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**A Critical Reading of David Icke's  
Superconspiracy Construct**  
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Vít Bohal

V Praze dne .....

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## Introduction

In his *Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) Karl Popper heralded a proper era of conspiracy. This specific mode of political thought and literary activity has flourished and budded to unprecedented proportions during the years following the second world war, becoming richer and more imaginative, than its previous, predominantly political incarnations. These contemporary post-modern narratives are quite often imbued with extra-terrestrial and religious undertones and, like the gods of Homeric Greece, the modern-day conspirators are felt, but rest unseen, their presence more inferred than properly corroborated, and their motives always transcendent and sublime.

Popper effectively distances the modern-day tradition of conspiracy belief from its historical antecedents in that, much in line with the the modern era's dissolution of the Absolute, "The gods are abandoned. But their place is filled with powerful men, or groups."<sup>1</sup> It is this substrate which the contemporary conspiracy discourse blossoms from. These literary and philosophical constructs are indeed an outgrowth of a long tradition of literary activity but, read in light of today's day and age, most of them can no longer be divorced from the political and spiritual. The Marxian axiomatic of the class struggle is particularly well suited to be incorporated into the conspiracy discourses, as the antagonism between the oppressor and the oppressed forms the basic binary framework around which contemporary conspiracy narratives are woven. Furthermore, the informational disorientation plaguing the western world in the post-modern era, only exacerbated with the launching of the internet (an integrally participatory medium) has only further destabilized the semiotic field in which the individual finds herself.

The Anglophone world from the latter half of the twentieth century all the way until the present day has been rife with talk of conspiracy. From McCarthy's 'Red Scare' politics, through to the assassination of JFK, up until the recent past events, like 9/ 11 or the earthquakes in Haiti; next to the official narrative there winds the alternate narrative of the conspiracy discourse. The claims of these partisan trains of thought are often chaotic, highly contentious, improbable; and yet, they manage to garner an audience which becomes fascinated with its grandiose claims. A creeping tendency towards a paranoid, conspiracist view of global events has become somewhat of a pop phenomenon, and it will be the goal of this work to identify its workings in light of the work of some thinkers of the post-structuralist tradition of critical theory. This work will specifically attempt to illuminate the contemporary conspiracy phenomenon and its functional mechanisms by means of

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* 22.4.2015<<https://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/jksadegh/A%20Good%20Atheist%20Secularist%20Skeptical%20Book%20Collection/Popper%20-%20The%20Open%20Society%20and%20its%20Enemies.pdf>>.

analyzing the literary/theoretical oeuvre of David Icke, who stands as one of the most prolific and well-known conspiracy theorists.

## The Epistemic Conjecture

### Chapter 1.1. - A Structural Typology

Definitions of conspiracy are many, but they can easily be summed up followingly: “A secret plan by a group to do something unlawful or harmful.”<sup>2</sup> From this it is easy to deduce that there are three central features a conspiracy must fulfill : 1) the plot and objective of the conspiracy must be secret 2) there must be at least two or more plotters 3) the objective must be something that is not in line with the effective workings of society, as it must stand apart from its morals/customs/legislation etc. for it to be labeled 'harmful'.

Although useful, this definition is too broad; after all, it is something different to, for example, attempt to defame a public person by printing a racy and untrue article in a small local newspaper, than to, for instance, use mind control on the entire American population. Nevertheless, the process leading up to the final printing of the news story may equally be termed a conspiracy - the plotting agents keep their plans secret, there are at least two of them (the reporter, and the agent who wishes to defame the public figure), and the objective itself may be seen as something unethical based on the fact that a private agent dictated the press' material, and thus undermines the ideal of 'objectivity'.

For comparison, the New World Order theory (here understood as the belief in the existence of a millenialist cabaal of the financial, political, and possibly extraterrestrial, world elite) may also be termed a conspiracy. Using the criteria above, it is clear that the objectives of the plotters are also kept secret, there is a great number of them, and they, invariably, work towards a malevolent end. What then distinguishes the first conspiracy from the second?

They vary because of the difference in what Michael Barkun calls the “scope.” The first conspiracy, perpetrated by the corrupt newspaper is, first and foremost, an event conspiracy<sup>3</sup>. Unless more segments of the social and political infrastructure were involved, the conspiracy would trace the following progression:

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2 “Conspiracy,” Oxford Online Dictionary, 3.12.2014<<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/conspiracy?q=conspiracy>>.

3 Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America* (University of California press: Brekley, 2003). 6

the agent (gives impulse to ) > the newsman ( who writes the article) > the article is produced > the article is noticed, and possibly accepted as a truth

There the event conspiracy finishes. It is limited to one event, and one party of perpetrators.

On the other hand the second, NWO conspiracy, is a “systemic” conspiracy, if not a positive “superconspiracy.” Event conspiracies seem more 'normal' to a healthy subject as opposed to the systemic, or superconspiracies, simply because they happen more often. When we talk about someone behind their back at a bar, for instance plotting to have a drink of their soda when they leave the table to use the restroom, that is a conspiracy. Yet, it does not resonate with the same foreboding and sublimity of the New World Order theory. One would be tempted to say that the scope is so vastly different that people would generally have an easier time accepting the existence of small-scale conspiracies, while negating the existence of larger ones. In that case why has conspiracy writing become such a dominant aspect of our post-modern cultural landscape?

To answer this, one must accept that the word 'conspiracy' does not quite measure up to denoting the pop culture phenomenon which we are talking about. The eclectic discursive territory of fringe science, new age belief, both right-wing and left-wing extremism, UFOlogy, etc. that defines the experience of the modern-day conspiracy sensibility cannot be summed up simply by the three above criteria. There are other factors at work, and it is necessary to properly identify the features of the nebulous discursive environment that has cropped up in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in all spheres of anglophone society.

It will not be the goal of this work to re-hash and analyze the individual conspiracies of the past 50 years. Their factitious or fictitious natures will not be the focus of the following analysis. Rather, the work will focus on the general workings of what Brian L. Keeley terms the “conspiratorial world view.” For this reason, one must become familiar with using the label 'conspiracy *theory*,' rather than the simple term 'conspiracy.' The former calls up associations of a wide area of popular contemporary discourse, whereas the latter term denotes only the concept defined by the three above criteria.

Keeley further introduces a class he labels as 'UCTs,' or 'unwarranted conspiracy theories.' These are conspiracy theories towards which there exists a “strong common intuition that it is possible to delineate a set of explanations. [...] It is thought that this class of explanation can be distinguished analytically from those theories which deserve our assent.”<sup>4</sup> Keeley thus appeals to a category of so-called 'common sense.' It is, for instance, easier to accept the possibility of a corrupt newsman running a defamatory article, than to believe that shape-shifting reptilians from the Draco

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4 Brian L. Keeley, “Of Conspiracy Theories,” *The Journal of Philosophy* (March 1999) 111.

constellation are at the head of our global politics. Whereas the former seems as food for a healthy imagination, the latter seems as pure phantasy. It is true that both are conspiracy *theories* until they are proven to be true or false, but the belief in one seems to indeed be unwarranted by a general “common sense.”

This appeal to common sense is, however, problematic, as browsing the various internet forums can indeed alter our view of that which we would label 'common'. Each subgroup of conspiracy believers has a certain slice of the larger pie that forms the conspiracy discourse, and what is common in one is not common in others. For this purpose Keeley drafts a five-point typology of what a UCT is

(1) A UCT is an explanation that runs counter to some received, official, or “obvious” account [...]

(2) The true intentions behind the conspiracy are invariably nefarious [...]

(3) UCTs typically seek to tie together seemingly unrelated events [...]

(4) As noted, the truths behind events explained by conspiracy theories are typically well-guarded secrets, even if the ultimate perpetrators are sometimes well-known public figures

(5) The chief tool of the conspiracy theorist are what I shall call *errant data*<sup>5</sup> [data that can, through cross reference of numerous sources, be identified as being false]

The UCT makes up the very substance that the popular conspiracy discourse consists of. For instance, the 9/11 conspiracy theory could be termed a UCT for the reasons (listed respectively) that

1) it professes that the government planned, or at least knew about the hijackings, although *officially*, they deny this.

2) The bombing of the WTC was used as an excuse to go to war in Iraq, implement the Patriot Act, and generally tighten the government's grip on the American population; all of them indeed “nefarious” intentions when viewed through the prism of western officially democratic politics

3) Seemingly unrelated events of the day 9/11 are often all used to support the general conspiracy theory. For instance, the military exercises taking place in New York state that day somehow corroborate the claim that the attack was known; they were apparently used as decoy to blur the boundary between exercise and real life.

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5 Keeley, “Of Conspiracy Theories” 117

Similarly, George W. Bush's presence in a Florida classroom, and his ambivalent reaction to the news is also given as proof of an existing conspiracy. Both these claims are highly contentious.

- 4) The myriad conspiracy theorists are within themselves undecided as to the guarded secret the 9/11 conspiracy was supposed to guard. The generally accepted view is that the US planned the events for to be able to attack Iraq, and to counter the Taliban's expansive role in Aghanistan. Other, more fringe ideas regarding the guarded secrets deal with the shapeshifting identity of George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, etc. and their plans for world domination.
- 5) An errant datum would, for instance, be the fact that the 9/11 hijackers had “indicators in their passports marking them as Islamist radicals,” but these indicators were, strangely, not noticed by the US officials who allowed them to enter the country. This is a claim that goes directly against the official version, and, as such, is termed an errant datum.<sup>6</sup>

Things are, however, not as clear-cut as they may seem. For some, the above arguments may be completely ludicrous, and they would label the 9/11 truth conspiracy theory a UCT, thus banishing it to the realm of crackpot theories. For others, the arguments are valid, and completely warranted. It is easy to see that the US government indeed *had* made certain blatant mistakes in the time leading up to the attacks, during the attack itself, as well as in the aftermath (for instance the debunked attempt to link the events of 9/11 with the repressive regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq).

This nebulous character of the conspiracy theory phenomenon is standard occurrence. Where one person may see a proper UCT, with all its seeming phantasmagoria, another may see a conspiracy theory in the proper sense of the term - a theory, which may lead to the uncovering of a conspiracy. For this reason, it is not the object itself which this work will focus on, but rather the mentality of the human subjects who create, proliferate, and believe the wide and constantly expanding array of UCTs. For our intents and purposes, all 'conspiracy theories' treated from now on, with David Icke's narrative taking the main stage, will essentially be UCTs, as their relation to the dominant discourse would label them as being “unwarranted.”

Michael Barkun approaches conspiracy theories from a different perspective. His approach may be termed folklorist, as he attempts to map out the dominant trends in the Anglophone

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<sup>6</sup> Jon Gold, “The Facts Speak for Themselves,” *9/11 Truth*, 3.12.2014 < <http://911truthnews.com/the-facts-speak-for-themselves/>>.

conspiracy discourse and map their diachronic development. In his book “A Culture of Conspiracy,” (2003) he goes to great lengths to identify the complex mechanisms of this constant flux that has been taking place in the Anglophone cultural milieu in the past sixty years. He effectively shows the points of insertion of various conspiracy theory systems into others and shows the points where the varied discourses diachronically met and diverged. More importantly for the purposes of this work Barkun also manages to frame yet another typology of what a “conspiracy theory” is. According to him there are three features that may be found “virtually in every conspiracy theory”

- *Nothing happens by accident.* Conspiracy implies a world based on intentionality, from which accident and coincidence have been removed. [...]
- *Nothing is as it seems.* Appearances are deceptive, because conspirators wish to deceive in order to disguise their identities or their activities. Thus the appearance of innocence is deemed to be no guarantee that an individual or groups is benign.
- *Everything is connected.* Because the conspiracists' world has no room for accident, pattern is believed to be everywhere, albeit hidden from plain view. Hence the conspiracy theorist must engage in a constant process of linkage and correlation in order to map the hidden connections.<sup>7</sup>

As one will notice these aren't exactly features of the text of a conspiracy theory per sé. Rather, they seem to be certain mental, psychological paradigms which allow conspiracy theories to flourish. This is the difference between Keeley's and Barkun's approach to conspiracy theories: where Keeley only maps out the formal features of the object that is the 'conspiracy theory,' Barkun shows the psychological dimensions of this particular discourse. His characteristics of the conspiracy theory have more to do with the mentality of their consumers and creators, rather than with defining the features and characteristics of the conspiracy texts themselves.

