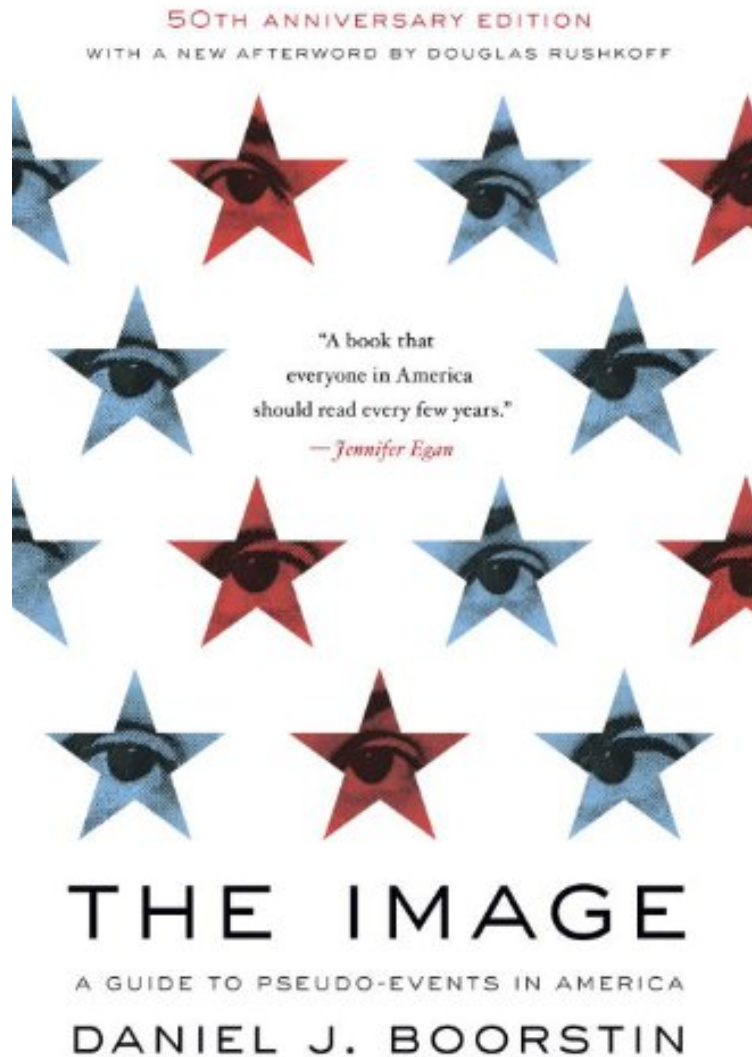


The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America

Daniel J. Boorstin

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taste than the author would like to admit. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. This was probably groundbreaking when it was written, in ...By William Whyte This was probably groundbreaking when it was written, in its observation of how many events in American life are things that are consciously created for effect rather than things that spontaneously arise. Though Boorstin was very much a conservative, his take, that the artifice of spectacle in America forces cynicism on the observer, mirrors a Marxist / Situationist analysis. The exception is where exactly the two analyses put the blame: Situationism sees it as a conspiracy; Boorstin sees it as something unfortunate that has arisen without any conscious agenda other than producing "content". Since it was written, the extent to which big events are stage managed has only increased (remember "Mission Accomplished", anyone?) and this book is unlikely to surprise anyone any more.

First published in 1962, this wonderfully provocative book introduced the notion of "pseudo-events"—events such as press conferences and presidential debates, which are manufactured solely in order to be reported—and the contemporary definition of celebrity as "a person who is known for his well-knownness." Since then Daniel J. Boorstin's prophetic vision of an America inundated by its own illusions has become an essential resource for any reader who wants to distinguish the manifold deceptions of our culture from its few enduring truths. From the Trade Paperback edition.