

ANALYSE ET COMMENTAIRE DE TEXTES OU DOCUMENTS EN ANGLAIS

Durée : 6 heures

Analysez et commentez, **en anglais**, les documents suivants :

DOCUMENT ONE.

Or turning now to the Government of men. Witenagemote, old Parliament, was a great thing. The affairs of the nation were there deliberated and decided; what we were to do as a nation. But does not, though the name Parliament subsists, the parliamentary debate go on now, everywhere and at all times, in a far more comprehensive way, out of Parliament altogether?

Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or a witty saying; it is a literal fact,--very momentous to us in these times. Literature is our Parliament too. Printing, which comes necessarily out of Writing, I say often, is equivalent to Democracy: invent Writing, Democracy is inevitable. Writing brings Printing; brings universal everyday extempore Printing, as we see at present. Whoever can speak, speaking now to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority. It matters not what rank he has, what revenues or garnitures. The requisite thing is, that he have a tongue which others will listen to; this and nothing more is requisite. The nation is governed by all that has tongue in the nation: Democracy is virtually there. Add only, that whatsoever power exists will have itself, by and by, organized; working secretly under bandages, obscurations, obstructions, it will never rest till it get to work free, unencumbered, visible to all. Democracy virtually extant will insist on becoming palpably extant.-

On all sides, are we not driven to the conclusion that, of the things which man can do or make here below, by far the most momentous, wonderful and worthy are the things we call Books! Those poor bits of rag-paper with black ink on them; - from the Daily Newspaper to the sacred Hebrew BOOK, what have they not done, what are they not doing!- For indeed, whatever be the outward form of the thing (bits of paper, as we say, and black ink), is it not verily, at bottom, the highest act of man's faculty that produces a Book? It is the Thought of man; the true thaumaturgic virtue; by which man works all things whatsoever. All that he does, and brings to pass, is the vesture of a Thought. This London City, with all its houses, palaces, steam-engines, cathedrals, and huge immeasurable traffic and tumult, what is it but a Thought, but millions of Thoughts made into One; - a huge immeasurable Spirit of a THOUGHT, embodied in brick, in iron, smoke, dust, Palaces, Parliaments, Hackney Coaches, Katherine Docks, and the rest of it! Not a brick was made but some man had to think of the making of that brick.- The thing we called "bits of paper with traces of black ink," is the purest embodiment a Thought of man can have. No wonder it is, in all ways, the activist and noblest.

All this, of the importance and supreme importance of the Man of Letters in modern Society, and how the Press is to such a degree superseding the Pulpit, the Senate, the Senatus Academicus and much else, has been admitted for a good while; and recognized often enough, in late times, with a sort of sentimental triumph and wonderment. It

seems to me, the Sentimental by and by will have to give place to the Practical. If Men of Letters are so incalculably influential, actually performing such work for us from age to age, and even from day to day, then I think we may conclude that Men of Letters will not always wander like unrecognized unregulated Ishmaelites among us.

Thomas Carlyle, *Lectures on Heroes*, May 5, 1840

DOCUMENT TWO

The time, it is to be hoped, is gone by, when any defence would be necessary of the "liberty of the press" as one of the securities against corrupt or tyrannical government. No argument, we may suppose, can now be needed, against permitting a legislature or an executive, not identified in interest with the people, to prescribe opinions to them, and determine what doctrines or what arguments they shall be allowed to hear. This aspect of the question, besides, has been so often and so triumphantly enforced by preceding writers, that it needs not be specially insisted on in this place. Though the law of England, on the subject of the press, is as servile to this day as it was in the time of the Tudors, there is little danger of its being actually put in force against political discussion, except during some temporary panic, when fear of insurrection drives ministers and judges from their propriety; and, speaking generally, it is not, in constitutional countries, to be apprehended, that the government, whether completely responsible to the people or not, will often attempt to control the expression of opinion, except when in doing so it makes itself the organ of the general intolerance of the public. Let us suppose, therefore, that the government is entirely at one with the people, and never thinks of exerting any power of coercion unless in agreement with what it conceives to be their voice. But I deny the right of the people to exercise such coercion, either by themselves or by their government. The power itself is illegitimate. The best government has no more title to it than the worst. It is as noxious, or more noxious, when exerted in accordance with public opinion, than when in opposition to it. If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind. Were an opinion a personal possession of no value except to the owner; if to be obstructed in the enjoyment of it were simply a private injury, it would make some difference whether the injury was inflicted only on a few persons or on many. But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

It is necessary to consider separately these two hypotheses, each of which has a distinct branch of the argument corresponding to it. We can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavouring to stifle is a false opinion; and if we were sure, stifling it would be an evil still. First: the opinion which it is attempted to suppress by authority may possibly be true. Those who desire to suppress it, of course deny its truth; but they are not infallible. They have no authority to decide the question for all mankind, and exclude every other person from the means of judging. To refuse a hearing to an opinion, because they are sure that it is false, is to assume that *their* certainty is the same thing as *absolute* certainty. All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility. Its condemnation may be allowed to rest on this common argument, not the worse for being common.

