

PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES NEW STUDY TO EXAMINE THE MARKETING OF VIOLENT MEDIA TO CHILDREN

June 1, 1999

As part of his continuing efforts to reduce youth violence, the President will announce today that the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice will conduct a joint study of the marketing practices of entertainment industries to determine whether these industries are marketing to children violent and other material that is rated for adults. In a Rose Garden event, joined by the First Lady, the President will also challenge retailers to enforce age restrictions on adult-oriented media, so that inappropriate material is kept out of the hands of children.

Helping Parents to Make the Right Choices for Their Children. Numerous studies have shown that violent programming increases children's aggression toward others and desensitizes them to violence. If and to the extent that the video game, movie, and recording industries market to children violent and other materials that are rated for adults, they undermine current content-based ratings systems, make it harder for parents to control the movies, music and games their children see, and increase the likelihood of children being exposed to inappropriate materials. President Clinton therefore will announce today that the Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice will conduct a study to determine whether and how the video game, motion picture, and recording industries market to children violent and other material rated for adults. The study will examine, among other matters, whether sectors of these industries advertise violent material rated for adults in media outlets in which children comprise a substantial percentage of the audience or whether they otherwise use marketing practices designed to attract children to violent material. The study also will examine whether these industries have adopted procedures restricting the sale of products rated for adults to children and the extent to which these procedures are effective in ensuring that children do not have access to adult-oriented material.

Challenging Entertainment Industry Distributors to Enforce Ratings. A key to shielding children from exposure to excessively violent media is to halt their access to these products at the point of sale. Too many children can purchase or rent violent video games and films intended for adults from retailers who do not check identifications. In fact, according to a study conducted last year, only nine percent of retail stores that rent video games refused to rent to minors games that are rated as suitable only for adults. As part of an effort to address this issue, the Washington State Retail Association and the Interactive Digital Software Association are working together to create a point-of-sale system that will notify and remind clerks to ask for identification from buyers. Because the President believes that it is wrong to sell or rent the most violent video games and movies to children without their parents' approval, he will challenge the nation's retailers today to follow the lead of those in Washington State and enforce the ratings systems when they sell or rent any adult-rated material to children.

Advancing an Agenda to Address Youth Violence. In an effort to comprehensively

address the causes of youth violence comprehensively, the President is launching a national campaign on the issue, to involve community and religious leaders, the gun and entertainment industries, educators, parents, and young people. As he announced at last month's White House Strategy Session on Children, Violence, and Responsibility, this campaign will be modeled on the highly successful Welfare to Work Partnership and the National Campaign to Reduce Teen Pregnancy. The campaign will call on all sectors of society to take responsibility for reducing youth violence and will disseminate efforts that are working throughout the nation.

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FYI re Media Violence



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

*Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention*

Office of the Administrator

Washington, D.C. 20531

May 17, 1999

MEMORANDUM

To: Ricki Sedman
Deputy Associate Attorney General

From: Sarah Ingersoll *SAI*
Special Counsel

Re: Media Violence

Per your request, attached is some summary information about media violence and its impact on children. You will note that the research has shown a clear link between screen violence (television, movies, and video games) and children's aggression and violence. A number of major organizations (American Psychological Association, National Institute of Mental Health, and others) have made public statements to this effect. The determinative issue is the type of violence portrayed (see the summary article on Mediascope's longitudinal content analysis and the changing nature of television violence) and how the violence and images are processed by the viewer, as well as their social context (i.e., healthy opportunities and outlets).

The goal in addressing media violence should be to work with the entertainment industry in building its awareness of the impact of negative media violence and improving its programming; protecting children from negative content and helping parents protect their children (i.e., ensuring adequate and applied standards, V-Chip, etc.); and media literacy strategies.

Media literacy has been seen as an esoteric or academic endeavor by many, but as our society becomes increasingly media dependent, it should be considered more seriously as a basic educational staple and a sound alternative to banning content and infringing on freedom of speech. What is needed is more research on media literacy and similar programmatic interventions to determine the most effective approaches. Few resources, however, are available for this purpose.

SCREEN VIOLENCE AND ITS EFFECTS ON SOCIETY

America, the nation with the highest homicide rate in the developed world, has seen violence soar to epidemic levels over the past several decades. During this time there has been passionate and ongoing debate about whether there is a causal relationship between media violence and aggression in society. Contrary to some claims, the medical, public health and scientific communities are in agreement that such a relationship exists.

Exhaustive reviews of the evidence, accumulated for more than forty years in over 3,000 studies, have led researchers to conclude that the mass media significantly contributes to the aggressive behavior and attitudes of many children, adolescents and adults.¹ In fact, the 1982 National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) report, supporting the Surgeon General's landmark 1972 conclusions, stated that "In magnitude, television violence is as strongly correlated with aggressive behavior as any other behavioral variable that has been measured."²

In 1985, the American Psychological Association (APA) endorsed the Surgeon General and NIMH conclusions that televised violence has a causal effect on aggressive behavior. The APA joined other professional groups such as the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Child Psychiatry in this finding.³

A 1990 report following a major conference, *Television and Teens: Health Implications*, concluded that media violence can teach adolescents violent behavior, and create and maintain societal attitudes that condone violence. Constant exposure to these depictions can also lead to emotional desensitization toward violence.⁴ In 1993, an APA Task Force published their findings from a six-year review of mass media influences, concluding that: "There is absolutely no doubt that higher levels of viewing violence on television are correlated with increasing acceptance of aggressive attitudes and increased aggressive behavior."⁵

The APA report concluded that viewing media violence has three kinds of effects:

- *Behavioral:* increases violence and aggression toward others.
- *Perceptual:* creates fearfulness about becoming a victim.
- *Attitudinal:* develops callousness toward violence among others.

(more...)

Media violence contributes to a cycle in which viewing violence and aggressive behavior patterns perpetuate each other. Viewers witness problems being resolved through violence, promoting violent fantasies. This leads to aggressive behavior and socialization problems, prompting withdrawal from positive social interaction and an increasing desire to view violence.⁶

Over the years, the overwhelming research evidence supporting this link between media violence and societal violence has often been ignored, denied, criticized and even misrepresented. Some critics point to those few studies whose findings indicate contrary conclusions. Responding to these criticisms, the APA argues that the occasional departures from this general pattern of research findings are, upon examination, inconsistent in their critical arguments.⁷

Leonard Eron, Professor *Emeritus* of the University of Illinois at Chicago, recently summarized the conclusions of the medical, public health and scientific communities during testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Government Affairs:

There can no longer be any doubt that heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior, crime and violence in society. The evidence comes from both the laboratory and real-life studies. Television violence affects youngsters of all ages, of both genders, at all socio-economic levels and all levels of intelligence. The effect is not limited to children who are already disposed to being aggressive and is not restricted to this country. The fact that we get this same finding of a relation between television violence and aggression in children in study after study, in one country after another, cannot be ignored.⁸

¹Ed Donnerstein, Ron Slaby and Leonard Eron, "The Mass Media and Youth Aggression." American Psychological Association, 1993.

²National Institute of Mental Health. *Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties (vol. I), Summary Report*, 1982.

³Donnerstein, Slaby and Eron, op. cit.

⁴H. M. Hoberman, "Study Group Report on the Impact of Television Violence on Adolescents." *Journal of Adolescent Health Care*, 1990.

⁵American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, *Violence and Youth: Psychology's Response, Volume One: Summary Report*. American Psychological Association, 1993.

⁶"APA Commission on Violence and Youth." *Amplifier*, 1992.

⁷Donnerstein, Slaby and Eron, op. cit.

⁸Leonard Eron, Testimony before the Senate Committee on Government Affairs. *Congressional Record*, June 18, 1992.

