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## Is Objective News Possible?

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**N**ever bury the lead; of course, objective news is possible. Unfortunately, I will also conclude, it is not earnestly pursued.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. I briefly explain the nature of objective news and of the debate regarding its possibility. I then assess the main arguments for the unattainability of objective news. A close examination of these arguments shows that, contrary to widespread belief, journalists who try to provide objective news are not striving in vain. I close by discussing the effect of competing journalistic aims and other limitations on our efforts to generate objective news. I suggest that the unwarranted skepticism regarding the possibility of objective news is an artifact of the changing priorities of journalists and inadequate journalistic methods, and that the only real issue is how we can better train those journalists who want to generate objective news.

### The Nature and Problem of Objective News

Objective news is essentially an epistemic kind. What is sometimes now called the “journalism of verification” is merely what yields objective news: verification (or justification) is an epistemic notion.<sup>1</sup> The editorial adage “When in doubt, leave it out” also expresses its epistemic nature. More specifically, objective news reports are those that can provide testimonial knowledge or justified belief about some aspect of the world to those who read or hear them. To satisfy this requirement we apply epistemic standards of evaluation. For example, we ask, “Is every sentence in the report supported by sufficient objective evidence?” A statement is objectively justified if it is rational to believe on the basis of evidence that anyone should accept. For example, observing ten inert bodies in the

road after a roadside bomb explodes is evidence on the basis of which it is rational to believe the statement that at least ten people died in the explosion.<sup>2</sup>

The ultimate aim of an objective news report is, of course, truth, but many statements in objective news reports may turn out to be false, despite our best efforts to verify. This is why it is not necessary for an objective news report to consist entirely of *true* statements. What is necessary is that it consist entirely of *objectively verified* statements. Thus, if a fact is a statement that expresses what is the case (what's true) or what reliably or logically follows from what is the case, to report "just the facts" is to include only objectively verified statements in a news report. (This is only a necessary condition for objective news; editing, discussed *later*, also plays a role.) It follows that the inclusion of a statement in an objective news report implies it is supported by sufficient objective evidence: it's not there because the reporter made a lucky guess or wishes it were true.<sup>3</sup> If he or she doesn't have that evidence, it should not be there.

Although the presence of *any* unverified statement in a news report detracts from its objectivity, the debate over objective news focuses on that subset of sentences that expresses or immediately implies the reporter's values, preferences, biases, or personal opinions (values, for short), which may or may not be shared by his or her social peers.<sup>4</sup> Value statements express what ought or should be the case, and the problem with these statements is there is no consensus on how they might be objectively verified or whether they can be. However, it is sufficient reason to leave them out of objective news reports if we're not sure whether they *are* verified, whether or not one thinks they *can't* be. Value statements may automatically appear to many readers or listeners as claims for which the reporter does not have sufficient objective evidence, based on their belief that such claims *can't* be verified. This appearance is sufficient reason to leave them out, even if (contrary to their belief) there *are* facts of the matter when it comes to values and even if value statements *can* be objectively verified.<sup>5</sup>

Journalists try to purge their news reports of objectively unverified statements, including but not limited to value statements, by following a bundle of professional practices. Mindich provides a standard description of the traditional features of objective news reports.<sup>6</sup> These include (1) detachment (use of neutral language), (2) nonpartisanship (inclusion of all relevant sides of a story; fairness), (3) the inverted pyramid style of writing (presentation of facts in order of importance), (4) naïve empiricism (factual accuracy), and (5) balance (lack of distortion, such as by omission of relevant facts).

This list is best seen as a complex description of a traditional objective news report, not a set of rules to follow for producing reports that satisfy the description, nor a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for any objective news report. For example, there is no essential connection between a report's being objective and its being written in the inverted pyramid style. And at least some of the practices traditionally used to generate news reports that satisfy Mindich's description may be poorly conceived (never mind poorly executed).

For example, the practice of getting an official statement and an opposition statement (what Cunningham has called “he said, she said” journalism) is one method for trying to generate a nonpartisan report, but not the only or best one.<sup>7</sup> As Kovach and Rosenstiel emphasize, journalism does not have a profession-wide set of rules for generating objective news reports, although individual news outlets, editors, or reporters generally do, from which a set of standard practices might be developed.<sup>8</sup>

Arguments against the possibility of objective news try to show that human cognitive limitations prevent us from leaving all values out of our news reports. One type of argument blames these limitations for the inevitable inclusion of sentences or descriptions expressing values; the other blames these limitations for editorial choices that shape news reports in ways that inevitably reflect values.<sup>9</sup> This reference to human cognitive limitations is crucial but liable to be misunderstood. The question is whether objective news is possible *for journalists*, not whether it is logically possible, since logical possibility refers only to the absence of contradiction. Of course, it is logically possible. The worry here is whether it is possible, given human cognitive capacities and the laws of nature.

