

Review Article | Derleme Makale

About the First Media Theoretician in Southeast Europe before McLuhan - Dževad Sulejmanpašić

Güneydoğu Avrupa'da McLuhan'dan Önceki İlk Medya Teorisyeni – Dževad Sulejmanpašić



Fahira FEJZİĆ-ČENGIĆ (Prof. Dr.)
Sarajevo University Faculty of Political Science
Sarajevo/Bosnia and Herzegovina
fahira.fejzic.cengic@fpn.unsa.ba

Başvuru Tarihi | Date Received: 26.11.2022
Yayına Kabul Tarihi | Date Accepted: 30.12.2022
Yayınlanma Tarihi | Date Published: 30.01.2023

FEJZİĆ-ČENGIĆ, F. (2023). About the First Media Theoretician in Southeast Europe before McLuhan - Dževad Sulejmanpašić. *Erciyes İletişim Dergisi*, 10(1), 433-445 <https://doi.org/10.17680/erciyesiletisim.1210379>

Abstract

The text is about Dževad Sulejmanpašić an author from Sarajevo and Zagreb who criticized sensationalism in the media almost 90 years ago. The analysis focuses on the relationship of sensational journalism, and religious issues. The author believes that only religion that follows the moral law is primarily capable of spreading universal good as a good driving principle in the world. But not any particular and partial forms of thinking and actions. He is fully aware that times are coming when sincere belief, confessionism, or religiosity in general will decline, and religions will rely more and more on empty dogmas that will no longer contain moral laws. Interests, material and selfish, will take their place, both individually as well as collectively at the level of the whole societies. Sulejmanpašić distinguishes the point worthy of attention that in the religious world incentives for good can be motivated from within or from without, and how sensational journalism fails to recognize this.

Keywords: Journalism, Ethics, Religion, Communication, Media Ethics, Manipulation.

Öz

Metin, yaklaşık 90 yıl önce medyada sansasyonelliği eleştiren Saraybosna ve Zagreblı bir yazar olan Dževad Sulejmanpašić'ı konu edinmektedir. Yazarın analizleri, sansasyonel gazetecilik ve dini meseleler arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanmaktadır. Yazar, yalnızca ahlaki yasayı izleyen dinin, dünyada iyi bir itici ilke olarak evrensel "iyiyi" yayma yeteneğine sahip olduğuna inanmaktadır. Ancak bu inanış herhangi bir özel ve kısmi düşünce ve eylem biçimi şeklinde tariflenmemiştir. Samimi inancın, itirafçılığın veya genel olarak dindarlığın gerileyeceği ve dinlerin artık ahlaki yasalar içermeyen boş dogmalardan daha çok yararlanacağı zamanların geldiğini teşhis etmiştir. Maddi ve bencil çıkarların, hem bireysel hem de tüm toplumlar düzeyinde yerini alacağını görüşünü savunmaktadır. Sulejmanpašić, dini dünyada iyilik için teşviklerin içeriden veya dışarıdan motive edilebileceği ve sansasyonel gazeteciliğin bunu nasıl fark edemediği konusunda dikkate değer bir noktaya atıfta bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gazetecilik, Etik, İnanç, İletişim, Medya Etiği, Manipülasyon.



Introduction

It is not hard to accept an approach as today media systems is an unavoidable factor. Actually, there is no one society or state without mass media. Whether it is printed or in radio, television, online media such as portals, YouTube channels, podcasts and more and more diverse multimedia formats exist.

It is quite impossible to trace all mass media innovations in a satisfactory theoretical way. Quite simply, the speed with which mass media productions, innovations and creations occur escapes theoretical thought, philosophical insight or communication reflection at the same speed. Theory often lags behind accelerated media practice.

It is hard to meet theoreticians who would go back following the history of mass media development and especially following theoretical thoughts about it. However, a similar event happened recently in Zagreb, Croatia, at a conference of communicators, media philosophers, media sociologists and mediologists from Southeast Europe, who discussed a major book. It is a book by an author Dževad Sulejmanpašić from Sarajevo and Zagreb, published 86 years ago in Zagreb under the title "Journalism - Destroyer of Humanity or Journalism with the smallest measure of professionalism", exactly in 1936. Exactly 30 years ago, since the contemporary media guru Marshall McLuhan published his capital work "Understanding the Media," with the famous catchphrase Media is message. He, a pioneer of the media thought, as well as all other subsequent authors, devoted part of his reflections to the manipulative dimension of mass media mediation. That is also logical. Because all mass media, beside its emancipatory role, also have a manipulative one.

