

## THE LIMITS OF OBJECTIVE REPORTING<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to scrutinize the assumption that objective reporting is good reporting, is ethical reporting. I do this by reflecting on different dimensions that are associated with the concept of objectivity: (1) accuracy; (2) truthfulness; (3) fairness and balance, and (4) moral neutrality. It is asserted that in many cases journalists are not objective in their reporting either because they consciously prefer not to be or because they are being manipulated by their sources. I close by asserting that the values of not harming others and respecting others should play a prominent part in the considerations of journalists. These are basic ethical standards that sometimes require **normative** reporting. Consequently, morally neutral coverage of hate speech and racism is a bad idea. It is a false and wrong conception. Subjectivity is preferable to objectivity when the media cover illiberal and anti-democratic phenomena.

**Keywords:** accuracy; balance; fairness; hate speech; moral neutrality; objectivity; racism; terror; truthfulness.

## **I. Introduction**

This study covers a field that still needs attention as far as communication research is concerned. It suggests a fresh way to observe the constraints on the media and the ethical obligations that reporting news entail. It aims to explore the tensions, contradictions and paradoxes in the relationship between objectivity and ethics. The study outlines research trends and developments in the field of media ethics. The concept of objectivity is in the focus of analysis.

The essay starts with historical background that explains the emergence of the concept of objectivity. It continues by outlining the inherent difficulties in meeting the concept, arguing that objectivity involves the notions of accuracy; truthfulness; balance and fairness, and moral neutrality. I argue that objectivity is difficult to achieve, but it is still possible when journalists are doing their homework and strive to understand the phenomenon they describe before writing about it. Further, I warn against false notions associated with objectivity.

The essay's main novelty lies in arguing to forego moral neutrality when covering issues that stand in stark negation to the basic foundations of liberal democracy: respect for others and not harming others.<sup>2</sup> They should not be held secondary to considerations of profit and personal prestige of

journalists and newspapers. The first background right, not to harm others, is derived from the teachings of John Stuart Mill. Only self-defence warrants harming others.<sup>3</sup> The second background right is a Kantian deontological approach: Journalists should see people as ends and not as means.<sup>4</sup> We respect others as autonomous human beings who exercise self-determination to live according to their life plans as long as they do not harm others. Thus, when covering phenomena like terror, racism, cannibalism, sexism, chauvinism, fascism, genocide and slavery, the media in liberal democracies are not required to be objective in their coverage but quite the opposite: they should denounce and condemn such phenomena.

## **II. Historical Background and Context**

Journalism historians have tied the emergence of objectivity in North America to the decline in party journalism, beginning in the 1830s, when the commercial penny papers combined advanced print technology with a street-sale distribution system as a way of expanding and cultivating a new public. Massive economic and political changes in the 1830s were expressively integrated into the form and content of the penny press, which both drew upon and strengthened the culture of a democratic market society. The cheap commercial papers asserted their independence from party politics and emphasised their reliance on news from any and all social spheres. The penny press could offer, so it claimed, a more dependable and authentic journalism: news untainted by the political, social, and economic values that for so long

had defined the content of the daily papers. The belief that knowledge, like property, should not be monopolised for exclusive use by private interests was expressed in the penny papers as a positive commitment to cheap, value-free information – to objective fact. There was growing reverence for naïve empiricism, the belief that the world was knowable and nameable.<sup>5</sup>

By the early 1900s, objectivity had become the acceptable and respectable way of doing reporting. Conventions of objective reporting were adopted as a routine journalists use to objectify their news stories. The media and news reporters saw themselves as arbiters of social reality. Just as scientists discovered the facts about nature by using normatively established objective methods, so too the news media and the news professionals would use their methods to reveal social reality to the news consumer. Gaye Tuchman describes these conventions as a strategy journalists use to deflect criticism, the same kind of strategy social scientists use to defend the quality of their work.<sup>6</sup> Attacked for a controversial presentation of ‘facts’, reporters invoke their objectivity almost the way "Mediterranean peasant might wear a clove of garlic around his neck to ward off evil spirits".<sup>7</sup>

As early as 1924, objectivity appeared as an ethic, an ideal subordinate only to truth. Objectivity was portrayed as the ultimate discipline of journalism, “at the bottom of all sound reporting – indispensable as the core of the writer’s capacity”.<sup>8</sup> It was called “the emblem” and "keystone" of American journalism,<sup>9</sup> the "highest original moral concept ever developed in America and given to the world".<sup>10</sup> After World War II, as newspapers

consolidated and the network television arose, the standard of objectivity in news really took root. It was a strategy for offending the least number of advertisers,<sup>11</sup> and to avoid potential libel suits.<sup>12</sup> In 1973, the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, adopted as part of its Code of Ethics a paragraph characterising objective reporting as an attainable goal and a standard of performance toward which journalists should strive.<sup>13</sup> In 1982, a survey of 153 U.S. journalists found that most of them equated ethics with “objective” news coverage.<sup>14</sup> And some 75 percent of journalists and news executives in a 1999 Pew Research Center survey said it was possible to obtain a true, accurate, and widely agreed-upon account of an event. More than two-thirds thought it feasible to develop “a systematic method to cover events in a disinterested and fair way”.<sup>15</sup> The *Columbia Journalism Review* as well as other media journals frequently cites ‘objectivity’ as a measure of good journalism.<sup>16</sup>

The idea of media objectivity was sustained by the contemporary acceptance of photographic realism, conceived as mechanism to overcome the tendency towards subjectivity. As newspapers have grown in size, and at least in North America have come to monopolise particular geographic areas, they had to claim objectivity. Otherwise, so newspaper owners thought, there might be greater pressure to impose public responsibilities and access legislation. Objectivity, thus, became a key word of praise first by the American media and later also in the European media, something that the public wants to attribute to journalism; an elusive idea that media

organisations adopt and propagate so as to acquire influence and prestige, a facade of professional journalism to which they vow their allegiance. As Jay Rosen puts it, objective reporting is a way of getting you to accept the journalist's account by saying "I don't have any passions. I don't have any convictions. I don't have the word of God... I am just telling you the way it is, you see, so accept it because this is the way it is".<sup>17</sup> It is a technique of persuasion, a rhetorical strategy.

