

Morten Tolboll

Doublethink (The Matrix Dictionary)

This article is an investigation of the propaganda used in [The Matrix Conspiracy Fascism](#).

Doublethink is the act of simultaneously accepting two mutually contradictory beliefs as correct, often in distinct social contexts. Doublethink is related to, but differs from, hypocrisy and neutrality. Also related is cognitive dissonance, in which contradictory beliefs cause conflict in one's mind. Doublethink is notable due to a lack of cognitive dissonance—thus the person is completely unaware of any conflict or contradiction.

George Orwell created the word Doublethink in his dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; Doublethink is part of Newspeak.

Newspeak is the language of Oceania, a fictional totalitarian state ruled by the Party, who created the language to meet the ideological requirements of English Socialism (Ingsoc). In George Orwell's world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Newspeak is a controlled language, of restricted grammar and limited vocabulary, a linguistic design meant to limit the freedom of thought—personal identity, self-expression, free will—that ideologically threatens the régime of Big Brother and the Party, who thus criminalized such concepts as thoughtcrime, contradictions of Ingsoc orthodoxy.

So, the intention with Newspeak is to control thinking, to make some ideas impossible to think, including concepts such as good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly. In connection with Doublethink they are using concepts such as old-thinking and new-thinking, so that people get a feeling of guilt, every time they use concepts within old-thinking. The rulers are doing this by connecting concepts within old-thinking with the word thought-crime.

The Thought Police (Thinkpol) are the secret police of the superstate Oceania, who discover and punish thoughtcrime, personal and political thoughts unapproved by the Party.

The Thinkpol use criminal psychology and omnipresent surveillance (telescreens, microphones, informers) to search for and find, monitor and arrest all citizens of Oceania who would commit thoughtcrime in challenge to the status quo authority of

the Party and the regime of Big Brother (in my article [The Hermeneutics of Suspicion \(the Thought Police of the Self-help Industry\) and Why I am an Apostle of Loafing](#) I have shown how [the Matrix Conspiracy](#) has created such a Thought Police. Below I will show how it works. But first I will just short mention that I'm surprised over how effective it works when you, as me, are criticizing New Age and the Self-help industry on the internet. I have been forced to close any possibility for commenting on my stuff and for emailing me (see my entry [Critique](#)), due to trolling (see my article [The Curse of the Internet Troll](#)). By necessity I have opened a Facebook profile, where I generally are posting stuff unrelated to New Age. I was surprised then, that in the same moment I posted something critical against The New Thought movement and the Law of Attraction, I had a commenter, who precisely used Doublethink and gaslighting. Apparently it's completely unconscious, but it is clearly due to American anti-intellectualism (see my entry [Anti-intellectualism and Anti-science](#)).

The overriding intention is of course to eliminate critical thinking, or said in another way: that people think for themselves.

Newspeak is today widespread in the positive thinking environment (which is rooted in the New Thought movement, and supported by constructivism – see my articles [The New Thought Movement and the Law of Attraction](#) and [Constructivism, the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry](#)).

A long line of “old” words – which according to the ideals of positive thinking – are negative, are in our society systematically being replaced with new, more “positive” sounding words. The idea is that you through thoughts and language can eliminate negativity and suffering. Problems are being given “positive” names, whereby they either are being hidden, denied or simply not are being *acknowledged* as problems.

This is especially seen in the business industry and in the working life. Quite superior words such as “problems” and “difficulties” have been transformed to “possibilities” and “challenges.” Within NLP the word failure has been changed to feedback, and many NLP practitioners directly say that there is no such thing as failure – there are only positive feedback or delay (see my article [Neuro-linguistic Programming \(NLP\) and Large Group Awareness Training \(LGAT\)](#)).

The list over expressions of problems, which in the name of positive thinking, has become converted into something promising, is very long. Guilt has been changed to responsibility, evil to inappropriateness, crisis to growth-potential, dismissals to new beginnings, “to be unsatisfied” to “to seek new challenges”, suffering to stress, colleague to fellow player, work to career, problem-orientation to solution-

orientation, human working capacity to human resource, sacking to setting free, conlict to conflict-solution, critique to response, leadership to self-leadership, etc., etc.

In the working life people are today educated to *think* positively, both about themselves and about others, to *communicate* positively, and to *speak* with positive words and phrases, which turn problems into challenges.

