

Nina Ryan

Professor Greenberg

Tabloid Journalism

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The Golden Age of Journalism

The tumult of the 2016 Presidential Election caused a renaissance of journalism. Reporters and presidential candidates alike commenced a war on the other, determined to have the power. This power that each candidate and each news agency fought so valiantly for has grown and expanded over time to become the ability to plant a seed of information in the reader's head, swaying every single opinion. The power of persuasion through sensationalism has dramatically changed the way that informed citizens consume information. It has caused social, political, and economic upheavals from its very beginning, the declaration of the Spanish-American War, all the way to the modern-day concept of fake news and the North Korean crisis. Yellow journalism has become a staple of American society; in the people's determination to seek the truth through the news, they have become neutralized to inaccurate information as sensationalism and bias take precedence over facts.

The advent of yellow journalism, as well as its continuation into the present day, was a byproduct of the ethical dilemma: business success vs. actuality. The only way in which news agencies could not possibly clash with the pressures of profit would be if the news was federally funded. In this case, the people would lack actuality because of government censorship, without the protection of the 1st Amendment. Before the emergence of sensationalism, newspapers were still considered subjective, but on the other end of the spectrum. Rather than the dramatization of facts, as well as the explicit emphasis of news that arose with sensationalism through yellow

journalism, common people were unable to access accurate information regarding the unpleasantnesses of living in society, because newspapers were too socially constrained to print it. Before the rise of Randolph and Pulitzer, sensationalist publishers, like that of *The Day's Doings*, would refuse to associate their professional names with such an abhorrence to society. The result was a society that only read about the “most appropriate” and “positive reflections” of their community.

The act of exaggeration seems to be a very crude way of seeking the truth, especially since its very beginnings were based upon a lie that eventually led to a declaration of war. Even so, in the process of exaggerating stories, sensationalist writers have granted common people access to information regarding the dregs of society, which were once unpublished because of moral constraints. In this way, the idea that people have become neutralized to inaccurate information is debatable. One could argue that the advent of yellow journalism could be an individual's first chance to form their own opinions about the news that they read, based off the premises that civilians finally could read both the positive and the negative areas of the news, rather than just the socially-uptight articles of before.

I find this argument of accuracy in the media so fascinating because of its relevance to today, as well as the dramatic effect it has had on the economy of the United States. When I pass a tabloid in a grocery store, I see the headlines, and I immediately forget about them. More often than not, I never hear anything about it again. There have been times, however, that I have seen a tabloid headline, consciously thought how ridiculous the idea was, but then later see a news break of the exact same information from the major news networks. This 7% of the time, when tabloids break accurate information before any other news agency, is what keeps tabloids in the

business and on peoples' minds. It dissuades people from blatantly disregarding tabloids, because of their possibility for truth.

I also consider this argument fascinating because of its relationship to fake news. Tabloid journalism, in its most basic form, fake news. In fact, people have been consuming fake news for far longer than President Trump's penmanship of the concept. While he and many others react with anger at its presence in higher profile news stations, they forget that so many of America's uneducated citizens receive their information from the most outlandish of tabloids every single day. Moreover, these people have the inability to decipher the truth from the hyperbole, and end up taking each word as bond. So many voters across the United States form their opinion based off fake news – from a variety of sources.

The arguments for the neutralization of inaccurate information are sound. If I had endless time and energy, I could write a dissertation on the causes and effects of sensationalism, as well as its effects of the mindset of people. In addition to being a central theme of the 1800s, its relevance today is profound. Before this election, the concept of yellow journalism was taught from a purely historical standpoint – it came, it turned the United States upside down, and then it passed into the next era. As the current presidency moves to one of the past, however, writers will soon see that yellow journalism never really left, but rather, it changed. The emergence of social media, fake news, and declarations of war with North Korea will eventually replace the declarations of war with Spain over two centuries ago.

While the argument against the neutralization of inaccurate information is logical, I still cannot personally abide by it. The fact that I displayed a counterargument with a sense of objectivity merely supports this belief, by suggesting that I was given the right to choose, and

after writing all the arguments, I still held the same beliefs as before, I but I had the ability to choose which information was accurate.

This is certainly a developing topic. I suspect my thesis will continue to change as the media and the way that information is distributed changes as well. A revolution of the news is likely in the future, as the 2016 War on the Media commenced in full effect. The media will likely develop as technology and security measures develops, as well as security measures develop. Many say that journalism is a dying profession, but I disagree – I believe that this is just the beginning.