

Yellow Journalism: Code of Ethics Vs Sensationalism

Abstract

In this research paper, we tried to explain and analyse the techniques of scandal-mongering, sensationalism, exaggerating eye catching headlines to increase sales of the publications and to increase viewership. Starting from the very origin of yellow journalism, this paper deals with various contemporary forms, instances and traits of Yellow Journalism.

Keywords: Yellow Journalism, Clickbait, Sensationalism, Exaggeration, Scandal-Mongering, Reporting, Tabloids.

Introduction

As a famous saying, "It all starts with a question mark and not a full – stop!"

It clearly depicts the base idea on which Yellow Journalism works in wholesome! Technically, the term can be defined as, "an exaggerated, exploitative, sensational style of newspaper reporting."

The practice of seeking out sensational news for the purpose of boosting a newspaper's circulation, or, if such stories are hard to find, of trying to make comparatively innocuous news appear sensational is what Yellow Journalism concentrates on.

Aim of the Study

1. Analysing different aspects of Yellow Journalism
2. Identifying different forms around which sensationalism revolves.
3. To comprehend certain instances which highlights exaggeration of news.

Review of Literature

1. The Gilded Age Press, 1865-1900 By Ted Curtis SmythePraeger, 2003
2. Yellow Journalism: Puncturing the Myths, Defining the Legacies, by W. Joseph Campbell

Hypothesis

1. The correct usage of the power and reach of a journalist can fix the contemporary multi-culturalist riots in the nation.
2. The optimization of the power of journalism should be the major goal and should benefit citizens the most.

Methodology

Interpreting different aspects and instances of sensationalism in news from different view points using secondary sources.

What Exactly Is Yellow Journalism?

In order to generate revenue and overtake competitors, Yellow Journalism was adapted in the 1800s.

It uses exaggeration, melodrama and romance to sensationalise a particular news story. It includes:

1. Fabricating of news.
2. Using exclamation mark in the headline.
3. Usage of words like "Unbelievable", "Astounding", etc.

It is unprofessional and unethical treatment of news and facts. It is mostly regarding scandal - mongering or scare - mongering!

What are the Possible Traits of Yellow Journalism?

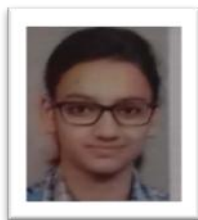
According to Frank Luther Mott., Yellow Journalism has following traits-

1. "Scare" headlines printed in large typo, despite the news being minor.
2. Usage of pictures accompanying the stories, valid or unrelatable.
3. Being over-sympathetic or bias.
4. Using : a) Fabricated Interviews
b) Deceptive Headlines



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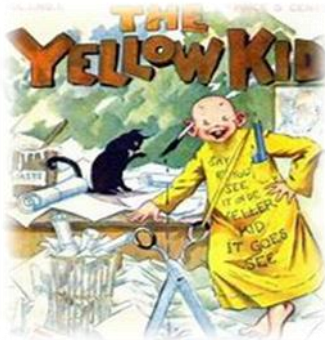
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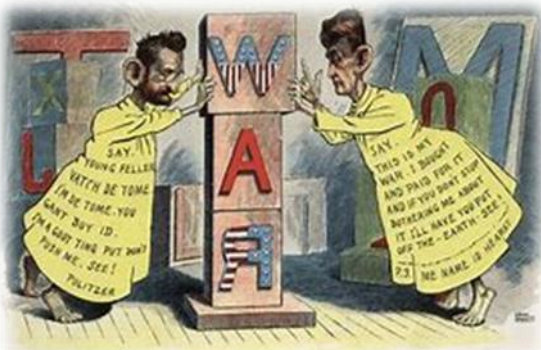
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- c) Pseudoscience
- d) False Information.



Origin of



Yellow Journalism

The term was coined in the mid-1890s to characterize a circulation war between Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*. The term was coined by Erwin Wardman, the editor of the *New York Press*. The battle peaked from 1895 to 1898. Wardman also used the expression "yellow kid journalism" referring to the then popular comic series *Hogan's Alley* published by both Pulitzer and Hearst during the circulation war.

An English Magazine in 1898 wrote, "All American journalism is not 'yellow', though all strictly 'up-to-date' yellow journalism is American!"

Joseph Pulitzer had purchased the *New York World* in 1883 and, using colourful, sensational reporting and crusades against political corruption and social injustice. In 1895 William Randolph Hearst, moved into New York City and bought the rival *Journal*. He hired Pulitzer's cartoonist of the character "The Yellow Kid" of the comic series, named *Richard F. Outcault*.

