

Media synthesis



Media Argument Synthesis A man stumbles out of a bar and digs through the junk in his pocket to find his keys. He scratches the door of his car while trying to unlock it. He proceeds to get in his car and drive home. Five days later, here he sits...in a cemetery. He didn't know when enough was enough and a bad decision was made based on his lack of knowing when to stop. Does experiencing too much negative media, such as violence and drug use impact people by subliminally interesting them in such things?

Will watching a gang in a movie sell crack cocaine on a corner, then stuff wads of cash into their pockets make an easily influenced teenager want to become a drug dealer? It's a possibility. Parents need to get more involved in the shows they are allowing their children to view and realize the cutoff point for both themselves as well as their children, because a kid growing up in today's society experiences so much violence from the television shows and movies they watch that only time can tell whether they will choose right from wrong.

Although media can easily influence people, Steven Johnson, the author of "Watching TV Makes You Smarter", believes that its okay to watch certain television shows that practice violence because some of them cause viewers to become more intelligent by making them use their brains` to follow difficult plots and numerous characters. His exact words are, " Instead of a show's violent or tawdry content, instead of wardrobe malfunctions or the F-word, the true test should be whether a given show engages or sedates the mind. " (229).

Basically Johnson is saying that all the violence and brutality on the show 24 is okay because he assumes that all audiences watching this hit show will automatically look past the violence and ethnic stereotypes as they search for the hidden morals of the story. So Johnson, let me ask you this. Do you think that a 14 year old watching this television show is going to look past all the guns and fights to search for the actual lesson he should be learning from watching? For those of you who mistakenly believed any of Johnson's viewpoints, the answer is no.

A 14 year old wouldn't look past the violence in search for the actual lesson. The parents of that 14 year old should not allow him or her to watch certain shows like this. They are extremely too violent and could teach younger viewers that it is okay to be cruel and hostile. Instead of being preoccupied with other things, parents should start taking the time to observe what their children are watching instead of wondering where they went wrong when their child brought a gun to school or gave the kid at the bus stop a shiner.

But until then, people should also realize that shows partaking in violence aren't okay to watch just because they are told that the complicated story line makes viewers more intelligent. Dana Stevens responded to Johnson's article with "Thinking Outside the Idiot Box", an article of her own. She does not think that watching television makes you smarter. However, she does not think it makes you dumber either. She believes that there are certain shows acceptable for children and some that are not.

She believes that children, being young and vulnerable to the advertising industry, should be directed in the right path of choosing which television

shows to watch and which not to watch. Children are susceptible when it comes to media. They almost act as a sponge; soaking up everything they see and hear and repeating it later on. Therefore, I cannot help but to agree with Stevens on that aspect of media except she then takes it too far when she asks, “ Shouldn’t grown men and women be trusted to judge their own dosages, just as they would decide on the number of drinks they can handle at the bar? (234). I disagree because I can see how some might react to this by saying that sometimes people don’t know their limit and can’t stop. This is 100% accurate when it comes to most things such as drugs, alcohol, and media. People might read that and think that media shouldn’t be placed into such a category, but all three of these things can start as small doses and turn into addiction within the blink of an eye. Parents who watch a lot of television as a child will most likely end up watching more and more television as they get older.

If parents are not too concerned about the amount of television they are watching, it’s almost expected that they won’t be too concerned with the amount of television their children are watching. With television overflowing with violence, this will only result in children watching television shows that will have a negative effect on them. Parents need to order a wakeup call for themselves so they can be more productive in screening the shows their children are watching. Finding entertainment in such heinous and violent shows is disappointing yet becoming more common in today’s world. Reality Television: Oxymoron”, an article written by George F. Will, tells us how people get such enjoyment out of watching such ridiculous and tactless events. He then goes on to tell us about “ That British pastime involved

pitting a chained bear against a pack of dogs, who fought, and usually killed, the bear. The historian Macaulay famously said that the Puritans opposed bearbaiting not because it gave pain to the bears but because it gave pleasure to the spectators. ” (295). This example couldn't have hit the nail on the head any better. Media is like this in today's world.

Shows like The Real World and Jersey Shore get thousands of viewers each week because America feeds off of watching the mistakes and pain of other people. With this being said, it's so easy for anyone to just turn on the television and have this cruel and unnecessary type of entertainment right in front of them. Children can be easily influenced by these shows distinct type of behavior. They should not even have the opportunity to watch such shows, but with parents sinking into the unrealistic world of media, they need to open their eyes and be more aware of the toll these shows can take on the becoming of their children's future.

Although media is an uncontrollable part of today's civilization, television can be controlled by the parents of the children watching it. They need to be more alert when it comes to the violence their children are experiencing when they turn on the television. Some shows out there will show kids nothing but negative cruelties and should not be parentally approved. With this being said, all you parents out there who don't wish to raise a replica of Peter Griffin or a mini Michael Myers, get up off the couch yourselves and start monitoring the shows your children are watching.