### 1NC – K - Scientism

#### Link Story

#### Prioritizing objectivity in journalism depends upon the positivist school of epistemology which separates facts from values which is Scientism

Munoz 2012 Munoz-Torres, Juan Ramon. “Truth And Objectivity In Journalism: Anatomy Of An Endless Misunderstanding.” Journalism Studies 13:4. 2012. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1461670X.2012.662401?needAccess=t rue>.

It is germane to start noting that objectivity theory in journalism is not, by any means, original or exclusive to it. Rather it is a variant of the theory of scientific objectivity, which stems from empiricist philosophy and its heir, positivism. The source of the idea of objectivity dates back to the thought of Comte (17981857), which traces its heritage back to Hume (17111776), later developed and spread in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by his many heirs, like the members of the Vienna Circle. The great success that natural sciences experienced along the nineteenth century fostered the positivist attempt to try to apply the empirical method \*whose brilliant results were obvious\* to the social sciences and humanities, based upon the assumption that it was the only one valid. This overvaluation of the empirical method as the only possible scientific method entailed the acceptance of the core epistemological premises of positivism and their later spreading to other fields. Among these postulates, the most important one is the dichotomy opposing the so-called ‘‘judgements of fact’’ to the ‘‘judgements of value’’ (a distinction adopted later in journalism, almost by the letter, as we will see further on). It is well known that the positivist tradition held as a dogma that only the assertions referring to facts were to be regarded as ‘‘objective’’ and, therefore, valid; whereas the judgements related to human affairs in which values play a leading role, were ‘‘subjective’’, that is, mere expression of empirically unverifiable preferences, and, therefore, without any rational validity or even any meaning whatsoever (e.g. Hempel, 1965). In accordance with positivism, truth is equated with objectivity and, consistently, in order to achieve it, one must ‘‘stick to the facts’’, ‘‘letting the facts speak for themselves’’, without any interference by the subject who knows and relays them to others. There is no need to resort to history in order to assert that, since the nineteenth century until the present day, the positivist doctrine has kept most of its vigour. A clear sign of this is how the objectivity problem arises in many academic domains and how it still creates a good deal of controversy and discussion, especially in the social sciences. The influence of the positivist thought in the media field has also been very strong and pervasive since the nineteenth century, to the extent that it has fully permeated its principles and practices. Thus, the sharp contrast between ‘‘value-free’’ news and ‘‘evaluative commentary’’ correlates to the fact-value dichotomy. As early as 1855, Samuel Bowles distinguished between ‘‘news of fact’’ and ‘‘news of opinion’’ in an editorial written for his Springfield Republican (as cited by Roshco, 1975, p. 39). In sum, as Schudson puts it, ‘‘the belief in objectivity is a faith in ‘facts,’ a distrust of ‘values’ and a commitment to their segregation’’ (1978, pp. 45). Similarly, the idea that objectivity requires that statements of science should be kept separate from value judgements (Weber’s theory of Wertfreiheit or value-free theory) has a direct equivalent in the duty of neutrality, or else the lack of bias, when reporting, as we have seen in the third section. Finally, this dichotomy became so widely accepted among journalists and scholars throughout time that it came to be coined as a very popular set phrase: ‘‘facts are sacred, comment is free’’, usually quoted and invoked as if it were an axiomatic principle beyond question.

#### The scientific method for objectivity in journalism and press empirically fails and causes the detriment of marginalized communities through Scientism

Marlee Baldridge Objectivity and the scientific method won’t save journalism It’s never worked, and it’s not going to start working by July 2, 2020The author worked for Tom Rosenstiel as the American Press Institute’s summer research fellow in 2019. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress. file:///C:/Users/yoyoa/Downloads/Objectivity%20and%20the%20scientific%20method%20won%E2%80%99t%20save%20journalism%20-%20The%20Objective.pdf

