IV. SO HOW GULLIBLE ARE WE?

EXCERPTED FROM WHY ARE PEOPLE SO GULLIBLE?, DAVID ROBSON, MARCH 2016, FUTURE, BBC

"Why do so many false beliefs persist in the face of hard evidence? And why do attempts to deny them only add grist to the rumour mill? It's not a question of intelligence – even Nobel Prize winners have fallen for some bizarre and baseless theories.

"OUR BRAINS DON'T LET PIDDLING LITTLE FACTS GET IN THE WAY OF A GOOD STORY, ALLOWING LIES TO INFECT THE MIND WITH SURPRISING EASE."

—Dave Robson

But a series of recent psychological advances may offer some answers, showing how easy it is to construct a rumour that bypasses the brain's deception filters. "Even when we 'know' we should be drawing on facts and evidence, we just draw on feelings," says Eryn Newman at the University of Southern California…Newman suggests our gut reactions swivel around just five simple questions.

- Does a fact come from a credible source?
- Do others believe it?
- Is there plenty of evidence to support it?
- Is it compatible with what I believe?
- Does it tell a good story?

"Crucially, our responses to each of these points can be swayed by frivolous, extraneous, details that have nothing to do with the truth."

"Consider the questions of whether others believe a statement or not, and whether the source is credible. We tend to trust people who are familiar to us, meaning that the more we see a talking head, the more we will begrudgingly start to believe what they say. "The fact that they aren't an expert won't even come into our judgement of the truth," says Newman. What's more, we fail to keep count of the number of people supporting a view; when that talking head repeats their idea on endless news programmes, it creates the illusion that the opinion is more popular and pervasive than it really is. Again, the result is that we tend to accept it as the truth."

HTTPS://WWW.BBC.COM/FUTURE/ARTICLE/20160323-WHY-ARE-PEOPLE-SO-INCREDIBLY-GULLIBLE

NEXT ISSUE:

- AT THE RISK OF REPEATING OURSELVES...
- CHOOSE OUR OWN ADVENTURE.

GULLIBLE, LAZY CITIZENRY ELECTS CORRUPT LEADERSHIP. DEMOCRACY FALLS TO CAPITALIST OLIGARCHY OR SOCIALIST

RESPONSIBLE, INFORMED CITIZENRY ELECTS HONORABLE LEADERSHIP. DEMOCRACY WITH BALANCED FREE MARKET ECONOMY AND REASONABLE SOCIAL SAFETY NETS STUMBLINGLY MARCHES SUCCESSFULLY ON.

- THE FALSE DEBATE REVISITED: SOCIALISM AND CAPITALISM IN A NUTSHELL
- CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

YOUR BRAIN ON 24/7 TELEVISION AND TALK RADIO "NEWS"

Just say no to the loud voices behind the microphones and in front of the cameras parading their opinions as facts.
Commit to good citizenship and dig deeper.

Thursday, October 8, 2020
Volume 1, Number 6

THINKING IT THROUGH

THE FALSE DEBATE

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- "FAKE NEWS," FALSE JOURNALISM OR PROPAGANDA: AKA LIES AND LEADING SHEEP

I.

PROPAGANDA: dissemination of information—facts, arguments, rumors, half-truths, or lies—to influence public opinion.

… and "is the more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols (words, gestures, banners, monuments, music, clothing, insignia, hairstyles, designs on coins and postage stamps, and so forth). Deliberateness and a relatively heavy emphasis on manipulation distinguish propaganda from casual conversation or the free and easy exchange of ideas. Propagandists have a specified goal or set of goals. To achieve these, they deliberately select facts, arguments, and displays of symbols and present them in ways they think will have the most effect. To maximize effect, they may omit or distort pertinent facts or simply lie, and they may try to divert the attention of the reactors (the people they are trying to sway) from everything but their own propaganda."

BRUCE LANNES SMITH, ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICAMARCH 20, 2020
HTTPS://WWW.BRITANNICA.COM/TOPIC/PROPAGANDA

II.

