesn't matter so long as it's something to absorb additional hatred and scorn. Thus the "Them" (always capitalise it *always*) reinforces the special nature of the information that the conspiracy theory purports to reveal.

The knowledge suppression aspect (for example, free energy suppression) plays nicely into our thinking about the abhorrence of censorship and the want to do something good in the world. Meanwhile, the "Them" aspect plays nicely into the distrust and hated people hold for corporations, governments or any organisation that exists in the *abstract* rather than personal. It's easy to demonise an institution, a person less so. When a skeptic wanders into a conspiracy theorist discussion to refute facts, the *ad hominem* responses of conspiracy advocates tend to be of the type "you work for the Illuminati" or "you're paid by Big Oil" or one of countless other very

similar such accusations. It's never "you *are* the Illuminati" or "you work for David Smales, who lives at 45 9th Avenue with a wife and two children and another on the way, who plays golf at the weekend, likes his pet dog and just happens to be the head of Big Oil". No, They are faceless and easy targets. Even in the circumstances when conspiracy theorists are capable of pointing the finger at a person they can identify outright - such as the pilot in charge of the AC-130 flying over Washington DC during the 9/11 attacks that is accused of dropping wreckage to "fake" the attack on the Pentagon - charges are always accompanied by phrases like "perhaps he didn't know what he was doing or perhaps he was following orders and wasn't aware". Even further, with Bob Lazar, who claimed to work at Area 51, no one seems bothered by who he worked for or with there, it's always faceless government. They are an easy target because They can't be personified.

These factors up the value conspiracy theorists ascribe to information, but unfortunately for them such clichés don't comment on the truth value of such information - in fact, they probably count *against* such things being true.

## Classification of conspiracy theories

In his book *Culture of Conspiracy*, Michael Barkun<sup>[31]</sup> (a political scientist specializing in conspiracy theories and fringe beliefs) defines three types of conspiracy theories:

- Event conspiracy: In which a conspiracy is thought to be responsible for a single event or brief series of events, e.g. JFK assassination conspiracies.
- Systemic conspiracy: A broad conspiracy perpetrated by a specific group in an attempt to subvert government or societal organizations, e.g. Freemasonry.
- Super-conspiracy: Hierarchical conspiracies combining systemic and event conspiracies in which a supremely powerful organization controls numerous conspiratorial actors, e.g. the New World Order or Reptoids controlling a number of interlocking conspiracies.

## See also

- List of conspiracy theories
- 9/11 conspiracy theories
- New World Order
- TinWiki
- Obama citizenship denial
- Persecution complex
- PrisonPlanet



**For those of you in the mood,  
RationalWiki has a *fun* article  
about *Conspiracy theories*.**

## External links

- Centre for Conspiracy Culture at the University of Winchester (<http://www2.winchester.ac.uk/ccc/index.htm>)
- CP's resident conspiracy theorist
- The Conspiracy Skeptic podcast (<http://www.yrad.com/cs/>)
- Why I go after the grand conspiracy theorists (<http://skepacabra.wordpress.com/2008/11/07/why->

i-go-after-the-grand-conspiracy-theorists/)

- Random conspiracy theory generator ([http://www.random-generator.com/index.php?title=Conspiracy\\_theories](http://www.random-generator.com/index.php?title=Conspiracy_theories))
- The Psychology of Crankery ([http://scienceblogs.com/denialism/2009/06/the\\_psychology\\_of\\_crankery.php](http://scienceblogs.com/denialism/2009/06/the_psychology_of_crankery.php)) , Denialism blog
- Lies, damn lies, and "counter-knowledge" (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1575346/Lies-damn-lies-and-counterknowledge.html>) , The Telegraph
- The Paranoid Style in American Politics ([http://karws.gso.uri.edu/jfk/conspiracy\\_theory/the\\_paranoid\\_mentality/the\\_paranoid\\_style.html](http://karws.gso.uri.edu/jfk/conspiracy_theory/the_paranoid_mentality/the_paranoid_style.html)) by Richard Hofstadter, originally printed in *Harper's Magazine*, November 1964, pp. 77-86, the basis for a book of the same name. ([http://books.google.com/books?id=JKILPgAACAAJ&dq=paranoid+style&hl=en&ei=XWoiTtT4I4aCgAemmMG-Cw&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDcQ6AEwAA](http://books.google.com/books?id=JKILPgAACAAJ&dq=paranoid+style&hl=en&ei=XWoiTtT4I4aCgAemmMG-Cw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDcQ6AEwAA))
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3. ↑ Also a good description of certain *other* nutjobs we know...
4. ↑ *20th Century Words* (1999) John Ayto, Oxford University Press, p. 15.
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  22. ↑ Knight pg 349
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  24. ↑ Knight pg 231
  25. ↑ Knight pg 486
  26. ↑ Knight pg 117
  27. ↑ Knight pg 490
  28. ↑ Knight pg 451
  29. ↑ Knight pg 38, 45, 538
  30. ↑ Knight pg 725)
  31. ↑ See also this interview with Barkun on C-Span (<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/180937-2>)

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# Fun:Conspiracy theories

## From RationalWiki

**Conspiracy theories** have many things in common. The greatest commonality, however, is the *conspiracy*!!! OMGDZ11!1!!!!eleventy!one!

