

Can journalists express opinions?



Using V.I.A. to analyze journalism that argues
(And arguments that aren't journalism)

(LECTURER WARNING: AT 79 SLIDES, THIS ONE IS CHOCK FULL AND REQUIRES YOU TO SKIM EXAMPLES SO AS TO WELL ON CONCEPTS. WE'VE WRITTEN FULL NOTES ON EVERY SLIDE, BUT ONLY IN CASE OF QUESTIONS. GO LIKE THE WIND!)

One of the more confusing things about journalism is the appearance of opinion inside news shows, news websites or newspapers.

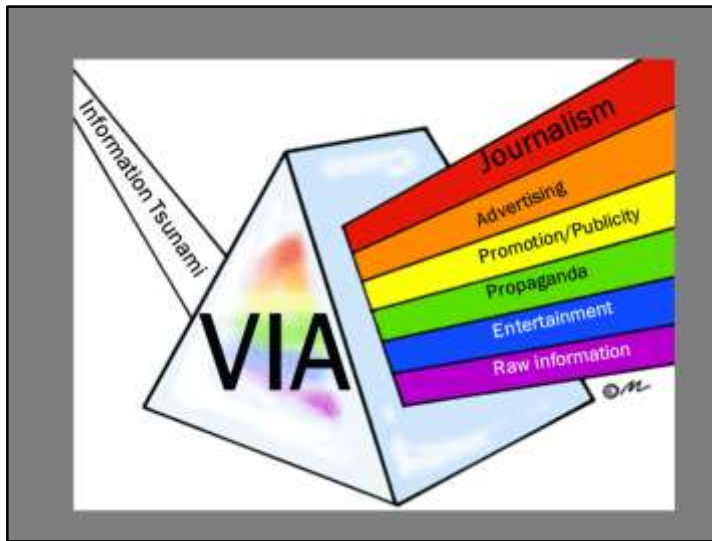
I'm not talking about a report that quotes experts or witnesses providing their opinion of what happened or will happen.

I'm talking about journalists who express their opinions, in movie reviews, columns and editorials and video commentaries. What's up with THAT?

Today, we encourage you to start using a new vocabulary to define the Opinion Journalism sub-neighborhood of the Journalism neighborhood.

And we encourage you to pay attention to the difference between Opinion Journalism and Mere Assertion...something we like to call "Bloviation"

(Isn't that a great word? Write it down!)



ANIMATION: AUTOMATIC THROBBING OF VIA AND POURING-IN OF THE INFORMATION TSUNAMI

Last week, we started using a simple taxonomy to help us quickly navigate the daily tsunami of information.

Last week we talked about information neighborhoods.

Another way to think of it is a chaos passing through your internal V.I.A. prism.

If you pay attention to whether a piece of information has been through a process of **verification**, by an **independent** truth-seeker who is **accountable**, then you will be avoiding the stuff that has no loyalty to the mission of journalism, which is to inform you.

With those ideas in mind, we next tackle the complicated problem of opinion journalism. Let's start by looking at the real world.

VIAble?



Finance reporter Rick Santelli, live from trading floor

When you go looking for reliable information, what we call Actionable Information, the taxonomy helps you find the good stuff: with VIA. This is Rick Santelli.

He is reporting for CNBC, a business news network, from the floor of the Chicago Board of Trade. His job is to report on interest rates, foreign exchange, and the Federal Reserve.

(LECTURER: NEXT SLIDE LAUNCHES SANTORELLI #1, A STRAIGHT-UP NEWS REPORT)

As an investor, you want accurate reporting to help you decide whether to buy or sell. As a citizen, you want a clear picture of how government policies are affecting the economy. That's his job.



NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT "START AUTOMATICALLY"

(Lecturer: After it runs)

V...I...A

He has verified his information by reporting straight from the floor of the exchange.

He is a journalist working for CNBC providing an independent report on market action.

He signs on and off with his name:

V...I....A.

VIAble?



Finance reporter Rick Santelli, live from trading floor

Here is that same reporter, Rick Santelli, live on CNBC on Feb. 19, 2009 in the depths of the Great Recession, about the same time a major economic stimulus bill was going into effect and the U.S. government was in the process of bailing out banks, some homeowners and Chrysler and GM.



NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT "START AUTOMATICALLY"

(Lecturer: After it runs)

He listens to an expert invited onto the show to comment and give an expert opinion...then suddenly Santelli is giving his opinion instead of keeping it to himself.

ASK: Do you think it is reliable information?

ASK: Do you think it is useful?

(If yes...why is an opinion useful)

What about VIA?

Has he verified what he is saying? Is he intellectually independent, or is he now supporting one side of the debate? Is he accountable for the truth of this?

This was a huge violation of his role as a journalist. He was no longer reporting facts about trading from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, he was using the access journalists are granted in order to argue one side of a public policy debate. News Consumers were shown the standard CNBC graphics, but with no "Commentator" label or intro or sign off.

It doesn't matter whether we agree or disagree. The point is he is having it both ways, blurring the lines that help News Consumers keep track of whether they are getting facts or opinions.

By the way, he'll go down in history for this rant, which is often cited as the founding declaration of the Tea Party movement.

Four Questions:

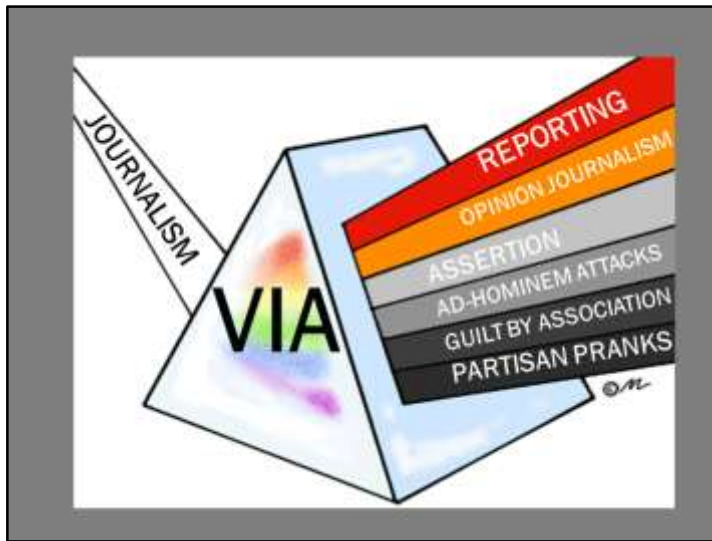
1. How do you tell the difference between News Reporting and Opinion Journalism?
2. Why should you care which is which?
3. What is the value of Opinion Journalism?
4. How do you tell the difference between Opinion Journalism and mere partisan assertion aka "Bloviation"?

ANIMATION: TEXT BULLETS FADE IN ONE BY ONE, BUT QUICKLY

These four questions are the roadmap for today's work.

First we'll talk about how to know when you've wandered into the Opinion turf of the Journalism Neighborhood and Why the difference matters We'll think about the value of an evidence based opinion.

And finally, we'll teach you to look out for Opinions that are purely partisan with little regard for facts, or evidence or even logic.



ANIMATION: AUTOMATICALLY: “JOURNALISM” AND “VIA” LABELS THROB

CLICK1=APPEARANCE OF THE GREY AREA

MATERIAL: “ASSERTION, NAME-CALLING, BULLYING, PRANKS”

To continue with the prism idea, today’s lecture should help you with one of the most complicated problems news consumers now face:

Differentiating between journalism, opinion journalism and the huge volume of partisan and commercial free speech that wants to look like journalism without submitting to the difficult work of V.I.A.



Housekeeping, Announcements & Notes

The Quick Quiz recap

1. The News Drivers are: Importance, Prominence
Human interest, Conflict, Change, Proximity, Timeliness, Magnitude, Relevance.
2. The three factors that determine what becomes news are: Universal News Drivers, Editorial Judgment, The Audience

Hand your QUICK QUIZ to your recitation instructor as you leave, and practice saying her or his name. (i.e. *"Hi, Professor Schmedlapp"*)

Every lecture, we'll stop and give you a quick quiz, just three questions.

This helps cement key lessons in your memory.

Plus, it helps us see if we explained things well.

And the third question is a chance for you to improve your own course.

We'll start lectures with a selection of your comments and suggestions.

After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Spot language and labels that distinguish reporting from opinion journalism
2. Cite examples that illustrate the value of opinion journalism
3. Understand differences between historical and modern opinion journalism.
4. Distinguish between opinion journalism and "mere assertion"

This slide intended for instructors as a focusing tool, but can be shared with students to prime them. Each lecture will include a slide like this with specific lecture outcomes that refer to course outcomes.

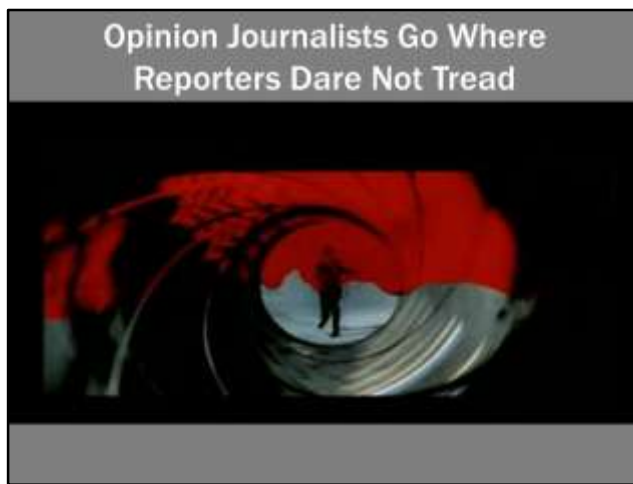
Here is what the syllabus declares students will be able to do if they successfully complete the course:

1. Analyze key elements of news reports - weighing evidence, evaluating sources, noting context and transparency - to judge reliability.
2. Distinguish between journalism, opinion journalism and un-supported bloviation.
3. Identify and distinguish between news media bias and audience bias.
4. Blend personal scholarship and course materials to write forcefully about journalism standards and practices, fairness and bias, First Amendment issues and their individual Fourth Estate rights and responsibilities.
5. Use examples from each day's news to demonstrate critical thinking about civic engagement.
6. Place the impact of social media and digital technologies in their historical context.

