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Generalist Denialism and the Particularist Critique

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When Tony Blair says, "But honestly, I mean, conspiracy theories," he appears to be encouraging the dismissal of the theory in question simply by suggesting that it counts as a conspiracy theory. Similarly, consider what twenty-seven prominent scientists published a letter in the *Lancet*: "We stand together to strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that COVID-19 does not have a natural origin. … Conspiracy theories do nothing but create fear, rumours, and prejudice that jeopardise our global collaboration in the fight against this virus" (Calisher et al. 2020). These scientists appear to be attempting to discourage belief in the lab-leak hypothesis by calling it a "conspiracy theory."[1] Particularists object to such pejorative use of the phrase "conspiracy theory." Rico Hauswald refers to such utterances as "dismissive conversational exercitives" (Hauswald 2023, 494). He comments, "the label 'conspiracy theory' is often used as a powerful epithet to exclude certain claims and arguments from the sphere of legitimate debate and to crush dissent" (495; citing Husting and Orr 2007).

The present essay is a response to Scott Hill (2024), who denies that statements such as those quoted above (by Blair and by the twenty-five scientists) are intended to encourage the dismissal of a theory *just because* it is a conspiracy theory. He can find no evidence for *that*. We will return to these examples at the end of this essay.

Hill's essay was a response to a previous essay of mine in which I clarified "the conventional wisdom" regarding conspiracy theories and the Particularist critique of Generalism. Hill and I do appear to agree on what I take to be the most important matter: that conspiracy theories ought not be dismissed just because they are conspiracy theories. But Hill doesn't think anyone believes otherwise—except perhaps for those who he now admits really do seem to defend Generalism (2024, 50). Let's define "Generalist denialism" as the denial that there are lots of ostensibly sophisticated people (particularly in the academy and media) who behave in ways that suggest either sincere belief or an insincere pretense of belief in the following view: if a theory can be identified as a "conspiracy theory" it is not a theory worth serious consideration. Hill *appears* to be a Generalist denialist, but he may well deny that too. In any case, his position is premised on misunderstandings regarding the Particularist critique. These misunderstandings provide an opportunity for further clarification.

Clarifying Terms and Implications

Let's start with something else Hill denies. He writes, "If there is something wrong with the common pejorative use of 'conspiracy theory,' it is not that it includes a commitment to Generalism" (2024, 45). It is not clear whether Hill is denying that the pejorative use of the phrase implies commitment to Generalism, or whether he would admit that there is such an implied commitment but denies that that is a problem. Either way he is wrong. Generalism is false, as even Hill seems to admit. And if a practice implies a false view, that is a problem with the practice. And, further, the pejorative use of "conspiracy theory" does imply a

[1] The video at the end of this Substack article gives a sense of just how common it was for the lab leak hypothesis to be branded a "conspiracy theory" in the mainstream media: https://disinformationchronicle.substack.com/p/cia-says-pandemic-likely-started

commitment to Generalism. This is clear when one pays attention to the relevant definitions, as shown below.

For the purposes of this discussion, the meanings of the key terms must be assumed to be those I've explicitly given them, since Hill is responding to me, and since he does not define any of these terms himself. Here is how I characterized the key terms:

> Generalism is the view that "*conspiracy theories ought to be dismissed based on the features that apply to conspiracy theories generally*" (Hagen 2024, 12).
>
> "The conventional wisdom" refers to "the view that conspiracy theories 'should be neither believed nor investigated.' They are thought to be somehow 'intellectually suspect' and often implied to be 'utterly unbelievable, too silly to deserve the effort of a serious refutation' and 'therefore not worth discussing'" (Hagen 2024, 13, quoting Pigden 2007, 219).
>
> The "pejorative use" of the phrase "conspiracy theory" refers a use of the phrase meant to suggest that "conspiracy theories ought to be summarily *dismissed* because they are conspiracy theories" (20; cf. 13 n1).

Given these characterizations, it is clear that the pejorative use of the phrase "conspiracy theory" does assume Generalism (as I'm using the term), and this is essentially the same as what Pigden and I refer to as "the conventional wisdom."