Barkun's psychological take on conspiracy scholarship can be traced all the way back to the popular essay by Richard Hofstadter entitled “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” (1963). There Hofstadter writes

The central image [of the paranoid style] is that of a vast and sinister conspiracy, a gigantic and yet subtle machinery of influence set in motion to undermine and destroy a way of life. One may object that there *are* conspiratorial acts in history

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<sup>7</sup> Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy* 3

and that there is nothing paranoid in taking note of them. This is true. [...] The distinguishing thing about the paranoid style is not that its exponents see conspiracies or plots here and there in history, but that they regard a “vast” or “gigantic” conspiracy as the *motive force* in historical events. History *is* a conspiracy [...]”<sup>8</sup>

As one can see, Barkun's three-part typology is a direct transposition of this concept. The three characteristics of conspiracy theories are rather characteristics of this “*motive force*” which Hofstadter talks about. If a human subject accepts these three points as set out by Barkun, he has effectively accepted the “paranoid style” of thinking, seeing history as a grand conspiracy; and, by reverse implication, accepting the 'history *is* a conspiracy' prerogative makes one adopt the three points as professed by Barkun. His three-part typology thus deals less with the question of individual conspiracy structure, and more with the ideal subject's (conspiracy theorist's) political paradigm.

Hofstadter himself is careful not to get too close to the clinical concept of paranoia. He distinguishes between the “clinical paranoid,” a purely psychoanalytical diagnosis, from the “paranoid style.” Where the clinical paranoid “sees the hostile and conspiratorial world in which he feels himself to be living as directed specifically against *him*,” the paranoid *style* “finds it [the conspiratorial world] directed against a nation, a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not himself alone but millions of others.”<sup>9</sup> This paranoid style is the blueprint, the spawn from which the conspiracy theorist operates. The difference of world-view from that of the clinical paranoid is in the political aspect of his belief. He does not feel alone in a hostile world, in the sense that 'everyone is out to get him' and that he can 'trust no-one'; rather, the conspiracy theorist acknowledges and welcomes the fact that there is a community which shares his views and which is 'on his side' against the forces of an ultimate evil.

This type of social paranoia, however, must be distinguished from that which Lewis and Kahn term “a much-needed, progressive 'critical paranoia' that is suspicious and inquiring into the politics of media culture.”<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that they see this former type of paranoia as being a necessary part of a working society. For instance, the investigative reporter must nurture a certain dose of this “critical paranoia” if he or she wants to get a good scoop. In the reporter's

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8 Richard Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics,” *The Paranoid Style and Other Essays* (Harvard University Press: USA, 1964) 29.

9 Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” 4

10 Tyson Lewis and Richard Kahn, “The Reptoid Hypothesis: Utopian and Dystopian Representational Motifs in David Icke's Alien Conspiracy Theory,” 3.12.2014<[https://www.academia.edu/167081/The\\_Reptoid\\_Hypothesis\\_Utopian\\_and\\_Dystopian\\_Representational\\_Motifs\\_in\\_David\\_Icke\\_s\\_Alien\\_Conspiracy\\_Theory](https://www.academia.edu/167081/The_Reptoid_Hypothesis_Utopian_and_Dystopian_Representational_Motifs_in_David_Icke_s_Alien_Conspiracy_Theory)>. 14

position, one cannot simply accept the official story that those in power give to the masses. One must rather be suspicious of it, and, if need be, inquire into the real state of things that comes closer to what we call 'the truth' of the event.

## Chapter 1.2. The Reptoid Hypothesis

The realm of those fringe theories we call conspiracy theories is vast. The above criteria and categories are helpful for identifying those that qualify for the title 'conspiracy theories,' and subsequently for analyzing them based on the criteria of their breadth and political context; yet, for the purposes of this paper, it would be helpful to focus predominantly on one theory which will serve as a type of specific example.

That grey, nebulous mass of fringe theories often situated in widely different fields (archeology, astronomy, history, linguistics, etc.) has, in a certain bizzare fashion, reached a pinnacle in the superconspiracy theories of David Icke. Icke has managed a synthesis of most of the popular conspiracy theories that float around in the cultural milieu. Barkun has written that “Icke has always been the most fluent of conspiracist authors, which gives his writings a clarity rarely found in the genre.”<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Lewis and Kahn write that “[Icke's] theory is a significant condensation of all conspiracy theories into one colossal narrative [...]”<sup>12</sup> David Icke is simply one of the most prolific conspiracy writers of our time, with over a dozen books dealing with various issues, and frequent lecture tours all over the globe. It is for this reason, that his superconspiracy construct will receive special attention in this work. It is necessary to note that the goal of this paper is not to attempt a folklorist interpretation of conspiracy theories such as presented in the writings of Barkun, but to put the concept into a philosophical, literary, and, above all, critical perspective. Even so, it is helpful to have a primary source for the object studied, and Icke's work will provide an example *par excellence* because of the complexity of its beliefs.

Briefly, Icke's overarching thesis is as follows: An alien race called the Annunaki have populated this planet for thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years. They genetically modified the species homo erectus, into the present species homo sapiens sapiens, and so made mankind what it is today. These Annunaki are lizard men who originate from the constellation Draco have access to the lower, fourth, dimension wherefrom they control our, the third, dimension. They have powers of shapeshifting which they have been using, since time immemorial (or, most likely, for the past 12, 000 years) to control the happenings on this planet. For the shapeshifting

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11 Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy* 163

12 Lewis and Kahn, “The Reptoid Hypothesis” 13

powers to remain intact, they must keep their blood pool as pure as possible, and for this reason the ruling classes have had a tendency to interbreed. These Annunaki are pulling the strings of all major secret societies (the Illuminati, the Freemasons, the Vatican, etc.), keeping “the truth” secret from the wider, human, population. They keep us as energy slaves for to suck from us negative energies (pain, jealousy, perversion) on which they feed. A number of present-day politicians and other public figures are part of this cult, themselves being lizard-people (Henry Kissinger, George Bush, Queen Elizabeth II, Tony Blair, Dick Cheney, etc.). They are attempting to create a fascist super-state, so that their control is absolute.<sup>13</sup>

The so-called “Reptoid Hypothesis” is indeed one of the most contemporary conspiracy phenomena. As can be seen from the above brief summary, it encapsulates most of the major, staple conspiracy theories into an entity which Barkun calls a “superconspiracy.” These superconspiracies are “conspiratorial constructs in which multiple conspiracies are linked together hierarchically.”<sup>14</sup> The summary shows that Icke's narrative combines UFO conspiracy theories (popular since the 1950's), New World Order theories, theories dealing with secret societies and Satanism all into one grand narrative tied together by a palpable New Age sensibility.

What is more, the narrative is so eclectic, its basic presumptions so vast, that any new information can easily be appropriated into the already existing structure. This characteristic, so effectively criticized by Karl Popper in his speech “Science and Falsifiability,” along with Icke's constant call for a New Age, anarchistic utopia, make his theory a prime example of what Barkun calls “improvisational millennialism.”<sup>15</sup> This type of millennialism (millennialism in general being closely associated with conspiracy theories)<sup>16</sup> is specific, in that it allows for a much freer association between otherwise disparate elements of the conspiracy theory. As Barkun notes, it is “by definition an act of bricolage.”<sup>17</sup> Modern media, such as the internet, and the general post-modern sensibility has only furthered this tendency towards a hyperstition between previously incompatible genres, cultural traditions, and whole fields of study. A basic feature of improvisational millennialism is to create eclectic narrative systems which function in such a way that new information, so quickly transmitted in our digital age, can be easily incorporated and appropriated into the already existing system. This is, according to both Keeley and Barkun, a fundamental characteristic of living conspiracy theories as such.

If we once again look at Barkun's tri-partite typology, we can see the point of insertion of this feature. The fact of the matter is that Barkun's second criterion - “Nothing is as it seems” - is

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13 David Icke, *The Biggest Secret* (Bridge of Love Publications: 1999).

14 Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy* 6

15 Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy* 11

16 Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy* 9

17 Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy* 11

superior to the other two. It effectively creates a basis for the paranoid style of Hofstadter. In fact, it is the very axiom on which the paranoid style is based. For a person who does not subscribe to this style of thinking it is possible to feel that some things indeed *are* as they seem, while others have a potential to hide an unseen reality. After all, even official media and governments do lie, and secrecy is a fact of life. However, for the true conspiracy theorist - meaning a person who subscribes to Hofstadter's "paranoid style" of thinking - *nothing* is as it seems. There is always something behind the visible and accepted façade. The whole world is, essentially, a malevolent mirage.

The relation between such a world-view and Jacques Lacan's relationship between the Real and the Other are pregnant with meaning. Yet, for to continue with a Lacanian analysis further on in the paper, we must first confirm the nature of the fundamental nature of the studied object. We must confirm that this disparate mass of what we call superconspiracy theories, Icke's first and foremost among them, functions much like an ideology.

### 1.2. Icke's Super-conspiracy as Ideology

A simple definition of ideology would be "the set of beliefs characteristic of a social group or individual."<sup>18</sup> This definition, however, does not suffice. It is too broad, there is no association with its fundamental tendency to appropriate and enforce a ubiquitous Truth. A better definition is offered in the phrase that "ideology is essentially the belief that perspective is truth."<sup>19</sup> That is to say that the perspective one chooses to adopt is the way that things objectively *are*. The implications of this definition are much more ominous, in the sense that ideology defined in this way intrinsically excludes other modes of thinking as being essentially untrue. Only the ideology itself, by definition, claims to possess an objective truth. Ideologies as such cannot co-exist, they can only compete for this mandate of primacy with other semiotic fields.

And indeed, this is what we see happening in contemporary conspiracy discourse. The 'official' version of events is regarded as being false along with other semiotic fields, such as religion, institutionalized philosophy, economics, etc. All dominant narratives and structures are portrayed as being fundamentally flawed in opposition to the vast and unkempt conspiracy narrative. There is a presumption that the official discourse always contains a certain tainted core because it must never be that which it seems to be at first glance. Only the structure of the conspiracy theory is seen as containing the truth, as it sees beyond the fake surface of the other('s)

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18 "Ideology," 2, Oxford Online Dictionary, 3.12.2014<<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ideology>>.

19 "The Frankfurt School of Critical Theory," Open Yale courses, Spring 2009<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFpGf7aPXNA>>.

ideologies. Textual examples of this would be too numerous to mention, but the uncanny warning at the beginning of David Icke's work "The Biggest Secret" (1999) should suffice: "There is an enormous amount of challenging information in this book. Please do not continue if you are dependent on your present belief system, or if you feel you cannot cope emotionally with what is really happening in the world." The message of this excerpt is two-fold: 1) The reader's former ideology is flawed as it limits their thinking("if you are *dependent* on your present belief system"), and 2) Icke's ideology contains the Truth, thus implicating that the reader's former ideology was false ("... what is *really happening* in the world.").

Icke's superconspiracy theory is, in other words, a final solution to the problem of truth. Perspectivism and post-structuralist sensibilities cannot function under the auspices of the paranoid style of thought, because they would break the ideological material of which the conspiracy is forged. Other perspectives are, at best, only false commentaries on the one truth which the superconspiracy claims to hold and, at worst, outright propaganda promulgated from 'those at the top.'

The reasons for this reduction of the wider cultural milieu into a single absolute narrative have been discussed extensively in relation to the post-modern semiotic field. Among them foremost is the Jamesonian idea that for many individuals and sub-cultures the contemporary eclectic cultural environment is simply too disorienting. The remedy for this is the influx of a "populist form of cognitive mapping that attempts to represent the un-representable totality of these seemingly disparate yet interconnected social, political, and economic transformations."<sup>20</sup> In the age of the internet and virtually instant communications, it is simply difficult to get one's bearings in the wide and heterogeneous semiotic field of mainstream media. It is this attempt at a coherent totality that is one of the criteria which establishes the fundamentally ideological nature of the superconspiracy theories.

Another reason why conspiracy theories are so popular would be their, oftentimes frustrating, resistance to debunking. The conspiracy theories are, according to Keeley, "the only theories for which evidence *against* them is actually construed as evidence *in favor* of them."<sup>21</sup> To give an example, any evidence against the notion that the US invaded Afghanistan with the intent of taking control of inter-dimensional portals can very easily be dismissed by stating that the evidence was supplied by the ruling reptile class to disseminate *false* information and keep their *true* intent secret. Thus, not only is a conspiracy theory capable of incorporating all new information to serve its basic ideology, it is also capable of incorporating evidence which directly challenges its claims.

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20 Lewis and Kahn, "The Reptoid Hypothesis" 13

21 Keeley, "Of Conspiracy Theories" 120

The more one tries to defraud a conspiracy's claims, the more the conspiracy believer is assured that his theory is, in fact, true. This is, according to Slavoj Žižek, a fundamental characteristic of ideology.

