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NYTimes warns readers against critical thinking lest they realize the 'paper of record' is feeding them lies

**Helen Buyniski***is an American journalist and political commentator at RT. Follow her on Twitter**[@velocirapture23](#) and on [Telegram](#)*

19 Feb, 2021 18:46 / Updated 5 days ago



Do not even THINK about thinking © Pixabay

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Critical thinking is dangerous, according to a Times editorial urging readers to vet sources with Wi-Fi into the hands of conspiracy theorists and be tricked into questioning the paper's iron-clad truths.

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Charlie Warzel, a Times columnist who styles himself an expert in “*online radicalization*,” has implored his readers not to “*go down the rabbit hole*,” in a Thursday op-ed luridly depicting the dangers of evaluating new information, questing out into the internet armed with nothing but one’s own mind. Thinking critically can lead to giving away one’s precious attention to dastardly conspiracy theorists whose only apparent goal is to dupe you, he warns, as opposed to the friendly narrative managers at the New York Times, who just want to make sure your brain is quivering with the required fear quota - of [viruses](#), [Russians](#), your [neighbors](#), [terrorists](#), [white people](#) or, now, the capacity for believing wrongthink lurking within *your own brain*.

It’s logical that the Times should warn its readers against engaging too deeply with “*wrongthink*,” of course – Times readers often lack a solid grasp of the views they consider to be their deeply-held beliefs, having picked them up absent-mindedly from one ‘approved’ source or another without thinking too deeply about their implications or how they might possibly conflict with their existing values.

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That is, if the average Times reader were to think too deeply about the material

they ingest every day with their morning coffee, the resulting cognitive dissonance would cause their heads to explode. The paper contradicts itself on at least a weekly basis, as the narrative managers gleefully mine out society's foundations from beneath it. Merely comparing the paper's [evolving](#) coverage of the Covid-19 [pandemic](#) makes it clear that if they *aren't* trying to keep their readers fear-stricken and off-balance with constant infusions of cognitive dissonance, they couldn't have paid someone to do it better.

Warzel cites a professor who warns that *"the goal of disinformation is to capture attention, and critical thinking is deep attention,"* implying that to think critically about some forbidden morsel is to fall victim to the evil mastermind who created it. *"The natural human mind-set is a liability in an attention economy,"* he continues, making very sure the reader gets the point that *"it allows grifters, conspiracy theorists, trolls, and savvy attention hijackers to take advantage of us and steal our focus."* You wouldn't want that, would you? Close that browser window NOW!

The professor, one Michael Caulfield of Washington State University Vancouver, offers up a series of thought-stopping clichés to be reverted-to whenever one believes one is reading wrongthink: *"1. Stop. 2. Investigate the source. 3. Find better coverage. 4. Trace claims, quotes and media to the original context."* On the surface, this isn't necessarily bad advice, though the professor's advice to take no more than 90 seconds on a given fact-check should raise a few eyebrows – not every fact is that easy to check, especially the sort that gets smeared as *"conspiracy theories."*

It's *where* one *"investigates"* the source and finds *"better"* coverage that the problems lurk. While Warzel doesn't come right out and recommend its readers seek out Wikipedia, the

bathroom wall of the internet, he does quote an assistant political science professor at the University of Nevada, Reno, who believes the supposedly crowd-sourced yet intelligence-agency-[dominated](#) *"encyclopedia"* known for hosting [massive hoaxes](#) and conducting [reputational hit jobs](#) is actually great for

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that recommending wikipedia is a method that “*could be exploited by conspiracy theorists*” (oh, the irony), he has no problem recommending searching unknown sources on Google and going with the top results. The Google contractors in charge of ranking websites for the search engine are [advised](#) to use Wikipedia as their primary source of guidance for evaluating the trustworthiness of an unfamiliar website – never mind the [massive disclaimer](#) the site carries warning that any or all content may be false. That doesn't deter the underpaid contractors doing Google's dirty work from swearing by it – and apparently it doesn't bother the Paper of Record either. At least now we know where the Times' journalists are really doing their fact-checking.

