

Conspiracy theories in the alethosphere

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This paper (re)thinks the concept of the alethosphere through conspiracy theories. The alethosphere funnily chimes with the fundamental conspiracy dogma that 'the truth is out there', evoking a far-near sphere of noetic activity and truth beyond knowledge. Of course the Lacanian alethosphere and conspiratorial thinking do not meet as they occupy inverse sides in the Moebian strip of spatio-temporality. All the same, they illuminate one another in at least the following points:

'Aletheia' and 'sphere' constitute one another. Those who feel excluded from power create a 'beyond' at the frontier of knowledge. In Lacanian terms, this gesture chimes with the difference between myth and structure (as per chapter VIII), with a nod to the common origins of mythical and scientific thought (158). Any cut in the signifying chain produces a sphere, both a spatial and a signifying separation of the (a)thing (a-chose) and meaning (p. 159), sphere and a-sphere, 'a place truly occupied' (p. 161) but empty, the sacred and the profane (Cassirer).

Conspiratorial thinking illuminates the difference between the impossibility and the impotence of truth as constitutive of the difference between Lacanian psychoanalysis and science-myth. Conspiracy theories replay the impotence of truth and negotiate the master's knowledge ad infinitum (including science as master discourse, p. 160). In spatial terms, conspiratorial thinking also reveals the conditions of being and desiring with reference to the concept of the non-place whilst mistaking the 'trace' of impossibility for a manifestation of impotence.

'Furrows in the alethosphere' can be primary inscriptions of the signifier but also traversals and lines of flight out of a specific assemblage. In that sense, when Lacan argues that nothing is incompatible with the truth and the latter is a thoroughfare, place of evacuation of knowledge, also possible to cleave to it and being driven mad (184) helps us to understand the contemporary paradox of mastery and knowledge as demonstrated by the conspiratorial mind: the latter does not negate science but 'cleaves to it to madness'.