The misunderstanding involves the goal of the professional practices that may result in objective news. The goal is not to cleanse reporters’ minds of values. It is to cleanse their news reports of statements for which they lack sufficient objective evidence.<sup>10</sup> Methods for achieving balance involve making sure verified relevant facts are not omitted; loaded descriptions are omitted because they imply values; and so on. If adopting a particular psychological attitude (sometimes called “objective” in a non-epistemic sense of the word) makes it easier for journalists to follow the practices, that’s an interesting psychological fact. It says nothing about the objectivity of the report, which lies in its sentences’ being backed by sufficient objective evidence, whether that evidence is gathered by a human, a robot, or a robotic human.<sup>11</sup>

The problem of objective news, then, is not whether journalists can purge themselves of their values by following the practices, but whether they can generate news reports purged of unverified facts by following the practices. In other words, the premise that human beings inevitably have subjective points of view, which is uncontroversially true, does not entail the conclusion that news reports are inevitably subjective, for the validity of making such an inference is precisely the issue. Einstein inevitably had a subjective point of view, too, but it doesn’t follow that  $E = MC^2$  is inevitably subjective.

### The Argument from Value-Laden Observation (VLO)

The impossibility of objective news doesn’t follow from the fact that reporters are fallible. Fallibility means only that we need to be careful to “get the facts”; it

doesn't make it impossible to do so. As we've also seen, concluding that "human beings inevitably have subjective points of view; therefore, news reports are inevitably subjective" also fails because we can't infer anything about the epistemic status of news reports from a fact about human psychology without additional premises. Can critics of the possibility of objective news do better than this?

If we change the language of the above statement slightly, we can see why it is a popular argument that at least *seems* plausible: We can only observe the world from our own subjective perspectives; therefore, objective news is not possible.<sup>12</sup> Stated this way, the statement summarizes another argument inspired by complicated debates in the philosophy of science that challenge what Mindich calls the "naïve empiricism" of many journalists.<sup>13</sup> The central claim in that debate is that, contrary to what most of us believe, values are embedded in perceptual observation. If observation is value-laden, no statement in a news report that is verified by observation can be accepted as objectively verified. For example, seeing and smelling ten dead people after a bomb blast may appear to objectively verify the statement that at least ten people died in the blast, but since values are suspect, any statement supported by value-laden observation is suspect as well.

The full argument can be stated as follows:

1. We can only observe the world via our own perceptual observations.
2. These observations are essentially value-laden.
3. Therefore, they cannot provide objective verification.
4. Consequently, objective news is not possible.

Note that the value-ladenness of observation **is not the** claim that we make observations and then interpret them in ways that reflect our values. Value-ladenness claims that two observers in exactly the same perceptual conditions who are identical biologically and psychologically except that they have different values will literally observe different things. The claim **also** is not that we can perceive only that for which we have concepts: If person A has the concept "cancer" and person B does not, then only A literally can see cancerous tissue when looking at an X-ray; B literally cannot see cancer, only (maybe) black dots. The claim here is that perception is constrained by the values we hold, not merely by the concepts we possess. If, for example, a reporter for the *Jerusalem Post* believes that Jews ought to have a homeland in Israel and a reporter for Al-Jazeera believes that Jews ought not to have a homeland in Israel, this difference in their *values*—not their *concepts*, which these two beliefs share—constrains their sensory capacities such that they literally cannot observe the same things. Looking at what we intuitively might consider the same object doing the same thing, the *Post* reporter literally cannot see an armed oppressor entering Gaza, even if she has the concepts "armed oppressor," "entering," and "Gaza," while the Al-Jazeera reporter literally cannot see an Israeli soldier entering Gaza even if he has the concepts "Israeli soldier," "entering," and "Gaza."

Value-ladenness of observation **also** is utterly different from standard problems of eyewitness testimony, in which people are very unreliable and often offer pure conjecture with a feeling of utter certainty.<sup>14</sup> Two eyewitnesses may be 100 percent reliable regarding their respective value-laden observations.