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See FORBES, A6, Col 1

See GOVERNORS, A4, Col 1
President Clinton submits his
outline for 1997 budget. Page A4

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National Television Violence Study
Marry Kelly

Media Scope and UC Santa Bar

Religions Collide In Mexico's South

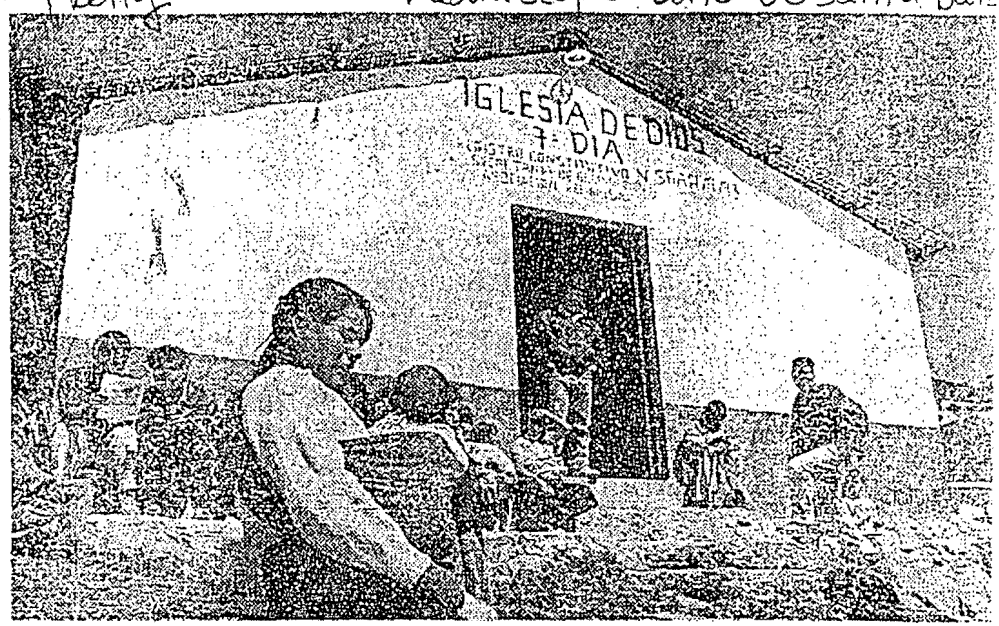
Protestants Pose Challenge To 500 Years of Catholicism

By Molly Moore
Washington Post Foreign Service

SAN JUAN CHAMULA, Mexico—Fiesta day in San Juan Chamula is not a pretty sight. The bodies of drunken men litter the sidewalks. Inside the imposing white Catholic church on the town square, women and children sit on a pine-needle floor twilling local moonshine and burning incense.

"We are pure Catholics," boasted Domingo Gomez Chacojchu, 63, a member of the predominantly Tzotzil Indian community here in the highlands of the southeastern state of Chiapas, as he surveyed the recent celebration of the feast of St. Sebastian. "We know how to pray and we know how to drink, and that's all we need. And if the evangelists try to return

■ Pope John Paul II begins a seven-day tour of Latin America. Page A11



BY MOLLY MOORE—THE WASHINGTON POST

Indians gather at a Seventh-Day Adventist church near San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas state. The Protestants were forced out of their native, Catholic-dominated San Juan Chamula.

here, they'll be met with bullets." It is no idle threat.

In the last two decades, as many as 30,000 former Catholics who have converted to Protestantism have been expelled from their home towns in Chiapas, most of them from San Juan Chamula and surrounding villages. In perennial

conflicts that have surged in recent months, many of the converts have been burned out of their homes. Others have been beaten, tortured, raped, and hundreds have been killed, according to human rights organizations, government officials and Protestant leaders.

See MEXICO, A11, Col 1

Post 2/6/96

Study Finds Real Harm in TV Violence

Programs Cited for Failure to Show Consequences

By Paul Farhi
Washington Post Staff Writer

A year-long study of television programming, conducted by researchers at four universities, concludes that "psychologically harmful" violence is pervasive on broadcast and cable TV programs.

The \$1.5 million study, funded by the cable television industry, was based on a scientifically selected sample of about 2,500 hours of programming, the largest ever analyzed by researchers. It not only found that the majority of programs (57 percent) contained some violence, but also that the manner in which this violence was depicted can have harmful effects.

"The risks of viewing the most common depictions of televised violence include learning to behave violently, becoming more desensitized to the harmful consequences of violence and becoming more fearful of being attacked," says the study, a copy of which was supplied to The Washington Post. "Thus, there are substantial risks of harmful effects from viewing violence throughout the television environment."

The study, which will be released tomorrow, could have implications for the unfolding political debate about violence in the entertainment industry. Both President Clinton, in his State of the Union speech two weeks ago, and

See VIOLENCE, A7, Col 1

INSIDE

Va. Senate Fight

■ A tie-breaking vote by the lieutenant governor sparked a battle over rules.

METRO, Page B1

Simpson Speaks

■ O.J. Simpson called a CNN show yesterday to discuss his murder case.

STYLE, Page E1



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TV Violence

Pervasive, Study Finds

VIOLENCE, From A1

the leading Republican presidential candidate, Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kan.), have criticized popular movies, recordings and TV programs for their violent content.

The study may also form the basis for the development of a rating system that could be used with TV sets equipped with devices that could block violent programming, Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) said yesterday.

Markey wrote legislation, passed last week in Congress, that requires set manufacturers to install the devices, known as V-chips, in most new sets. The technology would "read" ratings encoded in each program and, if activated by viewers, would automatically block programs deemed objectionable. The system could single out programs for violence, sex or other potentially objectionable content.

With funding from the National Cable Television Association, researchers led by a team at the University of California at Santa Barbara reviewed cable and broadcast programming in an attempt to identify acts of violence that previous academic research has linked to harmful consequences. Among the findings:

The researchers found violence—defined as threatened and actual portrayals as well as depictions of the consequences of unseen acts—across all types of channels. However, premium channels including HBO and Showtime were found to have the highest proportion of violent programs (85 percent of their shows) and the kind that poses the greatest risk of reducing viewer sensitivity to violence. The broadcast networks presented violence less often (44 percent) than the industry norm (57 percent), but the context of network portrayals was deemed "just as problematic" as that on other channels.

The hard-hitting tone of this report is somewhat at odds with academic research released in September. That study, funded by the four major broadcast networks, found "promising signs" in the way the networks depicted violent acts on series programs. Those networks—ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox—championed the early study by UCLA researchers as evidence that they were taking steps to reduce the violence on TV.

However, the UCLA study used a much more lenient standard than the new cable industry survey. For example, the UCLA study judged whether a violent act was "contextually appropriate"—that is, whether it was central to the plot of the program—as well as how graphic it was, whether it was glorified, and whether the consequences of the violent act were shown.

The cable-funded study attempts to link different types of violent acts to their known psychological effects, based on hundreds of previous studies of behavior and TV. Each type of violent act "can be evaluated as to whether it heightens the risk of negative behaviors," said one person involved in the study.

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION: A MARKETING TOOL

In 1969, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) banned television programs that promoted the sale of product tie-ins, ruling that programming should not be subordinated to sales. They also limited the amount of advertising minutes that could be utilized per television hour.¹

However, in 1984 under President Ronald Reagan, the FCC reversed the latter ruling and "deregulated" the limit on commercial minutes in a given time period. As a direct result, television programmers and toy companies quickly began working together to develop product-based children's television programs, often called "program-length commercials." Then, in 1985, the FCC ruled directly that commercial tie-ins on children's television were acceptable, in effect approving toy-based programming and reversing its 1969 ban.²

The new cartoon programs, commonly financed by companies that manufactured the tie-in toys, became increasingly violent. In five years, the amount of time devoted to war cartoons grew from one and a half hours to 27 hours a week, and the sale of war-related toys correspondingly surged. As a general rule, each war toy has one specific function and children need many of them in order to play.³

The child psychologist Jean Piaget makes a distinction between *imitation* and *play*. In play, he states, the child is empowered, taking charge of what happens, exploring his or her imagination, emotions and understanding. This is a process, Piaget states, that facilitates growth and socialization. On the other hand, Piaget finds that imitation, which is more or less the limit of the single-purpose toy, provides the child with little opportunity for elaboration or variation.⁴ In effect, the single-purpose war toy encourages the child to stay fixated on fighting, violence and even mutilation.⁵

This was illustrated in alarming extreme with the airing of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (TMNT)* television cartoon series and the subsequent 1990 release of the live-action motion picture. Both the movie and the series were instant hits, and more than 1,000 toys and other products were marketed with the Ninja Turtle logo.⁶ A survey of elementary school teachers throughout the United States revealed that the movie and series, in which violence is portrayed as virtually the single means of resolving conflict, affected children in a powerfully disorienting way.

(more...)



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HOME VIDEO: THE QUESTION OF CHILDREN'S ACCESS

The widespread availability of video rentals has raised concerns about children's access to adult-themed feature films. Today, some 100,000 video outlets in America have sales nearly tripling theatrical box office receipts.¹ Unlike movie theaters, however, video stores have no uniform nationwide policy to restrict minors from obtaining adult material.²

Responding to public concern, the Video Software Dealers Association (VSDA), the home video trade organization, has developed a "Pledge to Parents" regarding minors' access to videos.³ Individual stores which adopt this voluntary "Pledge" agree to withhold from children films rated NC-17, and refuse to sell or rent R-rated films without some form of parental consent. The "Pledge" makes no reference to film parental advisory ratings such as G, PG and PG-13.⁴

Restricting minors from obtaining adult material is a complex issue. While many parents do not want their children to have access to adult or age-inappropriate films, others believe the responsibility for children's viewing habits lies with parents and don't want interference from video stores. According to the VSDA, parental consent arrangements vary by retailer, although it is unclear how many retailers have adopted the "Pledge to Parents" and how consistently the policy is enforced. Some stores allow parents to designate restrictions in their computer membership files, while others determine that the act of entrusting the membership card to a child constitutes parental permission. The VSDA recommends that participating stores include a written parental consent section on their customer membership agreements.

