The Scene of Truth in The X-Files

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It has already become a cliché to note that The X-Files is more than simply a television program; indeed, the show has become a cultural phenomenon, whose ripples extend well beyond the program itself. The recent, mildly successful debut of The X-Files feature film is merely one aspect of this phenomenon. The X-Files has, in fact, begotten a vast array of ancillary products, ranging from such typical items as T-shirts, coffee mugs and calendars to collectibles such as Scully and Mulder action figures and even to the parodic X-Fools computer game. Magazine articles and books—both “Official” and “Unofficial”—related to the show and its stars multiply by the day. All this does not even begin to include the material related to the show on the Internet, where the most devoted of X-Philes seem to reside. On a host of discussion lists and newsgroups, there are, of course, seemingly endless discussions of the nuances of various episodes, of the meaning of details that might, even to regular viewers of the show, have gone unnoticed. In wide circulation on the Internet, one can also find The X-Files Drinking Game, where various amounts of alcoholic consumption are dictated by typical actions in the course of a show (e.g. Mulder eats sunflower seeds = take one sip). Finally, there are also a large number of X-Files Websites devoted to the fans’ own versions of X-fiction, with plotlines that range quite literally from the sublime to the ridiculous. Indeed, the sheer volume of X-Files fan-fiction is rivaled only by that of the venerable Star Trek and its spin-offs, which have had much longer to develop a following.

Some might argue that the show’s depiction of such obsessive behavior only inspires more of the same. Some may even argue that this encouragement of obsessive behavior has been part of a calculated effort by the show’s producers to market the show. There is, no doubt, a certain truth to this explanation, but it is, in my view, too simple a truth to explain much about why The X-Files has caught so many people’s interest—obsessive or not. But then, truth, or the search for truth, is itself an integral part of The X-Files and, I believe, of its appeal. In the show, the obsession with finding the truth not only motivates the characters’ actions but serves as a lure for its audiences. Indeed, I would argue that what The X-Files continually, and quite obsessively, re-enacts is precisely the scene of truth in contemporary, postmodern cultures. Yet, the more obsessively the show attempts to reproduce the truth, to locate the scene of truth, the more that truth seems to recede into a figurative darkness and, in fact, to be figured as a kind of darkness, as a strange and alien absence, which is nevertheless quite familiar. As I hope to show, then, the scene of the truth in The X-Files remains bound up with the figure of woman, with the woman as the scene of both truth and (its) absence. Yet, the show also suggests the possibility of a truth that cannot be reduced to the terms of light and dark, presence and absence, male and female, human and alien.

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At first glance, of course, *The X-Files* may seem like a fairly typical example of the traditional detective genre. As such, it seems to uphold enlightenment ideals of science and truth, of rational investigation and analysis. Indeed, much of the show’s appeal rests on its assurance that, amidst the welter of often deceptive images and data that make up its vision of contemporary society, “the truth is out there.” Yet, if this motto suggests, on the one hand, that the truth can still be located, discovered, known, it also suggests that it is not readily at hand. Its location is unknown, elsewhere, in a strange, alien, and perhaps even extraterrestrial, place.

*The X-Files* is, in many ways, structured around these two senses inherent in its slogan. On the one hand, the show suggests that the truth lies hidden behind a misleading surface of darkly lit images and baroque conspiratorial plots. In this sense, the show tantalizes us with the possibility that the truth is recoverable, if only we could decode the system, uncovering the narrative or explanation, through which these seemingly unrelated images are linked. On the other hand, *The X-Files* also seems to insist that the place of “truth” can no longer be located solely in the mundane world—the world of scientific evidence and observable facts—but only within a “supernatural” realm—a realm where UFOs, alien abductions and paranormal phenomena have become “the truth.” If detectives such as Holmes and Dupin have been seen as emblematic of the enlightenment belief that truth could be rationally discovered or detected, Mulder and Scully have become the emblems of a postmodern detection, which edges into the genres of fantasy, horror, and science fiction, genres of the “unknown,” of that which is figured as “other.”

