

Controversial Images: Media Representations on the Edge



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The media are inextricable from controversy yet 'controversy' is an under-theorized term in studies of the media, even though controversies over specific images, from 'video nasties' to snapshots from Abu Ghraib, have structured our understanding of the media's power, seductiveness and dangers. This collection offers a series of case studies of recent media controversies and draws on new perspectives in cultural studies to consider a wide variety of types of image, including newspaper cartoons, advertising and fashion photography, music videos, photojournalism, news media, art works, hardcore porn film, anime, horror and exploitation movies, video games, and YouTube reaction videos. In the current climate when images appear to be increasingly controversial, it is important that media controversies are not made the excuse for greater censorship and the demonization of 'dangerous' images and the audiences that consume them. The case studies in this book suggest how we might achieve a more subtle understanding of controversial images and negotiate the difficult terrain of the new media landscape.

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