The whole idea is that negativity simply doesn't exist, except in our thoughts and language. There only exists positivity in the world itself (that is: what the positive thinking movement *itself* believes is positivity – note how we already here see “problems” with the idea).

On July 23, 2012, in San Jose, California., 21 people were treated for burns after walking barefoot over hot coals as part of an event called Unleash the Power Within, starring Tony Robbins. The American journalist Oliver Burkeman is the author of the book *The Antidote: Happiness for People Who Can't Stand Positive Thinking*.

In an article called *The Power of Negative Thinking* Burkeman is asking in a comment to the firewalker incident: What, exactly, did they expect would happen? In fact, there's a simple secret to “firewalking”: coal is a poor conductor of heat to surrounding surfaces, including human flesh, so with quick, light steps, you'll usually be fine.

But Mr. Robbins and his acolytes have little time for physics. Burkeman says: “to them, it's all a matter of mind-set: cultivate the belief that success is guaranteed, and anything is possible”. One singed but undeterred participant told The San Jose Mercury News: “I wasn't at my peak state.”

Burkeman asks: “What if all this positivity is part of the problem? What if we're trying too hard to think positive and might do better to reconsider our relationship to “negative” emotions and situations?”

A positive thinker can never relax, lest an awareness of sadness or failure creep in. And telling yourself that everything must work out is poor preparation for those times when they don't. You can try, if you insist, to follow the famous self-help advice to eliminate the word “failure” from your vocabulary — but then you'll just have an inadequate vocabulary when failure strikes.

The social critic Barbara Ehrenreich has persuasively argued that the all-positive approach, with its rejection of the possibility of failure, helped bring on our present

financial crises. The psychological evidence, backed by ancient wisdom, certainly suggests that positive thinking is not the recipe for success that it purports to be.

Americans are a "positive" people - cheerful, optimistic, and upbeat: This is their reputation as well as their self-image. But more than a temperament, being positive is the key to getting success and prosperity. Or so we are told.

In the utterly original debunking book *Bright-Sided – How Positive Thinking is Undermining America*, Barbara Ehrenreich confronts the false promises of positive thinking and shows its reach into every corner of American life, from Evangelical megachurches to the medical establishment, and, worst of all, to the business community, where the refusal to consider negative outcomes - like mortgage defaults - contributed directly to the current economic disaster. With the myth-busting powers for which she is acclaimed, Ehrenreich exposes the downside of positive thinking: personal self-blame and national denial. This is Ehrenreich at her provocative best - poking holes in conventional wisdom and faux science and ending with a call for existential clarity and courage.

She begins her book with a chapter called *Smile or Die: The Bright Side of Cancer*, where she tells that the first attempt to recruit her into positive thinking was when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She experienced that everything and everybody around her tried to make her “realize that breast cancer is not a problem at all, not even an annoyance – it is a ‘gift,’ deserving of the most heartfelt gratitude.”

Ehrenreich clearly see the similarity with Soviet-style Communism, which we do not usually think of as a cheerful sort of arrangement. But it exemplified the use of positive thinking as a means of social control. Writing of the former Yugoslavia at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Dubravka Ugresic observed that “former communists, modern capitalists, nationalists, religious fanatics” were all picking up on the fresh breeze of positivity from the West. “They have all become optimists.” But this was hardly something new, she went on, because “optimism has a stain on its ideological record...If anything has survived Stalinism itself, it is the Stalinist demand for optimism.” In the Soviet Union, as in the Eastern European states and North Korea, the censors required upbeat art, books, and films, meaning upbeat heroes, plots about fulfilling production quotas, and endings promising a glorious revolutionary future. Czechoslovakian literature was suffused with “blind optimism”; North Korean short stories still beam with “relentless optimism.” In the Soviet Union itself, “being charged with a lack of historical optimism meant being charged with distortion of the truth or transmission of false truths. Pessimism and ideological wavering meant the same thing...in various disputes, the possibility of an alienated

and lonely hero in socialism was forbidden in the name of the demands for historical optimism and a positive hero.”

The penalties for negative thinking was real. Not to be positive and optimistic was to be “defeatist,” and, as Ugresic writes of the Soviet Union, “*defeatists* paid for the sin of defeatism. Accusing someone of *spreading defeatism* condemned him to several years in Stalinist camps.”

