



# Public Opinion

*Walter Lippmann*

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## **Public Opinion** Walter Lippmann

"Public Opinion," written by Walter Lippman in 1922, stands today as a classic in political and social thought. Lippmann's style may be difficult for some, but those who endeavor to read will find the book fascinating. Written in lucid, clear prose, yet dealing with incredibly complex theoretical and philosophical issues, "Public Opinion" argues that not only is there not really an agreed-upon "Public Opinion," but that people rarely even understand what they think they know, let alone what they can agree upon with other people. Lippman persuasively demonstrates that opinions are formed in such a way that they have little or no bearing upon "really existing" facts and truth most of the time, and instead are ill-informed, vague, and haphazard in their application of rational thought. "Public Opinion" also discusses how most people have a very limited view of the government, and how the government synthesizes complex views into either-or issues such as "pro-life" or "pro-choice," arguing that that control of public opinion is a means to controlling public behavior. What made Walter Lippmann's thoughts, opinion and observations on current affairs so important to the movers and shakers of his day was his fundamental knowledge of history and how that knowledge related to the often bewildering array of modernist "spin" -- from the manipulation of popular opinion through propaganda, to the more often overlooked affect of human psychology on the course of politics and current events. Though often neglected, "Public Opinion" should be a wake-up call for what's wrong with government, and more widely attended to than Michael Moore or Ann Coulter. "Public Opinion" is a must-read for anyone fascinated by media, politics, or even more general philosophical or cultural questions.

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