Chapter 2

Journalism in the market place

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A central argument of defenders of the free market is that freedom in the economic market is a necessary condition for democracy to flourish. The role of journalism and the press is central to this argument: they supply the link between the market and democracy.[1] A free market brings with it a free press that supplies the diversity of opinion and access to information that a citizenry requires in order to act in a democratic, responsible manner. The free market, journalism and democracy form an interdependent trinity of institutions in an open society. This liberal economic position has been prominent in recent debates concerning the First Amendment in the United States and the recent deregulation of the media in Europe.[2] In this paper I will attempt to prise these institutions apart. I will argue that, while journalism as a practice does have a necessary role in democratic societies, the market undermines the relation between journalism and democracy. There is a tension between the internal goals of journalism and the market contexts in which it operates; and the market inhibits the dissemination of information and diverse opinions required of a democratic society. In defending this position I will, for the most part, limit my discussion to journalism in a free market *per se*. Issues of monopoly in the press, while they are relevant to the points I raise, will not be discussed here.[3]

MARKETS, OWNERSHIP AND FREE SPEECH

Central to the argument for the free market in the field of journalism is that it ensures free speech. A free market is necessary for a free press and a free press is a central component of free speech. The view that a free press is simply a central application of a more general freedom of speech is a common one. On this view, for

example, in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States – 'Congress shall make no laws . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press' – 'freedom of the press' should be understood merely as a central instance of 'freedom of speech'. The amendment refers to one freedom, not two. However, the claim that a free press is simply one of the most important instances of free speech is mistaken, *if* by a 'free press' one means the freedom of a proprietor or editor to publish what they wish. This view of press freedom is presupposed by the Supreme Court's ruling on the *Miami Herald Publishing Co.* v. *Tornillo* case of 1974. In rejecting Tornillo's claim for space to reply to the *Miami Herald*'s attack on his character and candidature for state legislature, the court ruled that

> The choice of material to go into a newspaper, and the decisions made as to limitations of the size and content of the paper, and treatment of public issues and public officials – whether fair or unfair – constitute the exercise of editorial control and judgement.[4]

A point to note about this ruling is that the powers it refers to are not powers of free speech. They are, rather, powers to decide who has access to an organ of speech. To exercise such powers is not an exercise of a right of free speech as such, but of a power to decide who should use an organ for the exercise of a right to speech. In the Tornillo case, the paper had decided that a union leader should be denied such access. The freedom of the press is not in fact an instance of free speech, but refers, rather, to powers to control the speech of others. The question we must ask in considering the arguments for a free press, when it is thus defined in terms of editorial powers, is what legitimates such powers.

It is worth considering for a moment a parallel case of academic freedom and the powers of academic journals. Such journals have power over the access of academics to their pages. What legitimates such power is the process of peer review: papers submitted are selected for publication by placing them under the critical scrutiny of other members of the academic community who are competent to appraise the work. Such a system is not perfect – for example, there may be systematic biases against certain kinds of paper – but the process has a general legitimacy in that it appeals to a community of shared values and the acceptance, in general, of the competence of peers to judge the worth of a piece of work given such values.[5]

What legitimates editorial powers in the press? One possible answer is to appeal directly to property rights. Presses within the market place are private estates in print, and the editor has rights akin to those of any manager of a private estate in land – to include and exclude access to the estate. However, property rights provide a weak basis for the legitimation of the power to determine access to organs of speech, since they involve a restriction on the freedom of the propertyless.[6] While it is true that any editorial power entails restrictions, such exclusion of the propertyless, unlike the exclusion from academic journals of those whose work fails to meet certain internal standards, rests on no ethically significant boundaries which distinguish those with access from those without.[7] Correspondingly, just as there are good grounds for changing property rights in land to ensure the freedoms of the propertyless – either through use-rights within an area of private property, for example, rights of access by footpath; or forms of socialisation, for example, the creation of national trusts and parks – in so far as the power of editors is akin to those of private estate managers, there are good grounds for similar allowances for either use-rights within private estates in print, including rights of reply, for example, or the socialisation of such estates into public property. In so far as freedom of speech is concerned, socialised press estates may allow for greater possibilities for rights to use public organs for speech than do the private press estates that exist within a market system. Direct appeal to property rights fails to provide a satisfactory defence of editorial powers.[8]