Linked to the notion of objectivity is the belief that journalists should remain detached from the events they cover.<sup>18</sup> Thus, objective reporting is believed to be a necessary component of media ethics and of an unbiased reporting. Objectivity in the media is popularly conceived as a virtue. Often it is claimed that media ethics require complete objectivity and that objective reporting is professional reporting, is ethical reporting. When editors were asked what they considered to be the most pressing ethical issues facing reporters or editors, the concern for fairness and objectivity was cited nearly twice as often as any other concern.<sup>19</sup> Thus Mindich argues that objectivity as a news strategy has dominated the American mainstream press for the better part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and it still does.<sup>20</sup> However, the fringe, alternative media, like [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org), <http://www.alternet.org>, and [www.schnews.org.uk](http://www.schnews.org.uk), reject all notions of objectivity and "balanced reporting". They claim that at root, beyond the rhetoric of "public interest", "public's right to know", "media professionalism", "search for truth" and "press freedom", all the objectivity "myth" does is to promote the interests of

the economic and political elites.<sup>21</sup> The whole point of objectivity is to mask, disguise, and legitimate the authority of society's powerful groups over weaker sections of the population.<sup>22</sup>

The aim of this study is not to reject objectivity *tout court* but to warn against human deficiencies. As Thomas Nagel observes, it is natural for us to want to bring our capacity for detached, objective understanding as closely into alignment with reality as we can, but it should not surprise us if objectivity is essentially incomplete.<sup>23</sup> Like Nagel and others, I am not a solipsist.<sup>24</sup> I do not believe that the point of view from which I (or any other human being for that matter) see the world is the only perspective of reality. The world is seen from many perspectives, including my own; there are many subjects of consciousness in it, as well as many biases, conceptions, and misconceptions that we hold consciously or subconsciously. Reporters, like all human beings, need to be aware of their biases.

Furthermore, the aim of this essay is also to warn against false ideas of objectivity and to call attention to the dubious notions associated with this term. The problem is that objectivity can be contrasted with too many different things, such as falsity, bias, partisanship, subjectivity, exaggeration, understatement, moralising, emotiveness, etc. Now I need to explain what notions are encompassed within the broad concept of objectivity.

### **III. Notions of Objectivity**

The concept of objectivity is concerned with the way news is created and

reported in the selection of facts, their arrangement, their framing and formation on public agenda with or without relationship to values. As Gans<sup>25</sup> holds, journalists seek to exclude conscious values and they do so in three ways: employment of the notion of objectivity, disregard of implications, and rejection of ideology as they define it. Value exclusion is a practical consideration, for it defends journalists against actual or possible criticism, and protects them against demands by powerful critics for censorship and self-censorship. Thus, objectivity is generally defined as the view that one can and should separate facts from values. Facts are assertions about the world open to independent validation; they are statements that stand beyond the distorting influences of any individual's personal preferences. Values, so it is argued, are an individual's conscious or unconscious set of preferences for what the world should be.<sup>26</sup> However, this definition, which emphasises the relationship between facts and values, is deficient. Values often enter into the process of knowing a fact. Without utilizing or presupposing certain values, we cannot determine which the realm of facts is, and we cannot know the real from the unreal. If certain values are embodied in our procedures for telling the real from the unreal, the facts from the unfacts, then it is impossible to stand firmly on the fact side of the fact-value distinction, while treating the other side as vaporous.<sup>27</sup>

In the ensuing discussion I want to show that objectivity involves several dimensions: accuracy; truthfulness; fairness and balance, and moral neutrality. I will speak about the difficulties involved in the first three

dimensions, and reject moral neutrality when covering morally detestable phenomena. While accuracy and fairness in reporting are accepted and encouraged, moral neutrality on important social issues that endanger democracy within which the media operate and flourish is rejected.

Media professionals, like all professionals, are expected to consider the implications of their actions. Disregarding implications, as Gans suggests, is unethical conduct and it also negates professional journalism. Furthermore, on some occasions journalists may be subjected to criticism because they **refrain** from taking sides in a controversy and because they exclude values. In this context, I will briefly discuss the issues of rape and Prime Minister Rabin's assassination, and then move on to discuss in some more detail how the media should cover practices which stand in stark contradiction to the basic values of democracy such as racism.

Racism is defined as the diminished respect and unequal treatment of peoples based on their biological particularities.<sup>28</sup> It is argued that ethical media reporting calls for normative or what might be conceived as subjective treatment of such timely and highly disturbing phenomena. When the media report on hate mongers, they do not have to view themselves as detached observers; they should not only transmit a truthful account of "what's out there".<sup>29</sup> When such matters are in the foci of concern, the media need not stop short of making moral judgements. These moral judgements are to be expressed in the editorials and opinion columns interpreting the events.

Unfortunately, as I show elsewhere, this was not always the case. When the Canadian media covered the first trial of the notorious Holocaust denial, Ernst Zündel, they played into his hands, quoting him and his "expert witnesses" statements that "Auschwitz was like a country club" and "Women Dined and Danced in Auschwitz".<sup>30</sup> Of course the media should report about Holocaust deniers, as they should report about any social and political phenomenon that concern the public. At the same time, the media should employ judgment and should not report without discretion. It is incumbent upon the media to rebuttal such "expert witnesses" statements, balancing them with historical facts.

### **Accuracy**

Facts are of obvious importance in media coverage of events. Reporters and editors magnify facts so as to put a story on the public agenda when it does deserve it. Exaggeration designed to promote stories, newsworthy or not, is an unethical procedure. Indeed, the BBC, for instance, has always stressed the importance of accuracy.<sup>31</sup> The *CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices* (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1993) holds in turn that information programmes must reflect established journalistic principles: accuracy; integrity, and fairness, and that "application of these principles will achieve the optimum objectivity and balance that must characterise CBC's information programs".<sup>32</sup>

In many instances accuracy is compromised because journalists cannot avoid selecting and because they prefer to interpret. In North American electronic media, the line between reporting and editorialising is rapidly collapsing. TV news reports on issues often mix the two shamelessly without admitting it.

