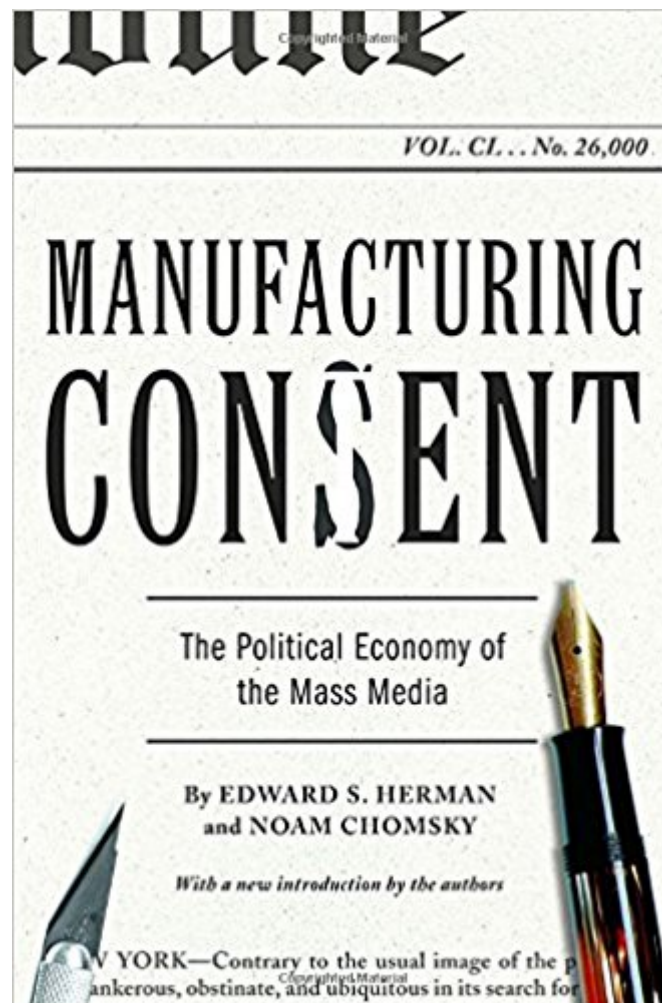


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Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy Of The Mass Media



Synopsis

In this pathbreaking work, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky show that, contrary to the usual image of the news media as cantankerous, obstinate, and ubiquitous in their search for truth and defense of justice, in their actual practice they defend the economic, social, and political agendas of the privileged groups that dominate domestic society, the state, and the global order. Based on a series of case studies—including the media's dichotomous treatment of "worthy" versus "unworthy" victims, "legitimizing" and "meaningless" Third World elections, and devastating critiques of media coverage of the U.S. wars against Indochina—Herman and Chomsky draw on decades of criticism and research to propose a Propaganda Model to explain the media's behavior and performance. Their new introduction updates the Propaganda Model and the earlier case studies, and it discusses several other applications. These include the manner in which the media covered the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement and subsequent Mexican financial meltdown of 1994-1995, the media's handling of the protests against the World Trade Organization, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund in 1999 and 2000, and the media's treatment of the chemical industry and its regulation. What emerges from this work is a powerful assessment of how propagandistic the U.S. mass media are, how they systematically fail to live up to their self-image as providers of the kind of information that people need to make sense of the world, and how we can understand their function in a radically new way.

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Customer Reviews

An absolutely brilliant analysis of the ways in which individuals and organizations of the media are influenced to shape the social agendas of knowledge and, therefore, belief. Contrary to the popular conception of members of the press as hard-bitten realists doggedly pursuing unpopular truths, Herman and Chomsky prove conclusively that the free-market economics model of media leads inevitably to normative and narrow reporting. Whether or not you've seen the eye-opening movie, buy this book, and you will be a far more knowledgeable person and much less prone to having your beliefs manipulated as easily as the press. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Herman of Wharton and Chomsky of MIT lucidly document their argument that America's government and its corporate giants exercise control over what we read, see and hear. The authors identify the forces that they contend make the national media propagandistic the major three being the motivation for profit through ad revenue, the media's close links to and often ownership by corporations, and their acceptance of information from biased sources. In five case studies, the writers show how TV, newspapers and radio distort world events. For example, the authors maintain that "it would have been very difficult for the Guatemalan government to murder tens of thousands over the past decade if the U.S. press had provided the kind of coverage they gave to the difficulties of Andrei Sakharov or the murder of Jerzy Popieluszko in Poland." Such allegations would be routine were it not for the excellent research behind this book's controversial charges. Extensive evidence is calmly presented, and in the end an indictment against the guardians of our freedoms is substantiated. A disturbing picture emerges of a news system that panders to the interests of America's privileged and neglects its duties when the concerns of minority groups and the underclass are at stake. First serial to the Progressive. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The authors wrote in the Preface to this 1988 book, "In this book, we sketch out a 'propaganda model' and apply it to the performance of the mass media of the United States. This effort reflects our belief, based on many years of study of the workings of the media, that they serve to mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity, and that their choices, emphases, and omissions can often be understood best, and sometimes with striking clarity and insight, by analyzing them in such terms." They note that "The great media also depend on the government for more general policy support" (Pg. 13), and that "Time magazine hardly attempts to

