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The Curse of the Internet Troll

In *Out of Africa* Karen Blixen somewhere describes the magic of the words. The natives named for instance an European after an animal, and a human being, who through many years, by all his surroundings, has been named with one animal-name, finally happens to feel himself related with the animal he is named after; he recognizes himself in this animal.

In the natives' ability to create myths they don't discriminate between the word and the thing, the name and the named. The white men are really, in the eyes of the natives, both humans and animals. In the same way with their linkage of spirits and machines.

Karen Blixen tells about how the natives, because of this mythical "gift", can put experiences on humans which they can't defend themselves against, and not get out of. They can make humans into symbols. She is telling that it is a kind of magic which is used on you, and that you later never completely can disentangle from it. It can be a painful, heavy fate to be exposed as one or the other symbol.

But also in the Western civilizations we become exposed for such a magic. It is not something which we have come over. Now it is happening through one or the other kind of religious or political propaganda - and in particular through the media storm which transforms humans into consumers. "You are what you eat!"

It is also this magic George Orwell describes in his novel 1984, with the language called New Speak; a language created by the rulers in order to control thinking. We all know it more or less. If you, by your surroundings, constantly are being induced some kind of image, you will in the end begin to believe in it, even if it is not true. Especially in family relations we see how family members are being induced roles which are incredible difficult to disentangle from, because family relations also have with love to do.

All this is magical thinking, and there are a lot of thought distortions built into it, for example the thought distortion *Arbitrary inference* which means that you make a causal linking of factors which is accidental or misleading (see my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions* – [free download](#)). The main reason for the rise of magical

thinking is that you don't discriminate between image and reality, the map and the landscape.

That being invisible to the culture of self-help – that being unregarded, ignored, devalued, is in a culture of self-assertion a curse. I have myself experienced that in a rather special way, namely in connection with my awakening of kundalini, which threw me out in a spiritual crisis, years of investigating this crisis, university-studies in philosophy, and the slow development of my teaching *Meditation as an Art of Life* - and then that, again and again, being unregarded, ignored, and devalued by my surroundings - made me think of my own life as being befelled by a curse. First it was the devaluation of the kundalini-experiences I have had. But after I had got my education in philosophy, it was this education in itself that was being devaluated.

When I in 2005 began to promote my teaching on the internet I, to my astonishment, experienced that there ruled some kind of spiritual censorship created by self-helpers and New Agers – not organized – but created by individuals who share the same ideas.

The presence of these people on the internet is enormous. And everytime someone is promoting spiritual issues (and also often scientific issues) you will have them on your comments area and on your email.

My “problem” was that I introduced the concept of *Philosophical counseling*. Philosophy is in the eyes of these people, in some weird way, banned in spirituality – it is somehow a terrible thing (probably due to the use of critical thinking – explanation follows).

And they didn't want to go into discussions about it, they didn't want to argue for their disagreement (argumentation is negative in their point of view). Instead they tried to silence me through mumbo-jumbo and condescension. So, where philosophy tries to investigate, restructure and change thought distortions, these people are directly using thought distortions in order to get on in the world.

In the start I closed down a couple of websites, blogs and forums, simply because I was unprepared for the enormous degree of attacks.

But also in the real world I began to meet these people everywhere. I discovered that their theories are introduced in schools, continuing education and on workplaces; yes that they even are on the top of EUs project on lifelong learning and education. I also discovered the connection with postmodern intellectualism and different kinds of reductionisms practiced on the Universities. Furthermore, I discovered the connection

with consumer capitalism, advertising industry and the entertainment industry.

Though many of the theories disagree in between there is a red thread going through them all: subjectivism and relativism - the indifference to truth, and the following distortion of spirituality, philosophy and science.

I realized that what I have met is a new kind of Sophists. The relationship between the Sophists (teachers of rhetoric) and Socrates (the philosopher) is the central issue in the whole of Plato's work.

In lack of a better term I have decided to call the whole of this circus the Matrix Conspiracy (see my article [The Matrix Conspiracy](#)). And I call the agents of this conspiracy The Matrix Sophists. The Matrix Sophists are a common term for the tens of thousands of consultants, coaches, practitioners, identity-experts, therapists, sexologists, educators, teachers, social workers, spin doctors, psychotherapists and psychologists, who all share the ideas of The Matrix Conspiracy; that is: some kind of mix between postmodern intellectualism, management theory, self-help and New Age.

In my first book *Meditation as an art of life – a basic reader* I presented what I call the four philosophical hindrances and openings in towards the Source (see my article [The four philosophical hindrances and openings](#)). I presented them in order to show what I think characterizes the spiritual practice as it exists in all the traditional wisdomtraditions. Ever since I have become increasingly puzzled over, how The Matrix Conspiracy - which claims to work in accordance with spirituality - is turning this upside down.

The paradox is that while The Matrix Sophists are claiming to create the authentic, autonomous, resource-filled and competent human being, at the same time is doing the exact opposite: it is making people dependent of therapist, coaches, others ideas and ideals; making them modeling and imitating so-called successful people, etc., etc.

The Matrix Conspiracy, and its belonging therapeutic techniques, thereby exposes the paradox, that the more resource-filled a human being is conceived to be, the more it has to be supported therapeutically. The more self-actualizing a human being becomes, the more it is in need of help to actualize itself. And the more responsibility a human being is said to have for its own life, the more this same human being, basically, is considered as a victim, as non-authentic, and therefore as powerless.

That means that if you don't share their ideas, and even are critical, you are considered as a non-authentic, powerless victim. That is one of the reasons why they

think they don't have to argue with you but instead are trying to silence you through mumbo-jumbo and condescension. I have especially met this attitude in relation with 1) my kundalini-experiences, 2) my education, 3) when I tried to take an education as a health care assistant, 4) in my time as unemployed, and 5) from friends and family.

I will describe these points in short. With the words of my professor David Favrholt, then we here speak about a movement, which conclusions are so rabid and stark raving stupid, that I hardly can give an account of them without immediately becoming accused of having distorted them. I can only say that I haven't distorted anything, but due to the limitation of this article I can only here give a short example of the essence of the stupidity involved. If you want to get the full picture, just read my books and articles as such.

The points are:

1) My kundalini-experiences

When my kundalini-experiences had the aspect of *The Dark Night of the Soul* I tried to seek help from other spiritual people. The problem is that when you try to seek spirituality, for example on the internet, you will eventually meet New Agers or Self-helpers. Not surprisingly they had no clue about what I was experiencing, but as coaches and therapists (self-proclaimed spiritual teachers), they acted as if they knew everything. The message to me was that the crisis was due to my negative thoughts, and that the crisis would disappear if I from my vocabulary removed all the negative words connected with the crisis.

2) My education

I have again and again been confronted with the claim that my education in philosophy (and psychology) is outdated; that I am caught in an old way of thinking which does that I am closed-minded. And precisely because most New Agers and self-helpers not are particularly qualified in philosophy (or any other higher education), then they claim that this is a significant condition for contributing to the development of new ways of thinking in philosophy; that is: contrary to me they are much more open-minded; or said in another way: they understand philosophy much better.

Such statements are typical in the New Age environment. Normally they are directed towards educated scientists though. In order to explain where they have got such strange ideas from I will here (just one example among many) quote John Grinder,

who is one of the founders of Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) (The other founder is Richard Bandler):

My memories about what we thought at the time of discovery (with respect to the classic code we developed – that is, the years 1973 through 1978) are that we were quite explicit that we were out to overthrow a paradigm and that, for example, I, for one, found it very useful to plan this campaign using in part as a guide the excellent work of Thomas Kuhn (The Structure of Scientific Revolutions) in which he detailed some of the conditions in the midst of paradigm shifts. For example, I believe it was very useful that neither one of us were qualified in the field we first went after – psychology and in particular, it's therapeutic application; this being one of the conditions which Kuhn identified in his historical study of paradigm shifts. Who knows what Bandler was thinking?

