



How Fantasy Becomes Reality: Seeing Through Media Influence

Karen E. Dill

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It's a common belief that the stories we encounter through mass media--whether in video games, action movies, or political comedy skits on *Saturday Night Live*--are just entertaining fantasies that have no tangible impact on our everyday lives, attitudes, and choices. Not so, says Karen Dill in this lively and provocative book. As much as we may want to deny it, the images, sounds, and narratives that bombard us daily have ample power to alter our realities.

Dill, the author of the single-most-cited study on the effects of video-game violence, draws on extensive research in social psychology to show not only the myriad ways--for good and ill--that media influence us, but also why we resist believing they do. Vibrantly written and packed with eye-opening examples from everyday life, her wide-ranging analysis encompasses everything from gender and racial stereotyping to social identity, domestic violence, and presidential politics. She discusses the ways that super-thin models and actresses have altered women's self-images, dissects the manipulative strategies of advertising aimed at children and medical consumers, and explains how the "fake news" of *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* may offer more authentic and incisive coverage than the cable channels and network newscasts. She also assesses the growing importance of "new media" like text-messaging, blogs, and Facebook in how we communicate and process information.

In a media-saturated society, Dill argues, understanding precisely how these powerful forces affect us and learning how to deal with them are vital to the very way we function as citizens. *How Fantasy Becomes Reality* shows what we can do to move from the passenger's seat to the driver's seat as media consumers.

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