Despite recent industry attempts to restrict minors' access to videos, there are continuing reports that children are often able to obtain copies of adult-rated films. When *U.S. News and World Report* recently sent a dozen children ages 11 to 14 to video stores around the country to rent R-rated films heavy on sex, violence or both, ten succeeded.⁵ These movies included *Basic Instinct*, *Universal Soldier*, *Cape Fear* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

MEDIA

VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA:

An Annotated Bibliography

September, 1992

Over 3,000 studies have been conducted over the past forty years on the relationship between violence on the screen and violence in society. What follows is a sample of this research in television, movies, music videos and video games.

VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA: An Annotated Bibliography

PRIME-TIME TELEVISION

An Analysis of the Contexts of Antisocial Acts of Prime-Time Television. In a random sample of 88 hours of prime-time programming, heroes and villains were equally likely to attempt to hurt or harm another character. Almost all aggressive actions (90%) were portrayed as justified, and few perpetrators expressed remorse or regret about behaving aggressively. The vast majority of aggressive behaviors (88%) were rewarded; that is, the perpetrators benefited from their aggression. *Communication Research*, 14(6), 664-686. Potter, W. J., & Ware, W. (1987).

Does Television Violence Enhance Program Popularity? Two studies contradict the widespread belief that television violence enhances program popularity. Study 1 found no relationship between the amount of violence in program episodes and the national Nielsen viewer index. In study 2, college students watched an episode of "Police Woman" either unedited or with the violent scenes omitted. The unedited version was seen as more violent, but it was not liked more than the edited version. These findings suggest that violent scenes could be omitted without detracting from program popularity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36(3), 333-341. Diener, E., & DeFour, D. (1978).

The Portrayal of Aggression on North American Television. Approximately 1,500 acts of aggression were observed in a sample of 81 hours of television programs. The majority of aggressive actions (69%) were judged unnecessary to the plot. The television programs portrayed an unrealistic picture of the effects of aggression. Four out of five victims did not suffer, and very few of the aggressive acts depicted pain or blood. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 12, 360-380. Williams, T., Zabrack, M., & Joy, L. (1982).

Prime Time Crime. Portrayals of crime and law enforcement in 263 television programs from the 1980-81 season were compared with real crime statistics. The majority of TV crimes were violent, most often involving murder, robbery, kidnapping or aggravated assault. Compared to real crime, TV crime was twelve times more likely to be violent, and 100 times more likely to involve murder. Although adolescents commit one-third of violent crimes, most TV criminals were white males between the ages of 30 and 50. *The Media Institute. Lichter, L., & Lichter, S. R. (1983).*

The Stigma of Mental Illness on Television. Although few characters in prime-time programming were depicted as mentally ill, these characters were most likely to commit violence and to be victims of violence. Fewer than half of all television characters were violent, but three-fourths of those characterized as mentally ill either hurt or killed others. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 33(3), 325-331. Signorelli, N. (1989).*

TELEVISION AND YOUTH

Adolescents and Death on Television: A Follow-Up Study. In a survey about violence and death on television, students (ages 12 - 18) reported seeing a lot of violent deaths on favorite programs and on the news. A substantial majority (80%) reported never or seldom talking with parents about death after watching programs that portrayed death. More than half the students (53%) believed that young children should be allowed to watch violent death on television. Most of these students believed that television represents reality and that it is important for children to know what the real world is like. *Death Studies, 13, 161-173. Wass, J., Raup, J., & Sisler, H. (1989).*

Attitudes Toward Violence: The Interaction of Television, Exposure, Family Attitudes, and Social Class. In a survey of 838 children (ages 9 - 12), frequent viewers of TV violence expressed a greater willingness to resort to violence to resolve conflict situations than did infrequent viewers. In G. Comstock & E. Rubinstein (Eds.), *Television and social behavior: Vol. 3. Television and adolescent aggressiveness, 314-335. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. Dominick, J., & Greenberg, B. (1972).*

Children's Perceptions of Favorite Television Characters as Behavioral Models. Interviews with 180 elementary school children (ages 5 - 8) showed that some boys admire television characters' aggressive behaviors and wanted to imitate them. In response to situations that lend themselves to aggression or violent outbursts (e.g., suppose a person you didn't like took away your favorite toy or game), children were asked to tell what they would do, what a favorite television character would do, and the right thing to do. Girls seldom described violent or aggressive responses. Only about half the boys said they would use violence. In most of these cases (82%), boys suggested that favorite television characters would respond violently and that using violence was the right thing to do. *Educational Broadcasting Review*, 7(1), 25-33. Meyer, T. (1973).

Children's Viewing of Crime Shows and Attitudes on Law Enforcement. According to a survey of 371 children (ages 10 - 12), boys and girls who watched a lot of crime shows were more likely to believe that criminals always get caught, and to identify a law enforcement character as the person they would most like to be. Children who were least willing to report crimes to police were also most likely to rate television as an important source of information about police, crime, and law enforcement. *Journalism Quarterly*, 51(1), 5-12. Dominick, J. (1974).

Crime Show Viewing by Preadults: The Impact on Attitudes Toward Civil Liberties. Children (ages 11 - 18) were surveyed to determine the impact of viewing television crime shows on attitudes toward civil liberties. Heavy viewers of crime shows were less likely than light viewers to support civil libertarian attitudes. For example, heavy viewers strongly favored severe punishment for criminals and fewer restrictions for police. *Communication Research*, 10(4), 529-552. Carlson, J. (1983).

Developmental Differences in Children's Reports of Fear Induced by the Mass Media. Approximately 100 children (ages 4 - 11) were interviewed to determine what kinds of television programs frighten them. Younger children (ages 5 - 7) reported being frightened of programs featuring grotesque and ugly characters and depicting events that could not occur in real life. In contrast, older children more often named programs portraying events or characters that could exist in the real world and programs containing graphic violence. *Child Study Journal*, 16(1), 55-66. Sparks, G. (1986).

Desensitization of Children to Television Violence. To examine the effects of long-term exposure to TV on viewers' emotional responses to TV violence, 82 boys (ages 5 to 12) were divided into two groups, those who regularly watched television less than 4 hours per week or more than 25 hours per week. While the boys watched a short segment depicting a brutal boxing match, physiological measures of arousal were recorded. The frequent viewers experienced less arousal during the violent sequence than did the other boys. Results suggested that the boys' previous heavy diet of television desensitized their responses to televised violence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 27(3), 360-365. Cline, V., Croft, R., & Courier, S. (1973).

The Effect of Television Violence on Television-Naive Pupils: A Follow Up Study Over Five Years. A study of 10,000 children demonstrated that one impact of the introduction of television to South Africa was to increase aggressiveness among frequent viewers. Children with low self-esteem and children who were aggressive to begin with were most likely to become more aggressive the more they watched television. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council. Conradie, D., Heineke, M., & Botha, M. (1987).

Effects of Realistic TV Violence vs. Fictional Violence on Aggression. A violent incident presented as realistic news had a greater impact on aggressiveness than the same scene portrayed as fantasy entertainment. Children (ages 10 - 13) watched either a fight scene presented as a news story, the same fight scene presented as a preview for a new movie, or a product commercial of equal length. Afterward, children who perceived the violence as realistic selected more aggressive strategies to solve interpersonal problems than did children who saw either the entertainment version or the non-violent commercial. *Journalism Quarterly*, 60(4), 615-621. Atkin, C. (1983).

The Effects of TV Action and Violence on Children's Social Behavior. To determine if viewing action (rapid movement by characters and objects), or violence (physical aggression by characters) or both influence aggression, pairs of preschool boys and girls watched either: (a) high action - high violence, (b) high action - low violence, (c) low action - low violence, or (d) no television. Based on observations in play sessions before and after viewing, children who watched no TV or the low action-low violence program increased in imaginative play and decreased in aggressive play. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 138, 183-191. Huston-Stein, A., Fox, S., Greer, D., Watkins, B., & Whitaker, J. (1981).