An ideology is really 'holding us' only when we do not feel any opposition between it and reality - that is, when the ideology succeeds in determining the mode of our everyday experience of reality itself. [...] An ideology really succeeds when even the facts which at first sight contradict it start to function as arguments in its favor.<sup>22</sup>

The refusal to accept the power of evidence which opposes the conspiracy construct is a measure of the conspiracy ideology's virility. The more it is impossible to refute its claims, the stronger the conspiracy theory is. In relation to Icke's superconspiracy, the potential for resistance, indeed identical with the psychoanalytic concept of an analysands resistance to the analysis, is of truly epic proportions. The “reptoid hypothesis” involves claims of such a grand scale, and the hypercompetency of the evil masters is so vast, that any piece of evidence against the theory is destined to become appropriated into it.

It is thus very difficult to attack the ideology's claims directly. The only possibility is to decompose it - to unravel what Žižek calls the 'ideological quilt.' This concept deserves some introduction: according to Žižek, “Ideological space” requires a certain locus which ties together the otherwise “floating signifiers, whose initial identity is 'open'.”<sup>23</sup> This locus is the *point de capiton*, the “rigid designator”, which totalizes an ideology by bringing to a halt the metonymic sliding of its signified.”<sup>24</sup> This 'rigid designator' is, in other words, that locus around which ideologies are weaved and framed. To take away this, seemingly firm, point of reference unravels the entire ideological quilt, and once again reinstates the signifiers as free, “floating signifiers.” They cease to be incorporated into a wider signifying system apart from that of grammatical language, as Derridian post-structuralist thought has effectively shown to be the case.

To get a better idea of this concept of quilting, Žižek calls up Lacan's well-known graph of desire. Although the graph went through altogether four stages of development, the basic form, graph I, will suffice to show the workings of the so-called 'quilting.'

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22 Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (Verso: 1989) 49.

23 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* 87

24 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* 99

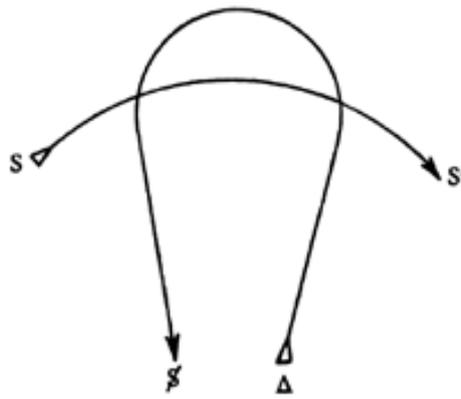


Figure 1, Lacan's Graph I of Desire<sup>25</sup>

The vector of S-S' is essentially that of time (S is the floating signifier, whereas S' is the same signifier incorporated into the ideological quilt), and the vertical vector (where S-barred is the Lacanian split subject, and  $\Delta$  is the “pre-symbolic intention”<sup>26</sup>) is that which quilts the signifier into the ideological system. In other words, a signifier (S) is at some point subject to a pre-symbolic, “mythical,” yet “real” intent which incorporates it into the symbolic quilt. Until this act of vertical 'quilting,' the S signifier is free, a “floating signifier.” After the primary impulse of the intent (a part of the Real, thus intrinsically non-Symbolic) it returns to the barred subject, which receives it as an object of symbolic, expressed information.

It is this vertical vector that may be identified, in the case of conspiracy theories, with the vector of the “paranoid style” of Hofstadter. Much like Žižek gives examples of 'quilting' the floating signifiers with the vertical vector of Communism, which gives the *point de capiton* of, for example, the ever-present “class struggle,”<sup>27</sup> so the conspiracy theorist quilts the free signifiers with the 'paranoid style' of thought. The 'paranoid style' stems from that pre-symbolic, pre-conscious intention ( $\Delta$ ) that initiates the vertical vector which, when it reaches the barred subject, quilts the symbolic order into the form of conspiracy belief. Lacan writes that “interpretation is directed towards desire, with which, in a certain sense, it is identical.”<sup>28</sup> The vertical vector, by the act of quilting, gives the floating signifier its firm meaning - it interprets it - by translating the simple S into the ideologically integrated S'. As was indicated previously, the conspiracy theory is by definition identified by this characteristic tendency towards the signifier being *interpreted* via the “paranoid style” of thinking as coined by Hofstadter. This is its essential feature. The graph I of

25 <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/tharpold/courses/fall04/eng4015/images/point-capiton.gif>

26 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* 101

27 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* 87

28 Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (Norton: USA, 1998) 176.

desire, in other words, visually presents the act of ideological transformation of the signifier from a free floating, inchoate concept to an ideologically charged one.

There is a locus which, according to Žižek, is central to the basic unit of the ideological quilt. This is the *point de capiton*.

[...] at a certain point- precisely the point at which the intention pierces the signifier's chain, traverses it - some signifier fixes retroactively the meaning of the chain, sews the meaning to the signifier, halts the sliding of the meaning.<sup>29</sup>

It is worth noting that in the case of any ideology this rigid designator is none other than Truth. Truth is in essence the *point de capiton* of all ideologies as can be inferred from the very definition of ideology as the “belief that perspective is truth.” An ideology proposes that the vertical vector, which in light of the above definition may be termed the 'perspective,' which transverses the horizontal vector of the signifier is regarded as being the only true perspective. This symbolic quilt woven from signifiers (horizontal) and their interpreted meanings (vertical) rests on the *point de capiton*, the point which “halts the sliding of meaning,” and it is this point that must, by definition, be that of Truth. Obviously, the mechanism is tautological: The signifier S' becomes that S' for the very reason that S' is, by definition, true. This is an obvious characteristic of ideology as such. As Žižek notes, it is the fundamental characteristic of the Law, the great Symbolic Other equated with ideology, that “we must obey it not because it is just, good, or even beneficial, but simply *because it is the law*- this tautology articulates the vicious circle of its authority [...]”<sup>30</sup> In a similar sense, any ideology is not to be believed because it is in reality true in an objective sense, but rather because it demands, by its very nature, to be seen as holding the absolute Truth. It is true because its very existence relies on the fact of it being true.

This affirmation, however, still addresses the concept of ideology in too broad a fashion. Yes, an ideology must be seen as being true by its very definition. Every statement, every signifier of the given ideology (S') must be regarded as being the right, true interpretation of that otherwise free, 'floating' signifier. Truth can thus be seen as a basic pre-requisite of the coherence of the *point de capiton*, of its ability to firmly hold in place the horizontal vector of the signifier with the vertical vector that is the perspective.

This is, however, problematic, as the tautology inherent in the ideological construct bars any access to the truth as a thing-in-itself. Law is law, that is true; as such, it must be taken that from its

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29 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* 102

30 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* 37

ideological position, it is intrinsically true. But from an outside position, the ideology of Law is inherently limited. Taking into account the vantage point that lies outside the ideology, the very root of its existence is unmasked as simple tautology. Any ideology must hide this fundamental Achilles' heel from anyone that does not take part in its transference. This knot of symbolic sinews, the *point de capiton*, which lies at the very center of the ideology is the force that allows for the ideology to exist, and is, in its essence, a tautological void: It is true, simply because it is true. As Žižek remarks

What is 'repressed' then is not some obscure origin of the Law but the very fact that the Law is not to be accepted as true, only as necessary- the fact that *its authority is without truth*.<sup>31</sup>

In its incessant determination to be regarded as true, Icke's superconspiracy construct exposes its own inherent lack. The literary merits of Icke's "Reptoid hypothesis" are not being disputed, as his narrative is a shining example of a creative type of speculative acceleration, where inchoate concepts are taken to their hyperreal guise. It is, however, this constant reiteration of its supposed truthfulness which unveils the text's ideological basis. Icke professes that what he is propagating is in fact the one Truth which stands in direct opposition to the official narratives circulating throughout society's vectors of communication. It is in this sense that his motivations are suspect, and it is in this way that he manages to garner so much media attention. He is not regarded as a sci-fi author, or a cultural critic, but as a prophet of a Truth too vast to be effectively pinned down. This model is not original in its own right, and it will be the goal of the following pages to show certain startling similarities with a number of critical discourses.

## Chapter 2: A Comparative Critique

The specific narrative cocktail which Icke creates undoubtedly makes use of numerous narrative fields, such as fiction, Biblical studies, History, New Age mysticism, and others. It is, however, the thesis of this chapter that the vision embodied in his texts can most effectively be approached as a type of variation on Marxist, and, more specifically, New Left critical theory. It shares many of its basic ideas, along with its vision of social dynamics.

Although Icke often makes use of the basic ideas and tenets of a fundamentally class-conscious critique of society, he in no way references the critical and academic discourse which has

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31 Žižek *The Sublime Object of Ideology* 38

accreted around these themes and issues. He only skirts the borders of the academic debate indirectly, toeing the line between properly rigorous academia and his specific brand of documentary fiction. This uneasy boundary between stigmatized knowledge and the mainstream discourse has been strained in the past decades with the advent of the internet, and the birth of a specific brand of knowledge which is generated by its inclusive and fundamentally participative character. Where active conspiracy scholar Jodi Dean sees the line as becoming more and more relevant, Barkun is more reticent and sees the western taste for conspiracy narratives as still being a fringe phenomenon, and more “wedded to [subcultures who adopt] alternative conceptions of reality, including artists, mystics, bohemians, and others who voluntarily secede from the prevailing consensus reality.”<sup>32</sup> The relation to the mainstream discourse is still maintained, if only on the level of positing contemporary academia as an other. Any theory framed as a hysterical attempt at deliverance from the implications of a scientific method is, more often than not, thwarted in its claim to a radically different truth. Icke's attempts at crafting a whole new theory about the state of social and global affairs comes into contact again and again with the existing theoretical discourse whose presence is persistently felt within his reductionist schemas and structures of thought. It is the eclectic mechanisms of critical theory which seep through the cracks most often, and which hold a very central position in the overall web of Icke's perceived reality.

## 2.1. Systemic Hegemony

Let us now look at the mechanism of Icke's superconspiracy theory in relation to a Marxist frame of thought. It undoubtedly relies on the fundamental ideological necessity of possessing the only absolute Truth. His basic thesis - the reptoid hypothesis - is regarded as being true, and remains open for future signifiers to be woven into the body of the existing text. This tendency of regarding his work as possessing the Truth, was indicated in the previous chapter. A good example of his hyperstitious weaving, or 'quilting,' is provided by the following excerpt

The present magnitude of Brotherhood control did not happen in a few years, even a few decades or centuries: it can be traced back thousands of years. The structures of today's institutions in government, banking, business, military and the media have not been infiltrated by this force, they were created by them from the start.<sup>33</sup>

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32 Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy* 186

33 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 1

As one can see, the signifiers 'government,' 'banking,' 'business,' 'military,' and 'media' are all peculiarly interwoven into the conspiracy narrative as defined by the “paranoid style.” All these vastly different institutions which make up the social fabric are all given the same treatment in the form of the basic ideological principle of Icke's theory - they have been created and are controlled by the Babylonian Brotherhood. Icke does not see them as a heterogeneous mosaic of interdependent social machines, but rather as a covertly hegemonic system controlling the *seemingly* pluralistic political world. These heterogeneous and varied systems which are in the present day becoming so complex that they are essentially starting to function as a black box<sup>34</sup> become, in Icke's treatment, wholly transparent. Present-day academia comprehends that these heterogeneous assemblages of political energy are in fact becoming more and more complex and potentially interwoven, but this does not make the system more easily comprehensible. Rather, it makes the algorithms of the system that much more stacked and disorienting. Contemporary thought sees the economic relations which govern the relationships between the societal structures as being all but transparent, and the individual workings of the economic machine are seen as a closed black box where we can trace the input and output, but the processes of the function remain hidden due to their technical complexity.

This complex system of accreted connections cannot be so trivially explained away. Yet Icke sees this interconnectedness as simplifying the system as a whole. He, in this sense, subscribes to the paranoid mentality as a psychological characteristic defined by the constant threat of a “vast' or 'gigantic' conspiracy” being “the *motive force* in historical events.”<sup>35</sup> He attempts to make the system easily readable for the conspiracy consumer, in that he binds all history within a net of transparent relations and ascribes its genesis to the Babylonian Brotherhood.

It is interesting to note that many critical thinkers have voiced very similar views on the nature of modern-day capitalism. Nick Land's treatment of what him and Menciis Moldbug call “the Cathedral,” for instance, is very similar in its basic outlines. It shows the Cathedral as a vehicle for the “ruling entity that is the truly dominant instance of the democratic polity.”<sup>36</sup> The Cathedral, in other words, is an assemblage of political entities which serve the small elite controlling them from behind the scenes. The basic idea is similar, but the rhetoric and the discourse which Icke employs is miles away from Land's writing mode based on unflinching, albeit tart, erudition. Land writes the following about the global capitalist Cathedral

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34 Brian W. Arthur, „Cognition: The Black Box of Economics,“  
3.12.2014<[http://tuvalu.santafe.edu/~wbarthur/Papers/Colander\\_Cognition\\_Web.pdf](http://tuvalu.santafe.edu/~wbarthur/Papers/Colander_Cognition_Web.pdf)>.

