

As the majority of people recognize, young children will believe almost anything. When a child sees a cartoon character fall from the roof of a ten-story building onto solid pavement, only to get up unhurt, he or she will probably think anyone could survive a drop like that. Afterwards, as young viewers grow older, they will watch more violent, realistic shows and movies now knowing that death is real, but will still be influenced by what they see. (www.Natcath.com)

Consequently, three second-grade boys almost beat a girl to death in a playground. When asked why they did it, the trio innocently answered by saying it was what the “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” or the “Mighty Morphin Power Rangers” would have done to one to of their enemies. After this incident occurred, Canada, Norway and Sweden canceled both shows. (www.Utexas.edu) Thus, when these seemingly innocent six-year-olds grow into adults, they may become more dangerous and cause more problems in their social environment.

For this reason, psychologist Jeffrey G. Johnson and his research team studied children in 707 families for 17 years. It was concluded that children who watched more than an hour of TV each day were more likely to take part in aggressive behavior later in life than those who watched less. (www.abelard.org) Furthermore, it was found that young black males (ages 16-22) who watched a violent rap music video were more likely to use violence in a conflict situation. (www.childrennow.org)

Another type of violent program is professional wrestling. World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) has been attacked by the Parents of America Guild (POA) for years, protesting the company’s blatant portrayal of extreme violence. The POA is a

group of several thousand adults that object to violence on TV, radio, etc. Most POA members feel WWE should air its programs later at night, after younger viewers have gone to bed. Their protest succeeded partially. WWE's main show now airs 9:00 to 11:00 pm, but satisfaction has not been reached, as other shows are still broadcasted on earlier times and on weekends.

Unfortunately, pro wrestling has been imitated for decades in playgrounds and backyards across the nation. For instance, a ten-year-old boy accidentally killed his younger sister while imitating a wrestling maneuver he saw on TV. This relationship between what children believe happens and what actually occurs must be professionally examined. (www.mediaawarenessnetwork.com)

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of TV violence and the effect it has on viewers is the "Mean World Syndrome," or MWS. The MWS is a psychological disorder that about one out of 2000 people suffer from. These victims are terrified of the world outside of their communities, homes, or in severe cases, bedrooms. Accordingly, if someone watches prime time TV each night for a month, they will see 240 people die.

(MediaViolenceWebring.com) After a year of witnessing hundreds of scripted deaths, anyone would start to be traumatized, which may lead to MWS. For this reason, Vince McMahon, CEO of WWE, says that if a child's parents do not approve of what they are watching, simply turn it off. Unfortunately, using this method may be easier said than done, as children have many ways to gain TV access.

Another method of control comes in the form of the "V Chip". This nickel-sized device is installed to a TV set, which blocks out all shows portraying extreme violence or

sexuality. Moreover, the “V Chip” can be programmed to prevent a TV set from functioning after a specific time. Also, these options can be changed by a special remote control. (www.Utexas.com)

In addition to TV shows and movies, videogames carry a portion of the blame. Nearly every videogame ever created implies the same rule: “kill or be killed”. Twenty-three percent of videogames are fantasy, which almost always involves some sort of violent theme. In fact, parents of the students who injured and killed dozens of people at Columbine High School blame their violent actions on a First Person Shooter (FPS) videogame called “Doom”.

In summary, an FPS is a genre of videogame where a player only sees from the character’s perspective. Usually, all that is visible is the character’s hand holding a weapon. Although most think this is an excuse to cover up their own imprudence, it does raise some suspicions about whether or not games with over-the-top blood and gore had an affect on the two murderers. (www.mediaviolencewebring.com)

Even though the level of violence has not drastically increased since the early days of “Space Invaders” or “Super Mario Brothers,”-family-friendly games with less technicalities than an electric razor-the realism has. Instead of enemies disappearing in a puff of smoke, they now die in graphic and often elaborate ways. For example, in the FPS “Perfect Dark”, if a sentry is shot in the foot, he will yell, then grab his leg and limp around. If he is standing in front of a wall and is shot, a spray of blood will cascade from his body, covering the wall and flow into a pool on the floor, all the while the victim is gasping for air and cursing. If viewed by a first-grader, this can be very frightening.

Additionally, one of the most popular videogames on the market today is the ultra-violent “Grand Theft Auto 3.” In this game, the main character is a carjacker who runs over pedestrians, shoots law officials, and beats elderly women to death with a baseball bat! Thankfully, “Grand Theft Auto 3” was issued an “M” rating, which stands for mature. Only consumers 17 years of age or older can buy an “M”-rated game. It is the videogame rating equivalent of an R-rated film. Ironically, “M”-rated videogames are the most popular with the gaming public. (Utexas.com) Although TV is considered dangerous to those who watch more than an hour a day, it is not a product that constantly poisons a mind no matter what show is on, and not all content broadcasted can harm you. To emphasize, a boy in Wales saved his mother from drowning in a pool using a lifesaving technique he saw on “Baywatch”. On the other hand, another boy in Arizona swung the family cat around over his head by its tail, mimicking the “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” Both are examples of pros and cons associated with a product that fifty years ago was thought to be a luxury. (www.abelard.com)

Back then the majority of Americans figured TV would just be an accessory, a product that would be used once or twice in a week, then sit in a corner unplugged for the duration of the week. Yet just the opposite has happened. TV has evolved into a virtual necessity for the American population. Ninety-four percent of U.S. citizens own at least one TV set, and approximately 6 million videos are rented daily, more than double the amount of books borrowed from the public library. The average teenager watches 1,180 minutes of TV each week, which adds up to about 1,023 hours of viewing yearly! That is almost two months! Moreover, forty-nine percent of Americans say they watch too much TV, and forty-one percent have three or more TV sets in their home. To make matters

worse, ninety-one percent of children polled said they felt “upset” or “scared” by what they saw on TV at one point or another. To really drive the nail into the coffin, The United States of America is the nation with the most TV viewing on Earth. (Hoffman) In short, violence carried by the media has been proven to damage the minds of the young and old alike, but it can be contained, possibly even halted. All in all, the factors mentioned vary in significance, but all point in the same direction; media violence is unquestionably a serious problem, and action must be taken to soften the blow it has on the minds of the future generation.