A poll was conducted among fifty journalists and fifty academics who teach journalism in the United States. Forty-one journalists thought that a connection existed between media ethics and objective reporting. Only nine journalists objected to the assumption. Forty-seven journalists believed that objective reporting was something one could achieve. Compare these figures with the responses of the educators. Among those who taught journalism, twenty-seven objected to the objectivity-as-ethics assumption and twenty-three supported it. Forty-two educators out of fifty rejected the possibility of objective reporting.<sup>33</sup> While journalists conceive objectivity in positive terms and see it as a concept they can and should follow, the level of scepticism regarding the concept among the educators is noticeable.

The journalists who supported the assumption saw their role as providers of accurate and unbiased reporting of a given event. Limitations of knowledge might compromise accurate reporting. Sometimes journalists unknowingly serve the interests of experts interviewed to probe a certain topic. For instance, one needs to be aware of the differences that exist between the terms 'euthanasia', 'assisted **suicide**', 'mercy **killing**', and 'mercy **murder**' in the field of medical ethics.<sup>34</sup> The very method of posing ethical

questions, such as 'Whether euthanasia is wrong?' assumes a certain moral assumption which – one is right to presume – is totally different from the underlying reasoning of someone whose question is, say, 'Why should we legalise euthanasia?'

I have asked David E. Hoffman, Foreign Editor of the *Washington Post*, about their usage of words. He explained that one of their first principles is that "the language we use should be chosen for its ability to inform readers". Hoffman maintained, "We seek to rely first on specific facts, not characterizations". He rightly noted that "a more full and specific description is better than a shorthand one".<sup>35</sup> Shorthand description might lead to inaccurate reporting.

### **Truthfulness**

The effort to achieve objective reporting is often impeded by pressures exerted on journalists by editors. They demand stories, and the sooner the better. In their briefings, emphasis is put on deadlines, the need to fill space, competition with other media organisations, scoops, and increasing ratings. I am hesitant to think that ethical standards appear as prominently as those considerations. In support may I refer to David Boeyink's findings. Boeyink<sup>36</sup> wrote to twenty-nine daily newspapers to identify editors who would be willing to call when a case involving an ethical issue arose. Four editors were willing to open their newsrooms for on-site observations and interviews, of which three were visited. One of Boeyink's principal findings was that

written ethical standards were rarely invoked in the resolution of cases, even when the code was relevant to the case. A managing editor of one of the newspapers explicitly admitted that he “never liked the idea of a code of ethics telling me what was right”.<sup>37</sup>

The pressure to report might influence journalists to twist the facts, to glorify relatively simple events, to magnify data, to produce no matter what. These are very human inclinations. We all tend to tell personal stories in a way that will benefit us, serve our interests, make us feel good, and at the same time make others look at us favourably. Journalists are not immune to these human inclinations and in addition they are under pressure to tell their stories when they are still ‘hot’, when they can attract public attention, within the deadlines set by editors. And if the story which at first seemed unique proves on examination to be quite ordinary, then it can be ‘coloured’ a bit to justify its inclusion. One would be very uncomfortable approaching one’s editor after spending considerable time investigating a purported story just to say that there is no story. This uncomfot was instrumental in driving Janet Cooke to write a fabricated lead story for the *Washington Post*.<sup>38</sup>

Editors might exert pressure on reporters to twist the facts. A freelancer in Britain was asked to cover local elections and to conduct a poll among potential voters. His editor supported one of the candidates, and who was his personal friend. When the editor received the poll’s results, which were not promising to his friend, he asked the freelance reporter to change the figures so they would be more positive to his friend’s chances of winning.

The freelancer fiddled with the figures as the editor demanded. The freelancer said the editor's behavior was "rather disappointing" but he had no choice; he wanted to continue supporting his family, and lacked the power to resist.<sup>39</sup>

The urge for sensationalism is the prime obstacle to maintaining some standard of ethics in the media. Under pressure to sensationalise, journalists might even invent events. The following discussion further highlights the dimension of truthfulness in media coverage of events.

During the days of the Palestinian *Intifada* (1987-1993) there were times when media people asked young Palestinians to fake events. I should clarify that I am not referring to cases where the presence of the camera sparked an event and made it happen.<sup>40</sup> That happened many times. I am referring to incidents in which media crews urged Palestinians 'to do something' that they could report back home: throw stones and Molotov cocktails, burn tyres, provoke soldiers, etc.<sup>41</sup> At the time of the hostage crisis in the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979, a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation team filmed a mob demonstration. As soon as the cameras were on, the demonstrators began shouting "Death to Carter" and burned American flags. After two minutes the cameramen signalled the end of the footage and then the same scene reiterated itself for the French-speaking Canadians, with the only difference that this time the crowd shouted "Mort a Carter".<sup>42</sup>

Objectivity in the sense of covering all aspects of a given story in a fair, true, and decent way might become a relatively minor thing to forego when

there is urgency to produce. The two 'goods' - 'good journalism' and 'good stories' - are not necessarily commensurate. Often one 'good' might come at the expense of the other, and when this happens the need to produce a 'good story' often prevails. 'Good journalism', which involves the requirement of objective reporting, might become no more than a token, something to which journalists pay lip service. After all, good stories (which are often concerned with bad and negative phenomena: terror; war; drug addicts; rape; accidents; violence; racism etc.) are more likely to sell newspapers and increase ratings. I emphasise that good stories and good journalism do not **necessarily** conflict, but in many cases of such conflict ample justification might be produced to offset considerations that impede publication.

### **Fairness and Balance**

On many occasions, the media consciously prefer not to be objective in the sense of either providing a balanced portrayal of a given issue or striving for accuracy in their reporting because they want to draw attention to a specific problem, person, political platform, ideology, dilemma, human story, mischief, and so on.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, fairness and balance are not synonymous. For instance, should the media draw a balance between a tobacco company that claims smoking is fine and the cancer association? Moreover, sometimes media reporting is unconsciously subjective. They are not aware of taking sides in a debate by using certain terminology or by refraining from using other terms. I will illustrate this argument below when discussing the issue of

cultural norms that justify murder.