A "conspiracy" is defined by Flebster's Modern Dicktionary of Some Random Language as "Some con artists engaged in piracy".

## Contents

- 1 OMG numbers!
- 2 Stupid evil people
- 3 The Department of Making Things Exponentially More Difficult
- 4 Blobology
- 5 Sploobiology
- 6 No Evidence
- 7 Don't Fall For It!
- 8 Dept of the Obvious

## OMG numbers!

Look! When I calculate the letters in "glucose", I can find a way to make it meaningful! Isn't that amazing?

## Stupid evil people

Evil societies, instead of using their vast resources and influence to just fucking *buy* the planet, sit in the background and **waste their money manipulating our glucoses**. Of course! I knew it all along! DAYLIGHT SAVINGS IS A MASONIC CONSPIRACY TO ROB US OF OUR SUN!!!

## The Department of Making Things Exponentially More Difficult

All conspiracies have an entire division devoted to fitting their schedule to match obscure astronomical events. This makes for one hell of a handicap.

I imagine, every now and then, they have a conversation that goes like this:

"Jenkins, are we ready to implement our ultra-secret super-awesome plan?"

"Yes sir, but we missed the passing of the constellation Orion at a 33° angle over the earth... I'm afraid we'll have to wait another ten years for it to come around again"

"Damn you, Orion! Always foiling our plans!"

## Blobology

"Ain't that funny? By analyzing photographs blown up to the point where we can see the pixels, I can read whatever I want into the pixels."

"For example, those fuzzy black-and-white blobs right there—here, I'll zoom in on them for you—" \*zooms in to where you can't make anything out anymore\* "OMG buildings! OMG a wall! OMG a face!"

## Sploobiology

I made a special hybrid in my greenhouse, but the Monsanto black helicopter came in the middle of the night and stole it!!! It would have made 95% pure alcohol to run our cars, from the air and sun, with my carefully bred orchid! man, I got so ripped off, and so did you. Cil Monsanto!

## No Evidence

I mean, I had all the evidence right in my garage, man, but the oil companies sent a goon squad to clean it up, and now I'll never be able to duplicate my invention that lets you plug appliances right into the ground.

## Don't Fall For It!

Don't believe the Government's and Big Oil's obvious LIE that they only came into my garage because I illegally bypassed my electrical meter! ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Searl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Searl)) That's just what THEY want you to think! And, in fact, they MAKE people think it with their evil MIND-CONTROL helmets! (Which I invented, but they stole them from me too!) Put on your tinfoil hats!

## Dept of the Obvious

Sometimes rich people, or foreign countries, or companies, get together and make plans that they don't want made public! It's a conspiracy, I tells ya! There have never ever been a conspiracy, you sick morons, it's impossible and never happens.

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# Church of the SubGenius

## From RationalWiki

The **Church of the SubGenius** is a parody religion described by some of its own members as an "insane bogus UFO mind-control cult". SubGenius doctrine combines the worst elements of self-help groups, UFO cults, Scientology, and apocalyptic Christianity with utterly shameless money-grubbing antics.

The organization was founded in 1979 when Rev. Ivan Stang and Philo Drummond (both pseudonyms) published a clip-art pamphlet entitled *The World Ends Tomorrow And You May Die!*, a clip-art extravaganza that described the basic SubGenius philosophy and introduced J.R. "Bob" Dobbs. The pamphlet found its way into the 1980s underground artist and rock-and-roll culture, as it was endorsed by comix artist R. Crumb in the pages of *Weirdo* magazine. This caused the SubGenius meme to spread into a graffiti and clip-art movement for several years. "Bob's" smiling face made cameo appearances all over the United States and several other countries (in a manner later echoed by *Obey* and other graffiti-art campaigns), and the membership of the Church of the SubGenius swelled to several dozen hardcore members, a few thousand "paid-up SubGenius ministers" (people who sent \$20 to the group for official "ordination"), and many unofficial vocal supporters (including Frank Zappa, Pee-Wee Herman, David Byrne, and a few other celebrities).