This we already see in the treatment of the unemployed – “defect consumers” – who are treated as a kind of criminals. Their rights have in many cases directly been taken away from them, and they are put in re-education institutions, and work-training camps.

Ronald Hutton’s book *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700* demonstrates how the festive culture of the Middle Ages was gradually eroded by the Reformation and the Puritans. It was in this merry time the legend of Robin Hood was formed. Robin Hood is a heroic outlaw in English folklore who, according to legend, was a highly skilled archer and swordsman. Traditionally depicted as being dressed in Lincoln green, he is often portrayed as "robbing from the rich and giving to the poor" alongside his band of Merry Men. Robin Hood became a popular folk figure in the late-medieval period, and continues to be widely represented in literature, films and television. In J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* we discover that this idea of [gift economy](#) is shared by Bilbo Baggins, who gives most of his treasures away. Also it is seen in the hobbit custom of giving presents when they celebrate their birthdays, instead of receiving them (see my pop culture file on [The Hobbit](#)).

And Max Weber’s book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* shows how the competitive Protestants booted out the cooperative Catholics; it shows how a new ethic based on work and earning a lot of money came to replace, in the eighteenth century, the old medieval ethic, which was based on mutual aid. The medieval culture (which wrongly are depicted as a dark age by the [Protestant work ethic](#)) combined a love of Jesus, who preached idleness, and a love of Aristotle, who argued that contemplation led to happiness. (I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to banish their guilt around work).

It is clear that in connection with the unemployed the separation of state and church are more less hypocritical. And the direct [Refusal of Work philosophy](#), which I advocate, is directly seen as blasphemy, considered the rage this can cause in people.

Another example of Newspeak is a New Thought “online expert”, who not only advised her client to remove the word critique from his online-material, but also to

remove “all judgmental terms.” If he should take that literally, he might as well close his website.

A third example of the use of Newspeak is the Danish feminist Susanne Staun who in an article in the Danish newspaper Politiken (July 29, 2017) writes an article about violence and men's violence against women. Here, Susanne Staun explains how the debate is leaked with different strategies. The Headline says:

The tactics of the debate on violence against women are obvious: deny, attack and change victims and offender.

In the article she accuses the medias (newspapers, Facebook, Commentators, etc.) for using a tactic called “Darvo” when it comes to discussing rape and men's violence against women.

The concept of Darvo refers to a reaction perpetrators of wrong doing, particularly sexual offenders, may display in response to being held accountable for their behavior. DARVO stands for "Deny, Attack, and Reverse Victim and Offender." The perpetrator or offender may Deny the behavior, Attack the individual doing the confronting, and Reverse the roles of Victim and Offender such that the perpetrator assumes the victim role and turns the true victim -- or the whistle blower -- into an alleged offender. This occurs, for instance, when an actually guilty perpetrator assumes the role of "falsely accused" and attacks the accuser's credibility or even blames the accuser of being the perpetrator of a false accusation.

So, Susanne Staun is using the psychologizing aspect of ad hominem move and the Newspeak technique in a way, that if anybody criticizes her, they will be reminded that they now are using Darvo, and is a potential sex offender. They have committed a thought crime. Darvo is a psychological term that should be limited to use in criminal cases and not in a public debate against anybody who criticizes.

Susanne Staun could in this way be a character in Wonderland (see my pop culture file on [Alice in Wonderland](#). Also see my article [The New Feminism and the Philosophy of Womens Magazines](#)).

Staun's use of Doublethink is in the form of guilt by association. An association fallacy is an informal inductive fallacy of the hasty-generalization or red-herring type and which asserts, by irrelevant association and often by appeal to emotion, that qualities of one thing are inherently qualities of another. Two types of association fallacies are sometimes referred to as guilt by association and honor by association.

Some syllogistic examples of guilt by association:

John is a con artist. John has black hair. Therefore, all people with black hair are con artists.

Jane is good at mathematics. Jane is dyslexic. Therefore, all dyslexic people are good at mathematics.

Simon, Karl, Jared, and Brett are all friends of Josh, and they are all petty criminals.

Jill is a friend of Josh; therefore, Jill is a petty criminal.

A real-world example of guilt by association is that, in response to mass shooting incidents in the U.S. and public speculation that the perpetrators had Asperger syndrome, many people throughout society wrongfully stigmatized and stereotyped people with the disorder as being potentially violent and having the potential to become shooters. Especially after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, the media (after the early reporting) and autism-advocacy organizations proffered expert opinions debunking this myth and attempting to better educate the public about autism to dissuade the stigmatization.