With that clarified, let's consider Hill's remarks. Hill writes, "I deny that the conventional wisdom is Generalist. And I deny that there is a significant number of implicit or silent Generalists among scholars and the media as Hagen suggests" (Hill 2024, 45). First, it is not just me suggesting that there may be many implicit Generalists. I cited Harris providing a reason to think that "a generalist skepticism toward conspiracy theories is the default position among philosophers" (Harris 2022, 2; quoted in Hagen 2024, 17-18). And many other scholars have also suggested that there is a Generalism prevalent in at least certain circles in the academy.

For example, David Coady has suggested that Generalism, or something that appears indistinguishable from it, is pervasive in the psychological literature on conspiracy theories. He writes, "[W]ithin the psychology literature, the assumption that conspiracy theories are objectionable … (i.e., that they are false, irrational, and positively harmful) appears to be universal" (Coady 2019, 166). And a group of social scientists have also, in this case approvingly, declared that the "'unhealthy' or 'pathologizing' view" of conspiracy theories is "held by the majority of psychologists … working in the field" (Wagner-Egger *et al* 2019, 50). Such a view seems to imply Generalism, or something very much like it. So, while Hill is entitled to hold a differing opinion regarding the prevalence of implicit Generalism, it is not fair to imply that my suggestion that this view is fairly pervasive in relevant circles is idiosyncratic.

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In addition, since the link between Generalism and the pejorative use of "conspiracy theory" is now clear (given the above definitions), the denial that there are many Generalists implies a denial that the phrase is used pejoratively in the way that particularists allege. And there is quite a lot of literature discussing the pejorative use (including those I cite in Hagen 2023b, 33).

Hill might respond by suggesting that those who use "conspiracy theory" pejoratively define "conspiracy theory" differently than Particularists tend to. But the question is this: Can they do so in a way that answers Pigden's Challenge without begging the question? Hill suggests that the challenge can be met, but, as we will see, he hasn't actually met it. However, before clarifying Pigden's Challenge (and Hill's failure to meet it), I'll will first add some nuance to the meaning of "the conventional wisdom" in the present context.

To What Does "The Conventional Wisdom" Refer?

Hill suggests that Particularists, and Pigden specifically, "mischaracterized the conventional wisdom" (Hill 2024b, 45; cf. 47). What Hill presumably means to say is that what Pigden and I refer to as "the conventional wisdom" is not in fact a view that is commonly held. Rather, it is merely a critique of *the phrase that was chosen to express an idea.* It is not a critique of *the idea itself*. What Hill is really suggesting, then, is that the phrase "the conventional wisdom," as Pigden and I have used it, is a misnomer. Even if he were right about that (which I dispute) that would not imply that the thesis Pigden puts forth is false. The conventional wisdom (as Pigden describes it)—which is essentially Generalism (as I've argued that word should be understood)—does seem to be false, at least as it applies to non-question-begging definitions of "conspiracy theory."

Indeed, Hill's criticisms suggests that almost everyone already knows and acknowledges this. In fact, Hill is in explicit agreement with me on the central issue. He writes, "I agree that merely calling something a 'conspiracy theory' and dismissing it in this way has no implications for whether it should be believed or investigated." But he adds, "I also think that is the conventional wisdom," by which he means it is largely accepted (Hill 2024, 49). I have argued that it appears not to be accepted in some important circles (Hagen 2024, 12, 17-19). However, as I explain below, the degree to which *ordinary laypeople* are Generalists is not particularly relevant to my concerns so long as at least some of them are susceptible to being duped and/or browbeat.

Regarding whether "the conventional wisdom" is a misnomer, some further clarifications are necessary. First, attentiveness to the Particularist literature reveals that the primary concern is with the opinion of (ostensibly) sophisticated people, *not the opinion of the folk*, as Hill seems to think (Hill 2024, 46). I've repeatedly indicated that my concern is with the Generalist attitude of people who take themselves to be sophisticated, as opposed to ordinary laypersons. In the essay to which Hill is responding, I specifically targeted "the way they are generally treated by (ostensibly) sophisticated people in the academy and those appearing in the mainstream

media" (Hagen 2024, 17).[2] And I am far from alone in having this emphasis. As I've previously noted, "Many philosophers, including David Coady and Steve Clarke, have commented that academics have a 'low opinion' of conspiracy theorists, or that conspiracy theorists are 'unpopular amongst intellectuals'" (2022, 179; quoting Coady 2006, 1, and Clarke 2002, 131). Lee Basham is perhaps the most emphatic on this point. For example, citing Wood 2016, Basham writes, "Empirical research suggests 'conspiracy theory' is not a term that motivates public rejection." He then adds his own view: "The pathologizing prejudice appears limited to professional media, politicians and a subset of academics" (Basham 2018, 273 n2). Second, "the conventional wisdom" is intended to apply to what the sophisticated *ostensibly* believe, regardless of what they actually believe.