Test #1 in recitation this week
10 questions
80 minutes

Lectures 1-6

Short answers, NOT multiple choice
Be prepared to use specific examples
from the news in your answers



ANIMATION: IMAGE FADES IN

The Opinion Journalist is given permission to go beyond gathering factual information . An Opinion Journalist's job is to select key facts and assemble an argument...to brandish an opinion.

This license is so dangerous and rare that we compare Opinion Journalists to the mythical "Double O" agents like James Bond in Her Majesty's Secret Service.

Think of this...

- ✓ The 00 agents are a tiny subset of Her Majesty's Secret Service.
- ✓ They are chosen from the cream of the British military.
- ✓ They are supervised from the highest levels of government.
- ✓ And they hold the unique license to do the unthinkable: kill without a direct order from an officer.

(Lecturer: [CLICK TO THE VIDEO](#))



007.WMV

NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT “START AUTOMATICALLY”

LECTURER: THESE NOTES ARE FOR AFTER VIDEO ENDS)
(USING EXACT PARALLEL WORDING/GESTURES WILL DRIVE HOME THE COMPARISON)

Why compare opinionists to Bond?

In responsible news organizations, a select few journalists are permitted to do the unthinkable: Express an opinion in public. Like the Double Oh's (00s)...

- ✓ Less than 1% of professional journalists are given that license to express opinions.
- ✓ They are usually chosen from the cream of the corps of reporters.
- ✓ They are supervised from the highest levels of their news organization.
- ✓ While they are loyal to journalism's mission, to inform, they take sides and try to convince readers of one argument.

The theory is this: the whole purpose of journalism is to give you the information you need to make a decision, take action or make a judgment. So, once you have a grip on the facts, opinion journalists expose you to arguments and analysis you may not have come up with on your own. They help you to rehearse your decision...or rehearse your defense of it.

Journalism, Opinion Journalism and Mere Assertion: What's Reliable and What Is Not

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts."



Daniel Patrick Moynihan (deceased)
U.S. Senator from New York

If you remember nothing else today, you'll benefit from memorizing Moynihan's Maxim. It's not entirely clear that he coined this phrase. But being himself famous, he popularized it. A noted sociologist, he was elected to the United States Senate for New York in 1976, as a Democrat, and was re-elected three times. Prior to that, he served as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and to India. He served in four successive presidential administrations, beginning with that of John F. Kennedy, and continuing through Gerald Ford.

Moynihan's Maxim helps us to keep an eye on opinions, making sure they are supported by facts instead of mere assertion.

Journalism, Opinion Journalism and Mere Assertion: What's Reliable and What Is Not



ANIMATION: CLICK1=BLOW-UP OF NEWS STORY, CLICK2=BLOW UP OF EDITORIAL EXCERPT

When Mexico's most notorious cartel leader, "Shorty" Guzman, was finally arrested, it was page one news. He's one of the world's most powerful people, according to Forbes business magazine and by all accounts, the biggest drug exporter in the world, with multi-ton cocaine, meth and marijuana shipments to the U.S., Europe and elsewhere.

CLICK1 Here's a typical page 1 story about the arrest, this one from the New York Times.

CLICK2 The next day, here is a typical newspaper editorial, in which the Times says Guzman's capture cannot quickly restore Mexicans' trust in the rule of law, or even in their own safety, in places like Juarez.

News...and Opinion.

People who don't look closely at newspapers are deeply confused by this.

What is Opinion Doing in the Journalism Neighborhood?

Society of Professional Journalists

Improving and Defending Journalism since 1909

Code of Ethics: (excerpts)

- ✓ Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting.
- ✓ Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.
- ✓ Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.
- ✓ Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.

ANIMATION: COMPLICATED

CLICK1=“Code of Ethics”

CLICK2= First tenet appears

CLICK3= First tenet vanishes and second appears

CLICK4= 2nd tenet vanishes and 3rd appears

CLICK5= 3rd tenet vanishes and 4th appears

CLICK6=-the whole list appears at once

CLICKJournalists are accountable to a code of professional conduct just like judges, bankers, engineers, doctors and any other profession.

The Society of Professional Journalists, a reporters organization, is quite specific about opinion’s place in journalism. Not only is Opinion to be quarantined from news reporting by labels...it must not, in the interest of arguing a side of a debate, misrepresent facts or the context that helps people make sense of facts.

Here are some excerpts from that code: **(CLICK THROUGH)**

1. Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting.
2. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.
3. Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.
4. Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.

IT'S STILL ABOUT V.I.A.



Verification:

"Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context"

Independence:

"Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests... (and) remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility."

Accountability

"Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context."

The point of those ethics guidelines is to preserve the essence of journalism:

Verification...Independence...Accountability

If a person is trying to help you make up your mind, trying to foster democratic debate about how we govern ourselves, they fight fair.

They verify the facts they use to support an argument.

They aren't allowed to pose as an opinion journalist if they are on the payroll of one interest group or another.

And they are accountable for their opinion, labeling it as opinion so that a viewer or reader is not misled into thinking it is reporting.

This slide shows how VIA fits in the ethics code for even an opinion journalist.

Definition of News

Main Entry: **news** 🗣️

Pronunciation: \ 'nūz, 'nyūz \

Function: *noun plural but singular in construction*

Usage: *often attributive*

Date: 15th century

Timely information about a subject of some public interest that is shared and subject to the journalistic process of verification by an independent organization that is accountable.

ANIMATION: IMAGE FADES IN FOLLOWED BY TEXT

While we're clarifying, let's gather our definitions:

News is **INFORMATION** about a subject of **SOME PUBLIC INTEREST** that is **SHARED** and subject to the journalistic **PROCESS OF VERIFICATION**.

Definition of Opinion

Main Entry: **opin-ion** 🗨️

Pronunciation: \ə-'pin-yən\

Function: *noun*

Etymology: Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Latin *opinion-*, *opinio*, from *opinari*

Date: 14th century

Opinion is a view, a judgment, or an appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter.

ANIMATION: IMAGE FADES IN FOLLOWED BY TEXT

Opinion is a **VIEW**, a **JUDGMENT** or an **APPRAISAL** about a particular matter.

Ask: what's the important difference?

Definition of Assertion

as-ser-tion [↗] (ə-sûr'shən)

n.

1. The act of asserting.
2. Something declared or stated positively, often with no support or attempt at proof.

as-ser'tion-al *adj.*

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ANIMATION: IMAGE FADES IN FOLLOWED BY TEXT

Opinion is a **VIEW**, a **JUDGMENT** or an **APPRAISAL** about a particular matter.

An assertion is something declared with no attempt at proof. I said it, so it's true.
Ask: what's the important difference?

Warning:

A News Report will often include the opinions of experts, participants or witnesses. That is not what is meant by "Opinion Journalism."

People are sometimes critical of the neutrality of a news report because it quotes opinions given by experts or witnesses....

I'm not making this up. People call Editors and Producers and say...

"Are you in Charge?!"

Yes

"Aren't you supposed to keep Opinions out of the news!?"

Yes

"Well that report on the election was full of opinions!"

"Uh, if you look at that again, those were the opinions of the people we interviewed...Not the reporter's opinions... The opinions of people involved in the situation."

Just to start on the correct foot...Today, we're not talking about the opinions of witnesses or expert sources. Those opinions are quoted in both Journalism and Opinion Journalism and are Evidence of Reporting and Research.

This Is NOT Opinion Journalism: Quoting Observer's Opinions About Events



The New York Times | <http://nyti.ms/1enZRIW> **GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL**

AMERICAS

How a Kingpin Above the Law Fell, Incredibly, Without a Shot

By DAMIEN CAVE FEB. 23, 2014

MAZATLÁN, Mexico — They reacted here with utter disbelief. Joaquín Guzmán Loera, El Chapo, drug kingpin to the world, the Robin Hood of Sinaloa, had been arrested in his home state, in the resort town that is a loyal fief of his empire?

"It was too easy," said a young woman of model height, her back to the sea, her eyes fixed on the 12-story condominium where Mexican marines and United States agents grabbed him early on Saturday morning. "No shootout, no final stand?"

To repeat: Much reporting includes opinions...of people being interviewed. They tell what they saw and what they thought of it. They share their expertise or their political point of view and it is often quite opinionated. That's not Opinion Journalism, that's just good reporting that gives you a comprehensive picture of how a situation is viewed.

It becomes Opinion Journalism when the writer's own opinion is included.

A Brief History of Opinion Journalism



Alexander Hamilton Starts the *New York Post*
and Attacks Thomas Jefferson

ANIMATION: IMAGES AND TEXT FADE IN SUCCESSIVELY

The U.S. press didn't always have such a careful code of ethics about Opinion Journalism vs. News Reporting.

The *New York Post* was started in 1801 as platform from which the Federalist Party proclaimed its views, including attacks on Thomas Jefferson.

And that was not the exception. The early U.S. press was filled with opinion and partisan attacks and newspapers were often subsidized by political parties UNTIL Early in the 19th Century.

(see Background: Jefferson vs. Hamilton and birth of the NY POST).

The Rise of the Non-Partisan Press
Mass-Market Publishing –
Newspapers profited by attracting a
wide variety of readers and advertisers



ANIMATION: TEXT FADES IN

We'll talk more about this later in the semester, but in the 1830s...a young medical student named Benjamin Day figured out that if you produced a cheap paper, more people would buy it. That meant he could charge advertisers more to get their announcements in front of customers. Day's New York Sun was the first penny newspaper and its success gave rise to the idea of non-partisan reporting.