The only thing Grinder here is demonstrating is that he doesn't understand Thomas Kuhn (precisely because he is not qualified in philosophy). Kuhn did not promote the notion that not being particularly qualified in a scientific field is a significant condition for contributing to the development of a new paradigm in science. Furthermore, Kuhn did not provide a model or blueprint for creating paradigm shifts! His is an historical work, described what he believed to have occurred in the history of science. He made no claim that anything similar happens in philosophy and he certainly did not imply that anything NLP did, or is doing, constitutes a paradigm shift (read more about the inspiration from Kuhn in my article [Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry](#)).

In my article [The Sokal Hoax](#) you can find other examples of this way of attacking science and other highly educated people (I will return to this article). In my article [Quantum mysticism and its web of lies](#) I give an example of how the New Age guru Deepak Chopra is using this way of “argumentation”.

Read more about NLP in my article [Neuro-linguistic Programming \(NLP\) and Large Group Awareness Training \(LGAT\)](#)

3) when I tried to take an education as a health care assistant

After I had finished my psychology studies in 2005, I tried to take an education as a health care assistant because there in this area were plenty of jobs. I had to stop it though, because a great deal of the theoretical part directly is based on the self-help industry. On the fixed curriculum were for example NLP and Nonviolent Communication; that is: in order to take the education you are forced to work with these theories, and you are being examined in them. Moreover, I experienced to be

bullied in the classes when I asked critical questions; that is: mumbo-jumbo and condescension.

4) in my time as unemployed

When you are unemployed in Denmark you have to attend so-called activation-courses (note: you are forced to, or else you lose your money). Most of them are run by the self-help industry. I have attended quite a few. I will just mention one of them. It was a so-called job-seeking course. Most of the participants were under 30. Some of them were newly educated graduates, a couple of engineers, and a graphic designer. Others had simply lost their jobs.

The slogan of the course was that “From scratch we build up human beings as a wholeness.” Notice here the obvious view of the participants as scratch; that is: they were considered as non-authentic, powerless victims (also the participants who had had jobs for years).

The course had five parts:

- a) A test of personality. Besides that the test in my case was completely wrong, then let me just mention the central issue: the attractive personality. In order to explain what the attractive personality is the consultant kept on using the same example, which she thought was quite obvious: namely that people with boyfriends/girlfriends had attractive personalities, while people without boyfriends/girlfriends had unattractive personalities (one of the participants found this a bit strange since she had just lost a boyfriend who had got killed in a car accident) – read more about personality typing in my article [Personality typing is a refined system of prejudice](#).
- b) How to give a handshake
- c) How to smile
- d) How to use a telephone. Here we learned how to ring up, say hello and goodbye
- e) How to use the internet. Here we learned how to switch on the computer, go on the internet, search on google, and as the most advanced part: how to open an email account on google (Gmail).

The course lasted one month, so you can figure out how many days were spend on each of these parts. In the start of the course we learned how to shout in chorus:

“waaauw!”. This we did several times each day. We had to do it each time one of the consultants had made an “obvious” conclusion.

5) from friends and family

In my first three books you can see my starting critique of all this. But since the main issue of the books is my spiritual teaching, the critique is rather sporadic and unsystematic. As you can see in the descriptions of the books, I had actually also decided that this critique should be the final critique. But after 2010 I experienced how The Matrix Conspiracy increasingly was creeping into all aspects of my life.

Especially because I also began to meet it in friends and family, I decided to write two books on The Matrix Conspiracy (The Matrix Conspiracy - part 1 and 2), which are dedicated the revelation of what I seriously see as the most dangerous ideology on Earth. But it is also connected with the re-introduction of philosophical counseling and my teaching.

But before that, the experiences with, again and again, being devaluated, without fully knowing what was going on, caused that I went into periods with periodical alcohol-abuse which I found justification for in the works of the Beatwriters, who also were the first kinds of dropouts I felt inspired by. I could also suddenly explode in extreme anger, where I insulted a lot of people, often in my nearest family. All this of course didn't made my situation better, and just confirmed people in the belief, that I was totally helpless, and in need of treatment (about alcohol abuse in connection with spiritual crises, see the article *The Spiritual Crisis* in my book [Dream Yoga](#) – also see my article [Spiritual Crises as the Cause of Paranormal Phenomena](#)).

I had to go into what was going on. It was necessary for me to investigate this enormous market alongside with the development of an art of life, or a teaching about how to live in this society. And today, where I have entered into my critical "Matrix Conspiracy Phase" I'm beginning to laugh of the implicated stupidity of this ideology, and I'm glad to report, that a lot of comedians also have discovered the comical side of all this.

Anyway, to understand and be free from self-assertion, and to do something, which you really love to do – regardless what it is, how small or how little remarkable it is – awakens a spirit of greatness, which never is seeking others' approval or reward, and which do a thing for its own sake, and therefore possesses strength and ability not to lie under for mediocre influences.

Here is that being invisible to the culture directly a blessing – that being unregarded, ignored, and devalued, can be an impetus to take another route: the quiet way, the

gentle, steady, behind-the-scenes path. This is the invisible way of empowerment, the slow path of alchemy. Soul work takes time. This meant I intentionally had to make time, especially in our increasingly hyperactive, extroverted secular culture.

My own discovery of this was what finally turned my crisis into a healing and transformative spiritual practice. Instead of seeing my life as befelled by a curse, I began, deeply inspired by Karen Blixen, to realize that this might be God's plan with me. I could begin to see the dreamtracks and songlines in the artwork of my life (see my article [The philosophy of Karen Blixen](#)).

The question I had to ask, involved as I was in exploring extraordinary phenomena devalued by mainstream consciousness, was whether the burden of being disregarded by noninitiates is truly greater than the burden of trying to convince them that I had an experience that, at least by implication, made me somehow "special". I began to adopt an Epicurean way of life.

True spirituality is about discriminating between language and reality. Discrimination is a central virtue in critical thinking. The Dominican mystics call this step *Discriminatio*, the ability to discriminate between how the energy is used temporal or religious. And despite that magical thinking actually can create something magical, then in true spirituality it is still something temporal, or relatively (black magic/occultism), which will create negative karma if practised (in my article on New Thought I have explained how this movement is a direct teaching of black magic – see my article [The New Thought movement and the law of attraction](#)).

The Orientals call the ability of discrimination viveka, discrimination, the ability to use your will on that part of the energy, you can steer yourself, and steer it towards exercises, prayer, mantras, meditation, instead of towards career, worldliness, self-unfolding, as the New Thought movement teaches it (read for example the Indian philosopher Shankara's book *The Crown-jewel of discrimination*).

Philosophical education has its basic objectives, first, the disposition to seek truth, and, second, the capacity to conduct rational inquiry. Training scientists, for example, requires the inculcation both of an ethic of inquiry – do not fabricate or distort results, take care to prevent your hypotheses (or desires) from affecting your observations – and the techniques of inquiry appropriate to the discipline.

There are of course many different forms of philosophical education, corresponding to the numerous ways in which truth may be pursued. Nevertheless, these forms of education share two key features. First, they are not decisively shaped by the specific social or political/religious circumstances in which they are conducted, or, to put it the other way around, they are perverted when such circumstances come to have a

substantive effect. There is no valid distinction between “Jewish” and “Aryan” physics, or between “bourgeois” and “socialist” biology; truth is one and universal.

Secondly, and relatedly, philosophical education can have corrosive consequences for political (and/or religious) communities in which it is allowed to take place. The pursuit of truth – scientific, historical, moral, or whatever – can undermine structures of unexamined but socially central belief.

Ideological education differs from philosophical education in all these respects. Its purpose is not the pursuit and acquisition of truth, but rather the formation of individuals, who can effectively conduct their lives within, and support, their political (and/or religious) community. It is unlikely, to say the least, that the truth will be fully consistent with this purpose. Nor is ideological education homogeneous and universal. It is by definition education within, and on behalf of, a particular political (and/or religious) order. Nor, finally, does ideological education stand in opposition to its political (and/or religious) community. On the contrary, it fails – fundamentally – if it does not support and strengthen that community.