Even today, many journalists use this definition of “objectivity,” the extension of the “scientific method,” as a way to describe how they decide what is objective. The problem is that it’s so clearly not working. First, and perhaps the most obvious problem with objectivity is that it never worked this way. There is no historical precedent for the scientific method-type objectivity to have actually existed, broadly, in newsrooms. In the 1950s, Warren Breed illustrated for us that antisemitism had far greater sway over news coverage than any desire for accuracy. In the 1960s, the oft-cited Kerner Report detailed in explicit and excruciating detail how newsrooms failed Black communities because they reported white values. In the 1970s, Gaye Tuchman performed an ethnography illustrating how objectivity was not thought of as a scientific instrument but as a defense mechanism against accusations of bias. In the next two decades, scores of papers underlined how news culture was a product of a predominant culture, one that was white, straight, and male. In the past two decades, scores of journalists on social media and online have underlined for their (often former) newsrooms exactly how they fail marginalized communities. Teaching objectivity as a “scientific method” seems to be completely limited to journalism school and to meta-journalism books like The Elements of Journalism. It doesn’t seem to exist in newsrooms in a pragmatic sense. The reason for this is simple: The scientific method, on a mechanical level, doesn’t translate to journalism. The scientific method — the process of testing the accuracy of a hypothesis to reality — assumes that the instruments of testing (the journalists) will have what statisticians call validity and reliability. Validity asks if the instrument will detect what scientists are actually testing for, or that the survey will actually measure what it’s trying to measure. Reliability asks if those results are consistent over time. Journalists are bad at this. If you asked a journalist: “what is it about this story that makes it newsworthy?”, you are testing the instrument’s validity. You’re asking them if they are covering what they think they’re covering. Journalists wouldn’t be able to tell you what makes a news story a news story. They might cite traditional news values like proximity or novelty, but these change over time and according to the audience (poor reliability). It’s a gut instinct cultivated with experience. It’s an art, not a science. Journalists are not scientists and we wouldn’t want them to be. Their work isn’t performed in a controlled environment.

#### Implication

#### Scientism enables conditions for racism and violent colonialism

Streski 95University of California, Santa Barbara eui9ias@mvs.oac.ucla.edu Postmodern Culture v.5 n.3 (May, 1995) [pmc@jefferson.village.virginia.edu](mailto:pmc@jefferson.village.virginia.edu) Ivan Strenski is Holstein Family and Community Professor of Religious Studies. He has studied and traveled extensively in Europe, Mexico and South Asia, and has maintained close contact with scholars in those regions of the world. Although a US native, he took his BA from the University of Toronto and his PhD from the University of Birmingham (England), followed by post-doctoral study at Yale. <http://pmc.iath.virginia.edu/text-only/issue.595/review-7.595>

Todorov argues further that universalism is not the only villain in perpetuating colonialism. Any available justification will serve colonialist ambitions: if not universalism, then %Lebensraum%. Besides, Todorov argues, ideologies such as (ethnocentric) universalism seldom, if ever, "motivate" colonial enterprises; they merely serve as post-facto "self-legitimations." Indeed, for Todorov, universalism isn't even the primary legitimating mechanism for colonial violence--scientism is. "Scientism," he says, is the most "perverse" and the most effective ideological weapon in the armory of ethnocentrism and racism, because it so easily passes undetected. People are rarely "proud of being ethnocentric," whereas they often "take pride in professing a 'scientific' philosophy." Here, Diderot becomes a major exemplar of "scientific ethnocentrism," as do Renan, who makes a religion of science, and Gobineau, with his fully elaborated scientific racialism. Todorov's discussion of this aliance between the scientific and the colonial is on the whole fully persuasive. Certainly science has served the needs of modern racialism all too efficiently; both Hitler and Stalin, we must recall, boasted that their ideologies were strictly scientific.

#### Scientism enables Nazism, ecocide and posthuman disaster – unchecked devotion to so-called objective rationality allows us to exterminate whole groups in the name of progress

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Held at the RSA in December, Tzvetan Todorov’s discussion of the enlightenment was altogether thought provoking, however it was a minor reference that really caught my attention. Todorov highlighted what he thought to be one fault line left by the enlightenment movement, namely the idea that science can take us anywhere and can teach us everything. A relatively benign concept, it was initially recognized by enlightenment thinkers as both fallible and containing limitations. It has been steadily revolutionized, however, to the point where “scientism” forms what many conceive of as an ideological movement. The basic understanding of scientism is that it is a view that espouses the superiority of science over all other interpretations of life, for example the religious and philosophical. The radicalization is in the overreaching of the discipline into other areas where scientific enquiry may not have jurisdiction, and the sense that there is no other appropriate means of interpreting our reality. Todorov discussed scientism as fuelling the evolution of totalitarianism within Europe through the growing sense of biological understanding. Resultantly, we are capable of accelerating the work of nature and eliminating whatever is perceived as a “lower” form of life. An apt example that could be brought in would be the prominence of scientific experimentation and profiling used under the Nazi regime, or even the elimination of bourgeois or minority groups, a commonly repeated formula in European history. For Todorov the permanent cycle of ‘improvement’ we are seeing from science is dangerous, potentially leading us on a path which could very well end disastrously, either for environmental reasons, or because of the encroaching involvement of science in the creation or reconfiguration of humans. And this is something with which ethicists in particular have been grappling for as long as science has been experimentally intervening with humans; the fear that in offering the ability to, for example, ‘design’ our children we will create a race which eliminates everything that is seen as an ‘unwanted characteristic’