The Effects of Television Commercial Form and Commercial Placement on Children's Social Behavior and Attention. Pairs of preschool children watched television commercials either with high action (rapid change of scene and character and frequent use of camera zooms and pans) or low action. The commercials were either dispersed throughout a children's program or clustered at the beginning and end. In a play session after viewing, children who watched the high action commercials used more physical attacks, threatening gestures, angry commands and teasing than children who watched the low action commercials. Increased aggression was greatest among boys who saw the clustered, high action commercials. *Child Development*, 53, 611-619. Greer, D., Potts, R., Wright, J., & Huston, A. (1982).

Effects of Television Violence on Expectations of Other's Aggression. After watching an aggressive television program, boys and girls (ages 8 - 11) were more likely to select aggressive solutions to interpersonal conflicts than were children who watched an nonaggressive program. Results suggest that violence viewing may lead children to believe aggression is commonplace and appropriate. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 4(1), 73-76. Thomas, M., & Drabman, R. (1978).

Family Patterns and Television Viewing as Predictors of Children's Beliefs and Aggression. A five-year study following 63 boys and girls from ages 4 to 9 showed that children who watched the most TV violence as preschoolers displayed the most aggression and least self-restraint at age 9. *Journal of Communication*, 34(2), 73-89. Singer, J., Singer, D., & Rapaczynski, W. (1984).

Media Accountability for Real-Life Violence: A Case of Negligence or Free Speech? Between 1977 and 1987, U.S. courts heard 15 cases in which youth were victims of violent incidents "triggered" by the media. Nine of these cases involved children or teenagers who injured or killed themselves while imitating something they had read about, played in a game or seen on television. The court decisions suggested reluctance to hold media organizations responsible for content that incites individuals to behave violently. *Journal of Communication*, 37(2), 106-138. Lee, J. (1987).

Stability of Aggression Over Time and Generations. A study of the same individuals at ages 8, 18 and 30 demonstrated that childhood television viewing habits are connected with adult criminal behavior. Boys' violence viewing at age 8 predicted aggression at age 18 and of criminal behavior at age 30. *Developmental Psychology*, 20, 1120-1134. Huesmann, L., Eron, L., Lefkowitz, M., & Walder, L. (1984).

Television and Delinquency: A Neglected Dimension of Social Control. According to a survey of 3,500 students (ages 9 - 18), high amounts of television viewing and preference for violent programs may contribute to juvenile delinquency. Rates of interpersonal aggressiveness and incidents of minor and major property damage were highest among students who watched the most television and preferred to watch violent programs. *Youth & Society*, 15(4), 445-468. Thornton, W., & Voigt, L. (1984).

Television Exposure and Children's Aggressive Behavior. After the introduction of television to a small Canadian community, children's aggressive behavior increased significantly. Compared to children from nearby towns with one (Unitel) or more (Multitel) television stations, children from the town without television (Notel) were as physically aggressive but less verbally aggressive. Within 2 years after television was introduced, children from Notel were more physically and verbally aggressive than children from Unitel and Multitel. In T. Williams (Ed.), *The impact of television: A natural experiment involving three towns*, 303-360. New York: Academic Press. Joy, L., Kimball, M., & Zabrack, M. (1986).

Television and Violence: The Scale of the Problem and Where to go From Here. Data from the United States, Canada, and South Africa suggest that long-term childhood exposure to television contributed to a marked increase in national homicide rates. Ten to fifteen years following the introduction of television in the U.S. and Canada, the homicide rates among whites nearly doubled. In South Africa, where television was banned until 1975, the homicide rate among whites increased by 130% as South Africa's first television generation came of age. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 267(22), 3059-3063. Centerwall, B. (1992).

Television Violence and Violent Behavior. According to a survey of approximately 2,000 junior and senior high school students, viewers who believe violence on television is an effective means to a goal commit more violent behaviors than viewers who perceive television violence as ineffective. *Social Forces*, 54(2), 341-351. Hartnagel, T., Teevan, J., & McIntyre, J. (1975).

Toleration of Real Life Aggression as a Function of Exposure to Televised Violence and Age of Subject. Forty boys and girls (ages 8 - 11) viewed either a 15-minute excerpt of a violent detective show or a 15-minute excerpt of a televised baseball game. Afterward, the children were led to believe they were responsible for watching over two younger children, who could be seen on a video monitor playing together calmly. The younger children became increasingly aggressive until their fighting caused the apparent destruction of the television camera. Children who saw the violent detective show took longer to summon adult help than did the children who viewed the baseball segment. The findings demonstrate that viewing televised violence increases normal children's toleration of real-life aggression. *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, 21(3), 227-232. Drabman, R., & Thomas, R. (1975).

Vicarious Reinforcement and Imitative Learning. Preschoolers were more likely to imitate a successful aggressor (one who was rewarded or avoided punishment) than an aggressor who was punished. Because children expect aggressive behaviors to be punished, perpetrators who reap rewards or get away with their crimes are equally likely to encourage children's aggressiveness. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67(6), 601-607. Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. (1963).

TELEVISION AND ADULTS

Desensitization to Portrayals of Real-Life Aggression as a Function of Exposure to Television Violence. For some viewers, exposure to violence in television drama decreased emotional responsivity to portrayals of real-life aggression. College students were shown an excerpt of either a violent police drama or a volleyball game. Afterward, all the students watched news coverage of the riots at the 1968 Democratic National convention while measures of physiological arousal were recorded. Male students who had seen the violent drama experienced less arousal while viewing the real-life violence than did the other students. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35(6), 450-458. Thomas, M., Horton, R., Lippincott, E., & Drabman, R. (1977).

The Difference Between Fear of Victimization and the Probability of Being Victimized: Implications for Cultivation. Responses to a telephone survey of 100 adults revealed a connection between amount of television viewing and fear of violence. Compared to light viewers, heavy viewers reported greater fear of being murdered, being threatened by someone with a knife, and being beaten by a stranger or by someone they knew. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 34(3), 351-358. Sparks, G., & Ogles, R. (1990).

The Effects of Social Class, Gender, and Personality on Physiological Responses to Filmed Violence. Among college students and residents of an inner city housing project (ages 17 - 24), frequent TV viewers were most aroused while watching violent scenes and more approving of violence in the media. *Journal of Communication*, 37(2), 29-45. Frost, R., & Stauffer, J. (1987).

Effects of Television: An Experimental Field Study. Husbands who watched violent prime-time shows for one week were rated by their wives as more quick to lose their temper than a group who watched non-violent programs. *Journal of Communication*, 27(3), 206-216. Loye, D., Gorney, R., & Steele, G. (1977).

Living With Television: The Violence Profile. Adults who watch prime-time television more than four hours a day believe the world is overpopulated with criminals, more violent and scary than do adults who watch television two hours or less. *Journal of Communication*, 26(2), 172-199. Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. 1976).

Parent Survey on Television Violence Viewing: Fear, Aggression, and Sex Differences. Parents of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders from a middle-class suburban community responded to a survey about the effects of violence viewing on children. Of greatest concern to parents was that watching TV violence would make children view aggression as acceptable. Boys' parents expressed more concern than girls' parents that violence viewing contributes to aggressiveness. Parents were equally concerned that TV violence would make children feel frightened, upset, sad, and more distrustful of others. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 12, 63-71. Ridley-Johnson, R., Surdy, T., & O'Laughlin, E. (1991).

Symbolic Victimization and Real World Fear. Results of a national survey of more than 5,000 adults suggest that television viewers might be especially receptive to portrayals of characters like themselves (in terms of sex, age, race and status) as victims of television violence. Frequent TV viewers expressed greater fear of being a victim of real-life violence. Watching television encouraged exaggerated perceptions of the chances of real-world victimization among minorities and women, who see television characters like themselves as least powerful. *Human Communication Research*, 9(2), 146-157. Morgan, M. (1983).

MOVIES

Children's Fear Reactions to a Televised Film as a Function of Perceived Immediacy of Depicted Threat. Children (ages 5 - 8) watched a brief suspenseful segment from the movie "The Blob." The children were told that the movie was about a "viscoid," and were asked whether "viscoids" existed in their hometown. Children who believed a threat was present in their local environment were more frightened of the film segment than children who did not believe a local threat existed. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 34(4), 421-442. Cantor, J., & Hoffner, C. (1990).

Effects of Long-Term Exposure to Violent and Sexually Degrading Depictions of Women. To examine the effects of prolonged exposure to filmed violence against women, 156 male college students watched either R-rated "slasher" movies, X-rated non-violent pornographic movies, or R-rated non-violent "teen sex" films. Violent "slasher" movies were perceived as less anxiety-provoking and depressing over time. Men who watched these films showed a tendency to be less sympathetic to a rape victim, and expressed less empathy with rape victims in general than did men who watched the non-violent films. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55(5), 758-768. Linz, D., Donnerstein, E., & Penrod, S. (1988).