For this text, it is important to say that the author Dževad Sulejmanpašić spoke about the manipulative role of the media of that time, which is the golden age of printing, in the thirties of the twentieth century and wrote an excellent book. There is no doubt, that it is the first such critical work on the media in Europe at the time.

In this book, the author criticizes the manipulative action of the press in several chapters, actually its ethical shortcomings in many of its segments, which are dealt with using the method of content analysis. From law, economy, religion, sports, ethics, nation, and the like. Accordingly, this author is the forerunner of all later thinkers about media and communications at the Balkan space/area, how else we could say it. This author is a contemporary of great thinkers who also think about the media and their role in society, like the philosophers of the Frankfurt circle of thought such as Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer. We should say Bosnia gave birth to a truly significant author who described his criticism of media activity in a great book that is still relevant today. This book is almost prophetic. The author looks back to numerous texts and articles from that time press, published in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, first the newspapers "Politika", "Borba", and similar and reveals the extent and examples of sensationalism, as very harmful forms of expression and influence on society and its ethics. So the author concludes, at the basis of content analysis, by comparative insight in hundreds of texts and advertisements from the press of that time that journal sensationalism makes weak important values in the society where it appears and these are, first of all, the weakening of morality, religion, psychic life, art, social order and framework, peace, mind, science, and finally, viewed in a deeper philosophical sense, such sensationalistic journalism destroys the human mind and the human spirit.

This author based his thoughts on the views of a group of journalists publishers and publicists from Vienna, around Karl Kraus, and these again function on the positions of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant from the work "Critique of the Practical Mind". And when it seemed to us that the author had already been completely forgotten, a group of researchers from Sarajevo, Zagreb, Zenica, Dubrovnik, Novi Sad and Tuzla, gathered at the end of October 2022 and marked this book with an appropriate scientific meeting, discussed its values, and reflected on what is still current in the views and analyzes of the author Sulejmanpašić. For this occasion, the Bosniak Minority Community of Zagreb and the Media Philosophy Center and the Media Institute of the City of Zagreb as well as the Ibni Sina Institute from Sarajevo supported the publication of a reprint edition of this good book.

Now, numerous authors, young researches, and journalists, editors and owners of media, can read how journalism looked with the least measure of professionalism before almost one century and compare what about today's similar sensaonalism in media. The intention of the publishers is to try this worth book translate into English and offer to the widest readership in the Europe as well as in the rest of the world.

It seems to us that in many aspects of reflection and analysis of the media in these areas, Sulejmanpašić was a pioneer, an early theoretician and the first to recognize discomfort in relation to the media, to write and think about it. Therefore, it is important that his work and name is remembered in the history of journalism in this region.

For us today, every chapter of this book is interesting. But in the rest of the text, we will devote ourselves to the analysis of Sulejmanpašić's criticism of journalism's relationship to religion.

Sulejmanpašić's Criticism of Relations between Journalism and Religion 30s of the XX Century

In the beginning, the author states that it is clear that man, even that it is not his favorite philosophy, is very important that man tries to live in such a way that in relation to other people he correctly determines interpersonal relations. And there is no dispute about it. It is both wise and of interest for people to live with other communities "according to certain established rules and laws" (Sulejmanpašić, 1936, p. 80) His hypothesis is that interreligious relations among peoples and communities could be established as harmony only if these communities truly respect their own confessions, if they have common governing principles and norms of behavior. That connecting tissue among all and between everyone the author calls the moral law. His idealistic, utopist premeditation is so that one day there could be so many important convergences of numerous religions towards one, namely the one "in which the moral law is most clearly reflected and brought to life." only belief in God and the immortality of the soul must have its final strongholds in the moral law...pure morality cannot be separated from belief, nor vice versa: belief from morality" (Sulejmanpašić, 1936, p. 80-81). Almost one century of his transformation of the world did not go well for him.

