

I Negate Resolved: In a democracy, a free press ought to prioritize objectivity over advocacy.

Observation:

The AFF's burden is to prove that the objective methodology should be favored over the advocative methodology.

Objectivity in journalism refers to a methodology of reporting facts in a way that is **bias free, precise, and consistent.**

American Press Institute 22

(American Press Institute, a nonprofit committed to educating on journalism and preserving the craft, "The Lost Meaning of Objectivity in Journalism" 2022.

<https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/bias-objectivity/lost-meaning-objectivity/>)

One of the great confusions about journalism, write Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel in [The Elements of Journalism](#), is the concept of **objectivity**.

When the concept originally evolved, it was **not meant to imply** that **journalists** were **free of bias**. Quite the contrary.

The term began to appear as part of journalism after the turn of the 20th century, particularly in the 1920s, out of a growing recognition that journalists were full of bias, often unconsciously. **Objectivity called for journalists to develop a consistent method of testing information – a transparent approach to evidence – precisely so that personal and cultural biases would not undermine the accuracy of their work.**

In the latter part of the 19th century, journalists talked about something called "realism" rather than objectivity. This was the idea that if reporters simply dug out the facts and ordered them together, truth would reveal itself rather naturally.

"Objectivity called for journalists to develop a consistent method of testing information – a transparent approach to evidence"

Realism emerged at a time when journalism was separating from political party affiliations and becoming more accurate. It coincided with the invention of what journalists call the inverted pyramid, in which a journalist lines the facts up from the most important to the least important, thinking it helps audiences understand things naturally.

At the beginning of the 20th century, however, some journalists began to worry about the naïveté of realism. In part, reporters and editors were becoming more aware of the rise of propaganda and the role of press agents.

At a time when Freud was developing his theories of the unconscious and painters like Picasso were experimenting with Cubism, journalists were also developing a greater recognition of human subjectivity.

"The method is objective, not the journalist."

In 1919, Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz, an associate editor for the New York World, wrote an influential and scathing account of how cultural blinders had distorted the New York Times coverage of the Russian Revolution. "In the large, the news about Russia is a case of seeing not what was, but what men wished to see," they wrote. Lippmann and others began to look for ways for the individual journalist "to remain clear and free of his irrational, his unexamined, his unacknowledged prejudices in observing, understanding and presenting the news."

Journalism, Lippmann declared, was being practiced by "untrained accidental witnesses." Good intentions, or what some might call "honest efforts" by journalists, were not enough. Faith in the rugged individualism of the tough reporter, what Lippmann called the "cynicism of the trade," was also not enough. Nor were some of the new innovations of the times, like bylines, or columnists. The solution, Lippmann argued, was for journalists to acquire more of "the scientific spirit ... There is but one kind of unity possible in a world as diverse as ours. It is unity of method, rather than aim; the unity of disciplined experiment." Lippmann meant by this that journalism **should aspire to** "a common intellectual method and **a common area of valid fact.**"

To begin, Lippmann thought, the fledgling field of journalist education should be transformed from "trade schools designed to fit men for higher salaries in the existing structure." Instead, the field should make its cornerstone the study of evidence and verification. Although this was an era of faith in science, Lippmann had few illusions. "It does not matter that the news is not susceptible to mathematical statement. In fact, just because news is complex and slippery, good reporting requires the exercise of the highest scientific virtues."

In the original concept, in other words, the method is objective, not the journalist. The **key was in the discipline of the craft**, not the aim.

This definition should be favored for these reasons:

- 1. Agent Specificity:** This definition is built out of journalistic practices, and the resolution refers specifically to journalism with a “free press.”
- 2. Ground:** Gives more equitable ground as debate just has to defend methodology, not that specific reporters are objective.

This brings us to advocacy journalism

Cáceres 19

(Ingrid Bahman Cáceres, School of Communication Pontificia Catholic University of Chile, “Advocacy Journalism” 6/25/19.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.776>)

A contested term with defenders and critics, **advocacy journalism refers to a genre of journalism that combines reporting with a point of view**. With roots as far as the origins of journalism itself, as a contemporary practice it can be found—to varying degrees—in all kinds of media outlets across the globe. Its key premise is that journalists participate in the mass-mediated public sphere and that their work deliberately and transparently stands for specific perspectives, with stories actively championing for certain ideas and values. While some authors have labeled advocacy as the binary opposite of objective (factual) reporting, in recent decades several journalism scholars and practitioners have argued that this is not the case, and that **advocacy and informing are not necessarily mutually exclusive**. At the core of this discussion are normative considerations of how journalism should be, the role of objectivity in news reporting, and professional models shaping news cultures and news content in different regions. Ethical concerns are also common arguments in this debate.