After Outcault's defection, Pulitzer's *World* hired *George B. Luks*, and the competition got intensified thereafter. This came rightly as the concept of "YELLOW JOURNALISM". Some techniques are still rampant and widespread in the contemporary world that now it has more or less become a common place.

Few Major Instances in Past Highlighting Yellow Journalism

The Sinking of Titanic

The pretty famous rumours about "All passengers rescued" or "Sinking due to coal fire in

one of the coal bunkers" is what yellow journalists showed back then. The truth is Coal Fires are common and are not seen as threat to ships. Although the crew workers were successful in extinguishing the fire long ago then the collision occurred. News about certain individuals were published, mentioning their survival in their pseudo-biographies, which were proved baseless in the course of time.



Early news about Minister of External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj's death by India TV on August 6, 2019

Television channels provides a wide base to serve people with yellow journalism. Not only that the hunger for TRP and the desire to be the first news source to people has made the reporters go blind towards authenticity and patience. The sad news about our People's leader Sushmaji's death was leaked early by India TV at 22:40 on Tuesday. It results to breach of trust of the consumers to a great extent.

Murder Cases – Web of Lies

"Back in the day in the newsrooms of US broadcast media, deciding the lead or the main story of the day wasn't difficult: 'if it bleeds, it leads', the saying went. In other words, news had to be sensational enough.

Shocking crime stories, especially involving high-profile people, still reign, as the media's delirious coverage of the Sheena Bora murder mystery proves. There's no doubt the case is inherently scandalous.

What's playing out on news television is an aggressive, hyperventilated coverage that's concocting theories, speculating motives, questioning friends, ex-spouses and even neighbours. If privacies are being invaded, so be it. This all prove to be true in Sheena Bora's murder case!

The joke is, if the media and the police collaborate, the murder would be solved faster.

The Arushi Talwar murder case was the most recent filicide case when media reportage was microscopic. In fiercely competitive journalism, sensational-style reporting is a surefire way of transfixing the public.

But are we overdoing it? Is such salacious journalism, one that respects no boundaries, desirable or justified?

From a reporter's point of view, there's unavoidable drama in the Sheena Bora murder case. But all too often, gossip, speculation, half-truths and conjecturing actually get in the way of getting the story right."

Tabloid Journalism

The term refers to journals where there is emphasis on sensational crime stories, astrology, celebrity gossip, discussion of cinema and T.V content and programming etc. This is just another face of Yellow Journalism with a much acceptable approachability.

Normal newspapers which are called Broadsheets and have 8 columns but tabloids generally have 5 to 6 columns.

The tabloid newspapers can be classified into –

1. **RED TOP** are distinguished by RED MAST HEADS and feature sensational crime stories, astrology, gossip columns about the personal life of celebrities and short stories. Sometimes they tend to cross the line of DEFAMATION.

There is a lot of emphasis given to pictures and are written in simple, straightforward language. They selectively report about attention grabbing stories which are often accused for misinterpreting.

2. **COMPACT TABLOIDS** use editorial style, more closely associated with broadsheet newspapers. They are usually published to enable people to read newspapers in tight spaces such as crowded trains or buses. They cover much larger spectrum of news stories as compared to red top.

Few popular examples of Tabloid Reporting

Yellow Journalism in Revocation of Article 370

3. It played a major role when it comes to covering issues and formulating news on the revocation of Article 370 on 5th August, 2019. It is hard to combine all the major instances and put it up in few paragraphs because it was clearly not restrictive to provisional laws, but it rather involved sentiments, religion and foreign relations as well. A short example where we can sense the presence of yellow journalism can be, when our Home Ministry questioned BBC channel to publish a raw footage of the protests against the government's decision to revoke the article reported by them. Although government later confirmed reports on stone pelting incident at



Srinagar's Soura region. Another example could be when the Government of India asked Twitter to block 8 accounts over rumours on J&K on around 13 August, 2019. Such incidents and the resulted turmoil are already a major concern for India and will be in the long run too.

Conclusion

Journalists in this era should abide by Society of Professional Journalist's Code of Ethics in every possible way. Reporting the truth is what can help the nation get back on track because sometimes we have to splash hard to part the red sea.

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CELEBRITIES

Kendall Jenner Talks Selfies: You Believe What She Said! (watch!)

Anything Goes When She's Behind Camera

By TheImproper Staff, April 17th, 2015

Kendall Jenner, half-sister to the queen of selfies Kim Kardashian, talks about posting self-taken photos and why it's so