Ideology altogether is a psychic disease. You are not in doubt about, that ideology is a psychic disease if you look at its collective manifestations. It appears for example in the form of ideologies such as Communism, Liberalism, Conservatism, National Socialism and any other nationalism, or in the form of rigid religious systems of faith, which function with the implied assumption, that the supreme good lay out in the future, and that the end therefore justifies the means. The goal is an idea, a point out in a future, projected by the mind, where salvation is coming in some kind – happiness, satisfaction, equality, liberation, etc. It is not unusual, that the means to come to this is to make people into slaves, torture them and murder them here and now.

That a thought-system has developed into an ideology shows in, that it is a closed system, which is shared by a large group of people. Such a closed system has especially two distinctive characters: 1) It allows no imaginable circumstance to talk against the ideology. 2) It refuses all critique by analysing the motives in the critique in concepts, which is collected from the ideology itself (an ideology always thinks black and white, and therefore always has an anti-ideology, an enemy image, which it attributes on to everyone, who don't agree).

An ideology is therefore characterized by, that it is not able to contain, or direct refuses, rationality and critical thinking. We all know how dissidents have been killed, jailed and tortured under totalitarian ideologies.

Ideologies are using propaganda in order to get their “truths” forced through. In that connection they use thought distortions. Thought distortions are “techniques”, that, unconscious or conscious, are used from an interest in finding ways of getting on in the world, rather than an interest in finding ways of discovering the truth. Thought distortions are the background for poor reasoning, diversionary ploys, seductive reasoning errors, techniques of persuasion and avoidance, psychological factors, which can be obstacles to clear thought.

Critical thinking, or philosophy, is in opposition to thought distortions. Critical thinking is about spotting thought distortions, and examining them by presenting reasons and evidence in support of conclusions.

In philosophy you focus on, what cooperation and conversation require of you in order to that you at all can exist: that you speak true (don't lie), that you are prepared to reach mutual understanding and agreement (don't manipulate), don't make an exception of yourself (but treat others as equals). From this rises the eternal moral values (as for example that it is wrong to lie), and generally our ideas of right and justice: the so-called human rights, the idea about the individual person's autonomy and dignity: you shall treat the other *not as a mean, but as a goal*.

The difference between the use of thought distortions and the use of critical thinking is very shortly said, that those who use thought distortions are in the control of the thought distortion *Magical thinking*, which is active when you don't discriminate between image and reality, while critical thinking is active, when you do make this discrimination.

The difference can further be clarified by comparing the so-called Sophists with the philosopher Socrates:

After centuries of successful trading, the local gods and festivals could no longer satisfy the religious needs of the ancient Athenians. Their spiritual hunger was exacerbated by the stress of city life, by the constant threat of destruction, and by the grim vision of totalitarian Sparta: the vision of Greeks living without light or grace or humour, as though the gods had withdrawn from their world.

Into the crowded space of Periclean Athens came the wandering teachers, selling their “wisdom” to the bewildered populace. Any charlatan could make a killing, if enough people believed in him. Men like Gorgias and Protagoras, who wandered from house to house demanding fees for their instruction, preyed on the gullibility of a people made anxious by war.

To the young Plato, who observed their antics with outrage, these “Sophists” were a threat to the very soul of Athens. One alone among them seemed worthy of attention, and that one, the great Socrates whom Plato immortalised in his dialogues, was not a Sophist, but a true philosopher, a pilgrim of the negative path.

The philosopher, in Plato’s characterisation, awakens the spirit of inquiry. He helps his listeners to discover the truth, and it is they who bring forth, under his catalysing influence, the answer to life’s riddles. The philosopher is the midwife, and his duty is to help us to what we are – free and rational beings, who lack nothing that is required to understand our condition. The Sophist, by contrast, misleads us with cunning fallacies, takes advantage of our weakness, and offers himself as the solution to problems of which he himself is the cause.

There are many signs of the Sophists, but principal among these is that they are subjectivists and relativists. Their teachings are about how to get on in the world, and not about how to find the truth. Anything goes: not facts, but the best story wins. And the result is mumbo-jumbo, condescension and the taking of fees. The philosopher uses plain language, does not talk down to his audience, and never asks for payment. Such was Socrates, and in proposing him as an ideal, Plato defined the social status of the philosopher for centuries to come.

No one should doubt that sophistry is alive and well. My concept of *The Matrix Conspiracy* is permeated with it. We see it in the mix of postmodern intellectualism (constructivism), management culture, self-help and New Age – and in the two main methods of this mix: psychotherapy and coaching.

The Sophists are back with a vengeance, and are all the more to be feared, in that they come disguised as philosophers and scientists. For, in this time of helpless relativism and subjectivity, philosophy and science alone have stood against the tide, reminding us that those crucial distinctions on which life depends – between true and false, good and evil, right and wrong – are objective and binding. Philosophy and science have until now spoken with the accents of the academy and laboratory, and not with the voice of the fortune teller.

When Plato founded the first academy, and placed philosophy at the heart of it, he did so in order to protect the precious store of wisdom from the assaults of charlatans, to create a kind of temple to truth in the midst of falsehood, and to marginalise the Sophists who preyed on human confusion.

The Sophists were teachers of rhetoric, who against a fee, taught people how to persuade other people about their “truths”. Rhetoric, or sophistry, is the art of persuasion. Rather than giving reasons and presenting arguments to support

conclusions, as Socrates did, then those who use sophistry are employing a battery of techniques, such as emphatic assertion, persuader words and emotive language, to convince the listener, or reader, that what they say or imply is true.

The Sophists taught their pupils how to win arguments by any means available; they were supposedly more interested in teaching ways of getting on in the world than ways of finding the truth, as Socrates did. Therefore, any charlatan is welcome. And the use of thought distortions is seen as the best tool, when practising the mantra of the management culture: “It is not facts, but the best story, that wins!”

So, the main theory of this ideology is relativism. There both exists an individual version of relativism, and a collective version. The individual version is called subjectivism. This version is often connected with a right-wing liberalism. The other version is a collective relativism, cultural relativism, which often is connected to a left-wing socialism. However, both are common in distorting both science and human rights. Both are demanding “alternative” views of science, and for example also human rights. And both are introducing intellectual apartheid in different ways, by seeking to eliminate critical thinking.

Both subjectivism and relativism claim, that there doesn't exist any objective truth. Truth is something we create ourself, either as individuals or as cultures, and since there doesn't exist any objective truth, there doesn't exist any objective scale of truth. Therewith they also say, that we live in a Matrix, a dream, a kind of virtual reality, we have created ourselves, and that there is no chance of getting out of this. Therefore, the best is to be interested in finding ways of getting on in this world, rather than being interested in finding ways of discovering the truth.

To teach people this, is the main job of the Sophists of the Matrix Conspiracy: Management theorists, New Age coaches, Nonviolent Communicators, Neuro-linguistic Programmers, Law of Attraction gurus.

Human rights are ethical tools. In ethics you focus on, what co-operation and conversation require of you in order to, that you at all can exist: that you speak true (don't lie), that you are prepared to reach mutual understanding and agreement (don't manipulate), don't make an exception of yourself (but treat others as equals). From this rises the eternal moral values (as for instance that it is wrong to lie), and generally our ideas of right and justice: the so-called human rights, the idea about the individual person's autonomy and dignity: you shall treat the other not as a means, but as a goal.

The society-ideology of today doesn't live up to this, because it increasingly makes people into means for the constant production of consumption in the future. And this

despite, that it believes, that it is an advocate for freedom, peace and human rights, yes, that it even can use war under those slogans. So, the communicative (philosophical) aspect of human rights (treat the other not as a means, but as a goal), has been turned into an instrumental (ideological) way of treating humans as means for own goals (Machiavelli's notorious words: "The end justifies the means").

Today we especially see this in the use of the freedom of speech as a justification for insulting other people, and as a way of promoting own (un-intelligent) viewpoints, or (un-talented) goals as a person or an artist. We have seen it in the controversy with The Jyllands Posten Muhammed Cartoons. And it has become so "natural", that talented artists, and other, more intelligent, people, or institutions, who do not want to use their freedom of speech precisely in this way, are being collectively bullied, even from highest political levels. They are for instance called cowards.

