

Sex in the 21sr century media essay samples

[Media](#), [Television](#)



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Introduction

Modern sexuality is one of those notions that include several possibilities and many judgments. In the modern times, sexuality is redefined as a way of self-realization with its roots in satisfaction. However, this idea is also separated from the process of reproduction. Thus, modern sexuality in the current era turned out as “ a new value system revolving around desire and sexual fulfillment became prominent; sexual discourse emphatically entered the public realm, and the entire framework for sexual understanding came loose from religious and proscriptive moorings” (Ullman 3). Thus, it would not be incorrect to state that the concept of modern sexuality has revised itself in a dramatic manner today and presents sexuality as the most important characteristic of personal identity of an individual. Moreover, this striking redefinition has made sexuality important to lead a successful life.

21st century Media and Sex

Media in the 21st century contains an overpowering amount of content that is related with sex and sexuality. This is the reason people (adolescents in particular) look up to media as a commendable source of information regarding the same. However, it is worth-mentioning that the sex portrayal in media is extremely impractical and idealistic. It is glamorized by presenting physical attractiveness, beauty, sexual encounters as prerequisite of sexuality. It also portrays hazardous sexuality that may affect people and they may start in believing sex as a relaxed and consequence-free practice. Thus, media has taken an excessively liberal approach towards

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sex in television broadcasts, advertisements, movies, books and magazines. The significant representation of sexual content in media negatively affects different age groups' attitudes and thoughts.

However, it is important to first gain a proper understanding of media sexual content and this insight are gained by understanding the exact references of both sexual content and media. Sexual content refers to love making, kissing, romantic gestures or any other actions that lead to sex and the image depiction of the physical touches and strokes. For such reasons, several concerns are frequently raised about media sex in the contemporary times.

Media Sex - Concerns

It is not an untold secret that, since the last many centuries, sex has played a central part in public entertainment of various forms. Fiction has represented sexual themes in a prominent way which includes playing out of sexual actions on television, theatre, or books. The comedies related to Ancient Greek were filled with sexual depictions. Moreover, several literary classics were laced with explicit sexual themes such as the Taming of the Shrew by Shakespeare and Canterbury Tales by Chaucer. In Roman times, sexual titillation was blended with violent subject matter and women were also introduced as gladiatorial contestants with poor clothes and uncovered breasts.

As far as the recent history is concerned, sex has been an important theme that is covered with the modern-day mass media that includes television, movies, theatres, magazines, book, and other related mediums. The renowned dramatic narratives often show interaction between characters

that involve sexual interactions nine times out of ten. They may be extremely or mildly romantic, but there are always such relationships that are depicted in dramas.

News also has sex stuff to catch the attention of the viewers. Sexual scandals that involve political figures, media and sports celebrities, and other famous personalities are regularly featured almost every other day in “tabloid newspapers, with such stories regularly spilling over into editorials and other media commentaries or into comedians' jokes” (Gunter 1). In addition, ordinary peoples’ sexual lives are also reported and advice columns are also published to guide people about their sexual relationships (Gunter 1).

Even though the preoccupation of media with sex is not considered as a controversial issue by many, it is also not acknowledged universally. People complain about certain categories of sexual productions in particular media and under certain state of affairs. For instance, an assumed concern with sexual subject in publications for adolescent girls ignited a hot debate regarding the role such magazines play in determining sexual outlook among the female youths. Special emphasis has been given to this subject particularly by figures “showing steady increase in the rate of underage pregnancies among teenage girls under 16 years of age and of unwanted pregnancies occurring among girls age 16 and over who are not in a steady relationship with a partner likely to serve as a supportive and responsible father” (Gunter 1).

Another concern regarding sexuality depictions is even more prevalent i. e. the sexual behavior presentation in movies and TV programs that attract

large viewers. Media is charged about its increasing preoccupation with sex as a sexual behavior representation has turned out more explicit and superfluous that leaves nothing for the imagination. In the 21st century, media has expanded itself with the expansion and availability of cable television and home video. These mediums have made it easy for the audiences to access sexually overt audiovisual resources. The easy accessibility is yet another concern as such materials are available to adolescent and immature audiences.