After the World War the Second, most modern theories and practices went against the moral laws and the laws of religious teachings. As a philosopher would say, Nikolai Berdyaev, ideal German philosophy relies on Protestantism, Kant and Hegel on Christianity, enlightenment is based on a negative attitude towards religion, rationalism is the negation of religion, and materialism "just like the previous two philosophical systems(Battle against The God unbelief is also a religious struggle like faith)..."(Berdyaev,

2007, p. 38) Thus, despite the Sulejmanpašić's wishes and writings in this book, the relativization of two principles - pure religion and pure moral law - brought the human race to crude agnosticism, harsh atheism, rigid secularism and deified every aspect of existence, especially in these Balkan and European geographical areas. For the modern religious life, which the author Berdyaev divides into an objective stage (folk, collective), a subjective stage (personal, spiritual) and high spirituality (the object-subject relationship is overcome), it could be said that he persisted at the first degree. And this means that in the modern age, religions become institutions of authority and not institutions of freedom, although the true original monotheistic religions were proclaimed and came only to guide the Right Path, increase and maintain human freedom as a basic prerequisite for any intelligent, harmonious and noble ethical action. For centuries, freedom has been snatched away and ended, because *the power does not like freedom*. As the power of politics, so the power of the economy, the power of science, the power of academia, the power of banking, the power of ideologies...

Nikolai Berdyaev would say:

"History was created for an average man, the man of the masses, the collective...organizations, states, families, legal institutions, schools, everyday order, even the church were created for him, knowledge, morality, religious dogmas and culture were adapting to him...This includes both the right and the left, that 'democratic' type of man. Both monarchies and socialist republics are equally necessary for the masses, they are equally adapted to the average man." (Berdyaev, 2007, p. 27).

Against this position is the Kantian principle, which is dominant for the author Sulejmanpašić. The moral law is a pure existing fact of our mind and it is not conditioned by anything external. This universal law, when ordered and applied, is superior to our 'happiness' or 'unhappiness', it is far from today's pragmatic form of morality and its form of adaptation and frequent relativizing, according to which everyone has their own personal, personal, ego-morality that does not refer to any universal principle. To be able to feel such a pure inner moral law, as human beings, we must be *free beings and beings who believe in their spiritual immortality, the immortality of the soul as such*. Today's era has never refuted this purely Kantian foundation of reason so that one would be truly surprised to see a diverse techno-sphere, techno-media, and technology appear from somewhere and see them as fundamental projects that advocate and 'realize' technical immortality for the existing material man in the media society.

Our civilization, our culture and our practical mind in the 21st century, completely distanced itself from any idea or notion of an 'immortal human soul' which as such encourages a man to the marvelous actions and moral principles that the pure moral law in us requires of us. The author calls reader for one more facing with Kant's work "*Critique of Practical Mind*", so that he himself would not discuss much about what had already been written and thought.

The Moral Law Inside Us and Out of Us

The author believes that only religion that nurtures the moral law is primarily capable of spreading universal good as a good driving principle in the world. He is fully aware that times are coming when sincere belief, confessionality, or religiosity in general will decline, and religions will rely more and more on empty dogmas that will no longer contain moral laws. Interests, material and selfish, will take their place, both individually and collectively at the level of entire societies. He makes a noteworthy point that in the

religious world, incentives for good can be motivated from within or from without. It is, probably, one of the most important principles by which an individual functions or his community functions. If there are preserved pure moral principles, pure moral laws in a person, his actions are completely good, untainted by interests or material motives. If it is different, and the motivation came from the so-called religious action from the outside, a kind of materialized and external world of interest, it is no longer a religious principle or respect for the moral law, no matter how religious hierarchies and religious authorities refer to it. Where interests prevail, a society of conquerors appears and the bare struggle for supremacy is the only social law that prevails. Almost Hobbesian inexorable.

This is, in all probability, the most difficult question of the moral upheaval of humanity, in the 21st century. Since moral laws have slipped away long time ago, disappeared before the interests of business, profit growth, financial sustainability and advancement. That so-called progress! Interests are lost as a fog and which, once upon a time, Churchill successfully defined that everything is transitory except interests that are permanent, obscuring everything truly moral and pure in man.

It is clear that we, immersed contemporaries of the new age, are also witnesses of a time in which pure religiosity is decaying, witnesses of a time where society becomes ungodly due to some wrong teachings, as Sulejmanpašić says... It is so difficult to count how many systems of desecration (making ungodly) that have arisen and disappeared in the past years since this book was published, especially in the last ninety years.

The author Dževad Sulejmanpašić in both socialism and capitalism, because he lives their rivalry on the historical stage, these permanent 'rivals', sees systems that run away from religiosity based on the same moral law, while he himself is a supporter of the system of altruism over egoism and finds it in his own utopian variant of socialism.