In *The X-Files*, it is not simply a matter of the truth being unknown, but rather that “the unknown” has become “the truth.” The “X” of the show’s title serves, then, not only to mark the space of a truth that always seems to remain somewhere “out there,” but also to represent that space and that truth as “other,” as “outside” of the traditional boundaries of Western science and rationality. In this sense, *The X-Files* is concerned less with the rational investigation of images, with finding the truth behind deceptive appearances, than with the staging of a mysterious “other scene” that seems to defy investigation and analysis. It is the scene of a not-quite-identifiable “truth,” which lies beyond the empirical world. At times, it verges on the scene of religious revelation; at others, it hints at dark, monstrous, and even demonic forces lurking within our everyday world; most commonly, however, it involves an alien presence that is, as the saying goes, already among us.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that this “other scene” is entirely other-worldly. In fact, in many ways it is a very familiar scene indeed. As even a glance at the mise-en-scène of *The X-Files* will demonstrate, the show continually, obsessively, returns to particular types of scenes, scenes that inevitably seem to enact a drama of darkness and light, concealing and revealing, veiling and unveiling, deception and exposure.

A prototypical example of this use of mise-en-scène can be found in a sequence from the episode “Paper Clip,” where Scully and Mulder enter a supposedly abandoned mine in search of “the truth.” Once in the mine, they find themselves, as they so often do, confronted by a cavernous darkness, split only by the beams of their flashlights. In this darkened space, they will encounter not only a play of lights and shadows, but strange, unidentifiable
figures hurrying by, as well as a certain difficulty in interpreting the images that they in fact do see. During this sequence, too, Mulder returns to the surface only to find himself blinded by light, by the brightness of an unidentified object in the sky. This is, of course, a well-known scene in Western philosophy. Does it not, in fact, replicate rather closely the mise-en-scène of Plato’s cave?

And if the relevance of Plato to The X-Files seems a bit “obscure,” let us remember that his allegory is precisely a matter of truth and deception, obscurity and clarity. Indeed, Plato figures truth as a brightness that is somewhere outside, “out there,” a brightness that is obscured by a veil of shadows, by the misleading images that most people take to be true. In fact, looking back at the allegory of the cave, we might well view Plato’s beliefs as an early version of conspiracy theory, a conspiracy that goes far beyond anything that Mulder or Scully or even the Cigarette-smoking Man might have imagined. For Plato, the world itself becomes a kind of shadowy conspiracy, which hides the truth from all except the enlightened few, who are willing to look beyond the deceptive images of conventional, worldly wisdom.

But perhaps even more strikingly, do not the accounts of alien abductions, around which the narrative of The X-Files so often revolves, duplicate almost exactly the scene of enlightenment in Plato’s allegory, in which a prisoner is removed from the cave and exposed to a light and to images that can only appear to him as alien? Irigaray, writing on exactly this point in Plato, observes that the prisoner who is taken by force into the light can have “no appropriate term, no agreed-upon or suitable denomination” for the “beings” or things he sees, “coming as they do almost from another world” (Irigaray, 1985, p. 272). The difficulty that the prisoner experiences in articulating this “truth” would, therefore, match rather precisely the descriptions of alien encounters that are so prevalent in The X-Files, which can generally only be recovered through “regression hypnosis,” if at all. By this account, in fact, it would seem that the place of philosophy, of truth, has always been “out there,” in a strange, other world beyond language, beyond mere images. Which is to say, I suppose, that philosophy has a long tradition of seeing “the truth” as an unknown, alien space.

But then, as Irigaray so thoroughly demonstrates, the distinction between the world of the cave and the world outside the cave is less a matter of truth than of gender. She notes that the cave is “an attempt to provide a figure, a system of metaphor for the uterine cavity” and that the prisoner is, therefore, brought “out of the cave as out of a womb, according to the techniques of childbirth” (Irigaray, 1985, p. 279). To be born is, in this case, to be brought out of an enfolding, deceptive maternal darkness, to be forcibly removed into the clear light of a paternal order, where truth is finally revealed or exposed. Such a representation, as Irigaray points out, involves an “Eclipse of the mother, of the place (of) becoming, whose non-representation or even disavowal upholds the absolute being attributed to the father” (Irigaray, 1985, p. 307). In the name of the truth, in the name of the father, the representation of the woman must be effaced, forgotten. In Plato’s allegory, female reproduction is, in fact, associated with a misleading, artificial reproduction, with false copies, shadows, images.

