

Reality tv and it's effect on society

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



Kenneth Nevling Professor Whitworth ENG 114: First draft- Reality TV 07 November, 2010 Reality TV and It's Effect on Society A reality TV show stars a non-celebrity or a volunteer who wants to participate in the program. The core role is to see what their reactions in certain scenarios are, and how they face given situations. The audience feels like they have a connection with the show's stars as they feel that they are real and normal people representing them. Viewers are then entertained by the sadness, depression, frustration, and emptiness that the reality stars will express in the show.

Audiences cannot seem to get enough of the drama of other regular, everyday people placed in unrealistic settings manipulated for the world to see. Overtime, exposure to these shows will subtly cultivate viewer's perception of reality. Reality television shows have a negative influence on today's society by portraying a false sense of communal experience, creating unrealistic standards of living, as well as affecting the productivity of growth to the younger generation. If television was all that was important to our existence then we would be very well off.

Marketing and production for reality TV shows are much less costly than it would be to pay for a whole set and professional actors/actresses. James Poniewozik, a writer for TIME magazine's Tuned In column, writes about how reality TV has been the best thing to happen to viewers and television companies. Poniewozik states, " It has given the networks water-cooler buzz again; it has reminded viewers jaded by sitcoms and dramas why TV can be exciting; and at its best, it is teaching TV a new way to tell involving human stories" (01).

Ratings for networks have skyrocketed ever since reality shows first began to hit the air. People are entertained and excited to watch drama that reality stars go through, forgetting about their own drama. He also states that "Reality shows don't just reach tens of millions of viewers but leave them feeling part of a communal experience" (02). Here it is obvious that these viewers who strive to achieve a communal experience through the television are not leading healthy lives.

If a communal experience is desired then one should get off the couch and get out of the house. We should spend more time volunteering, playing sports, learning, and many other things that are taken away from time spent in front of the television. Reality television can be considered a form a brainwash broadcasting that people will watch and attempt to base their own personal lives off of what media portrays as reality. Audiences will desire to become stars themselves from the excessive time spent watching these false stereotypes of humanity.

Jake Halpern, author of the book, *Fame Junkies*, states, "The children and teenagers I meet are convinced that fame is a cure-all for life's problems and that they're entitled to become stars" (03). Much of the audience watching believe that fame is the only way out of their real life problems. The American society is turning into an increasingly celebrity obsessed culture in which people will attempt to manipulate their own lives to act out similar to reality stars. Each day viewers will reciprocate actions and in the process lose their own sense of critical thinking and real emotions toward real life situations.

These unrealistic standards of living are unreal and devastating to individuals who view these shows on a regular basis. Prolonged exposure to television will also have a negative influence on the growth of the younger generation. Excessive time spent watching reality TV defers children from spending more time on healthy activities such as playing outside with friends, reading books, playing sports, studies, and many other activities that require practice to become skillful.

It is believed that children under the age of eight cannot decipher the difference between fantasy and reality, making them much more vulnerable to the effects of television. Exposure to these shows may result in children behaving in a similar state, acting out when something doesn't go their way. There is a powerful link between exposure to mediaviolence and violent behavior. Kyle Boyse is a registered nurse from Michigan University who states that " An average American child will see 200, 000 violent acts and 16, 000 murders on TV by the age of 18" (04).

It is important to understand that seeing images containing death and violent acts will initiate more violent crimes. Children and young adults are the likeliest audience for these types of shows, thriving for acceptance and what may need to be done to be considered cool. The effects on the growth of the younger generation are of great importance and must not be taken lightly. We've all seen the shows on television where women and men alike are acting in a manner that one wouldn't typically see on a daily basis.

As soon as the television turns on we are exposed to lies, deceit, violence, and many inappropriate sexual circumstances in which viewers will subconsciously reciprocate at one time or another. Teens will strive to be

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popular and do so by imitating what they believe is necessary to be accepted by their peers. As the audience of these reality shows we must submerge ourselves in a moment of self-cultivation, and determine whether or not these shows are appropriate for our children, and even us as adult viewers. Let us be aware of the false sense of community within the television and seek a communal experience elsewhere.

We must understand that the standards of living portrayed by reality stars in nothing short of an ad-libbed script, over dramatized by directors to capture the attention of the audience. Finally we must realize that our children are very impressionable. Teenagers will take what they see on television and carry it with them throughout their adolescence and into adulthood. Therefore affecting society overall. Works Cited Page 01) Poniewozic, James. " Why Reality TV IS Good For Us" February 12th 2003. Time. November 6th 2010 <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,421047,00.html> 02) Poniewozic, James. " Why Reality TV IS Good For Us" February 12th 2003. Time. November 6th 2010 <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,421047,00.html> 03) Halpern, Jake, " Fame Junkies" Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. November 6th 2010 http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/booksellers/press_release/fame/ 04) Boyse, Kyle, " Television And Children" University of MichiganHealthSystem. Updated August 2010. Accessed November 6th 2010. <http://www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/tv.htm>