While I can't enter the minds of others, I suspect there are plenty of true believers in Generalism, or something approximating it, in certain influential circles. Many scholars, it appears to me, speak and write as if they believe it, Hill's denials notwithstanding. And I don't think they are being intentionally deceptive. At the same time, I assume that the *expression of* the conventional wisdom in the form the pejorative use of the phrase "conspiracy theory" is often insincere, especially when it is transparently used to deflect criticism. In order for "the conventional wisdom" to include such insincere expression, the phrase should be understood to mean "the (ostensible) conventional wisdom." This concept encompasses both sincere belief in Generalism and cases in which the phrase "conspiracy theory" is used in an *insincere* attempt to cow people into submission based on *the pretense* that such theories can be safely regarded as bunk such that it is foolish to even raise the issue.

The effect comes from suggesting that sophisticated people (ostensibly) know that conspiracy theories can be safely dismissed as rubbish. The Particularist critique of the pejorative use of "conspiracy theory" holds regardless of the degree to which Generalism is sincerely believed as opposed to wielded cynically. The effectiveness of the pejorative use of the phrase in suppressing inquiry may depend to some degree on whether the audience accepts Generalism, but mostly on whether the audience *believes or fears that others may accept it* (whether anyone *actually* accepts it or not). And the degree to which an attempted deflection is successful or unsuccessful does not change the inappropriateness of the attempt. So, while I happen to believe there are plenty of sincere Generalists, the importance of the Particularists' critique of Generalism does not depend on that.

Has Hill Answered Pigden's Challenge?

Hill says that he thinks that it is possible for people like him to meet Pigden's challenge. However, despite offering a long quotation *about* Pigden's challenge, Hill manages to avoid

[2] In my book on the philosophy of conspiracy theories, I have consistently signaled my focus on such people. For example, I begin the book writing, "The aim of this book is to make serious consideration of conspiracy theories respectable among the sophisticated" (Hagen 2022, vii). And I later note, "there may be a bias against conspiracy theorists in the academy, as, indeed, there seems to be among 'sophisticated' people more generally" (2022, viii). I also remark, "conspiracy theorists have a bad reputation among intellectuals" (2022, 40), and "Many intellectuals scoff at what are called 'conspiracy theories'" (2022, 107).

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even indicating what the challenge amounts too, much less provide an answer to it. As a reminder, to "vindicate the conventional wisdom" the challenge was this:

> First you must give an interpretation of the term "conspiracy theory" with roughly the right extension. (Most of the theories castigated as "conspiracy theories" must qualify as such, and most of the conspiracy-postulating theories that conspiracy skeptics believe in must not.) You must then show that on this interpretation, the strategy of neither investigating nor believing in conspiracies makes epistemic sense (Pigden 2007, 230).

But Hill has in no way given such an interpretation. He has not even attempted to do this. Instead, he simply suggests that virtually nobody maintains that it makes epistemic sense to neither investigate nor believe a theory just because it counts as a conspiracy theory. Again, not only has he failed to answer the challenge by giving a definition of "conspiracy theory" that meets these conditions, he has avoided giving any clear definition of "conspiracy theory" at all.

Let's look at how he does respond to the challenge. He writes,

> I think the challenge can be met by recognizing that Pigden mischaracterized the conventional wisdom. Pigden makes it sound like the conventional wisdom is that you are not allowed to investigate conspiracy theories and you shouldn't believe in conspiracy theories. He makes it seem like just by calling something a "conspiracy theory" politicians are able to get people to stop investigating (Hill 2024, 47).

There is much wrong with this response. First, Pigden can't have mischaracterized what he himself defined "the conventional wisdom" to mean in this context (unless he was inconsistent, which doesn't seem to be the case). When Pigden says two conditions must be satisfied "to vindicate the conventional wisdom" he does not mean that they must be satisfied to vindicate *whatever view happens to be commonly accepted*, but rather to vindicate the view that "neither investigating nor believing in conspiracies makes epistemic sense." This is very clear. And it implies that *this* is what "the conventional wisdom" refers to in this discussion. If Hill is merely complaining about the phrase, suggesting that it is a misnomer because that view is not actually commonly held, that would not address the challenge even if he were right. Indeed, it is tacitly acknowledging that the challenge probably cannot be met. Second, Hill's characterization of what Pigden supposedly makes conventional wisdom "sound like," and "makes it seem like," is problematic, as explained in the section below. In any case, regardless of the details, such a response cannot *meet* the challenge since no definition or "interpretation" of "conspiracy theory" was even offered.