Sulejmanpašić asked for total assurance in the moral law embodied in true religiosity. In that spiritually high world we are connected to the higher world, which is immortal and endless, not visible by senses. But it is existing and there is no death there, all our thoughts and actions are saved, no triviality and we are waiting to continue life in that eternal existence. In opposition to such lofty thoughts and hypotheses, the author returns to the role of journalism in the existing framework of the time when he lived. He will simply say that this kind of journalism destroys both the moral law and religiosity.

"He distracts him from every interest for timeless ideas, and ties it down stronger and stronger for interest of a moment and day. Journalism does not need to explicitly fight against religiosity, because by its very existence and all-encompassing soul and spirit, disables man for religious feelings. And even then, when he, here and there, examines religious issues, it is again the destruction of religion... the words of journalism in this unholy society act in such a way that before any other effect, the sanctity appears in the mud" (Sulejmanpašić, 1936, p. 82).

The author criticizes the simplified treatment of deep and sacred religious topics, the banalization of the sacred, but also the use of simple language that throws the sacred into the mud and superficiality in the approach, which does not care about any responsibility. His remark is still very relevant today, how "journalism reaches for the highest religious sanctuaries as well as for the excitement of a football match", or an even better comparison, which we can find every day in the huge mass media machinery of the world and locality, that "journalism does not hesitate at all not from any confirmation of his equal measurement in the matter of religion as in, for example, the question of the sexual life of a manicurist" (Sulejmanpašić, 1936, p. 82).

Moreover, today it can be said exactly the opposite and that the question of the sex life of a manicurist is given much more attention than the question of any sanctity of the moral law or lofty religious idea on some TV channel, on the radio, in the press, on portals or at social networks in the networked society of today. Any talk about the sacred is considered boring and excessive.

Moreover, if it is possible to report about some new scandal inside the religious community, it is the only thing attracting modern media workers to take up reporting work. Famous Guy Debord principle of "the society of the spectacle" works tirelessly, modern people are interested in it, and modern journalism is crying out for spectacles, of any kind, religious as well as non-religious. And in this sense, he is a true visionary with his research, criticisms and recognition of the journalistic spirit that we, the latter, the present, witness every day. The author criticizes a text in the 'Politics' of the time in which the essence of the Christian religion is ironized on Christmas Day itself. Namely, the drawing shows a star as a symbol of the word of Christ standing above the heads of believers, symbolizing that this star consciously does not want to be glorified but rather stands above the procession of the poor people who does not know where to go. In March 1934, the same newspaper published the travelogues of French journalists Soerven and Shadren, who wanted to answer questions from the essence of complicated issues for humanity, where in 1934 they wrote that "New York is a symbol of a new faith, man's faith in his power over the Universe" (Sulejmanpašić, 1936, p. 84). In the text, the authors write:

"Skyscrapers...They are numerous. It is better to understand their mystical sense. Bend over. Look at a small Gothic belfry stuck in place in the depths of their forest, funny cathedrals that represent a failed flight. Churches are the smallest in New York: they admit inability of old faiths. One new faith in itself, in personal power, made man to be overcome." (Sulejmanpašić, 1936, p. 85).

Sulejmanpašić is outraged that Christianity is belittled, that this religion is dismissed as an old coat and that places of worship are compared to shopping malls, that nowadays he experiences exaltation in almost all parts of the world and planet earth, and he wonders: "*Can the depth be measured the fall of the unfortunate Christian world, which calmly listens and swallows all those terrible blasphemous words, not only in our country but also in all civilized countries*" (Sulejmanpašić, 1936, p. 85). He is aware that the new material civilization no longer feels an iota of respect for the endless secrets and miracles of its own existence, can modern people at least ask themselves that big question - where do they get their thoughts from? How to get in touch? Where does it come from? Who brings it? Is it that man creates and creates himself? And there is also the question of the secret of life and of a single cell of life, which we moderns try to copy, enter into its essence and change it at our own discretion, thus making a mess on Earth, only to depreciate the Original Creator.

And here Sulejmanpašić makes a very strong point:

"Doesn't the world, after all, represent a madhouse, in which those who still have a trace of a normal mind and soul retreat silently to the walls, while the craziest make the biggest noise! Because journalism, according to other major confessions, is the same infinitely impudent ignoramus!" (Sulejmanpašić, 1936, p. 85).