Of course, when value-ladenness is properly understood, many of those who think the initial inference is a good argument will find VLO implausible. There is more to be debated here, but it doesn't matter. For even if we accepted premise 2 as true, VLO is invalid: the conclusion doesn't follow. This is because even if observation is value-laden, all that follows is that to see what someone else sees I must share that person's values. This is obviously possible. So, to get to the conclusion, we will need another premise:

1. We can observe the world only via our own observations.
2. These observations are essentially value-laden.
3. Values cannot be objectively verified.
4. Therefore, our observations cannot provide objective verification.
5. Consequently, objective news is not possible.

In short, value-laden observation cannot provide objective verification, not because we have different values (so what, if values can be shared?), but because values themselves cannot be objectively verified.

The problem here is that premise 3 may not be true; it trades on the popularity in some circles of value relativism (if there is no fact of the matter regarding values, then there's nothing to verify) and epistemic relativism (there are no objective methods of verification). But both positions are controversial. There may well be values that anyone should hold and evidence on the basis of which a belief is rational for anyone to hold. It's true that objective news is possible only if objective verification is possible. But VLO doesn't argue that this necessary condition can't be satisfied in the case of values; it just *asserts* it can't. We were looking for a reason to doubt the possibility of objective news, but VLO doesn't give us one.

In sum, **the** argument from value-laden observation **claims** that a reporter can't generate objective news because observation can't provide objective verification. (**The** problem *isn't* that we can't share values or "worldviews"—which include values—or come to know what others are thinking.) It's not obvious that observation is value-laden. But even if it were, value-laden observations can provide objective verification if values can be objectively verified. Since the argument **gives** us no reason to think they can't be, **it fails** to show that objective news is not possible.

### The Argument from Value-Laden Editing (VLE)

A second line of argument claims that the editorial filter itself is value-laden. Not every activity counts as an event, not every event counts as news, not every

feature of a newsworthy event is considered newsworthy, and not all the statements that describe the newsworthy features of newsworthy events are given equal weight. These selection processes—collectively, I'll call them editing—involve value judgments along two dimensions: in or out, high or low (e.g., the lead is in and high). The argument from value-laden editing claims that editing choices inevitably reflect the values of those doing the choosing and that whatever passes through a value-laden filter is itself value-laden. We can state this argument as follows:

1. Generating news reports (individually or through a whole edition) necessarily involves editing.
2. Editing is essentially value-laden.
3. The product of a value-laden editing process is itself value-laden.
4. Therefore, objective news reports are not possible.

Of course, objective news reports are not data dumps or lists of unrelated statements. At a minimum, news reports (objective or otherwise) are linguistic narratives offered for public consumption by a news outlet. This weak criterion is not a sufficient condition (e.g., a newspaper might contain a short piece of fiction), but it enables us to distinguish news reports from non-news reports without begging any questions raised by value-laden editing.

The strength of VLE lies in its simplicity and specificity. Unlike VLO, it does not rest on complex philosophical positions or on premises that threaten the justification of any belief based on perception. It argues that objective news reports must not just get the story right; they must get the story. But getting the story involves a framework of editorial choices, which rely on judgments of importance. Since these judgments will inevitably be affected by one's values, the argument goes, the reports cannot be objective in the sense that any competent editor or reporter should make the same judgments in the same circumstances.

Before addressing VLE, some preliminary issues can be set aside. First, the possibility of objective editorial choices also does not require infallibility. Editors and reporters omit important facts, bury the lead, and miss stories all the time. Reporters are constrained by what they know when they look for what they don't. But omniscience is not a condition of objective news, and ignorance is not bias. Second, even if values or biases inevitably taint editing in general, it doesn't follow that every story inevitably is tainted by bias. As Mindich argues, it took an outsider, Ida B. Wells, to break the story of the segregation and terrorizing of African Americans in the South before the civil rights era.<sup>15</sup> Mainstream reporters missed it. But if leaving a story out is a form of value-laden editing, then Wells's story was not value-laden; she got the story (as did later reporters). The push to hire minorities in newsrooms is predicated on the idea that editing biases of this sort can be overcome in news reports. Whether individuals must overcome their biases is not the issue.

