**No, Facebook Does Not Reflect Reality | Shira Ovide | Sept. 9, 2020 | New York Times**

Mark Zuckerberg is the world’s most powerful unelected person, and it drives me bonkers when he misrepresents what’s happening on Facebook.

In an interview that aired on Tuesday, Zuckerberg was asked big and thorny questions about his company: Why are people sometimes cruel to one another on Facebook, and why do inflammatory, partisan posts get so much attention?

Zuckerberg told “Axios on HBO” that Americans are angry and divided right now, and that’s why they act that way on Facebook, too.

Zuckerberg and other Facebook executives consistently say that Facebook is a mirror on society. An online gathering that gives a personal printing press to billions of people will inevitably have all the good and the bad of those people.

It’s true but also comically incomplete to say that Facebook reflects reality. Instead, Facebook presents reality filtered through its own prism, and this affects what people think and do.

Facebook regularly rewrites its computer systems to meet the company’s goals; the company might make it more likely that you’ll see a friend’s baby photo than a news article about wildfires. That doesn’t mean that wildfires aren’t real, but it does mean that Facebook is creating a world where the fires are not in the forefront.

Facebook’s ability to shape, not merely reflect, people’s preferences and behavior is also how the company makes money. The company might suggest to a video game developer that tweaking its social media ads — changing the pitch language or tailoring the ad differently for Midwestern college students than for 40-somethings on the West Coast — can help it sell more app downloads.

Facebook sells billions of dollars in ads each year because what people see there, and how Facebook chooses to prioritize that information, can influence what people believe and buy.

Facebook knows it has the power to shape what we believe and how we act. That’s why it has restricted wrong information about the coronavirus, and it doesn’t allow people to bully one another online.

Further proof: An internal team of researchers at Facebook concluded that the social network made people more polarized, The Wall Street Journal reported in May. American society is deeply divided, but Facebook contributes to this, too.

So why does Zuckerberg keep saying that Facebook is a mirror of society? Maybe it’s a handy media talking point that is intentionally uncomplicated.

There are no easy fixes to make Facebook or much of the world less polarized and divided, but it’s dishonest for Zuckerberg to say his company is a bystander rather than a participant in what billions of people on its site believe and how they behave.

Zuckerberg knows — as we all do — the power that Facebook has to remake reality.

**1) According to the columnist, how dishonest is Mark Zuckerberg’s defence of Facebook? Answer the question in your own words (80 words, +/- 10%) / 4 points**

**2) Should social media have the status of media outlets? (180 words (+/-10%) / 8 points**

**\*\*\***

**Thème : traduisez (8 points)**

L'après-midi on avait revu Claude Hartmann au bureau vers quatre heures. À cinq heures il était parti. Il n'avait parlé à quiconque, il avait juste murmuré : « au revoir » en croisant sa secrétaire. Elle avait répondu : « Je vous souhaite un bon voyage », par politesse, elle savait bien qu'il détestait les voyages. (...)Le vendredi matin vers sept heures, il avait réveillé Pierre au téléphone. De ses rares amis Pierre était le plus proche, ou le moins lointain. Ils s'étaient connus à l'université et depuis ils n'avaient jamais cessé de se voir. (...)

- Pierre, pardonne-moi de t'appeler si tôt. Je pars tout à l'heure en voyage. Pierre, s'il m'arrive quelque chose, prends bien soin de Thérèse. Pierre était bourré de somnifères, il se souvenait avoir été long à réagir, il avait interrogé son ami :

- Où vas-tu ? Pourquoi pars-tu ?

Claude avait répondu :

- Je vais à New York, pour mes affaires. Il avait répété :

- Prends bien soin de Thérèse. II avait encore dit :

- Je t'embrasse.Il avait brusquement raccroché. Jean-Denis BREDIN, *L'Absence, 1986*

**Corrigé question 1 type Mines-Ponts:**

Held accountable for magnifying hatred and partisanship, Facebook claims that it is but a mirror image of society’s divisions.

The columnist concedes Zuckerberg’s chicken-or-egg point and owns up to Facebook’s commitments against misinformation and online bullying. Yet for her, it precisely goes to show the extent of its power to shape both content and activity, and thus to make a fortune selling targeted advertisements.

Resultantly, the columnist deems Zuckerberg’s argument simplistic and manipulative: by blaming it on the users, he talks down his own responsibility for fostering polarization. (88 words)

**Corrigé question 1 type Mines-Ponts:**

Held accountable for magnifying hatred and partisanship, Facebook claims that it is but a mirror image of society’s divisions.

The columnist concedes Zuckerberg’s chicken-or-egg point and owns up to Facebook’s commitments against misinformation and online bullying. Yet for her, it precisely goes to show the extent of its power to shape both content and activity, and thus to make a fortune selling targeted advertisements.

Resultantly, the columnist deems Zuckerberg’s argument simplistic and manipulative: by blaming it on the users, he talks down his own responsibility for fostering polarization. (88 words)

**Corrigé question 1 type Mines-Ponts:**

Held accountable for magnifying hatred and partisanship, Facebook claims that it is but a mirror image of society’s divisions.

The columnist concedes Zuckerberg’s chicken-or-egg point and owns up to Facebook’s commitments against misinformation and online bullying. Yet for her, it precisely goes to show the extent of its power to shape both content and activity, and thus to make a fortune selling targeted advertisements.

Resultantly, the columnist deems Zuckerberg’s argument simplistic and manipulative: by blaming it on the users, he talks down his own responsibility for fostering polarization. (88 words)

**Corrigé question 1 type Mines-Ponts:**

Held accountable for magnifying hatred and partisanship, Facebook claims that it is but a mirror image of society’s divisions.

The columnist concedes Zuckerberg’s chicken-or-egg point and owns up to Facebook’s commitments against misinformation and online bullying. Yet for her, it precisely goes to show the extent of its power to shape both content and activity, and thus to make a fortune selling targeted advertisements.

Resultantly, the columnist deems Zuckerberg’s argument simplistic and manipulative: by blaming it on the users, he talks down his own responsibility for fostering polarization. (88 words)

**Corrigé question 1 type Mines-Ponts:**

Held accountable for magnifying hatred and partisanship, Facebook claims that it is but a mirror image of society’s divisions.

The columnist concedes Zuckerberg’s chicken-or-egg point and owns up to Facebook’s commitments against misinformation and online bullying. Yet for her, it precisely goes to show the extent of its power to shape both content and activity, and thus to make a fortune selling targeted advertisements.

Resultantly, the columnist deems Zuckerberg’s argument simplistic and manipulative: by blaming it on the users, he talks down his own responsibility for fostering polarization. (88 words)