hide the face that it takes its cues from Washington." (Pg. 118) Government-controlled "experts" and "pseudo-events" are used to attract media attention and "channel it in the direction of the propaganda line." (Pg. 139) Concerning Vietnam, they assert that "principled objection to the war as ... a war crime is inexpressible. It is not part of the spectrum of discussion... It is not present even to be refuted. Rather, the idea is unthinkable." (Pg. 252) The media encourage spirited debate, criticism, and dissent, "as long as these remain faithfully within the system of presuppositions and principles that constitute an elite consensus, a system so powerful as to be internalized largely without awareness." (Pg. 302) And it does this "without significant overt coercion." (Pg. 206) They state, "We do not accept the view the freedom of expression must be defended ... by virtue of its expression to some higher good; rather, it is a value in itself." (Pg. 298) This book is a challenging, provocative, and thought-provoking discussion, and well worth study by anyone, of any political persuasion.

In "Manufacturing Consent" there are too many concepts to list in this critical and influential work by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman. Anyone who receives information from any form of media should read this book. If you're curious and/or question the information that you're bombarded with every single day and night of your life, check out "Manufacturing Consent." So many questions, and more importantly so many answers, supported by data. Backed by facts. Who decides and chooses what we read and don't read? What we see and don't see? What we hear and don't hear? The power of the media and its influence often stems from not only what is reported but what is *not* reported. This, is power. And, who actually owns the major media conglomerates? What we, the common people, discuss over a cup of coffee or beer at the dinner table is spoon-fed to us. The "topics of the day," week, or year, are handed to us on a dish. And naively, we eat what's on the plate. This book is one of Chomsky's most influential and heuristic books. And, there is a reason why Noam Chomsky is blacklisted from the (MSM) mainstream media in the United States, while being the 8th most cited author in the world for over 20 years.

WORTHY VS. UNWORTHY VICTIMS

The concept of the "worthy" vs. "unworthy" victim is statistically studied in "Manufacturing Consent." A worthy victim is abused or murdered in an enemy country by a perceived or actual enemy, whereas an unworthy victim is abused or killed in a "friendly" country. Whether a nation or movement is an "enemy" or "friend" is defined by the mainstream media, which is no doubt firstly influenced by the U.S. government, whose foreign policy establishes the rules, or teams, if you will. One example of a worthy victim noted was Polish priest and solidarity supporter Jerzy Popieluszko. A perfect example of news creation and news management of propaganda. The Polish secret police abducted, bound

and gagged, and murdered Popieluszko and threw his body into a reservoir. The media response and coverage of this was comprehensive, emotional front-page news. But this case, is compared to others. Who chooses to run a story front-page? For how many days? Yes, Popieluszko was a worthy victim to be reported on, but why were so many other "worthy victims" ignored. Ideological management by the mainstream media. Another more detailed example of this is in the section covering The Indochine Conflicts in Laos and Cambodia in "Manufacturing Consent." After reading "Manufacturing Consent" we can recognize our new "heroes" and "worthy victims" of today: with the recent Iraq conflict the media is using the "Cult of the Fallen Soldier," which a concept originally created by the Germans, hundreds of years ago. Further reporting includes adjectives used to describe the "heroism" and "bravery" of soldiers in military conflict. The specific acts are almost never specifically detailed, nor the details corroborated. Weasel Words. This was very common in Vietnam and now is used in Iraq. Some individual fighting for the "good guys" is labeled a "hero," but we are not informed of the heroic act(s) that he did. Was it documented? As for the term "brave," Perhaps he or she was. We don't know, because we're not told. A recent example is the case of Jessica Lynch. This does not only apply to the false myth of Jessica Lynch, but is used throughout these military-media campaigns to cover all of the participants, be they military, military families, civilian, bureaucrats, (e.b. Paul Bremer) and politicians. "Manufacturing Consent" is timeless, and we see the mainstream media today function exactly the same way today as it did when this book was written. It's just that the "bad guys" who "threaten" the US and its 5,100+ nuclear warheads have changed. The fact that this book was written in the late 1980s reinforces the facts that only the players have changed, yet the game remains the same. Many citizens of the world view "reality" that is carefully constructed for them, and often through an "ideological" lens. There is comprehensive and pervasive censorship in America. The filtering of the info we receive is not about the false "Left vs. Right" paradigm. It's about the paradigm of perception.

It makes one aware of the biases of mass media so that one can read it critically and thereby have a better chance at becoming informed. Like all of Chomsky's work, this book is critical but rational; always tolerant and never lapsing into leftist jargon or polemic. I just wish the rest of the left could learn from him.

Interesting information, but it is a bit of a hard read.

I spent twenty five years in the magazine business, so I have a little insight to the

"publisher-advertiser" relationship. You never took a position contrary to the advertisers position or cause. You would never show the advertiser's product in any negative way, in fact, you tended to glorify it. These weren't written or spoken rules, but you damn well had better follow the unsaid code. Chomsky has it right - the media is for the money and least of all the reader.

The book excellently explains how Politics and self interests are the prime motivators for most of the big actions in the world

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