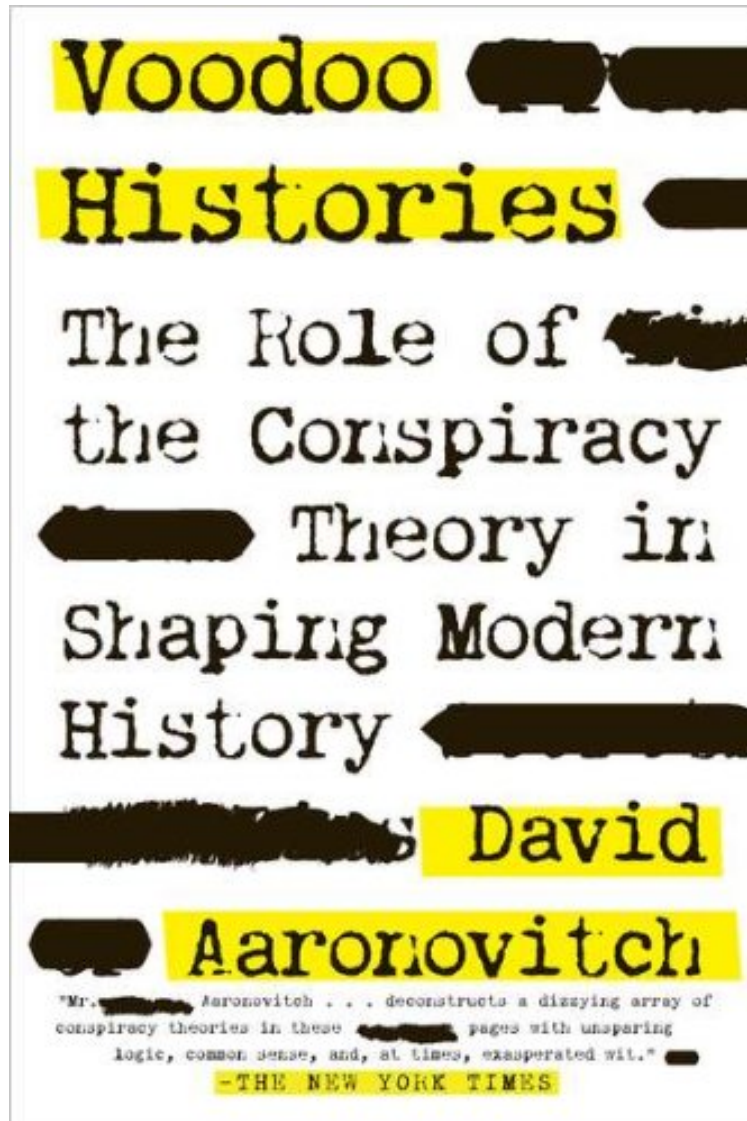


Voodoo Histories: The Role of the Conspiracy Theory in Shaping Modern History

David Aaronovitch

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#99791 in Books 2011-01-04 2011-01-04 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.21 x .87 x 5.451, .75 #File Name: 1594484988416 pages | File size: 54.Mb

David Aaronovitch : Voodoo Histories: The Role of the Conspiracy Theory in Shaping Modern History before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Voodoo Histories: The Role of the Conspiracy Theory in Shaping Modern History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Thorough and informative, but a DENSE read. By ReaderPros
Outstandingly well-written and researched Peppered liberally with acerbic wit (my favorite kind) Near-encyclopedic

coverage of about a dozen popular conspiracy theories
Cons Misleading sub-title Near-encyclopedic coverage of about a dozen popular conspiracy theories
Do buy this book if you need a thorough and I mean THOROUGH reference work on the following conspiracy theories: Protocols of the Elders of Zion Moscow show trials Pearl Harbor as an inside job McCarthys Red Scare JFKs assassination Marilyn Monroes murder Princess Dianas murder Hilda Murrells murder Jesus descendants 9/11 Truthers Dr. David Kellys murder Vince Fosters murder The Birther movement
Dont buy this book if youre looking for an easy-to-digest overview of conspiracy theories and/or an explanation of how they have shaped modern history (as promised by the books sub-title). Aside from an excellent Stephen Ambrose quote on the very last page of the book, Mr. Aaronovitch barely even makes an attempt to show how conspiracy theories do anything other than inform, and perhaps beget, other conspiracy theories.
To summarize: Despite the authors often searing humor, which I enjoyed immensely, I still had a hard time slogging through this book because of the high volume of minutia he elected to include. In the first chapter, for instance, he provides the names of, and considerable background information about, every soul who had a hand in creating, modifying, promoting, debunking, and rejecting the debunking of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Therefore, Id recommend this book primarily as a reference work.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "People are as dumb now as they were 2000 years ago"By Dr. S. Shapiro
A well-researched and well-written (albeit selective) documentation of human credibility/gullibility and blindness to recognize obvious truths when facts get in the way of beliefs. In this respect, the book can be thought of as kind of scary! Read this one together with Eco's "Foucault's Pendulum", and see where they intersect. (Hint: Years ago, when asked to summarize the content of "Foucault's Pendulum" in one sentence, I replied: "People are as dumb now as they were 2000 years ago.")
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. dootBy Julia
Does what it's designed to do