Sometimes one comes across journalistic investigations whose contents do not match their headlines. The headline, written by an eager editor, is spread across the page in bold letters, promising a tale of juicy corruption in a big organisation.<sup>44</sup> The content, by contrast, speaks of minor things. For instance, readers do not expect to be advised in bright headlines of corruption in the city mayor's office who is said to steal money, only to realize later on that all that the mayor did was to allocate some football tickets free of charge to his close friends. Set in derogatory language, such a piece of newspaper inquiry can hardly be said to be fair. Fair reporting is a basic requirement of journalistic ethics and professionalism.

Sometimes journalists are not objective because they intentionally prefer bias. There is a certain angle that they want to highlight for various reasons, pertinent among them the increase of ratings and sales. We can assume that each newspaper will try to satisfy the taste and wants of its particular readership. Consideration is given, *inter alia*, to major news items that cast a shadow over other events; to preferences of politicians, celebrities, and others who influence agenda-setting; to cultural affinities of each paper's readership,<sup>45</sup> and to the particular taste and preferences of the publisher or the editor who is usually nominated by the publisher.<sup>46</sup> In the United Kingdom, *The Guardian* appeals to a certain slice of the newspapers market; its views and platform tends to be liberal-left. Consciously the paper does not seek conservative readership. Conversely, the *Daily Telegraph* appeals to

conservative readership. Like its competitor, the owners of this paper sliced the market and consciously decided to appeal only to a fragment of it, not to all readers. In the United States, Fox News is identified with the Republican Party. Its owners too made a conscious decision to support the Bush Administration. In Israel, for many years there were several party newspapers, each representing the party that owned the specific newspaper. Papers associated with the leading parties, Labour and Likud, had closed down, and presently the existing party papers are those associated with religious political parties. They appeal to a very specific readership, not to the mainstream. The owners of the different organs of the media in the three countries know that they pay a price by being subjective, as they do not appeal to the largest common denominator. They do this willingly, being true to their conscience and political agenda. The readers know that they receive tainted and unbalanced views, with strong ideological bias; still they buy the paper they like. I see nothing wrong in this.

John McManus<sup>47</sup> analysed thirty-four case studies, each of a separate news account's construction, at three television stations in the western United States. His findings show objectivity violations in twenty case studies, all classified as serving the self-interest of the news organisation or its parent corporation. In almost all of these cases (eighteen), the structure of the news organisation either encouraged distortion or failed to correct obvious omissions and errors.

## Against Moral Neutrality

My critique of the media does not suggest that journalists refrain from critical reporting. Surely on some matters, such as corruption in political institutions, the media have every right to reveal information to the public at the expense of some corrupted individuals. Those individuals do not deserve respect and should be denied opportunity to carry on their mischief. Instead, the concern is with occasions where the search for 'juicy stuff' leads the media to disregard what Ronald Dworkin terms 'fundamental background rights', *i.e.*, basic rights to human dignity and to equality of concern and respect that underlie a free democratic society.<sup>48</sup>

The values of not harming others and respecting others need to occupy a prominent place in the considerations of journalists. These are basic ethical standards that sometimes require a **normative** attitude on the part of the media. Here I come to deal with moral neutrality, which is a further dimension usually associated with objectivity. I contest William Marimow's assertion that moral values are not problematic for the investigative reporting and that "right and wrong may be a threshold question but not a fundamental question".<sup>49</sup> Morality should be a factor in deciding whether to cover an event or not, and if it is decided to cover the event, how it should be covered. When clearly immoral practices, such as racism, are at issue, morality is a pertinent and significant factor that prescribes partiality rather than neutrality. Media organisations do not necessarily have to give a platform to both sides of a given conflict. They do not need to play the role of

a neutral observer when one side in a given dispute or conflict is clearly immoral.

That is to say that on such matters journalists, despite popular sentiment, do not stand outside the community they cover. The insistence that journalists' identities and experiences can be made irrelevant, and that all good reporters leave their personalities at home before they cover any news story is flawed. Their identity as citizens in democracies *does* matter. Journalists are not forced to erase themselves from their stories and to distance themselves from their immoral subjects.<sup>50</sup> The media may have an opinion, even a strong opinion, regarding a certain issue. For instance, when doing a follow-up of a rape story where clear evidence was produced during the trial to prove the convicted man's guilt, the media do not and should not give equal footing to the girl who was raped and to the rapist who was found guilty by the court. They should not be impartial between the criminal and the victim.<sup>51</sup> It is the duty of the media to be partial, to condemn the rape, and to say that the deed was repugnant. This is the only correct way of presenting the moral case in hand. Likewise, it would be unthinkable to invite Yigal Amir, the assassin of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and Leah Rabin, the Prime Minister's widow, to share the same platform for debate in the name of 'balancing'.

Several arguments may be advanced against moral neutrality when covering explicit immoral conduct, such as racism. The first is the **argument from democracy**. It holds that journalists are also citizens. They live within

the democratic realm and owe democracy their allegiance. Free speech and free journalism exist because democracy makes them possible. They flourish in a liberal environment and they would become extinct in a coerced, anti-democratic society. Hence, journalists are obliged to sustain the environment that enables their liberties. Many do uphold and promote the basic values of democracy: not to harm others, and to respect others.

The second is the **argument from paternalism**. It is wrong to assume that all readers and spectators are able to differentiate between good and evil, and that all beings are rational. The media need to be responsible to those who are not fully rational, who are not able to discern between values and mischief. Here I refer first and foremost to children and youth. Violence and black-and-white slogans work better on the youth than on mature people. The media are not expected to simply transmit attractions without a warning. They need to be aware of the variety of people who receive their communications. The rejection of evil does not necessarily have to be made by the media personnel. The media could offer a platform for decision-makers and influential personalities to condemn detestable phenomena such as racism.