The U.S. press didn't adopt the idea of Neutrality as a noble step in our common search for truth and meaning...

It was a business decision.

Newspapers had been niche products, produced for a political party and read by party members . But by broadening the appeal, getting rid of partisan ranting, you could make more money.



ANIMATION: CLICK1=GREELEY THOUGHT BUBBLE FADES IN

Horace Greeley founded the New York Tribune in 1841 and is credited with inventing the idea of segregating news reports from opinion writing, giving opinion its own page.

He labelled it the “Editorial Page” and the idea caught on in American newspapers and continues to this day, even on websites, where the label is usually “OPINION”.

With Greeley’s innovation came the “Editorial” a short essay or column which delivers each newspaper’s institutional statement of opinion. When papers were family owned, the editorials had a personality and a long-term relationship (good or bad) with the community.



ANIMATION: TEXT FADES IN

By the early 1900s, certain writers were given special space in the paper, often with their photo above it to signal to readers this was their opinion, not a news report.

Famous newspaper columns started with the likes of humorous poet Franklin P. Adams of the New York Tribune in the 1920s and H.L. Mencken in the 30s and 40s. Walter Winchell, a newspaper columnist active from the 1920s through the 1960s, was syndicated in 2,000 newspapers and read by up to 50 million people a day.

The tradition continues today with writers such as George Will, Thomas Friedman and Gail Collins

An Opinion Quarantine on TV?

foxhours.wmv

NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT "START AUTOMATICALLY"

NOTE TWO SIMILAR VIDEO NAMES

This one is 0:38

On TV, the quarantine is not so carefully observed. In fact, murky labeling can become controversial. Here's the Daily Show taking on Fox News' labeling of what is news, and what is not.

(Lecturer: FOXHOURS.WMV is short and sets up the idea of an opinion quarantine at Fox.: News is 9-4 and 6-8.)

What Happens When Lines Blur?

foxhours2.wmv

**NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND
SELECT “START AUTOMATICALLY”
NOTE TWO SIMILAR VIDEO NAMES**

This one is 2:17

(Lecturer: This is the continuation, with Stewart attacking Meghyn Kelly’s interpretation of Fox’s News/Opinion boundaries.)

The debate over Fox News certainly didn’t end with this Daily Show episode.

It is interesting to note, however, that crossing the line from News Reporting to Opinion Journalism without signaling to viewers with a new label, cost Juan Williams his job at NPR, cost Lou Dobbs his job at CNN and cost Keith Olbermann his job at MSNBC. Williams and Dobbs are conservatives, Olbermann a liberal.

An Opinion Niche Is Partisan Cable TV Inheriting the Role of Hamilton-era Newsletters?



ANIMATION: TEXT FADES IN

We could probably argue all day whether Fox is more conservative than MSNBC is liberal.

Whether you like Fox or not, the point we wish to make today is that Cable TV may have brought back the era of the partisan niche product.

Hamilton started the New York Post to attack Jefferson. Jefferson paid a journalist (James Callendar) to write that his opponent was a mentally unbalanced hermaphrodite. Australian media mogul Rupert Murdoch launched Fox News in 1996, hiring a former Reagan Whitehouse Official, Roger Ailes to run it.

Now Fox generates a daily stream of conservative commentary.

MSNBC, a spin-off of NBC spawned by a partnership with Microsoft, now sounds familiar to the Democratic Party's talking points.

Some Journalists Consider Cable TV Assertion Unethical

 Society of Professional Journalists
improving and protecting journalism since 1908

Code of Ethics: (excerpts)

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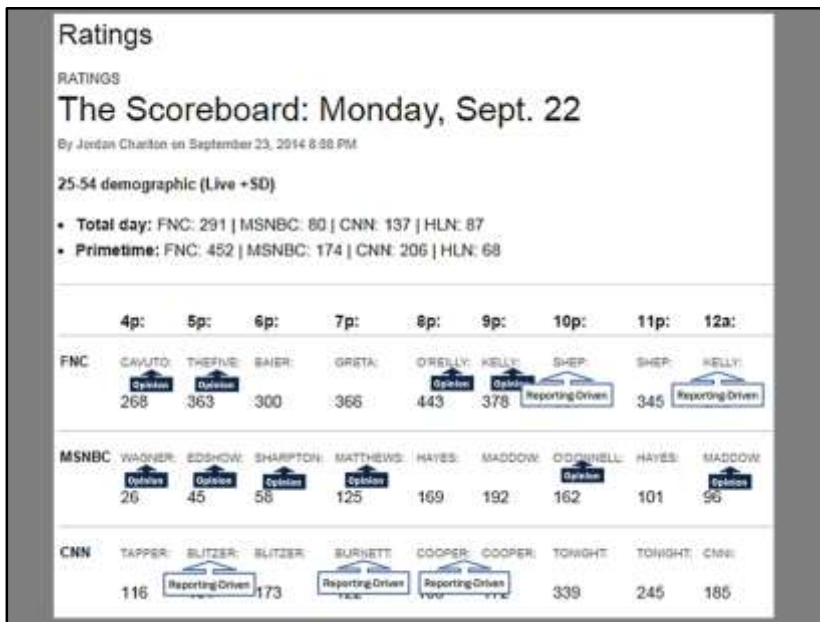
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Just a flashback here:

Journalists are accountable to a code of professional conduct just like judges, bankers, engineers, doctors and any other profession.



ANIMATION: CLICK1="OPINION" TAGS FLY IN
CLICK2="REPORTING-DRIVEN" TAGS FLY IN

What Fox and MSNBC and CNN quickly figured out were two things:

1. It takes a lot of material to fill 24 hours per day.
2. Opinion shows are much cheaper than news shows.
3. Opinion shows are very popular with certain groups of viewers.

Now, keep in mind that cable news' audience is 3 million compared to broadcast news' 22 million.

But looking at a recent set of ratings data, it's notable that the opinion parts of Fox and MSNBC drive those networks' ratings

CLICK

AND that they are killing CNN, which focuses more on reporting. **CLICK**

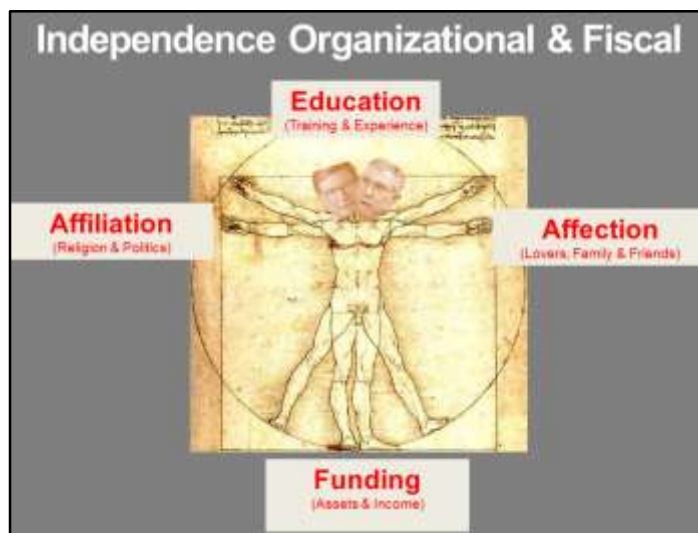


Again with the careful distinctions between similar things: Independence is very different than neutrality.

While it's near-impossible for a thinking human to be neutral, even the most partisan opinion writer can be independent, if his paycheck comes from a news organization instead of one of the major partisan players.

If George Will were on the payroll of the Republican Party, he might never ever be able to criticize the Republicans, as he often does.

And if Paul Krugman were on the payroll of the Democrats, he would have a much harder time criticizing the Democrats. Both have a point of view, but both are paid to serve the audience, not a political party.



(Lecturer: two heads are George Will and Paul Krugman)

It's often confusing to students who correctly cling to V.I.A. as the fundamental standards of journalism, yet encounter opinion journalists like Paul Krugman or George Will who take a side.

They aren't intellectually independent. They are advocates.

It's nearly impossible to be neutral. We are all unable to be neutral about those we love, those we affiliate with and our education and experience shapes us.

But we can be independent by virtue of who we work for.

An opinion journalist answers to the audience, the readers and not to one or the other of the political parties.

This is what we mean by independence, when it comes to opinion journalists.

“Think Twice”

A Silent Minute to Absorb the Material

ANIMATION: Click once to start the fade-out, fade-in, which takes one minute

At Stony Brook, we’ve become interested in the effects of silence in the classroom.

At summer workshops in 2013, we began breaking up intensive lecture or discussion sessions with a minute of silence. It made participants uncomfortable the first time, but over the course of a few days they became quite enthusiastic about pausing every so often to let ideas sink in or to simply reflect. We find it works well to ask a question and then call for a minute of silence. This slide is built to fade to black and then come back, all in one minute

ASK STUDENTS IF INFORMATION IS WORTH THE COST

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/8841649/Silence-is-golden-how-keeping-quiet-in-the-classroom-can-boost-results.html>

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec09/vol67/num04/Silence-Is-Golden.aspx>

Four Questions:

1. How do you tell the difference between News Reporting and Opinion Journalism?
2. Why should you care which is which?
3. What is the value of Opinion Journalism?
4. How do you tell the difference between Opinion Journalism and mere partisan assertion?

ANIMATION: CLICK1=ITEMS 2,3,4 FADE TO EMPHASIZE #1
Now to Question #1 How DO you tell the difference?

Question # 1:

How do we tell the difference between
News Reporting and Opinion Journalism?



IF we can't depend on all broadcasters and publishers to carefully quarantine, HOW DO WE TELL THE DIFFERENCE?