35 Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” 29

36 Nick Land, “The Dark Enlightenment,”3.12.2014<<http://www.thedarkenlightenment.com/the-dark-enlightenment-by-nick-land/>>.

Within the final phase of Modernity 1.0, American history becomes the master narrative of the world. It is there that the great Abrahamic cultural conveyor culminates in the secularized neo-puritanism of the Cathedral, as it establishes the New Jerusalem in Washington DC. The apparatus of Messianic-revolutionary purpose is consolidated in the evangelical state, which is authorized by any means necessary to install a new world order of universal fraternity, in the name of equality, human rights, social justice, and – above all – *democracy*. The absolute moral confidence of the Cathedral underwrites the enthusiastic pursuit of unrestrained centralized power, optimally unlimited in its intensive penetration and its extensive scope.<sup>37</sup>

Simply the words “new world order” would be a red flag for any right-wing, die-hard conspiracy theorist. The debate regarding the nature of this “new world order,” and whether it is malevolent only slightly or downright infernal would do for many hours of conversation in the virtual hangouts of the more intrepid conspiracists.<sup>38</sup> In truth of fact however, it is the clause which reads: “American history becomes the master narrative of the world” which gives most ample food for thought. Land means to say that the ideology of American neo-liberal values becomes the dominant narrative for the world as such, and that Christian rhetoric and Puritan ethics become a type of hegemonic ideal against which to judge the various polymorphic political entities which make up the societies of the US, as well as of the rest of the world. “Narrative” can, in this instance, be inextricably tied with the notion of 'ideology,' in that it is an assemblage of history, religion, and politics, all tied together by a rhetoric of the supremacy of the inherent Truth residing in the symbolic system. The Cathedral is a product of the late stages of capitalism, when irrational politics become imbedded within the very fabric of the social machines, and when drastic political and economic decisions are made by the ruling elite who are intrinsically dissociated from the process of production. This gradual implosion of the possible in late capitalism is looped in an eigenstate of ambivalence, where what is deterritorialized with one hand immediately becomes reterritorialized with the other by systems of flows integral to the very makeup of the political environment.

This capacity of capital to generate itself in the manner of a positive feedback loop has been critiqued by leftist thinkers since the time of Karl Marx. A more recent example can be found in Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* (1964) where he speaks of the “Closing of the Universe of Discourse,” a media-driven mechanism where

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37 Land, “The Dark Enlightenment”

38 A good example of such a forum: <http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/>

the productive superstructure over the unhappy society permeates the “media” which mediate between the masters and their dependents. Its publicity agents shape the universe of communication in which the one-dimensional behaviour expresses itself.<sup>39</sup>

This idea that the elite misinforms and controls the populace by means of campaigns of disinformation is recurrent in Icke's work as well, and can be picked out in his ever recurring mantra of “problem-reaction-solution”<sup>40</sup> This concise *bonmot* expresses the belief that the powers that be *create* problems to which their political apparatus reacts, and subsequently solves in a manner which enforces the integration of the political system and of the social body, thus tightening the Brotherhood's grip on the affected society. The media play the role of narrating this power struggle in a manner which is complicit with the agenda of the dominant system. In Icke's treatment the problem is developed by those in power, and the remedy is bestowed by the same group, all the while falling back on a media campaign of misinformation which properly contextualizes the mediated events to the wider polis.

It is interesting to note that Icke gives utter primacy to political agency rather than circumstance. In his vision, social inequality and conflict do not come about by means of complex interrelations and via the playing out of disparate social algorithms, but by a type of supernatural agency personified in the Babylonian Brotherhood. It is 'they' who create the problems, and it is 'they' who create the solution, thus further tightening their grip on the free populace. The economy and the social environment is not seen as a black box too complex to readily comprehend, but as a fully transparent system which the sapient mind can easily read if only they have access to the right type of information, meaning Icke's oeuvre.

In a similar fashion he affirms the dominant role of media and mediation when he addresses specific instances of supposed willful disinformation. For instance, Icke accuses the Brotherhood of hijacking the New Age movement as an act of this very type of capitalist reterritorialization and reappropriation. He writes

It was the Brotherhood who created the New Age Movement to divert the awakening [of sapient souls to their true condition]. The term *New Age* is the name of a

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39 Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Beacon: 1964) 3.12.2014<<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/marcuse/works/one-dimensional-man/one-dimensional-man.pdf>> 69.

40 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 220, 230

Freemasonic magazine. A mind controlled slave of the American Government, now recovering, confirmed to me that the New Age was launched covertly by Henry Kissinger and others [...] Their only alternative was to hijack the awakening consciousness into another cul-de-sac, another rules-and-regulations religion, where it would be no threat to the Brotherhood agenda.<sup>41</sup>

What Icke professes is a campaign where the Brotherhood and its lackeys create a medialized, consumer-friendly bundle to peddle to the masses as a substitute for real and empowering change. In terms of the New Left theory this would be a critique of the capitalist system's capacity for reterritorialization of previously liberated agencies. In post-Deleuzian discourse capitalism is often seen as a system which works to “liberate inhibited dynamics of creativity, previously carefully imprisoned in primitive or despotic taboos.”<sup>42</sup> It is then regarded as one of the first political systems which gave rise to the idea of a constantly morphing and transcending society. Yet its capacity to reterritorialize those very same liberated libidinal tendencies which it initially gave rise to is critiqued extensively, most notably in Deleuze and Guattari's opus *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. These critiques, however, are already heralded in the work of Marx when he puts forth his typology of the inner workings of capital.

In Marxian economical theory the surplus production immediately becomes assimilated and fed back into the production of more means of production, thus increasing the potential for generating new capital. This makes a positive feedback loop of the production process, and creates the economic discrepancy between the “masters and their dependents.” The person in possession of fixed capital and in a position to manage circulating capital can easily do so: if the surplus is not organically spent, it becomes re-appropriated into the process of production, generating further increase in production. As Marcuse writes

The growing productivity of labor creates an increasing surplus-product which, whether privately or centrally appropriated and distributed, allows an increased consumption – notwithstanding the increased diversion of productivity. [...] This is the rational and material ground for the unification of opposites, for one-dimensional political behaviour. On this ground, the transcending political forces within society are arrested, and qualitative change appears possible only as a change from without.<sup>43</sup>

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41 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 478

42 Alex Williams, “Escape Velocities,” *E-Flux*, 3.12.2014<<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/escape-velocities/>>.

43 Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* 45

The ideological universe of capitalism thus encapsulates itself in a constant seesaw of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, of creating demand and supplying it. It is in this way that late-capitalism is at a fundamental level hegemonic, as its symbolic codes become written and deconstructed and again rewritten at such a speed, that this multivalent exchange becomes the very essence of the economy, and subsequently of the consumerist society as a whole. The positivist dimension of this process can be most easily picked out in Guy Debord's treatment of the phenomenon of spectacle. His well-known definition of “what appears is good; what is good appears”<sup>44</sup> is a tautological equivalent, a lingual expression of the capitalist tendency towards hegemony. The positive feedback loop created by an industrial-media complex works on the basis of creating a commodified symbolic code which the consumer takes part in and promulgates. This code effectively comprehends the semiotic field of the populace, and fits into the capitalist/late-capitalist neoliberal ideology in that it subscribes to its free-market economy. The 'market', however, is not as free as the ideologues would have critics believe, as it is governed by capital whose agenda is to create more capital. The more capital an agent controls, the more capital they are capable of producing, creating a positive feedback loop which only generates more centralized power. This mechanical advancement of capital, however, does not presume that true social progress is being made, as the movement is stifled by the very mechanisms which allowed it to function in the first place.

A recent outgrowth of critical theory, the accelerationist movement, critiques this very incapacity of the system to achieve a state of true progress, and rather offers the idea that contemporary capitalism works in a perpetual state of homeostasis, where progress is only a type of optical illusion. The writers of “The Accelerationist Manifesto” (2013) write that

We may be moving fast, but only within a strictly defined set of capitalist parameters that themselves never waver. We experience only the increasing speed of a local horizon, a simple brain-dead onrush rather than an acceleration [...] <sup>45</sup>

The idea that technological and ethical progress is taking place is seen as a devious illusion, because the capitalist system with the Cathedral at its helm is portrayed as already having constructed the very limits of social evolution. What appears to be a constant linear progress towards a brighter future is in fact only a type of social stasis encapsulated within an ambivalent,

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44 Guy Debord, *Society of Spectacle*, 2.12.2014<[www.tacticalmediafiles.net/mmbase/attachments/47184/sos.pdf](http://www.tacticalmediafiles.net/mmbase/attachments/47184/sos.pdf)>.  
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45 Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, *Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics*, 3.12.2014<<http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/05/14/accelerate-manifesto-for-an-accelerationist-politics/>>.

dialectical framework of the stabilized ideology of late-capitalism. Marcuse's "change from without" goes hand in hand with the accelerationists' notion that "The future must be cracked open once again, unfastening our horizons towards the universal possibilities of the Outside."<sup>46</sup> A transcendent element is present in both these formulations, albeit the former posits the source of change as coming from the outside (presumably from the neo-Marxist left), whereas the latter sees the source of change as necessarily coming from within the technological and metaphysical remnants of late-capitalist society.

Icke also feels the need to break from the standing system, and says as much himself when he speaks of the need to break through the "egg-shell" of vibrational manipulation to which the world population is subjected to at the hands of the reptilians. Although his mode of writing is rather mystical and willfully distances itself from more rigorous theoretical traditions, the basic presupposition is the same: in Icke's oeuvre the individual is encapsulated in a type of "vibrational prison" which he or she may only escape by breaking from the reptile-owned society at large.<sup>47</sup> Icke writes

when we open our hearts to love, the heart chakra spins with tremendous speed and power, whipping up the frequency of our incarnate consciousness to the highest vibrational expression of life, pure love. [...] The egg-shell explodes.<sup>48</sup>

This touching appeal for a type of New Age, individualist acceleration is an attempt at framing the process of breaking away from the dominant ideology which keeps the people bound in a system that is and has been ethically flawed from the very outset. Just as Marx (whom Icke, incidentally, accuses of being a stooge for the reptilian Agenda) saw the inherent limitations of capitalism in its rabid and inescapable tendency to capitalize on everything, Icke sees this ideological limitation as curbing the mystical rebirth on a personal and energetic level. The basic logic is, however, the same. Icke clamors for a global "freedom" which he sees as existing beyond the veil of "the spell" which the Reptilian overlords have cast over the eyes of the global population. Icke is in this sense critiquing capitalist ideology from a thoroughly leftist perspective, without properly acknowledging the similar ideas already put forth by myriad critical thinkers.

This tendency to shed the shackles of a capitalist system of production also shows Icke's ideology in a profoundly anarchistic light. He is in fact not preoccupied with capitalist society as a whole, with transforming its ideology and its society into a society based on freedom, equality, and

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46 Srnicek, and Williams, *Accelerationist Manifesto*

47 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 466

48 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 492

on acknowledging an *à priori* value to human life. Icke rather turns his sight to the individual, and attempts to free them from their life of toil and drudgery at the hands of the reptilian elite in a manner that is wholly solipsistic in relation to the society at large.

Icke's books are a product of our times and no longer cater to the class which Marx dubbed 'the proletariat.' Antonio Negri realizes this distinction when he speaks of the difference between the “working class” and the class of “cognitive labor,” and when he identifies accelerationism with the struggle to “liberate the productive forces of cognitive labor.”<sup>49</sup> Icke takes this affirmation into the next dimension in that he completely does away with the necessary social coherence of this change, but rather adheres to a rabid New Age individualism where it is the individual himself who must accelerate their vibrational pulse<sup>50</sup> to break through the ideological prison of the Brotherhood. Icke sees our mechanistic society as being hegemonic to such a radical degree, that he sees the only means of escape from the day-to-day capitalist reality by means of mystical, and thus inherently individualist, methods.

## 2.2. The Pyramid of Manipulation

Icke silently makes extensive use of the Marxian idea of base and superstructure. Although Marxist scholars have argued at length about the specific dynamics of the relationship between the base and superstructure of society, the basic blueprint in Marx's own words reads as follows

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations [...] namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life.<sup>51</sup>

In this dialectical complex between the base as “the real foundation,” and the “legal and political” superstructure Marx frames a basic dichotomy between the exploited and the exploiters.