However, there are other, more persuasive arguments for editorial rights of exclusion. It might be argued that the analogy between the editor and the manager of a private estate is an imperfect one, and that there are aspects in which his or her position can be closer to that of the peer-reviewer of an academic journal. Journalism is a practice with its own values and, relatedly, its own community structure. Systems of editorial control can reflect the judgements of peers within that community and in accordance with its values. Thus, while it may be the case that newspapers can turn into private fiefdoms of their owners, this need not be the case. And where it is the case, the goods of journalism are recognised to be in jeopardy. 'Editorial independence' has not been recognised. Hence the special arrangements and guarantees often involved in the ownership of newspapers in order to ensure such independence[9] and the special declarations owners sometimes make (although often with some

cynicism) to respect editorial independence.[10] Such arrangements are, to be sure, precarious,[11] but where they do exist the legitimacy of editorial powers rests on something more than mere property rights. Rather, it reflects the judgements of an editor who accepts the internal goals and values of journalism. Thus, in defining a free press as one in which editorial independence is maintained, one is not appealing to property rights but to the internal goods of journalism.

This argument is not sufficient to support private property and a free market in the media. As we have just noted, editorial independence can often conflict with proprietorial rights. Moreover, it is not the case that private property is a necessary condition for such independence. However, having distinguished the legitimacy of editorial powers from those of property rights, the above argument might be conjoined to traditional liberal argument for a free market in the press, that the interests of democracy are best served by a press that is not socialised, but operates within a decentralised market system. Two points are commonly made in this regard. First, that market arrangements encourage a diversity of opinion and best serve the democratic need for an informed citizenry capable of passing judgements on the central issues that face them. Second, and relatedly, the market is the best institutional arrangement for ensuring that the press can act as a check on government, as a 'fourth estate' that checks the powers of the other three. In the rest of this chapter I address these arguments. In the next section I give a brief account of the goods of journalism, and argue that such goods are well suited to the democratic goals which the press is often taken to serve. However, in the following section, I argue that the goods of journalism are in tension with the requirements of the market place, and that the market place, far from providing an institutional arrangement in which the needs of democracy are served, is in conflict with them. While the practice of journalism and the needs of democracy are well suited to each other, the market is a friend of neither. I finish by examining the special pressures this tension places on the journalist.

THE PRACTICE OF JOURNALISM

Certain human practices – medicine and education for example – have internal ends which are partially constitutive of the kind of activity they are.[12] Journalism is among such practices. Just as health is an internal and constitutive end of medicine, so truth-telling about

significant contemporary events is an internal and constitutive end of journalism.[13] As an end it distinguishes journalism from other practices akin to it, but distinct from it – for example those of pure entertainment. This is not to say that journalism always delivers the truth any more than it is true to say that medicine always delivers health. Rather, it is to say that where these practices do fail to deliver such goods, they fail in a special way. To criticise a doctor or medical institution for failing to provide adequate health care for patients is to make an internal criticism. It is to criticise them for failing to realise the very ends which the practice of medicine aims to serve. Likewise, to criticise a journalist, newspaper or radio or TV station for failing to report significant events truthfully is to accuse them of failing to perform that function constitutive of the practice. Thus while it is true that some doctors are bad doctors or that medical institutions may systematically fail to solve health problems – and perhaps even create them – it remains true that health as an end is constitutive of medicine.[14] Likewise, although some journalists may cease to report truthfully, and some newspapers may systematically distort the truth – or even become mere vehicles for entertainment produced by entertainers employing traditional journalistic skills[15] – it remains true that truth-telling is constitutive of journalism.

The same point can be made in another way. Consider what it is to be a cynical member of an occupation. To be a cynical journalist is to believe that truth-telling in journalism is a sham and that the practice is universally pursued for narrow self-interested aims. However, while the cynic does not believe that the goods of journalism are anywhere realised, either in his or her own work or that of others, the attitude presupposes a view of what the constitutive goods of journalism are supposed to be. The cynicism is parasitic on the acceptance of a shared view that the end of journalism is truth-telling. (I discuss the image of the cynical journalist further in the final section of this chapter.)