The reason is that human rights today have been turned upside down by The Matrix ideology and pedagogy. They have not only become psychologized and subjectified, but also emotionalized, since it is the individual's feelings, which determines the moral quality of something. Moreover, has this moral been therapized, so that you think you can become whatever you desire.

Human rights have also been submitted the reductionist aspect of The Matrix Conspiracy, so that no one can be said to have responsibility for anything they do (neither Muhammed cartoon publishers or terrorists). All this causes, that you can use human rights as a weapon in any ideology. And ideologies always think black and white. They are a psychic disease.

The cultural editor on Jyllands Posten, Flemming Rose, has recently published a book about the controversy with The Jyllands Posten Muhammed Cartoons, *The Tyranny of Silence* (Tavshedens Tyranni). Here he once again has published the cartoons, and thereby he has intensified the risk of terror on you and me.

Flemming Rose says, that he can't understand why people are so focused on the Cartoons, since they only form a small part of the book. Well, maybe because the book was published precisely on the fifth anniversary day of the first publishing of the cartoons? But that is maybe only a coincidence?

Flemming Rose won't take any responsibility for his actions (as no one will in the reductionist ideology). On the contrary, he is seeing himself, and one of the cartoon drawers, Kurt Westergaard, as great fighters for freedom, and all critics as silenced victims of anxiety. He compares himself and Kurt Westergaard with the great Danish cultural critic Poul Henningsen, and with the death-sentenced author Salman Rushdie. But the art of these people is precisely not ideological controlled – and that

is a quite central difference. Contrary to Flemming Rose they are critics of ideology as such; that is: their art is not controlled by any ideology, religious or political, Christian or Islamistic, left or right wing.

We can discuss the difference in intelligence and talent, but why is the militant priest Terry Jones - who recently was about to perform an “Art Happening”, by burning 200 Korans on the ninth anniversary of the terror attacks on USA 11-9 - being suppressed by everyone, who obviously are silenced victims of anxiety? Why should he not be honoured with a Freedom prize (as Kurt Westergaard recently has been)? Why should he not be admired as a new Salman Rushdie?

Who is to judge, when you have removed philosophy from the stage of debate, and replaced it with political and religious ideologies?

Flemming Rose says: “In a society where the fundamentalism of offence has been put on the agenda can any expression in principle be criminalized, if just those in power state that it is an offender. It is therefore, that it in a democracy is so important to insist on the right to offend.”

Besides that Flemming Rose’s statement, in his fight for the freedom of speech, is self-contradictory, because it also implies the right to offend the freedom of speech, then it is also wrong. Among those in power is namely Flemming Rose himself. It is, among other like-minded, Flemming Rose, who puts on the agenda.

In the Mass Media they have closed down the professional editorial offices, where there were people with knowledge about their areas. In the Mass Media the level of entertainment is higher valued than objectivity, so that all points of views are seen as equally good, and the contempt for professionalism goes from top to bottom.

In his New Years speech the then Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (later Secretary General of Nato) thus said, that you shall not believe in experts, and today the public debate is characterized by coarseness and vulgarity from people without education, knowledge or experiences, who nonetheless uncontrolled express themselves about everything from quantum mechanics to medicine.

The result is that any professional, who dares to express himself in public shall be prepared for collective bullying. We don’t see any dialogue anymore. Any attempt on reply are looked at through the eyes of the hermeneutics of suspicion (for example Flemming Rose), where the thoughts you think, and the reasons you produce, can’t be taken seriously, because there must be some other real reasons at work, reasons which the Matrix Conspiracy itself have produced. Knowledge is stamped as snotty. Prejudice is confused with liberalism.

There is a need for a dialogue from where there can be talked with authority. Such a dialogue has been removed. The platform, from where the public debate is being lead, is controlled by the Matrix Conspiracy.

In a true dialogue you focus on what cooperation and conversation require of you in order to that you at all can exist: that you speak true (don't lie), that you are prepared to reach mutual understanding and agreement (don't manipulate), don't make an exception of yourself (but treat others as equals). From this rises the eternal moral values (as for example that it is wrong to lie), and generally our ideas of right and justice: the so-called human rights, the idea about the individual person's autonomy and dignity: you shall treat the other not only as a mean, but also as a goal.

In such a dialogue you use objective argumentation. Objective argumentation is an ethical way to convince others about your views, because it in reel sense shows what is appropriate or inappropriate about a case. Objective argumentation contains some of the following elements: summary or abstract, informations, description, reason, concrete choice of words, nuanced objective statement. You use critical thinking in order to explore, re-structure and change thought distortions.

But this dialogue has been replaced by a culture of debate (débat, from débattre, struggle, quarrel). The culture of debate is the common used form of communication in the whole of society today. Just try to follow the American Fox News, the new feminist Sarah Palin and the Tea Party movement. And, Donald Trump, who is the worst manifestation to date (see my article [The Confabulation of Trump](#)).

In debate people all the time work against each other and are seeking to show each other's flaws. They often only listen to each other in order to find flaws and defend their arguments. They more and more harden their own perspectives, because they are so busy judging the positions of others. They defend their own positions as the best solutions and eliminate others' solutions. They fundamentally seen have a closed attitude, which is due to a fixed decision to be right. They wholehearted invest in their own conceptions, and they therefore calculate others' positions, without being aware of feelings or relations, yes, they even often happen to play down and offend the other person.

This debating attitude is unethical, and leads to violence and war. Why? Because it is based on subjective argumentation. Subjective argumentation is an unethical way to convince others about your views, because it doesn't show, what in reel sense is appropriate or inappropriate about a case, but manipulates with it.

Subjective argumentation contains some of the following elements: innuendoes, distortions, generalizations, over-/understatements, sarcasm, satire, irony, postulates,

emotional affections, coloured choice of words, choices and exclusions, subjective style.

People who use subjective argumentation don't hesitate using thought distortions in order to manipulate, for example using ad hominem moves, hermeneutic of suspicion, Giraffe language, setting up a strawman, etc., etc. Personally, I have stopped having face to face discussions with this kind of people, and I am withdrawing as soon as I sense this kind of communication.

The whole tendency is in my view also the cause of the uprise of the so-called internet trolls.

In internet slang, a troll is a person who sows discord on the Internet by starting arguments or upsetting people, by posting inflammatory, extraneous, or off-topic messages in an online community (such as a newsgroup, forum, chat room, or blog) with the intent of provoking readers into an emotional response or of otherwise disrupting normal, on-topic discussion, often for the troll's amusement.

This sense of both the noun and the verb "troll" is associated with Internet discourse, but also has been used more widely. Media attention in recent years has equated trolling with online harassment. For example, the mass media have used "troll" to mean "a person who defaces Internet tribute sites with the aim of causing grief to families." In addition, depictions of trolling have been included in popular fictional works, such as the HBO television program *The Newsroom*, in which a main character encounters harassing persons online and tries to infiltrate their circles by posting negative sexual comments.

Investigative journalist Sharyl Attkisson is one of several in the media who has reported on the increasing trend for organizations to utilize trolls to manipulate public opinion as part and parcel of an Astroturfing initiative. Teams of sponsored trolls, sometimes referred to as sockpuppet armies, swarm a site to overwhelm any honest discourse and denigrate any who disagree with them. A 2012 Pew Center on the States presentation on Effective Messaging included two examples of social media posts by a recently launched "rapid response team" dedicated to promoting fluoridation of community water supplies. That same presentation also emphasized changing the topic of conversation as a winning strategy.

A 2016 study by Harvard political scientist Gary King reported that the Chinese government's 50 Cent Party creates 440 million pro-government social media posts per year. The report said that government employees were paid to create pro-government posts around the time of national holidays to avoid mass political

protests. The Chinese Government ran an editorial in the state-funded Global Times defending censorship and 50c party trolls.

A 2016 study for the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (NATO StratCom COE) on hybrid warfare notes that the Russian military intervention in Ukraine "demonstrated how fake identities and accounts were used to disseminate narratives through social media, blogs, and web commentaries in order to manipulate, harass, or deceive opponents."

