HATE SPEECH AND DISINFORMATION CONTRARY TO ETHICS AND MEDIA EDUCATION

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Abstract: In the conditions of accelerated information-technological progress, ethical principles began to be lost. This is best reflected in the existence of hate speech and the spread of misinformation in the media space of the global village, as the world is today. The Internet has opened up a free media space, but it has not introduced a sufficient number of regulatory bodies that could eventually select or completely eliminate certain content, such as hate speech and misinformation. In this paper, one will try to point out the global problem concerning the expansion of a free, non-selective and non-critical digital space.

Keywords: *ethics, media, hate speech, misinformation, media education.*

Introduction

When one talks about ethics, ethical principles and norms, topics that inevitably arise are the questions of morality, evaluation criteria, codes of conduct, ethics of the spoken word, integrity, and media education within the media space. Media education and media literacy arose as a result of the need to indicate a critical reflection on the ethical standards of spoken or written words. Here it can also be talked about media propaganda, fake news, plagiarism, unnamed sources and tabloidization, all in the context of bad media practice. Ethics that is in opposition to violence, fight against misogyny, degradation, unverified information,thus is on the side of children, preserving the identity of the victim, when it comes to hate speech.

Ethics

Ethics is a philosophical discipline that studies morality, in terms of criteria for human evaluation and preservation of personal integrity. Like any other discipline that stands for honesty, correctness, reliability, precision, verification, it is often under attack from opposite values. Ethics is a feeling of what is valuable and good. Violation of ethical rules in media, journalistic practice causes mental pain, especially if it is about hurting other people's emotions, hate speech, discrimination. Although media freedom is an ideal to strive for, and the Internet has made almost complete freedom possible, it is ethical standards that point to responsibility, correct decision-making and common sense.

There are personal, business and institutional ethics. Personal ethics advocates for the preservation of the personal integrity of each individual. It contains those values that are woven into a person from birth, genetically, hereditary, and some are acquired during life, through socialization, education, and level of maturation. Not all people have the same predispositions, ethical norms and criteria for evaluating life events, but the aspiration is to strive for universal ethical principles based on justice, truth and honesty. When talking about business ethics, within each media house, news agency, editorial office, there is a system of rules and norms for functioning. Journalists are people who must respect ethical principles and standards in order to adequately perform their work. Their duty is to behave in accordance with professional ethics, and primarily personal ethics. According to the authors of the book Mass Media, Goran and Ljiljana Bulatović: "Style instructions or "Broadcasting rules" are distributed to editorial staff members as work instructions[1]." The same authors further state that: "large media houses have departments that deal with broadcasting standards. Those departments also have the function

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1 Bulatović, G, Bulatović, Lj. (2009): Masovni mediji, Cekom, Novi Sad, str. 263.

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of censors."[2]

The system of self-regulation is also important, when the media company itself regulates the work of its employees through responsible behavior. "Self-regulation or media responsibility occurs where journalists and publishers jointly establish rules of journalistic conduct and ensure that those rules are respected."[3]

Above all previously mentioned stands institutional ethics, under whose auspices are personal and professional ethical rules and norms of behavior, which also deals with censorship as part of its activities.

"Today's media dictates the audience's taste." In addition to unhindered promotion of current and important topics, they also influence and change the attitudes of the audience through a certain selection and choice of topics."[4]

Hate speech on social networks

Contrary to ethical standards, hate speech is a category of public discourse that has established itself on social networks, which is impossible to control to the same extent as when it comes to traditional media. New media, the emergence of the Internet, opened up a heavenly, media space, in which information moves at the speed of light and is impossible to control, because everything happens on a global level! Starting with twitter, facebook, instagram, tiktok, news portals, web platforms and other Internet content, almost the entire world population has succumbed to the influence of an unchecked amount of content that creates human consciousness, opinion, reshapes and dictates the actions of human behavior, especially the younger population.

Hate speech on social networks has a predominant role and must be prevented. Violation of privacy, degradation of human character and actions, insults, theses about political, racial, religious, gender, sexual intolerance go beyond the framework of normal, human understanding. "Therefore, we do not have a dilemma whether a topic will be put on the agenda, but in what way it will be presented to the audience and with what goal."[5]

One is witnessing the anonymity of sources, which further threatens the credibility of the media. Are there sanctions for abuse of media space? Who is responsible? Can legal regulations, judicial authorities and to what extent have jurisdiction over cases of Internet violence? Children are one of the most vulnerable categories of Internet violence. They can't deal with so much pressure on social media, hate speech, and it often ends in a fatal outcome! The question is who is responsible?!

It is a fact that the average person spends around thirty percent of the entire life time in front of some media and that the media largely shapes human consciousness, but how can the media be properly "consumed"?

Media education and literacy

The issue of media education was raised in the early seventies of the last century. UNESCO raised the issue of education for the media, and then a series of topics, polemics, and discussions on that topic followed. Media literacy is a key factor in properly understanding media content. Individuals must not receive and adopt media messages without knowledge of techniques, technologies, institutions, methods that deal with media production. A critical review, a critical approach to media content must be developed. The skill to decode the message, to critically analyze it, is necessary in order to understand the complex relationships between the audience, the message and the world.

The author of the book "Journalism and Literature", Nada Torlak cites a study on media literacy by James Potter in which it is said that: "most people today allow the media to program their habits and ways of seeing the world. A low level of media literacy enables access to the

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Vojinović, M. (2022): Media representation of gender (in)equality through the prism of print media-violence against women in a partner relationship, Art without borders, Bar, p.33.

[5] Ibid.

message, but not protection from the barely noticeable, yet constant shaping of life perception. (Potter, 2011)." [6]

"The structures of public opinion are different, and therefore the understanding of the marketed information is different from the moment when it is heard, from the source to the process of transmission to the target, end user."[7]

The recommendations are to introduce media education and media literacy in primary and secondary education, as well as in institutions of higher education, in order to enable young generations to be familiar with the rules of reading and interpreting media messages from an early age, to enable them to have a more correct and clearer perception reality and the development of critical, selective thinking.

Conclusion

From the early beginnings of the development of media structures and organizations, many centuries have passed, and the media have always fought for independence, freedom, freedom of public speech, space, and today one is brought to a situation where the freedom of the media must be defended by law. Hate speech, misinformation, plagiarism, uncredited sources, the Internet, contributed to the fact that media placements of this type receive their epilogues in judicial bodies and that legal measures and regulations must be used against hate speech on social networks. As a result, ethics, ethical norms and principles, media education, literacy along with the judiciary and judicial bodies must stand on the fenders of public discourse in the media space. Selection and criticism versus hatred and discrimination.

The intention of the authors of this paper is not to answer all possible questions and problems that inevitably arise from this topic, but to present the real situation and draw the public's attention to the use of ethical public discourse in the free media space.

References

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6 Torlak, N. (2022): Journalism and literature, Academy of Social Sciences, Bijelo Polje, p.106

[7] Vojinović, M. (2022): Media representation of gender (in)equality through the prism of print media-violence against women in a partner relationship, Art without borders, Bar, p.33.