The third argument is from **social responsibility**.<sup>52</sup> It is, of course, connected to the previous two arguments, but it has to do more with the shape and character of society that we wish to have. Jonathan Kaufman and his colleagues at the *Boston Globe* prepared a series attacking racial discrimination, not merely because it was illegal, but because they had

decided that discrimination made a bad city, and they wanted Boston to be “the best city it could be”.<sup>53</sup>

In a similar vein, the BBC regards impartiality as involving not absolute neutrality or detachment from those basic moral or constitutional beliefs upon which the nation’s life rests. For instance, “the BBC does not feel obliged to be neutral as between truth and untruth, justice and injustice, freedom and slavery, compassion and cruelty, tolerance and intolerance”.<sup>54</sup> Being a constitutional creation of Parliament, the BBC could not be impartial towards the maintenance or dissolution of the nation or towards illegal behaviour.

However, as a general rule, the BBC World Service refrains from using the term ‘terrorists’, which is perceived to be too loaded and prefers to resort to more neutral terms, even when the brutality involved in the violent crime against innocent civilians is obscene. BBC News aspires to be the world’s most trusted news organisation: accurate, impartial and independent. It aims to be truthful and fair, offering journalism that explores multiple viewpoints and gives voice to a wide range of opinions in order to serve all audiences. BBC News seeks to act in the public interest and to resist pressure from political parties, lobby groups or commercial interests.<sup>55</sup> However, these laudable aspirations lead to moral neutrality, and to inability to denounce terrorism even when facing the most hideous acts. The most recent controversy took place after the July 7, 2005 attack on London, when the BBC allegedly preferred to use the term “bombers” in reference to the terrorists

who murdered more than 50 people in the attack.<sup>56</sup> Instead of adhering to one principled definition of terrorism and then employ it across the board regarding any individual or groups that resort to terror, the BBC prefers to sit on the fence and employ no moral judgment, so as to say that it is impossible to differentiate between terrorists and 'freedom fighters', that terrorist for one might be a 'freedom fighter' for the other, and in order not to alienate any segment of their viewers they play a UN role of sorts, taking no sides, employing no moral judgment, paying homage to moral relativism. Even when terrorists took over children in Beslan (September 2004) and murdered hundreds of them, the BBC preferred to call those people "gunmen", "attackers", "Chechen separatists", and "hostage takers".<sup>57</sup> I have asked senior editors in the BBC whether the Baslan atrocity is questionable and could be interpreted as anything but terrorism ("freedom fighting"?). The response was that the "gun men" did act of terror; still the BBC did not call them terrorists, loyal to their sitting-on-the-fence, neutral policy.<sup>58</sup> I hasten to think that one who conducts act of terror is a terrorist, exactly as one who murders deserves to be called murderer, and one who rapes is a rapist.

Terrorism is defined here as the threat or employment of violence against random citizens for political, religious, or ideological purposes by individuals or groups who wish to evoke fear and are willing to justify all means to achieve their goals. The underlying assumption is that a zero sum game exists between terrorism and democracy, *i.e.* a win for the one constitutes a loss for the other.<sup>59</sup> Bearing this in mind, I have asked David E.

Hoffman, Foreign Editor of the *Washington Post*, about their policy on coverage of terrorism. He said that "our first obligation to readers is to tell them what happened, as precisely as possible". When the *Post* resorts to labels, editors

"strive to avoid being tendentious. We do not automatically apply a label to a group just because someone else has used it". Reporters believe "we should use our journalism to delve into the specifics about an organization rather than slap a label on it. We should give readers facts and quotes -- even if from disputed parties - about how to characterize an organization".

The *Post* prides itself on observation and discovery at first-hand, rather than relying on derivative or second-hand information from others, whenever possible. The *Post* strives to tell the reader as much context as possible about the actions by both sides. Hoffman concluded that "In general, we seek to be careful and precise when describing the motivations of groups or individuals involved in violence and terrorism".<sup>60</sup> As a result, the *Post* does not rule out using the term 'terrorism' in the appropriate circumstances.

The media need not be objective towards terror, racism, cannibalism, genocide and slavery. In contrast to the demand for objectivity on the part of the media that is often echoed, the media do not have to be objective towards phenomena which contradict their basic values.

The fourth and last argument is from **jurisprudence and law**. The

media may learn from the courts as to how to treat malice and racism. In the Canadian *Keegstra* case, Judge Quigley of the Alberta Court of Appeal said that “it is beyond doubt that breeding hate is detrimental to society for psychological and social reasons and that it can easily create hostility and aggression which leads to violence”.<sup>61</sup> Later on, Keegstra appealed to the Canadian Supreme Court without success. Chief Justice Dickson depicted Keegstra as inflicting injury on his target group, the Jews, and as striving to undermine worthy communal aspirations. The language used by the court to describe Keegstra was far from neutral or objective. On the contrary, it was strong, negative, and extreme. Those who promoted hate speech were described as “hate mongers” who advocated their views with “inordinate vitriol”. Their aim was to “subvert” and “repudiate” and “undermine” democracy, which they did with “unparalleled vigour”. Since their ideas were “anathemic” and “inimical” to democracy, the court viewed them with “severe reprobation”. Dickson CJ. characterised Keegstra as the enemy of democracy who did not deserve the right to free speech to undermine fundamental rights of others.<sup>62</sup> The media should treat racists in a similar reprobation.

I would also refer media professionals to two international covenants. Article 20 (2) of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* states the following: “Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law”.<sup>63</sup> In turn, Article 4 of the *International Convention on the*

*Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* holds that

“States Parties condemn all propaganda and all organisations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination..”<sup>64</sup>

The rationale of these conventions needs to be observed by the media.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The media need not stay neutral when values and institutions of democracy are threatened and attacked. Journalists are also citizens. Theodore Glasser<sup>65</sup> notes that one of the unfortunate consequences of the view of objective reporting is that it denies journalists their citizenship: as disinterested observers, as impartial reporters, journalists are expected to be morally disengaged and politically inactive.<sup>66</sup> This consequence is, indeed, unfortunate. Ethical journalism in the sense of caring for individuals as human beings, caring for democracy, and showing responsibility with regard to what one writes, is more important than the notion of moral neutrality that is embedded in the technique of objective reporting.