In The X-Files, we can see a similar effacement—in this case, figured as an abduction—of the woman, which also takes place at the behest of the father, of a clearly patriarchal authority and order represented by the secretive all-male
"consortium" to which the Cigarette-smoking Man and the Well-manicured Man belong. Indeed, the narrative of The X-Files continually revolves around precisely this loss or repression of the woman. Mulder's beliefs, for example, are motivated by the abduction of his sister Samantha, the memory of which he has only been able to recover through regression hypnosis. This loss is echoed by the later abduction and near-death of Scully herself, and her own difficulty in remembering and articulating what happened to her. In this way, the search for truth in The X-Files merges with the woman's absence, with the difficulty of representing woman as anything other than an absence, a repressed memory, a lack. Here, however, we are no longer in a strictly Platonic scenario, but it is still a familiar scene in Western philosophy. As Derrida has repeatedly noted, it is the scene of the woman as truth, as a missing or at least inaccessible truth. Indeed, while writing on the relation of truth and woman in Nietzsche's work, Derrida remarks that "we shall bear witness here to her [the figure of the woman's] abduction" (1979, p. 41, emphasis in original). This scene of abduction has, in fact, been as indispensable to philosophy as it has been to The X-Files; in both cases, it has often served as the scene of truth. Yet, as familiar as this scene is within Western philosophy, it has always been represented as taking place elsewhere, in a dark and unfathomable alien space.7

One of the most prominent figurations of this "other scene" of "truth" has been in the psychoanalytical scene; as Lacan has in fact argued, "the truth can be rediscovered; usually it has already been written down elsewhere" (1977, p. 50). Indeed, just as in Plato's scenario, the analytical scene defines itself by its "rediscovery" and exposure of this truth, by its investigation of the misleading signs and images that would veil the truth. As in Plato too, psychoanalysis imagines this scene in conspiratorial terms: as a conspiracy of the unconscious, which constantly seeks to disguise the truth. Yet, while for Plato, the truth is located outside the cave, in the light of a paternal sun, for psychoanalysis, it is always inside, hidden in the depths, in a darkness that the analyst must penetrate in order to reveal. This is also, of course, exactly what Mulder and Scully do in the previously described scene.

The truth that Mulder and Scully discover in the depths of this womb-like enclosure is also, not surprisingly, related to women—in this case to Mulder's sister and to Scully herself—and to their abduction, abductions that, although never explained, are suggested to have been engineered by the all-male consortium. Indeed, in her Lacanian-oriented analysis of The X-Files, "You Only Expose Your Father," Elizabeth Kubek has argued that what the show enacts is precisely a critique or "exposure" of a patriarchal, symbolic order and its repression of the feminine. For her, "what has been repressed is...a signifier with no fixed signified—in other words, an X .... The X of The X-Files is the fate of the feminine (the daughter) under patriarchy" (Kubek, 1996, p. 198). This repression—or rather, the exposure of this repression—would seem to be, for Kubek, the scene of truth in The X-Files, a truth that nevertheless remains elsewhere, in the place of the other, of the woman. Here, obviously, the repression of the feminine coincides with the repression of the truth of alien existence. For Mulder especially, discovering the truth about aliens is inextricably linked to uncovering the truth about his sister. Like the analyst, Mulder seeks to expose this truth, to rediscover what is missing or displaced, to find that other scene for which the X is a signifier.
Yet, as Derrida, writing on psychoanalysis, has noted, “Exhibiting, baring, stripping down, unveiling—this is an old routine: the metaphor of truth, which is as much as to say the metaphor of metaphor, the truth of truth, the truth of metaphor” (1975, p. 34). It is worth recalling that Derrida makes this remark in an article entitled, appropriately enough, “The Purveyor of Truth (Le Facteur de la vérité).” In this article, he takes up and critiques Lacan’s reading of Poe’s story “The Purloined Letter.” In fact, at the risk of sounding like a conspiracy theorist myself, I would note that there are a surprising number of parallels between Poe’s story and The X-Files. Poe was, after all, one of the few writers to work both in the detective genre and in the genres of horror and the fantastic, the very genres that are condensed in The X-Files. Moreover, just as the narrative of The X-Files continually revolves around “cases” of missing or abducted woman, so too does “The Purloined Letter” revolve around something that is missing, stolen—in this case a letter belonging to a woman: the Queen. In both cases, too, there are detectives who attempt to find what is missing, to expose the truth that is out there (recalling that in “The Purloined Letter” the missing letter is hidden in plain view), to restore it to its proper place. And just as Kubek reads the abducted woman, i.e. the repressed feminine, as a signifier without a signified, an X, Lacan also reads the purloined letter, whose contents are never divulged, as a signifier, or, more properly, as the signifier, whose circulation (absence and return) is the very basis of a phallic, symbolic order and of the subject. For Lacan, then, the truth of the purloined letter lies precisely in this circulation, in the repression and repossession of the signifier, which, like the letter in Poe’s story and the aliens in The X-Files, has been “out there” all the time. One need only, like Dupin in Poe’s story or Lacan in the Seminar, look in the “proper place” to find it.

