Objectivity Model

As humans, we have the powerful freedom to make our own decisions. To go through the steps of gathering information, processing it, and making up our own thoughts about the matter. What if this freedom was stripped away? Would this ignite the unimaginable idea of becoming a dystopian society? One where, perhaps, the truth is dictated rather than discovered. These are the same questions that journalists today are asking.

The fight for objectivity is under attack, but abandoning it would be a detrimental mistake. Objectivity, defined as "expressing or dealing with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations" (Baron, 2023), is not just an idealization but the backbone of trustworthy reporting. Critics argue that true objectivity is impossible, but this argument is a dangerous excuse that can lead to the spread of bias and misinformation. Without objectivity, journalism destroys public trust and fuels disinformation. Journalism must stand firm in its commitment to objectivity.

The public expects objectivity to be upheld in almost every profession. Marty Baron uncovers this in his piece "We want objective judges and doctors. Why not journalists too?". Baron claims that we (the public) expect judges and juries to be objective which concludes that the public has established objectivity as a fundamental expectation in the legal system. Baron also makes the statement "Objectivity among science and medical professionals is at the very heart of our faith in the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe and the medicines we take.". This encapsulates the idea that objectivity in science is an essential aspect of daily life. Objectivity in journalism, just like that in science or law, is built on the trust that information will be fair and accurate. If society expects this in courts and hospitals, it follows that the same standard should be applied in journalism.

Abandoning objectivity is more dangerous now than ever before. Today, misinformation spreads at a rapid speed and biases take center stage across media platforms. Without a commitment to objective reporting, media outlets risk becoming hotspots for disinformation, allowing bias to overpower accuracy. In an area where social media advances the spread of false narratives, the consequences are extreme. An article by *Pew Research Center* highlights this crisis. Stephen Downes warns "Things will not improve. There is too much incentive to spread disinformation, fake news, malware and the rest. Governments and organizations are major actors in this space." (Anderson & Raine, 2017). With the rise of AI generated media, politically motivated misinformation, and the public losing trust in reporting, the stakes are higher than ever. If journalism loses objectivity now, it risks uprooting democracy itself.

The lack of objectivity switches the view of journalism from a source of reliability into a tool used for the spread of disinformation. When the media is controlled by biases, it limits the public's ability to make informed decisions. This ultimately controls the narrative in a manner which is parallel to a dystopian society. This shift undermines the foundation of establishing a free press in democracy where unbiased information is essential for informed citizenship.

Despite critics arguing that objectivity is impossible to achieve, the dream of it remains essential to the honesty of the profession. Without objectivity, reporting risks becoming biased, untrustworthy, and misleading, diminishing public confidence in the media. While every journalist brings their own backgrounds and perspectives to the table it's important to focus on the principle that the method is objective, not the journalist (Baron, 2017). This implies that while personal bias may still exist, it is up to the journalist to discipline themselves in order to attain complete fairness and accuracy. At the end of the day, it isn't a journalist's job to strip themselves of their perspectives but rather approach their work with a commitment to the truth.

In a world that is constantly coming across new information, the desire for objectivity is what prevents journalism from becoming a tool for manipulation. The effort to report facts without bias remains crucial. Without it, journalism loses its credibility which may allow misinformation and biases to extend too far into reality. Objectivity isn't about throwing away perspectives but rather committing to the truth, no matter the circumstance.

Truth model

The difference in humans is what makes us extraordinary. It's a privilege to be able to come from different backgrounds, have different perspectives, and believe different things. Whether it is conscious or unconscious, these factors create internal bias deep within us. Though the majority of journalists try their best to hide their internal bias in their work, they can never be completely objective and unbiased in their work. The decline of objectivity in journalism is not necessarily a failure but rather a shift towards a model that prioritizes transparency. This approach acknowledges perspectives while committing to accuracy.

Objectivity in journalism can create a fake sense of balance by giving weight to equal sides, even when one may not be correct. In an article published by *The New York Times*, Wesley Lowery argues that "The views and inclinations of whiteness are accepted as the objective neutral. When black and brown reporters and editors challenge those conventions, it's not uncommon for them to be pushed out, reprimanded or robbed of new opportunities."(Lowery, 2020). When writing for the public, it's crucial that journalists don't prioritize neutrality over the truth. Presenting both sides equally, even when one is false, fails to serve the public interest. It

misleads significantly more than it informs. Journalism must prioritize truth, even if that means taking a stand against false narratives.