The Effects of Mass Media Exposure on Acceptance of Violence Against Women: A Field Experiment. Exposure to two movies depicting sexual violence against women with positive consequences increased male college students' acceptance of violence against women. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 15, 436-446. Malamuth, N., & Check, J. (1981).

Victim Reactions in Aggressive Erotic Films as a Factor in Violence Against Women. Male college students who watched a violent erotic film with a positive ending believed the victim suffered less and was more responsible for her plight than did male students who saw a violent erotic film with a negative ending. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 41(4), 710-724. Donnerstein, E., & Berkowitz, L. (1981).

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Video Violence and Aggression. A survey of 807 teenagers showed a significant connection between aggressiveness and exposure to violence in all types of media. Students who reported spending more time watching violent movies, videos, and television programs also reported higher levels of spontaneous aggression; that is, fighting with someone in school, smashing a window, damaging a parked car, trying to start a brawl. The association between aggression and violence viewing was stronger for viewing violent movies and home videos than for watching television violence. *German Journal of Psychology*, 13(4), 293-300. Lukesch, H. (1989).

MUSIC AND MUSIC VIDEOS

Adolescents' Interest in and View of Destructive Themes in Rock Music. Approximately 700 middle and high school students from central Florida completed a survey about rock music preferences. Nearly one-fifth of the students named as favorites those performers whose music describes homicide, suicide, and satanism. The majority of these fans were male. Fans of heavy metal and punk rock were more likely than fans of other rock music to report knowing the lyrics to favorite songs. *Omega*, 19(3), 177-186. Wass, H., Raup, J., Cerullo, K., Martel, L., Mingione, L., Sperring, A. (1989).

A Content Analysis of Music Videos. Violence and crime were depicted in more than half of a random sample of 62 music videos shown on MTV. Violent videos featured destruction of property, physical aggression against self and others, and use of weapons such as chains, guns, knives and axes. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 29(3), 333-340. Baxter, R., DeRiemer, C., Landini, A., Leslie, L., & Singletary, M. (1985).

The Effects of Sexually Violent Rock Music on Males' Acceptance of Violence Against Women. Seventy-five male college students participated in an experiment to compare the effects of exposure to sexually violent heavy metal rock, Christian heavy metal rock, and easy-listening music on attitudes about women. Men who listened to only seventeen minutes of heavy metal music (regardless of sexually violent or Christian themes) expressed greater endorsement of sexual stereotypes, negative attitudes and prejudicial beliefs about women than did men who heard easy-listening music. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 15, 49-63. St. Lawrence, J., & Joyner, D. (1991).

Image Effects in the Appreciation of Video Rock. A nonsexual-nonviolent rock music video was edited to include sexual images, violent images or both. The addition of sexual images enhanced college viewers' appreciation of the music. The addition of violent images failed to produce a similar effect. The music received the lowest quality ratings from those who watched the version that combined sexual and violent images. *Communication Research*, 14(3), 316-334. Zillmann, D., & Mundorf, N. (1987).

Influence of Rock Videos on Attitudes of Violence Against Women. To examine the influence of erotic and violent content on men's attitudes about violence against women, 144 male college students watched music videos featuring either erotic violent, erotic non-violent, non-erotic violent, or non-erotic non-violent content. Those who watched the non-erotic violent videos expressed the most callous and antagonistic attitudes toward women. *Psychological Reports*, 64, 319-322. Peterson, D., & Pfost, K. (1989).

The Influence of Sex and Violence on the Appeal of Rock Music Videos. Approximately 400 college students watched music videos containing either a low, moderate or high level of visual violence. For both males and females, increasing the level of video violence decreased the appeal of the music and the visual content. The more violent videos made viewers feel less happy, more angry, more fearful, more anxious, less sexual and more aggressive than did less violent videos. *Communication Research*, 17(2), 212-234. Hansen, C., & Hansen, R. (1990).

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Violence and Sex in Music Videos: TV and Rock'n'Roll. Violent episodes occurred in 57% of 166 videos sampled from MTV; WTBS's "Night Tracks," and NBC's "Friday Night Videos." Aggression more often involved wrestling, punching and grabbing than use of weapons. Men were three times more likely than women to be victims of violence. Nonwhite characters more often than white characters used weapons and had weapons used against them. *Journal of Communication*, 36, 79-93. Sherman, B., & Dominick, J. (1986).

Violent Program Content in Music Video. A random sample of 139 music videos from MTV showed an average of ten acts of violence per hour, almost twice the amount of violence found in prime-time programming. An act of violence was defined as "force or the compelling threat of force that may result in harm to life or to valued objects." *Journalism Quarterly*, 62(1), 144-147. Caplan, R. (1985).

CARTOONS

A Day of Television Violence. The level of violence on television is higher for cartoons than for any other type of program. Nearly 2,000 violent scenes were observed in a sample of 180 hours of programming. One-third of these violent scenes occurred in cartoons and toy commercials, usually depicting children or animated characters playing with guns. *Center for Media and Public Affairs. Lichter, S.R., & Amundson, D. (1992).*

Aggression on Prosocial Television Programs. A study comparing the number of aggressive acts in twelve prosocial cartoons (shows with an obvious moral) and in twelve standard cartoons (shows without prosocial messages) found no difference between the two types of programs. The prosocial cartoons featured as many aggressive acts as other cartoons. Although villainous characters displayed more aggressive acts than did heroic characters, the difference between the two character types was greater in standard cartoons than in prosocial cartoons. *Psychological Reports*, 46, 1065-1066. Liss, M., & Reinhardt, L. (1980).

Effect of Exposure to Symbolic Aggression on Aggressive Behavior. After viewing either an aggressive or nonaggressive cartoon, preschool children were permitted to play with two toys, each controlled by depressing a lever. One lever operated a hitting doll, and another lever caused a ball to rise inside a cage. Children who watched an aggressive cartoon pushed the lever for the hitting doll more often than did children who watched a nonaggressive cartoon. *Child Development*, 32, 37-44. Lovaas, O. (1961).

Imitation of Film-Mediated Aggressive Models. Preschool children were just as likely to imitate aggression from watching a live model as a filmed model. Children who watched a cartoon model also imitated aggressive behaviors, but not as much as the other groups. The results demonstrate that children can learn aggressive behaviors from watching television, whether they are portrayed by true-to-life or animated characters. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 66(1), 3-11. Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. (1963).

Televised Aggression and the Interpersonal Aggression of Preschool Children. Pairs of nursery school children who watched ten minutes of aggressive cartoons for eleven days behaved more aggressively in free-play settings than children who were exposed to non-aggressive cartoons. The results of the study provide evidence that viewing violence increases children's interpersonal aggression. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 11, 442-447. Steuer, F., Applefield, J., & Smith, R. (1971).

TV Heroes: The Impact of Rhetoric and Deeds. Sixty kindergartners watched (a) a prosocial cartoon that portrayed a moral (don't take others' property), (b) a prosocial/aggressive cartoon in which characters used aggression to demonstrate the same theme, or (c) an aggressive cartoon without a moral objective. After viewing, children who watched the prosocial/aggressive cartoon hurt more often than helped another child. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 4, 175-187. Liss, M., Reinhardt, L., & Fredriksen, S. (1983).

VIDEO GAMES

Affect of the Game Player: Short-Term Effects of Highly and Mildly Aggressive Video Games. Sixty college students played either a highly or mildly aggressive video game. Afterward, students who played the highly aggressive video game continued to feel more hostile and anxious than students who either played the mildly aggressive game or did not play. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 12(4), 390-402. Anderson, C., & Ford, C. (1986).

Arcade Video Games: Proxemic, Cognitive and Content Analyses. Of the 21 most popular games in urban video arcades, 15 featured violent content, promoting destruction of objects or individuals. Either war, sports, or criminal activity (e.g., an escape from jail) were the most common themes for violent video games. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 21(2), 92-105. Braun, C., & Giroux, J. (1989).

The Effects of Prosocial and Aggressive Video Games on Children's Donating and Helping. Boys and girls (ages 8 - 15) either played a nonaggressive video game alone or cooperatively with another child, or played an aggressive video game alone or competitively with another child, or played with a group that had no access to video games. Afterward, children were given an opportunity to donate any portion of ten nickels given to them by an adult. Children who played the aggressive video game donated significantly less than children in the other groups. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 148(4), 499-505. Chambers, J., & Ascione, F. (1987).