As Derrida points out, however, Lacan tends to identify this “proper place” as “the place of castration”:

It is, woman, a place unveiled as that of the lack of the penis, as the truth of the phallus, i.e., of castration. The truth of the purloined letter is the truth itself .... What is veiled/unveiled in this case is a hole, a non-being; the truth of being, as non-being. Truth is “woman” as veiled/unveiled castration (1975, pp. 60–61).

Put simply, then, psychoanalysis imagines the scene of the truth as the exposure of the woman, of woman as castration. From this perspective, however, even when this castration is exposed, there is still nothing there; the absence is the truth. This conflation of truth and absence perhaps explains why psychoanalysis has always had difficulty in representing women and their desires, except in the terms of mystery or enigma, as a negation or hole within the symbolic order. Women are not only missing something, they are themselves constituted as missing, as the unrepresentable other by which the symbolic order, including psychoanalysis, defines itself. Thus, Derrida can observe that in Lacan’s Seminar, “Something is missing from its place but the lack itself is never missing” (1975, p. 63). Indeed, it is precisely this lack or castration that serves “to bring the phallus, the signifier, the letter or the fetish back to their ... familiar dwelling, their proper place” (Derrida, 1975, p. 63). In this way, the signifier is “reappropriated,” reattached to a signified: in Derrida’s words, “The link between Femininity and Truth” becomes the “ultimate signified” of Lacan’s reading. This is precisely why Derrida refers to Lacan as “the purveyor of truth.”
In a similar way, Kubek’s Lacanian reading of *The X-Files* repeats this gesture by linking truth to women, especially to the absence or abduction of women. Indeed, even as she explicitly attempts to separate the image of the woman from castration, she continually refigures women in terms of lack, as that truth which is missing or repressed. As such, it can presumably be “rediscovered,” exposed, and thus returned to its proper place, by the analyst. Thus, after citing Lacan on the ability of the analyst to restore meaning through his own “exegesis,” Kubek notes that in *The X-Files*, “the buried lies reappear as inconsistencies, holes in the face of the earth, silences that function as signifiers saying ‘dig here!’” (Kubek, 1996, p. 202). Here, the loss or repression of something is precisely what enables the possibility of revealing the truth, of restoring meaning, just as Samantha’s abduction is what motivates, and indeed makes possible, Mulder’s search for an alien truth. As Derrida points out, however, this circuit can only be completed by the purveyor of truth, by the analyst, the detective, the critic or philosopher who gives what is missing its proper meaning, who returns it to its proper place within the symbolic system. Indeed, this is the scene in which all criticism explicitly operates, including my own and even Derrida’s, as Barbara Johnson has noted in her examination of “The Purveyor of Truth” (Johnson, 1977).

As Derrida notes, however, there is something that escapes this circular logic of loss and return, obscurity and clarity, female and male. In Poe’s story, it is that which cannot be reduced to Lacan’s reading of the truth of the purloined letter as an empty signifier. In *The X-Files*, it is what cannot be subsumed within the terms of a search for a repressed or missing truth. Kubek, to her credit, acknowledges this remainder when she notes that in *The X-Files*, there are many “loose ends” that remain “unforeclosed by the narrative,” as well as a certain “heterogeneity” that “resists the functional aspect of signification.”

Although Kubek does suggest that this heterogeneity is connected to women—and, of course, to aliens—she does not discuss it in any detail, thus allowing it to be “reappropriated” within a Lacanian model as part of that inarticulable otherness or lack that can only be figured as woman. Unlike “the woman,” however, this heterogeneity cannot simply be abducted, reduced to a matter of absence, repression or darkness. Rather, this heterogeneity seems to make itself continually visible within *The X-Files* (both the television program and the phenomenon) as an extremely obsessive concern with scenes involving reproduction, breeding, cloning, hybridity, and genetics. When Scully is abducted, for example, the tests or experiments that we see being performed on her seem to have a sexual and reproductive significance: a pipette drill apparently penetrates her abdomen, which seems to inflate as if she were pregnant (Gillian Anderson, as was well known among fans, was in fact pregnant at the time). Of course, this scene is framed in such a way that it is impossible to tell if we are dealing with actual events or with Mulder’s imagining of them. Yet, in either case, Scully is implicated in a scene—indeed, in a chain of scenes—where reproduction and the attempt to control it are constantly re-enacted.