It's no secret that establishment journalists – especially the sort who write for self-styled 'papers of record' – consider themselves something of a priest class, tasked with translating the divine word of politicians and 'experts' so that ordinary people don't realize there's something deeply wrong with the whole situation. And it's no secret either that these narrative-managers realize they're outnumbered by the alt-media commenters who've taken it upon themselves to report the facts left out by the establishment. So the only hope of the Warzels of the world is to hold their noses and convert ordinary folks to their doctrine, in which the once-noble discipline of “*fact-checking*” is perverted into an unsubtle bludgeon against ideological foes. This growing movement is reflected in Twitter's “*Birdwatch*” program, in Facebook's since-discontinued effort to [crowd-source](#) the rating of news sources, and, of course, in Wikipedia. Only by knightining the hoi polloi as the foot soldiers of orthodoxy can they be inoculated against the threat of critical thinking.

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Twitter's 'Birdwatch' feature embraces its self-appointed thought police, giving citizen censors stamp of approval

Because the real issue – with politics, with Covid-19, with the endless bloody wars, with pretty much all of the US' problems – is a failure to think critically. The majority of Americans go through life believing that the status quo is 'that way' for a reason beyond inertia and graft, unwilling to imagine – let alone attempt to create – a better world. This is in large part because American children are taught in school not to think critically, but to obey – which some might deem a necessary casualty of sticking one helpless teacher with a class of 40 rowdy children, but which any honest person has to call a recipe for disaster. After all, one cannot have a functional democracy without an educated populace, and for all its newfound post-Trump enthusiasm for Our Democracy™, the US does not have a populace capable of critically evaluating information.

The narrative managers, Charlie Warzel included, want to keep it that way. Why mess with a good thing? Don't strain your brain, just relax and let the Times rock you to sleep. Anything else is letting the bad guys win.

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c CarolABinkley

19 February, 2021

This is a great article, Helen. You seem to be one of those rare women who are actually able to "think critically".

The majority of the members of my gender, in their evolved sense of duty to "control" the small charges in their care, seem to only want to "tell you things they want you to believe."

Well, my mother was like that. I rebelled.

Reply 44 1

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DukeLeo > CarolABinkley

2 days ago

"Critical thinking is dangerous, according to a Times editorial ...". Looks like the neocons at the New York Times are getting panicky, demanding that the "sheep" cease thinking for themselves. This demand is fit for psychiatric evaluation.

Unfortunately for the New York Times, the "sheep" know how to use the Internet and are comparing Internet articles to the nonsense written by the NYT. No wonder that MSM newspapers have for years seen a decline in sales.

Reply 1

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c CarolABinkley > CarolABinkley

20 February, 2021

26 upvotes. Wow.

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RCBreakenridge

19 February, 2021

A good friend shared with me years ago that any new information should be confronted with the question "How do you know?" Any answer to that question that fails to reference either a sound logical thought process or known facts runs very high odds of being propaganda or worse, opinion/belief masquerading as fact.

Reply  18 **RD Ramona Dispatch** > RCBreakenridge 

19 February, 2021

This ends the conversation with neoliberals upwards of 80% of the time in my experience. NYT must now be considered as being somewhere between Труд and The Necronomicon.

Reply  8 **D DeoGratias** > RCBreakenridge 

19 February, 2021

NYT has become NYS limes

Reply  4 **Vidarr Kerr** 

19 February, 2021

People in the USA have become incredibly lazy and apathetic. It is the result of the poison, food-like products that they eat, fluoridated water, TV programming and an ever worsening, brainwashing education in the public schools. Now, most people in the USA would rather hand off responsibility to the government, or almost any institution, to evade the responsibility of their own actions. They have to have people to blame. Shouldering the responsibility is simply too heavy to handle for these weakened people.

This why Freedom has a Slim Chance of returning to the USA. The Patriot Act is still here Twenty Years later -----and, they have Added Even More Anti-Freedom Legislation. The firearms will be next. Once that is complete, the USA will be completely dismantled and sold off for pennies to the Small Hats, just like they did to the Soviet Union/Russia.

Reply  35  Show 5 previous replies**uncle_Alex** > Vidarr Kerr 

20 February, 2021

Nothing new under the sun. Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about the US reality, like John Swinton, Ortega y Gasset, Ayn Rand and Noam Chomsky. But Hollywood prevailed and helped the deep-state swamp to flourish.

Reply  10 **Dmitry_Slaviansk** > Vidarr Kerr 

20 February, 2021

Small hats, lobbyists, and Russian billionaires belong to the small hats cabal. They will use their billion NY to acquire large factories and natural resources for peanuts and allowed to keep a commission on it.