Your ears are your most important sense in this neighborhood. In the same way that accents can define specific neighborhoods of the city, you can hear the difference when you pass from the News neighborhood to the Opinion Journalism neighborhood.

Listen carefully for clues.

CNN.IRAN.REPORT.WMV

CNN.IRAN.REPORT.WMV

NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT “START AUTOMATICALLY”

(Lecturer: This is a straight news report on the entrée to Iran. It runs 1:54)

ZAKARIA.IRAN.OPINION.WMV

CNN.IRAN.REPORT.WMV

NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT “START AUTOMATICALLY”

(Lecturer: This is the first 2 minutes of Fareed Zakaria's opinion piece on the entree to Iran)

The Language of Persuasion

- First-person Declarations
 - Exaggeration
- Emotionally-Loaded Words
 - Tone (sarcasm, irony)
 - Parody's Poison Pen

ANIMATION: TEXT FADES IN, TWO GROUPINGS.

If you pay attention to the language used, you'll note characteristics in the Opinion Journalism neighborhood.

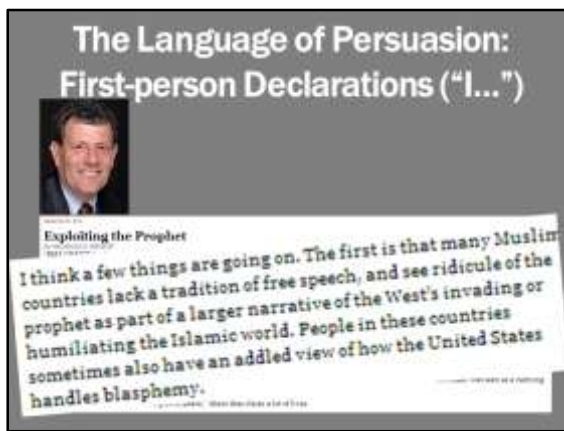
It's like the difference between a Boston accent and a New York accent.

Once you know the accent, you can tell where a person is coming from.

ASK: SOMEONE GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE OF EXAGGERATION YOU'D HEAR IN AN OPINION

ASK: WHAT IS FIRST PERSON, GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE

ASK: SOMEONE PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC DESCRIPTIONS



(Lecturer Read Aloud from Nicholas Kristof's column)

"I think a few things are going on. The first is that many Muslim countries lack a tradition of free speech, and see ridicule of the prophet as part of a larger narrative of the West's invading or humiliating the Islamic world. People in these countries sometimes also have an addled view of how the United States handles blasphemy."

Ask: What do you hear?

What do you NOT hear?

How does that change the credibility of the information?

The Language of Persuasion Tone: Sarcasm and Irony



"Writing in the Harvard Crimson (newspaper) editorialist Sandra Korn wants to stop academic research and opinion contained in that research with which she disagrees. She just wants justice. And of course that justice would be imposed by Sandra Korn who apparently knows all...Harvard University is about as left wing as it gets."

Clearly, Bill O'Reilly does not believe that Harvard Crimson Editorialist Sandra Korn knows all. Quite the contrary. He thinks she's a pinhead, which is why he has quoted her editorial in which she argues that academic freedom of speech is too uncontrolled and steps should be taken to tone it down.



Real left-wingers might take exception to O'Reilly's statement that Harvard is about as left-wing as it gets. Harvard was actually one of the last major universities to admit women to its law school (1950). Berkeley, which really is about as left wing as a university gets, admitted women in the 1880s. Couple that with the steady stream of Harvard under-graduates going to work for investment banking companies run by Harvard MBAs and it's hard to think of Harvard as a radical place...

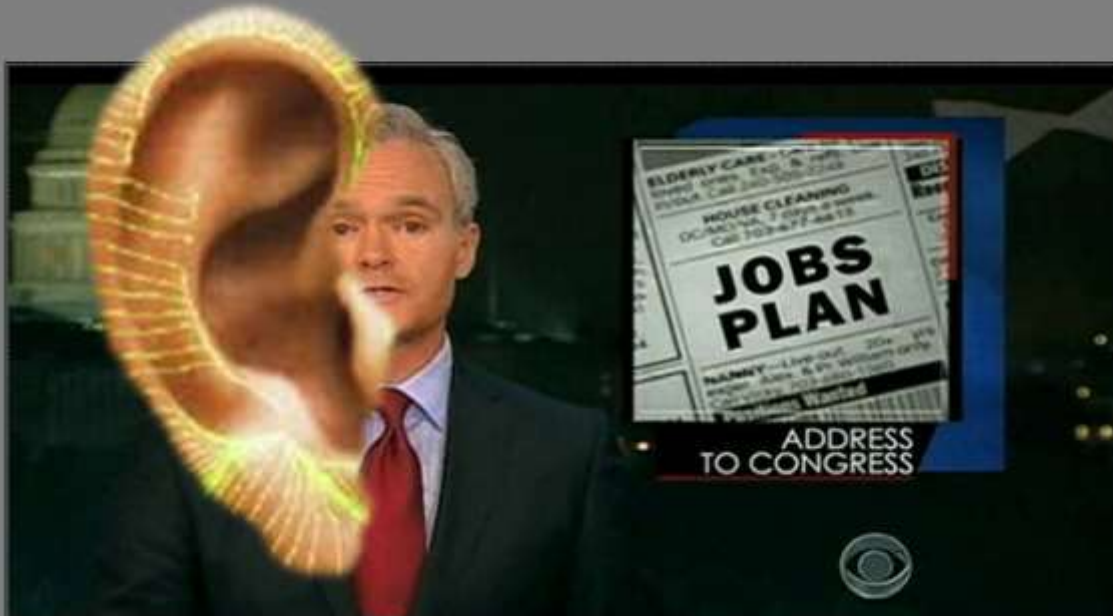


If John Boehner ever did have a merlot hang-over, liberal New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd is the last person with whom he'd be suffering through it.

A parody like this is made it up, putting him up for mockery by imagining a scene to suit her point, which was that the U.S. House Republicans got out of control, shut down the government and fell into the same partisan trap that ended House Speaker Newt Gingrich's political career in the U.S. House.

This kind of smart-Aleck parody is a hallmark of Mad Magazine and, sometimes, Opinion. Here, New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd imagines Republican House Speaker John Boehner the day after the government shutdown takes effect.

Differentiating Reporting From Opinion Journalism: A Live Test



Animation: The EAR appears and grows, reminding students to LISTEN for cues.

Let's take a quick look at the spectrum, from news to opinion, on TV. Remember, by listening, you'll usually be able to tell when you've crossed from News Reporting, the neighborhood where VIA rules, to Opinion, where writers take sites, to mere assertion, where Verification and Independence go out the window.

News to Opinion

TVspectrum.wmv



NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT "START AUTOMATICALLY")

(This clip series is as follows:

CBS straight report on Obama selling his Jobs bill

Fox straight report, on-set interview with White House official who expresses opinions

Fox tees up its own "Legal Affairs Analyst" Peter Johnson, Jr., a trial lawyer.

And because so many students rely on Comedy Central for news...a Colbert report on the jobs bill (Lecturers. You can cut Colbert short...although the last bit is a classic line-graph joke.)



Animation: labels appear one-by-one automatically.

Evidence-based, factually accurate Opinion Journalism makes it very confusing for a news consumer.

There are statistics and quotes from experts and the kind of verification that makes a news story reliable. It can seem like News Reporting.

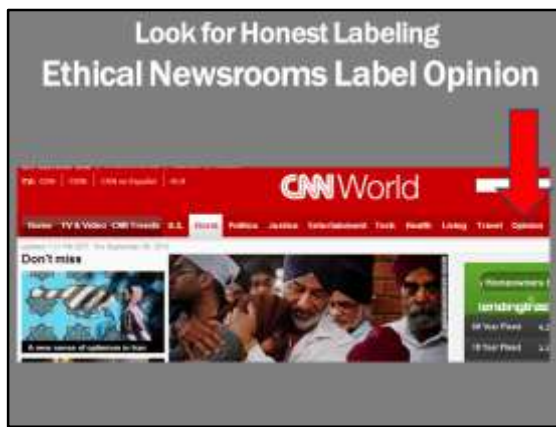
But then the writer or commentator spouts off an opinion, or leaves out a fact or two in order to emphasize one facet of the argument.

BUT If they are committed to informing news consumers, news outlets are scrupulous about labeling. Remember that Code of Ethics. Clear labelling.

These are a few common labels.

(Lecturer can explain each)

ASK: WHY WOULD AN OUTLET NOT LABEL CLEARLY?

