

Louis Armand, PhD
SUPERVISOR'S REPORT:

re "A Critical Reading of David Icke's Superconspiracy Construct."
by Vít Bohal
(MA dissertation, 2015)

Mr Bohal's dissertation examines the genealogy and recent manifestations of "conspiracy theory," from Karl Popper to David Icke, with specific focus on the work of the latter. The dissertation begins with an examination of the susceptibility of epistemology and truth systems in general to manipulation: what Popper calls "falsifiability," focusing on a number of more exotic conspiracy theories (e.g. the "Reptoid Hypothesis") which – cast in the light of "real" 20th-century world events – appear less fantastic than might otherwise be the case, leading to questions not only about plausibility but also the status of what we call "fiction" (hypothesis, theory... even "science"). In view of the extravagant manipulations of ideology during the past century, with its bearing upon all aspects of life (and also "science" – e.g. the Soviet suppression of whole areas of microbiology as "Western Imperialist"), Mr Bohal is correct in his assessment of "superconspiracy" as *ideology* – and by implication *ideology* as *superconspiracy*.

Mr Bohal's analysis of hegemonic systems at work in conspiracy theories, the pyramid of manipulation, and the work of "alienation" brings together ideas from Marx, the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory (Marcuse predominantly) and the Situationists (Guy Debord), alongside latterday postmodernist thinkers like Fredric Jameson. The concluding chapter, focused on the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan (& Louis Althusser, Slavoj Žižek), raises the question of conspiratorial agency as an "other of the other" – conspiracy as a generalised condition of the (de-centred) subject. One line of theorising that draws all of these elements together is the "schizogenesis" of Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze – although only touched upon briefly in this dissertation – as is the role of conspiracy (paranoia, persecution complexes, body "snatching" etc.) in experiences of psychosis. (Further discussion in this area might have been illuminating – along with additional specific, evidentiary material concerning "real" conspiratorial events.)

My recommendation for this thesis, dependent upon the candidate's performance in the defence, is a grade of very good.

Louis Armand, PhD
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