What he cites as blasphemy against Islam from the newspaper “Novosti” dated November 16th 1933, is also interesting. “Muhammad made them pray after every meal. Gymnastics for better digestion”. (Sulejmanpašić, 1936, p. 82)

How to Nurture the inner Moral of Today's Man? Today's Critique of Correlation of Journalism and Religion

Today's islamofobia, terrorism and pseudoterrorism, on the wings of numerous world and local media would only complete this general picture that Sulejmanpašić paints in his excellent criticisms of the relationship between journalism and the religions of the world and religion as such in general. There is not a day or a week that at least some blasphemy against moral laws within religious frameworks is not brought by numerous media contents, and if in modern times we have tamed them with various legal frameworks, obligations scattered over codes and regulations on professional reporting, it does not matter, the image of journalistic representation of the true of religion and religious consciousness is not at the level it should be. Criticism of the bad practices of holders of religious power and hierarchy is something else, and it should and could be separated by useful dividers. One is universal values and their value, and the other is concrete material behavior of individuals who themselves are losing universal principles from their souls and practices.

One thing is certain, Sulejmanpašić also thinks, the truly human spirit cannot do without spiritual drinks and snacks, without spiritual food and drink. At some point, he will come to the stage of questioning himself. Who I am, what I am, where I came from, where I'm going and what I have to do in the world – to the small point that was given to me to live it. Without these essential questions and even more essential answers to them, there is no real whole person. Neither in the past, nor today in modernity. These noble and true drinks should be searched for in all higher spiritual and even religious spheres daily and persistently, and mediatized them in the best possible way, *to make human existence better*. And it should and can always be that. The best is to quote him at the end:

“And journalism not only stops him to step in a wright way, but even forces man in an opposite direction, from the light to the dark, and brings him in such a spiritual darkness that almost everywhere the memory of the fact began to fade, that once upon a time there was such a light in our world, that our journalistic soul can no longer even imagine, that shone from the founders and bearers of great morally filled with confessions, and whose brilliance could to be received and felt by their contemporaries.” (Sulejmanpašić, 1936, p. 86)

In the book with an interesting title, *The World without Islam*, Graham E. Fuller, posed a radical question « would the world be different if Islam never existed? »Especially after September 11 when New York Sky scrapers were demolished, and an era began, and started its historical path.

Fuller states: “...the long complex relationship between the West and the Middle East is less about religion and more about disputes over territory, resources, politics and power.” (Fuller, 2015)

This is perhaps the most useful detail from the discussion of the place and position of religion and religious structures in today's world. Actually, they, the religious structures were overwhelmed by the materialized side of existence, and formal interests, due to which almost no one returns to the principles. The principles are not mentioned, they have been greatly changed, violated, abolished, few people respect the principles. In the work of today's journalists, seekers of the truth, for example, today this is also a very

important principle, if a journalist has internal moral principles, no one and nothing can motivate him or force him to manipulate, to lie, to deceive the public, to do his job it only brings the realization of salaries, fees, and profits under the dimension of interest. But, it is picture of today's journalist and editor. Every gaffe, mistake, lie, deception, manipulation, propaganda, sensationalism, every blasphemy, gossip, voyeurism, it is justified by some new interests for the benefit of supposedly journalists, media or editors. Often these motives of interest are raised to an even higher level, such as nation, state, planet earth, survival. Of course, completely unfounded.

Today, if by any chance he found himself in Dubai and similar rich Arab emirates that copy the early achievements of *corporate capitalism* on the islands near the Arabian Peninsula and Africa, he might not even be surprised, long ago he predicted and criticized construction megalomania, the alienation of man from all essential spiritual and idealistic aspirations, criticized the curse of profit and its inscrutability while making millions of differences between the few billionaires of the world and the billions of the world's poorest people. It is likely that if it were not for this huge game of the world, which the Creator of all that exists Plans, so that the average pragmatic human reason could not even understand how much misfortune, real misfortune is over the heads of the materialized deafened, blinded and exploited human masses, *those rivers of unfortunate existences* that have stopped looking and admiring the sky, stars, galaxies, eons, duration...stopped looking for a deeper meaning of existence, life, duration. A school example of dialogue of modern father and his little son who asks him looking at the sky: "Dad, what do the stars in the sky advertise?"