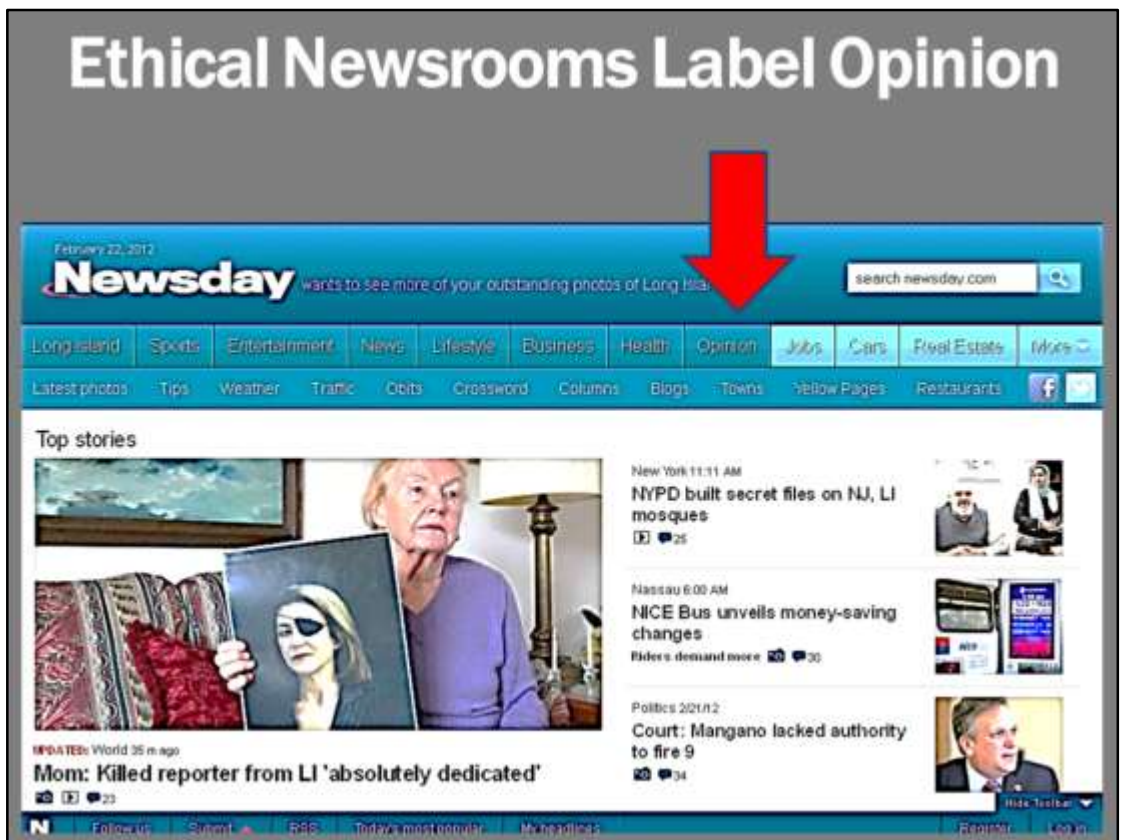


ANIMATION: RED ARROW HIGHLIGHTS THE “OPINION” TAB

News on the web continues to evolve rapidly and in all directions at once, so these are very broad observations of the news-to-opinion spectrum on the Web:

- CNN labels sections of its site by topic, including a tab that sends readers to the work of opinion writers.

Ethical Newsrooms Label Opinion



ANIMATION: RED ARROW HIGHLIGHTS THE “OPINION” TAB

Newsday Online, as in the print edition, has set aside tabs for Columns and for Blogs, which are usually an all-opinion-all-the-time medium.

Ethical Newsrooms Label Opinion



The BBC, a website used by a large percentage of this semester's students, labels different sections, including the "Have Your Say" section, where people share their opinions...worldwide.

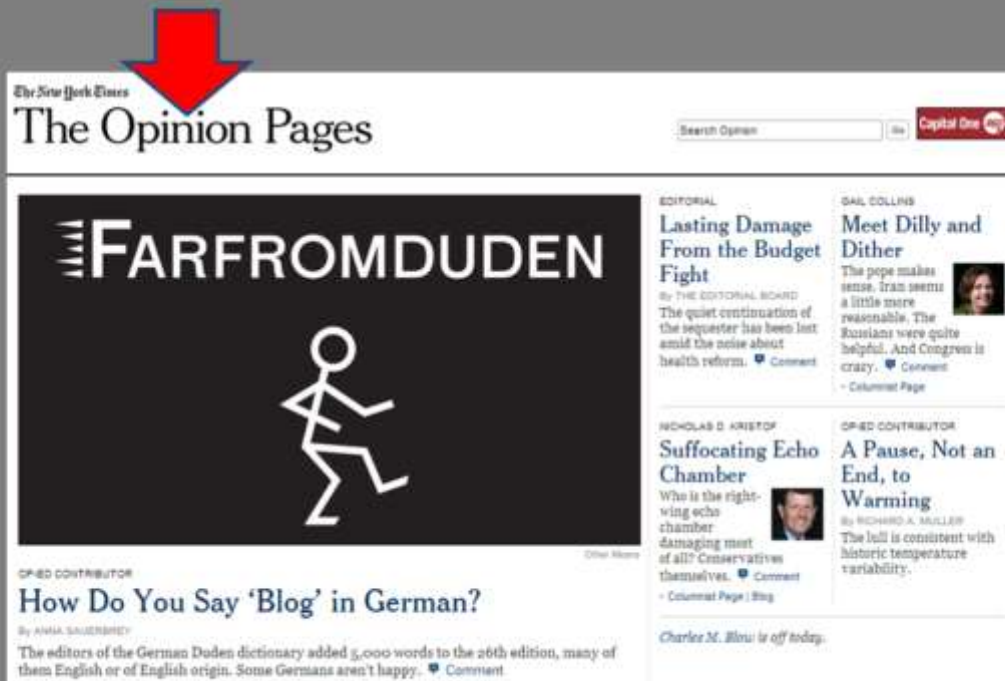
**Ethical Newsrooms Label Opinion.
Period.**

Ethical Newsrooms Label Opinion



- **ANIMATION: CLICK1= ARROW, WANDERING IN SEARCH OF OPINION LABEL, 3 CIRCUITS**
- The Huffington Post swipes news stories from other sites, links to them and surrounds those links with opinion bloggers. On Huffington Post, news consumers get little help from labels.
- Is HuffPo reporting...reporting that someone is reporting...commenting on news that someone somewhere is reporting??? You can't tell from the labels.

Ethical Newsrooms Label Opinion



ANIMATION: RED ARROW HIGHLIGHTS THE “OPINION” TAB

We finish with an ideal case, The Times’ home page, heavily labeled and sub-labelled.

Forms of Opinion Journalism In Print

The Review

For the Precious Moments on the Porcelain Throne

By DWIGHT GARNETT

This year's list of best bathroom books includes those on rock lyrics, cocktails and a look inside the brain.

November 29, 2013, Friday



Mapping Clinton's Trajectory

By NICHKYO KASUJIMA

"H.R.C." by Jonathan Allen and Amie Parnes is a largely sympathetic portrayal of Hillary Rodham Clinton as a smart and tireless A student, supportive of her teammates, loyal to President Obama.

February 7, 2014, Friday

The Deliberations of War

By NICHKYO KASUJIMA

In his fascinating new memoir "Duty," former Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates provides highly revealing insights about decision making in both the Obama and Bush White Houses.

January 9, 2014, Thursday



"THE GODFATHER" ★ ★ ★ ★

March 24, 1972

By Gene Siskel

Yes, it's very good, but Brando is hardly the reason.

"The Godfather," now and maybe forever at the Chicago Theater, ends with a door being closed in the face of the audience, and it is because we have been behind that door for nearly three hours that the film has such remarkable appeal. To permit us a glimpse at The Mob, with all of its ethnic insularity, is like giving a chronic gambler a chance to wander above the false mirrors that overlook every casino.

News websites and newspapers and news networks have found there's a lot of audience hunger for professionally written reviews by music critics and film critics. They're paid to know a lot about their area and to provide personal assessments of the work of artists. We don't always agree, but if we care about the musician, it's interesting to argue or nod our heads as we take in a review.

Forms of Opinion Journalism In Print

The Editorial



The New York Times | <http://nytimes.com> | **WELLS**

THE OPINION PAGE | EDITORIAL

The Capture of Chapo Guzmán

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD | FEB. 22, 2014

Many Mexicans may have found it hard to believe that it was really him. That the pudgy little man with the Paper Marie mustache being marched into a helicopter by a masked escort with gloved hands flexing on his neck was El Chapo, Joaquín Guzmán Loera, the world's most wanted, most elusive drug lord.

But it was. Mr. Guzmán was arrested early Saturday in a hotel-condominium in Mazatlán, on the Pacific Ocean in Sinaloa, the Mexican state that is the center of his global drug operation. Further down the hotel, he was taken quietly, without a gun battle.

The government of President Enrique Peña Nieto has a triumph to celebrate but also the enormous challenge that comes with taking into custody someone so powerful and dangerous. To one knows what new violence may emerge from the decapitation of a multibillion-dollar crime network that extends from the mountains of rural Mexico to banks in Chicago and other American cities and beyond. Though Mr. Guzmán had reportedly distanced himself from day-to-day control of his vast operation, many feel sure that the cartels will grow another head and continue as before. There are competing gangs, like the Zetas, known for intense violence and for expanding into human trafficking and extortion, that will surely seek to seize advantage. There are other splinter narco-groups and the unknown web of influence among the government and businessmen that will adjust to the new reality.

There are doubts, too, that the Mexican government will even be able to keep Mr. Guzmán locked up; he had already escaped from one maximum-security prison, and he has shown an ability to conduct his affairs from within prison walls. There is already pressure to extradite Mr. Guzmán to the United States, where he faces multiple federal drug charges.

No Mexican will forget the assassination that led to the deaths of tens of thousands, burning Ciudad Juárez, just north of El Paso, into one of the most dangerous cities in the world. Mexicans' trust in government, and confidence in their safety and the rule of law, will not be restored overnight.

The New York Times publishes its institutional opinions

Forms of Opinion Journalism In Print

The Column



The New York Times | <http://nyti.ms/12W8878>

THE OPINION PAGE | SEP 22, 2014 (MONDAY)

Don't Just Do Something. Sit There.

By Thomas L. Friedman



With Russia growing ever the downfall of its ally, Russia's Ukraine and still protecting its nonexistent ally, Russia's Syria, there is much talk that we're returning to the Cold War — and that the Obama team is not up to defending our interests or friends. I beg to differ. I don't think the Cold War is back: today's geopolitics are actually so much more interesting than that. And I also don't think President Obama's reaction is entirely misplaced.

The Cold War was a unique event that pitted two global ideologies, two global superpowers, each with globe-spanning nuclear arsenals and broad alliances behind them. Indeed, the world was divided into a chessboard of red and black, and who controlled each square mattered to each side's sense of security, well-being and power. It was also a zero-sum game, in which every gain for the Soviet Union and its allies was a loss for the West and NATO, and vice versa.