#### Alternative

#### The alternative is to embrace open transparent advocacy as a means to reject Objectivity and Scientism

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Given that objectivity is, according to its ideological construction, in a state of binary opposition with subjectivity, it necessarily follows that if objectivity is abandoned, journalism would perform its functions by owning its subjectivity, its biases, and contextualising the information which it presented openly, according to its own clearly and explicitly defined perspectives, political and otherwise. The clarity and logical consistency of this context would condition the credibility of what is reported. And such a change of understanding is not unthinkable. As one of the authors of this book has discussed elsewhere,9 there was a (fairly long) period in the history of American journalism during which the news was openly biased, and, to oversimplify quite a bit, it still worked just fine. It can be argued, as we said at the beginning of this chapter, that this press earned a role for itself in the founding myth(s) of the American republic which conditions, to this day, the high claims made for its journalism. The arrow flies straight from Tom Paine’s time to John Carey now, hitting the bullseye and allowing Carey boldly to assert that ‘journalism is usefully understood as another name for democracy’.10 But for much of this arrow’s flight – how much is a matter of debate – objectivity was not just irrelevant, but unheard of. As another eminent US media scholar, Robert McChesney, observed: During the first two or three generations of the republic such notions for the press would have been nonsensical, even unthinkable. The point of journalism was to persuade as well as inform, and the press tended to be highly partisan.11 Gerald Baldasty, in discussing the ‘opinionated, politically biased, one-sided, argumentative and frequently strident’12 newspapers of the Jacksonian era, which were also publicly subsidised, privately patronised, and openly partisan, noted that in the early 1800s, it was in fact a failure to adopt and espouse clearly defined political positions that was taboo. This was not because of a lack of professionalism, or of a lack of respect for the importance of newspapers in the functioning of a democracy, but rather because journalism was viewed differently. Neutrality, thought Horace Greely, was a gag. In essence, as Baldasty notes, a newspaper’s failing to express a clear opinion would have been viewed as evidence, not of fairness, detachment, etc., but that either the editor did not have an opinion, or did not have the courage to express it. Neither was acceptable. Baldasty says, ‘Evenhandedness or objectivity was not so much bad as inappropriate.’13 While some might view the move from such an ideological position towards professionalism and objectivity as an example of progress, from the primitive to the sophisticated, and from worse to better, we, obviously, do not see it in this way. This admittedly now unfamiliar ideology seems to us far from incomprehensible or obviously inferior, given the nature and importance of lively public debate, informed not just by facts, but by popular understanding of the context(s) and meaning(s) of the news. Conscious that some may reply that much of the news is already openly politically-slanted, a note of clarification: though within the (admittedly fuzzy) borders of the mainstream press, there are of course news outlets of various kinds which might conventionally be considered as highly partisan (e.g. The Daily Mail, but also the likes of The Guardian), even their rhetoric is grounded, invariably, in presenting news/truth, with the only bias ever explicitly acknowledged being the national/common interest. The rhetoric of the spectacularly partisan Fox News network, which until relatively recently had the phrase ‘fair and balanced’ trademarked, exemplifies this point. Since admitting to your bias is no admission at all if you define it as a bias in favour of being right, this type of stance, still ultimately grounded in the ideology of objectivity, must not be confused with the honest, explicit partisanship from which we are suggesting the press should never have departed, and to which it should return. The word ‘objectivity’ comes into the language in 1803 but it is not immediately applied to the press. Nevertheless, according to Dan Schiller, selling what amounted to objectivity had, by the 1830s, become a shrewd commercial move for newspaper publishers.14 He grounds his case for its de facto adoption in the press of that era in terms of a response to the growing scepticism of the age of industrialisation and urbanisation – a new world of trains and electricity, of probabilistics and increasingly democratic modes of government. Objectivity at this point can in fact perhaps best be understood as a hustle, designed to obscure the exercise of power within the realm of news. Schiller describes how the con was pitched: With its universalistic intent, its concern for public rationality based on equal access to the facts, objectivity harbored a profoundly democratic promise. From the 1830s the informational system was not to be the exclusive preserve of a king, a baron, a president or a class but rather, as it seemed, of the political nation itself.15

Science is constantly changing and evolving and scientism is the idea that science is in one place and never changes. Aff causes scientism by making it objective So science should be constantly checked or sum