How to help the modern journalized soul? More sacred principles and more truly spiritual content to offer to the network society. How? The most difficult question. To try and try every day again. To talk with true believers, to read and present truly valuable books and creativity, to strengthen all moral laws in ourselves and in the world, to point out the misuse of everything sacred, tirelessly and spiritual life.

Fate is not written by the minds of people. The natural order is not forever and unchangeable, it is just one moment symbolizes spiritual life. Spiritual life is understood only through symbolism.¹

Berdyaev again:

"Deity can only be understood symbolically; its secret can only be penetrated through symbols. Deity is inconceivable in a rational way; it cannot be expressed in logical terms. And no amount of scholastic theology and metaphysics can obscure this great truth. Behind the religious idea of God always hides an abyss, the depth of the irrational and suprarational." (Berdyaev, 2017, p. 91)

Once more said:

"Where the competence of the term ends, the symbol appears with its rights. Knowledge of God has never been and could not be abstract-intellectual, rational knowledge, it was always powered from another source. All systems of rational theology and metaphysics are adapted to the natural world and natural man and have a pragmatic and legal meaning. There is a Secret always remain, it could be never exhausted to the bottom. And it is expressed in symbol, could not be in term which closes, it always requires the end, behind which there is no longer the secret. Where the sphere of rational knowledge and logical concept ends...there begins the sphere of symbolic knowledge and symbols applicable to the divine world." (Berdyaev, 2007, p. 93)

Conclusion

In this study, analysis is focused on the relationship of sensational journalism, and religious issues. Dževad Sulejmanpašić published a book under the title "Journalism - Destroyer of Humanity or Journalism with the smallest measure of professionalism", in 1936. This author, Dževad Sulejmanpašić from Sarajevo and Zagreb criticized sensationalism in the media almost 90 years ago, since the contemporary media guru Marshall McLuhan published his capital work "Understanding the Media," with the famous catchphrase *Media is message*. Sulejmanpašić distinguishes the point worthy of attention that in the religious world incentives for good can be motivated from within or from without, and how sensational journalism fails to recognize this. Sulejmanpašić was a pioneer, an early theoretician and the first one recognized discomfort in relation to the media, who wrote and thought about it.

The author believes that only religion that nurtures the moral law is primarily capable of spreading universal good as a good driving principle in the world. The author calls this connective tissue between everything and among all the moral law. His idealistic, utopian premeditation is that one day there may be an important convergence of many religions towards just one. It is important to say that the author Dževad Sulejmanpašić in the thirties of the twentieth century spoke about the manipulative role of the media of that time, which was the golden age of printing, and wrote an excellent book. This author is a contemporary of great thinkers who also reflect on the media and their role in society, such as the philosophers of the Frankfurt circle of thought like Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer.

Sulejmanpašić is aware that the new material civilization no longer feels an iota of respect for the endless secrets and wonders of its own existence. The question arose: How to nurture the inner morality of today's man and what is the relationship of today's criticism to journalism and religion? If it is possible to report on some new scandal, that is the only thing that attracts modern media workers to take up the job of reporting, for modern journalism cries out for spectacles of any kind. How to help the modern journalist soul? The answers are contained in more sacred principles and more truly spiritual content that can be offered concerning the online society. The most difficult question is how to put it into practice? Some of the suggestions are to remain persistent in everyday attempts. To talk with true believers, to read and present truly valuable books and creativity, to strengthen all moral laws in oneself and in the world, to point out the misuse of everything sacred and behaviors that can harm human relations.

Notes

1 That is why there was a fierce debate between the European Commission and the Church in 2021 and 2022 about the symbol of the manger and its deletion from public discourse. And it's not accidental at all! Not to mention the other numerous religious symbols that are banished from media and public discourse

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Fahira FEJZİĆ-ČENGIĆ (Prof. Dr.)

Genişletilmiş Özet

Metin, yaklaşık 90 yıl önce medyada sansasyonelliği eleştiren Saraybosna ve Zagreblı bir yazar olan Dževad Sulejmanpašić hakkında analiz sunmaktadır. Analiz, sansasyonel gazetecilik ve dini meseleler arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanmaktadır.

Benzer ilişkiyi ele alan bir tartışma geçenlerde Hırvatistan'ın Zagreb kentinde Güneydoğu Avrupa'dan iletişimciler, medya filozofları, medya sosyologları ve medya çalışanlarının önemli bir kitabı tartıştıkları bir konferansta gerçekleşmiştir. Tartıştıkları kitap Saraybosna ve Zagreb'den yazar Dževad Sulejmanpašić'in 86 yıl önce Zagreb'de "Gazetecilik - İnsanlığın Yok Edicisi veya En Küçük Profesyonellik Ölçüsüne Sahip Gazetecilik" başlığıyla 1936'da yayınlanan kitabı hakkındadır.

