

There is Still Way to Fight the “Animation News”

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The Animation News became the headline story during the past few days because they mimic news events in animation and reproduce vivid crime scenarios and sensational pictures, provoking criticism on their bad influence on children. Specifically speaking, the Animation News can possibly induce crimes and impair personality development in children and adolescents. Is there nothing we can do with those commercially minded media?



The Animation News discloses personal data of criminals and victims and illustrates crime scenarios in detail and thus it not only invades the privacy of all persons concerned, but also negatively influences children and adolescents whose personality is evolving. From this perspective, the right of privacy and right of personality protected by Article 22 of the Constitution of the Republic of China (Taiwan) are compromised to media interests. This is the time the state, with the obligation to protect their people, should resolve to take action, or this signals inertia of the government.

Facing controversy around the Animation News, the Ministry of Transportation and Communication and the Chunghwa Telecom both commented that “our capacity is to provide platform and not to ban,” while the Taipei City Government even excuses that “the machine room of the Animation News is located in Hong Kong, which is beyond our sovereignty.” In fact, the Article 1 of R.O.C. (Taiwan) Constitution dictates that “The Republic of China, founded on the Three Principles of the People, shall be a democratic republic of the people, to be governed by the people and for the people,” and we learn that the R.O.C. (Taiwan) is a country ruled by law. Though traditionally the definition of a state based on the rule of law is restricted, and it was assumed that laissez-faire would be the ideal state, which was based on the assumption that people will pursue their best self-interest. However, contemporary legal states are obliged to take initiative to protect the basic rights of their people. As explained above, the Animation News invades the right of privacy and right of personality of the people; therefore the state cannot escape from their duty with the excuse of lack of law.

In addition to regulate through the capacity of the Telecommunications Act and the Children and Youth Welfare Act, we can also consider the controversies resulted from the Animation News constructively, that is, is the state obliged to cultivate media literacy among its future citizens? We must admit that the printed media employ bold headlines, striking pictures, short sentences and anecdotes to create sensational effects, while the electronic media prefer live broadcast and dynamic news, mixing thrillers and detective movie approaches to induce more imagination in viewers, and thus the media do not necessarily give us unaltered information of the world. In light of this, it is a priority for Taiwan to cultivate media literacy through school education to help students to sift through and analyze the messages that inform, entertain and sell to them inside the gift-wrapped media.

In fact, media literacy and media education also originate from this concern. We expect to cultivate critical thinking skills to prevent students from taking the content of the



media for granted with no second thought. Because children and adolescents are immature individuals, they cannot discern the difference inside and outside the campus and the difference in the construed plots in media and real life, and hence leads to inadequate imitation behavior and perception. To solve this problem, we must implement media literacy education during the compulsory education stage.



However, in Taiwan's current information education curriculum in elementary school and high school, except for late inception, the basic Internet skills are overly emphasized, while the ability to analyze the media comes secondary. As a result, though the 1st and 2nd graders can learn to surf the Internet independently, they are also exposed to all sorts of information on the Internet. In the long run, their personality development would be impaired by inappropriate information. In fact, through understanding the character and content of the media, we can cultivate clear logical thinking ability and be able to sift really valuable and important information in the information society, and hence the real objective of media literacy education is to cultivate media literacy in students through curriculum planning, and help them to care and examine mass communication phenomenon around them. Under the above condition, we can be sure that when viewers are capable of decoding news, they can see through the camouflage employed by the Animation News.

The Animation News controversy reveals the commercial DNA of the media. To attract viewers' attention, elaborated information will be common. Hence it is urgently needed for the nation to regulate information. However, in the long run, how to prevent students -- the future citizens, from being enslaved by media information is an issue worth serious consideration. In addition to expect the nation to actively initiate protection on the basic rights of the people, I hope the nation can bestow the ability to see through the media through education upon our students.

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