Unfortunately for the good sense of mankind, the fact of their fallibility is far from carrying the weight in their practical judgment, which is always allowed to it in theory; for while every one well knows himself to be fallible, few think it necessary to take any precautions against

the credit of those who finance and program it. Measure the results by Nielsen, Trendex or Silex-it doesn't matter. The main thing is to try. The responsibility can be easily placed, in spite of all the mouthings about giving the public what it wants. It rests on big business, and on big television, and it rests at the top. Responsibility is not something that can be assigned or delegated. And it promises its own reward: good business and good television.

Perhaps no one will do anything about it. I have ventured to outline it against a background of criticism that may have been too harsh only because I could think of nothing better. Someone once said - I think it was Max Eastman - that "that publisher serves his advertiser best who best serves his readers." I cannot believe that radio and television, or the corporation that finance the programs, are serving well or truly their viewers or listeners, or themselves.

I began by saying that our history will be what we make it. If we go on as we are, then history will take its revenge, and retribution will not limp in catching up with us.

We are to a large extent an imitative society. If one or two or three corporations would undertake to devote just a small traction of their advertising appropriation along the lines that I have suggested, the procedure would grow by contagion; the economic burden would be bearable, and there might ensue a most exciting adventure - exposure to ideas and the bringing of reality into the homes of the nation.

To those who say people wouldn't look; they wouldn't be interested; they're too complacent, indifferent and insulated, I can only reply: There is, in one reporter's opinion, considerable evidence against that contention. But even if they are right, what have they got to lose? Because if they are right, and this instrument is good for nothing but to entertain, amuse and insulate, then the tube is flickering now and we will soon see that the whole struggle is lost.

This instrument can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire. But it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Otherwise it is merely wires and lights in a box. There is a great and perhaps decisive battle to be fought against ignorance, intolerance and indifference. This weapon of television could be useful.

Stonewall Jackson, who knew something about the use of weapons, is reported to have said, "When war comes, you must draw the sword and throw away the scabbard." The trouble with television is that it is rusting in the scabbard during a battle for survival.

Edward R Murrow
RTNDA (Radio Television News Directors Association) Convention
Chicago October 15, 1958

DOCUMENT FOUR.

The Watergate affair changed journalism in many ways, not the least of which was by launching the era of the journalist as celebrity. Woodward and Bernstein, portrayed, respectively, by Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffmann in the movie "All the President's Men," were pioneers in the now widespread phenomenon in which a handful of wealthy, glamorous journalists are as famous, if not more famous, than the people they cover. "Celebrity Journalists," a phrase coined in 1986 by James Fallows, abound these days, on television and in print. *People* magazine writes about them. *Vanity Fair* offers up flattering profiles. Their names appear in gossip columns and on society pages. When they come to small towns simply doing their jobs, their arrival can become front-page news.

A celebrity, writes Daniel E. Boorstin, historian and former head of the Library of Congress, "is a person who is known for his well-knownness." And he adds in an interview, "journalists

are the creators of well-knownness. In the process of creating well-knownness for others, it is not surprising that some of them become celebrities too. It is inevitable."

Few journalists embrace the celebrity label. Woodward scoffs at the notion that he's one. But that's not how the public sees it. The public reads about journalists dining at the White House, inviting Colin Powell over for dinner, sending their kids to school with Chelsea Clinton, playing tennis with presidential assistants, partying with Hollywood stars at affairs like the White House Correspondents Dinner, receiving mind-boggling fees for hour-long speaking engagements and spouting off on TV and radio on subjects they know little or nothing about. And while the media elite is a tiny slice of the profession, it plays a major role in shaping the public's negative perception of the press.

"The public feels that journalists are too aggressive in the way they play their watchdog role and they are doing it not because they are seeking the truth but to advance their careers," says Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. "The notion that journalists were the people, as was the case 30 or 40 years ago, is no longer the case because of the rise of celebrity journalism. I don't think this is the issue that most hurts journalism, but it's one of a cluster of things that has eroded the public confidence in the press."