Third, not all editorial choices detract from the possibility of objective news. Many judgments of importance are not problematic. For example, the fact that an ant crawled across a reporter's sleeve will not be included in his or her report on a street demonstration. At least some editorial choices reflect differences in the facts that each reporter has discovered or the quality of the evidence he or she has obtained by deadline. Fourth, the editing filter is typically not one person. Unlike columns or blog entries, objective news reports are generated by news staffs, even if one person gets the byline. Therefore, most editorial filters are multiperspectival. If the second premise is right, multiperspectival editing processes will still be value-laden, however.

So why think premise 2 of VLE is true? Value-laden editing is correct to emphasize that editorial choice involves judgments of importance and that these judgments are as important for objective news reports as is verifying the statements in them. The question is whether these judgments can be based just on objective reasons; if not, they are value-laden. An editorial judgment is objectively justified if it is rational to make that judgment on the basis of reasons that anyone should accept, just as it is rational for a person to obtain eggs and break them if he or she wants to eat an omelet. If at least some stories are the result of choices that satisfy this condition, then the second premise is false.

Consider the following: if no editorial choice is objectively justifiable, then such choices may as well be made by a rookie reporter. Conversely, if some editorial choices can be objectively justified, that would explain why seasoned journalists are put in editorial positions. They are there because they have acquired the ability to base their editorial choices on reasons that any skilled editor would accept as constraints on their judgments—facts about audience interests and values, background knowledge of related issues, competing stories, the size of the day's news hole, the quality of a reporter's evidence by deadline, and so on. We can satisfy ourselves of the objectivity of these choices by putting other skilled editors in those circumstances and seeing if they make the same choices. We don't, in fact, do this in journalism, but we could; the replication of experiments in science by independent research teams is the same sort of test.

There can, of course, be more than one way to report objectively on the same event (by the same or different news outlets), for each editorial filter will be objectively determined by different constraints, particularly audience values and background knowledge. The fact that Al-Jazeera, the BBC, and CNN cover events in the Mideast differently does not mean that their editorial choices are value-laden in the sense that they cannot be fully constrained by these facts about audience interests and so on. Differences in these constraints can be sufficient to explain the editorial differences. **It remains true that** editorial staff values may play a role in some or even many editorial choices. But the second premise claims that editorial choices are inevitably value-laden—that is, not fully constrained by

**objective reasons.** We have no reason to think that this stronger claim is true. It was not an accident that news outlets everywhere reported the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center towers, even if distinct audience values or other constraints also dictated different ways of reporting the story. The test of objective editing remains: replicate all the constraints to replicate the choices.

There is, however, one particular value that does affect all editorial choices: the value of satisfying the audience's (or publisher's) interests. Journalists, like anyone else, need not value the interests of others; bloggers, in particular, may make a point of not doing so. But acknowledging and responding to the fact of other people's interests may itself be a reason for editorial choice that anyone should accept, particularly if doing so is instrumentally valuable for its role in making knowledge possible. Bloggers who ignore others' interests and yet want to generate objective news may be acting irrationally in something like the way someone who wants an omelet but refuses to get eggs would be. If objective news is a form of testimonial knowledge, it makes little sense to try to generate it if one pretends there is no one else who might care. I might have reason to seek evidence for my beliefs all for myself, but that is not sufficient reason to publish it.

I conclude that while VLE raises an important and problematic aspect of objective news, it does not succeed in showing that it is impossible for editorial choices to be dictated by the constraints in which journalists operate. I do concede that it is open for journalists to refuse to accept those constraints, in particular by refusing to value other people's interests. So editorial choices will be value-laden in this respect. But this value may itself be one that anyone ought to hold.

### The Real Problem of Objective News

I have defended the possibility of objective news from claims that our values inevitably infiltrate either the statements in news reports or the editing filter through which these statements pass. The argument from value-laden observation does not give us a reason to think that observation is not a source of objective verification. Arguments from value-laden editing do not acknowledge the role of knowledge in constraining editorial choice. Although bias in news reports is inevitable in general, it does not follow that every news report is inevitably biased.

However, it is undeniable that many actual news reports are not objective—they do not contain just objectively verified facts chosen just on the basis of objective constraints. If it is possible, and if the conditions for its possibility have nothing to do with journalists' attitudes, why is this so? I'll discuss two reasons.

The first is that actual news reports reflect competing goals, each of which leaves its stamp on the published product. The epistemic goal of objectivity is one constraint. Economic, aesthetic, and egoistic goals are the foremost



non-epistemic constraints. The effect of these three non-epistemic goals on the objectivity of a news report can be roughly gauged by comparing news reports with scientific research papers published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, which strive for the same epistemic goal but not the other goals (or not nearly to the same extent). *Scientists* may well be as ego-driven as journalists, but their *papers* are not about themselves or their opinions.

