

Media controls your mind

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Media Controls Your Mind The media has a greater effect on America's popular culture than most people realize. Americans are always "plugged in," and our access to media has a greater effect on our choices than ever before. People must learn that just because something is being reported in the media does not mean it is true. This lesson goes all the way back to the beginning of "modern media," starting with the television. One cannot trust everything he sees being advertised.

Most advertisements are overly exaggerated and sometimes manipulative, just to persuade consumers to buy a product, vote a certain way, or believe in a certain thing. For instance, in the 1930s America's first "drug czar" Harry J. Anslinger began one of the world's greatest public relations campaigns to demonize marijuana by telling apparent lies to society, such as marijuana is more harmful to the body than alcohol and tobacco. Seventy years later people still believe the lies even after decades of scientific proof.

Because media can have significant influences on our opinions, the American public as a whole needs to be more aware of it on a daily basis. The media has a responsibility to use only truthful explanations as opposed to exaggeration when arguing against the legalization of marijuana. The campaigns that Anslinger designed consisted of many movies, musicals, and advertisements, all aimed at demonizing the usage of marijuana. His main argument against the use of marijuana was that smoking it could drive a person insane. Every single one of his claims omitted some very important facts, which made the advertisements misleading.

Study after study over the years has proved that marijuana is way less dangerous than alcohol or tobacco, and it is not a "gateway drug" leading to the usage of other drugs. For example in the article posted by Paul Armentano he says, "In the United States alone, an estimated 79,000 lives are lost annually due to excessive drinking." Anslinger promoted these false claims to the general public for the sole reason of making sure that marijuana remained illegal. He even tried to say that a kid from Florida killed his father, mother, two brothers, and sister was due to his newly formed habit of smoking marijuana.

That was a very far-fetched claim, even for those who supported keeping marijuana illegal. But, it did stick with a vast majority of people, and to this day marijuana is still illegal in almost every state. However, the longstanding tradition of keeping it illegal is slowly changing. As of the most recent election, there are eighteen states in the U. S. that have legalized the plant for medicinal usage, and two states, Washington and Colorado, have recently legalized the recreational usage of the plant as well.

One would think after 70 years of proven studies on marijuana that more states would have made efforts to legalize marijuana by now. Keeping marijuana illegal due to its "dangerous" effects seems especially hypocritical, in light of the fatalities that are associated with alcohol and tobacco use every year. Four percent of all deaths in America annually are due to the consumption of alcohol. To this day there has not Magazine "No one has ever died of THC [marijuana] poisoning, mostly because a 160-lb. person would have to smoke roughly 900 joints in a sitting to reach a lethal dose. In light of that statistic, it is astonishing that alcohol is used so casually

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every day by millions of people, yet marijuana remains illegal. In my opinion I think that alcohol should be illegal not cannabis. The mass media should be obligated to present factual information and not over exaggerate claims on behalf of marijuana, because the public needs to know the truth. Every citizen has the right to unbiased, truthful information, and we should be able to trust the media to give this information to us.

One of the 1930 anti-marijuana advertisements that was particularly inaccurate was an advertisement with images degrading anything associated with marijuana. It showed a devil in the background with the weasel words "sin," "vice," "insanity," and "degradation" scattered around the figure. It also has a joint in the middle with the words "the smoke of hell". That is obviously promoting exaggerated and inaccurate information to someone who has not been able to get both sides of the story. Back when this advertisement was made the "Ethos" portrayed would be a lot different nowadays..

In the 1930s that ad had just enough credibility to the average citizen to persuade them to agree because a majority of the popular culture was not educated on the subject. A person uneducated on the subject will be easily persuaded into believing that marijuana is dangerous, without understanding the full picture. Using the devil's image to promote anti-marijuana beliefs is like using God's image when selling a product. If one has to use either of those images in an advertisement, he must be really desperate to sell or promote something because there are a lot of other less suggestive images that could be used.

However, the message to refrain from smoking marijuana is not completely inaccurate either, especially in states where it remains illegal. A good reason to stay away from marijuana is that it is simply illegal, and no one wants to go to jail. Other people believe that cannabis should only be used if it is absolutely needed for medicinal reasons. Smoking cannabis impairs your ability to function normally and do daily activities, such as driving. The effects are not as strong as alcohol but can still be enough to be considered being impaired.

The effects of smoking tobacco are more minor than the effects of alcohol and marijuana, and therefore daily use of the product is more acceptable. Even though it may cause long-term health effects, cigarettes can be smoked daily without causing any harm to other people. It is understandable why these products are still legal in the United States, because it is hard to change the law after many years of selling the product. Our government would lose a lot of money if either alcohol or tobacco were illegal because of the special tax that many states levy on cigarettes.

And the government is mainly focused on clearing their debt, and that would be detrimental towards the economy. They also provide thousands of jobs to citizens. The alcohol and tobacco industries contribute significant tax revenues to the federal, state, and local governments. In conclusion, the choice to support the legalization of marijuana is influenced by many factors, including religion, family, and values. However, it is also influenced by the media and the media's portrayal of marijuana as a dangerous substance.

If the media is going to play such an important role in affecting our choices, it should have realized that what is shown to the popular culture on a daily basis could be so influential no matter how untruthful the advertisements might be. It is not fair for the government to know more information than society. So to be able to instill truthfulness the mass media cannot promote exaggerated claims like the one I mentioned earlier. Once an advertisement is out there, there is no getting it back. The media should be responsible for promoting truthful claims to society so that we can all prosper in life like we all should.

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