49 Antonio Negri, “Reflections on the “Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics,” *E-flux*, 3.12.2014<<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/reflections-on-the-%E2%80%9Cmanifesto-for-an-accelerationist-politics%E2%80%9D/>>.

50 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 466

51 Karl Marx, “Introduction,” *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1977)4.12.2014<<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm>>.

Furthermore, he places agency within the base, rather than with the over-arching superstructure. The relationship between the two has since been a source of a long-standing “confusion at the very center of Marxism.”<sup>52</sup>

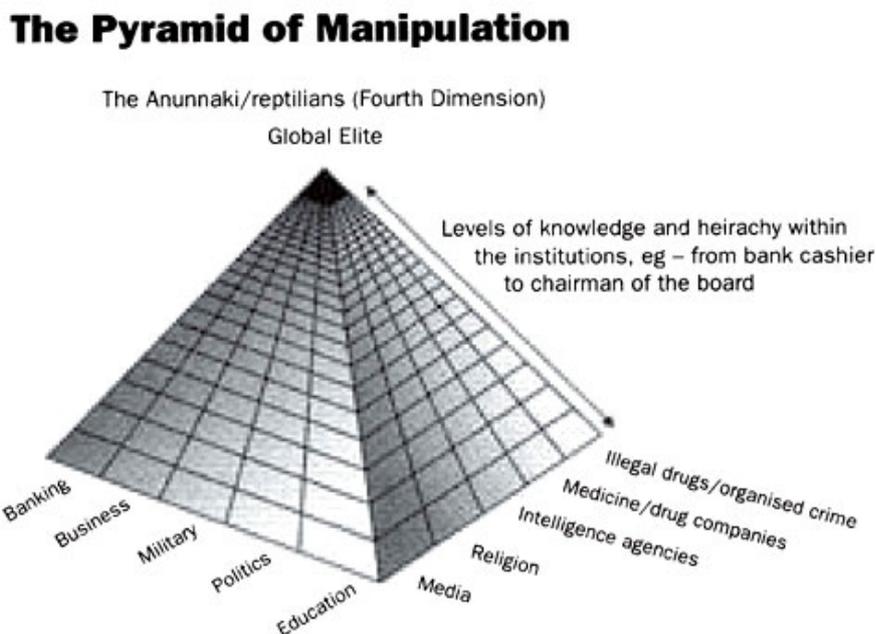


Figure 2 <sup>53</sup>

While the Marxists of the Maoist-Althusserian school felt that agency is only one-directional insofar as the base only gives impulse to the superstructure, the New Left thinkers saw that the superstructure equally influences the base. The social dynamics which we see working in society today can only corroborate the latter, and show a capitalist system where the information which trickled down from the superstructure changes equally the habits of consumption as well as of political activity within the base. Icke riffs on this idea in his own, mythical way.

The shapeshiting reptilians of the Babylonian brotherhood are placed at the very top of what he calls “The Pyramid of Manipulation.” The pyramid is a schema which places the source of power not in the base, but rather in the upper-most echelons of the superstructure. This power with which Icke has invested the 'Global Elite' is so vast, so far-reaching, and so total that it is beyond comprehension for the average plebeian. In Rob Brotherton's words, the superstructure exhibits

<sup>52</sup> Chris Harman, “Base and Superstructure,” *International Socialism* (Summer 1986)4.12.2014<users.comcen.com.au/~marcn/redflag/.../BaseAndSuperstructure.doc >.

<sup>53</sup> Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 260

“hyper-competence.”<sup>54</sup> Icke writes:

After thousands of years of evolution, the reptilian network is now a vast and often unfathomable web of interconnecting secret societies, banks, businesses, political parties, security agencies, media owners and so on. But its basic structure and Agenda remains very simple.<sup>55</sup>

The Agenda is, of course, the “Global centralisation of power, fundamental control of the minds and bodies of the mass population, and the creation of a master race,”<sup>56</sup> and is a type of leitmotif which winds its way throughout all of his works.

In his schema Icke effectively does away with the base entirely, in the sense of the people who constitute it having absolutely neither stake nor agency in the workings of the superstructure which ubiquitously dominates them. The base is subsumed under the superstructure completely, and as the pyramid widens towards its base, it represents the superstructure's appropriation of the creative energies of the masses. The pyramid as schema is Icke's way of showing how the entire populace is working within the superstructure itself, rather than creating it from the base upwards. It is not, as in the Marxian sense, an over-arching network of outgrowths which organically receive their mandate from the primary base; rather the superstructure is portrayed as ubiquitous and domineering. It is in this way that Icke critiques the mechanization of capitalist society, and it is in this way that Icke's vision is reminiscent of the critique offered by both Marx and Marcuse.

Marcuse identifies the capitalist tendency for automation when he writes that “The machine process (as social process) requires obedience to a system of anonymous powers.”<sup>57</sup> It is this obedience to the anonymous elite at the helm of society's economy that Icke is attempting to critique. Icke explains the pyramid of domination as being headed by the “reptile full-bloods” who “hold the major positions of power in the world or work in the background controlling those in the positions of apparent power like prime ministers and presidents.”<sup>58</sup> The rest of the pyramid, its lower tiers, are made up of similar, smaller pyramids, stacked together “like Russian dolls,”<sup>59</sup> the smaller ones inside the larger. This structure is filled with people who are through their adherence to the pyramidal structure incorporated into the machine of their state and their society. It is the

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54 Rob Brotherton and Chris French, “Psychology and Conspiracy Theories,” 4.12.2014 < <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqXgE0HMMLw> >.

55 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 259

56 David Icke, *...and the Truth Shall Set You Free*, 4.12.2014 < <http://sandiego.indymedia.org/media/2007/02/124945.pdf> > 134.

57 Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* 43

58 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 259

59 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 260

reptilians, however, who remain the unquestioned masters of this ideological universe.

The similarity between the mechanistic capitalist society as drawn out by Marx in his “Fragment on Machines,” where he identifies the fundamental differences between a pre-industrial and industrial society, and the social typology as put forth by Icke is striking. Marx postulates that whereas the tool allows the worker a relative means of freedom and self-expression, the worker's activity in an automated, industrial society is “reduced to a mere abstraction of activity, is regulated on all sides by movement of the machinery, and not the opposite.”<sup>60</sup> The worker, in other words, becomes a mere cog whose repetitive automated activity is channeled towards fulfilling the needs of the system. It is this rigidity of the social structures as postulated by Marx that Icke is critiquing with the concept of the Pyramid of Manipulation. Rather than seeing the different fields of social activity ('Banking,' 'Business,' 'Military,' etc.) as being outgrowths from a firm economic base, he sees them as being created top-down by the world-elite; the superstructure is portrayed as an *à priori* substrate of society controlled and created by the Babylonian Brotherhood. In other words, Icke puts forth the idea that it is not the specific workings of the social system we know as capitalism which make for the alienated, machine-like existence of the western individual, but that there is, in the words of Hofstadter, a “vast' or 'gigantic' conspiracy” which appears “as the *motive force* in historical events.”<sup>61</sup> The malevolence of the institutions is thus all-encompassing.

The schematic framework of this idea is very much akin to Louis Althusser's critique of the state superstructure. Althusser identifies two components which make up the societal superstructure: the locus of “State Power” and the mechanism of the “State Apparatus” (further divided into the Ideological State Apparatus and the Repressive State Apparatus).<sup>62</sup> The state power may change through elections, coups, revolutions, invasions, etc., but the state apparatus (and especially the RSA) remains essentially similar throughout these political changes. Icke palpably retains these basic concepts of Althusser's critical thought, but uses them to his own ends.

In Icke's text the state power is perennially centralized in the hands of the Brotherhood (A.K.A. The reptilian Annunaki). This is a thesis that he maintains throughout his work – that “the Serpent Race, the Annunaki, is controlling this world [...]”<sup>63</sup>. From the time of the very first king of Sumer, Nimrod, the Annunaki have been in charge<sup>64</sup> and through various forms of infiltration and advanced technology they maintained their position as the overlords of the Earth to this day. The locus of “State Power,” in other words, has not changed once throughout history, but firmly adheres

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60 Karl Marx, “The Fragment on Machines,” *Grundrisse*, 4.12.2014<<http://thenewobjectivity.com/pdf/marx.pdf>> 693.

61 Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” 29

62 Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (Monthly Review Press, 1971)4.12.2014<<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>>.

63 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 26

64 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 50

to the nefarious Agenda.

The same goes for Icke's version of Althusser's concept of the State Apparatus. Althusser writes: "The State Apparatus [...] defines the State as a force of repressive execution and intervention 'in the interest of the ruling classes' [...]"<sup>65</sup> The two arms of the state apparatus are material manifestations of the abstract State Power. The manifestations of the ISA are identified in Icke's diagram (fig. 2) under the headings of 'Education,' 'Religion,' 'Media.' The RSA, the mechanism of forced compliance, is included under the headings of 'Banking,' 'Business,' 'Military,' etc. Icke, however, does not retain the Althusserian distinction between the ISA being mostly privately owned, whereas the RSA "belong entirely to the public domain,"<sup>66</sup> i.e. belong under the auspices of the state government. Icke does not make these distinctions, but fuses the State Apparatuses together into one. What transpires is the fact that Icke has indeed subsumed the base under the superstructure completely, and has placed a radical primacy and ubiquitous agency onto the societal superstructure. The fact that Icke does not at length address the categories of private ownership and public ownership, and their relation to the Ideological Apparatus, and vicariously to the promulgation of the reptilian Agenda, is a dire omission, and one that makes his narrative all the more suspect. It is because Icke willfully avoids dealing with multi-agent systems and the ambiguities and overlaps which this type of system inherently exhibits. Rather, he puts forth the theory of one super-agent imbued with hyper-competence, effectively incarnating the fetish of top-down power and extending it to a breadth as yet unfathomed.

Icke further writes that the reptilian overlords effectively arranged for the "destruction of ancient historical records, texts, and accounts over the centuries as they ravaged and raped the native societies of the world."<sup>67</sup> This vision of a Rousseauian primal people being colonized and incorporated into the nefariously mechanistic society of the extra-terrestrials is a paraphrase on the ascent of the Marxian superstructure over the base. Icke fleshes out a vision of a society where the base has been repressed in favor of a mechanistic superstructure controlled by the top-most tiers of the pyramid. In other words, Icke does not see the top tiers of the superstructure as being a place of experimentation, and an arena for the natural selection of opposing concepts and ideologies, but rather as a fixed, unchanging body of institutions. The overlords sit at the top-most tier of this pyramid and control all and sundry levels of the structure below them. In Icke's diagram the base is non-present as it is fully and completely subsumed into the dominant superstructure. There is, essentially, no base to speak of, as any and all relations of production (relations which, according to Marx, should freely and productively mingle within the base) are colonized by the superstructure

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65 Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

66 Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

67 Icke, *The Biggest Secret* 260

which rests atop them. Everything from 'Banking' to 'Illegal drugs' and 'Organized crime' is controlled by the Annunaki, whose only consistent goal, the Agenda, is the domination of the human species.

The fact that Icke also includes nefarious and illegal systems of production (like illegal drug trafficking) only speaks for the fact that Icke sees the economic system, the very idea of a systematic monetary exchange, as being fundamentally flawed and linked to the alien oppressors. In other words, he does not see the production of cocaine in Columbia, or of opiates manufactured in Afghanistan as being subversive to the totalitarian system, as being expressions of economic dissent, but as being an integral part of it. The activities of organized crime are thus seen not as being dangerous to the hegemonic structure, but as supporting it at a fundamental level. The domination of the world is portrayed as being total, as there are effectively no interstitial gaps where an individual may exercise her freedom. In Icke's world there is nowhere to hide from the long arm of capital, as even in the drug trade its mechanisms invariably work, and invariably serve those whom he identifies as our alien slavemasters.

Icke takes the Marxian debate on the influence of the superstructure on the base to an extreme and gives primacy to the superstructure to such a degree, that one can only term it irrational. Much like the Landian concept of the Cathedral, Icke places at the top of our society a complex web of interlocking entities, but then proceeds to imbue them with a supernatural identity. Where Land and other thinkers take part in the present academic discourses on the reality of late capitalism, Icke distances himself from this debate, and sees it as only another facet of the all-powerful perennial oligarchy placed at the top of the pyramid. He is in this sense a radical critic because he presents the ideological capsule of late capitalism as being virtually impermeable, and places the only solution to its positivist discourse in an individualist, personal negation. Icke distances himself from the academic sphere all together, and opts for a prophetic mode of speech, where fiction and reality blur.