And, as mentioned, New Age internet trolls are also a huge problem. They are most often guided by the thought distortion Backfire Effect, as attacks on critics of New Age and Self-help. As mentioned, before I had a clear overview of the immensity of New Agers working online, I experienced this in a degree, that I had to close down a couple of forums and facebook groups, because they simply were taken over by New Age trolls. New Age trolls is a subject not much discussed, since critics seem to ignore them. But I think it's very important to investigate why precisely New Agers use this form of debate, because it shows a lot about what New Age and Self-help are.

The Cult Education forum tells how it formerly was trolls from Large Group Awareness Training cults (LGAT), that were swarming the site, but that Byron Katie trolls now have taken over. Byron Katie is, in style with the Secret, an enormous world wide New Age and Self-help phenomena (see my article [A Critique of Byron Katie and her therapeutic method the Work](#)). Below I will compare Byron Katie's The Work with Freud's case study of Dora.

[Against Therapy](#), is a book by Jeffrey Masson. In this ground-breaking and highly controversial book, Masson attacks the very foundations of modern psychotherapy from Freud to Jung, Fritz Perls to Carl Rogers. With passion and clarity, *Against Therapy* addresses the profession's core weaknesses, contending that, since therapy's aim is to change people, and this is achieved according to the therapist's own notions and prejudices, the psychological process is necessarily corrupt. In a nutshell, it is the same argumentation I myself put forward towards the Matrix Conspiracy's two methods: psychotherapy and coaching.

Among others Masson investigates Dora, the pseudonym given by Sigmund Freud to a patient whom he diagnosed with hysteria, and treated for about eleven weeks in 1900. Her most manifest hysterical symptom was aphonia, or loss of voice. The patient's real name was Ida Bauer (1882–1945); her brother Otto Bauer was a leading member of the Austromarxism movement.

Freud published a case study about Dora.

Dora lived with her parents, who had a loveless marriage, but one which took place in close concert with another couple, Herr and Frau K. The crisis that led her father to bring Dora to Freud was her accusation that Herr K had made a sexual advance to her, at which she slapped his face — an accusation which Herr K denied and in which her own father disbelieved.

Freud himself reserved initial judgement on the matter, and was swiftly told by Dora that her father had a relationship with Frau K, and that she felt he was surreptitiously palming her off on Herr K in return. By initially accepting her reading of events, Freud was able to remove her cough symptom; but by pressing her to accept her own implication in the complex interfamily drama, and an attraction to Herr K, he alienated his patient, who abruptly finished the treatment after 11 weeks, producing, Freud reported bitterly, a therapeutic failure. What Freud in reality did, was a complete turnaround of just about anything Dora told him.

Through the analysis, Freud interprets Ida's hysteria as a manifestation of her jealousy toward the relationship between Frau K and her father, combined with the mixed feelings of Herr K's sexual approach to her.

In the following I will show how you easily can shift the name Freud with Byron Katie, and his psychoanalytic theory and practice, with The Work.

Byron Kathleen Reid (or “Katie” as she is often called) became severely depressed in her early thirties. She was a businesswoman and mother who lived in a small town in the high desert of southern California. According to Katie, for nearly a decade she spiraled down into paranoia, rage, self-loathing, and constant thoughts of suicide; for the last two years she was often unable to leave her bedroom. Then, one morning in February 1986, while in a halfway house for women with eating disorders, she experienced a life-changing realization. She called it “waking up to reality.” In that moment of enlightenment, she says,

“I discovered that when I believed my thoughts, I suffered, but when I didn’t believe them, I didn’t suffer, and that this is true for every human being. Freedom is as simple as that. I found that suffering is optional. I found a joy within me that has never disappeared, not for a single moment.”

According to journalist Allison Adato, soon afterwards people started seeking Katie out and asking how they could find the freedom that they saw in her. People from her

own town, and eventually from elsewhere, came to meet her, and some even live with her.

Katie is not aligned with any particular religion or tradition. She is married to the writer and translator Stephen Mitchell, who co-wrote her first book, *Loving What Is* and her third book, *A Thousand Names For Joy*.

Katie calls her method of self-inquiry “The Work.” She describes it as an embodiment, in words, of the wordless questioning that had woken up in her that February morning. Adato further writes that as reports spread about the transformations people felt they were experiencing through The Work, Katie was invited to present it publicly elsewhere in California, then throughout the United States, and eventually in Europe and across the world. She has taught her method to people at free public events, in prisons, hospitals, churches, corporations, shelters for survivors of domestic violence, universities and schools, at weekend intensives, and at her nine-day “School for The Work.”

The Work is nothing else than a simplified and biased form of therapy taken from Cognitive Therapy: a “single cause-single cure” approach to therapy, which has led many a therapist down a dead-end trail and has created no end of problems for clients. The typical scene is, that the innovators found themselves doing something: sitting in a hot tub, berating patients, or feeding them out of baby bottles. It felt good or worked for the therapists, so they made some assumptions in order to create an ideology that would support practicing the method on others. Without much thought, and little or no proof, the technique was expanded to become a “cure-all” for all people.

This is precisely how the innovation of the Work happened. As mentioned, Katie said: “I discovered that when I believed my thoughts, I suffered, but when I didn’t believe them, I didn’t suffer, and that this is true for every human being. Freedom is as simple as that. I found that suffering is optional. I found a joy within me that has never disappeared, not for a single moment.”

Another typical scene is that the innovation is based on therapist observation of the conduct of one patient. The therapist then teaches the method to countless others, professing that this is the best and only useful therapy to cure mental illness.

In life, there can be many causes and contributing factors that might lead a person to seek therapy. Each person’s problems are unique.

There is a general, and peculiarly, phenomenon within New Age, where “new” theories are exposed to have been taken (stolen) from something else,

simplified/distorted, and then presented as something holy, new and revolutionary, often received in divine visions; that is: the illusion that a simplified psychotherapy should be a spiritual/philosophical practice.

You can say that the Work ends up as a “single cause-single cure” mix between Cognitive therapy, Cathartic psychotherapy and positive thinking.

The Work consists in four questions you have to ask to a problematic thought of yours, and a turnaround technique. The four questions are:

1. Is it true?
2. Are you absolutely sure it is true?
3. How do you react when you think this thought?
4. Who would you be without this thought?

These questions can be a good idea to ask yourself if a problematic thought of yours actually is false. And there is nothing new in it. As mentioned they also use such questions in Cognitive Therapy, but not so simplified. So why not use that instead, or take a few lessons in philosophy?

Because the problem with The Work is that it has a conclusion in advance, namely that the thought is false (also Freud had all his conclusions in advance, it didn't matter what his patient said), and therewith it is in progress, as with other New Age directions, of eliminating peoples' ability of critical thinking. Problematic, because the training of critical thinking is the first step in a true spiritual process, and on the whole a primary condition for a healthy mind. In Cognitive Therapy for example, they also have questions to ask to problematic thoughts, that actually have some truth in them.

When the conclusion is given in advance then The Work's four questions becomes so-called rhetorical questions; that is: questions which are asked purely for effect rather than as requests for answers. In that case the four questions function in precisely the same way as persuader words.

It is comparatively easy, and certainly unhelpful, to raise four seemingly deep questions on any problem (called pseudo-profundity) – and where the conclusion is given in advance. But that is precisely what The Work is doing. It is said to work on any problem, and that it has to be used precisely as Byron Katie herself is doing it. But what is difficult and important is to investigate problems, and find answers. In a true philosophical investigation a problematic thought can very well be true, but the problematic in it could be generated by, that the person for instance can't find any

answers, any further solutions, or ways out. The investigation could then begin with finding other philosophical questions involved in the problem, for instance “What do I ought to do, or not to do?”, “How should I live in society?”, “What are feelings?”, “Is there a meaning of life?”, “Who am I?”

That is philosophical critical thinking, and such a critical way of thinking is eliminated in The Work.