The Effects of Video Game Play on Young Children's Aggression, Fantasy, and Prosocial Behavior. Pairs of children (ages 4 - 6) were observed in a free-play setting before and after watching a violent cartoon, and before and after playing "Space Invaders." Playing a violent video game influenced children's subsequent behavior in much the same way as watching a violent cartoon. Children behaved much more aggressively after the cartoon or the video game than before. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 8, 453-462. Silvern, S., & Williamson, P. (1987).

OFF THE SHELF

A random sampling of current books received at this magazine

The Library of Congress: The Art and Architecture of the Thomas Jefferson Building, edited by John Y. Cole and Henry Hope Reed '38 (Norton, \$60). The Library of Congress building marked its centennial last year after an \$80-million restoration. Part of the celebration was this sumptuous volume exploring what is arguably the most beautifully decorated building in the United States.

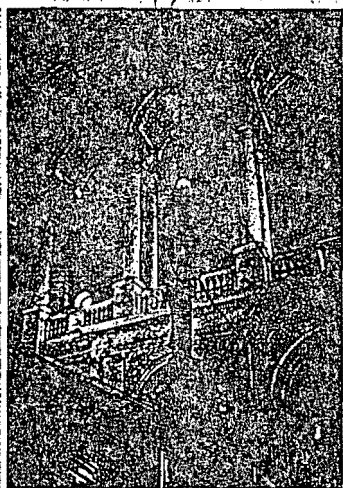
Portrait of Dr. Gachet: The Story of a Van Gogh Masterpiece, by Cynthia Saltzman '71 (Viking, \$25.95). Weeks before his suicide, van Gogh painted a portrait of the doctor who was trying to treat him. The artist sought to capture, he said, "the heartbroken expression of our time." A hundred years later, in 1990, the painting sold at auction for \$82.5 million, the most ever paid at a public sale for a work of art. Saltzman, a former reporter for *Forbes*, has written an entire book about the public life of this picture. It concerns modernism, money, politics, collectors, dealers, taste, greed, and loss, and it makes lively reading.

False Hopes: Why America's Quest for Perfect Health Is a Recipe for Failure, by Daniel Callahan, Ph.D. '65 (Simon & Schuster, \$23). Organizational reforms and new financing schemes will not meet today's health-care crisis. We must change our expectations that medicine will deliver cures for all disease and indefinitely extend lifespans. Callahan, director of international programs at a bioethics research institute, proposes "preventing and treating diseases that afflict the many rather than the few, improving the quality of life of the elderly and the chronically ill, and focusing our

resources on primary care and public health measures.

Mayhem: Violence as Public Entertainment, by Sissela Bok, Ph.D. '70, distinguished fellow at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies (Addison-Wesley, \$22). We let our four-

year-olds watch slasher movies on TV perhaps because we imagine ourselves having to choose between uncontrolled violent programming and censorship. We don't, says Bok, advising readers on how to take action at home and in the public arena.



Innocent of type or hype, the front of the book jacket for *The Library of Congress* bears only this photograph of the Great Hall.

A Guide to Monastic Guest Houses, third edition (including every state and all Canadian provinces), by Robert J. Regalbuto, A.B.E. '80 (Morehouse, \$17.95, paper). If you seek tranquility in Cambridge, for instance, the Monastery of St. Mary and St. John at 980 Memorial Drive accommodates 16 guests in single rooms in a guest house. Each room has a sink, toilets and showers are nearby. The Society of St. John the Evangelist (Episcopal) suggests a donation of \$50 for the room, three meals, and much silence.

Motorcycle Journeys through Baja, by Clement Salvadori '62 (Whitehorse Press, \$19.95, paper). Silence not your thing? Follow your front wheel to Baja in the enlightening company of a Harvardian journalist on the biker beat.

The Handsome Sailor, by Larry Duberstein, A.M. '71 (Permanent Press, \$25). A fictional record of Herman Melville's romantic life. Writes biographer Theodore Rosengarten, Ph.D. '75: "Truer than biography, this beautifully imagined, darkly comic novel reconstructs the lost years

and landlocked heart of America's greatest writer. Melville meets his confessor in a triumph of prose art."

The Discipline of Hope: Learning from a Lifetime of Teaching, by Herbert Kohl '58 (Simon & Schuster, \$24). Bracing stuff, from a preeminent educator, for teachers and all who care about other people's children.

The War against Parents: What We Can Do for America's Beleaguered Moms and Dads, by Sylvia Ann Hewlett, G '68, and Cornel West '74, G '76 (Houghton Mifflin, \$24). Hewlett is president of the National Parenting Association. West is professor of the philosophy of religion and of Afro-American studies. "They propose," writes Carol Gilligan, Ph.D. '64, Graham professor of gender studies at the School of Education, "a Marshall Plan to rebuild families devastated by social and economic policies and by the racial and gender divisions which this book symbolically ends."

The Freshmen: What Happened to the Republican Revolution?, by Linda Killian, M.P.A. '90 (HarperCollins/Westview, \$28). Chronicling the 104th Congress, journalist Killian focuses on its 73 Republican freshmen, Newt's "storm troopers," and shows through their eyes how power is used in this democracy.

Liberalism and Its Discontents, by Alan Brinkley, Ph.D. '79 (Harvard University Press, \$27.95). Brinkley, a Columbia professor, offers both a history of liberalism since the 1930s and a critique of how that history was explained (or not) by historians before him. He finds liberalism far more complex and far less stable than it is usually portrayed.

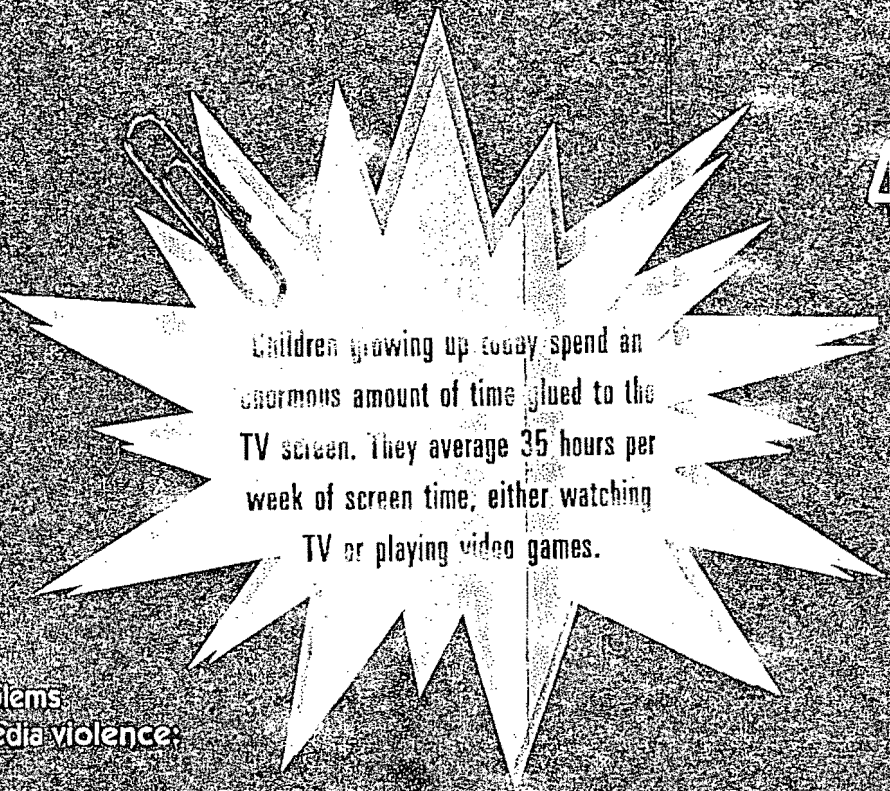
Fathering Daughters: Reflections by Men, edited by DeWitt Henry, Ph.D. '71, and James Alan McPherson, LL.B. '68 (Beacon Press, \$24). Men have written plenty about being fathers to sons, but few have explored profoundly their relationships with their daughters. Nine-

MEDIA HAZARDS

When children watch television, they may be physically passive, but they are absorbing information, ideas, and values. And when they have toys and other products that are marketed with what they see, the messages of violence are even stronger. Because media are such powerful teachers, adults must pay attention to the lessons children learn.

Research consistently identifies six problems associated with repeated viewing of media violence:

1. Children are more likely to behave in aggressive or harmful ways toward others. They begin to see violence as a normal response to stress and an acceptable means of resolving conflict. Children who repeatedly observe aggressive problem-solving behavior tend to replay what they have seen in real-life situations.
2. Children may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others and see violent behavior as normal. Viewing violence stimulates children to view other people as "enemies" and to be unconcerned about their welfare. They show less remorse about their own aggressive behavior and less concern about the aggressive actions of other children.
3. Children may become more fearful of the world around them. Exposure to media violence may compound some children's natural anxieties.



