

Why is Liberal Opinion Journalism So Breathtakingly ... Unsuccessful?

☒ In the last six presidential elections, going all the way back to Bill Clinton's first victory in 1992, the more liberal candidate won *in the popular vote* five out of the six times.

You would think that with so many Americans opting for a liberal over a more conservative candidate this would bode well for liberals in the media too. But it doesn't. If MSNBC or liberal talk radio were a presidential candidate, they'd lose almost every time.

So what gives? Why are liberals far more popular in presidential races than in media ratings races?

Bill O'Reilly asked me about that recently, citing numbers showing how bad liberal opinion journalism is doing.

"You may remember Air America radio," Bill said, "which launched nation-wide in 2004 – and went bankrupt 6 years later, losing at least 40 million dollars in the process."

So much for wishful thinking in the world of liberal talk radio. What about liberal talk television?

Recently, Bill said, "After Benjamin Netanyahu gave his speech, millions of Americans tuned into the news. But they did not tune in to MSNBC. The ratings for them were catastrophic."

Not so, for Fox News. At 8pm Eastern Time, O'Reilly had nearly five times as many viewers as the show on MSNBC.

There's more. O'Reilly told his audience that, "In February

the Fox news channel was the number one-rated cable channel in the world in prime time. MSNBC on the other hand, declined an amazing 55 percent in the key primetime advertising age group and 28-percent overall, from year to year.”

A “total collapse of ratings,” O’Reilly concluded, “that were never high to begin with.”

Then he asked me why liberal opinion journalism is failing so spectacularly. I told him there are probably a hundred reasons, but here are three:

1. Opinion media all too often violate the cardinal rule of *all* media: They fail to entertain. Instead, liberal opinion hosts – in prime time on MSNBC, for example – lecture us. They drone on forever making pedantic arguments. If you could bottle these shows you’d have a cure for insomnia.

I went to college and like everybody else sat through lectures; I wasn’t fascinated back then and I’m not fascinated today.

You can love Fox or hate Fox – and there are plenty who do both – but you can’t accuse Fox News of being boring.

Same with Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. Whatever you think of their politics, they are not dull. And in their own way, they’re entertaining. That’s a big reason each of them won, twice.

Not so with liberal commentators on TV and radio. They’re oh so serious. And oh so dull. Saving the world and all of humanity from those evil conservatives may satisfy the ego of the host or hostess, but it doesn’t make for good radio or TV.

2. People go to opinion journalism not so much for information, but to get their own views validated. But what we’re calling liberal talk TV and radio aren’t

liberal as much as they are ... far left. So even liberals don't watch MSNBC or listen to talk radio in big numbers – because the content is further left than the listeners. If they want their liberal views validated, MSNBC and liberal talk radio are not the places to go.

3. There's pretty much only one place to go to get conservative news and opinion on television – and that's the Fox News Channel. (There are other small, new conservative stations popping up on cable; but Fox remains the only big one.) But there are plenty of places in the media landscape to get news and opinion that is left-of-center. There are a million places on the Web, and plenty of big city newspapers, and the three broadcast networks that serve up a daily helping of the liberal (or leftist) worldview. No need to watch MSNBC or listen to talk radio if you're looking for "progressive" info and ideas.

Roger Ailes, the visionary who created and runs Fox News, figured it out a long time ago: find a niche and go after that audience. His niche turned out to be half of America. Let's just say the niche for far left opinion journalism is a *tad* smaller.

As I say, there are probably a hundred reasons left wing journalism doesn't register with the American people. Here's where you, my friends, come in: Give me a few more reasons far left news media are on life support. Keep your ideas short. Funny is good, too.