Former devotees even say that The Work can get quite nasty with its turnaround technique. After that you, as expected, have “realized”, that your thought is not true, then you have to turn it upside down; you so to speak have to think the opposite thought.

Again, it can be a good thing to look at problems from different sides, but that is not what you do with the turnaround technique. The turnaround technique actually sound a bit like the thought distortion called *Conversion to the opposite*. The turnaround technique must be a dream for any bully, liar or manipulator. If you are critical, then this is due to your own false thoughts. If someone have bullied you, and you feel hurt, then this pain is based on your own wrong way of thinking. Certainly not the bully’s. The bully is, in the Work, always depicted as a kind of guru; an example of the divine. Likewise, with other problematic thoughts. This is due to the root in positive thinking, where they deny the existence of negativity and evil.

And in that we find the main problem with The Work, and the reason why I would advice people to keep a long distance from it. It is similar to other New Age therapies where everything is psychologized. If you are critical, then you have a resistance problem, and must pay for some more courses. Because, as in other New Age directions, there is also the typical cult aspect in The Work, where it is about earning a lot of money.

The strange thing happening, when you in extreme way deny the existence of negativity, then negativity will try to release itself in an exploding way. Positive thinking is suddenly exposing itself as an extreme example of negativity and evil.

Here is an example of Katie’s use of the turnaround technique. On page 35, of *Losing the Moon*, Byron Katie starts talking about Nazi's taking babies from Jewish mothers and throwing the babies into a firepit near the end of WWII.

Quote:

If Someone (God, 'what is'), pulls my baby from me - if that's what it takes, I'm there. Take the baby. Tear my baby from me. Throw it in the fire....My discomfort is my war with God. [...]

You see, there are NO choices. What is, is. [...]

But when we get to the baby thing, we're getting down to our sacred little concepts now....You take my baby from me, you're messing with the illusion of I'm the mommy, this is the baby, there's the daddy...

But tearing the baby away- that's the higher. That's the higher, because it snatches your story from you and makes it apparent in your face - nothing's real short of reality....

That's it. That's what is. That's love. That's absolutely Un-describable love. That you, God, would even give me that.

Can you know that Hitler didn't bring more people to realization than Jesus? On your knees - God. God! God! But our stories of reality keep us from the awareness of God is Everything. And God is Good. [...]

There has never been evil and there never will be. Evil is simply a story about what's not...

But I have trashed the baby when I have trashed the Nazi...

I am the baby going into the pit. I am the one throwing the baby in the pit...

Byron Katie just keeps going on and on from there.

So according to Byron Katie, Nazi's mass murdering Jewish women's babies by burning them to death alive while the mothers watch, is the loving work of God.

As a matter of fact, Byron Katie says that baby killers are "higher" than the illusion of mommy.

The book *Losing the Moon* from which the above quotation has been taken has now been removed, but aspects of this justification of all kind of unethical behaviour (in the name of love) are seen again and again in *The Work*. And this kind of subjectivism/relativism could of course never come from an enlightened consciousness since enlightenment (spirituality) of course is absolutism and not relativism.

If you doubt that the above kind of “argumentation” not are common in Byron Katie devotees I will here provide a link to “Samsara”, a Katie devotee, who on his or hers blog demonstrates it in action. The blog **the-work-byron-katie.blogspot.com** is called *Abusive Partner is your Guru?* ([Click here](#) to read how the examination develops in the same way as Byron Katie herself could have done it (though the choice of words now have been changed). If the blog-author should decide to delete the blog, I have saved it on Archive.org ([click here](#)). I will return to this blog later.

An example of the variation: Byron Katie wrote on Facebook June 15, 2012:

"There's never a mistake in the universe. So if your partner is angry, good. If there are things about him that you consider flaws, good, because these flaws are your own, you're projecting them, and you can write them down, inquire, and set yourself free. People go to India to find a guru, but you don't have to: you're living with one. Your partner will give you everything you need for your own freedom."

([Click here](#) to read it on Facebook where you also can follow the comments. Note how most of them – except a few clear-sighted comments - uncritically celebrate the statement as an example of fantastic wisdom, without even considering the - quite obvious - terrible consequences it would have if you took it for true).

The blogger “Samsara” commented on this message on the above-mentioned blog *Abusive Partner is your Guru?* under titles such as *Your Abuser is your Guru?* and *Did Byron Katie Lose Her Noodle?* She writes:

"let's travel this statement and see what we can find. Maybe Katie did lose her noodle. And if she did, let's see if we can find it. If she did not lose her noodle, well that is great news, too."

And so on...

The nazi example is special, but the abuse example is just one of many, very many, and it should be easy to see that Byron Katie is much worse than Freud, because the conclusions is a part of The Work. No matter what problem you would tell Katie about, you can foresee how any The Work session will end, with 100 % certainty. So, besides its astonishing wickedness, it can also be rather boring, in one of her book, to read examples upon examples of sessions, that all ends in the same way.

In 1999, the California Board of Psychology became alarmed after listening to a tape of Katie working with an incest survivor. What would happen if the woman had a

nervous breakdown during a session, they wanted to know. How would Katie know how to help her? (as other New Agers and Self-helpers she has no education or license as a therapist) Katie argued that the woman's emotional state after the session was her own responsibility just as it was before they met. Ultimately, the board dropped the investigation, but questions remain. How can a "divine loving person", as Katie often is called, be so completely indifferent to the incest victim? Well, because she isn't the enlightened person she likes to mirror herself in, on the contrary.

Moral insanity is another topic discussed by Masson. Moral insanity referred to a type of mental disorder consisting of abnormal emotions and behaviours in the apparent absence of intellectual impairments, delusions or hallucinations. It was an accepted diagnosis in Europe and America through the second half of the 19th century.

The physician James Cowles Prichard first used the phrase to describe a mental disorder in 1835 in his *Treatise on insanity and other disorders affecting the mind*. He defined moral insanity as: "madness consisting in a morbid perversion of the natural feelings, affections, inclinations, temper, habits, moral dispositions, and natural impulses, without any remarkable disorder or defect of the interest or knowing and reasoning faculties, and particularly without any insane illusion or hallucinations."

The concept of moral insanity was indebted to the work of physician Philippe Pinel, which was acknowledged by Prichard. Pinel had described mental diseases of only partial, affective, insanity. That is, the sufferer was thought to be mad in one area only and thus the personality of the individual might be distorted but his or her intellectual faculties were unimpaired.

The psychiatrist Koch sought to make the moral insanity concept more scientific and suggested in 1891 the phrase 'psychopathic inferiority' (later personality) be used instead. This referred to continual and rigid patterns of misconduct or dysfunction in the absence of apparent mental retardation or illness. The diagnosis was meant to imply a congenital disorder, and to be made without moral judgement, though Koch has been described as deeply rooted in a Christian faith. Toward the mid 20th century the terminology of the 'psychopathic' would become specifically associated with an aggressive and anti-social personality. A more general concept of character disorders came into use by psychoanalysts, and psychiatry later adopted the current terminology of personality disorders.

But Masson shows, that the concept in short was used to diagnose people who didn't live up to the moral standards of the ruling social order. And he gives example upon

example of how this was used to imprison people in asylums. And the examples are absurd. One tragic example, which was only revealed in 1966, concerns the author and Nobel prize winner, Hermann Hesse. In June 1892 his father was convinced that Hermann had a secret life, filled with “unnatural and unhealthy thoughts and feelings and excited fantasies.” The father decided to commit his son to the *Stetten Asylum for Epileptics and the Feeble-minded*. When the son realized where he was being taken, he became terrified. The head of the asylum, inspector Pfarrer Schall, noted that the way Hermann knitted his brows was a sign of moral insanity, and, moreover, that he had been reading the Russian writer, Turgenev, an evil influence.

Despite what people say, the concept of Moral Insanity is more alive than ever. A modern example is Alan Sokal, who was attacked in these ways. The Sokal Hoax, also known as the Sokal Affair, was a publishing hoax perpetrated by Alan Sokal, a physics professor at New York University. The hoax was a so-called hoax of exposure. Hoaxes of exposure are semi-comical or private sting operations. They usually encourage people to act foolishly or credulously by falling for patent nonsense that the hoaxer deliberately presents as reality.