These constitutive ends of journalism also define the qualities characteristic of a good practitioner of the profession – the particular virtues and excellence of a journalist *as* journalist. Among these are those technical skills which are part of a journalist's craft – the ability to construct a story, to tell it well. However they also include broader ethical virtues which are associated with truth-telling – with the recognition and discovery of important truths and a willingness to report them. Thus typical virtues used by journalists to describe their peers are 'honest', 'perceptive', 'truthful'. Closely associated

with these virtues of honesty and truthfulness is that of integrity – for example the sub-editor who insists on rewriting a front-page story to eliminate systematic bias in it. I return to this point in the final section.

Another, more contested, virtue that is often raised here is that of 'objectivity'. The virtue of 'objectivity' is often rejected by some of the best journalists of our day. Thus James Cameron writes that:

> I do not see how a reporter attempting to define a situation involving some kind of ethical conflict can do it with sufficiently demonstrable neutrality to fulfil some arbitrary concept of 'objectivity'. It never occurred to me, in such a situation, to be other than subjective, and as obviously so as I could manage to be. I may not always have been satisfactorily balanced; I always tended to argue that objectivity was of less importance than the truth, and that the reporter whose technique was informed by no opinion lacked a very serious dimension.[16]

I will not attempt to discuss the question of objectivity in detail here. However, two comments are in order. First, Cameron's rejection of objectivity stays within the circle of values of journalism. Objectivity is rejected in terms of a contrast with 'truth' and later with the need to present an account that can be 'examined and criticised' such that it will:

> encourage an attitude of mind that will challenge and criticise automatically, thus to destroy the built-in advantages of all propaganda and special pleading – even the journalist's own.[17]

The criticism of objectivity stays within the particular set of virtues associated with truth-telling. Second, and relatedly, the rejection of objectivity in journalism appeals to an argument that is accepted by traditional defenders of objectivity in the social sciences – notably by Weber – that if values are to enter into the reportage of empirical matters of fact, it is better that they do so explicitly rather than implicitly.[18] This has particular importance in journalism: given the degree to which the selection and presentation of news is value-laden, the critical faculties of the audience are better served by making those values explicit. 'Objectivity' in the sense of reportage which best allows the audience to appreciate the complexities of a situation may be better served by non-objective presentation of events.

Journalism, then, is a practice constituted by its own goods and a set of virtues among its practitioners that are necessary for the

realisation of such goods. It follows from this that it makes sense to talk about a set of shared values to which journalists can appeal and – to return to the topic of the preceding section – such an appeal *might* be made to defend editorial independence. I say *might* here since it is not clear to me that editorial authority is the optimum way of enforcing those values – there are more democratic forms akin to peer-review that look more likely candidates – and the case for a more democratic internal structure to the press is a strong one. However, editorial control, where the editor recognisably enforces the internal values of journalism, does have a legitimacy which mere property rights do not.

However, the argument for a free press in the sense of the freedom of journalists to control the contents of their newspaper provides no argument for a free market in the media or for the private estates in print that such a market presupposes. In what follows I will argue that the market is systematically at odds with the values of journalism.

JOURNALISM IN THE MARKET AND THE FORUM

Journalism has traditionally been held to have a special role within democracies. The third Press Commission defined press freedom in terms of democratic responsibilities:

> We define the freedom of the press as that freedom from restraint which is essential to enable proprietors, editors and journalists to advance the public interest by publishing facts and opinions without which a democratic electorate cannot make responsible judgements.[19]

There are two components to the view that free journalism is a necessary condition for democracy. The first is that the media act as a watch-dog on government. Even where the press gains immense independent powers, it acts as a 'fourth estate' which provides a check on the other estates of government. The second is that the press is a necessary condition for an informed and critical citizenship. It provides information on major issues without which the public would not be able to make intelligent judgements. And it functions as a forum for public debate about such issues, serving to ensure that a diversity of opinions is heard.

It is clear that there is a necessary relation between the goods of journalism outlined in the last section and the functions that journalism is assumed to perform. Since truth-telling about significant

contemporary events is constitutive of journalistic practice, where excellence in journalism exists, journalism will serve the creation of an informed and critical political citizenry. For the liberal, this happy alliance of journalism and democracy is best served by a free market. It is the market, unrestrained by political power, that provides the best institutional framework to ensure that the press satisfies those needs. However, I shall argue in what follows that, on the contrary, the market undermines journalism's capacity to provide for an informed and critical citizenry.

