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Assignment 3

Pope points out many flaws in the 2016 election coverage. Overall, the main flaw that Pope points out is that reporters focused too much on reporting about the personalities of the candidates instead of focusing on reporting the issues that mattered to voters.

One example of this is the early coverage of Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren’s New Year’s Eve campaign. Pope wrote that reporters focused on how Warren presented herself on stage rather than what she had to say while on stage. Pope wrote that the reporters, “Overshadow[ed] the candidate; they were too distracted, or too bored, by the policy issues to consider the senator’s serious, and detailed, ideas about running the country.”

This example that Pope used validates his main point about the flaws in the 2016 election coverage. Although the coverage of Warren’s speech was two years after the 2016 election, it validates that journalists are still overshadowing candidate’s policies and plans by reporting their personalities.

Throughout the article, Pope gave a lot of advice about taking a different approach in covering the 2020 election. Pope gave examples of what reporters did in the 2016 election, and offered advice to reporters for the upcoming election. Overall, Pope’s main point was that journalists can learn from the mistakes that were done in the 2016 election, and change how they report politics for the future.

One example of the advice that Pope gave in his article to to not focus on “atmospherics” of a candidate’s announcement, like the candidate’s hair or outfit color or location. Instead, Pope urges reporters to report what happened (the facts). This is a valid piece of advice because it is easy to understand that if you are reporting the atmospherics, you are not reporting relevant information that voters will care about.

Another piece of advice that Pope gives for taking a different approach in the 2020 election is to not assume the results. Pope writes, “No one knows who will be left campaigning a year from now… Reporters and their news organizations were massively wrong in assuming the results of 2016.” Pope then offers to reporters to follow the basic rule of journalism, write what you know. This is also a very valid piece of advice that Pope writes about. Reporters should not be making predictions of who will win the election but instead, reporters should focus on writing what they know in terms of candidate’s policies and plans for the future.

Drawing back to the basics of journalism, it gives reporters the opportunity to remember why they are writing the story and who they are writing the story too. By remembering the basic rules, it can help create a story that is in the best interest of the citizens.

The different approaches that Pope writes about relate to The Elements of Journalism and the best ethical practices in many ways. Throughout the article, Pope mentions several times that the stories that are published are for the citizens so they are able to make educated decisions while voting. This relates to the element that a journalist’s primary loyalty is to the citizens.

Another element that relates to Pope’s approaches is that journalists must make the significant interesting and relevant. To support this, Pope writes, “To explain byzantine systems, complicated bills, and congressional voting histories in a way that grabs attention.” By putting this complicated information into plain language, it makes it easier for citizens to understand.

There are several other approaches that relate to the elements of journalism. For example, journalism must provide a forum for criticism and compromise, and they must serve as an independent monitor of power. Throughout the entirety of the article, Pope gives several approaches for journalists to use when reporting the 2020 election, while also relating them to the elements of journalism and giving valid advice that will ultimately help reporters write stories that will be informational and easy to understand for the citizens.