Gaslighting is also a form of Doublethink. Gaslighting could be a common term of the propaganda used in an ideology where psychologizing, emotionalizing and therapeutizing theories are introduced everywhere in schools, higher education and workplaces.

Gaslighting is a form of manipulation that seeks to sow seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or members of a group, hoping to make targets question their own memory, perception, and sanity. Using persistent denial, misdirection, contradiction, and lying, it attempts to destabilize the target and delegitimize the target's belief.

Gaslighting is a tactic in which a person or entity, in order to gain more power, makes a victim question their reality. It works much better than you may think. Anyone is susceptible to gaslighting, and it is a common technique of abusers, dictators, narcissists, and cult leaders. It is done slowly, so the victim doesn't realize how much they've been brainwashed. For example, in the movie *Gaslight* (1944), a man manipulates his wife to the point where she thinks she is losing her mind.

It is clear that proponents of especially relativism, subjectivism and idealism, and hereby the whole of the ideology where psychologizing, emotionalizing and therapeutizing theories are ideological goals, love to question people's sense of

reality, perception and sanity [note that totalitarian regimes always have used relativism and subjectivism as weapons].

From Nineteen Eighty-Four:

The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. His heart sank as he thought of the enormous power arrayed against him, the ease with which any Party intellectual would overthrow him in debate, the subtle arguments which he would not be able to understand, much less answer. And yet he was in the right! They were wrong and he was right. The obvious, the silly, and the true had got to be defended. Truisms are true, hold on to that! The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall toward the earth's center. With the feeling that he was speaking to O'Brien, and also that he was setting forth an important axiom, he wrote: Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.

Orwell shows a government who manages to preserve absolute rule by torturing its enemies until they come to “love” it. Aldous Huxley, author of *Brave New World*, seems to suggest the opposite—that the “brave new world” will last because it is so convenient. Orwell’s book is more of a reflection on the Soviet Union; Huxley’s, on the capitalistic West. In my article [The Hermeneutics of Suspicion \(the Thought Police of the Self-help Industry\) and Why I am an Apostle of Loafing](#), I have portrayed both as a part of The Matrix Conspiracy.

But one element of 1984 seemed strangely pertinent. The difference between the views of Big Brother and those of protagonist Winston Smith, before his torture at least, is this—to Big Brother, truth is whatever is convenient. Winston believes that truth does not change, that history is fact, that falsely claiming his country has always been at war with another is wrong.

Winston becomes a committed relativist after his torture. (Not a completely consistent one—everything must be according to Big Brother’s wishes—though there is no such thing as a consistent relativist, because a relativistic attitude toward relativism would be fatal.) In Orwell’s words:

He accepted everything. The past was alterable.... Anything could be true. The so-called laws of nature were nonsense. The law of gravity was nonsense. The fallacy was obvious. It presupposed that somewhere or other, outside oneself, there was a “real” world where “real” things happened. But how could there be such a world? What knowledge have we of anything, save through our own minds? All happenings are in the mind. Whatever happens in the mind, truly happens.

Or does it? Is the most important thing what we think inwardly, or what is real outside us? Are we really prepared to sentence ourselves to a moral solipsism?

Do you recognize New Age claims here?

According to Nineteen Eighty-Four, Doublethink is:

“To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again, and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself—that was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word—Doublethink—involved the use of Doublethink.”

“The power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them... To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just as long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies—all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word Doublethink it is necessary to exercise Doublethink. For by using the word one admits that one is tampering with reality; by a fresh act of Doublethink one erases this knowledge; and so on indefinitely, with the lie always one leap ahead of the truth.”

Positive thinking *precisely* involves all this. But *precisely* because that positive thinking so extremely shows its own opposite, then the flipside of the “positive thoughts” that the positive thinking movement so keenly promotes that as sure as positive thoughts bring wealth, health and happiness, negative thoughts are also responsible for any illness, poverty or bad luck that happens your way. The problem is the propensity for self-blame when it doesn't work. Besides that it is an invalid ad hoc clause (rationalization), to say that if positive thinking doesn't work, then it is because you are not doing it correct, then such statements, as mentioned, are inducing a false dichotomy in people, that makes them easy targets for guilt, shame and depression.