FALSE JOURNALISM: mixing the reporting of events that happened with commentary, analysis and speculation betraying underlying personal opinions and beliefs

"I tend to see examples of people falsely equating news and opinion when they start complaining about bias in the media. My liberal friends complain that FOX News is biased because of people like Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity. My conservative friends complain that MSNBC is biased because of people like Rachel Maddow and Ed Shultz. Are these people biased? Definitely. Are they reporters? Not by any stretch of the imagination. Their job is to say, "I'm a liberal/conservative and here's what I think of the news," not, "Here is objective news." News and opinion writers both publish articles they believe to be the truth about an issue. But here's the difference: reporters would cover a debate about gay marriage, whereas columnists would take one side or another — sometimes neither."

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REPORTING AND COMMENTARY,
CALEB HENDRICH, THE COLLEGIAN, FEBRUARY 19, 2013
HTTPS://COLLEGIAN.COM/2013/02/THE-DIFFERENCE-BETWEEN-REPORTING-AND-COMMENTARY/

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF SPECULATIVE JOURNALISM?

BY CHRISTY WAMPOLE JANUARY 22,2018 , NEW YORK TIMES
HTTPS://WWW.NYTIMES.COM/2018/01/22/OPINION/SPECULATIVE-JOURNALISM-FUTURE.HTML

"Reporters and editors making guesses at what might happen rather than reporting what did happen results in what is typically called speculative journalism.

While this tendency to speculate has existed in journalism since its inception, its prevalence in recent months strikes me as peculiar at a time when all sides seem to be calling for more truth and less fake news. Because speculation is neither true nor false, it seems to work as a strange compromise, a third way that shelves for now the question of what is real and true.

