

Essay on is media responsible for violence in society

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



Tessa Sproule, in her essay “ Exposing Ourselves in South Park”, argues in favor of media. Sproule states “ Violence in society is not the result of violence on screen or in pop music; rather it’s the symptom of a deeper decay” (Sproule 2011). It is true that history has long shown that violence has been present for most of human history. Violence lies deep inside of many people that have been exposed to violence, ranging from domestic violence to violent acts of war. Media often portray violent people, violent language, identifies people with certain clothe and props; making it easy for people that have faced violent acts in their life to identify themselves with these characters. Media is a risk factor for these people and therefore exposing other people to becoming victims of violence. These unhealthy images can also cause real physical health conditions including cardiovascular problems and even epilepsy (Strasburger, Victor , Jordan, and Donnerstein 756). Constantly exposing children to media violence is a great problem to society; children’ s learning happens through observation and hearing. Everything starts within the home. Once children have access to these outlets that portray violent, sexual or inappropriate actions, they will start to imitate and believe that it is acceptable to act in such a way (Fikkers, et al. 180). Exposing children to these violent acts on a regular basis can affect their future behavior.

An example of how media is portraying people in today’s society is the film “ I Saw the Devil”, directed by Kim Ji-Woon. This movie depicts extreme forms of violence meted on the people by a serial killer. The secret agent on a revenge mission also murders innocent people, far reaching the concept of justice, but the audience still sides with him. Another example on how media

is portraying people is the essay “ Exposing Ourselves in South Park,” Tessa Sproule says “ I watched it, unimpressed by the crude animation, the obnoxious characters, and the lower-than-low punchlines” (200). The main characters in the cartoon are Cartman, Stan, Kyle, and Kenny. These are ten-year old children, attending 4th grade. They smoke in order to be different. Cartman is obese and has passionate hatred for blacks, foreigners, and Jews. Stan has attempted to murder Cartman, who happens to be his friend. Kyle is a Jew. This makes him feel like an outsider. Kenny is most famous for being poor and dying. He commits serious crimes like prostitution. Even little things such as cursing, being rude to adults or minor negative behavior can be picked up in shows such as these. Parents unknowingly allow their children to watch these types of shows, and they wonder where their children learned to be so disobedient and obscene (Kirsh). Sproule admits that “ South Park” soon grew on her, although she was opposed to it initially. This shows how effective the media can be; it depicts small children in inappropriate acts, and this may influence the viewers’ thinking and behavior.

Through television screens, society is exposed to violent scenarios every day. The media influences what people wear. It influences fashion trends all over the world. Katha Pollitt (227) notes in her essay on “ The Smurfette Principle”, how females are normally depicted with inequality in cartoons. “ The female is usually a little-sister type, a bunny in a pink dress and hair ribbons who tags along with the adventurous bears and badgers” (Pollitt 227). This shows the female as vulnerable and weak. The pink dress and the ribbons are nothing more than just decoration. The pink dress makes

females look powerless and vulnerable. Females in cartoons are dressed in pink to make them look like the princesses in need of a hero to save them. In movies, women tend to be portrayed as sexual objects. In the movie “Dead in Tombstone,” there is a scene where women dressed in strapless corsets, with red scarves on their necks. The red color has been used for a sexualizing effect in the media, to represent sensuality in women. The strapless corsets are meant to bustle the bust, making them more eye-catching. One man is often seen kissing and hugging two women, with both of them being skimpily dressed. “Get some putas!” the man screams, meaning “get some prostitutes.” These are disrespectful roles played by women in today’s media, leaving the youths with the message that their physical attractiveness depends on sexy clothing. This has given young girls the wrong idea about sexuality. It also exposes them to danger as they appear vulnerable. Movies like this can lead contribute to an increase in rape cases and violence against women. Gender roles and images have also been portrayed in very confusing light. Not only do television shows, movies and commercials influence negative or overt sexual behavior, but video games also influence children. In the same light (Gentile).