The Church of the SubGenius expanded in the 1980s with the publication of *The Book of the SubGenius*, *High Weirdness by Mail*, *Three-Fisted Tales of "Bob,"* and *Revelation X: The "Bob" Apocryphon*. However, the movement died down by the early 1990s, as other "wacky" pop culture groups made their own imprints on society. The underground zine movement which fueled the Church faded out and was replaced by the Internet and the World Wide Web, and the Church of the SubGenius moved online to sustain itself.

During the 1990s and even 2000s the Church of the SubGenius continued to attract followers, as it attached itself to ongoing cultural and Internet memes; however, it didn't find the "viral" popularity seen online by other parody religion figures such as the Flying Spaghetti Monster, the Invisible Pink Unicorn, and Anonymous. SubGenius members continue to pop up amid the latest "rebel" fads of the moment (such as the Occupy Wall Street protests), though the movement never moved past its hardcore membership of several hundred SubGenius "ministers" (and many hundreds or thousands of paid-up ministers worldwide giving lip service to the movement).

### One of many articles on

### Religion



### The main players

- Christianity
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### Supporting actors

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## Doctrine

The central doctrine of the Church is that certain portions of humanity are actually superior mutants known as Yetinsyn, the result of crossbreeding between humans and the superior Yeti, or "Atlanteans". Novice SubGenii must prove their worthiness by sending thirty dollars to Church headquarters. By unleashing their Abnormality Potential, they seek to unlock dormant psychic abilities, gain the mystical quality of Slack, and defy the Conspiracy that secretly controls the world and makes all humans dance like puppets.

## End of the World: X-Day



JR "Bob" Dobbs

The ultimate goal of all SubGeniuses is to survive until X-Day, when the godlike aliens known as the Men From Planet X will arrive and Rupture all the dues-paying SubGenii to a never-ending tour of the universe, while converting Planet Earth into the intergalactic equivalent of a greasy-spoon truck-stop. This will result in unending torment for any surviving Normals (and non-paid-up SubGenii), as human pain is apparently a very high-priced drug among the various gods, demons, and alien beings of the complex and ever-growing SubGenius Pantheon.

X-Day is prophesied to occur on July 5th, 1998, at 7 AM. The fact that that date apparently passed without the arrival of the Alien Fleet has forced SubGenii to come up with a multitude of excuses--some of the more popular ones being:

- "Bob" has interceded with the Xists on behalf of the Earth, and persuaded them to wait until a better 'crop' of souls can be raised.
- The Conspiracy has tampered with the calendar, and 1998 hasn't occurred yet.
- "Bob"'s memo was misread (due to being torn in half and taped back together ineptly), and it's actually scheduled for July 5th, 8661.
- The aliens did destroy Earth, but this planet is actually Mars.

The SubGenii celebrate the impending doom of humanity with a large party/religious devival on the weekend of July 5th, every year. At the (alleged) 1998 devival, the failure of prophecy to come true was marked by the Church's chief preacher, Reverend Ivan Stang, being stripped naked, covered in motor oil and feathers, and tossed in a nearby pond. (When was the last time the Baptists provided that kind of entertainment value?)

## Pantheon

SubGenii are polytheistic, with new gods, demons, and alien monsters constantly being added as Shordurpersavs as old ones wear out. Some of the more persistent of these include G'BroagFran, the Elder Space Bankers, JHVH-1, Eris, the Yacatisma, and the Fightin' Jesus.

The Church's Messiah, if you can call him that, is J. R. "Bob" Dobbs, a drilling-equipment salesman of dubious but possibly divine heritage who was contacted by the space-god JHVH-1 in 1958, and commanded to sell his religion to all the world, or at least the parts willing to pay for it.

## Money-Back Guarantee

The Church of the SubGenius offers a guarantee that no other religion dares to offer: **Eternal Salvation, or TRIPLE Your Money Back!** Should eternal damnation result from any SubGenius product or service, "Bob" *will* meet you at the gates of Hell, with a \$90.00 check in one hand and a copy of his bestselling book, "Hell on Five Cents an Eternity" (only \$89.96, including tax) in the other!

## Publications

- *The Book of the SubGenius*
- *Three Fisted Tales of "Bob"* (fiction)
- *High Weirdness by Mail* (non fiction)
- *Revelation X*
- *The Bobliographon*

## See also

- Scientology
- Rapture
- Invisible Pink Unicorn
- Flying Spaghetti Monster
- Discordianism
- Shordurpersavs
- J. R. "Bob" Dobbs

## External links

- SubGenius Website (<http://www.subgenius.com/>)

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