



## **III Effects: The Media Violence Debate (Communication and Society)**

*Julian Petley*

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The influence of the media remains a contentious issue. Every time a particularly high-profile crime of violence is committed, there are those who blame the effects of the media. The familiar culprits of cinema, television, video and rock music, have now been joined, particularly in the wake of the massacre at Columbine High, by the Internet and the World Wide Web. Yet, any real evidence that the media do actually have such negative effects remains as elusive as ever and, consequently, the debate about effects frequently ends up as being little more than strident and rhetorical appeals to 'common sense'. Ill Effects argues that the question of media influence needs to be debated by those with a clearer understanding of how audiences and media interact with one another. Analysing the failure of the effects approach to understand both the modern media and their audiences, this second edition examines the influence of the effects tradition in America, the United Kingdom, Australia and Europe as well as the role of the British Board of Film Classification. Contributors examine the increasing number of stories about the alleged ill effects of the Internet and enquire whether this is a prelude to, and a crude attempt to legitimise, the imposition of tighter controls on new media. Ill Effects is a guide for the perplexed. It suggests new and productive ways in which we can understand the effects of the media and questions why many in media education accept a simple interpretation of the effects debate, particularly at times of moral panic. Refusing to adopt the absurd position that the media have no influence at all, Ill Effects reconceptualises the notion of media influence in ways which take into account how people actually use and interact with the media in their everyday lives. Martin Barker, Sara Bragg, David Buckingham, Tom Craig, David Gauntlett, Patricia Holland, Annette Hill, Mark Kermode, Graham Murdoch, Julian Petley, Sue Turnbull.

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