Economically, we value accuracy highly and are willing to pay a lot to get it. Science is hugely expensive largely because sophisticated instruments for making accurate observations are costly. Generating news reports to an analogous degree of accuracy is also expensive. But you get what you pay for, and the objectivity of a news report will reflect this economic constraint.

Aesthetically, news stories must be interesting enough to catch and keep the audience's attention. That means color—which may mean using descriptions that are loaded with positive or negative connotations or provoke emotional responses. For example, we often describe the characters of public figures even if we don't really have sufficient evidence for our descriptions. It also can mean a judgmental style—not analysis, which can be based objectively on valid deductive or strong inductive arguments, but colorfully expressed opinion that may not be supported by any valid argument at all (e.g., vivid ad hominem attacks). It also can mean using anecdotes to illustrate or make vivid, even though truly representative cases are rare and non-representative cases often distort or distract (hence the temptation to form a composite person from various sources or make one up from scratch). Being objective and being interesting are compatible goals but can be difficult to combine successfully. No wonder objective news is often described in highly unappealing terms.<sup>16</sup>

Egoistically, journalists—like many people—are often motivated by the goal of social status.<sup>17</sup> Objective journalism is intrinsically self-effacing: it's not about you. And who, in this day and age, wants that? The article that does not have the reporter's identity stamped all over it does not garner the public recognition for its author that a blog entry, an opinion piece, a television appearance, or any of the other media in which journalists assert themselves in the public sphere can. Few non-journalists read bylines, and the work that goes into discovering and verifying facts, rewriting, and editing is invisible to the public. Extensive wire service reporting may garner only a mention of the service's having contributed to a news report that runs with a local reporter's byline. No wonder Ivy League graduates often fill the newsrooms of the most prestigious news outlets and that opinion journalism has again become so popular.

The second reason that objective news is difficult has to do with the practices that have traditionally been associated with its pursuit. It is debatable whether these practices do lead to objective news (even when properly followed). Much of the discontent with objective news may simply be belated recognition that the traditional practices are not adequate. I have emphasized that

objective news is an epistemic category. But compare the professional training journalists get with that of students of the sciences. The latter spend a great deal of time learning epistemological techniques—how to design an experiment that will yield a useful result, how to derive a prediction from a theory, how to generate and critically assess alternative hypotheses. These critical and analytical skills are not had just by having normal cognitive abilities.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, it took time to develop these techniques: courses in experimental design and data analysis did not just appear with Galileo and Newton. Analogous training in journalism schools would be what Kovach and Rosenstiel have called a “science of reporting,” which emphasizes methods of verification. They suggest the following as the “intellectual principles of a science of reporting”:

1. Never add anything that was not there.
2. Never deceive the audience.
3. Be as transparent as possible about your methods and motives.
4. Rely on your own original reporting.
5. Exercise humility.

The Rule of Transparency (#3) is explained as follows:

It is the same principle as governs scientific method: explain how you learned something and why you believe it—so the audience can do the same. In science, the reliability of an experiment, or its objectivity, is defined by whether someone else could replicate the experiment. In journalism, only by explaining how we know what we know can we approximate this idea of people being able, if they were of a mind to, to replicate the reporting. This is what is meant by objectivity of method in science, or in journalism.<sup>19</sup>

These cognitive skills, possessed by seasoned journalists, can be made explicit and taught. Arguably, the core of what in journalism is called an “objective attitude” or even “skepticism” is just critical and analytical thinking.

Ultimately, the problem of objective news is not that it is an unattainable ideal, but that, relatively speaking, it can be boring, costly, and dissatisfying to the ego. We want it, but not enough to outweigh our other goals. In the meantime, we have a hodgepodge of traditional practices that may not be adequate to this epistemic goal; only now are we beginning to focus on the epistemic nature of objectivity.<sup>20</sup> I conclude that while objective news is attainable, we have barely begun to pursue it in earnest.

## Notes

1. See, e.g., Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, *The Elements of Journalism* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001).