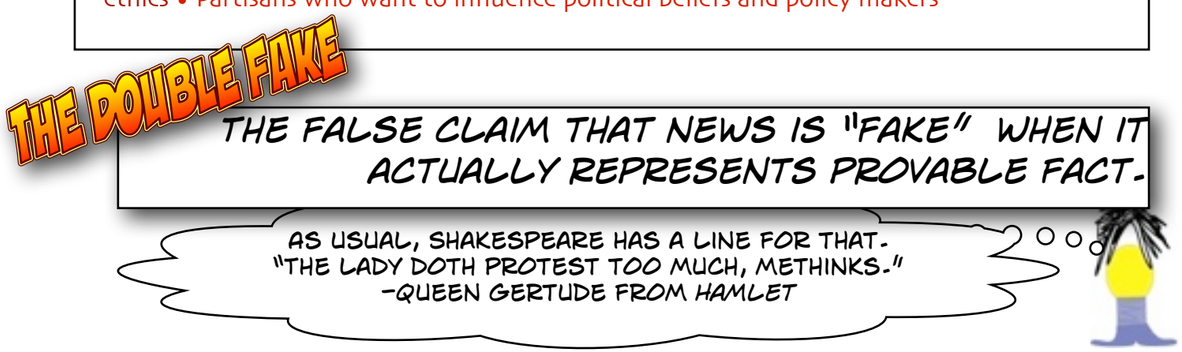
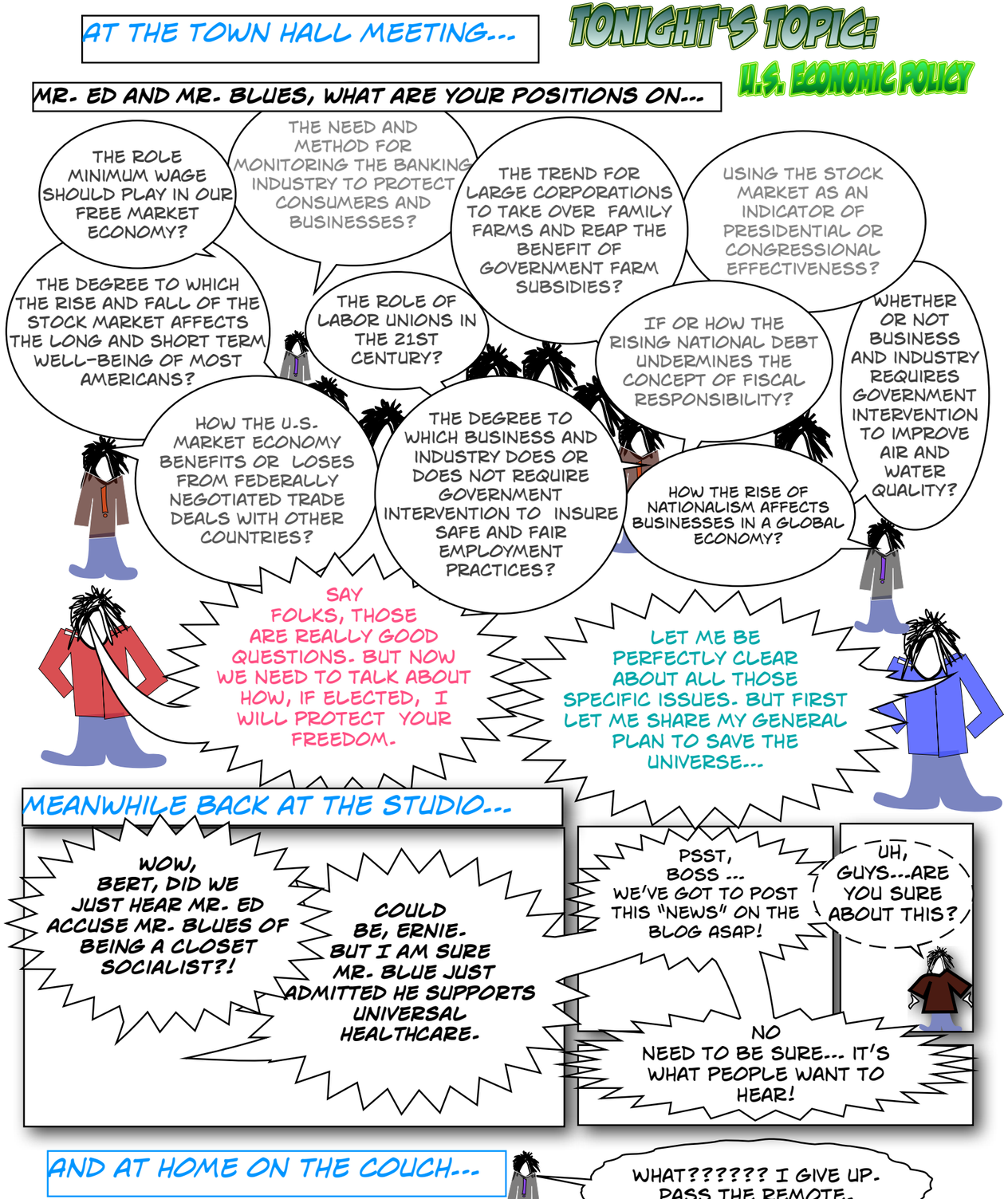
Network news relies on these speculations most frequently, but newspapers certainly indulge in the practice. A few examples of speculative headlines from recent days: "Republicans' 2018 Resolution: Bipartisanship. Will It Last?" (The New York Times); "A Trump-Mueller Sitdown: Could the Endless Russia Probe Soon Be Over?" (Fox News); "How Breitbart Might Change, or Not, Without Steve Bannon" (The Washington Post); "Russia Collusion Inquiry Faces a Big 2018 — but Will Trump Let Mueller Finish the Job?" (The Guardian); "Who Is Going to Run for President in 2020?" (The Wall Street Journal). All of these articles appear in the news sections of their publication, not in the opinion pages, where speculation might be more fitting."

III.

FAKE NEWS...or not

EXCERPTED FROM.....
FAKE NEWS," LIES AND PROPAGANDA: HOW TO SORT FACT FROM FICTION
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY RESOURCE GUIDES, SHEVON DESAI, HAILEY MOONEY, JO ANGELA OEHRLI
HTTPS://GUIDES.LIB.UMICH.EDU/FAKENEWS

" 'Fake news' is a term that has come to mean different things to different people. At its core, we are defining 'fake news' as those news stories that are false: the story itself is fabricated, with no verifiable facts, sources or quotes. Sometimes these stories may be propaganda that is intentionally designed to mislead the reader, or may be designed as "clickbait" written for economic incentives (the writer profits on the number of people who click on the story). In recent years, fake news stories have proliferated via social media, in part because they are so easily and quickly shared online…

" How misinformation and disinformation is produced is directly related to who the author(s) is and the different reasons why it is created. Who are the authors? They may be:

- Someone wanting to make money, regardless of the content of the article
- Satirists who want to either make a point or entertain you, or both
- Poor or untrained journalists
- The pressure of the 24 hour news cycle as well as the explosion of news sites may contribute to shoddy writing that doesn't follow professional journalistic standards or ethics
- Partisans who want to influence political beliefs and policy makers"