To be clear, what I am objecting to here is this: Hill frames himself as doing something that he has not at all done or even tried to do. That is, he has not met Pigden's challenge.

The Pejorative Use as an *Attempt* to Discredit

When Hill accuses Particularists of misrepresenting the conventional wisdom, he misrepresents what we mean by the phrase "the conventional wisdom." Much like the claim quoted above, Hill also writes, "Particularists make it sound like the conventional wisdom *prohibits* belief in and investigation of conspiracy theories" (Hill 2024b, 45; emphasis added).[3] Hill must be referring to me, and to Pigden, who I quote in this regard. But Hill's interpretation of the implication of what is meant by "the conventional wisdom" is an exaggeration that constitutes a straw man. It is similar to a position taken by Juha Räikkä, to which I have already responded (here on SERRC—Hagen 2023b), as summarized below. The conventional wisdom, as Pigden and I described it, doesn't *prohibit* anything. And we never suggested that it does. Indeed, the idea that Generalism prohibits belief and investigation hardly even make sense. Rather, the conventional wisdom is the view that conspiracy theories "should be neither believed nor investigated," and they are "not worth discussing" (Pigden 2007, 219; see also Hagen 2024, 13). The conventional wisdom, so understood, is implicit in the common pejorative usage of the term. Incidentally, the fact that the pejorative use is so common justifies referring to the assumption underlying such usage as "the conventional wisdom."

Hill characterizes the Particularist critique of the conventional wisdom as asserting that "conspiracy theory" is "a powerful term that politicians can use to shut down debate" (p. 48). He treats this as if it means that politicians can thereby *successfully* shut down debate *completely* and *at will*. But nobody suggested anything that strong. Instead, "conspiracy theory" is a term that politicians, and others, can use to *attempt* to devalue unwelcome viewpoints and shut down debate, with mixed results. Sometimes all that is needed is to dampen critique to some degree for some period of time. Attempts to discourage critiques of the Iraq war by suggesting that it was substantially about oil fits this model. After all, the war did take place. Critics may feel vindicated now, but they were not able to prevent the war at the time.

Pigden, then, was not claiming that a theory "was dismissed just because Blair called it a 'conspiracy theory'," as Hill suggests he was (Hill, 48). Rather, Pigden was suggesting that this was an *attempt* to get people to dismiss an allegation and to discourage follow up on the matter. If Hill is going to seriously deny that Blair was trying to do that, then I think we are at an impasse. The reason Blair would make such an attempt is because he believed he could

[3] This isn't just a matter of accidentally using the wrong word, for he reiterates the claim, with a slight variation, this way: "Pigden makes it sound like the conventional wisdom is that you are *not allowed* to investigate conspiracy theories and you shouldn't believe in conspiracy theories" (Hill 2024, 47, emphasis added). He also describes the particularist position as follows: "the conventional wisdom *requires* that conspiracy theories neither be believed nor investigated" (Hill 2024, 47, emphasis added). Hill also questions whether Tony Blair's use of the phrase "conspiracy theory" "did anything to prevent investigation" (p. 48). But that is the wrong question. The real question is: was it *intended to discourage* further inquiry. Admittedly, if such efforts are always and entirely ineffective then that would blunt the particularist criticism. But there seems little reason to think that is the case. If such efforts were entirely ineffective, presumably people would stop trying. (Regarding Blair's ostensible eloquence, Hill may merely be missing a touch of sarcasm on Pigden's part. In any case, Whether Blair was eloquent or pathetic is not particularly relevant.)

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rely on a common (at least ostensible) understanding of conspiracy theories as theories that should not be taken seriously. That is what it means to suggest that Blair's remark is an appeal to "the conventional wisdom." The degree of significance attributable to such delegitimizing strategies, such as dismissing legitimate critiques by calling them "conspiracy theories," is unknown.