Children growing up today spend an enormous amount of time glued to the TV screen. They average 35 hours per week of screen time, either watching TV or playing video games.

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4. Violent programming presents limited models of language development. The repetitive scripts of violent programs narrow the range and originality of children's verbal expression at a time when the development of language is critically important.

5. Viewing media violence limits children's imaginations. Programs that regularly depict violence often promote toys that encourage children to imitate the actual behaviors seen on TV or in the movies. Young children have a natural tendency and need to explore many make-believe roles and to play imaginatively to learn about themselves and their world. Heavy screen time not only limits children's playtime but also leads to imitation of fighting, gun play, and other stereotypical actions.

6. When children are glued to a screen, they are not interacting actively and positively with the environment or getting the foundation they need for learning in school.

 Children in the United States watch an average of 3 to 5 hours of television each day.

 Prime-time television shows depict an average of 5 to 6 violent acts per hour, and Saturday morning children's programs show an average of 20 to 25 violent acts.

 Only 10% of children's viewing time is spent watching children's television. The other 90% is spent watching programs designed for adults.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

1. Plan your family viewing. Give children choices within certain guidelines by using a program listing and the TV ratings. Let them choose from shows that you know are nonviolent, informative, or entertaining.
2. Monitor your child's television viewing. Move the TV to a room that is not at the center of family life. Choose only one show to watch at a time. Limit children's screen time to 1 to 2 hours daily.
3. Offer alternatives. Substitute open-ended activities such as playing games, reading books, or helping with household chores that offer opportunities to be active and creative. Use good children's videotapes as alternatives to network or cable television.
4. Watch television with your child and talk about the shows you view together. Children do not interpret programs in the same ways adults do. Give-and-take conversations reveal how your child is interpreting what she sees and hears and they clarify misunderstandings. Point out when you disapprove of a character's violent behavior and when you think there are better ways to solve a problem. Talk about what is real and pretend.
5. Help children resist commercials. Advertising is one of the most sophisticated forms of communication, and young children cannot distinguish it from programming. Discuss commercials with your children. Point out when advertisers make false or exaggerated claims.
6. Work to reduce media violence in children's lives and in the wider society. Support regulation of children's television. Encourage legislation that promotes educational, nonviolent television programming and restricts advertising on children's shows. Call or write TV stations (network and cable) and advertising sponsors to express your opinions—both pro and con—about programming.

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FOR FURTHER READING

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Roedell, R.G., W.C. Roedell, D. Arezzo, & K. Hendrix. 1995. *Early violence prevention: Tools for teachers of young children*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

FOR FURTHER ACTION

Center for Media Education, 1511 K St., NW, Suite 518, Washington, DC 20005, 202-628-2620, <http://www.cme.org>

Leads national coalition to promote public policy for healthy media and to educate the public. Publishes *InfoActive Kids Newsletter*.

Center for Media Literacy, 4727 Wilshire Blvd., #403, Los Angeles, CA 90010, 213-931-4177 or 800-226-9494, <http://www.medialit.org>

Publishes acclaimed curriculum *Beyond Blame: Challenging Violence in the Media* and offers media literacy resources through its extensive catalog.

Coalition for Quality Children's Video, 535 Cordova Rd., Suite 456, Santa Fe, NM 87501, 505-989-8076, fax 505-986-8477

Publishes *Kids First!* newsletter and *Kids First! Directory*, with its complete list of titles endorsed by a screening jury—and by children.

National Alliance for Non-Violent Programming, 1864 Banking St., Greensboro, NC 27403, 910-370-0407

Works to build community coalitions that teach media literacy and non-violent problem solving.

National Institute on Media and the Family, 2450 Riverside Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55454, 800-672-5437, <http://www.mediaandthefamily.org>

Produces resources, including a newsletter and the video *Unplug the Kids*, to help parents evaluate children's media.

NAEYC order #585. Copyright © 1998 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Single copies of this brochure are available for 50 cents each; 100 copies are \$10.

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The nature of children's television viewing has lately been a newsworthy phenomenon. CNN founder Ted Turner, addressing a Montana audience in the summer of 1996, expressed dismay at the *quantity* of television watched by young people: "I worry about the younger generation. They're idiots. They spend *too* much time watching TV." Almost simultaneously, President Clinton was using the bully pulpit to urge the television industry to improve the *quality* of kids' TV by meeting the standards of the Children's Television Act of 1990.

In July 1996, the TV networks responded by promising at least three hours per week of real educational programming for children, clearly a step forward. Moreover, within the past year—and in the face of repeated concerns about the possible effects of television violence—a broadcasting industry group has developed a rating system to go with the V-chip required in all new TV sets by 1998.

While the American public still has to confront both quality and quantity problems in television, this recent progress is in part the result of active citizen efforts to make the media more accountable.

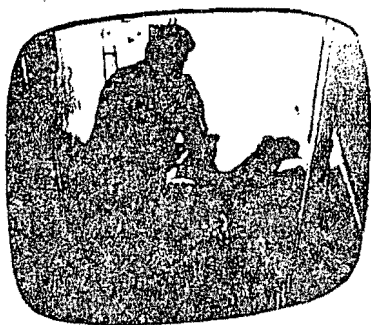
Early Research: Denial and Inaction

Despite a number of research studies in the 1960s and 1970s that linked aggressive behavior with heavy doses of viewing on-screen violence, the television and movie industries for decades denied that pervasive violence in American entertainment had any negative influence on children. The U.S. Surgeon General's 1972 report, *The Impact of Televised Violence*, caused hardly a blip on the video scene—this after a committee of scientists and TV industry representatives had reviewed the research and concluded that viewing violence on television *does* influence the children watching and increase the likelihood of their exhibiting aggressive behavior.

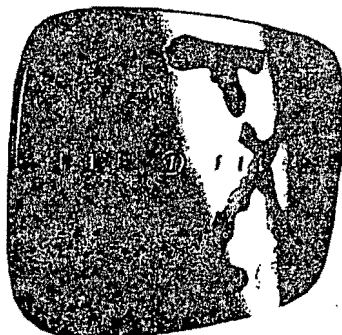
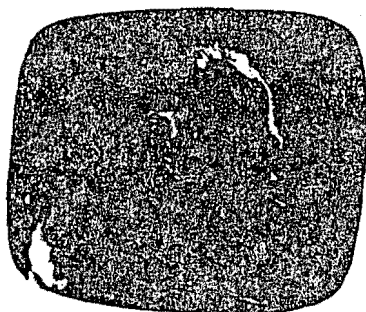
Additional research in the 1980s offered clear warning that viewing daily doses of physical threats, stalkings, beatings, shootings, knifings, rape, and other violent acts was affecting the feelings and behavior of youngsters and even older viewers. But the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) opposed any type of regulation, its chairman describing television as no different from other home appliances, in effect, "a toaster with pictures." As the FCC moved to deregulate children's television in 1984, medical and psychological researchers found their warnings falling on deaf ears, and public discussion was stonewalled by lack of both honest response and organized public interest.

A MEDIUM'S EFFECTS UNDER SCRUTINY

BY
MARY A. HEPBURN



Within the broadcast media, there has been endless finger pointing as to who is responsible for the violence on television. As Senator Paul Simon recently described the sequence: "Executives say they use what producers give them; producers blame the screen writers; and the screen writers say they script what they have been instructed to write."⁵ Many have claimed they are only reflecting society's violence, while refusing to examine the evidence that their programs might be adding to that violence. In the past several years, however, wider dissemination of research findings on media violence—coupled with pressure from medical professionals, media-watch groups, educators and parents, and political leaders—has captured public attention. This change in public awareness and response to media violence has forced the industry to respond.



Current Research: Linking Causes and Effects

The problem of TV violence has three interlinking elements: the heavy viewing of television, the violent content of TV programs, and the psychological and behavioral effects of combining the two.

Life in Front of the Tube

There is little question about the pervasiveness of the TV screen in American homes. About 99% of American households have television, often two or three TV sets. The average hours of television viewing have increased annually in American households, from 43 hours weekly in the early seventies to 50 hours weekly in the mid-nineties.⁶ Nielsen reports in 1993 showed an average viewing time of 23 hours per week by youngsters aged 2 to 11, and about 21.5 hours per week by teenagers.⁷

As the number of TV sets per home has increased, family viewing has declined, while individual program selection and solitary viewing has increased. Media Dynamics estimates that 52% of all TV set usage is now by a solitary viewer.⁸ It also estimates that on an average day, 50–60% of children aged 2 to 5 can be expected to view one or more shows at any time except late evening, while 75% of children aged 6 to 11 and teenagers aged 12 to 17 can be expected to view one or more shows at any time of day including late evening. The television lifestyle is well established in U.S. households, and it is difficult to rule out any time in terms of when young people are watching.

