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McChesney, Robert Waterman 1952-

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McChesney, Robert Waterman 1952-

PERSONAL:

PERSONAL: Born 1952, in Cleveland, OH. *Education:* University of Washington, Ph.D., 1989.

ADDRESSES:

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CAREER:

Academic and writer. *University of Wisconsin*—Madison, Madison, WI, faculty, 1988-98; *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, Urbana, IL, research professor; *Free Press*, New York, NY, president and cofounder. Serves as executive director for the Illinois Fellowships in Media and Communication Policy Program; WILL-AM Radio "Media Matters" weekly talk show host.

WRITINGS:

(Editor, with William S. Solomon) *Ruthless Criticism: New Perspectives in U.S. Communication History*, University of Minnesota Press (Minneapolis, MN), 1993.

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Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-1935, Oxford University Press (New York, NY), 1993.

(With Edward S. Herman) *The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism*, Cassell (Washington, DC), 1997.

Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy, Seven Stories Press (New York, NY), 1997.

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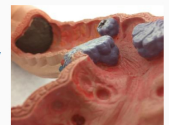
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(Editor, with Ellen Meiksins Wood and John Bellamy Foster) *Capitalism and the Information Age: The Political Economy of the Global Communication Revolution*, Monthly Review Press (New York, NY), 1998.

Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times, University of Illinois Press (Urbana, IL), 1999.

(With John Nichols) *It's the Media, Stupid*, Seven Stories Press (New York, NY), 2000.

(With Dan Schiller) *The Political Economy of International Communications: Foundation for the Emerging Global Debate about Media Ownership and Regulation*, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (Geneva, Switzerland), 2003.

(With Ben Scott) *Our Unfree Press: 100 Years of Radical Media Criticism*, New Press (New York, NY), 2004.

(Editor, with John Bellamy Foster) *Pox Americana: Exposing the American Empire*, Monthly Review Press (New York, NY), 2004.

The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the Twenty-first Century, Monthly Review Press (New York, NY), 2004.

(Editor, with Russell Newman, and Ben Scott) *The Future of Media: Resistance and Reform in the 21st Century*, Seven Stories Press (New York, NY), 2005.

(With John Nichols) *Tragedy and Farce: How the American Media Sell Wars, Spin Elections, and Destroy Democracy*, with illustrations by Tom Tomorrow, New Press (New York, NY), 2005.

Contributor to periodicals. *Monthly Review*, coeditor, 2000-04.

SIDELIGHTS:

Robert Waterman McChesney is a research professor who has devoted his professional career to understanding the media, educating others about his findings, and working to reform it. He is the cofounder and president of the Free Press, a national organization which seeks to reform media in the [United States](#) and educate the average person about significant issues in current media policy of the U.S. government. He also hosts a weekly radio talk show called "Media Matters," broadcasting locally from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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One of McChesney's first books, *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-1935*, published in 1993, covers the early days of modern media in the [United States](#) from the seminal days of radio to the consolidation of commercial influence and control in broadcasting. Reviews were mostly positive for *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy*. Deedee Halleck reviewed the book in *Afterimage*, writing that "McChesney has rescued this fascinating history from the dust bin of union and Congressional archives." Edward S. Herman, reviewing the book in the *Monthly Review*, claimed it was "rich in details." In a review for the *Historical Journal for Film, Radio, and Television*, Donald R. Browne stated: "McChesney's account is far more detailed in its treatment of one period of U.S. broadcast history than anything that I can recall reading."

Written with Edward S. Herman, *The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism* highlights four issues pertaining to global media, including the shaping of national media systems, the domination of transnational media conglomerates, the narrow groups that control the media and their influences, and media's erosion of the public sphere and public participation. In his *Foreign Policy* review, Anil Dharker noted the politics of the authors. He commented: "While the authors make their political leanings clear, they are objective enough to give a fair hearing to the other side." Michelle Spinella, writing in the *Comparative Education Review*, found the writing "well-organized, ... straightforward" and uses "abundant detail to persuade."

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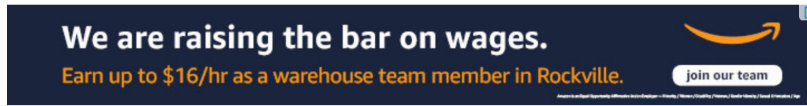
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In 1999, McChesney published *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, covering the media's control by corporations and business interests which have an adverse effect of weakening democracies due to the monopolization of the media. Christine Pawley stated in her review for the *Library Quarterly*: "For those who want to do more than complain about the state of the media, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* provides plenty of ideas about where to start." James W. Carey mirrored Pawley's sentiments in his review for the *Nieman Reports*, calling it "a splendid book that deserves close reading and thoughtful consideration by anyone who cares about the future of the press and democracy."



The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the Twenty-first Century continues in a similar vein as previous McChesney books by analyzing government policy and regulations of media throughout its history and how the average citizen can have a larger say in shaping the media. Emile McAnany, writing in *Communication Research Trends*, called it "an important book both for its scholarly approach and its advocacy for reform." McAnany pointed out that "McChesney is identified by many as a leftist spokesperson and dismissed as only promoting a one-sided argument against capitalism." However, McAnany believed that "readers who take the time to read this book will find ... the arguments promoted are bolstered by a wide array of evidence, both historical and social scientific, and the author makes a point of trying to examine the evidence for counter-arguments to his positions as well." In an *American Journalism Review*, Carl Sessions Stepp found the main weakness of the book was its "focus on the problem without [giving] a detailed plan for change." Nevertheless, Stepp conceded that *The Problem of the Media* is "a coherent and timely analysis" and called the author "a strong analyst whose efforts deserve attention."

Tragedy and Farce: How the American Media Sell Wars, Spin Elections, and Destroy Democracy was written with John Nichols in 2005. This book discusses modern issues pertaining mostly to the Bush administration's media policy and the media's lack of criticality leading up to war in Iraq and other related issues. A *Kirkus Reviews* contributor felt that "the authors' argument gets a little soft when they trumpet their media-reform platform." Karl Helicher, however, reviewed the book in *Library Journal*, where he "strongly recommended ... this fine portrayal."

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Kirkus Reviews, October 1, 2005, review of *Tragedy and Farce*, p. 1066.

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Library Quarterly, January, 2001, Christine Pawley, review of *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, p. 92.

Monthly Review, October, 1994, Edward S. Herman, review of *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy*, p. 56; March, 1998, Doug Dowd, review of *The Global Media*, p. 50; December, 1998, Ben H. Bagdikian, review of *Capitalism and the Information Age: The Political Economy of the Global Communication Revolution*, p. 55.

Nieman Reports, summer, 2000, James W. Carey, review of *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*, p. 67.

Progressive, January, 2000, Kate Clinton, "Best Books of 1999," p. 35.

St. Louis Journalism Review, March, 2001, Rita Csapo-Sweet, "Media and Democracy: An Interview with Robert W. McChesney," p. 20.

ONLINE

Free Press Web site, <http://www.freepress.net/> (July 11, 2006), author's organization profile.

Robert McChesney Home Page, <http://www.robertmcchesney.com> (July 11, 2006), author biography.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, College of Communication Web site, <http://www.comm.uiuc.edu/> (July 11, 2006), author biography.

WILL-AM Radio Web site, <http://www.will.uiuc.edu/> (July 11, 2006), author profile.

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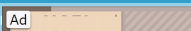
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