



Aesthetics of Violence in Contemporary Media

Gwyn Symonds

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The topic of violence in the media seems as inundated as can be. Countless studies and research projects have been conducted, mostly to show its negative effects on society. What Gwyneth Symonds proposes, though, takes this significant topic one step further: studying the *aesthetics* of media violence. By defining key terms like the ‘graphic’ nature and ‘authenticity’ of violent representations, and discussing how those definitions are linked to actual violence outside the film and television screen, Symonds broadens the arena of study.

Engagingly written, *The Aesthetics of Violence in Contemporary Media* fills an important gap. Symonds uses existing studies for the empirical audience reception data, together with discussions of the different representations of violence to look at violence in the media as an art form in of itself. By looking at *The Simpsons*, *Bowling for Columbine* and Norma Khouri’s *Forbidden Love*, just to name a few, Symonds cross-analyzes violence in multiple media to see their affective role in audience reception – an important aspect when discussing media. The book strikes a balance between the readers’ need to see how theory matches what actually happens in the texts in question and the demands of a theoretical overview.



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