False dichotomy is a misleading conception of possible alternatives. A dichotomy is a division in two alternatives. Often seen in the expressions Either/or – If/then, as for example: "Either you are with us, or you are against us" – "if I'm not always a success, then I'm a fiasco". Similarly, someone who says that you must either believe that God exists or else that God doesn't exist is setting up a false dichotomy since there is the well-known third option of the agnostic.

A false dichotomy appears when somebody sets up a dichotomy in such a way, that it looks like, that there only are two possible conclusions, when the facts actual are, that there are many other alternatives which not are being mentioned. Many inappropriate rules of living and life-strategies are based on false dichotomy. False dichotomy is thinking in extremes, and leads to a false and imbalanced way of life.

You can't think in extremes such as I am a success, I am perfect, I am beautiful, without the opposite extreme. That is: if you for example follow the teaching of positive psychology, which excludes all negativity, then you induce in yourself a false dichotomy, because an exclusion of the opposite extreme not is possible.

In the novel, *Doublethink*'s origin within the typical citizen is unclear; while it could be partly a product of Big Brother's formal brainwashing programmes, the novel explicitly shows people learning Doublethink and Newspeak due to peer pressure and a desire to "fit in", or gain status within the Party—to be seen as a loyal Party Member. In the novel, for someone to even recognize—let alone mention—any contradiction within the context of the Party line was akin to blasphemy, and could subject that person to disciplinary action and to the instant social disapproval of fellow Party Members.

Like many aspects of the dystopian societies reflected in Orwell's writings, Orwell considered Doublethink to be a feature of Soviet-style totalitarianism, as reflected in this statement from a speech by Joseph Stalin: We are for the withering away of the state, and at the same time we stand for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which represents the most powerful and mighty of all forms of the state which have existed up to the present day. The highest development of the power of the state, with the object of preparing the conditions of the withering away of the state: that is the Marxist formula. Is it "contradictory"? Yes, it is "contradictory." But this contradiction is a living thing and wholly reflects the Marxist dialectic.

"War is peace" and "freedom is slavery" are good examples of Doublethink. Though contradictory by definition, they are both accepted as correct, simultaneously, by the citizens of Oceania. This means that even though Oceania is in a constant state of

war, the people are acting like there is peace as well, hence they can easily switch from one emotion to the other, in accordance to what The Party asks of them.

"Freedom is slavery" also acts as a subconscious discouragement for anyone who might consider seeking freedom, whilst the last part of the slogan, "Ignorance is strength," encourages the people to accept as fact everything that The Party tells them, without using rational thinking. Believe and never question! This sounds like "follow your intuition, or your feelings! Rational thinking is negative!"

For example, even though there is a constant shortage of everything, and the people make great efforts to get ahold of the most basic things (e.g. shoe laces or shaving razors), they are convinced that there is, in fact, an abundance — only because The Party keeps repeating this everyday. In their highly conditioned minds, it can be both scarcity and abundance, at the same time.

Even in a corrupted semi-democracy, like ours, it is hard to believe that paradoxes like: "war is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength" could make any sense — but they do.

The concept of "war is peace" is used today by the United States of America and NATO, when they engage in the so called "preemptive wars." The term itself is a paradox, because one cannot start a war in order to prevent it.

"Freedom is slavery" is the very foundation of our global society, and the biggest and most ignored problem of a so-called democracy. All human beings are in fact "currency slaves," meaning that they must work to survive (though physical labor could have been abolished by now), but at the same time, almost all of them strongly believe they are free.

I urge all those who consider themselves free, to stop paying taxes for the already "owned" possessions (e.g. house, car, land, etc.) and see what happens.

Any deviation from the socially accepted norm (which today is controlled by the Matrix Conspiracy) is swiftly fought and corrected by society (the Thought Police of the Self-help industry), with the help of individuals who believe in the Matrix Conspiracy — the Matrix Sophists. We are both prisoners and prison masters, constantly policing ourselves and each other. And even though we are not aware of it, we are all subjects to carefully designed mind programming, indoctrination and brainwashing, from birth to death.

Related in the Matrix Dictionary:

[The Matrix Conspiracy Fascism](#)

Related:

[The Matrix Dictionary](#)

All articles and books referred to are available in free PDF Versions. Links can be found on my blog: www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com

Copyright © 2017 by Morten Tolboll.

Terms of use:

http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/deed.en_US