

News and “Fake” News

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

We should be clear about one thing: “news” is a commercial product, like toothpaste or chewing gum. It is also designed more or less according to the same principles and with few exceptions “sold” by the same kind of hawkers.

The term “fake news” has one effect which many apparently do not understand- it implies that there is news which is not “fake”.

It might be useful to consider how advertising works- news is a form of advertising. A product is announced with “less sugar” or even with “zero sugar”. I think everyone here can imagine the products to which I am referring. Of course the “less sugar” or “zero sugar” seem like positive qualities. But in the products concerned the difference is like saying “gentler slavery” or “zero whipping” of slaves. It begs the question whether the product that has less or none of some currently fashionable “negative content” is in and of itself a desirable product.

Is a mystery liquid sold as a beverage- originally with addictive cocaine- virtuous or more virtuous by reducing its official sugar content?

Is “news product” — actually an advertising vehicle from its very inception- better when it is not “fake”?

The luxury goods business spends an appreciable amount of money lobbying for police interdiction of counterfeit products. However, all industry insiders know that counterfeiting is beneficial advertising for the “real” goods. If the counterfeits were entirely eliminated it would devalue those very brands. The contrast between “real” luxury goods and “fakes” is part of the vanity the promotes the brand as such.

In the same way when people of whatever political persuasion complain about “fake news” their pleas in fact support the illusion that the “news” per se is not fake. In fact there is no objective news. Moreover the news items are actually destructive since they are designed to undermine the notion of necessary information, i.e. historical background and context to interpret events or facts that are to be understood as events.

“Conspiracy theory” as a pejorative is really an attack not on “news” which is actually senseless but on any attempt to establish context, historical or otherwise, for data that needs interpretation. The “news” is a TV dinner packaged as if it were a Lego kit. If you spread all the Lego pieces on your table and have never seen the box, it will certainly take a while to build what is intended. You might build something else. But a TV dinner needs no box. Rip off the foil and you have the reconstituted turkey product with all the artificial ingredients, clearly separated in the aluminum tray. The big compartment is the meat, the smaller ones are for potatoes and veg. If you prefer to cook your own meals then you are a

conspiracy theorist...

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