For a discussion of an analogous matter, I direct Hill to the second part of my three-part critique of Juha Räikkä's defense of pejorative definitions of "conspiracy theory" (Hagen 2023b, 30). According to Räikkä's mischaracterization of the objection to pejorative definitions, such definitions make it *impossible* for such theories to get a fair hearing. As he puts it, "Their worry is that if conspiracy theories are considered implausible by definition, then the theories *cannot* get fair treatment and will be rejected for just being conspiracy theories" (Räikkä 2023, 63; emphasis added). I argued that this is an exaggeration of the critique of the pejorative use of the phrase. The real objection, which is essentially the same as the objection to the conventional wisdom, is this: "[T]he pejorative use of the term serves as *an obstacle to* open and unbiased inquiry, not that it makes such inquiry *strictly impossible*. … While it may be *possible* to investigate something given a pejorative label fairly and with an open mind, such a label may still be doing pernicious work by making such fair treatment *both psychologically and practically difficult* and thus *less likely* to occur. That is the concern" (Hagen 2023b, 34).

Similarly, it is not that the conventional wisdom somehow *prohibits* belief or investigation, or that it makes it somehow impossible. Rather, according to the conventional wisdom, it is reasonable to assume that conspiracy theories are unworthy of belief, investigation, or serious consideration. Such theories, this implies, ought to be summarily dismissed. This assumption underlies the pejorative use of the phrase, which *discourages* investigation and (expression of) belief or even of serious consideration, or at least it *attempts to do so*.

As I have elsewhere explained, the common objection to the pejorative use is this: "the phrase 'conspiracy theory,' when functioning as a pejorative, delegitimizes and thereby strongly disincentivizes inquiry" (Hagen 2023b, 35). I provide a full page of quotations supporting the contention that this is a common objection to the pejorative use of the phrase (2023b, 33).[4] The pejorative use of the phrase often involves (at least arguably) an implicit equivocation, such that the operative definition is not actually clear. The theory in question seems to count as a conspiracy theory under one implicit definition (a non-pejorative one), and to be summarily dismissible under a different one (a pejorative one).

[4] I've also argued that using the phrase "conspiracy theory" in a pejorative way provides an "informal but serious disincentives for qualified experts to demur" (Hagen 2023a, 46 n9). I cited Tim Hayward, who notes, "[A] clear purpose for fostering the very concept of 'conspiracy theory' has, in practice, been to disparage it so that people who desire to have a reputation as intellectually serious, or even just sensible, are discouraged from engaging in it" (Hayward 2021, 152).

Clarifying the Watergate Argument

Now let's clarify the Watergate Argument. It states: "[F]or any definition of 'conspiracy theory' according to which Watergate would have counted, one should not dismiss a theory just because it counts as a 'conspiracy theory'" (Hagen 2024, 12). In other words, Generalism cannot hold for any definition of "conspiracy theory" for which Watergate would have, at some point, counted as one. Hill's response to the Watergate Argument is to imply that Watergate might not have actually been a conspiracy theory. Clearly, Hill's implied claim is a non-sequitur. The "Watergate Argument," as I've expressed it, applies only to definitions of "conspiracy theory" for which Watergate *does* count. I regard it as a significant argument because many scholars who have addressed the epistemology of conspiracy theories have acknowledged that Watergate counts, even those who take a dim view of conspiracy theories (for example Sunstein and Vermeule 2009, 206; Keeley 1999, 118; Stokes 2018, 25; Clarke 2024).[5]

The Watergate Argument suggests that, if one is to vindicate Generalism with respect to some particular definition of "conspiracy theory," then, at minimum, Watergate can't count as having been a conspiracy theory according to that definition. This is a necessary but not sufficient condition for Generalism to hold for any particular definition of "conspiracy theory." The definition would also have to survive analogous arguments, such as the Iran-Contra Argument, the Iraqi War Propaganda Argument, and the Hunter Biden's Laptop Story Is Russian Disinformation Argument, etc. The sum of these "arguments" approximates a key aspect of Pigden's challenge: "most of the conspiracy-postulating theories that conspiracy skeptics believe in must not [qualify as 'conspiracy theories']" (Pigden 2007, 230).