### 2.3. Alienation and the System

Icke has appropriated the Marxian concept of alienation for his own needs. Marx defines the state of alienation as stemming from the dissociation of the worker from his or her product: when the worker finds himself encapsulated in the mechanized mode of production, his relationship to the product of his labors becomes estranged to him – he confronts the object of his labor not with a sense of pride and personal investment, but as something strange and alien to himself; something

that, although created by him, has no direct relation to his manifest self-image. When production is not an externalized product of the subject's libidinal investment but an automatic activity benefiting only a higher power, the worker becomes "related to the product of his labor as to an alien object."<sup>68</sup> Marx aptly comments on the social conditions which bring about this feeling of alienation when he writes

[...] the external character of labor for the free worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs not to himself, but to another. [...] the worker's activity [is] not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self.<sup>69</sup>

This estrangement manifests itself as a loss of agency, as "the more powerful labor becomes, the more powerless becomes the worker, the more ingenious labor becomes, the less ingenious becomes the worker and the more he becomes nature's servant."<sup>70</sup> Alienation thus entails a loss of effective self-affirmation in face of the capitalist machine. In the face of the estranged product the worker becomes "powerless" and a "servant" to the automated necessity of production. There follows not only a simple distance between the worker and the product his work, but also a recoding of their relationship. The alienated worker is robbed of his agency and becomes a slave to the master product.

Furthermore, this loss of self does not end at the level of the relationship between the individual and his product, but can be traced to the dynamic of the individual's relationship toward his society and toward its structures of power. Since Marx sees the human animal as being a "species-being,"<sup>71</sup> he sees the alienation of the product of labor as an index to a process of alienation from the species: "estranged labor estranges the species from man. It changes for him the life of the species into a means of individual life."<sup>72</sup> In other words, when the product of the worker's labor is not a source of individual pride and is not regarded as a source of self-affirmation, the worker's connection with the wider species of man shatters. The product of labor inherently carries within it the productive energy the worker has inscribed into it, and when this energy is no longer a source of self-affirmation, but of estrangement, the society of man becomes estranged along with it. The coherence of the human race dissipates in favor of a compartmentalized system

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68 Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, 4.12.2014<<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Economic-Philosophic-Manuscripts-1844.pdf>> 29.

69 Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* 30

70 Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* 30

71 Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* 31

72 Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* 31

of individuals who themselves produce estranged products for the depersonalized market, which in itself becomes an estranged system of relations. The hegemony and aesthetic totality of the human community dissipates in the face of alienated production which spawns a depersonalized system.

Looking back at Icke's mechanistic concept of the Pyramid of Manipulation, this is exactly what he implicitly professes. The Pyramid comprehends the totality of the human condition in a machine-like structure, where people are not regarded as free agents giving expression to their individual productive forces, but as a spawn of automata whose work benefits only those at the top of the Pyramid of Power. These are, of course, the members of a different species not in a figurative sense, but in a literal one. The reptilian overlords are a mythified transposition of this Marxian idea that estranged labor creates a rift in the very species of man. Icke has adopted this idea for his own, but bestowed upon it the added weight of being true in a literal, ideological sense: he professes that there is a fundamentally hegemonic foreign species who control the means of production and who sow discord among our own human race.

This metaphysical reaction to a fundamentally materialist social problem is predicted by Marx himself when he asks the question "If the product of labor is alien to me, if it confronts me as an alien power, to whom, then, does it belong? To a being *other* than myself. Who is this being? The *gods*?"<sup>73</sup> The psychological alienation which stems from the subject's uncanny perception of the product of his work invites these very questions. If the products of his labor are not of him, then it naturally follows that he himself is not fully in possession of his productive, meaning his social, existence. Who then owns his libidinal investment?

Icke answers simply: the Annunaki. The numerous intertwined systems as seen in the Pyramid of Manipulation possess the individual, just as in Marxian theory the capitalist possesses the labor force. This is not, however, only true in an economic sense, but also in a metaphysical one. The paranoid mentality bestows on the reptilians unlimited power of mind-control, time travel, invisibility and shape-shifting, psychic immortality, as well as an uncanny liking for blood rituals. In Icke's world this is all possible, because he does not see the ruling class as being of the people, as a superstructure which is in constant dialogue with the base, but rather as an external and fundamentally transcendental class of overlords, who are not of the human species. The very existence of their immensely powerful alien technologies is problematic, as the greater populace has no knowledge of such possibilities, but rather simple intimations of their existence which trickles down from the academic and scientific spheres of discourse. It is in this way very simple to craft a narrative with these disparate technological trivia of the information age, and ready them for consumption at a time when political paranoia has had an unprecedented renaissance. The Annunaki

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<sup>73</sup> Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* 32

truly start to mimic an all-knowing, all capable metaphysical entity which may only be described as being godly - they are the unseen rulers of our world, they are the source of all our institutions, they created us by genetic modification, and they keep watch over us, punishing those who do not conform to their Law. In the psychoanalytic sense they fill in the role of the great Other.

The 'ancient-astronaut' hypotheses, which have been populating the post-modern literary landscape for the past decades, feeds into this tradition as well, as 'the gods' figure very extensively in them and are tied to a type of pre-monotheistic tradition of religiosity (see the works of Erich Däniken, i.e. *Chariots of the Gods*, or Zacharia Sitchin's *The Earth Chronicles*). In this rich literary sub-genre the fictional mingles with the factual, and the mystical with the positive. This mosaic is so rich in its scope that it is effectively hard to sift through, and often receives derogatory treatment for its methodology at the hands of more erudite scholars. To dismiss these modern myths would, however, be a mistake, as they offer invaluable insight into our psychological and aesthetic realities.

If one looks at alienation from a less political viewpoint, and rather attempts to see it as a type of psychological tendency stemming from the psychological makeup of the inquiring subject, one can make some interesting inferences about Icke's oeuvre, as well as about its particularly positive reception by the wider public.

Slavoj Žižek writes this about the phenomenon of alienation

This 'alienation' [...] does not consist simply in the fact that man – a creative being, externalizing his potentials in the world of objects – 'deifies' objectivity, conceiving the objective natural and social forces out of his control as manifestations of some supernatural Being. 'Alienation', means something more precise: it means that man presupposes, perceives *himself*, his own creative power, in the form of an external, substantial Entity; it means that he 'projects', transposes his innermost essence into an alien being ('God').<sup>74</sup>

The Annunaki can thus also be seen not as a simple retelling of the Marxist dogma with additional cosmetic features attached. It may just as easily be termed a mythical narrative, and as an externalization of a fundamentally psychological conundrum. The underlying motif which resonates throughout is that of distance, of a type of self-inflicted alienation.

Žižek's argument about alienation as stemming from the subject's own psyche bridges the gap between the Marxist and the psychoanalytical take on Icke's work. He shows that alienation does not simply have to be a product of the relation of the worker to the product of his labors as

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<sup>74</sup> Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* 225

framed in the parameters of the capitalist machine, but may also be a creative act. Žižek, in other words, argues that it may not be society as object which precipitates the torrent of critical commentaries pertaining to itself, but that the commentaries themselves may be products of the subconscious drives which circulate in the creating subject's psyche.

The basis of Žižek's statement is that the subject is a creative agent who creates from "his own creative power." The Annunaki conspiracy would then be just such an exercise of transposing the subject's "innermost essence into an alien being." This gives an active meaning to the word 'alienation'. Alienation in this sense does not necessarily have to function as a state verb, but may also be regarded in its active voice as an action verb. The human subject often wills estrangement to take place in her immediate life, perhaps as a form of escape from her social environment, from her self-image, etc. It is in a similar fashion that Icke's work is an exercise in this act of alienation. Icke's narrative functions as a myth which has the function of estranging Icke's ideological subscribers from the dominant ideology of their society.

The transposition of the nebulous and internal into the expressed and external is an act of symbolic alchemy – it is an act which, in the Lacanian use of the concept, condemns the subject to the symbolic realm, and to the ever-slipping chain of signification which accompanies language. The Symbolic is in this way directly implied as the source of alienation, in that it is inherently foreign to the subject,<sup>75</sup> and is encountered in the form of a Law, of a great Other. This *à priori* Law is in its very essence the phallic entity against which and towards which the subject inevitably creates her symbolic identity. The Babylonian Brotherhood, with its mass surveillance, its blood rituals, its alien identity, its implicit omnipotence, is the perfect epitome of the great Other in all its virility. By seemingly exposing the nefarious motives of the world rulers Icke effectively distances himself from the dominant capitalist ideology which portrays the ruling elite as widely known and monitored by means of legislative systems. This self-inflicted act of alienation is a misguided attempt to divest agency from the Other, and place it on the individual. This symbolic Promethean act has the result of, on one level, alienating the subject from the dominant ideology, but at the very same time bestowing a sense of self-affirmation and agency. The choice to believe or not to believe the dominant discourse is a process which effectively alienates or incorporates the subject, insofar as he stands apart or is complicit with the perceived totality of the capitalist ideology. Alienation is thus a source of empowerment for the subject in direct proportion to his fading in face of the socially promulgated Law. Lacan expresses this followingly:

Alienation consists in this *vel* [the logical *or*], which [...] condemns the subject

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75 Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," *Écrits* (Norton: 2006) 75-81.

to appearing only in that division which, it seems to me, I have just articulated sufficiently by saying that, if it appears on one side as meaning, produced by the signifier, it appears on the other as *aphanisis* [the fading of the subject].<sup>76</sup>

Alienation is, in other words, a fundamentally ambivalent phenomenon, which empowers the subject at the same time as it is robbing him of social agency. From the point of view of society the subject is losing symbolic potency (the *aphanisis*), while at the same time, on a personal, solipsistic level, gaining access to new meanings, to new chains of signification, and to new discourses as subjectivity effectively “appear[s] only in that division”. Alienation is in this sense a type of coming into being of the subject's fractured individuality (the Lacanian “split subject”) no longer constrained by the dominant system. It is a type of self-emancipation from reigning societal codes.

To relativize the dominant discourse is in its very essence a rebellious, revolutionary act simply for its symbolic subversiveness. The social Law, promulgated through language, morality, judicial law, and phatic discourses in general, does not allow for the subversion of its basic tenets. In the capitalist system this tendency has been taken to a new level, in that the dissenting counter-cultures are themselves part of the system's makeup. Marcuse has already critiqued this phenomenon in relation to the Beat movement, Zen philosophy, and other seemingly counter-cultural movements.<sup>77 78</sup> Foreignness is something capitalism does not promulgate, as capital is capital wherever it goes. In the neo-liberal political view all the world's races and religions can agree on capital and the free market, and this should naturally lead to a hegemonic, harmonious global society. But this peace-professing rhetoric has a dark side, in that it is not truly open - it is in fact ferocious in its military activities and over-protective in the social sphere. Where the rhetoric talks of openness and peace, the capitalist machine continues to sow the seeds of verticality based in constant military conflict, as the military-industrial complex along with its prettier sister the military-entertainment complex silently become the most powerful and lucrative capitals around.

One of the products of this systematization is the enforcement of a type of enlightened political correctness which serves to promulgate the smooth functioning of an effectively docile population. Although seemingly a positive development, especially when tied to the popular ideals

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76 Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* 210

77 Marcuse, *One-dimensional Man* 21

78 Žižek in a similar fashion speaks of a type of “corporate Zen“ which has begun to flourish in the managerial spheres of capitalist society. The simple reality that capitalist society is capable of reterritorializing an effective tool of cognitive deterritorialization speaks on its ability to colonize subversive movements and cathect them into the wider social structure.

of humanism, this type of self-inflicted political blindness has managed to ultimately whitewash over the traumatic kernels which lay dormant in the political unconscious. Racism, sexism, bigotry, and elitism still flourish, but are effectively hidden under an accreted layer of pre-packaged responses and proper political stances. The ultimately asocial and detrimental effect of these conditioned sentiments has been commented upon by many neoreactionary thinkers with Land and Mencius Moldbug leading the pack.

Icke also shares a taste for the alienating potential of being considered subversive to this dominant ideology. Icke's need to distance his discourse from that of the capitalist ideology in any way possible is, on the one hand, the reason for its lack of academic rigor, but, on the other, the very reason why his writings resonate so well with the wider public. Icke's need to take a step back from the dominant ideology which, with the help of modern media, is being force-fed to just about every corner of the globe is palpable. This revolutionary element of his writings is contained in his frequent use and manipulation of what Michael Barkun calls "stigmatized knowledge."