Sulejmanpašić, yirminci yüzyılın başlarında matbaanın altın çağı olan o zamanın medyasının manipülatif rolünü ele almış ve Avrupa'da medya hakkında bu anlamda ilk eleştirel çalışmayı temsil eden bir kitapta toplamış bulunmaktadır.

Medya düşüncesinin öncüsü olarak, sonraki tüm diğer yazarlar gibi, Sulejmanpašić düşüncelerinin bir bölümünü kitle iletişim aracılığının manipülatif boyutuna ayırmıştır. İletişimde ister yazılı, ister görsel, işitsel medya kullanılsın, tüm kitle iletişim araçlarının iletişim tarihi açısından manipülatif olduğu kadar özgürleştirici bir rolü olduğu akılda tutulması mantıklıdır.

Analiz, sansasyonel gazetecilik ve dini meseleler arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanmaktadır. Yazar, yalnızca ahlaki yasayı izleyen dinin, dünyada iyi bir itici ilke olarak evrensel iyiyi öncelikle yayma yeteneğine sahip olduğuna inanmaktadır.

Dinlerin ahlaki yasalardan yoksun boş dogmalara giderek daha fazla bel bağlayacağı zamanların yaklaştığına dair farkındalıktan bahsetmektedir. Sulejmanpašić, dini dünyada iyilik için teşviklerin içeriden veya dışarıdan motive edilebileceğini, ancak sansasyonel gazeteciliğin bunları tanıyamayacağını belirtmektedir.

Sansasyonel gazeteciliğin zararlı olduğu belirtilirken; bu mesleğin gurur verici rolüne katkıda bulunmaktan çok kitle iletişim araçlarının manipülasyonlara modern yaklaşımla mümkün kılındığının altı çizilmektedir.

Onun hipotezi, insanlar ve topluluklar arasındaki dinler arası ilişkilerin, ancak bu toplulukların kendi itiraflarına gerçekten saygı duymaları, ortak yönetim ilkelerine ve davranış normlarına sahip olmaları durumunda uyum olarak kurulabileceğidir. Yazar, herkes arasındaki bu bağlantı dokusuna "ahlaki yasa" adını vermiştir.

Onun çok sayıda dinin yakınlaşmasına ilişkin idealist, ütöpik ve doğru olduğuna inandığı fikri: "ahlaki yasanın en saf şekilde yansıtıldığı ve hayata geçirilmesi ile sonuçlanan... yalnızca Tanrı'ya inanç ve ruhun ölümsüzlüğünün nihai kalelerine sahip olmalıdır. Ahlak yasasında ... saf ahlak inancı kendisinden ayrılamaz ve bunun tersi de olamaz: inanç

aynı zamanda ahlaktır”(Sulejmanpašić. 1936. p. 80-81). Bu durum ise hiçbir zaman gerçekleşmemiştir ve Sulejmanpašić'in ideal görüşü olarak kalmıştır.

Bu muhtemelen 21. yüzyılda insanlığın ahlaki altüst oluşunun en zor sorusudur. Çünkü ahlaki yasalar çoktan ellerinden kayıp gitmiş, iş dünyasının çıkarları, kazan elde etme çabası, finansal sürdürülebilirlik ve ilerleme önünde kaybolmuştur ve sözde ilerleme olarak görülmüştür.

Yazar Dževad Sulejmanpašić sosyalizmin ve kapitalizmin rekabetini tarihsel sahnede yaşadığı için, bu kalıcı 'rakipleri', aynı ahlaki yasaya dayalı dindarlıktan kaçan sistemler görünürken, kendisi de dindarlık sisteminin destekçiliğini, özgeciliğini, egoizme tercih eder ve bunu kendi ütöpik sosyalizm varyantında bulur.

Gerçek dindarlıkta somutlaşan ahlaki yasada tam bir inanç arayışındadır. Ancak bu tür ulvi düşüncelere ve varsayımlara karşı yazar, yaşadığı zaman çerçevesinde gazetecilik rolüne geri dönerek, böyle bir gazeteciliğin hem ahlak yasasını hem de dindarlığı yok ettiğini söyleyecektir.

