

Objectivity's So Passé

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“Will More Media Bias Save Democracy?” James Bovard headlined his latest column.

At issue? Yet another call for journalists to abandon objectivity, and, as Bovard puts it, “take sides on the barricades.” This time it comes from *Washington Post* media columnist Margaret Sullivan, who suggests reporters use a “‘pro-democracy’ frame.”

But as Mr. Bovard explains: “Most Washington journalists reflexively presume that being pro-government is the same as being pro-democracy.”

And even worse, when differentiated, “most Washington press poohbahs show more affection for Leviathan than democracy.”

Jim Rutenberg argued that America's news hounds must “throw out the textbook American journalism has been using” and become “oppositional” to candidate Trump.

For instance, “*The Washington Post* devotes far more newshole to publishing leaks from FBI officials,” he points out, “than to exposing FBI abuses.”

Of course, activist journalists might frame “democracy” in their own way or choose to advance



another cause.

“Journalists need to be overt and candid advocates for social justice,” argued Stanford Communications Professor Ted Glasser during last year’s presidential contest, “and it’s hard to do that under the constraints of objectivity.”

Howard University Communications Professor Nikole Hannah-Jones of *New York Times*’ 1619 Project infamy advocates that “all journalism is activism,” and condemns “even-handedness, both sideism.”

Five years ago this month, during the Trump vs. Clinton presidential campaign, *The New York Times* offered readers a front-page commentary wherein former media columnist Jim Rutenberg argued that America’s news hounds must “throw out the textbook American journalism has been using” and become “oppositional” to candidate Trump.

Though Mr. Trump triggered massive media partisanship, which continues to worsen, it is not new. Indeed, at this point, with the public’s trust in media flushing into the toilet bowl of history, objectivity would seem almost transformational.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.