That game is over. We won. What we have today is the combination of an older game and a newer game. The biggest geopolitical divide in the world today "is between those countries who want their states to be powerful and those countries who want their people to be prosperous," argues Michael Mandelbaum, professor of foreign policy at Johns Hopkins.

The first category would be countries like Russia, Iran and North Korea, whose leaders are focused on building their authority, dignity and influence through powerful status. And because the first two have oil and the last has nuclear that it can

The New York Times publishes Columnists' opinions...

Forms of Opinion Journalism In Print The Letter



The New York Times | <http://nyti.ms/1j6CW8E> **Open Source Intelligence**

THE OPINION PAGE | LETTER

A View From Iran: 'Respect Rather Than Sanctions'

FEB. 24, 2014

To the Editor:
Re "Don't Let Up on Iran," by Michael Kasson and Lee Eisenberg (Op-Ed, Feb. 22):

The writers claim that they are not advocating further conflict with the Islamic Republic while spreading unfounded accusations of deception and intransigence against Iran and its officials. Let's try to develop new approaches to thinking about Iran.

If a meaningful and adequate response is expected from Iran, the language of respect rather than sanctions and threats will work. Iran is the harbor of peace and stability in this turbulent region. The writers' arguments may add more joy to the annual gathering of their organization, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, but in practice will not change the reality.

While negotiations for reaching a comprehensive deal between the P5+1 countries (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany) and Iran are underway, it's reasonable to refrain from hyperbole to make the world safer for all.

HANID SARAEI
New York, Feb. 24, 2014
The writer is head of the press office, Iranian Mission to the United Nations.

The New York Times publishes Readers' opinions...

Forms of Opinion Journalism In Print

The Cartoon



The Visual Equivalent of Exaggeration, Satire, Irony and Parody is Caricature

ANIMATION: Boss Tweed fades to new Handelsman example
There's a visual vocabulary that provides landmarks, too.
While there are strict rules governing news photos and drawings used in News Reporting... Irony, Parody and Satire are the stock-in-trade of Opinion Journalism, and that includes the cartoons and illustrations on the Opinion page which can be manipulated to make a point. It surprises us every year when we show the work of newspaper cartoonists and learn that many of you have seen very few...and when you do see them, enjoy them very much.

By long tradition, dating back most notably to upper-class New York's attempts to weaken the political control of Boss Tweed's Tammany Hall political organization of immigrants, cartoon caricatures have been part of American Opinion Journalism: the visual equivalents of Exaggeration. Strong Language. Emphatic one-sidedness.

Question #2: Why should you care which is which?

The goal of news reporting is to tell you what
happened.

The goal of opinion journalism is to provoke you to
make it mean something.

Animation:

Slide opens with the question.

CLICK1=The two points)

So, who cares which is which?

Like reporters, opinion journalists are expected to
stick to the facts.

But the goal of opinion journalists is to use what
they've learned to provoke discussion by picking
sides and arguing forcefully.

Opinion journalism is, by definition, one-sided.

I may be misled if I only hear one side of the
situation.



ANIMATION: On Click, Opinion side of the wall fades to Blue to emphasize separation

Thus was born the VIRTUAL WALL between opinion journalism and news reporting...which is also physically marked by serious websites and newspapers, just as Greeley did back in the day.

ASK: Why is the “Wall” important for News Consumers?

(Before you are knowledgeable, you can be easily swayed. Even if not, when you’re seeking facts, you want to start on the news side of the wall.

ASK: Why is the “Wall” important for News Outlets?

(Protects the credibility and independence of the news reports)

A Virtual "Wall" Protects Credibility of Neutral Reporting



In print, online, a paper like the New York Times physically separates news coverage from opinion writing, AND those writers are also segregated in the building.

News Reporting

Opinion Journalism

WORLD
U.S.
POLITICS
NEW YORK
BUSINESS
DEALBOOK
TECHNOLOGY
SPORTS
SCIENCE
HEALTH
ARTS
STYLE
OPINION

Boehner Halts Talks on Cuts, and House G.O.P. Cheers

By ADAM LEE FRANKEL
Speaker John A. Boehner seems to have decided that he may have more to lose by negotiating with the White House over spending



The Opinion Pages

- EDITORIAL
The White House Joins the Fight
The Obama administration made a powerful argument against California's gay marriage ban, but it disappointingly stopped a step short.
- **Erskine:** The Learning Virtues
 - **Krugman:** Ben Bernanke, Hippie
 - **Cohen:** Israel's Security
 - **Egan:** Science and Sensibility
 - **Op-Ed:** Give Up Your Pew for Lent!

ANIMATION: IMAGE FADES IN:

Greeley is dead and gone, but his quarantine idea lives on. Most newspapers maintain a strict separation between the news section and the opinion section; and often the staff are in separate rooms or even on different floors. At Bloomberg News, they are in a separate building across town.

ASK: WHY WOULD THE SECTIONS, STAFFS, ETC...BE SEPARATED?

The "Wall" is supposed to protect the credibility of the news report as a neutral, non-partisan account of the day's news.



Do news consumers notice these quarantine zones? Your professors who have run newsrooms can tell you, too few people understand the difference between reporting, opinion journalism and wild comments on a web page. It's all news to many Americans. We've gone in search of data about the percentage of the average American's information diet that is Opinion versus straight-up reporting. There isn't much, interestingly enough. But there is plenty of evidence from which we can infer that a lot of what you see each day is opinion. Consider Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and other social platforms. Is most of what catches your eye a calm and deeply-researched exegesis of the day's top stories, or is it snarky commentary?

The image shows a screenshot of the New York Times website's 'Most Popular' section. The page is titled 'Most Popular' and features four columns of article lists. The columns are: 'Most Viewed', 'Most Shared on Facebook', 'Most Popular Movies', and 'Most Tweeted'. The 'Most Shared on Facebook' and 'Most Tweeted' sections contain several opinion pieces, which are highlighted with blue arrows. The text 'Most-viewed, Most-shared, Most-Tweeted' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Most Viewed

- In Aristotle, U.S. Targets Military Oil Hold to Plot an Attack Against the West
- Elita Cases Could Reach 1.4 Million Within Four Months, C.D.C. Estimates
- Make Dinner: A Home Cooking Marathon
- Larry Ellison Bought an Island in Hawaii, New What?
- Portland Will Still Be Cool, but Architecture May Be the Place to Be
- Single, With Four Main Ingredients
- The Epstein: Flooding Risk From Climate Change, Country by Country
- Mitt Romney Prepares to Offer Low-Cost Checking Accounts
- Books of The Times: Hannah's Self-Aware, Like Eye
- Step Out of It

Most Shared on Facebook

- Elita Cases Could Reach 1.4 Million Within Four Months, C.D.C. Estimates
- Portland Will Still Be Cool, but Architecture May Be the Place to Be
- Step Out of It
- The Epstein: Flooding Risk From Climate Change, Country by Country
- In Aristotle, U.S. Targets Military Oil Hold to Plot an Attack Against the West
- Make Dinner: A Home Cooking Marathon
- Single, With Four Main Ingredients
- Op-Ed Contributor: Why Four Students Struggle
- Mitt Romney Prepares to Offer Low-Cost Checking Accounts
- Obama Promises Citizens on Global Warming

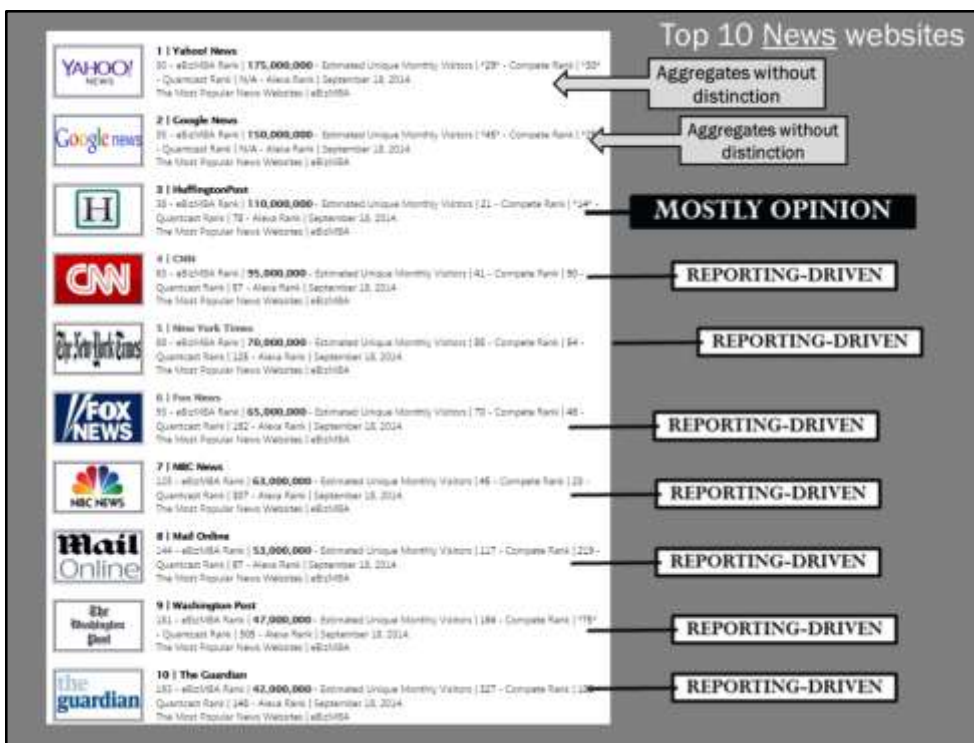
Most Popular Movies

- This is Where I Love You
- Bird People
- So Good Deal
- 14 Years a Slave
- The Helmsman
- Day Furniture
- Khushnagar
- The Guard
- 1000+ Ratings Playback
- The House of Mirth

Most Tweeted

- The Epstein: Flooding Risk From Climate Change, Country by Country
- Elita Cases Could Reach 1.4 Million Within Four Months, C.D.C. Estimates
- In Aristotle, U.S. Targets Military Oil Hold to Plot an Attack Against the West
- Portland Will Still Be Cool, but Architecture May Be the Place to Be
- Books: Modern Lives, Pops' and Dr. Pepper
- Mitt Romney Prepares to Offer Low-Cost Checking Accounts
- Success H.P.F.: Recently Banned Corporate Donors
- States in Play: North Carolina, or Political Plan, Rattles for Its Minority
- Op-Ed Contributor: Why Four Students Struggle
- Books of The Times: Hannah's Self-Aware, Like Eye

The Opinion section of the New York Times is a small fraction of that newsroom's output. Yet opinion journalism items are always on the list of the most-shared, most-viewed and most-Tweeted material from the Times. Clearly, news consumers have an appetite for Opinion.