Advocate journalists do not necessarily dismiss objectivity—although some do—and insist they **adhere to professional standards** nonetheless, since they still do journalism rather than propaganda. Promoters of advocacy also argue that having a situated viewpoint is more transparent, whereas critics argue against what they deem news reporting with an agenda or promoting an ideological campaign. More recently, advocacy journalism has been adopted—and adapted—by nongovernmental organizations and civic movements, which highlights the constant redefinitions of journalism practice outside of legacy media and traditional contexts.

So the definition of advocacy in this round is a genre of journalism that combines reporting with a point of view.

This definition should be favored for these reasons

- 1. Ground** - Ground for the NEG, because the NEG can still advocate for informative pieces, so NEG doesn't have to defend articles only consisting of lies
- 2. Not propaganda** - Definition is not propaganda as it still informs. If the definition for advocacy was just propaganda, debate would be vapid as propaganda is bad.
- 3. Actor Specificity** - Born out of journalistic practices, as seen with card. Thus, specific to the resolution, and should be favored over.

Single Standard: Minimizing Oppression

First, we can't assume the world is perfect when deciding on our moral frameworks. Instead, we need to take inequalities into account.

Mills 05

(Charles W. Mills is a Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at The Graduate Center, CUNY. "'Ideal Theory' as Ideology." Source: *Hypatia*, Summer, 2005, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Summer, 2005), pp. 165-184
Published by: Wiley on behalf of Hypatia, Inc. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3811121>.)

So **the abstractions of ideal theory are not innocent.** Nor, as is sometimes pretended, have they simply descended from a celestial Platonic conceptual realm. Apart from their general link with the historic evasions of liberalism, they can be seen in the U.S. context in particular as exacerbated philosophical versions of apologist concepts long hegemonic in the self-image of the nation. In an important recent work in American political science, *Civic Ideals* (1997), Rogers Smith argues that the dominant tradition in studies of American political culture has long been to represent it as an egalitarian liberal democracy free of the hierarchical and exclusionary social structures of Europe. Taking the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville, Gunnar Myrdal, and Louis Hartz as exemplary, Smith shows that all three writers, even when they admit the existence of racism and sexism in national practices, public policy, legal rules, and central ideologies, still fall back on the conceptualization of an essentially inclusive "liberal democracy." So **racism and sexism are framed as "anomalies" to a political culture conceived of as-despite everything-basically egalitarian. Despite the long history of racial subordination of nonwhites (Native American expropriation, black slavery and Jim Crow, Mexican annexation, Chinese exclusion, Japanese internment), despite the long history of legal and civic restrictions on women, the polity is still thought of as essentially liberal-democratic.** The result is that **mainstream political theory has not**, until very recently, thought about and **taken seriously what would be necessary to achieve genuine** racial and gender **equality.** I suggest that this is a perfect complement, in the more empirical realm of political science, to the abstractions in the more rarefied realm of ethics and political philosophy. In both cases, **an idealized model** is being represented as capturing the actual reality, and in both cases this misrepresentation **has been disastrous for** an adequate **understanding of the real structures of oppression and exclusion that characterize the social and political order.** The **opting for "ideal" theory has served to rationalize the status quo.**

Finally, I would suggest that **a nonideal approach is** also superior to an ideal approach in being **better able to realize** the **ideals, by virtue of realistically recognizing the obstacles to their acceptance and implementation.** In this respect, the debate between ideal and nonideal theory can be seen as part of a larger and older historic philosophical dispute between idealism and materialism. I am using "materialism" here as a term of art, not in the sense it is often meant-as a repudiation of ethics in the name of amorality and realpolitik-but to signify the **commitment to locating moral theory in society and the interactions of human beings as actually shaped by social structures, by "material" social privilege and disadvantage. Recognizing how people's social location may both blind them to important realities and give them a vested interest in maintaining things as they are is a crucial first step toward changing the social order.** Ideal theory, by contrast, too often simply disregards such problems altogether or, ignoring the power relations involved, assumes it is just a matter of coming up with better arguments. Summing it all up, then, one could say epigrammatically that the best way to bring about the ideal is by recognizing the nonideal, and that by assuming the ideal or the near-ideal, one is only guaranteeing the perpetuation of the nonideal.

Second, the debate cannot just exclude those harmed by oppression.