European and North American cable systems have launched various sexually explicit TV channels including American Exxtasy, Playboy, The Adult Channel, which are watched by large audiences. Channels like these broadcast explicit sexual recreation and actual sexual intercourse between both heterosexuals and homosexuals. In recent times, the emergence of Internet has escalated this phenomenon. Parents today are anxious because of the mostly uninhibited provision of extremely contentious, potentially unpleasant, and even prohibited sexual content available on the Internet. It is also worrisome that children and adolescents are always curious and ready to gain access to material related to sex (Gunter 2).

For all the mentioned issues and reasons, people all around the world have raised concerns over media sex and the bold representation of sexes. To begin with, sex in the media is criticized for its offensiveness for public. Secondly, bold sexual depictions and narratives have a negative influence over young generation's minds. Thirdly, media sexual presentations also have a great impact on family values and moral principles. It is also condemned as it also affects the social institution of marriage immensely.

Moreover, there are obvious social and sexual repercussions of media sex for the female gender. Lastly, it increases the likelihood of sexual offences in the society.

The mentioned concerns are especially pointed towards the demonstration of sex in ordinary audiovisual media and restricted media that can be accessed by anyone. The restricted media involves “ encrypted erotic television channels for which subscription charges are levied and explicitly sexual videos available through special outlets or via mail order” (Gunter 2).

As mentioned above, such sexual materials can slot in an awfully vivid nature, showing real sexual actions including gays and lesbians, group sex, and violent sex. However, the criticism is not only limited to the stated sexual materials and mediums. Strong condemnation is also shown towards the conventional entertainment channels (dramas and movies) as they highlight sexual themes to a great extent. In particular, TV dramas and movies now use nudity as a source of attracting the audience and also portray sexual intercourse openly in an explicit way.

A crucial point of apprehension on the subject of media sex is that it causes offense to many people. This form of unease has been mainly severe concerning sex shown on television programs, advertisements, and even cartoons. Ordinary television channels are easily available to all without any fee. The only thing required is a television set. Therefore, everyone can easily see the sexual depictions by just tuning in to the different channels that show such content. This sexual-sighting experience might not merely be a cause of private disgust to audience, but may also cause them great shame and awkwardness if their family members or other people are around

watching the same program.

If the truth is told, the attitudes of the public towards sex depiction in media show a wide discrepancy with the sexual contents' nature, the sexual category, age/maturity, social environment, and traits of individuals, as well as the social perspective of consumption. In addition, at the same time as some people do not watch sexual content themselves; they do not find it necessary to ban the broadcast and availability of adult television channels for people who like to watch such erotic stuff (Gunter 3).

At the end of the day, when people are offended by sexual manifestations in mainstream media, they do not hesitate to share their views with the authorities. In particular, broadcast television viewers never vacillate from sharing their opinions if they get upset by a sexual demonstration on their TV screens. On a number of occasions, professional sociologists, anthropologists and critics participate in the debate about media's role in serving the people. This happens mainly when the media goes too far in expressing sexuality and showing explicit sexual relationships. In the present era, viewers are smart and they do not tolerate any overtly expressed sexual gesture in media, especially when children also constitute a large number of audience.

As far as the adolescents are concerned, they are also exposed to erotic content in the media that affects their minds tremendously. The unease about the disclosure of youth to media sex has two major facets. First, there is a continued apprehension that children may get disturbed by watching open sexual scenes as they are not mature enough to construe the meaning behind it. Second, it is believed that teenage romance and sexual themes in

media promote premature beginning of sexual behavior. As a consequence, this exposure contributes in the high rates of undesired teenage pregnancies and spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. This is proved by the fact that “ social statistics for the United States have indicated that, by the age of 20, 70% of females and 80% of males have had sexual intercourse” (Gunter 5) and 1/7 of these individuals has caught sexual diseases. It is worth-mentioning here that the United States of America is on the top of the list of industrialized countries with the maximum rate of teenage pregnancies.

This, media sex is considered as a major contributor reason about all the sexual behavior trends. Media sex has a great impact on viewers and has been assumed to function through several phases. To begin with, the media authorities put sex on the top of the public agenda. Second, the mass media lead people to imagine about sex day and night. Third, the media present celebrities as shining examples for people to imitate. Fourth, these media-presented role models do not behave responsibly all the time. Therefore, when people see their ‘ stars’ in sexually explicit scenes, they may learn careless lessons in sexual behavior, performance, and ethics.