ANIMATION:

CLICK1= "AGGREGATES WITHOUT DISTINCTION" TAG ON #1 AND #2

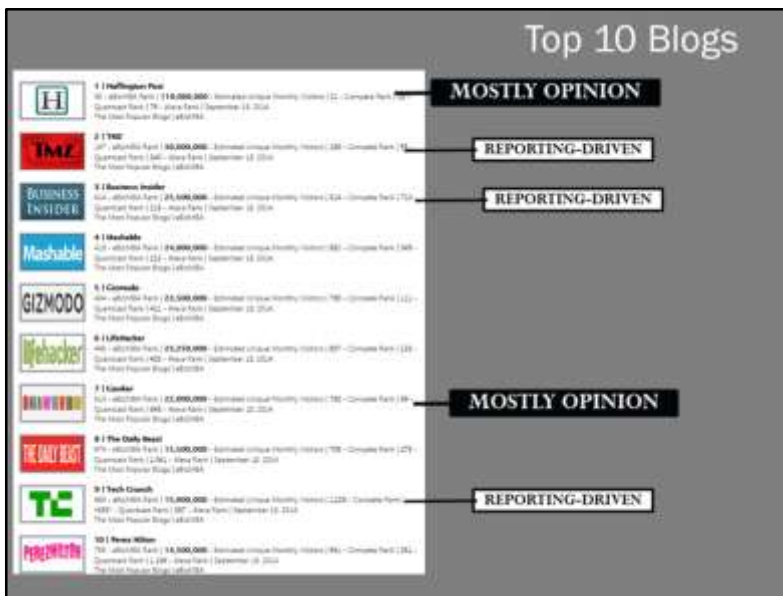
CLICK2= "MOSTLY OPINION" TAG ON HUFFINGTON

CLICK3="REPORTING-DRIVEN" TAG ON THE LESS POPULAR SITES

On the list of the News websites with the greatest traffic, Yahoo and Google are tops. We can't characterize their output because they don't differentiate news from opinion in general searches.**CLICK** Also, neither of these corporations makes a significant investment in creating new material. They scrape other sites and aggregate.

CLICK Third among all news websites is Huffington, which is driven by opinion bloggers commenting on reporting from other sources.

CLICK Fourth and below are other reporting-driven sites, which produce some opinion journalism, but mostly original reporting.



ANIMATION: NO ANIMATION

The most popular blog of all is Huffington Post, an opinion blog about news and a number of other topics.

We can debate the content of TMZ, but their traffic is most robust when they are breaking celebrity news.

Gawker, on the other hand, is all opinion all the time.

And Tech Crunch is a news site, with opinion, for techies.

Point is, we consume a lot of Opinion.

Cross Not the Virtual Wall, Padawan



Octavia Nasr fired by CNN over tweet praising late ayatollah

Several sources said Twitter tribute to Hezbollah's spiritual leader had compromised senior Middle East editor's credibility

That virtual wall is important to professionals. When a Hezbollah leader died, CNN's senior Middle East editor tweeted out a tribute...and she was fired for it.

That's how seriously professionals take the wall between covering the news and offering your opinions about it.

CNN said she had damaged her own ability to be an honest broker of information about that contested region by speaking in warm terms about the leader of one side...

Pivot Point

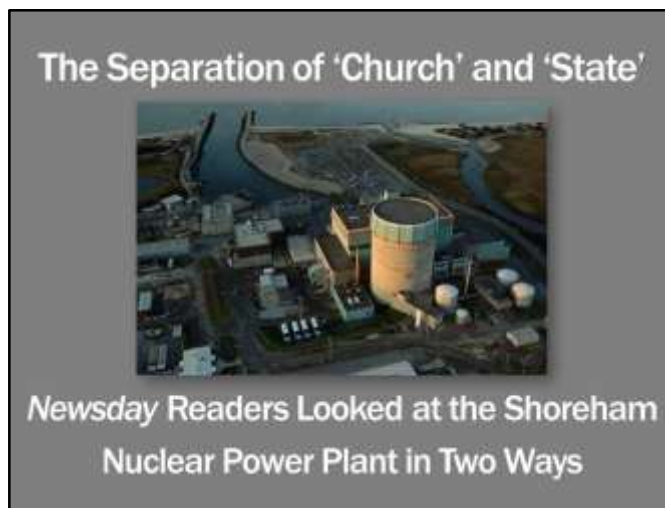
Every other row
Pivots to the row behind
To discuss in groups of four

*“What if News Outlets Don’t
Separate News from Opinion?”*

We have done this informally in years past, but now provide a slide to prompt short in-class discussions among students.

At appropriate moments, the lecturer will pose a question to the room and then ask students to pivot into groups of 4, discuss the question and prepare to offer answers to the whole room.

This will be clumsy until students learn the drill, but the idea is to break up the lecture with small-group work, if only to give students a chance to shift positions.



Typically, newsrooms find a way to accommodate news consumers' need for both news reporting AND opinion journalism.

Case in point:

During the great debate over the Shoreham nuclear power plant the Newsday editorial page said it should be opened.

Meanwhile, the news side kept asking questions and digging and reported on problems like this: the plans for evacuation of Long Island were wildly unrealistic; at a time when oil was cheap, this plant was going to produce expensive power, and so on.

ASK: Are there other institutions that essentially let two departments function at cross purposes?

Is that any way to run a business? Thinking about this gives you an idea why journalists are so prickly.

(footnote: The plant never opened and students and their parents are still paying off the debt.)

Question #3:

What is the value of Opinion Journalism?

- Gives you new insights
- Challenges your assumptions
- Helps you make a decision or judgment
- American democracy's premise: An open contest among ideas is vital to democratic self-governance

If blurring those lines can get a journalist fired, why would we urge you to take it in?

First of all, If you have a solid hold on the facts, from reading News, a very pointed opinion piece can offer you new ways to analyze those facts.

It can either challenge your view or provide you with reinforcements to your view.

When educating myself about the federal government's response to record-high unemployment, I want reliable, comprehensive information to make sure I understand what's going on.

But when I move from research mode into decision making mode...I want to strengthen my confidence by listening to or reading someone who has studied the matter, made up their mind, and who marshals the facts in a logical way to support a conclusion.

If I disagree, I know what I'm up against. If I agree, I'm armed for battle.

After all, I've got to decide how to vote in the next election.

What is the value of Opinion Journalism?

"The ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas...the best test for truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market"

(That idea) "...is the theory of our Constitution...it is an experiment, as all life is an experiment."



Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes

dissent in *Abrams v. 250 U.S. 616* (1919)

From John Milton's idea of a fair contest among ideas in "Areopagitica" to John Stuart Mill's arguments for a free marketplace of ideas, this is a central idea of American democracy. You can read the influence of Milton and Mill in Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes' dissent in *Abrams v. 250 U.S. 616* (1919): "The ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas – that the best test for truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out." That idea "...is the theory of our Constitution...it is an experiment, as all life is an experiment."

Opinion Journalism is Valuable When:

- You are well-informed
- You are open-minded
- You are active, not passive

Great changes are made by leaders only when they convene well-informed and thinking followers. Not blind followers. Goal-oriented do-ers.

The whole point of staying up on the news is so that you can find reliable information...not just to collect bits of factual trivia, but to make the most of your roles in life by being that person who makes wise decisions, and takes action or makes judgments they don't have to apologize for.

You leave college both to lead powerfully and to follow powerfully. As effective leaders and followers, you must learn the facts for yourself before you form an opinion.

But the world is full of people who want you to accept their opinion as fact...They want to lead without being questioned. It's that Power of Information idea from Lecture #2...

Question #4: How do you differentiate opinion journalism from partisan assertion?



Bloviation.mp4

INSERT BLOVIATION VIDEO HERE. IT IS ABOUT 15 SECONDS LONG

(Lecturer's note: The photo illustrates a common handsign for bullshit. It's not ASL, by the way.)

We considered calling it “Bull_____” but the Dean of the Journalism School forbade it. So we provide the Sign Language translation...

When we say “Mere Assertion”, we urge you to substitute whatever phrase works for you, or resort to sign language

Before cable, the biggest names in television news were reporters like Walter Cronkite who were careful to guard their neutrality and became, as anchors of the evening news, some of the most trusted people in public life.