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Reply  6 **Dmitry_Slaviansk**

20 February, 2021

When I was a high school student in Oklahoma, we were made to stand up and recite a pledge to the United States of America and to the nation for which it stands...etc. Then they also had an "Army class". Once I sneaked into the class and they had a huge world map where the Soviet Union was painted black and there were no cities, rivers or anything in it. I am talking about the early 80s. Imagine the psychological indoctrination made on such primitive minds who were chewing tobacco and wearing cowboy boots even in summer time. This continues today and new issues have been added, gender permutations insanity and the rest..

Reply  13 **Stu** > Dmitry_Slaviansk

20 February, 2021

Yes, US schooling is particularly bad. The allegiance to the flag every day is pure indoctrination

Reply  10  2 Show 1 more reply**The_Chosenites**

19 February, 2021

As George Carlin said, the owners of us all don't want an educated public, well-versed, capable of critical thinking because they might just realize how badly they are being blanked over every day! They want a dumbed down population, just smart enough to go to work in these dead end jobs for minimum wage and not question why the system thru them overboard long ago. That was the essence of it.

Reply  35 **Sovietski** > The_Chosenites

19 February, 2021

For example Culture of Critique should be a required reading at the high school level in the US, not a banned book.

Reply  13  Show 2 more replies**asdfghjkl**

20 February, 2021

Speaking of the MSM, anyone knows what's up with CNN? It seems to be launching a relentless press assault on China. Picking dissatisfied individuals from the billions of Chinese, draw conclusions from the one or two disaffected and clobber the entire nation.

They had withdrew their readers comments section many many years ago for fear that readers are able to point out their logic flaws. This is the reason why I read RT as I don't being slammed by the American press. You need some balance for your sanity

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Reply  11 

N

NANCY

19 February, 2021

Too true. Americans love to be told what to think.

Just read a fascinating article on Glenn Greenwald's site about the cop supposedly murdered at the Capitol on January 6. The story was largely made up by--wait for it--the New York Times!

Reply  33 

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John Titor > NANCY



19 February, 2021

Sicknick had died at home and the media was suggesting he could have had a heart attack because of being sprayed by bear spray from "rioters". So he didn't die from being hit by a fire extinguisher.

Reply  6 

↩ Show 1 more reply

RD

Ramona Dispatch > NANCY



19 February, 2021

They have lost all credibility. Nobody of any intellectual worth trafficks in their circles any more. They are a self sustaining narcissistic neurotic circle jerk of Globalist talking points, hedonism, elitism, and emotes.

Reply  8 

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S

Stranded

19 February, 2021

Ok so to verify things I just look at Wikipedia for all the answers? Is that a joke?

Reply  19 

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YankiGoHome > Stranded



21 February, 2021

No, it is the sad reality. I'm so sorry that I have been donating to them for some years.

Reply  

Vidarr Kerr > Stranded



19 February, 2021

Right. Wikipedia is FULL of lies and propaganda. It is a joke.

Reply  14 

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20 February, 2021

"vet sources with Wikipedia". While Wikipedia is very good on technical facts, it is 24/7 monitored by a large group of mercenary jobsworths paid to ensure that every page sticks closely to the establishment narrative. Any attempted edit which "does not meet our required standards" is immediately undone.

Reply  4 

bluedanube > Confucious

20 February, 2021

there are teachers involved :)

educational systems will not teach people to be critical on wikipedia..

it is a clandestine version of authoritarianism.

Reply  1 

perspective

20 February, 2021

Why do US people hate Marx. He just wrote a document book , das kapital , where he pronounced the dangers of letting the free kapital getting too much power. He pronounced that a few number , an elite , could end controlling your country government and everyday life if not any regulations of kapital control was set. Concerning the US he was quite right. The wall street controls your life and by still supporting that there is nothing you can do about it.

Reply  6 

1 **1demeneye** > perspective

20 February, 2021

Because from birth they are taught that communism is pure evil and that Marx was one of the most evil communists of all.