The Sokal Hoax was a pseudoscientific experiment to test the standards of scholarship and intellectual responsibility within the postmodern intellectualism.

After having revealed his Hoax, he wrote a book *Intellectual Impostures*, together with Jean Bricmont, where he examined the canon of French postmodernists – Lacan, Kristeva, Baudrillard, Irigaray, Latour, Virilio, Deleuze and Guattari – and systematically (with the use of objective argumentation) exposed their abuse of science. In the book he also writes about the reactions of the relativists.

As I have mentioned, then George Orwell’s novel 1984 seems to be a possible inspiration for these people. Alan Sokal mentions Schopenhauer’s *The Art of Always Being Right*: namely, enlarge your opponent’s target so as to make him look ridiculous. The relativists support the use of rhetoric, manipulation and even lies in order to force their message through, because, according to them, it is not facts, but the best story, which wins (they have actually written books about this). Relativism justifies it. Anything goes (= the tendency to that objective dialogue more and more is being replaced by a subjective, coarse debate culture).

Sokal describes the reactions in the following way, which I will repeat below, because the insults are very similar to the insults I have experienced.

Sokal categorizes the reactions in two kinds of Ad Hominem move:

1) Name-calling.

2) Attacking his alleged motivations.

1) *Name-calling*. Some of Sokal's opponents seem to think that clever epithets can replace the detailed refutation of his arguments. And the insults are legion: "little school-teacher", "cowboy and pharmacist", "censor", "Francophobe", and "purveyor of disinformation", "gendarmer", and even "a dwarf who resemble teenagers Game Boy all day long." Still more extraordinary, Philippe Sollers asserts, in an interview paradoxically entitled "Answer to imbeciles", that Alan Sokal's private life "merit investigation": "What is Alan Sokal like? What paintings do he have on his walls? What is his wife like? How is his beautiful abstract statements translated in their daily and sexual lives?" So, the insults are going on the same themes: that Sokal is an arrogant, mediocre, sexually frustrated scientist, ignorant in postmodernist science, and enslaved by a scientific ideology (neoconservative or hard-line Marxist, take your pick). But Alan Sokal keeps his philosophical integration intact and is calmly answering: "Please tell me what this implies concerning the validity or invalidity of my arguments?"

2) *Attacking his alleged motivations*. Some commentators, instead of examining Sokal's reasoning, attack the motivations, that they attribute to him. For example, Julia Kristeva claims that his book forms part of an American economic and diplomatic campaign against France. Isabelle Stengers sees it as a pure "commercial operation." Vincent Fleury and Yun Sun Limet accuse him of seeking to redistribute research funds from the social sciences to the natural sciences. But Sokal answers: "Again this form of defence is curious: for even if my motivations were as alleged (and they most certainly are not), how could that affect the validity or invalidity of my arguments?" So, the rhetoric doesn't succeed in creating a curse over Sokal's head, but not all are so lucky.

Yes, we have passed 1984, and now we see, how frightening close to reality George Orwell's novel is. The Sokal Hoax clearly shows the symptoms of The Matrix Conspiracy.

In an article from *Skeptical Inquirer*, March/April 1995, the American female philosopher Noretta Koertge, writes about her worries for the development of feminism.

She writes that a Rip Van Winkle of feminism, who might have fallen asleep in the 1970s, would have been astounded over the opposite attitude, which is dominant among academical feminists today. The thick-skinned and strongly armed Rosie Riveters (reform feminism) have become replaced by moralizing Sensitive Susans (radical feminism), who individually are trying to find new ideological splits in the so-called "patriarchal, racist, colonistic, eurocentric, cultural dominion discourse".

They are in progress with a systematic undermining of the intellectual values of the free education. Young women are being made alien towards science in many ways. One of the strategies consists in redefining, what counts as science. Instead of for example telling about great female researchers such as Emmy Noether, Marie and Irene Curie and Kathleen Lonsdale and their struggles – and triumphs, the radical feminists, in their account of the history of science, now accentuate the contributions to it from midwives and from the claimed arts of healing, which herbal cultivators and witches mastered. Instead of motivating young women to prepare themselves to a line of technical subjects by studying science, logic and mathematics, they now teach the students in womens studies, that logic is a tool, which men use to dominate with.

These women refuse rationality and critical thinking, and claim that this is inconsistent with "womens way of knowing". These feminists characterize themselves as "subjective knowers", who are characterized by "a passionate rejection of science and male scientists". These "subjectivistic" women regard the methods, which you use in logic, as "alien territory, that belongs to men" and consider "value-intuition as a more safe and productive path to truth."

I claim, that all this is a part of a much the superior totalitarian ideology, which is about to become introduced in all educations on EU plane: The Matrix Conspiracy. In my article on the Sokal Hoax I also describe the tragic consequences of the feminist postmodern intellectualism on the universities.

And it *is* a tragedy to see the devastating effects, which you see in all the young women (and a great deal of men also), who follow radical feminists' attack on rationality and science.

Just to give an example: traditional feminists (reform feminists) often talked about the misogynistic elements in Freud's theorizing, and pointed out weaknesses in his methods – the case Dora was a typical example on, how Freud was bullying his clients in his attempts on discovering the repressed memories, which he "knew" were there.

There is a painful irony in the fact, that our days feminists so uncritical have affiliated the methods, which hypnotherapists and New Age psychotherapists pretend can uncover repressed memories from childhood about sexual abuse and more bizarre things such as satanic rituals, cannibalistic orgies, alien abduction, past lifes etc.

I know no better demonstration of, how dangerous the naive faith in subjective attitudes and rejection of scientific methods and content can prove to be for all, who are involved in these things (see my article [The New Feminism and the Philosophy of Womens Magazines](#)).

In my concept of *The Matrix Conspiracy*, I show how all these tendencies - postmodern intellectualism, management theory, New Age, Self-help and different kinds of reductionisms - today is working as one, global spreading ideology, though it can be hard to discover it, because many of the viewpoints within it seem to disagree in between. You could call it Consumer Capitalism, but there is a danger that this might melt together with Chinese Communism in a strange Matrix Hybrid, which will be the end of democracy and human rights.

You can very well say that this ideology also has a kind of Thought Police, what I call *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion*. And an important aspect of this is the use of internet trolls.

The philosopher Paul Ricoeur has referred to the “hermeneutics of suspicion” encouraged by writers such as Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. What people think, and the reasons they produce, may not be the real reasons at work. It then becomes easy to become suspicious of the motives of everyone, whether as the representative of an economic class or the purveyor of a morality, or just as an individual with psychological problems to solve.

The last mentioned is a typical trait of the management theories and their use of coaching and psychotherapy (for example Neuro-linguistic Programming – NLP) in leadership theories and personality developing courses. In this way they end up in concealing power relations at the workplace, they lead to difficulties assigning responsibility towards children in the schools, they reduce our spouses to means for our personal development (self-improvement), and remove political incitation and social responsibility by disguising social problems as personal/psychological problems.

An aspect of, that the instrumental reason has conquered territory from the communicative reason consists in, that we in connection with human problems treat each other as means or as items, which have come on the wrong course (the treatment society – moral insanity). It is interesting, that the New Age movement, which actually should be a spiritual alternative to this, and be an advocate for a communicative reason, on the contrary is one of the most aggressive advocates for the instrumental reason. This is due to its psychologizing of philosophy. New Age is possessed with all kind of self-invented forms of treatment, and with pseudoscientific attempts to justify them as science. Often they manipulative use instrumental/scientific inspired terms about their methods, but which are without any scientific meaning at all. It is just a rhetorical trick to persuade people to pay the fee

In my article *The Matrix Conspiracy* I claim, that a serious problem in the future, is that a new kind of pseudoscience is trying to unite New Age pseudosciences with some of the pseudosciences of reductionism (see my article [The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism](#)). I call it the Illuminati aspect of the Matrix conspiracy.

