

Interview with Noam Chomsky

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Our comments for prof. Chomsky before this interview: Science today is a controversial issue from different point of view: One, because industrial and financial scopes of science are its development focus. Then, social sciences no always could bring profits as we get in other fields. Other thing, maybe the most interesting for us, and maybe linked with our word above is (specially after postmodernism tendencies), the method of social sciences, its prestigious and outcomes have many hermeneutics problems that (apparently) natural and formal sciences do not have. I think postmodernism stream of thought confused us in many cases more than the light that they shade on social problems. And finally, we need to evaluate how is the current contribution of some social sciences as economics and linguistics (and other) to criticize and build a better human being, from what kind of scientific rigor, because postmodernism brought the idea that all the border are broken and all limited too, then now we have the dictatorship of the particular true all the time. And, universal are desired for scientific and academic thought, in good way of course: Universals without absolutes. From this scope we have some questions:

E.F. Are we living confused times after postmodernism currents in social sciences especially about their scientific method purposes?

N.CH. Anyone who takes postmodernist currents seriously is likely to be very confused. There's a simple solution. Don't take them seriously unless they have some merit, and my own feeling, for what it is worth, is that they very rarely do.

E.F. Are postmodernism tendencies really and new conservative version? I mean, with that kind of "excessive freedom" all stay in the same place; on the other hand, if you can get universal thought it could be so much important to build a fairer world.

N.CH. I do not think that most of this makes any sense, so cannot really comment.

E.F. It is clear for us that J Habermas philosopher took distance from postmodernism thinkers, and Habermas gave us many works around social science classification and method. How close are you from his ideas inside this debate?

CH. I often tend to like what he says, but frankly, I do not find it very useful or insightful.

EF. Could current neurolinguistics contribute to build a fairer world linked with socio-economical differences and the unfair world –in the way Amartya Sen talks about it in his book *Development as Freedom*?

CH. Neurolinguistics is very far from such aspirations.

Finally. Of course, this question is a huge risk. What are the most important issues you are working just now? Some academics persons say you abounded the hard linguistics and science and now politic activity occupy all your time. Of course, we appreciate it and your social activity has illuminated many of us. But the point is, may new develops from

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hard linguistics, or hard social sciences could help in the same way or better to human being. Then, what is your advice for new linguistics researcher what paths to walk?

Many academics circulate gossip without taking the trouble to look at actual work. Those who do know that I continue to do technical work in linguistics. One recent technical publication just appeared in *Lingua*, one of the major linguistics journals, and more is on the way. That has been the case without a break. These are some of the topics I am working on, and there are others in other domains: philosophy, general cognitive science, social-political issues, etc., the kinds of things I've been writing about for many years.

Linguistics at its best is concerned with the most fundamental and distinctive of human capacities, human language, the source of much of our creative and independent lives and our social interactions. However, it is not likely to help us become better human beings. That is a different topic. As for young researchers, it is an exciting field with many choices and prospects. I wouldn't presume to give advice as to which paths an individual should follow.