

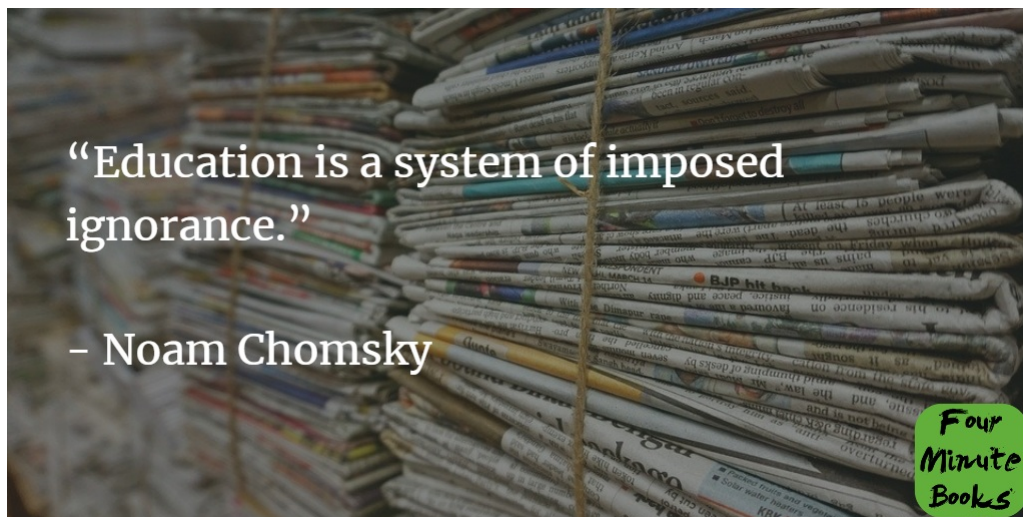
Manufacturing Consent Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Manufacturing Consent* reveals how the upper-class controls and skews the news to share what they want.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Do you ever watch the news and ask yourself what the motivations are for a station sharing a particular story? Information should be informative, entertaining, and amusing, but is it always this way?

The mass media has a dark side to it that you may not have thought of before. In addition to entertaining us, these sources also promote certain social norms and behaviors. The government and other people who control the country are more in charge of what you see on the television than you might think.

These are the claims of Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Chomsky argues that with an unequal division of wealth and power comes a wildly uneven distribution of stories that favors the upper class. Even though the media boasts objective, trustworthy reports, they are only a puppet of those who are really in charge.

Here are 3 of the most fascinating lessons from this book:

1. The media covers events in ways that favor the elite ruling class.
2. Because of the need for advertising revenue, news outlets focus on stories that will benefit their advertisers.

3. Experts give facts and information that are really just a form of the upper class controlling the media with their money.

Get ready to blow the lid open on the problems with mass media! Let's begin!

Lesson 1: The elite ruling class control what news the media covers.

At first glance into the ideas behind this book, you might say you've seen the media criticize someone who is rich or powerful. But did you stop to think that their condemnation could be the result of another person who is more rich and powerful paying them off?

As Qui-Gon Jinn put it in Star Wars Episode I, "there's always a bigger fish."

Publishers of news will always favor the elite in one way or another. If harshness against the rich, who govern what these outlets share, comes from someone outside the upper class, news outlets merely ignore and suppress it.

Take the Watergate scandal for example. Appearing to criticize Richard Nixon, the news was actually only a puppet of another ruling class-the Democrats. The events around the scandal were harmful to the Democrats, and their aim was to improve their image again.

At the same time, government agencies illegally spied on the small Socialist Workers Party. **But the media didn't make any effort to cover this act because it's masters, the ruling class, didn't care about the little guys.**

Political and financial incentives that benefit the elite govern what the news shares, and what it keeps quiet. Many of these top earners and power-wielders are big business owners. Their large corporations contribute a lot of material for media outlets, who rely on these companies heavily. Thus, the wealthy and powerful have a tight grip on what the media talk about and what they snuff out.

Lesson 2: Advertiser interests govern what the news shares because of their payments to news stations.

To make it in the media world, you've got to pay for expensive reporters and publishing equipment. Add to this the competitive nature of the industry and you've got a recipe for easy disaster. That is unless you've got the cash to back up your station.

This is why advertisers play such a large part in the reporting and publishing business. But you can't get sponsorship without making those advertisers happy. That means the coverage a news station provides is almost always biased. And who controls these advertisers? You guessed it, the rich and powerful.

Consider for a moment what happened to one TV network in the United States who lost their advertising funding. The station aired a documentary on the malpractice of some international companies in Third World countries. This upset their funder because it made big business look bad.

Some programs even get wiped from the schedule because it messes with the “buying mood” of potential customers. More serious shows, like documentaries and dramas, are shadowed by lighter entertainment like sit-coms to help drive sales.

The end interest of these corporation owners and other big-wigs is to maximize sales. Thus, they adjust their advertisement payments in ways that help them target wealthier audiences that will buy more products and make them more money.

Lesson 3: The upper class pays for experts to share their skewed findings on media outlets.

How often have you seen something to the effect of “experts say...” in the news or other media? I’ve often found myself quoting some of their statements. Now, I am a bit more leery of the accuracy of what “experts” tell us.

Not only are most experts just as good at predicting things as the rest of us, but they are also paid by the rich and powerful.

What may seem to be an authoritative and objective report of worldwide phenomenon is a mere bribery scandal meant to help the elite. Facts and information from these authorities is only a way for the dominant wealthy to propagate their opinions through the media.

Let’s look at the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II as an example of experts skewing reports to favor the elite. A Turkish national attempted the murder, but two hired “experts” put the blame on the Soviet Union instead. People ate up the story even though it was based on questionable evidence and easily invalidated. The expert’s credibility pushed a way of thinking that benefited the powerful.

Manufacturing Consent Review

I wanted to like Manufacturing Consent more than I actually did after reading it. The concept that the media skews information to the interests of the elite is intriguing, but the examples given are a bit too outdated for me. Still, it’s an important concept to be aware of!

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Who would I recommend the Manufacturing Consent summary to?

The 35-year-old reporter who wonders if their employer is fair, the 63-year-old who is concerned about the validity of their news sources, and anyone who consumes mass media.