Reply  1 

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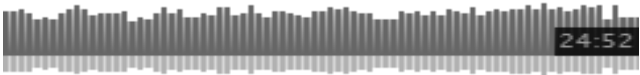
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Vaccine passports MUST be resisted as a solution to the Covid crisis; they'll simply encourage state-backed snooping



America's future is in the hands of woefully inept cretins at a time when creativity and innovation are needed more than ever



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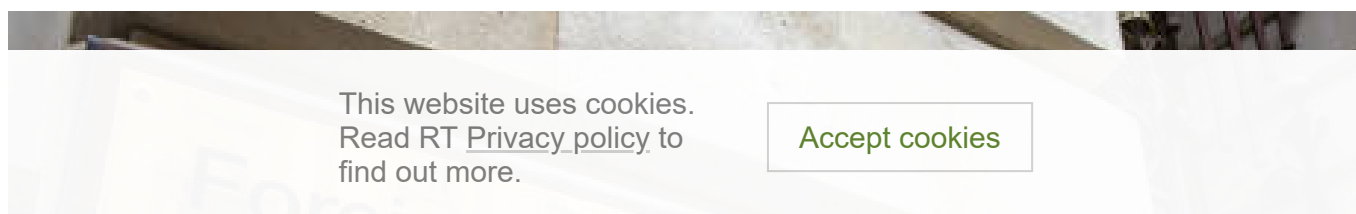
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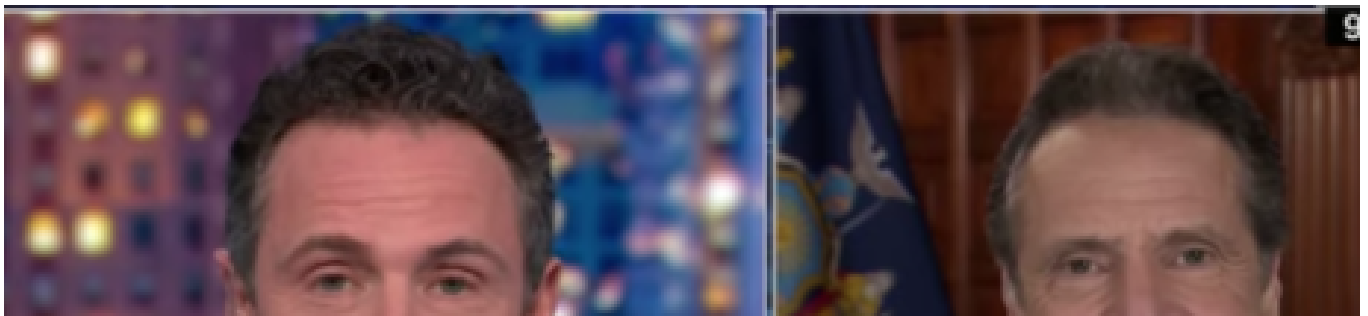




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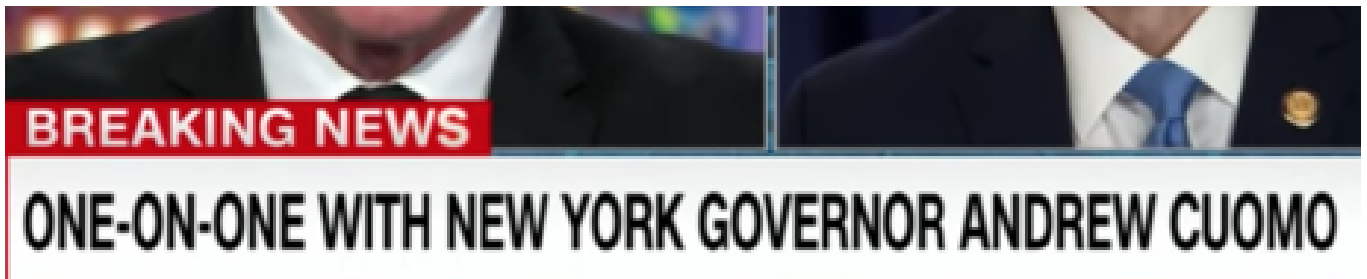


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Just in time for FBI probe, CNN bans Chris Cuomo from covering his governor brother – and New York Mayor piles on



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US diplomats in Russia have asked to receive Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine after Washington failed to supply doses — reports



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What if this happened to their brothers, friends, cousins.....what if we beat the civilians they love. Could you imagine how they would think twice about how they treated people if they knew their loved ones would get that same treatment.

That's just me talking crazy....nothing serious or anything. I would encourage you to do....but it's something to think about.

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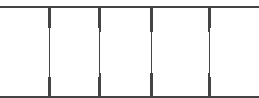
'Amend: The Fight for America', Netflix's new painfully woke docuseries, is only interested in indoctrinating, not educating

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Spain risks more riots as free speech crackdown and rapper's jailing reveal a country still struggling to escape Franco's legacy

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