Alston and Timmons 14

(Jonathan Alston, Head Debate Coach at Newark's Science Park High School, and Aaron Timmons, Head Coach at the Greenhill School. "Nobody Knows the Trouble I See (And In National Circuit Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Does Anyone Really Care?" April 2014, VBriefly.)

The writers of the article seem deeply offended and or confused by an argument that many students around the country have recently found it necessary to make. Students pushing back against the idea that they have to prove that rape or genocide is bad have taken to routinely using the works of Dr. Shanara Reid Brinkley, Tim Wise, Henry Giroux, Tommy Curry, Chris Vincent, (former CEDA and NDT Champion), Elijah Smith and others to warrant the benefit to making arguments that challenge structural oppression. Though **debate is** a game, it is a game **about issues that have real consequences. We teach future generations** how **to deal with issues of** freedom and **oppression**. Often the evidence shows that debaters go on **to** become leaders and **impact** policy in **the** real **world**. This means that it is appropriate for **the judge's role {is} to be an educator** responsible for training future generations. **Justifications of moral frameworks that don't preclude rape, slavery and genocide are dangerous because rights are only important so long as a critical mass of society believes that they should exist.**

Contention 1: Objectivity is Oppressive

Many objective stories employ a neutral voice as that helps the journalist ensure their bias doesn't leak into the story. However, this neutral reporting is problematic because it harms trans reporters heavily.

Li 20

(Sara Li, journalist, "Journalistic Objectivity Isn't Realistic, Young Reporters Say" 3/6/20.

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/objectivity-neutrality-not-option-some-journalists>)

Journalists spend a lot of time on Twitter these days. Like everyone else, they use the platform to share news stories, mundane details about their lives, and, in some cases, opinions about what's going on in the world, including who they support for president. But some reporters, like the New York Times's chief White House correspondent Peter Baker refrain from this approach. In a story published this week on how Times reporters try to remain "impartial," Baker said that he tries "hard not to take strong positions on public issues," and declines to participate in elections at all. The veteran reporter's comments sparked a pushback among journalists who suggested that voting is a civic duty and that these standards of neutrality are simply impossible to meet.

This question is particularly complicated in the Trump era. As **Lewis Wallace, a trans reporter, put it in the** 2017 "Medium" **post that** reportedly **got him fired** from Marketplace, **"I can't be neutral or centrist in a debate over my own humanity."** (Marketplace has maintained that its company ethics code requires staffers to keep their political views private.) How can we expect writers, especially those from marginalized communities, to refrain from taking a position on some of the most urgent and impactful issues of our times, including climate change, health care, and the mass incarceration of people of color? Journalists have an important role to play in politics, but they are not exempt from being affected by politics themselves.

Teen Vogue talked to nine journalists in their 20s and 30s about why they believe neutrality is an illusion, and how taking stances have made them stronger reporters — and citizens

Advocacy reporting remedies this issue, as these trans reporters can add their point of view to the story allowing them to state their existence without fear of being punished.

Reporters' point of views are extremely valuable for stories as that way, light can be shined on oppressive structures in journalism and outside of it.

Baleria 20

(Gina Baleria Ed.D., assistant professor of digital media, media writing, and journalism at Sonoma State University, "It's time for journalism educators to rethink 'objectivity' and teach more about context" 9/11/20. <https://www.poynter.org/educators-students/2020/its-time-for-journalism-educators-to-rethink-objectivity-and-teach-more-about-context/>)

Objectivity and journalism — over the last century, these two words have become inextricably linked. But **striving for objectivity has actually hindered us from adequately covering truth, giving context and achieving equity.**

As educators, it is **our role and responsibility to teach a journalistic approach based not on objectivity, but on seeking truth, providing context, and including voices and perspectives left behind by the adherence to objectivity.**

At the dawn of the 20th century, as the scientific method emerged, journalists recognized that some sort of objective process might lead to stronger coverage of important stories, keep biases in check, help get to the truth and better inform the public. Objectivity became the gold standard of news reporting, but the word "objective" came to be applied not to the process of newsgathering, but to journalists themselves. To convey objectivity, some journalists refrained from voting to keep from appearing biased. Many adopted the detached, safe tone originally developed by the Associated Press and other wire services to appear more neutral and thus marketable across news markets. And many began to seek sources from "both sides" of an issue, to illustrate that they were giving every side a voice (no matter how valid or how absurd).

The "facts" and "truth" that have generally been deemed objective are actually centered on a mainstream, white, male, able-bodied, cis-gendered perspective — not actually objective or neutral at all.