"Meticulous in its research, forensic in its reasoning, robust in its argument, and often hilarious in its debunking... a highly entertaining rumble with the century's major conspiracy theorists and their theories." --John Lahr, National Book Critics Circle Award-winning author of Tennessee Williams
From an award-winning journalist, a history so funny, so true, so scary, it's bound to be called a conspiracy. Our age is obsessed by the idea of conspiracy. We see it everywhere- from Pearl Harbor to 9/11, from the assassination of Kennedy to the death of Diana. In this age of terrorism we live in, the role of conspiracy is a serious one, one that can fuel radical or fringe elements to violence. For David Aaronovitch, there came a time when he started to see a pattern among these inflammatory theories. these theories used similarly murky methods with which to insinuate their claims: they linked themselves to the supposed conspiracies of the past (it happened then so it can happen now); they carefully manipulated their evidence to hide its holes; they relied on the authority of dubious academic sources. Most important, they elevated their believers to membership of an elite- a group of people able to see beyond lies to a higher reality. But why believe something that entails stretching the bounds of probability so far?
In this entertaining and enlightening book, he examines why people believe conspiracy theories, and makes an argument for a true skepticism: one based on a thorough knowledge of history and a strong dose of common sense.

From Booklist*Starred * Like Michael Shermer in Why People Believe Weird Things (1997), or Damian Thompson in Counterknowledge (2008), Aaronovitch tackles the intriguing question of why people accept as factual things that are patently (and provably) untrue. Most of the popular conspiracy theories are here: 9/11 as an inside job; the faked moon landings; the secret Zionist world empire; the Priory of Scions mission to safeguard the bloodline of Jesus; the murder of Vince Foster; the noncitizenship of Barack Obama. Aaronovitch demonstrates where the theories go off the rails (the Priory of Scion was a hoax concocted in the mid-1950s, for instance), and he examines the reasons why elaborate conspiracy theories, despite being so implausibly complex, capture the imaginations of so many people. Its due to a mixture of credulity, a lack of critical reasoning, a need for an underlying explanation for the inexplicable, and perhaps most important an inability to distinguish between the possible and the wildly implausible (for example, which is more likely: that astronauts actually went to the moon, or that thousands of people, including the astronauts themselves, perpetrated, and are still perpetrating, a mammoth hoax?). The author also examines the role the Internet now plays in disseminating, and lending apparent validity to, crackpot theories. The book is an evenhanded, lively, and fascinating look not just at the people who believe these theories but also at the people who promote them: the evidence manipulators, the liars, the con artists, and the almost pathetically gullible and uninformed. --David Pitt
"Aaronovitch tackles the intriguing question of why well-educated, reasonable people sometimes believe 'perfectly ridiculous things.'" --NPR
"Lively...In most cases, Mr. Aaronovitch notes, conspiracy theorists would rather tie themselves into complicated knots and postulate all sorts of improbable secret connections than accept a simple, more obvious explanation." --The New York Times
"Every reader will have his favorite crank." -- The New York Times
Book "Meticulous in its research, forensic in its reasoning, robust in its argument, and often hilarious in its debunking... ahightly entertaining rumble with the century's major conspiracy theorists and their theories." --John Lahr, National Book Critics Circle Award-winning author of Tennessee Williams
"Terrifying, hilarious, irreverent and addictively compelling, Voodoo Histories is an instant classic that should be read by everyone
a brilliant, witty and

devastating analysis of, and guide to, the big lies of modern history by our most brilliant commentator" Simon Sebag Montefiore, author of *Young Stalin* and *Stalin: The Court Of The Red Tsar*"A brilliant, sparkling and witty demolition of numerous conspiracy theoriesnot only dotty but sometimes, as in the case of the fabricated Protocols of the Elders of Zionhighly dangerous and an analysis of why otherwise intelligent people are so ready to believe in them" Ian Kershaw, author of *Hitler and To Hell and Back*About the AuthorDavid Aaronovitch is an award-winning journalist, who has worked in radio, television and newspapers in the United Kingdom since the early 1980s. His first book, *Paddling to Jerusalem*, won the Madoc prize for travel literature in 2001. He is also the recipient of the George Orwell Prize for political journalism. He writes a regular column for *The Times* (UK). He lives in north London, with his wife and three daughters.