

## NOAM CHOMSKY: ΚΑΘΕΣΤΩΤΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ

Necessary Illusions. Thought Control in Democratic Societies - <http://goo.gl/GlNNv>

«...Τα media που έχουν τη δυνατότητα να απευθυνθούν στο ευρύ κοινό, είναι μεγάλες εταιρείες, στενά συνδεδεμένες με ακόμα μεγαλύτερες συμφυρματικές (conglomerates). Όπως όλες οι επιχειρήσεις, πουλάνε ένα προϊόν σε αγοραστές. Οι αγοραστές είναι οι διαφημιστές, και το "προϊόν" είναι το ίδιο το κοινό, κατά προτίμηση το πιο ευπρόσδεκτο κοινό, που αυξάνει την αποδοτικότητα των διαφημίσεων...

...Τα κυρίαρχα ΜΜΕ που ορίζουν τη γραμμή με την οποία ευθυγραμμίζονται και τα μικρότερα, είναι εταιρείες που "πουλάνε" προνομίουχα ακροατήρια σε άλλες επιχειρήσεις. Φυσικά, η εικόνα του κόσμου που εκπέμπουν αντανάκλα τα συμφέροντα και τις προοπτικές των πωλητών, των αγοραστών και του προϊόντος.

Η συγκέντρωση της ιδιοκτησίας των ΜΜΕ είναι υψηλή και αυξάνεται. Επιπλέον τα διευθυντικά στελέχη των ΜΜΕ και οι [διασημοί] σχολιαστές, ανήκουν στις ίδιες προνομίουχες ελίτ, και είναι αναμενόμενο να συμμαχίζονται τις αντιλήψεις, τις φιλοδοξίες και τις στάσεις των συνεταιριών [εργοδοτών] τους, αναφορικά με το ταξικό συμφέρον όλων τους. Οι νεοεισερχόμενοι στο σύστημα δημοσιογράφοι είναι απίθανο να αναρριχηθούν αν δεν συμμορφωθούν στις ιδεολογικές πιέσεις εσωτερικευοντας τις αξίες. Δεν είναι εύκολο να πιστεύεις κάτι και να λες το αντίθετο. Εκείνοι που δεν συμμορφώνονται, απορρίπτονται μέσω γνωστών μηχανισμών...

...Πολλοί άλλοι παράγοντες καθορίζουν τη συμμόρφωση των ΜΜΕ με το κρατικο-εταιρικό συμπλέγμα. Η εναντίωση στην εξουσία είναι δύσκολη και δαπανηρή· απαιτεί υψηλό επίπεδο τεκμηρίωσης και επιχειρημάτων. Επιπλέον, η κριτική ανάλυση δεν είναι ευπρόσδεκτη από τους κρατούντες, που αντιδρούν αποτελεσματικά κατεχοντας ποικίλα μέσα επιβραβεύσης ή τιμωρίας. Αντιθέτως, η συμμόρφωση με την "πατριωτική" γραμμή δεν έχει κόστος...

...Το σύστημα αμυνεται με ιερή οργή και περιφρόνηση όταν αμφισβητείται το δικαίωμα του να εξαπατά προς όφελος της εξουσίας. Η ίδια η ιδέα να υποβληθεί το ιδεολογικό σύστημα σε ορθολογική

έξεταση, προκαλει αμηχανια ή εχθροτητα, συνηθως καλυμμενη υπο προσχηματα...

Benjamin Ginsberg: ...η δυνατοτητα των ανωτερων και των ανωτερων μεσαιων ταξεων να ελεγχουν την αγορα των ιδεων, τους επιτρεπει να διαμορφωνουν τις αντιληψεις ολοκληρης της κοινωνιας σχετικα με την πολιτικη πραγματικοτητα και το ευρος των ρεαλιστικων πολιτικων και κοινωνικων δυνατοτητων... το κρυμμενο χερι της αγορας ειναι οργανο ελεγχου τοσο αποτελεσματικο σχεδον οσο και η σιδερενια γροθια του κρατους...»

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KARL MARX: *Η Γερμανική Ιδεολογία* -  
Αρχουσα τάξη και κρατούσες ιδέες

«...Σε καθε ιστορικη περιοδο, οι κυριαρχες ιδεες ειναι οι ιδεες της αρχουσας ταξης... οι κυριαρχες υλικες σχεσεις εκφρασμενες ως ιδεες• οι σχεσεις που καθιστουν μια ταξη κυριαρχη, συνεπως οι ιδεες της κυριαρχιας της...

