

Student's Name  
Professor's Name  
Class  
Date



## Book Report

*The Yellow Journalism: The Press and America's Emergence as a World Power* written by David R. Spencer is a book informing its readers about evolution facts regarding media and its development. It is the book that turned attention of the society to the concept of 'the yellow press'. The book reveals different aspects of the media performance discussed in the chapters. The diversity of chapters shows the inheritance of media and reasons which led to its evolution. It discusses the New York marketplace in the third chapter and explains the main nature of competition aroused by the majority of companies. Graphic innovation follows the tendencies of rivalry in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter discusses the diversity of facts which are true or go beyond the real life situation in the segment of journalism. In the sixth chapter, the author discusses the Spanish-American War and the Hearst Myth. It connects war to the information flowing in the media. It discusses the theory that the government continued the war with an intention to provide media with appropriate spread and development. During the period of Spanish-American war "Hearst and in particular Homer Davenport relayed the tales of American bravado largely through full-page illustrations and political cartoons." (Spencer 209). In the seventh chapter, the author discusses peculiarities of correspondents' activity. The next chapter reveals the performance of the illustrators

explaining their duties in the same way as with correspondents. In conclusion, the author summarizes the whole flow of information discussed in the book and points at the most important facts. In general, it is necessary to mention that the book's concept is to reflect the information in a thematic way instead of presenting it as a chronological system of facts. The author tends to switch from one period to another while discussing the different facts. In addition, the author reflects the nature of the media development caused by many factors in the governmental regulation. It discusses interactions between publishers and journalists in different aspects. In addition, the author uses an intention of the yellow press to influence on the reader's mind with the help of various information transformations.

There are many ethical issues discussed in the book, which relate to the media concepts. First, it is necessary to distinguish ethical issues and then apply theories introduced by the philosophers, which can be the core argument explaining tendencies in the media. In addition, it can help to critically evaluate the information presented in the book. First, the book makes a special emphasis on the advertising nature of the media. It reflects the dependence of media on the advertising principle. Advertisement created a commercial relationship between media and the merchant class discussed in the book. The author pointed at the advertising nature of the media since it became the tool boosting the development of any company involved into the press or other electronic sources of information. With the development of printing and radio it became possible to "communicate messages to even the partially literate, messages that would be missed in the columns of wordy dialogue." (Spencer 206). However, the relationship which existed between the merchant class and media became the determinant of the further development. It is obvious that the development of mass media is

an important element in the society's performance. However, it is important to mention that the advertisement created obstacles regarding perception of the information presented in the media. Media did not notice that it started to destroy one of the main ethical values. Credibility of the media became threatened by the active penetration of advertising tools which disrupted a healthy nature of competition among the companies. Mass media started to obtain peculiarities of the tool providing companies with advertising measures and techniques. In addition, advertising started the removal of clarity in the informational flows in the media. However, the advertising sector of the human performance started its development due to the availability of different mass media sources. Therefore, media started its expansion in order to provide the sector with competition. The book also mentions the development of radio stations promoting the advertising nature of the media. The source of the competition in the segment of mass media arose from the competition between Hearst and Pulitzer striving to obtain the development of their media sources. Advertisers should be thankful to these two figures since they provided the segment of the press and other media with commercial interests. Moreover, commerce does not have a destructive nature. However, the overwhelming amount of advertisement can prevent the acceptance of the information presented in press or radio sets. The diversity of other aspects in the prospect of the ethical nature intertwined in the late Gilded Age provided the sector of media with other transformations. Commercial nature of the economy influenced on the behavior of mass media. For example, media sources noticed that it is necessary to attract social interest in order to continue the development. It meant that many facts had to obtain a vivid representation in the media in order to influence on the spread of media. The author mentions the way of reporting the Spanish-American War which enriched the abusive side of the mass media. It is not confident that

mass media represented wrong facts about the course of war. There is a theory that war continued in order to keep attention of the readers. Misinterpretation of facts can be associated with Kant's categorical imperative which in the prospect of journalism transforms information making it equal to lies. It also has a destructive influence on the credibility of the mass media. The period of the Spanish-American War supported the negative tendency in the processes running within the mass media segment. This is an ethical issue with a relation to the concept of utilitarianism, which means that the greatest happiness people attain is when an act is ethical. Ethical issues in the media reflected in the book contradict to the principle of utilitarianism. There are different aspects supporting this idea. In addition to the war representation, there were problems with the evidence of criminal activity. This misrepresentation diminished the sacred duty to inform the target audience with plain information. The author emphasizes that it was impossible to continue the development of press due to the war. Therefore, the press turned to the reflection of crime and corruption facts. It is the point which combines both fact and fiction. Utilitarianism introduced by Mill represents the consequences of different processes which should bring happiness to the society without raising doubts and concerns. However, focusing on crime and corruption increased the negative intention of the mass media to attract attention of the audience through heart-breaking topics.

Communitarianism is also present in the book written by Spencer. The article includes the diversity of contradictions between legal, ethical and political aspects. Hearst and Pulitzer pointed at the sensationalism nature of the media. However, crime reporting remains one of the main focuses of the contemporary media. In addition, the reflection of the events in vivid colors brings the reader tension and stress causing misunderstanding between statistics

and information in the media. For example, statistics show a significant decrease of the crime rate, while TV, newspapers and radio continue to focus on bloody crimes with its details proving that the threat of criminal activity is high. Communitarianism states that mass media should support the social welfare and its interests in values and standards of the good life. However, the facts revealed in the book have an opposite influence on the audience. According to Spencer (n.d., p.228), "The television picture of the bleeding suspect, the injured victim, or the damaged domicile is taken as fact in a way that impacts negatively on the more vulnerable members of our society."

In conclusion, it is important to state that ethical issues in the mass media formulate the negative side of human intention to grow and develop in the age of information. Contemporary world of information should go through the process of changes in order to reflect the facts. There are many examples when the yellow press has an abusive nature of information representation. Ethical issues have a tendency of contradiction to the philosophic approaches applied by the humanity. In addition, the audience got used to misrepresentation of the information. It means that the contemporary audience forgot about the concepts of utilitarianism and communitarianism which support its welfare. Today, it is difficult to distinguish effective flow of information from non-effective one. The book written by David R. Spencer is an appropriate platform for further considerations aimed to improve the segment of mass media. Analysis of the ethical issues opened the essence of ethical side in mass media. It provided enough information to conduct further investigation regarding contemporary mass media development. Finally, the author fulfilled his duty to reflect the nature of mass media in collaboration with other segments of the human activity which influenced on the development of the society.



## Work Cited

Spencer, David R. *The Yellow Journalism: The Press and America's Emergence as a World Power*. Evanstone: Northwestern University Press, 2007. Print.