Barkun defines stigmatized knowledge as

claims to truth that the claimants regard as verified despite the marginalization of those claims by the institutions that conventionally distinguish between knowledge and error – universities, communities of scientific researchers, and the like.<sup>79</sup>

He further identifies five subcategories: Forgotten knowledge, Superseded knowledge, Ignored knowledge, Rejected knowledge, and Suppressed knowledge.<sup>80</sup> Stigmatized knowledge is, in other words, a continuum of knowledge that is not incorporated or accepted into the mainstream discourse, and sometimes stands directly opposite to its claims. As seen in Icke's Pyramid of Manipulation - banking, politics, education, medicine, in other words fields where rigorous research is happening on a day to day basis, are regarded as being subsumed under the reptilian agenda, and thus untrustworthy in their truth value. It follows naturally that whatever claims are not corroborated or outright rejected by the dominant institutions the conspiracy discourse adopts as being true. The reason for this is that the subversion of the mainstream discourse is *enjoyable in its alienating element*.

By subscribing to the conspiracy discourse, even in simply entertaining its claims as hypotheses, the conspiracists challenge the great Other, and derive *jouissance* from it.

The Lacanian Law is closely associated with the Other – it is an amalgam of the

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<sup>79</sup> Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy* 17

<sup>80</sup> Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy* 17

psychological remnant of the “ferocious figure” of childhood trauma<sup>81</sup> and the social simulacrum of this original primal fear. It is identical with the symbolic register, and with its prescriptive, constraining nature. The symbolic register is the space where society inscribes its codes, and, as such, the conspiracy discourse stands as a partisan faction which distances itself from these codes. Alienation is in this sense an alienation from the ideological, symbolic code in which society embalms the individual. Alienation is an estrangement from Law as ideology based around the master signifier. Even Marx's materialist worker effectively feels himself estranged via his alienated product from the concept of a homogenous species. The Law in this way functions as the dominant ideology, one which offers protection, but at the same time makes demands on the individual. Alienation thus always happens in relation to the Law as it is in its very essence a symbolic act which takes place in the symbolic register - it is a distancing from the totality of the master signifier and the ideology which may accrete around it. On the level of the Symbolic it is always in relation to society and its Law that alienation occurs.

The 'stigmatized knowledge' is subversive for the very reason that it challenges the dominant codes of knowledge. Any piece of information which is not rightly appropriated by the dominant discourse becomes a type of free-floating signifier, waiting for its appropriation into any ideological quilt.

It is this zest for transgressing the dominant discourse and the limitations of the capitalist ideology that point towards a covert enjoyment. The conspiracy discourse functions as a means to extract jouissance from knowledge, and the point of alienation is the point where this act of distillation takes place.

Lacan writes that

We must keep in mind that jouissance is prohibited to whoever speaks, as such - or, put differently, it can only be said between the lines by whoever is a subject of the Law, since Law is founded on that very prohibition.<sup>82</sup>

The statement can be phrased as “The Law prohibits the subject's distillation of jouissance from of speaking.” It is in this way that stigmatized knowledge is an attempt at unmasking the Other's inherent lack; it is a way to subvert the Other's mandate for the implementation of a ubiquitous master signifier. As Graph IV of Desire shows (figure 3), the vertical vector of the upper tier flows from jouissance through to the signifier of the Other's lack(  $S(A)$  ), into the Drive (  $\$ \diamond$

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81 Jacques Lacan, *Freud's Papers on Technique* (Norton: 1991) 102

82 Jacques Lacan, “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious,” *Écrits* (Norton: 2006) 696

D) as “the treasure trove of signifiers,”<sup>83</sup> and finishes in castration. Who's castration? The subject's, as the top tier mimics the lower tier where Voice is what remains after the signification has left it. It is an empty husk of its former signifying power, just like castration is “the sole indication of this jouissance in its finitude, which brings with it the mark of its prohibition, and which requires a sacrifice in order to constitute this mark.”<sup>84</sup> The vector essentially starts out from the act of jouissance aimed at the signifier of the “lack inherent in the Other's function as the treasure trove of signifiers”<sup>85</sup>. This act of jouissance, however, depletes itself in that realization and finishes in castration as jouissance emptied of its content.

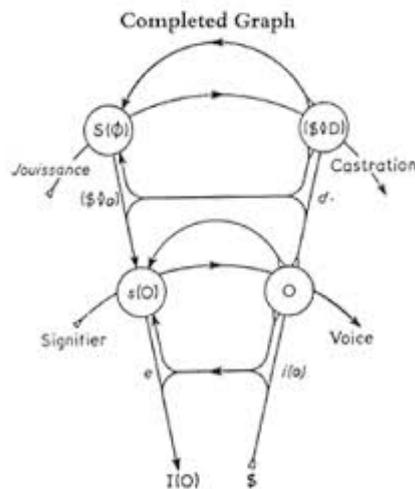


Figure 4, Graph IV of Desire

This is the dynamic of Icke's conspiracy discourse and the discourse based around the master signifier. The exposing of the inherent lack in the dominant discourse and in the knowledge of the master signifier is an act where jouissance is the fleeting product. In the case of conspiracy theories, stigmatized knowledge is the point of entry of this lack into the dominant ideology. It is the indicator of the incomplete nature of the ideologically signifying quilt. For Icke and his readers the manipulation of this stigmatized knowledge is a source of jouissance in that it points towards an inherent lack in the master's discourse; it exposes its “treasure trove of signifiers” as being incomplete, as lacking.

This act of transgression, however, terminates with the castration of the speaking subject, because in his tirade against the master's system the subject exposes the fundamental lack inherent

83 Lacan, “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious” 692

84 Lacan, “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious” 696

85 Lacan, “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious” 693

in his own discourse. This characteristic is easy to pin down in Icke's discourse, as the very source of jouissance derived from knowledge (i.e. stigmatized knowledge) more often than not becomes problematic when put under academic, or technological scrutiny at the hands of the subjects presumed to know. Whether the information is correct or not has no consequence in this case – in terms of the dominant ideology, Icke's claims are regarded as false, as if by uttering them, he exposed his own lack, his own impotence. It does not rightly matter whether the claims he makes are in fact true or not, because once he makes contact with the ideological quilt based around the *point de capiton* of the master signifier (which is inevitable, due to the use of the same language, the audience, etc.), he is instantly judged on the terms of that ideology. The result is his symbolic castration, the palpable expression of a suddenly perceivable lack.

This mechanism is identical to that of alienation. Here I will restate Lacan's quote where he writes that alienation consists of the process, where what “appears on the one side as meaning, produced by the signifier, it appears on the other as *aphanisis*.”<sup>86</sup> Jouissance enters on the one side of the graph as meaning, and goes through a function of signification of the lack in the Other. This act of signification then exits at the other side of the graph as castration. The role of castration is in this sense identical with *aphanisis*, in Ernest Jones' typology defined as the disappearance of sexual desire, but in Lacan's treatment reevaluated to mean “the *fading* of the subject.”<sup>87</sup> This fading occurs in the subject's loss of agency, as the jouissance which carried the signification becomes emptied, and the subject is left alienated/castrated. This is the mechanism which joins together the Lacanian concept of alienation to that of castration: the input (jouissance through signification), the function (the reevaluation of the master signifier), as well as the output (*aphanisis*) are identical in both.

This is in line with the popular image of conspiracy theorists as those that somehow didn't make the cut in this capitalist world. The common consensus would see them as disenfranchised individuals who are economically useless in their endeavors to sift through meaningless amounts of stigmatized data and so they compensate this lack of political agency by an even more fervent criticizing of the system which shuns them. This mad scientist image is perhaps not so far from the truth, as the fundamental tendency towards an alienated existence banishes the conspiracy theorist to the fringes of the dominant ideology's power structures.<sup>88</sup>

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86 Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* 210

87 Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* 208

88 It is perhaps worthy to note that David Icke is very vocal in claiming that his “vision” came after being publicly ridiculed for his New Age beliefs on national television on the BBC's Terry Wogan Show in 1991.

### Chapter 3. The Need for the Other of the Other

The fundamental issue when dealing with conspiracy narratives is the place and role of the Other. Early Lacanian theory tends to posit the Other in purely psychoanalytic, subjective terms, and it is only in the later 'Four Discourses'<sup>89</sup> that Lacan firmly incorporates the idea into a wider social milieu. It is with thinkers like Slavoj Žižek and Hang Yu-Huang that the term straddles effectively the two discourses of psychoanalysis and cultural study, and becomes pertinent in the analysis of conspiracy narratives. These discourses pertaining to the conspiracy texts have a tenuous relationship to clinical psychology, and tend to be based in the fields of literary theory and sociology. The following analysis will attempt to pin down the fact that super-conspiracy narratives do not simply relativize the present-day hegemonic discourses via an act of decomposition, but that they in fact make them hyper-real, and, in an act of misrecognition, attempt to fix an “Other of the Other.”

Žižek identifies the “big Other” as being “the virtual symbolic order, the network that structures reality for us,” and elaborates in saying that a constitutive feature of this phenomenon is “the alienation of the subject in the symbolic order: the Other pulls the strings, the subject doesn't speak, he is 'spoken' by the symbolic structure.”<sup>90</sup> From the moment of the injunction of the Mirror stage, the subject is dominated by the Symbolic order, the manifestation of which is speech. As such, the subject is alienated from his own speech much like a worker in the capitalist mode of production is alienated from her product. Language is in this sense a product of various diachronic events which are imposed upon the subject in what Lacan identified as the Mirror stage of development, the stage where the individual is introduced *into* language. Language comprehends him in profound ways and is in this sense alien to his pre-Symbolic state of being. As a result the subject becomes estranged towards his linguistic production as a direct result of the imposition of language; he “is 'spoken' by the symbolic structure.”

This issue with the Symbolic register may manifest later in life as a fear of losing agency, or what Timothy Melley calls “agency panic.” Melley writes:

By agency panic, I mean an intense anxiety about an apparent loss of autonomy or self-control – the conviction that one's actions are being controlled by someone else, that one has been “constructed” by powerful outside agents.<sup>91</sup>

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89 Jacques Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis* (Norton: 2007)

90 Slavoj Žižek, “The Matrix, or Two Sides of Perversion,” *Philosophy Today* (1999)4.12.2014<<http://www.egs.edu/faculty/slavoj-zizek/articles/the-matrix-or-two-sides-of-perversion/>>

91 Timothy Melley, “Agency Panic and the Culture of Conspiracy,” 4.12.2014<<http://www.pasleybrothers.com/>

Through being incorporated into the Symbolic structure of the big Other the individual loses his sense of agency, and feels subjected to a “loss of autonomy or self-control.” The conspiracy theorist, according to Melley, attempts to regain a sense of self via the personal implications of the conspiracy theory. Once the great Other is identified in all its monstrosity, the conspiracy theorist feels as if the loss of agency is being checked, as if he has begun a process of healing in his thrust to regain freedom from the tenets of a great evil which has subsumed him. Melley writes that the crux of agency panic “lies in the way it attempts to conserve a long-standing model of personhood – a view of the individual as a rational, motivated agent with a protected interior core of beliefs, desires, and memories.”<sup>92</sup> It is an attempt at a reversal of the estrangement experienced through the imposition of the Symbolic order onto the individual.

The Symbolic register which comprehends the big Other is in essence virtual, and as the perceiving subject matures the rule of Law becomes more and more porous and prone to be recontextualized, as in Freud's developmental phase of “secondary revision.”<sup>93</sup> This is the perennial leitmotif of Lacanian theory as expressed in the so-called “lack of the Other” - S(Ø). Žižek writes,

[...] the most radical dimension of Lacanian theory lies [...] in realizing that the big Other, the symbolic order itself, is also *barré*, crossed-out, by a fundamental impossibility, structured around an impossible/traumatic kernel, around a central lack. [...] it is precisely this lack in the Other which enables the subject to achieve a kind of de-alienation called by Lacan *separation*: not in the sense that the subject experiences that now he is separated for ever from the object by the barrier of language, but that *the object is separated from the Other itself*, that the Other itself 'hasn't got it,' hasn't got the final answer. [...] This lack in the Other gives the subject – so to speak – a breathing space, it enables him to avoid the total alienation in the signifier not by filling out his lack but by allowing him to identify himself, his own lack, with the lack in the Other.<sup>94</sup>

Looking back to the preceding chapters, we have identified the fact that the conspiracy believer feels herself alienated from the dominant culture. Where the subject who subscribes to the dominant symbolic codes of the big Other often acknowledges the inherent lack of the master

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conspiracy/readings/Melley,%20Agency%20Panic.pdf> 62

92 Melley, “Agency Panic and the Culture of Conspiracy” 64

93 Hayden White, “Introduction,” *Tropics of Discourse* (John Hopkins University Press: 1973) 14.

94 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* 122

signifier and finds a sense of identification through that lack, Icke and other conspiracy theorists refuse this identification. They villify 'those at the top' as a means of retaining the sense of alienation from the dominant culture, refusing to acknowledge a subsurface lack, a traumatic kernel, which resides in themselves as much as in the phallic signifier. Where Melley feels that conspiracy discourse originates through an attempt to regain some sort of agency in a chaotic world, Žižek sees its more perverse side in the fact that it is not an attempt to *reclaim* the subject's agency, but rather an attempt to negate it by means of reinstating the fantasy of the Other.