The disruption that the market causes to the relationship between journalism and democracy can be stated in general terms thus: to survive within the market place, the press has to satisfy the preferences of its consumers. As de Tocqueville puts it: 'A newspaper can survive only on the condition of publishing sentiments or principles common to a large number of men.'[20] However, this market imperative is incompatible with both the internal goods of journalism and the democratic function it is meant to serve. In the first place it is incompatible with the diversity which the market is claimed to engender: far from encouraging a diversity of opinion, the market place encourages the producer to present news in a way which is congruent with the pre-existing values and beliefs of its audience. It does not pay to present news which is outside the dominant cultural framework of the audiences addressed. Hence, mass journalism will tend to work within the confines of the dominant culture in which it operates. Relatedly, the value of truth-telling becomes at best subsidiary in the presentation of news. For it is not always the case that the truth about significant events is what the consumer prefers to hear or read. Indeed, the critical argument on which democratic debate depends often relies on the citizen's being informed of events and presented with views which he or she would prefer not to hear. What is portrayed in the press, how it is portrayed and how much it is portrayed is, within a free market, shaped by consumer preference. What *ought* to be portrayed, how it *ought* to be portrayed and how much it *ought* to be portrayed for the purposes of democratic discussion might be quite at odds with such preferences. Hence, while truth-telling might be constitutive of journalism *as* a practice, the free market entails that *in* practice it plays a quite subsidiary role. The 'news value' of a story is rarely a function of its truth value. It is, rather, a function of the perceived market at which the story is aimed.[21]

The market systematically shapes what is reported in a news story.

The consequence of this is not so much the reporting of falsehoods in the media – although this occurs[22] – but the failure to report what is of significance and a simplified presentation of events.[23] The democratic citizenry is rarely fully informed by the media that are supposed to serve it. Moreover, failure to report often results in the presentation of partial truths which, while not false in themselves, may set up implicatures among readers that are false. Something like the Gricean *principle of quantity*[24] assumed in standard conversation – that one supplies all relevant information – will convert partial truths into falsehoods. For example, to report a war solely in terms of conflict with a particular tyrant – which it may in part be – sets up implicatures that it is nothing but such a war – which is normally false. A free market in the press will tend to work against the ideal of an informed and critical citizenry. It rarely confronts its consumers with information, beliefs and knowledge which do not conform to their pre-existing preference – because it cannot afford to do so.

This market failure is compounded by similar economic pressures on the supply of information. Gathering information is costly, and there are pressures on newspapers to accept ready-made news stories from potential suppliers. Those with a particular viewpoint to present will effectively subsidise the media in the costs of gathering news – hence the growth of press agents and public relations officers. In doing so they are forced to present the press with versions of events that will sell within a particular market niche. This in turn infects democratic debate. Consider, for example, the differences within the Green movement concerning the activities of Greenpeace.[25] Greenpeace is highly effective in terms of media coverage. Its effectiveness is a consequence of its engaging in dramatic forms of action that make classically good news stories. It literally makes good 'news'. It carries with it the necessary camera equipment to ensure that it has good footage to pass on to the media – dramatic shots of small craft dwarfed by environmentally destructive giants, or of bloodstained white, large-eyed cuddly seals – and courts the journalists who cover their events. However, this approach poses problems for those who want a full democratic debate on the issues. The drama value of an issue may bear little relevance to its environmental significance. There is a danger that the environmental debate gets driven by an agenda which is set not in terms of the environmental importance of the issue but in terms of what makes for good publicity. As Yearly notes, the market encourages environmentalists

> to attend to what are perceived to be the most popular campaign themes; consequently the market reinforces the tendency for relatively unpopular issues to be marginalized. Such issues are nobody's favourite campaign topics even if the organizations privately regard them as important.[26]

The case of Canadian seals is a good example: in terms of either cruelty or endangered status there are more pressing cases which go unnoticed.

The problem of the economic constraints on news gathering also has a second consequence for the democratic functions of the press. The major subsidisers of news information are the governments over which the press is supposed to act as watch-dog. Through the lobby system in the United Kingdom and the system of press briefing in the United States, governments provide information on the cheap which is presented in a way that will yield maximal political benefits.[27] The media become heavily dependent on just those institutions on which they are taken to be a check. Moreover, like environmental groups, politicians will attempt to present information in a way that maximises its news value. The market in news shapes their presentation. The consequence is a deterioration of both democratic accountability and debate.

