

Example of critical analysis critical thinking

[Entertainment](#), [Video Games](#)



Violence and Sex in Media and Pop Culture

Media and pop culture are full of sex and violence. It is impossible to turn on any television show, radio station, or video game without being confronted by something sexual or violent. While adults who have a different view of the world may be able to process these images more maturely, what is the impact that they have on teenagers? Are teenagers capable of viewing this risky behavior several times a day in the context of its being “cool” without it impacting their behavior, their interactions, or their future? Multiple studies suggest no, it cannot. Teenagers are incapable of taking in numerous violent and sexual images and scenes per day without allowing it to affect their behavior, interactions, and future.

Violence is depicted all over the media but one of the primary places it is seen is in computer and video games. Since their conception, video games and computer games have become increasingly violent. This is particularly dangerous for teens for several reasons. One reason is because video games and computer games are a popular hobby for teenagers, meaning that the violence displayed in them is seen often, sometimes on a daily basis for hours at a time. Secondly, the way violence is displayed in these games is very unhealthy to an individual who is unable to process violent scenes apart from reality. Because the graphics are fun and the premise of the game is goal and point oriented teens usually do not process that these acts of violent are horrific and not to be encouraged. According to Evan Gahr’s article, “Gore For Sale”, published in Wall Street Journal many video games and computer games not only depict violence and gore as okay, but as fun. The violence becomes the joyous act of a champion, which is a dangerous

thing for a teenager to learn. The object of these games is to maim individuals. And creators of a particular game, Postal, decided to go an extra mile when designing the game by ensuring that individuals you murder will stay dead; the bodies will not disappear mysteriously. This will make the game seem more real (Gahr). Game creators are basically going out of their way to make the violence in video and computer games seem as realistic as possible. The premise of Postal is also very dark. Players can either decide to be a deranged criminal or a psychotic woman, both of whom decide to go on a killing spree. The only goal of the game is to kill policemen, run over innocent pedestrians, and avoid being caught by law enforcement at all costs. The game not only glorifies horrific acts of violence but encourages the goal of getting away with murder.

Doom, another popular video game, according to Gahr's article, is also full of violence. The premise is simple: players wander through mazes of corridors, killing everything they see. Typically the suspects are aliens. Blood and strange liquids shoot all over the walls after the player shoots the enemy with countless bullets. Many times limbs are left hanging lifeless off the bodies. It is horrific. There is no discernible goal outside of the act of murderous violence. Players even get to choose which weapon they will use for their murderous adventure (Gahr). There are many other games with violent themes to satisfy customer's thirst. Grand Theft Auto, for example, encourages players to steal cars, beat women, and hit pedestrians. FPS, or first-person-shooter, games are becoming very popular. The screen depicts the barrel of the player's weapon and the only goal is to shoot as many of the enemy as you can. Games like Doom and Postal seemed like harmless,

albeit violent fun, until it was revealed that one of the shooters involved in the Littleton school shooting loved to play Doom. While there are arguments that these violent video games may have had an impact on the Littleton shooters behavior, Gahr mentions in his article that the director of Comparative Media Studies at MIT, Henry Jenkins, has suggested that video games have become a scapegoat. Jenkins suggests that video game violence allows us to ignore other, more realistic factors that contribute to violent behavior, such as access to guns, socioeconomic status, and location (Gahr). Whether or not video games are partially to blame for a school shooting, it is still not healthy to gleefully advertise violence and getting away with murder in this manner.

Sexual activity is also very prominent in the media and pop culture. In his article entitled "A Desensitized Society Drenched In Sleaze" published in the Boston Globe, Jacob Jacoby tells of his own encounter with an X rated movie and how it impacted him. Having no real-life experience himself at the time, he had no frame of reference to draw from as he watching twenty minutes of "Cry for Cindy". He says in the article that he found sexual ads on television very alluring and arousing but what he saw in the movie was "repellent" (Jacoby). The point of Jacoby's article was to explain that he was very innocent for a 17 year old boy, at the time. Of a parochial upbringing, the movie shamed him and made him feel incredibly guilty. Now, as an adult man, he no longer blushes at naked bodies on a screen or explicit lyrics in a song but this was a process that happened over time. This was something that happened after he crept out from under the sheltered rock of his childhood. Jacoby fears for the children, younger than he was when he first

viewed “ Cry for Cindy” that are not sheltered from anything. He fears for the children who, at 15, have a realistic frame of reference to draw from when they see a sexual scene in a movie (Jacoby).

“ A Desensitized Society Drenched in Sleaze” tries to get across the point that there is so much violence and sex in the media today that we no longer feel its full impact. We are completely desensitized to the magnitude of these actions. The unfortunate effect this has on a generation is traumatic. Teens who grow up desensitized to this, according to Jacoby, can become adults who are apathetic to joggers who are raped or beaten in a park. They may even grow up to be the criminal (Jacoby). The article makes a good case against the entertainment industry as well. The entertainment industry claims no responsibility for these issues but Jacoby points out that the explicit sex and violence and the media not only overdoes it but is hardly art and while they may not be the cause of the problem, they are certainly not helping the next generation (Jacoby).

With Jacoby’s argument in mind, the question really is does sex in the media impact teens in a significant way. A study in an article published by the Rand Corporation, entitled “ Does Watching Sex on Television Influence Teens’ Sexual Activity” suggests that yes, it does. According to the published study, average teens watch about three hours of television each day and much of this is saturated with sexual content. Researcher, Rebecca Collins, studied groups of teens viewing this material and found both negative and positive results. Teens who watch television shows with a lot of sexual content begin engaging in sexual acts sooner than teenagers who watch programming that does not show explicit sexual activity. Collins also found that just discussing

sex can have the same effect on teenagers as shows that show sexual activity. However, Collins did find that when shows include information about contraception, teens can become educated about how to avoid pregnancies. They can also be informed on things like how to avoid STDs, how to avoid abusive relationships, and the shows sometimes opened up a dialogue between the teen and a trusted adult. Though the last result is a positive one, and something that teens all over the world desperately need, engaging in sexual activity early can lead to many negative consequences. For instance, teens who initiated in sex at an earlier age were more likely to get and STD or get pregnant. This is in spite of the research showing that television shows have the capacity to educate teens on topics such as birth control and safe sex.

The television is not the only portal wherein sex can attack and begin warping young teenage minds. The internet is also guilty of this. Donna M. Hughes wrote an article called "The Internet and Sex Industries: Partners in Global Sexual Exploitation" published in Technology and Society Magazine. In the article she goes into detail stating how the internet works for the sex trafficking business and the number one target are young women and children. Thanks to the internet, international sex trafficking has become the fastest growing international criminal enterprise. It is thanks to technology that young women are able to receive the marketing ads associated with sex trafficking operations. Already vulnerable from the sexual activity they are exposed to on television they fail to see the harm in sex trafficking when approached through another media channel and end up another commodity in this \$6 billion industry.

As you can see, violence and sex in the media have a negative impact on the behaviors, interactions, and even the futures of teens. Violent video games can cause violent behavior in teens as well as apathy. Sexually explicit material in the media can also cause teens to grow into apathetic adults. Sex in the media also can cause teens to begin having sex at an earlier age. This may cause them to contract an STD or become pregnant when they otherwise would not have. In extreme cases, this apathy towards sex and violence may cause teen girls to get caught up in sex trafficking. Though it is not entirely the entertainment industry's fault, there is clearly too much sex and violence in the media and in pop culture.

References

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