The way that conspiracy theory is used as a tool for countering the agency of the big Other is fundamentally regressive, in that it effectively reinstates a pure Other in its place, a transcendental 'Other of the Other.' This event of reinstatement manifests itself in Hoffstadter's notion of "the paranoid style" and in Barkun's fundamental conspiracy notion that "nothing is as it seems." It is this distrust of all and sundry symbolic objects which invites the belief in 'an Other of the Other' on the part of the conspiracy theorist. The tautology which resides at the center of the *point de capiton* is based around a regressive oscillation between the belief that in the Symbolic register 'nothing is as it seems' and the opposite belief that via the conspiracy narrative the perceiving subject knows *exactly* how things are. Herein lies the dialectical tautology which functions an intertwined knot binding together the ideological quilt of the conspiracy discourse. The conspiracy theorist, although paranoid towards the mainstream messages and vectors of communication, leaves the ideological quilt of the conspiracy theory intact, as a type of axiom or scripture which supplies a symbolic phallus around which to structure his world-view.

It is in this way that conspiracy discourse is a paradoxical phenomenon insofar as it instantiates an Other beyond the Law and beyond language. It functions as an attempt to wrest personal agency from the dominant discourse, while simultaneously firmly retaining the belief in an hyper-competent external agent directly controlling the subject's position. Therein lies its perversity.

Žižek writes the following on the diachronic development of a subject's conspiracy mentality,

[...] alienation IN the big Other is followed by the separation FROM the big Other. Separation takes place when the subject takes note of how the big Other is in itself inconsistent, purely virtual, "barred," deprived of the Thing – and fantasy is an attempt to fill out this lack of the Other, not of the subject, i.e. to (re)constitute the consistency of the big Other.<sup>95</sup>

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95 Žižek, "The Matrix, or Two Sides of Perversion"

It is this “consistency of the Other” which is the unacknowledged intention behind Icke's conspiracy discourse in that it reinstates the big Other to its rightful place. This 'rightful place' of course only functions in an infantile world-view where the Other is effectively consistent, and it is in this way that conspiracy is regressive, trying to retain an illusion of Law. The narrative shuns any leanings toward complex concepts, such as multi-agent system dynamics, black-box mechanics, or the post-structural theories on discourse. Rather, Icke's super-conspiracy narrative attempts to retain and fix the idea of a holistic, mythical, and fully transparent world where the illusion of the hypercompetent big Other has not yet dissipated.

The question then seems to be why the subject needs the ideal of the big Other as a surrogate for a tenuous freedom. The progressive, critical aspect of Icke's conspiracy narrative seems to lie in its new and fresh identification of social and economic asymmetry and class struggle, i.e. the identification *of* the big Other through the lens of the low and middle classes. The perverse, fantasmic aspect rests in the implied ubiquity of the big Other, and in the covert need for the big Other, as manifested in the need for the Other of the Other. Together these views create a closed loop: on the one hand Icke's super-conspiracy construct mirrors the power structures and offers a type of Foucaultian critique of the present-day political environment, whereas on the other hand it quite willfully reinscribes a hypercompetent Other of the Other in relying on the existence of the reptilian race. This inherent tension creates a narrative cocktail which is very hard to decompose and recontextualize.

### Considerations for Further Study

The conspiracy discourse is very much alive and in a constant state of flux. The goal of the preceding work was to attempt to shed some light on a solitary aspect of the conspiracy discourse, rather than offer any type of exhaustive and complete commentary on the topic. Such an endeavour would not only be difficult, but in fact systemically impossible, as the complex conspiracy discourse is, at this moment in time, impossible to effectively pin down for any longer period of time. That is most certainly a part of the mystique of this multi-media, participatory, and wholly relevant literary genre.

The super-conspiracy narrative seems a tool for dealing with the discourses which the societal power structures intrinsically promulgate to all spheres of the social body. Further inquiries into the conspiracy discourse should explore its psychological relation to adolescence and to symbolic coming-of-age rituals, as it seems to be a regressive reaction to the imposed imperative of symbolic maturity and an attempt at a hysterical escape from social roles and social registers by

retaining a fundamentally coherent, albeit infantile, world-view. The conspiracy theorist in this sense adopts the ideology of the conspiracy as a surrogate for genuine relations between human agents.

Another vector for further study might be a trans-cultural view of conspiracy theories and their, often ingenious, use in political discourse. The approach to conspiracy theory varies widely from location to location, the most notable asymmetry being the US government's traditional unwillingness to engage, as opposed to the post-Soviet Russian strategy of escalating and promulgating the conspiracy claims as a tool for power.<sup>96 97</sup>

Finally, a productive approach to the topic might materialize in analysis of the relationship of conspiracy discourse and emergent technologies. New technologies are often a source of anxiety and disinformation as to their potential capabilities, and this characteristic gels very well with the often remarked-upon panoptic “hypercompetence” of the nefarious conspirators. Imagined future tech allows for the imagination's free reign as to the capabilities of the malevolent agent and provides ample room for maneuvering in terms of argumentation on part of the conspiracy-believer. The misrepresentation of technological inventions (like project HAARP, for example) is a staple of the conspiracy discourse and functions as indication of the public's mistrust of new technologies.

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96 Eliot Borenstein, “Why Conspiracy Theories Take Hold in Russia,” *Huffington Post*, 4.12.2014  
<[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eliot-borenstein/why-conspiracy-theories\\_b\\_5626149.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eliot-borenstein/why-conspiracy-theories_b_5626149.html)>

97 Taras Kuzio, “Soviet Conspiracy Theories and Political Culture in Ukraine: Understanding Viktor Yanukovych and the Party of Regions,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* (September 2011).

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## Abstract

The numerous and varied conspiracy theories which circulate in the contemporary discourse are subject to hyperstition, insofar as they are grouped into wider, more elaborate structures. Some of them become hierarchic to such a degree, that they may, in Michael Barkun's typology, be labeled as "superconspiracy" constructs. No author is more prolific and systematic in the crafting of these constructs than the guru of anglophone conspiracy theory belief, David Icke. The work attempts to keep as its object of study the work of David Icke and his "reptoid hypothesis," as it is effectively one of the most elaborate and baroque conspiracy theories which populate contemporary political discourse. It is Icke's oeuvre which this thesis attempts to recontextualize within the confines of critical social theory and Žižekian psychoanalysis.

The existence of a "paranoid style" as professed by Richard J. Hofstadter can be noted throughout the history of western culture, from the Homeric gods, scheming behind the scenes, to its modern incarnations culminating in the superconspiracy constructs of David Icke, Alex Jones, and others. The work focuses not on specific conspiracy theories and their claim to facticity, but rather attempts to trace the structural features of Icke's construct and establish their underlying logic based around, predominantly Marxian, dialectics. These include the opposition of oppressor vs. the oppressed as manifest in class struggle, the critique of capitalist homogeneity, or the alienation of the worker from his/her product of labor. It will be shown that Icke professes not only a type of vulgar Marxism, but further places his narrative within a mythical mode, making frequent use of mystical, transcendental New Age discourses.

The thesis charts a path of analysis through the tradition of critical theory towards a psychoanalytic, predominantly Lacanian/Žižekian, analysis which attempts to unravel the relationship between the subject and the Other, which lies at the very core of conspiracy theory belief. The concept of the big Other plays a central role in the forming and propagation of conspiracy theories. In fact, it is always the Other that Icke's superconspiracy construct is geared towards and grapples with. The thesis attempts to show that, through a type of Žižekian reversal, the modern, turn-of-the-century conspiracy theory belief is, in fact, not an attempt at an escape from the Other's Law, but rather a perverse attempt to reinstate it. The characteristic of 'hypercompetence' placed onto the Other (in Icke's case, the reptilian Annunaki overlords) is an attempt to reclaim a fixed order of things. The hierarchy on which Icke's conspiracy belief is based betrays an attempt to move away from the multi-agent, black box mechanics of much of today's social, economic, and psychological processes towards a wholly transparent, readily readable system. It is in this way that Icke creates a functional myth, which attempts to fill the void left in the western semiotic field in the wake of post-structuralist theories of language and textuality. The advent of the internet was not only a type of catalyst for this attempt to get readable answers, but also became the tool for the promulgation of these highly idiosyncratic narratives.

The thesis makes use of the works of 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers, most notably Jacques Lacan, Herbert Marcuse, Michel Foucault, Slavoj Žižek, Nick Land and of numerous theorists of conspiracy theory, such as Michael Barkun, Richard J. Hofstadter, and Karl Popper.

## Abstrakt

Početné a různorodé konspirační teorie, které cirkulují v soudobém diskurzu jsou často mezi sebou propojovány post-moderní hypersticií. Tímto vznikají složitější a vrstvené struktury, z kterých se může, v rámci typologie Michaela Barkuna, vyvinout „superkonspirace,” tj. struktury, které v sobě spojují více různorodých konspiračních linií. Žádný soudobý autor není v tomto ohledu více produktivní, než David Icke. Tento guru anglofonní tradice konspiračních teorií, je jeden z hlavních popularizátorů tzv. 'ještěří hypotézy,' která se v jeho podání stává jednou z nejkompexnějších superkonspirací. Je to právě dílo Davida Ickea, které si tato práce bere za svůj předmět analýzy, a které se snaží vyložit a přivést do akademického kontextu pomocí kritické kulturní teorie a Lacanistické/Žižekiánské psychoanalýzy.

Dynamika tzv. „paranoidního stylu“ diskurzu byla načrtnuta Richardem J. Hofstadterem, a již tisíciletí její variace rezonují v tradici západní literatury – od Homérských bohů, po modernější inkarnace kulminující v superkonspiracích Davida Ickea, Alexe Jonese, a dalších. Tato práce se nezaměřuje tolik na specifické teorie a jejich domělou fakticitu, ale spíše se snaží zmapovat strukturální rysy Ickeova díla, a to převážně jeho základní schémata založené na, převážně Marxistické, dialektice. I z tohoto důvodu se zaměřuje na vztah utlačovatele s utlačovaným, tj. na koncept třídního boje, kritiku kapitalistické homogenity, či na jeho náhled na vztah dělníka s produktem jeho práce. Jak se ukazuje, Icke hovoří z pozice tzv. vulgárního Marxismu, a dálepak zasazuje tento konstrukt do hávu mytické řeči, neboť často využívá tradic mysticismu, a transcendentního diskurzu New Age.

Tato teze dále zasazuje Ickeovo dílo do psychoanalytické, specificky Lacanistické/Žižekiánské tradice, v rámci které se snaží osvětlit vztah mezi subjektem a konceptem 'the Other' (*L'Autre*), který definuje celý diskurz konspiračních teorií. Koncept *L'Autre* hraje centrální roli ve formování a propagaci konspiračních teorií, neboť je to vždy výhradně Lacanistický koncept *L'Autre*, vůči kterému se konspirační teorie vymezují, a se kterým se snaží svým způsobem vypořádat. Tato práce se snaží ukázat, že, skrze paradoxní Žižekiánský obrat, moderní tradice konspiračních teorií není únikem před řádem *L'Autre*, ale spíše má původ ve snaze ho opět dosadit do kulturního i individuálního povědomí. Charakteristická 'hyperkompetence,' která je *L'Autre*, přisuzována (v Ickeově případě vtělená do formy ještěřích vládců Annunaki) má původ ve snaze znovu vidět pevný řád stavu věcí. Implicitní hierarchie na které je Ickeova vize založena prozrazuje snahu nevidět společnost jako soubor multi-agentních systémů, fungujících převážně na základě konceptu 'black-box' tak, jak je vidět v dnešních společenských, ekonomických a psychologických procesech, ale spíše se snaží z těchto heterogenních procesů udělat zcela čitelný, homogenní systém. V tomto smyslu vytváří Icke funkční mýtus, který se snaží vyplnit propast, která v západním sémiotickém poli zbyla po post-strukturalistických teoriích řeči a textuality. Zrod internetu v tomto smyslu nefungoval pouze jako katalyzátor snahy získat lehce čitelné odpovědi, ale také se stal nástrojem pro šíření těchto okrajových teorií.

Tato teze převážně využívá teorie myslitelů dvacátého století, a to hlavně se zaměřením na Jacquesa Lacana, Herberta Marcuse, Michela Foucaulta, Slavojě Žižeka, Nicka Landa, a mnoho teoretiků konspiračních teorií, jako např. Michaela Barkuna, Richarda J. Hofstadtera, a Karla Poppera.