It might be objected that these arguments for the claim that the market distorts the relation of journalism and democracy depend on a number of assumptions about the preferences of consumers that are open to challenge. I have assumed that preferences are homogeneous, and hence that diversity of opinion is not served by the market. Moreover, I have assumed a particular content to such preferences – that there exists a widespread preference for simplified news, that there are few second-order preferences for one's existing preferences to be challenged, and so on. These objections have some power. Journalism and the market for news take place within a wider cultural, political and social context. Within particular periods of history and within particular social groups there can exist widespread preferences for news that is truthful and critical of accepted assumptions. Even given the absence of such self-critical preferences, the homogeneity assumption is weak. While it might be true, as de Tocqueville asserts, that 'a newspaper can survive only on the condition of publishing sentiments or principles common to a large number of men', it is not the case that such sentiments must be shared by *all* people. While each paper may not present its readers

with unpalatable truths, what is palatable will differ across different groups in society. Hence, while there may be a conflict between the free market and a press that will function to create a critical and informed citizenry, there is no conflict between the market and diversity. Indeed, part of de Tocqueville's point was that in a pluralistic culture a diversity of association will encourage a diversity of opinion, whereas in a culture that has become homogeneous such diversity decreases. This claim is part of the central pessimistic message of *Democracy in America* concerning the growth of homogeneity and mediocrity. However, there is no reason to believe that de Tocqueville's picture of a mass homogeneous society has been realised. And given that it has not, the free market in the media is not incompatible with diversity.

A full response to these points would entail a detailed discussion of the relationship between markets, preferences and culture which is beyond the scope of this chapter. I confine myself here to two points of particular significance.

First, with respect to the assumptions about the content of preferences, while it is true that critical preferences can exist – and I do not want to suggest with theorists of mass society that it is impossible for the ordinary person to have such preferences – the problems of journalism and democracy need to start from where we are, that is, a context in which market-driven media do not appear to respond to such preferences. Moreover, the media cannot be treated as entirely passive agents in this regard. The media reproduce the preferences to which they respond. The difficulty in establishing critical media that accord with the ends of journalism is part of the problem of developing a critical political citizenry with preferences for the products of such media.

Second, with respect to the assumptions concerning homogeneity, there are limits to diversity. While modern societies may not be homogeneous, there are cultural and political boundaries within which most of the media operate. Diversity is circumscribed. Furthermore, diversity is limited by the nature of the markets in which the media operate. The commercial media exist in two markets: they sell their products to an audience and an audience to advertisers. Not all audiences are the same from the advertisers' perspective – only some form a potential market which it pays to address. A section of the population which has little purchasing power is in general less attractive to advertisers, and hence a newspaper that articulates its views will fail in its second market. Hence, the diversity of the press

does not always reflect the diversity of a population. Thus, for example, the decline of the radical press in the UK has been a consequence not of a decline in readers – readership has sometimes increased during periods of decline – but rather of the lack of advertising revenue.[28] Likewise those minority groups which lack significant purchasing power lack a representative press. Advertising as a source of income limits diversity.

This said, within the constraints noted it is true that a limited diversity can be expected to arise from a free market. Furthermore, it is possible that such diversity sometimes serves some democratic ends. Where a government is seen to be opposed to some particular interest represented by a press, then one will expect criticism of that government via the media. Even given the state's power as a source of cheap news, the critical functions of the press undoubtedly do exist. What is badly served by the press is not the articulation of views opposed to that of an incumbent government, but the existence of an informed and critically engaged citizenry knowledgeable about the major issues that collectively face them.