There is ample evidence for reading this scene and the entire signifying chain related to reproduction, as Kubek in fact does, as exposing “the father’s use of the repressed ‘daughter’ as a site of (his own) creation and rebirth” (Kubek, 1996, p. 203). To stop our reading at this point, however, is to return this chain to a Lacanian notion of truth as a woman, as that lack, that “hole in the face of the earth,” that dark cavern, from which the symbolic order is born and around
which it continually revolves. To do so is, in other words, to participate in the same patriarchal system of control and repression that Kubek rightly decries; it is to contain the movement of the signifying chain, its own self-reproduction and multiplication, what Derrida would call its “dissemination.”

Yet, “dissemination” has its own, all-too-phallic implications, which are at odds with The X-Files’ association of this reproduction and hybridity with the female and with the other. Indeed, this signifying chain will include, in an interesting twist on both Lacan’s view of the purloined letter and Derrida’s notion of dissemination, the theft and circulation of Scully’s ova, which were apparently taken during her abduction. One consequence of this theft is later found in the discovery of a child, whom genetic tests confirm to be Scully’s daughter. This apparently artificial reproduction of children is echoed by earlier episodes that feature identical clones of Mulder’s sister Samantha, which are themselves linked to several episodes in which clones are revealed to be the result of attempts to breed alien–human hybrids. This concern with breeding and hybridity has, in fact, been one of The X-Files’ most obsessive motifs. Numerous episodes of the show have involved some form of alien–human hybrid, which have in several cases been linked—usually, without any logical explanation—to genetic experiments performed by Nazi and Japanese scientists during World War II. There is, of course, a curious irony in the fact that Nazi genetic experiments, with their focus on Aryan purity, would be linked to such a notion of genetic intermixing, but in this context, the unsettling connotations of Nazi and Imperial Japanese science merely seem designed to convey a sense of inarticulable, “alien” horror in connection with the very processes that constitute what is “human” and what is “other”: breeding, reproduction, and genetic makeup. In more recent episodes, it has even been hinted that these experiments in interbreeding are part of a conspiracy to abet the colonizing of the world by aliens.

But here again, this signifying chain cannot simply be reduced to the level of a conspiracy to alter humanity’s genetic makeup and take over the world. Indeed, the vast majority of The X-Files’ episodes have had something to do with genetic experiments or anomalies, from carnival freaks to missing links to atomic mutations to insects with alien DNA. Even Scully’s near-fatal bout with an inoperable cancer can be seen as involving a form of reproduction that is monstrous or alien, that is out of rational, or scientific, control. Indeed, within The X-Files, this concern with reproduction and hybridity itself often seems to be self-replicating, monstrous and out-of-human-control, as if it had been taken on an alien life of its own. It becomes, in other words, a generative process in itself, reproducing scenes and images in a way that no eventual narrative explanation is likely to contain (a fact that is, I believe, confirmed in the recent X-Files feature film, which could hardly live up to the promises that it would explain many of the show’s mysteries). Nor, I would argue, can this escalating process of self-replication be subordinated to some analytical or interpretative truth, not even to a notion of truth as some repressed origin or originary repression—“feminine” or otherwise—which could then be rediscovered by the analyst or critic. To do so is, ultimately, to fall into a kind of interpretative conspiracy theory, in which castration, or capitalism, or patriarchy, becomes the end of analysis, the explanation of all things.

I do not, of course, mean to suggest forsaking interpretation or analysis
altogether, nor abandoning psychoanalytical, marxist, feminist, or any other form of criticism. I am simply arguing that any such approach inevitably forecloses interpretative possibilities, attempting to contain—i.e., to offer a unified explanation for—what it sees as an alien, and often feminine, proliferation within the text, and in the world itself. Indeed, it seems to me that The X-Files' obsession with reproduction, breeding, genetics, and hybridity should be seen precisely as a concern with proliferation—a proliferation that, although it may seem alien, is hardly other-worldly. I would argue that it is, in fact, part and parcel of that obsessive proliferation and mixture of information—of artificially reproduced images, signs and data—that defines contemporary cultures. In this context, the multiplication of products, discussions and Websites related to the show, as well as the production of fan-written fiction, may be seen as an integral part of this ongoing process of reproduction, intermixing and proliferation.

