

Are we witnessing the final collapse of “objective” political reporting? Let’s hope so | Salon

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There are two main reasons why the leaders of America’s elite newsrooms are so devoted to the journalistic practice commonly referred to as “objectivity,” which precludes reporters from “taking sides” in their political coverage — even when one side is an obvious lie, or an affront to core journalistic values like pluralism and democracy.

The official reason is that they sincerely believe that press neutrality leads to a more informed electorate. They argue that voters will trust their news sources more if those sources are “unbiased,” and that accurate information is more likely to be accepted as the truth if readers come to their own conclusions rather than being told what to think. A news organization perceived as objective, they say, has an increased power to persuade.

The unofficial reason, which New York University journalism professor Jay Rosen pithily calls “refuge seeking,” is that the “objective” approach protects editors and reporters from criticism – specifically, from accusations of bias. It also allows them to feel superior to partisans and activists, because they remain “above the fray.”

[...]

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