A free market in the media serves a democracy, but a democracy of a particular kind. Democracy is served where it acts as a political market place. That is, in so far as democracy serves principally as a means of interest aggregation, acting in the manner of a surrogate market satisfying preferences in which votes serve as a surrogate currency, free-market media can serve as one means by which the perceived self-interests and opinions of particular groups are articulated, albeit those with greater purchasing power having a larger degree of influence. However, in so far as democracy is not a market but a forum in which informed citizens rationally debate those issues which face them, then the free market in the media serves democracy ill. While, properly constituted, journalism as a practice would serve that function, the market as an institutional framework for the media will tend to subvert the exercise of that function. Democracy as a forum is undermined by market-driven media.[29]

The arguments of this section are open to a final general response: while it may be true that market-driven media may not serve democracy as well as might be hoped, the alternative of media run from a centralised state will serve none of the functions demanded by democracy. The market, by decentralising power across different owners, is the only feasible framework in which a press capable of preserving democracy can exist.[30] This argument must be questioned, however. It reflects an assumption that is common in discussion of

the market – that there exist just two feasible systems of information distribution: a centralised state-dominated system, or a decentralised market-led system. I have argued elsewhere that this dichotomy is a false one. Even within existing societies, non-market but state-independent and decentralised sources of information exist. The scientific community, for example, although it is now under market pressure, has traditionally relied on a decentralised but non-market institutional framework.[31] Within existing market societies such institutions exist with respect to the media, and I refer here not principally to public broadcasting institutions, but to other islands in which journalists have collectively attempted to realise journalistic practice, such as the Panos Institute.[32] Non-market, socialised and decentralised media serving the goals of both journalism and democracy as a forum are not a political impossibility.[33]

JOURNALISTS IN THE MARKET PLACE

> The specialised 'virtuoso', the vendor of his objectified and reified faculties, does not just become the [passive] observer in society: he also lapses into a contemplative attitude *vis-à-vis* the working of his own objectified and reified faculties . . . This phenomenon can be seen at its most grotesque in journalism. Here it is subjectivity itself, knowledge, temperament and powers of expression that are reduced to an abstract mechanism, functioning autonomously and divorced from both the personality of the 'owner' and from the material and concrete nature of the subject matter in hand. The journalist's 'lack of convictions', the prostitution of his experiences and beliefs is comprehensible only as the apogee of capitalist reification.[34]

A popular picture of the journalist is that of the hardened and cynical individual for whom nothing, not even the truth, counts against 'a good story'. (This is popular in fiction – see for example Mr Flack in Henry James's *The Reverberator* and Lousteau and the corrupted Lucien in Balzac's *Lost Illusions*.) I do not want to claim that this picture is a wholly accurate one – any more than is that of the prostituted journalist that Lukács draws. Lukács, like Balzac, tends to view journalists as corrupted poets, and fails to appreciate the internal ends of journalism. However, these pictures of the journalist highlight a real problem that the journalist faces. The journalist exists in two worlds: he or she enters a practice that is characterised by a commitment to truth-telling, and at the same time is an

employee who works for a wage and is expected to produce a story of the kind demanded by his or her newspaper, magazine or TV station. The nature of such stories is determined by a market with which the journalist might have no sympathy.

These two demands on the journalist can clearly conflict. Where this occurs, the journalist exhibits vices and virtues characteristic of the trade. On the one hand, the conflict engenders a cynicism concerning the values constitutive of journalism and the divorce Lukács describes between the journalist's written word and his or her own beliefs and temperament. The journalist's personality and ethos are subverted by the dictates of his or her employee. On the other hand, in biographies of particular journalists, mention of the virtue of integrity is common. Such virtue is required not only in the peformance of a practice, but in resisting those external pressures which undermine its goods.[35] The history of journalism is full of examples of principled resignation by editors and journalists.[36]

The tension, then, between the practice of journalism and the market framework in which it operates produces characteristic virtues and vices. This is not to say that journalists fall into two classes – villains and heroes. Many, I suspect, find themselves forced to compromise the constitutive values of journalism, while at the same time insisting that some of the standards be enforced. The copy-editor may still have reservations about the final form of a story he or she has rewritten, yet be able in the process of rewriting to remove some of the bias, simplification and falsehood. While Lukács might be right in drawing attention to the special tension that exists for journalists between their beliefs and activities, that tension need not always be expressed in a 'lack of convictions' and the 'prostitution of his experiences and beliefs'. Journalists, like other workers, are not totally passive in their attitude to their own faculties. They also have the capacity to resist the pressures of the market place. The constitutive values of journalism have some power through such resistance, despite the countervailing tendencies of the market place.[37]

NOTES

1 See M. Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 16ff. For a clear restatement of this position see D. Kelly and R. Donway, 'Liberalism and Free Speech', in J. Lichtenberg (ed.), *Democracy and the Mass Media* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 66–101.