Sulejmanpašić, Hristiyanlığın küçümsenmesine, bu dinin eskimiş bir kaftan olarak görülmesine, ibadethanelerin alışveriş merkezlerine benzetilmesine, bugünlerde dünyanın hemen her yerinde ve dünya gezegeninde yücelmeler yaşamasına öfkelenir ve merak eder:

“Sadece ülkemizde değil, bütün medeni ülkelerde bütün o korkunç küfürleri sakince dinleyen ve yutan talihsiz Hristiyan dünyasının düşüşünün derinliği ölçülebilir mi?” (Sulejmanpašić. 1936. p. 85).”

Yeni maddi uygarlığın kendi varoluşunun sonsuz sırlarına ve mucizelerine artık zerre kadar saygı duymadığının farkındadır, modern insan en azından kendine şu büyük soruları sormalıdır: “Düşüncelerini nereden alıyorlar? Nasıl iletişime geçilir? Nereden geliyor? Kim getiriyor? Bir de hayatın sırrı ve biz modernlerin kopyalamaya, özüne girmeye, kendi keyfimize göre değiştirmeye ve ortalığı karıştırmaya çalıştığımız tek bir hayat hücresi meselesi var mı? Ve bu sorular yalnızca Orijinal Yaratıcının değerini düşürmek için midir?”

Şu soru ortaya çıkıyor: İslamofobi, terörizm, sözde terörizm, çok sayıda dünya ve yerel medyanın kanatlarında, yalnızca Dževad Sulejmanpašić'in sunduğu bu genel tabloyu tamamlarken, günümüz insanında içsel ahlakın nasıl geliştirileceği; gazeteciliğin dünya dinleri ve genel olarak din ile ilişkisine yönelik mükemmel eleştirileri ortaya koymuştur.

Sulejmanpašić, ne zaman kendini sorgulama aşamasına gelse gerçek insan ruhunun manevi yiyecek ve içecek olmadan yapamayacağını düşünüyor. Bu temel sorular ve cevaplar olmadan, hem geçmişte hem de modernitede gerçek bir tam insan yoktur. Bu asil ve gerçek içecekler, insan varoluşunu daha iyi hale getirmek için tüm yüksek manevi ve hatta dini alanlarda her gün ve ısrarla aranmalı ve mümkün olan en iyi şekilde medyatize edilmelidir.

Yazar, derin ve kutsal dini konuların basite indirgenerek işlenmesini, kutsalın sıradanlaştırılmasını, kutsalı çamura atan yalın bir dil kullanılmasını ve hiçbir sorumluluk gözetmeyen yaklaşımdaki yüzeyselliği eleştirmektedir. Dünyanın ve yerelin devasa kitle iletişim araçlarında kutsaldan bahsetmek sıkıcı ve gereksiz görülebilmektedir.

Modern gazetecilik her türden gösteriyi haykırdığından, skandallar hakkında haber yapabiliyorlarsa, modern medya çalışanlarının ilgisini çekmektedir.

Sonunda, en zor sorunun cevabını nasıl bulabilirim: “Modern gazeteci ruhuna nasıl yardım edilir?”

Her gün gerçek inananlarla konuşmaya, gerçekten değerli kitapları ve yaratıcılığı okumaya ve sunmaya, kendi içindeki ve dünyadaki tüm ahlaki yasaları güçlendirmeye ve kutsal olan her şeyin kötüye kullanılmasına yorulmadan işaret etmeye çabalamaktır bunun cevabı belki de. Kader insanların akıllarıyla yazılmamıştır. Doğal düzen ebedi ve değişmez değildir, sadece ruhsal yaşamı simgeleyen bir andan ibarettir. Manevi yaşam ancak sembolizm yoluyla anlaşılır.

İletişim teknolojilerinin kitlelere ulaşmayı kolaylaştırdığına, sadece günlük iletişimi değil; daha kutsal ilkeler ve daha gerçek manevi içerik sunabilecek bu özel iletişim türünün sürdürülmesini sağladığına hepimiz tanık olmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gazetecilik, Etik, İnanç, İletişim, Medya Etiği, Manipülasyon.

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In this study, the rules stated in the “**Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive**” were followed.

Araştırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile **çakar çatışması** bulunmamaktadır.

There is no **conflict of interest** with any institution or person within the scope of the study.