It is worth remembering here that women have traditionally been identified not only with "natural" reproduction, but also with artificiality: with those impure copies, images, and other signifiers that supposedly hide the truth, that deceive the eyes of men. In The X-Files, as in contemporary culture, men do indeed attempt to control and contain this reproducibility, to make sense of the replication and proliferation of images and information that are "out there," which might otherwise overflow their "proper" boundaries and take over "our" world, like some kind of dangerous digital kudzu from another world. Often, in fact, this proliferation is represented as a kind of invading alien virus, which threatens to infect us with its seemingly uncontrolled reproducibility, just as Scully is infected with cancer. At the same time, of course, the scene of this proliferation and mixture is inevitably figured as obscuring the truth, hiding it behind a haze of excess information, what David Shenk (1997) has called "data smog," a term that might easily be applied to both the mise-en-scène and the narrative of The X-Files. Of course, this obscuring data smog can itself be seen in terms of conspiracy. Thus, for example, Fredric Jameson, writing about that "contemporary entertainment literature" that he dubs "high-tech paranoia," observes that its conspiratorial narratives are themselves an attempt to make sense of the excessive information and extreme complexity of the postmodern, late-capitalist world: "conspiracy theory (and its garish narrative manifestations) must be seen as a degraded attempt ... to think the impossible totality of the contemporary world system" (Jameson, 1991, p. 38).

The X-Files certainly seems to fit Jameson's description. It attempts to cut through the smog of data that is out there, to control the proliferation of information, to put the pieces of the conspiracy together and expose the truth of the system that threatens to engulf us, to swallow us in an alien process of replication, to turn us into monstrous, inhuman hybrids. Yet, at the same time, The X-Files also seems to suggest that maintaining this sense of control and coherence—even over its own narrative—has become increasingly difficult. Like any repetition, replication always involves a certain difference, a certain heterogeneity, that cannot easily be controlled. Indeed, one might well argue that we are already inalterably caught up in this process of reproduction, that it has already changed not only humanity, but the truth itself.

What The X-Files enacts, then, is precisely the scene of truth's proliferation and hybridization. The scene of the truth can, in other words, no longer be located either outside or inside, in terms of a patriarchal light or a feminine darkness,
nor in reference to any "proper place." It seems instead to take place in that mysterious, inappropriate, other zone where humans continually, and often obsessively, come in contact with a familiar, but still alien reproducibility—in that elsewhere that we, perhaps mistakenly, continue to call "our culture."

Notes


2. The game actually rates actions or scenes in the show in terms of their typicality, with more unusual actions calling for a consumption of larger amounts of drink (e.g., "Either character goes out on a date" is a "three sip event").

3. See, for example, X-Links Central’s listing of fan-fiction sites at www.geocities.com/Hollywood/6050/x-1.html. Perhaps the largest of these is The Gossamer Project X-Files Fan Fiction Archive at gossamer.x-philes.com/

4. Like Star Trek fan-fiction, The X-Files fan-fiction includes “crossover” fiction, in which characters from The X-Files are blended with those of other shows, and "slash" versions (Mulder/Krycek stories are particularly popular; see, for example, The Mulder/Krycek Romantics Association Website at www.slash.simple.net/mkra), similar to the Star Trek slash fictions analyzed by Constance Penley (1991). See also Henry Jenkins’ (1992) work on fans’ relations to and uses of television shows, particularly Star Trek.

5. This slogan, along with the “Trust No One” motto and The X-Files logo, is the trademarked property of Twentieth-Century Fox. On the relation of the “propre” to truth, see Jacques Derrida (1979, pp. 109–123).

6. As an indication of just how typical this scene is, it is worth noting that at least three events within it are listed as “one sip events” in The X-Files Drinking Game: (1) Either character uses a flashlight; (2) The all-important evidence of alien sighting (film, photograph, DNA) is lost/stolen; (3) Bright lights implying alien presence.

7. Cf. Derrida (1979, p. 51): “There is no such thing as the essence of woman because woman avers, she is averted of herself. Out of the depths, endless and unfathomable, she engulfs and distorts all vestige of essentiality, of identity, of property. And the philosophical discourse, blinded, founders on these shoals and is hurled down these depthless depths to its ruin. There is no such thing as the truth of woman, but it is because of that abyssal divergence of the truth, because that untruth is ‘truth.’ Woman is but one name for that untruth of truth.”

8. In Spurs, Derrida (1979, p. 103) observes: “there is no such thing as a truth in itself. But only a surfeit of it.”

References