2 See for example the recent collection of essays in Lichtenberg, *Democracy and the Mass Media*. On developments in Europe see D. McQuail and K. Siune (eds), *New Media Politics* (London, Sage, 1986).
3 For a discussion of these issues see J. Curran and J. Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain*, 4th edn, (London, Routledge, 1991).
4 Cited in W. van Alstyne, *Interpretations of the First Amendment* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1984), p.74.
5 I discuss these points in more detail in J. O'Neill, 'Property in Science and the Market', *The Monist*, 73 (1990), pp. 601–20. The publication of academic books is an interesting half-way house in this respect. It often employs similar peer-review mechanisms, but also brings external goals into play, in particular that of marketability. The size of the projected audience becomes more important.
6 See G.A. Cohen, 'Capitalism, Freedom and the Proletariat', in A. Ryan (ed.), *The Idea of Freedom* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 9–26, and 'Illusions about Private Property and Freedom', in J. Mepham and D. Ruben (eds), *Issues in Marxist Philosophy, Volume 4: Social and Political Philosophy* (Hassocks, Sussex, Harvester Press, 1981), pp. 223–42.
7 Thus while Gray is right to note against Cohen that all systems of property involve some restrictions on access, even if these might be voluntary (J. Gray, 'Against Cohen on Proletarian Unfreedom', *Social and Political Philosophy*, 6 (1989), pp.77–112), he fails to acknowledge the special problems with private property – that the boundary between those with and those without access is normally an ethically arbitrary one. In this regard it is interesting to note the way that owners of private property attempt to present themselves as guardians of particular values: for example, owners of land as agents of conservation. Such presentations are normally fairly flimsy.
8 There are of course a number of replies that might be made to the line of argument thus developed. For example, powers of exclusion from the press could be defended by reference to property rights on the grounds that those excluded have, within a market economy, the capacity to set up presses of their own. This argument fails for empirical reasons – it is simply false to say that all have the capacity within a market economy to reply through their own presses. (For example, the Third Royal Commission on the Press found that, in 1977, to establish a new local evening paper would cost between £2 million and £3 million: Royal Commission on the Press, Final Report, Cmnd 6810 (London, HMSO, 1977).) Other arguments in defence of private property in the media will be considered below.
9 See, for example, H. Evans, *Good Times, Bad Times* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), chs 6–8.
10 Typical is Maxwell's statement on taking over the Mirror group: 'under my management editors will be free to produce their newspapers without interference with their journalistic skills and judgement' (cited in J. Pilger, *Heroes* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1986), p. 516).
11 See for example Evans, op. cit., pp. 400–5 and *passim* and Pilger,

op. cit., ch. 44 on failures to honour guarantees by Murdoch and Maxwell respectively.

12 This point is developed well by Aristotle: see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. T. Irwin, (Indianapolis, IN, Hackett, 1985), 1097b 25–7 and 1098a 8–15. See also Plato, *The Republic* trans. D. Lee, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974), 342d 2–7. Compare A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd edn (London, Duckworth, 1985), ch. 14. For a more general discussion of the ways in which markets can undermine the constitutive goods of such practices see R. Keat, 'Consumer Sovereignty and the Integrity of Practices' in R. Keat and N. Abercrombie (eds), *Enterprise Culture* (London, Routledge, 1991), pp. 216–30.

13 For an argument that truth-telling should be an internal goal of the media quite generally, fictional as well as factual, see J. Mepham, 'Television Fictions: Quality and Truth Telling', *Radical Philosophy*, 57 (1991), pp. 20–7.

14 As Aristotle notes, the potentiality medicine has for the production of illness is derived from its primary function of health making (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. J. Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2 (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1984), 1046b 4–15). The same point might apply to journalism concerning the relation of truth-telling and the actual production of falsehoods.

15 See for example Murdoch's telling comment during the Hitler diary hoax: 'we are in the entertainment business' (Evans, op. cit., p. 404). It is the case that some newspapers are no longer vehicles for the practice of journalism and are not perceived to be so – there is evidence for example that *Sun* readers are sceptical of the accuracy of what they read, while papers like the *Sunday Sport* are explicitly unconcerned with the truth value of that they 'report'. This distancing of newspaper production from the values of truth-telling and its recharacterisation as entertainment allows the easy relativism exhibited by Murdoch in his Edinburgh lecture of 1989 in which he identifies 'quality' with 'satisfaction of market preferences'. None of this is to deny the value of entertainment: it is rather to contest the claim that the practice of journalism can be treated purely as entertainment.