Just because misinformation is widespread it doesn't mean that journalism should surrender to it. Reporting must rise above the noise, not follow the crowd. Some stories may have misleading information because journalists are following what everyone else is saying. If everyone around you including your boss, police, and your boss's boss are saying an event was an accident despite you knowing deep down in your heart it was a hate crime, what purpose does objectivity serve? Objectivity isn't always the truth. It can be a tool that upholds what some people want published, and what some people want to hear. If journalists become too complacent and are afraid to challenge opposing information, they participate in the act of spreading misinformation rather than exposing it.

The way objectivity is framed in journalism can actually silence voices instead of amplifying them. By a journalist trying so hard to stay neutral, they risk not calling out real injustices. Instead, they say that there are two equal sides of the debate. Wesley Lowery explains that traditional journalism is built around white perspectives, so when journalists of other races push back, they're often seen as biased when in reality they may just be telling the truth (Lowery, 2020). This can be dangerous as it lets specific people control the narrative. If the media refuses to call injustices out such as racism or police violence, it's upholding the status quo.

A journalist's background, culture, and experiences are going to shape the way they interpret events. It is nearly impossible to stay completely neutral. An article from *Columbia Journalism Review* states "More diverse newsrooms—armed with a broader range of backgrounds, experiences, relationships, skills, and expertise—spot more stories and imbue them

with greater nuance and insight.", implying that these differences can create greatness (Sulzberger, 2023). Journalists shouldn't pretend to be unbiased. Instead, they should be transparent about their perspectives while maintaining ethical standards.

At the end of the day, journalists write for the public. The public deserves to hear the truth, not just every equal side. The idea of objectivity often serves those of power which silences voices and creates a false sense of reality. Instead of clinging to old standards, journalists should strive for truth-seeking, even if that territory comes with arguing against established norms. The public deserves reporting that prioritizes fact over neutrality.

Essay 4

The most memorable story I read in these two sections was the one titled “The Envelope”. The story goes through the emotions and growth one man experienced in the days leading up to his execution. Quotes such as “Every conversation I had, I was so tuned in to this other person’s point of view..” and “Every sandwich, every bite meant more.” emphasize the mindfulness that became present once death was seen as a truly inevitable thing. It makes me reflect on my life, and the gratitude that I look past on the daily. Yes, this man had a set death date but, don’t we all in a way? The inevitability of life is that there is going to be a day when we die. Why do we need to know the specific date to experience a full sense of mindfulness and gratitude in our daily lives? That is something that should be practiced every day we are alive. This story made me reflect on how often I take things for granted such as a sandwich or human connection. It also made me reflect on what I consider to hold importance in my life. While I have the freedom of being alive, I want to live my life the way this man did before he died. I want to improve my mindset of being truly present and grateful for every opportunity that is presented to me. This section reminded me that growth is possible, no matter the situation you are in.

UNC Worker Hospitalized, Raising Concern Over North Carolina's Workplace Safety Laws in Extreme Heat.

A University of North Carolina gardener, part of a work-study program, was hospitalized Monday afternoon after collapsing on the job. The incident occurred around 2 p.m. EST, with the heat index soaring to 98 degrees Fahrenheit. This has prompted renewed discussions on the risks faced by outdoor workers in the heat and the lack of specific state laws addressing heat exposure in the workplace.

The unidentified student was found by colleague, Janet Vasquez, 22. She reported "I just saw him slumped over the lawn mower, not moving, I said You ok? You ok? And he didn't answer.". After realizing he was unresponsive, she called 911. Emergency responders confirmed they transported the male student to the UNC medical center, where he is being treated for acute injuries related to heat stroke and is in critical but stable condition.

The incident has sparked concern within the UNC community, especially considering recent statistics showing an increase in 2024 in heat-related deaths. Since 2008, at least 15 workers have died from heat-related illnesses in North Carolina. The state currently lacks specific regulations regarding heat exposure in the workplace, leaving workers in a vulnerable position as temperatures rise.

Federal measures are underway, as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration proposed a new rule aimed at preventing heat-related injuries. This proposed regulation would require employers to create a plan to evaluate and control heat hazards in their workplaces, with comments on the rule due by Dec. 30, 2024.

As authorities investigate, UNC employees release statements regarding the situation. The UNC Department of Employee Relations confirmed that they are cooperating with the authorities to investigate this matter. Meanwhile, Jody Littleton, a professor of Environmental Studies at UNC, expressed her concern on Twitter. She urged both employers and workers to take caution when working outdoors. She also provided resources to help individuals protect themselves against heat-related injuries.

As the community awaits further updates on the student's condition, the incident highlights the need for improved workplace safety measures. Particularly in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area where the average temperature has increased 2 degrees Fahrenheit in the past decade. It's crucial for workers to recognize the signs of heat-related injuries and take precautionary actions to stay safe in the extreme heat.