2. See Paul Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 63–69. We need not be infallible for evidence to be objective; what matters is that beliefs based on such evidence can be considered rational.
3. This is why when we aren't sure (i.e., when we don't have sufficient objective evidence) we do not claim that we are. Instead, we write a sentence for which we do have sufficient objective evidence (e.g., that official estimates on Tuesday put the number of dead at *N*).
4. Often, the disputed values are those familiar from the culture wars; even Bernard Goldberg's critique of the mainstream media (*Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2002) does not target news reports in general but stories on gay rights, abortion, affirmative action, and the like.
5. Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), urges journalists to seek objective news via an allegiance to the fact/value distinction. This is imprecise, for even partisan journalists can be professionally committed to that distinction. More precisely, it is an allegiance to the objectively verified/unverified distinction, which need not coincide with the fact/value distinction at all. If values can be objectively verified, they can be included in objective news reports; and if a fact is not objectively verified, it should be left out.
6. David T. Z. Mindich, *Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).
7. Brent Cunningham, "Re-thinking Objectivity," *Columbia Journalism Review* 3, no. 4 (July/August 2003), p. 3, and online at <http://www.cjr.org.issues/2003/4/objective-cunningham.asp?printerfriendly=yes>.
8. Kovach and Rosenstiel, *Elements of Journalism*.
9. E.g., some suggest replacing the norm of objectivity with a norm of accuracy (Michael Kinsley, "The Twilight of Objectivity," *Washington Post*, March 31, 2006, p. A19) or of reliable information (Victor Navasky, *A Matter of Opinion* [New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005]). Presumably, this means just getting the facts right, whether or not values are also excluded.
10. Jack Newfield, "Journalism: Old, New and Corporate," in *The Reporter as Artist: A Look at the New Journalism Controversy*, ed. Ronald Weber (New York: Hastings House, 1974), 54–65, and Kinsley, "Twilight of Objectivity," are among the many who make this mistake. After listing a set of values commonly held by U.S. reporters ("belief in welfare capitalism, God, the West, Puritanism, the Law, the family, property, the two-party system, and perhaps most crucially, in the notion that violence is only defensible when employed by the State"), Kinsey writes: "I can't think of any White House correspondent, or network television analyst, who doesn't share these values. And at the same time, who doesn't insist he is totally objective" (p. A 19). Whether or not the correspondents and analysts are correct in describing *themselves* as objective (whatever they mean by that), *nothing* immediately follows about the objectivity of their news reports.
11. Schudson (*Discovering the News*, 8) discusses the "objective attitude." See also Stephen J. A. Ward's essay in chap. 9 of this book.
12. Molly Ivins seems to offer an argument of this type. As Victor Navasky writes:  
  
As far as I'm concerned, when in 1993 Molly Ivins achieved the ripe middle age of forty-nine, she disposed of the objectivity question for all time: "The

fact is that I am a forty-nine-year-old white, female, college-educated Texan. All of that affects the way I see the world. There's no way in hell that I'm going to see anything the same way that a fifteen-year-old black high-school dropout does. We all see the world from where we stand. Anybody who's ever interviewed five eyewitnesses to an automobile accident knows there's no such thing as objectivity." (*A Matter of Opinion*, 409)

13. See Mindich, *Just the Facts*, 8. For one of the original arguments in philosophy of science, see N. R. Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

14. Elizabeth F. Loftus, *Eyewitness Testimony* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Gary L. Wells and Elizabeth F. Loftus, eds., *Eyewitness Testimony: Psychological Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

15. See Mindich, *Just the Facts*, 113–137.

16. Mindich (*Just the Facts*, 109) notes the “bland gruel, without the spice and piquancy of partisan criticism and local dialect” of early Associated Press reports, while Schudson (*Discovering the News*, 77–87) describes the “dull discipline” of objective news editing imposed on reporters who sought to launch literary careers.

17. For example, Richard Perez-Peña (“Top Editor to Step Down at the *Washington Post*,” *New York Times*, June 24, 2008, p. C3) describes Leonard Downie Jr. as “a calm, unassuming leader in an often frenetic business known for outsize egos.”

18. Anthony Serafini, “Applying Philosophy to Journalism,” *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 3, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 45–49. Reprinted in *Philosophical Issues in Journalism*, ed. Elliot D. Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 256–63.

19. Kovach and Rosenstiel, *Elements of Journalism*, 79.

20. For example, Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism introduced a course in evidence and inference in the 2006–7 academic year. See also the critical analyses of media recommended by Brent H. Baker (*How to Identify, Expose and Correct Liberal Media Bias* (Alexandria, VA: Media Research Center), even though his goal is exposing liberal biases in particular.