Οι αρχοντες... μεταξυ αλλων αρχουν και ως διανοητες, ελεγχουν την παραγωγη και τη διαδοση των ιδεων της εποχης τους... Εμφανιζουν το συμφερον τους ως κοινο συμφερον ολων των μελων της κοινωνιας... αποδιδουν στις ιδεες τους οικουμενικη ισχυ, και τις εμφανιζουν ως τις αποκλειστικα μονες ορθολογικες, οικουμενικα εγκυρες ιδεες...» <http://goo.gl/fe91L>

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**...Two kinds of questions arise in connection with these vigo-**

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**rous debates about the media and democracy: questions of fact and questions of value. The basic question of fact is whether the media have indeed adopted an adversarial stance, perhaps with excessive zeal; whether, in particular, they undermine the defense of freedom in wartime and threaten free institutions by «flagellating ourselves» and those in power. If so, we may then ask whether it would be proper to impose some external constraints to ensure that they keep to the bounds of responsibility,**

or whether we should adopt the principle expressed by Justice Holmes, in a classic dissent, that «the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market» through «free trade in ideas.»

The question of fact is rarely argued; the case is assumed to have been proven. Some, however, have held that the factual premises are simply false. Beginning with the broadest claims, let us consider the functioning of the free market of ideas. In his study of the mobilization of popular opinion to promote state power, [Benjamin Ginsberg](#) maintains that

western governments have used market mechanisms to regulate popular perspectives and sentiments. The «marketplace of ideas,» built during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, effectively disseminates the beliefs and ideas of the upper classes while subverting the ideological and cultural independence of the lower classes. Through the construction of this marketplace, western governments forged firm and enduring links between socioeconomic position and ideological power, permitting upper classes to use each to buttress the other... In the United States, in particular, [the ability of the upper and upper-middle classes to dominate the marketplace of ideas has generally allowed these strata to shape the entire society's perception of political reality and the range of realistic political and social possibilities. While westerners usually equate the marketplace with freedom of opinion, the hidden hand of the market can be almost as potent an instrument of control as the iron fist of the state.](#)<sup>15</sup>

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**Ginsberg's conclusion has some initial plausibility, on assumptions about the functioning of a guided free market that are not particularly controversial. Those segments of [the media that can reach a substantial audience are major corporations and are closely integrated with even larger conglomerates. Like other businesses, they sell a product to buyers. Their market is advertisers, and the «product» is audiences, with a bias towards more wealthy audiences, which improve advertising rates.](#)**<sup>16</sup>

Over a century ago, British Liberals observed that the market would promote those journals «enjoying the preference of the advertising public»; and today, Paul Johnson, noting the demise of a new journal of the left, blandly comments that it deserved its fate: «The market pronounced an accurate verdict at the start by declining to subscribe all the issue capital,» and surely no right-thinking person could doubt that the market represents the public will.<sup>17</sup>

In short, the major media – particularly, [the elite media that set the agenda that others generally follow – are corporations «selling» privileged audiences to other businesses. It would hardly come as a surprise if the picture of the world they present were to reflect the perspectives and interests of the sellers, the buyers, and the product. Concentration of ownership of the media is high and increasing.](#)<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, those [who occupy managerial positions in the media, or gain status within them as commentators, belong to the same privileged](#)

elites, and might be expected to share the perceptions, aspirations, and attitudes of their associates, reflecting their own class interests as well. Journalists entering the system are unlikely to make their way unless they conform to these ideological pressures, generally by internalizing the values; it is not easy to say one thing and believe another, and those who fail to conform will tend to be weeded out by familiar mechanisms.

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The influence of advertisers is sometimes far more direct. «Projects unsuitable for corporate sponsorship tend to die on the vine,» the London Economist observes, noting that «stations have learned to be sympathetic to the most delicate sympathies of corporations.» The journal cites the case of public TV station WNET, which «lost its corporate underwriting from Gulf+Western as a result of a documentary called 'Hunger for Profit', about multinationals buying up huge tracts of land in the third world.» These actions «had not been those of a friend,» Gulf's chief executive wrote to the station, adding that the documentary was «virulently anti-business, if not anti-American.» «Most people believe that WNET would not make the same mistake today,» the Economist concludes.<sup>19</sup> Nor would others. The warning need only be implicit.

Many other factors induce the media to conform to the requirements of the state-corporate nexus.<sup>20</sup> To confront power is costly and difficult; high standards of evidence and argument are imposed, and critical analysis is naturally not welcomed by those who are in a position to react vigorously and to determine the array of rewards and punishments. Conformity to a «patriotic agenda,» in contrast, imposes no such costs. Charges against official enemies barely require substantiation; they are, furthermore, protected from correction, which can be dismissed as apologetics for the criminals or as missing the forest for the trees. The system protects itself with indignation against a challenge to the right of deceit in the service of power, and the very idea of subjecting the ideological system to rational inquiry elicits incomprehension or outrage, though it is often masked in other terms.<sup>21</sup> One who attributes the best intentions to the U.S. government, while perhaps deploring failure and ineptitude, requires no evidence for this stance, as when we ask why «success has continued to elude us» in the Middle East and Central America, why «a nation of such vast wealth, power and good intentions [cannot] accomplish its purposes

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more promptly and more effectively» (Landrum Bolling).<sup>22</sup> Standards are radically different when we observe that «good intentions» are not properties of states, and that the United States, like every other state past and present, pursues policies that reflect the interests of those who control the state by virtue of their domestic power, truisms that are hardly expressible in the mainstream, surprising as this fact may be...