This concern carries great weight as it is frequently observed that the conventional mass media are flooded by references of sexual incidences (Gunter 5). One can easily observe the swift occurrences of these references in TV channels, advertisements, films, fiction and non-fiction literary works, video games, as well as popular music.

A number of media productions produce extremely overt sexual representations. In particular cases, sex is also amalgamated with violent

behavior, hostility or terror. At times, these kinds of sexual contents can generate objectionable changes in audience attitudes in a social context. People may learn disagreeable lessons about sex, feminine sexuality, and the utilization of coercive or shameful sexual performances (Gunter 6). Media sex is also criticized for impacting family values, moral guidelines, and the marriage institution. Sex depictions in the mass media have been charged with showing extra-marital affairs. In addition, morality in the society is also at stake as media sex openly depicts sexual relations that take place outside a loving, affectionate background. In its place, media sex represents careless and fussy sexual pairings or disloyalty (unfaithfulness, adultery). Thus, it directly contributes in conveying the unspoken message that promiscuous sexual bonding and unfaithfulness are all right and socially acceptable (Semonche).

According to a number of sensible authors, this pattern of sex depiction could promote individualistic values if such content is regularly telecasted that emphasize a wider recognition and approval “ of sex outside marriage, childbirth outside marriage, marriage as a temporary rather than permanent estate, and an expectation of many sexual partners in one's adult life” (Gunter 6). As a consequence, this emphasis on immoral sexual performance may breakdown the values of traditional family, willingness to raise a family and may also affect peoples’ eagerness to commit themselves to long-lasting personal associations.

Media sex in the twenty-first century has also brought social and sexual repercussions for the female gender. Many people consider media sex portrayals and the related trends as an unwanted development. This is

because viewers' attitudes get affected with the explicit content that is encouraged by the mass media. According to supporters of feminism, sexual behavior depictions in the typical media show women as objects of sexual gratification and sexual subsidiaries for the male gender.

Media sex has contributed in conveying several redundant messages about women's sexual role in relationships by cultivating various beliefs concerning the comparative authority of men and women in today's world. When audiences are continuously exposed to overt depictions of females busy in sexual fulfillment of men, this persistent representation may stimulate thoughts about women being the promiscuous creatures (Gunter 7).

Sexual images and metaphors are also used in 21st century media with the purpose of selling commodities to the customers. For the last many years, sex is employed as an attraction tool for particular brands to get the attention of the customers (Gunter 9). The deployment of nude and sexually-appealing models (male and/or female) in advertisements of various brands is a common practice in a number of developed countries. It can be easily observed by one that women are featured as pure sex objects in most of the advertisements where the focus is mainly on their sensuous body parts instead of their faces. On the other hand, male faces appear more frequently than their body parts. The media's representation of females has always been a controversial issue (Semonche).

It is exceedingly important to mention here that such polarized conduct of media is very antisocial as people are deeply affected by the constant gender-based messages. Women are either shown as doing household chores, as sex objects at the service of men (shaving commercials) or

primarily as the victimized gender. In other situations, the image of women in talk shows, news channels and entertainment shows regularly finish up in the fortification of the status quo and the stereotypes prevalent in the society (Wolf).

The media sex is playing an important role in creating the beauty myth that has left the majority of women pursuing physical beauty. Women are challenged by this myth every day of their lives as the media constantly emphasizes on the importance of being sexy and beautiful outwardly.

Undoubtedly, the media has negatively affected the minds of women as the tyrannical beauty myth has unquestionably a repressive role to reinforce the idea of physical fitness and beauty (Wolf). The beauty industry and mass media makes women crave for beauty attainment by showing beautiful, half-naked women as the successful and contented ones in the advertisements on a 24/7 basis. It is due to sexual and beauty depictions of media that the modern woman has been trapped in an infinite spiral of expectation, embarrassment and self-hatred during her struggle to fulfill the impractical and unattainable society's definition of the perfect beauty (Gunter 10).

Conclusion

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