16 J. Cameron, *Point of Departure* (London, Grafton Books, 1969) p. 74. J. Pilger, 'A Question of Balance' in his *Heroes*, pp. 475–507, develops a similar position. For a different view that takes objectivity to be much closer to truth-telling than Cameron assumes see J.B. Abramson, 'Four Criticisms of Press Ethics' in Lichtenberg, op. cit., pp. 229–68.

17 Cameron, op. cit., pp. 74–5.

18 See M. Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. E. Shils and H. Finch (New York, Free Press, 1949).

19 Royal Commission on the Press, Cmnd 6810, op. cit., ch. 2, paragraph 3. Cf. Cameron, op. cit., p. 72.

20 A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. II (New York, Knopf, 1945), p.113. Compare Balzac: 'Every newspaper is . . . a shop which sells to the public whatever shades of opinion it wants' (H. de Balzac, *Lost Illusions*, trans. H. Hunt, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971) p. 314).

21 Cf. R. Entman, *Democracy Without Citizens* (Oxford, Oxford University

Press, 1989), and W.L. Bennet, *News: The Politics of Illusion*, 2nd edn (New York, Longman, 1988), ch. 1. For examples of the departure of news value from truth value see S. Cohen and J. Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News*, 2nd edn (London, Constable, 1981).

22 See for example Goldsmiths' Media Research Group, *Media Coverage of London Councils: Interim Report* (London, Goldsmiths' College, University of London, 1987).

23 Hence the standard complaints about modern journalism – that it decontextualises events, prefers news that fits standard narrative structures and presents it in these terms, personalises domestic and international politics, has a systematic bias towards European and American issues, and so on.

24 H. Grice, 'Logic and Conversation', in P. Cole and J.L. Morgan (eds), *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts* (New York, Academic Press, 1975), pp. 41–58.

25 For a good example of criticisms of Greenpeace on these grounds see E. Draper, 'The Greenpeace Media Machine', *New Internationalist*, no. 171 (May 1987), pp. 8–9. Related misgivings have been voiced by the publicity director of Greenpeace – see J. Porritt and D. Winner, *The Coming of the Greens* (London, Fontana, 1988), p. 94.

26 S. Yearly, *The Green Case* (London, Harper Collins 1991), p. 75.

27 On the Westminster lobby system see J. Tunstall, *The Westminster Lobby Correspondents* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970); and J. Margach, *The Abuse of Power* (London, W.H. Allen, 1978). On the American context see L. Sigal, *Reporters and Officials* (Lexington, MA, Heath & Co., 1973).

28 See Curran and Seaton, op. cit., pp. 36–41, 95–9; and R. Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1961) p. 187f. and 'The Growth and the Role of the Media', in C. Gardner (ed.), *Media Politics and Culture* (London, Macmillan, 1979), pp. 14–24. Cf. F. Hirsch and D. Gordon, *Newspaper Money* (London, Hutchinson, 1975), and J. Keane, *The Media and Democracy* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991) pp. 81–8.

29 On the contrast between democracy as a market and democracy as a forum see J. Elster, 'The Market and the Forum', in J. Elster and A. Hylland (eds), *Foundations of Social Choice Theory* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 103–32.

30 See Friedman, op. cit, Ch. 1, and W. Evers 'Liberty of the Press under Socialism', *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 6 (1989), pp. 211–34 for a statement of this position.

31 See O'Neill, op. cit.

32 The Panos Institute is one of a number of small indpendent information gathering and dissemination agencies which includes journalists on its staff. It is particularly concerned with environmental and Third World issues.

33 For a development of this point see J. Keane, op. cit., pp. 144ff.

34 G. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (London, Merlin Press, 1971), p.100.

35 See MacIntyre, op. cit., ch. 14.

36 For just two examples see the resignation of Gardner from the editorship of the *Daily News* in 1919 (S. Koss, *Fleet Street Radical*, London, Allen Lane, 1973, ch. 11) and Cameron's self-deprecating descriptions of his own departures from the *Daily Express* and the *Picture Post* (J. Cameron, op. cit., chs 5 and 9).

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