"The views and inclinations of whiteness are accepted as the objective neutral," wrote Wes Lowery in a recent New York Times opinion piece. "Those selective truths have been calibrated to avoid offending the sensibilities of white readers." The dangers of this, he wrote, are that "instead of telling hard truths in this polarized environment, America's newsrooms too often deprive their readers of plainly stated facts that could expose reporters to accusations of partiality or imbalance."

When we teach our students how to do good journalism, it is incumbent upon us to challenge the idea of journalistic objectivity and point out how it manifests.

One example is climate change coverage. Instead of contextualizing that nearly 100% of climate scientists have reached consensus about the implications of climate change and humans' role in its hastening, news outlets often give equal time to the 1-2% who disagree. Climate and other stories told in a detached tone remove urgency, which does not help contextualize or inform. Rather, it confuses, misleads and alienates audiences seeking to understand.

As Lowery wrote, a reckoning over objectivity has been a long time coming. In the wake of a deadly pandemic, an uprising over Black lives lost to police brutality and a recognition that many groups within communities are being covered as outsiders, that reckoning is now critical as we teach students to be more effective journalists. In turn, they can better contribute to preserving and strengthening our democracy.

For example, as Black Lives Matter protests filled U.S. streets after the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others, **a Black reporter at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette was taken off protest coverage after she pointed out that a photo of trash and vandalism was taken not at the protests, but at a Kenny Chesney concert. She was told she violated social media policy and could not be objective. A white male reporter who also violated this social media policy around the same time was given a warning and allowed to continue his work. The implication here is that his violation was an anomaly, while hers was inherent to her being.**

What **reporter Alexis Johnson** was actually doing **was** pointing out an important truth and **giving context to an important story. She was illustrating how the same behavior is condoned when perpetrated by white mainstream society and vilified when undertaken by people of color. Her perspective is actually needed as we navigate coverage** of this important and ongoing story **=** her personal **objectivity isn't.**

The concept of objectivity "leads to a fundamental misunderstanding of what journalism is," said New York Times Magazine reporter Nikole Hannah-Jones on the 1A Podcast. "Journalism is not stenography. We don't simply say, 'Donald Trump said this. Nancy Pelosi said this.' That should not be our role. Our role should actually be at getting at the truth and providing context and analysis so people understand what this means."

All journalists bring their own biases to the table — no matter their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ability or other factor. We must teach our students that this can be an advantage and not a hindrance, that our identities and experiences can inform the journalism we do, the interviews we get, the access we have to communities and the stories we tell.

Even the factual truth itself objectivity strives for is not outside power structures, and these power structures uphold oppression. We must strive to end this oppression, meaning we have to avoid striving for truth whatsoever.

Lorenzini 15

(Daniele Lorenzini, University of Saint Louis-Brussels, "What is a 'regime of truth'" 2/2/2015.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317961938_What_is_a_Regime_of_Truth)

As far as I know, the first time Foucault introduces the concept of 'regime of truth' is in chapter one of Discipline and Punish where, speaking of the formation (within the new penal system in the 18th and 19th centuries) of a corpus of knowledge, techniques, 'scientific' discourses that became entangled with the practice of the power to punish, he argues that a new "regime of the truth" emerged. 1 Now, what makes this concept so interesting is the fact that, through this expression, Foucault links the notion of truth to the explicitly political notion of regime — as he does also in the February 18th, 1976 lecture of Society Must Be Defended, where he speaks of "our regime of truth and error" and incidentally makes it clear that 'regime' means here a certain power of separation between truth and error. 2 But the most interesting text, before 1980, with regard to Foucault's use of the concept of regime of truth — leaving aside a short passage in The Birth of Biopolitics³ —, is without a doubt the 1976 interview "The political function of the intellectual", where Foucault argues, in contrast to a certain philosophical myth, that **"truth isn't outside power, or deprived of power"**: on the contrary, **truth "is produced by virtue of multiple constraints [a]nd it induces regulated effects of power"**. This is to say that **"each society has its regime of truth"**, and by this expression Foucault **means**: (1) **"the types of discourse [society] harbors and causes to function as true"**; (2) **"the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements"** and (3) **"the way in which each is sanctioned"**; (4) **"the techniques and procedures which are valorized for obtaining truth"**; (5) **"the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true"**.⁴ Therefore, **"truth"** is "a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and functioning of statements"; it **is linked** "by a circular relation **to systems of power which produce it and sustain it**, and to effects of power which it induces and which redirect it". And right at the end of the interview, Foucault adds that **the essential political problem for us, today, is trying to change our "political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth"** in order to constitute a new "politics of truth".⁵

When reporters don't have to strive for truth, they can address these harmful structures, and not propagate them.

Onto the AFF!