Because you can see the same development in the so-called diagnosed life, where large pharmaceutical companies are speculating in creating new diagnoses, which have to be treated with medicine: a product of a reductionistic view of human nature (biologism), where they for example have removed spiritual and philosophical claims about the meaning of suffering (see my article [Suffering as an entrance to the Source](#)). In the self-help industry the same is happening in form of the so-called positive psychology (where the “positive” is about material glory, money, success, personal power, sex, health, beauty) and where you have to ignore, repress, turn your back to everything you find negative. Here the concepts of suffering and negativity also have been removed. So, though the psychiatrists and doctors of the pharmaceutical industry, and the coaches and psychotherapists of the self-help industry, may be in opposition to each other (as shown in the movie *Cuckoo’s Nest*) it is in my view a product of the same Matrix conspiracy.

It is therefore interesting to compare the characteristic traits of New Age (the self-help industry) and the pharmaceutical industry with Aldous Huxley’s novel *Brave New World*. This novel foresees the end of democracy in a pseudoscientific, technological fixated meritocracy. The novel is about a totalitarian state, which keeps psychological and genetic control with everybody, so that they surrender to the claimed “blessings” of the progress of the instrumental or technical reason; that is: through the reductionisms of psychologism and biologism.

Everything, also humans, and human problems, are treated instrumental or technical. Psychology and genetics are controlling people down to the smallest details, children are being born and “grewed” on bottles, brains are being trimmed, characters are being converted after the needs of the dominant state. Notice the similarities with the New Age product called NLP which are about programming your brain so that you can become a success in society; that is: so that you work in favour of Consumer Capitalism.

The people in this meritocracy are considered as being happy. If they experience some kind of negativity, they are in large quantities supplied with the drug Soma, which makes them “happy” again. All religion, philosophy, literature and art have been removed. Science is strictly political controlled. The entertainment is so-called sensitivity-entertainment. You can go to sensitivity-parties, or you can watch sensitivity-movies, etc. Everywhere the people are meeting sensitivity-influences.

Somewhere in the novel there is a discussion between the main character Johannes and the President about the lack of truth and beauty in this society. The President argues that it might very well be that there isn't any truth and beauty, but the people are happy. Johannes objects, and says that the whole society is completely meaningless. The President continues: "Yes, but the people are happy!"

When I read this novel I remember the quote from a nonviolent communication coach, whom I had a discussion with: "Would you rather be right, than happy?" – see my article [Nonviolent Communication is an instrument of psychic terror](#).

The politicians in Denmark – which is one of the most secularized, management-oriented and coaching-controlled countries in the world – have had scientists to make an investigation, that shows that the Danes are the most happy people in the world. A bit of a paradox, because other investigations also show, that they are the largest consumers of Prozac in the world. Prozac is in Danish called "lykkepiller", which directly translated to English means Happiness-pills.

I have personally several times been attacked by NLP-coaches and psychotherapists for no other reason than being a philosopher; that is: a person who uses rationality and critical thinking (which is Old-thinking in their point of view). I have even, several times, been advised to seek NLP-psychotherapeutic treatment, in order again to be able to think new, and be flexible and willing to change (to claim that I have psychological problems, without any justification, and without being in a treatment-situation, is actually a very serious insult).

They call it self-improvement, which again is one and the same as adjustment to society, and therefore to the ruling ideology. An advice that doesn't differ much from the theories behind the re-education institutions in China. A direct Stalinistic approach, which almost all companies today is using more and more.

I actually think, that there is a danger that this ideology, in its fascination of economical growth and consumerism (personal power, success, and so-called NLP induced self-imagined X factors (=I am a fantastic superhuman), might melt together with Chinese Communism, which more and more is importing Western Consumer Capitalism, is growing more and more as an economical power, but which still is a totalitarian ideology, that doesn't accept democracy and human rights.

We more and more see how Western theorists of all kinds are praising China, how they more and more talk about what we can learn from China, but without mentioning China's violation of human rights. That we in the Western world gradually will accept the violation of human rights is now seen in how we for example have subjectified and relativized the freedom of speech, so that it can be

used as a means of offending other people. It is also seen 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, precisely as in China. Our day asylums.

In the brave new world of *The Matrix Conspiracy*: if you not are behaving precisely as the ruling ideology wants you to behave, then you'll meet the thought police of the Hermeneutics of Suspicion. From the coaches and psychotherapists of the self-help industry, you will, more or less explicit, be told that there is something wrong with you, that you not are “normal”, but, somehow “moral insane”. From the psychiatrists and doctors of the pharmaceutical industry, you could even get yourself a diagnose, which paradoxical enough gives you some rights, but which also stigmatizes you.

The approach of *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion* is to attack the character of the person with whom they are arguing rather than finding fault with his or her argument. This move is within philosophy well known as arguing *ad hominem* (Latin for “to the person”). It is a technique of Rhetoric (communicative swindle), since discrediting the Source of an argument usually leaves the argument itself intact. Shifting attention from the point in question to some aspects of the arguer's personality or behaviour are irrelevant to the point being discussed.

To try to have a normal conversation with, for example, a NLP-coach or psychotherapist, can be an odd experience. Have you ever met a person, that to everything you say, answers: “I can see, that you mean something else, than what you say” – (implicit: what the coach thinks you mean). Then you might answer: “No, I meant what I said!” Then the person answers: “When you say no, I see that you with that answer means something else, than what you say” – (implicit, what the coach thinks you mean)”? But as mentioned, it could also come as a diagnose from a psychiatrist or doctor.

But how can they know this? How can they play the role as someone who know who you are better than yourself, at the same time as they totally deny and renounce what you think, and the reasons you produce; that is: your experiences, your education, your arguments, your articles, your books?

Well, the only way they then can get their knowledge from, is from their own theories (which are without psychological, scientific, and philosophical foundation). It is pure prejudice. Prejudice is a belief held without good reason or consideration of the evidence for or against its being true. The funny thing is that philosophy - that is: rationality and critical thinking – precisely is opposed to prejudice. We are all riddled with prejudices on a wide range of issues, but it is possible to eliminate some of them

by making an effort to examine evidence and arguments on both sides of any question. Human reason is fallible, and most of us are strongly motivated to cling on to *some* beliefs even in the teeth of evidence against them (for example wishful thinking); however, even making small inroads into prejudice can transform the world for the better.

But these people do the opposite. They try to remove rationality and critical thinking through the hermeneutics of suspicion. And they have success. As already mentioned, then a whole time-tendency within school, folk high school, universities and continuing education, focus on so-called "self-improvement – self-help", which are inspired by them.

But you don't only meet the problem of the hermeneutics of suspicion within high developed theories. You also meet it within the so-called common, mediocre life. For example, the whole of Karen Blixen's life is a rebellion against this mediocrity of the common life, which tried to clip her wings in her childhood. It is a human insult. I will say that this is probably the biggest wall you will meet on your spiritual journey. And it is much more painful when you also meet it from friends and family, if you not are behaving "normal". Like this it is somehow something that is coming from "within".

But to stand up against these influences, and keep your philosophical integration intact, will for certain create a spirit of greatness. In some cases it is best totally to avoid these people, because they will clip your wings if they get the chance for it.

Do as Epicurus, treat people with friendliness and compassion as long as it is possible, but withdraw to your garden when they try to lure you into the world's noise and political quarrels, because they think that this is a part of being "normal". When you in peace are cultivating your garden you can also keep on cultivating your philosophical integration and the refined pleasure in this. But not without being critical!

The removal of genuine rationality from the stage leaves open the possibility of accusations of rationalizations for ulterior motives. This form of analysis (leading us to think of groups or individuals "what is in it for them?"), is not only corrosive of trust in society. It is bound eventually to undermine itself. Why are such views themselves being propagated? What are those spreading them going to gain?

I think it is time for rebellion against this tendency in society, and especially within leadership theories. If we shall save our democracy and welfare society it is absolutely necessary, that we in relation to democracy-parasitic ideologies become

philosophical rebels like Socrates, Henry David Thoreau, Gandhi, Martin Luther King or Krishnamurti – a kind of spiritual anarchists.

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

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