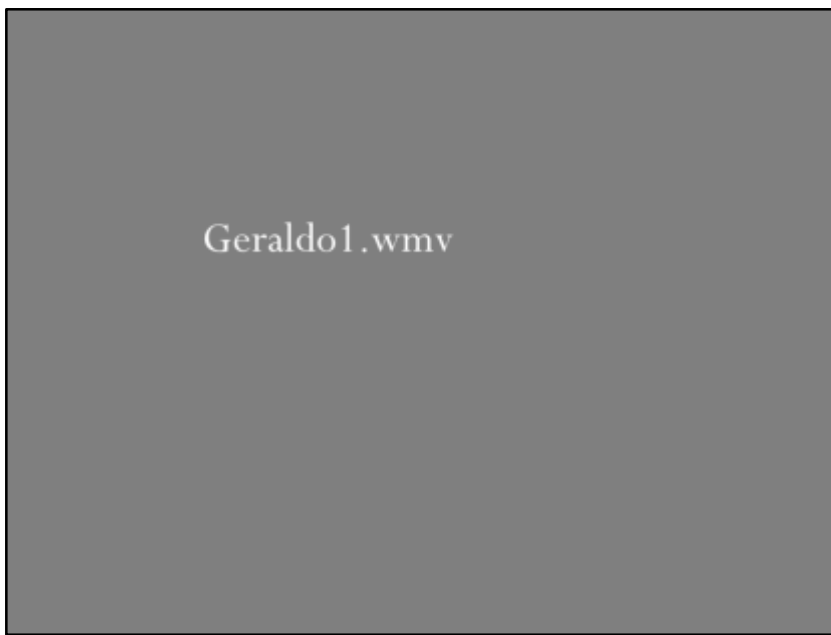
Opinion Journalism or Mere Assertion?



Unlike opinion journalism, which emphasizes evidence-based conclusions, mere assertion is a cluster of assumptions in search of validation. Belief and Emotion trumps evidence in this sphere. The key differences for news consumers are these: opinion journalism draws conclusions from a fact-based inquiry with a first allegiance to the truth and a willingness to disagree with significant portions of that audience.

Mere assertion is the result of a search for ways to validate a niche audience's political agenda. It tends to emphasize beliefs and emotions over evidence and facts. And the quality of the arguments can be quite low.

Circling back to the Geraldo commentary, what do you observe about the evidence he offers and the logic he has assembled? Has he verified the assertions about hoodies?



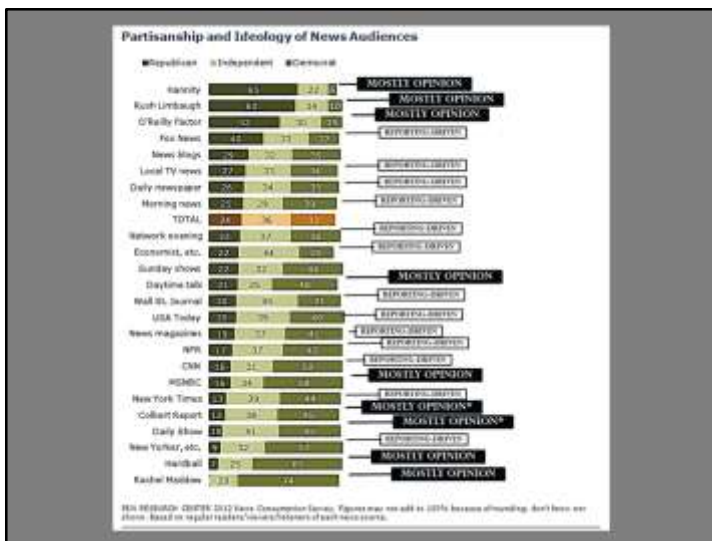
Geraldo1.wmv

NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT "START AUTOMATICALLY"

Take a deep breath and think for a sec.

We are asking you to make a distinction within a distinction.

Once again, your ears are vital in identifying mere assertion. How is this different from Opinion Journalism that's based on reporting?



ANIMATION: CLICK1="MOSTLY OPINION" TAGS APPEAR
CLICK2="REPORTING-DRIVEN" TAGS APPEAR
CLICK 3= "MOSTLY OPINION*" TAGS APPEAR

The Pew Research Center in 2012 looked at the political make-up of the audiences of these cable outlets.

At the top are the Republican audiences. At the bottom the Democratic audiences.

CLICK1 In general, the partisan outlets cluster around the partisan audience. **CLICK2** And the less partisan audience is drawn to the reporting-driven outlets.

(CLICK3 And the comedy shows follow suit)

Cable TV is home to startlingly partisan shows hosted by news staff who openly campaign for candidates, help them raise money and sometimes are even themselves candidates for office. These pundits have no use for the SPJ's standards of independence.

They earn high ratings (and big pay) by affirming the audience's beliefs, not by fact-collection and construction of logical conclusions that might aggravate viewers. This is what we call mere assertion.

...Or whatever you wish to call it...

	Bloviators	Opinion Journalists
Evidence	<i>"I am America's truth detector...the all-knowing, all-sensing, all-everything Maha Rushie"</i>	<i>"Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts."</i>
Logic	Practitioners accept fallacy-prone arguments: ad-hominem, appeals to authority, guilt by association	Practitioners attack fallacious arguments based on ad-hominem attacks, appeals to authority, guilt by association.
Audience	Audience is rarely outraged by practitioner's conclusions	Audience is often outraged by practitioner's conclusions.

To some of you, this may sound like a partisan slap at Rush Limbaugh, or Bill O'Reilly or Rachel Maddow or whatever partisan talker you favor.

But even if you don't accept the sheer number of fact-corrections that follow the partisan talkers around like dandruff, or the demolition of their routine rhetorical errors by scholars, there is this key difference.

The Bloviators serve an entertainment ethic, preaching to a single reliable audience, while opinion journalists aim for a broad audience and know they will often disappoint or even outrage a significant portion of that audience.

Whether that's pandering or smart business, it is the central difference.

The Quick Quiz

1. What two kinds of clues help you distinguish Opinion Journalism from Reporting?
2. Complete Moynihan's maxim: "Everyone is entitled to _____"
3. Write a question we can answer to clarify today's lesson...or a comment that will help us improve our work.

Write your name and Recitation Instructor name on your Quiz

Hand your QUICK QUIZ to your recitation instructor as you leave, and we'll start our next lecture with your comments. (i.e. "Hi Professor Salmons!")

Every lecture, we'll stop and give you a quick quiz, just three questions.

This helps cement key lessons in your memory.

Plus, it helps us see if we explained things well.

And the third question is a chance for you to improve your own course.

We'll start lectures with a selection of your comments and suggestions.



hus endeth the Lesson...

Opinion Journalism or Mere Assertion?



Listen Carefully. Are you hearing assertions or is there evidence underpinning Bill Moyers' opinion?



Moyers_Inequality.mov

NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT “START AUTOMATICALLY”

(After it runs...)

ASK: WHAT DID YOU HEAR?

AS IMPORTANT, WHAT DIFFERENCES DID YOU NOTICE?

(Depending on answers, this can be an excellent place to clarify that a piece containing opinions of experts or players is not the same as opinion journalism)

Opinion Journalism or Mere Assertion?

UncleRush.wmv

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The reigning king of assertion is Rush Limbaugh, whose show is all about current events and highly entertaining.

He's a fund-raiser for his causes and an ally to politicians, which sacrifices his independence. And while he has a significant research staff like The Daily Show does, verification may be of lower importance on his show than is getting a laugh from the audience or a reaction from his political enemies.

Rush's show is often cited by consumers as their main source of news...in much the same way that many young Americans say they get their news from The Daily Show, another show that focuses more on entertaining a niche audience than on informing the broader public.

Again, let your ears tell you which neighborhood you're in.

We're well aware these examples are all from right-of-center shows.

Logical Fallacies

- Omitting the antecedent**: If I go to the gym every day, I'll lose weight. I don't go to the gym every day. Therefore, I won't lose weight.
- Ad hominem fallacy**: All politicians are liars because I heard one say that on the news.
- Bandwagon fallacy**: Everyone is buying this product, so you should too.
- Appeal to authority**: My doctor says this is the best medicine for my condition.
- Appeal to emotion**: Think of the children who are starving in Africa. We must do something now!
- Appeal to fear**: If you don't buy this insurance, your car will be stolen.
- Appeal to pity**: I'm really poor, so please give me a job.
- Appeal to greed**: Buy this product now because it's on sale!
- Appeal to vanity**: Buy this perfume because it will make you look beautiful.
- Appeal to pride**: Buy this car because it's the most expensive one.
- Appeal to envy**: Buy this watch because it's the same one as the one your friend has.
- Appeal to shame**: Buy this product because you don't want to be like the other people.
- Appeal to honor**: Buy this product because it's the most prestigious one.
- Appeal to respect**: Buy this product because it's the most respected one.
- Appeal to love**: Buy this product because it's the most loving one.
- Appeal to hate**: Buy this product because it's the most hating one.

Misconceptions

- Over-argumentation**: We should do this because it's the best thing to do. It's the best thing to do because it's the best thing to do.
- Bandwagon fallacy**: Everyone is doing it, so it must be right.
- Appeal to authority**: My doctor says this is the best medicine for my condition.
- Appeal to emotion**: Think of the children who are starving in Africa. We must do something now!
- Appeal to fear**: If you don't buy this insurance, your car will be stolen.
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The Logic (and Illogic) of Persuasion

Cognitive Biases

- Confirmation bias**: I believe that all politicians are liars because I only read news from sources that confirm my belief.
- Bandwagon fallacy**: Everyone is buying this product, so I must buy it too.
- Appeal to authority**: My doctor says this is the best medicine for my condition.
- Appeal to emotion**: Think of the children who are starving in Africa. We must do something now!
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Red Herrings

- Bandwagon fallacy**: Everyone is buying this product, so I must buy it too.
- Appeal to authority**: My doctor says this is the best medicine for my condition.
- Appeal to emotion**: Think of the children who are starving in Africa. We must do something now!
- Appeal to fear**: If you don't buy this insurance, your car will be stolen.
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(Very optional slide)

Certainly This stuff is entertaining and provocative. But is he logical? Factual?

Generations of scholarship are at your disposal if you'll take a Rhetoric or Logic class and

learn to catch scoundrels who try to persuade you with these familiar, but bogus arguments:

- Straw man argument
- Slippery Slope
- Bandwagon Fallacy
- Ad Hominem