Karen Sanders argues that objectivity is unattainable yet useful lodestone for truthful reporting. It is particularly valuable for media enterprises in

which a specific public trust has been placed. It is not, however, an unequivocal good set against the unequivocal badness of subjectivity.<sup>67</sup> While I think that objectivity is attainable but difficult to achieve, in this study I analysed the main dimensions often associated with the concept of objectivity: accuracy, truthfulness, balance and fairness, and moral neutrality. Arguing that accuracy, truthfulness and fairness in reporting are accepted and encouraged, I also warned against common tendencies that involve partisan inclinations in media coverage, generating biases and imbalance.<sup>68</sup> A distinction was made between cases where journalists are not objective in their reporting because they consciously prefer to be subjective and cases where journalists play into the hands of others and are manipulated by their sources. It was further argued that in cases of conflict between 'good journalism' and the effort of getting 'good stories' (which are often bad stories), regrettably the latter will often enjoy precedence. I closed by urging media professionals to adhere to the values of not harming others and of respecting others. These are basic ethical standards that sometimes require normative and biased reporting. Furthermore, and for similar reasons, reporters and editors are urged not to turn a deaf ear to moral considerations. Moral journalism will necessitate acknowledgement that objectivity is not an end in itself; that on certain matters objectivity in the sense of prescribing moral neutrality is a false idea. The media should not observe moral neutrality in the face of wrong conceptions and deeds, those that aim to harm others and that discriminate against certain segments of democracy. It is

required that journalists be accountable for what they report as well as for how they report. Media organisations have to play the role of an umpire both in the sense of applying just considerations when reviewing different conceptions and also in trying to reconcile conflicting interests, claims, and demands. This is a delicate task, one that demands integrity: bearing in mind when making decisions the relevant considerations and demands that concern society as a whole.

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2. Ronald Dworkin, "Liberalism", in *A Matter of Principle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985): 181-204; *idem*, *Taking Rights Seriously* (London: Duckworth, 1976); R. Cohen-Almagor, *The Boundaries of Liberty and Tolerance* (Gainesville, Fl.: University Press of Florida, 1994). For further reading and analysis, see Richard L. Abel, *Speaking Respect, Respecting Speech* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

3. J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, and Representative Government* (London: J. M. Dent, 1948, Everyman's edition).

4. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishers, 1969).

5. Dan Schiller, *Objectivity and the News* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981): 7-10; Robert A. Hackett, and Yuezhi Zhao, *Sustaining Democracy? Journalism and the Politics of Objectivity* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1998), esp. chap. 1; Celeste Michelle Condit and J. Ann Selzer, "The Rhetoric of Objectivity in the Newspaper Coverage of a Murder Trial", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1985): 210-211; Theodore L. Glasser and James S. Ettema, "Investigative Journalism and the Moral Order", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1989): 4; David T.Z. Mindich, *Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism* (NY: New York University Press, 1998): 95.

6. . Gaye Tuchman, *Making News* (New York: The Free Press, 1978), pp. 160-161, 177-181. Crawford also connected objectivity to scientific method, arguing that verifiable facts are the only sure way to dependable conclusions. Cf. N.A. Crawford, *The Ethics of Journalism* (NY: Knopf, 1924): 28.

7. Gay Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity", *American J. of Sociology*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (January 1972): 660. For further discussion,

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see Meenakshi Gigi Durham, "On the Relevance Standpoint Epistemology to the Practice of Journalism: The Case for 'Strong Objectivity'", *Communication Theory*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (May 1998): 118-119; Tony Harcup, *Journalism: Principles and Practice* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2004): 67-70.

<sup>8</sup> . Theodore L. Glasser, "Objectivity Precludes Responsibility", *The Quill* (February 1984): 14-15. See also Richard L. Kaplan, *Politics and the American Press: The Rise of Objectivity, 1865-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Sandra Gabriele, "Politics and the American Press: The Rise of Objectivity, 1865-1920", *Canadian Journal of Communication* Vol. 28, No. 2 (2003). Available: <http://www.cjc-online.ca/viewarticle.php?id=793>.

<sup>9</sup> . Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), at 9; Robert A. Hackett, "Decline of a Paradigm? Bias and Objectivity in News Media Studies", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (September 1984): 229-230.

<sup>10</sup> . William B. Blankenburg and Ruth Walden, "Objectivity, Interpretation, and Economy in Reporting", *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 54 (1977): 591.

<sup>11</sup> . Larry Calloway, "The Lost Compass of Objectivity", *Albuquerque Journal* (14 December 2003): B3.

<sup>12</sup> . Gay Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity", pp. 663-664.

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<sup>13</sup> . It should be noted that the code was revised three times since then. The latest revision, in 1996, does not mention the word 'objectivity', which is a significant omission. There are many other codes of ethics that aspire to objectivity in media reporting. See, for instance, Section 6 of the Israeli Professional Ethics Code of Journalism (ratified on 16 May 1996); Chapter C of the Guidelines of the Israeli Second Television and Radio Authority (1994); Article 2 of the Italian Riforma della legge 3/2/1963 N. 69 "Ordinamento della Professione di Giornalista", and Sections 2 and 3 of Carta dell'informazione e della programmazione a garanzia degli utenti e degli operatori del servizio pubblico - Rai (December 1995). For further discussion, see Tiina Laitila, "Journalistic Codes of Ethics in Europe", *European J. of Communication*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1995): 527-544; <http://www.presscouncils.org/html/frameset.php?page=library2>

<sup>14</sup> . Robert A. Hackett, and Yuezhi Zhao, *Sustaining Democracy? Journalism and the Politics of Objectivity*, p. 54.

<sup>15</sup> . Brent Cunningham, "Rethinking Objectivity", *Columbia Journalism Rev.* (July-August 2003): 24.

<sup>16</sup> . David T.Z. Mindich, *Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism*, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> . Jay Rosen, "Beyond Objectivity", *Nieman Reports* (Winter 1993): 50.

<sup>18</sup> . Richard Keeble, *Ethics for Journalists* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 130.

