Television, Movie, Video Game Violence Essay, Research Paper

VIOLENCE IN TELEVISION, MOVIES, AND VIDEO GAMES:

The wrong explanation

Television, movies, and video games have a great influence on the minds of today?s youth. But, what exactly are the effects of such an influence? Certain people have exaggerated the effects that these media have on today?s youth. Many people, including government officials, have singled out these three media sources as the cause of some types of violence simply because it is an easy target for laying the blame. The truth is that television, movies, and video games are no where near the actual causes for acts of violence and other crimes. Studies on the issue are, at best, inconclusive on the issue. Many people believe that television, movies, and video games are the cause of crime because they don?t know the facts on the issue. They single out those three because they have violence images and suggestive themes and therefore believe that these will create violence in real life. This happens when people are misinformed on the issue. This essay will explore the causes for these assumptions about violence in television, movies, and video games. As well, it will properly inform people on the facts about violent crimes that are supposedly related to television, movies, and video games.

When a violent crime is committed by a youth, the crime is often blamed on the television that the youth watched or the movies the youth saw or the video game the youth just played. Many people will start thinking that this is true, based on that it seems like a plausible explanation. People will start trying to censor violent images and possibly even ban them. But, by censoring the images it will just make people want to see them more. Humans are inherently attracted to violence and if they can?t see it on television or in movies, they will go elsewhere to get it. Violent television, movies and especially video games offer a way to relieve stress without actually committing any crimes or hurting anyone. Before humans could see or engage in virtual violence, we watched or committed real violent acts. Take, for example, the Romans. They would watch gladiators fight each other to the death in a ring before they could find their violent entertainment in television. Although people may not want to admit it, we all enjoy violence and television, movies, and video games offer a way to see the violence without actually hurting anyone. If we censor or ban it, we will be forced to find our violence elsewhere.

Ever since the introduction of motion pictures about 100 years ago, people have been arguing over the content of what we see. With the mass introduction of television in the ?50s, this issue was being raised again and again. And when video games invaded the entertainment market, the issue of what society?s youth are subjected to was raised once again. These three entertainment industries have become huge over the last fifty odd years. The 1994 U.S. box office receipts totaled 5.4 billion dollars and the U.S. video game revenues totaled 10 billion dollars. Many children are spending one-third of their waking hours in front of a television screen and it is estimated that by seventh grade, the average child has seen seven thousand murders and 1 million acts of violence on television. Those numbers are staggering to think about, but what does seeing these images actually do to a child. More than 3 thousand reports on the issue have been made and most of the results of these studies have been inconclusive. Many studies simply conclude that seeing these images will make the child more aggressive for the time being. But, does that mean that as a result the child will go out and murder someone? Some people think so because they believe that aggression will make a child hurt someone else. Often when a seemingly senseless violent crime is committed by a youth, the blame gets laid on television or movies or video games. Simply because they are a source of violence and many people believe that media violence will beget real life violence. They also blame these sources of media because there often isn?t any other explanation. When people are distressed by an incomprehensible crime, such as the one recently committed in Jonesboro, they want an excuse for why it happened. When one can?t be found, they are quick to blame it on the violent television programming or the video game with the most blood in it.

My belief is that people will single out violence on television, movies, and video games as an explanation for youth committing violent crimes simply because it is the easiest, simplest explanation. We can already see problems arising because of these wrongful assumptions. Television programming has begun putting rating classifications on the show before it begins and there are plans of implementing a chip into televisions to make the screen go completely black when violent imagery is being broadcast. Video games are getting censored and have already begun using rating classifications as a result of pressure from the American congress. In fact, the viewing of violent images does not correlate with violent crime statistics. Japan is the only country that watches more television than Americans do, yet in America you are six times more likely to be burglarized, ten times more likely to be murdered and 208 times more likely to be robbed. People don?t want to admit that the reason may be part of society?s ills. It may be a result of a youth growing up in a violent family, or simply having a troubled childhood. Although the violence in these three media sources may help instigate a violent act, it is never the only cause. A person does not go from being a perfectly adapted member of society, watch a person get shot in a movie, and then go out and shoot somebody themselves. As U.S. senator Bill Bradley said; ?Violence? is a blaze fed by many fires?. We have to focus our attention on solving the rest of society?s problems and start informing people more accurately so that we don?t have to censor or ban our media.

Problems that could arise from such a solution are that people may start to blame television, movies, and video games even more than before for violent crimes. The information on this subject is often clouded with opinion and restrictions on studies that are intended on tailoring a certain answer, in most cases one that points the finger at violent media. But, if we can properly inform people with unbiased information, we can start paying attention to the real problems, rather than television, movies, or video games. Our society would become better informed overall as well.

People are quick to blame violence in our society on television, movies, or video games because they are simple, believable targets. We have to look beyond this misinformation and attack the real causes for the violence in our society. Violence in television program, or movie, or video game will not make a person kill someone else. People watch violent images all the time, and only a very small percentage of them actually commit violent crimes. Research on the subject does not necessarily support the hypothesis, but they do not counteract it either. The research is too often inconclusive and basing opinions on this is naive. In conclusion, violence on television, movies, and video games is not the problem. The problem is that we wrongfully blame these media sources for violent crimes and if can do away with the misinformation on this issue, we can start solving the real issues in our society.

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