The Watergate duo together played a major role in launching the current incarnation of the journalist as star. "Woodward and Bernstein seemed to start the trend where there's a lot more interest in the reporter than there ever seemed to be," says Maurice Beasley, who teaches journalism at the University of Maryland. "The publication of their book *All the President's Men* showed the public is more interested in learning about people who get the news." "But the public has always been fascinated by people who report the news," says Mitchell Stephens, journalism professor at New York University and author of a *History of News*. In the 1930s and 1940's, Walter Winchell, father of the newspaper gossip column, not only made people celebrities but was himself an influential and well-known figure. The focus shifted, however, from print journalists to their television counterparts as America became a TV-saturated culture. "I see no evidence that journalists are better known than they were in the past," Stephen says.

Alicia C. Shephard, *American Journalism Review*, September 1997.

DOCUMENT FIVE

The Murdoch Factor

In October 2003, the nonpartisan Program on International Policy Attitudes published a study titled "Misperceptions, the media and the Iraq war." It found that 60 percent of Americans believed at least one of the following: clear evidence had been found of links between Iraq and Al Qaeda; W.M.D. had been found in Iraq; world public opinion favored the U.S. going to war with Iraq.

The prevalence of these misperceptions, however, depended crucially on where people got their news. Only 23 percent of those who got their information mainly from PBS or NPR believed any of these untrue things, but the number was 80 percent among those relying primarily on *Fox News*. In particular, two-thirds of Fox devotees believed that the U.S. had "found clear evidence in Iraq that Saddam Hussein was working closely with the Al Qaeda terrorist organization."

So, does anyone think it's O.K. if Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, which owns *Fox News*, buys *The Wall Street Journal*?

The problem with Mr. Murdoch isn't that he's a right-wing ideologue. If that were all he was, he'd be much less dangerous. What he is, rather, is an opportunist who exploits a rule-free

media environment -- one created, in part, by conservative political power -- by slanting news coverage to favor whoever he thinks will serve his business interests.

In the United States, that strategy has mainly meant blatant bias in favor of the Bush administration and the Republican Party -- but last year Mr. Murdoch covered his bases by hosting a fund-raiser for Hillary Clinton's Senate re-election campaign.

In Britain, Mr. Murdoch endorsed Tony Blair in 1997 and gave his government favorable coverage, "ensuring," reports *The New York Times*, "that the new government would allow him to keep intact his British holdings."

And in China, Mr. Murdoch's organizations have taken care not to offend the dictatorship.

Now, Mr. Murdoch's people rarely make flatly false claims. Instead, they usually convey misinformation through innuendo. During the early months of the Iraq occupation, for example, Fox gave breathless coverage to each report of possible W.M.D.'s, with little or no coverage of the subsequent discovery that it was a false alarm. No wonder, then, that many Fox viewers got the impression that W.M.D.'s had been found.

When all else fails, Mr. Murdoch's news organizations simply stop covering inconvenient subjects.

Last year, Fox relentlessly pushed claims that the "liberal media" were failing to report the "good news" from Iraq. Once that line became untenable -- well, the Project for Excellence in Journalism found that in the first quarter of 2007 daytime programs on *Fox News* devoted only 6 percent of their time to the Iraq war, compared with 18 percent at *MSNBC* and 20 percent at *CNN*.

What took Iraq's place? Anna Nicole Smith, who received 17 percent of Fox's daytime coverage.

Defenders of Mr. Murdoch's bid for *The Journal* say that we should judge him not by *Fox News* but by his stewardship of the venerable *Times* of London, which he acquired in 1981. Indeed, the political bias of *The Times* is much less blatant than that of *Fox News*. But a number of former *Times* employees have said that there was pressure to slant coverage -- and everyone I've seen quoted defending Mr. Murdoch's management is still on his payroll.

In any case, do we want to see one of America's two serious national newspapers in the hands of a man who has done so much to mislead so many? (*The Washington Post*, for all its influence, is basically a Beltway paper, not a national one. The McClatchy papers, though their Washington bureau's reporting in the run-up to Iraq put more prestigious news organizations to shame, still don't have *The Journal's* ability to drive national discussion.)

There doesn't seem to be any legal obstacle to the News Corporation's bid for *The Journal*: F.C.C. rules on media ownership are mainly designed to prevent monopoly in local markets, not to safeguard precious national informational assets. Still, public pressure could help avert a Murdoch takeover. Maybe Congress should hold hearings.

If Mr. Murdoch does acquire *The Journal*, it will be a dark day for America's news media -- and American democracy. If there were any justice in the world, Mr. Murdoch, who did more than anyone in the news business to mislead this country into an unjustified, disastrous war, would be a discredited outcast. Instead, he's expanding his empire.

Paul Krugman, *The New York Times*, June 29, 2007