<sup>19</sup> . Seven areas of concern were cited most frequently. The other six were reporter misrepresentation; privacy rights vs. public's right to know; conflicts of interest; anonymous sources; 'freebies'; and balancing compassion for subjects with newspaper policy. See Douglas Anderson, "How Managing Editors View and Deal With Ethical Issues?", *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 64 (1987): 344.

<sup>20</sup> . David T.Z. Mindich, *Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism*, p. 9.

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21. C. Atton, *Alternative Media* (London: Sage, 2003).
22. . Martin Hirst and Roger Patching, *Journalism Ethics: Arguments and Cases* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 40. For feminist critique, see Minelle Mahtani, "Gendered News Practices", in Stuart Allan (ed.), *Journalism: Critical Issues* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2005): 299-309.
23. . Thomas Nagel, "The Limits of Objectivity", in Sterling M. McMurrin (ed.), *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1980): 83-84.
24. John D. Caputo (ed.), *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997); Michael Kelly (ed.), *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994); Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (eds.), *The Essential Foucault* (New York: New Press, 2003)
25. . Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), pp. 183, 187-193, 304-335.
26. See Michael Schudson, *Origins of the Ideal of Objectivity in the Professions* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1990), at 3. He provides an analysis of the historical development of the concept of objectivity in journalism in chap. vii, esp. pp. 231-269. See also Robert A. Hackett, "Decline of a Paradigm? Bias and Objectivity in News Media Studies", p. 232; Tony Harcup, *Journalism: Principles and Practice*, pp. 68-69.
27. . Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 535. For further philosophical explorations of the facts and values controversy, see Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
28. Alexander Tsesis, *Destructive Messages* (N.Y. and London: New York University Press, 2002): 2. See also Mari Matsuda, "Public Response to Racist Speech: Considering the Victim's Story", *Michigan L. Rev.*, Vol. 87 (1989): 2320; Christopher Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to Al Qaeda* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

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- <sup>29</sup> . Stephen D. Reese, "The News Paradigm and the Ideology of Objectivity: A Socialist at the Wall Street Journal", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 7 (1990): 394.
- <sup>30</sup> . Raphael Cohen-Almagor, "Ethical Considerations in Media Coverage of Hate Speech in Canada", *Review of Constitutional Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2001): 79-100. Interviews with Irwin Cotler MP in Montreal on July 24, 2002 (former Canadian Minister of Justice); Marvin Kurz, National legal Counsel for B'nai Brith League for Human Rights, Toronto, on 15 July 2002; Harvey Goldberg, Deputy Director, Policy and Liaison Branch, Canadian Human Rights Commission, Ottawa on 17 July 2002, and David Lepofsky, Ministry of the Attorney General, Toronto, on 13 July 2002.
- <sup>31</sup> . See Thomas Gibbons, *Regulating the Media* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1998), Second Edition, pp. 99-100.
- <sup>32</sup> . CBC *Journalistic Standards and Practices* (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1993), p. 28.
- <sup>33</sup> . John C. Merrill, "Is Ethical Journalism Simply Objective Reporting?", *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 62, Nos.1-2 (1985): 391-393. For further discussion, see John Lloyd, "Is that a fact?", *Financial Times* (8 March 2003): 3.
- <sup>34</sup> . R. Cohen-Almagor, "Language and Reality at the End of Life", *Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Fall 2000), pp. 267-278.
- <sup>35</sup> . Personal communication on 11 May 2004.
- <sup>36</sup> . David E. Boeyink, "How Effective Are Codes of Ethics? A Look at Three Newsrooms", *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 71 (1994): 895.
- <sup>37</sup> A senior editor of the *Globe & Mail* used almost the same words during an interview I conducted in the summer of 1998.
- <sup>38</sup> . Bill Green, "Janet's World", *The Washington Post* (19 April 1981). See also [http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/day/04\\_17\\_2001.html](http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/day/04_17_2001.html)

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<sup>39</sup>. I heard this story from the freelancer, T.J., at a 21st Century Trust Fellowship Weekend Seminar on *The Media and the Public Interest in the Information Age*, Freedom Forum European Centre, London (10-12 October 1997).

<sup>40</sup>. For a different example concerning Cecil Andrews who set himself on fire after calling upon a camera crew to film him igniting himself, see Stephen D. Reese, "The News Paradigm and the Ideology of Objectivity: A Socialist at the Wall Street Journal", p. 390.

<sup>41</sup>. Gideon Ezra, former Deputy Head of the SHABAC (Israel internal security) (Communication Forum on Terror and Communication, University of Haifa, 30 April 1996). For further discussion on staging events, see A. P. Schmid, "Terrorism and the Media: The Ethics of Publicity", *Terrorism & Political Violence*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1989): 539-565.

<sup>42</sup>. A.P. Schmid, "Terrorism and the Media: The Ethics of Publicity", *Ibid.*, p. 559.

<sup>43</sup>. Leftist ideologists advance Marxists arguments that hold that the media actively frame and promote news stories that serve the needs and concerns of the elite. Herman and Chomsky provide a systematic 'propaganda model' to account for the behaviour of the corporate news media in the United States. They preface their discussion of the propaganda model by noting their fundamental belief that the mass media serve to mobilise support for the special interests of power groups and large corporations that dominate the state, the media, the advertising industry, and private activity. In their view propaganda is a very important aspect, arguably the most important aspect, of the work of the media. See Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

<sup>44</sup>. Fowler's notion of the discursive gap is of relevance. See Roger Fowler, *Language in the News* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991). See also Fowler *et al.*, *Language and Control* (London: Routledge and Kegan paul, 1979).

<sup>45</sup>. See Christopher Hewitt, "Public's Perspectives", in David L. Paletz and Alex P. Schmid (eds.), *Terrorism and the Media* (Newbury Park, CA.: Sage, 1992): 170-207; Herbert G. Kariel

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and Lynn A. Rosenvall, "Cultural Affinity Displayed in Canadian Daily Newspapers", *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 60 (1983) : 431-436; Matthew Kieran (ed.) *Media Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>46</sup> . Amos Shoken, the owner of the Israeli daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* and some other local newspapers, said in a public meeting on Israeli media that the only requirement of a journalist is to write in accordance with the preferences of the editor. Academic Forum, Dan Carmel Hotel, Haifa (27 February 1996). David Radler, president of the Canadian media giant, Hollinger Inc. said: "If editors disagree with us, they should disagree with us when they are no longer in our employ". See Maude Barlow, and James Winter, *The Big Black Book* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1997): 11.