Pigden's Challenge is a more complete test than the Watergate Argument, but the latter can be useful for easily eliminating Generalism with respect to some definitions. Importantly, it not only invalidates Generalism as it applies to the broad "minimal" definition, but also as it applies to narrower descriptive definitions which include a "contrarian" criterion. That was a key point. And Hill's response does not address it. Indeed, Hill has conspicuously avoided providing any clear definition. He seems to be concerned only with whether a theory was explicitly and prominently *called* a "conspiracy theory." In that case, perhaps Watergate is not

[5] While Keeley is a particularist, his 1999 article addressed a subset of conspiracy theories for which he thought generalism might apply. He found that it didn't. Clarke now identifies as a "non-generalist" (2024, 22), but he has sometimes come across as having a fairly dim view of conspiracy theories, regarding them as "prima facie skepticism" though not so implausible that they should be disregarded. Clarke begins his 2002 essay as follows: "The dismissive attitude of intellectuals toward conspiracy theorists is considered and given some justification. It is argued that intellectuals are entitled to an attitude of prima facie skepticism toward the theories propounded by conspiracy theorists, because conspiracy theorists have an irrational tendency to continue to believe in conspiracy theories, even when these take on the appearance of forming the core of degenerating research program" (Clarke 2002, 131). I regard this characterization of conspiracy theories as misleading and unfair even if Clarke regards it as ultimately non-generalist. The psychological distance between "prima facie skepticism" and *unworthy of further consideration* is too short. And so, I worry that the distinction will largely be ignored. But that is a discussion for another time.

the best example. But there are examples of theories derisively called "conspiracy theories" that should not have been dismissed, such as the lab leak hypothesis. Worse, *any* theory *can be called* a "conspiracy theory." So, *that* can't be what determines whether or not a theory should be taken seriously.

The Pejorative Use of "Conspiracy Theories" Versus More Explicit Language

Hill implies that the term "conspiracy theory" signals that the theory is preposterous (Hill 2024, 50). At the same time, he doubts that calling a theory a "conspiracy theory" is an attempt to get people to dismiss the theory on that account. He writes, "I have yet to see evidence that such claims are dismissed *because* they are counted as conspiracy theories." (Hill 2024, 50). Really? What exactly does Hill think Blair was trying to do when he said, "But honestly, I mean, conspiracy theories," if not to dismiss the accusation and encourage others to do likewise? Similarly, regarding the lab leak hypothesis, Hill writes: "I don't see why we should think that it was dismissed *because* it was called a 'conspiracy theory'" (Hill 2024, 50). Really? Then what exactly does Hill think the people calling it that were thereby trying to do? Were they just trying to indicate their objective scientific opinion that the hypothesis was preposterous? But it never was preposterous.

Hill also expresses doubt that using the phrase "conspiracy theory" in a pejorative way is any worse than just saying, explicitly, that one finds a certain theory "preposterous." He explains, "If 'conspiracy theory' were a neutral term and instead the lab leak hypothesis was called 'preposterous' by the media, I don't think that would have changed the degree to which the lab leak hypothesis was unfairly dismissed" (Hill 2024, 50). I disagree that this would not be an improvement. The problem with the pejorative use of the term "conspiracy theory" is that it facilitates equivocation, as suggested above. A theory (such as the lab leak hypothesis) may clearly count as a "conspiracy theory" on some implicit descriptive definition, or by virtue of perceived family resemblance. At the same time, on other implicit definitions, conspiracy theories are bunk. The term thus facilitates the insinuation that the theory in question is bunk, based on an implicit equivocation.

In contrast, if someone says that a theory is "preposterous," there is no potential for such equivocation. The claim is clear, and it can be challenged directly if the preposterousness of the particular case is deemed false or questionable. Look at it this way: if someone says, with a sneer, "that's just a conspiracy theory," then much is unclear. How should someone who takes the theory seriously respond? Answering, "No it is not," does not clarify the matter. Worse, that answer encourages an extended philosophical exploration of the meaning of the phrase "conspiracy theory," rather than an exploration of the merits of the theory in question. Alternatively, answering, "The theory is *not* preposterous" sounds like a non sequitur, since nobody explicitly said that it was.

If more people refrained from using "conspiracy theory" pejoratively, fewer people would be falsely implying that Generalism is true, since that is what the pejorative use implies, according to the definitions given above. And it would also be good if those who encounter the pejorative use of the term recognize the invalidity of the inference they are being

encouraged to make. For all these reasons, the pejorative use of the phrase should be universally abandoned, and it should be rejected when encountered. Until then, continued criticism is justified.[6]

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