The media has created enmity between native English speakers and people from other countries, especially those that are non-English speaking. It has made the English language appear superior to other languages. These types of messages keep society apart from each other, making society believe that differences make people enemies instead of learning from one another. Unfortunately society is becoming the enforcer of this sad reality. People come from other countries under different circumstances. Leaving one’s

country to live in a foreign nation is very difficult. It is also very difficult to speak a new language as perfectly as the natives do, but much worse to receive negative treatment and be considered ignorant for having difficulties communicating perfectly with others. In Amy Tan's essay "Mother tongue," is a clear example of this - "my mother's 'limited' English limited my perception of her. I was ashamed of her English. I believed that her English reflected the quality of what she had to say" (154). The media has significantly contributed to this type of narrow thinking, where only English speaking individuals could be considered as intellectuals. The violent message not only comes from violent movies, it comes in many forms and in the least expected ways. It seems comedy is there to satirize people and sometimes making it very cruel and soul-destroying for others. An example of this is seen in the movie "Jack and Jill." In this movie, there is a man representing a Mexican. He is a gardener; who has a very strong accent. He often repeats the same phrase "I'm kidding, I'm kidding," making him look very ignorant. The manner in which he speaks also contributes to this. When he finally speaks a little more, he says, "We play games, we eat, we steal white people's money." His words do not reflect much intelligence. The manner in which he is depicted is very offensive to people of this culture. From offending one culture the movie goes on to attack another culture by saying, "you don't look homeless to me, you're fat! You're Al Qaida!" this movie shows the worst image of people of Arabic descent, creating animosity in the society. The language used by the media is communicating the wrong message, thus preventing young people in this nation from developing to their full potential and appreciating other cultures.

American children are exposed to guns, rifles, knives, bombs, and weapons of mass destruction. This is done through video games, music videos and movies. Media is responsible for these cruel images that have been created in today's society. Paul Campos, in his essay, "Modern Witch Hunts Fueled by Irrational Fear, Media," stated "In some cases our fears are based on the invention of imaginary diseases" (307). One example of this is the violent movie "You're next." In this movie, a home invasion takes place. A gang of masked murderers come upon the Davison family, killing most of the members of the family with machetes, axes, bows and arrows. To their surprise, a guest of the family proved to be the most talented killer of all. This quotation expresses how violent she could be; "I stuck a blender on his head and killed him." From this message, a person who was not previously a killer can become one if forced by circumstances. This message does not leave room for rational thinking. This same person advises the others "grab anything you can and use it as a weapon." Movies like these give young people the impression that violence can be condoned and that it is even okay to be violent some of the time.

There is no doubt that media is very powerful message. Media is the responsible for portraying very violent people, media is responsible for using extremely violent language, media is responsible on how people through clothes and props want to represent themselves, and media is responsible for the violence images that have been created in many children because media has no limits when it comes to violence. Americans are letting media shape the lives of those people who lack a real model in their life. The internet, television shows and all media outlets that allows instant-

gratification for children of all ages are contributing to the increasing cases of violence among young people. Lack of parental control, supervision and guidance is the reason why a lot of children are developing behavioral problems at an early age. More families are allowing their children to watch rated shows on television, not knowing that the effects on the behavior of their offspring can be very negative (Ybarra, Mitchell, and Korchmaros 137). Various characters in these violent movies are giving America lessons on values and morals. There is no doubt that media is responsible of violence in our society.

Works Cited

- Fickers, Karin M., et al. " Double Dose: High Family Conflict Enhances the Effect of Media Violence Exposure on Adolescents' Aggression." *Societies* 3. 3 (2013): 280-292.
- Gentile, Douglas A., ed. *Media violence and children: A complete guide for parents and professionals*. Vol. 22. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003.
- Kirsh, Steven J. *Children, adolescents, and media violence: A critical look at the research*. Sage, 2011.
- Strasburger, Victor C., Amy B. Jordan, and Ed Donnerstein. " Health effects of media on children and adolescents." *Pediatrics* 125. 4 (2010): 756-767.
- Ybarra, Michele L., Kimberly J. Mitchell, and Josephine D. Korchmaros. " National trends in

exposure to and experiences of violence on the Internet among children." *Pediatrics* 128. 6 (2011): e1376-e1386.