<sup>47</sup> . John McManus, "How Objective Is Local Television News?", *Mass Communication Review*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1991): 21-30, 48.

<sup>48</sup> . Ronald M. Dworkin, "Liberalism", in *A Matter of Principle*; *idem.*, *Taking Rights Seriously*, pp. 266-278.

<sup>49</sup> . See Theodore L. Glasser and James S. Ettema, "Investigative Journalism and the Moral Order", p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> . Stuart Allan (ed.), *Journalism: Critical Issues* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2005), pp. 300-301.

<sup>51</sup> . Impartiality is not the same as objectivity, though it serves the same purpose of protecting the newspaper's credibility with its readers. An objective report must necessarily be impartial, but an impartial report need not remain detached and impersonal, nor need it report only verifiable data. Cf. Harlan S. Stensaas, "Development of the Objectivity Ethic in the U.S. Daily Newspapers", *J. of Mass Media Ethics*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (fall-winter 1986-1987): 50-51. For Frost, impartial reporting means that a journalist is aiming at the truth, whereas true objectivity would require the ideal task of presenting the whole picture. See Chris Frost, *Media Ethics and Self-Regulation* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), p. 38.

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<sup>52</sup>. Standard 1 of the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics speaks of Responsibility. See also section 1 of Associated Press Managing Editors Code of Ethics. On the social responsibility theory, see William L. Rivers, Wilbur Schramm and Clifford G. Christians, *Responsibility in Mass Communication* (NY: Harper and Row, 1980): 43-50; Deni Elliot (ed.), *Responsible Journalism* (Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage, 1986); Conrad C. Fink, *Media Ethics* (Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 1995), 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Appendix B, p. 309; Michael Schudson, *The Power of the News* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Kristie Bunton, "Social Responsibility in Covering Community: A Narrative Case Analysis", *J. of Mass Media Ethics*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (1998): 232-246.

<sup>53</sup> . See Theodore L. Glasser and James S. Ettema, "Investigative Journalism and the Moral Order", p. 10.

<sup>54</sup>. Thomas Gibbons, *Regulating the Media*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>55</sup>. See BBC Governors' Review of Services,

<http://www.bbcgovernors.co.uk/annreport/report05/42-45.txt>

<sup>56</sup> . See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/complaints/news/2005/07/13/20561.shtml>

<sup>57</sup> . [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/world/04/russian\\_s/html/1.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/world/04/russian_s/html/1.stm);  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/5018928.stm>

<sup>58</sup> . I thank Mr. Fraser Steel, BBC Head of Programme Complaints; Ms. Margaret Hill, Senior Advisor, BBC Editorial Policy, Mr. David Levy, BBC Policy and Planning, and Senior Editor David Jordan for providing me with vast material about the BBC and its policies.

<sup>59</sup> . R. Cohen-Almagor, "Media Coverage of Terror: Troubling Episodes and Suggested Guidelines", *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Volume 30, No. 3 (2005), pp. 383-409.

<sup>60</sup>. Personal communication on 11 May 2004.

<sup>61</sup> . Alberta Court of Queen's Bench (1984), 19 C.C.C. (3d) 254, at 273.

<sup>62</sup> . Cf *R. v. Keegstra* [1990] S.C.J. No. 131, at 763-769. See also Richard Moon, "Drawing Lines in a Culture of Prejudice: *R. v. Keegstra* and the Restriction of Hate Propaganda", *U.B.C. L.*

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*Rev.* (1992): 99-143; Mayo Moran, "Talking about Hate Speech: A Rhetorical Analysis of American and Canadian Approaches to the Regulation of Hate Speech", *Wisconsin L. Rev.*, No. 6 (1994): 1493; Irwin Cotler, "Holocaust Denial, Equality and Harm: Boundaries of Liberty and Tolerance in a Liberal Democracy", in R. Cohen-Almagor (ed.), *Liberal Democracy and the Limits of Tolerance*, 151-181; Richard Moon, *The Constitutional Protection of Freedom of Expression* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); R. Cohen-Almagor, "Ethical Considerations in Media Coverage of Hate Speech in Canada", *op. cit.*; Stephen Newman (ed.), *Constitutional Politics in Canada and the United States* (NY: State University of New York Press, 2004).

<sup>63</sup> . *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 999 U.N.T.S. 171 (1966). Article 20 immediately follows Article 19 on freedom of expression, and the UN Human Rights Committee that monitors and adjudicates on compliance with and alleged violations of these rights takes the view that there is no inconsistency between the two Articles.

<sup>64</sup> . *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, adopted by the United Nations in 1966 (Can. T.S. 1970, No. 28).

<sup>65</sup> . Theodore L. Glasser, "Objectivity Precludes Responsibility", *The Quill* (February 1984), p. 15.

<sup>66</sup> . Glasser cites Walter Cronkite who said: "I don't think it is any of our business what the moral, political, social, or economic effect of our reporting is. I say let's go with the job of reporting - and let the chips fall where they may". *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>67</sup> . Karen Sanders, "Ethics in Journalism: False Dichotomies, Uncertain Goals", *Ethical Space*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2005): 33-38, at 36. For further discussion on the objective/subjective dualism, see Richard Keeble, "Is Virtuous Journalism Possible? A critical overview of journalism ethics", in R. Keeble (ed.), *Print Journalism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>68</sup> . Quite sensibly, the British Press Complaints Commission's Code of Practice speaks, *inter alia*, of accuracy (section 1), the distinction of comment, conjecture, and fact (section 3), and of

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misrepresentation (section 7). The word 'objectivity' is not mentioned even once in the Code. Similarly, Clause 3 of the National Union of Journalist's Code of Conduct emphasises: "A journalist shall strive to ensure that the information he/she disseminates is fair and accurate, avoid the expression of comment and conjecture as established fact and falsification by distortion, selection or misrepresentation".