

# The Media and Body Image: If Looks Could Kill

By Maggie Wykes, Barrie Gunter

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**The Media and Body Image: If Looks Could Kill** By Maggie Wykes, Barrie Gunter

Blaming the media for reproducing and extolling unrealistic female bodies has almost become a popular truism. Even medical opinion notes that the media can influence young women to starve themselves and therefore act as a possible causal factor of disordered eating.

Yet surprisingly, little work has addressed either the nature of media representations of the body, or the ways in which audiences interpret and use such images in our contemporary cultural context.


**The Media and Body Image** addresses this lack and:

-Draws together literature from sociology, gender studies and psychology

-Brings together new empirical work on both media representations and audience responses

-Offers a broad discussion of this topic in the context of socio-cultural change, gender politics, and self-identity.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"Wykes and Gunter take a novel approach to familiar subjects - body image, eating disorders, Western ideals of beauty, media representations of femininity - by offering historical contextualization of the discourses surrounding each issue and articulating how these discourses relate. The upshot is a useful discussion that interrogates, rather than presumes, the effects of mass media on audiences and consumers. . . . Highly recommended." (P.A. Fulfs *CHOICE* 2005-07-01)

#### About the Author

My main research interests include media violence, the impact of broadcast news, effects of television on public opinion, the effects of advertising on young people, the use and impact of new interactive media. I have also conducted research on a wide range of other media, marketing and management issues.

My recent research has centred on the use and impact of new media (in particular the Internet and digital interactive television). I am particularly interested in the use of the web as an information source and in the impact of Internet-related behaviour on use of other media, especially television.

I have continued to conduct research and to write about the influence of television advertising, among children and adults. Much of this recent work has focused on alcohol advertising and young people's drinking. In addition, with two colleagues in my department, I recently conducted research for the Food Standards Agency on the nature of formula product advertising targeted at young mothers.

I have also been involved in research from the British Library with colleagues at University College London on the use of online tools for information search in the context of higher education.

### **Users Review**

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##### **Shiela Steen:**

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