The Violent World of Television

A 1993 report by the American Psychological Association warned that the average American child was watching 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence before leaving elementary school.⁹ But, until recently, the U.S. did not have the benefit of annual, nationwide systematic monitoring of video programs.

Two vast studies are now underway, funded—remarkably enough—by the television industry. Urged on by several congressional leaders, the four major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox) support one of the independent monitoring programs, while the National

Cable Television Association supports the other. Over the past three years, informative reports from these research studies have shed light on the extent of the violence transmitted on television in the United States. Their findings support concerns over both the quantity of viewing time and the quality of what is available to watch.

Violence on the Networks: the UCLA Reports. The network monitoring program is a three-year study being conducted by the Center for Communication Policy at the University of California in Los Angeles.¹⁰ The first UCLA report (1995) provided some insight into the amount of violence in dif-



ferent kinds of TV programs: prime-time series, made-for-television movies, theater movies shown on television, Saturday morning children's programs, specials, and promotions for coming shows. Although the study found decreases in the violence in prime-time series and made-for-TV movies, it reported that Saturday morning children's programs, made-for-theater movies, and promotionals all contained excessive violence.

Viewing the 121 network series, the report assessed only ten as raising frequent concerns about violence, while an additional eight series evoked "some concern" in their presentations of violence. Among the prime time shows cited for glorified or excessive violence were *Walker*, *Mantis*, *X-Files*, *Lois and Clark*, *Due South*, *Fortune Hunter*, and *Tales from the Crypt*.

Recognizing violence as a part of life that must be dealt with in TV dramas, the UCLA study cited examples of prime time shows that deal with vio-

lence as a social problem, avoid showing graphic and overdone violent scenes, and include the repercussions of violent acts as well as expressions of remorse. Among the examples of programs that they found treated violence appropriately were *Law and Order* and *NYPD Blue*.

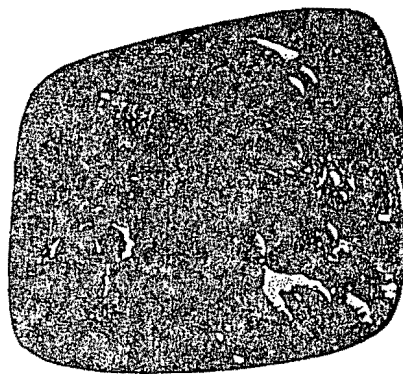
Network programs for children on Saturday morning (which excludes NBC) were also subject to analysis. These cartoons and stories were categorized as:

- 1 slapstick with a comedic theme,
- 2 tame combat violence usually involving a battle between good and evil, and
- 3 sinister combat violence where depicting fights and other violent acts seems to be the main purpose of the program.

The third type of children's show was found to have considerably more vicious fighting than the others, accompanied by hard-driving music and story themes in which the heroes try to destroy their foes rather than bring them to justice. Examples were the newest versions of *Batman and Robin* and *X-Men*. Many promotions for coming TV programs were also criticized for stringing together out-of-context violent images.

Films made for theaters generated the greatest concern in regard to violence. Nearly half of these action films, even after editing for TV, were judged as displaying excessive violence. According to the report: "The violence contained in the most disturbing television series is minor in comparison to that contained in theatrical films shown on network broadcast television."¹¹ The study concluded that Hollywood produces much of the gratuitous violence that ends up on television.

A Review of All Channels: the National Television Violence Study. The National Television Violence Study (NTVS) was funded by the National Cable Television Association and conducted independently by researchers at four universities: the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of North Carolina, the University of Texas, and the University of Wisconsin.¹² This study monitored all types of TV channels—ba-



sic cable, premium cable, public broadcasting, independent broadcasting, and the networks—for a twelve-month period in 1994-1995, as the beginning of a continuing effort.

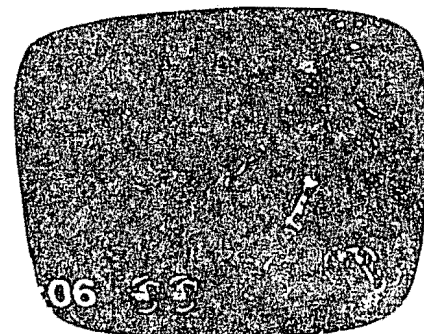
Overall, this study concluded that the majority of television programs (57%) contain violence, often including numerous violent interactions in one program. Among the programs with violence, the perpetrator engages in repeated acts of violence in 58% of the programs. Moreover, about 75% of all the violence monitored shows no punishment of the perpetrators. According to the report, "The world of television is not only violent—it also consistently sanctions its violence."¹³



More than a third of the programs with violent content presented it as humorous and tended to trivialize the brutality. Only 4% of all violent programs presented a strong anti-violence theme. It is more common to find violence depicted as "attractive, effective, and socially acceptable."¹⁴

Comparing the five types of channels, public broadcasting had the low-

est overall percentage of programs with violence. The networks were below the industry average in violence, the basic cable channels close to the industry average of 57%, and the independent stations above average in violence. Premium cable channels—such as Showtime, HBO, and Playboy—had the highest



percentage of violent content. Similarly to the UCLA analysis, the National Television Violence Study revealed that when various types of programs are compared, movies have the highest quantity of violent content, with numerous violent acts portrayed in realistic settings.

This study too found children's programs to be worse than regular network adult programming with regard to violence. Children's programs are nearly 10% above the average for violent content. Perhaps more troubling is that children's shows are less likely to show the pain and suffering of victims, and very seldom show the long-term consequences of violence. Very few channels used warnings and advisories preceding violent programs; perhaps that would be doubly embarrassing if they had to be applied to kids' shows.

Linking Causes and Effects

The third element in the media violence discussion, psychological and behavioral effects, is hardly in question in the late 1990s. The negative influence that prolonged viewing can and does have on individuals is underscored by the National Television Violence Study report. Researchers looked at hundreds of experimental and longitudinal studies and concluded that viewing violence

in the mass media can lead to aggressive behavior and become part of lasting behavioral patterns.

The NTVS analysis found consistent evidence that continual viewing of violent TV programs brings on desensitization towards victims and violent acts in the real world. The report warned that viewers can become "emotionally comfortable" with violent content, and even gain an appetite for it. Another possible effect is for viewers to grow increasingly fearful of becoming victims of violence; they may begin to perceive the world around them as mean and dangerous.

Remedies:

Media Literacy and Public Policy

The research groups involved in the TV monitoring programs have joined the ranks of others concerned about the effects of pervasive violence on television. The UCLA group advises that media literacy should be systematically included in the school curriculum. The National Television Violence Study report urges specific attention to the types of programming that attract young people. Social studies at all grade levels offers the opportunity for students to examine and discuss TV's impact on their own lives and on society at large. The pull-out section of this issue of *Social Education* includes class activities suitable for different grade levels.

Media Literacy and the Tube

The modern television lifestyle is an easy fit into the social studies curriculum. Students at all levels, although with varying degrees of sophistication, can consider such issues as:

- how much time they spend watching television, and how the choice to watch TV means the choice not to do something else.
- how television affects the things they want. Younger children can examine how many of the toys they play with are heavily advertised on, or "go with," TV programs. Older students may become engrossed in analyzing how

television influences the things they want and buy.

- how television affects their expectations about how they should act, who they should become, what it means to be an adult, and what their society does and should value.
- how television favors action over reflection, and why commercial broadcasters use fast-action violent programming to attract viewers of all ages—but especially children on Saturday mornings.

Both of the recent TV monitoring programs recommend media literacy as a tool for mitigating the effects of television violence. The National Television Violence Study specifically recommends discussion of the context for violence in TV programs. For example:

- Is violent action rewarded or punished in the drama or cartoon being watched?
- Are heroes engaged in violent activity that seems justified? What is the basis for this justification?
- Is violent behavior treated as a joke?
- Are the negative consequences of violent acts made clear?
- Is violence shown needlessly or in a glamorized manner just to hold viewers' attention?
- How could the same story be told without the violent scenes and sounds?

Many organizations offer materials to help various age groups study the effects of media violence. See the list of Media Literacy Groups in the pullout section.

Public Policy and the Media

The question of what society can or should do regarding violence on television and in other media is appropriate for many areas of the social studies, including government and civics, law-related education, U.S. history, anthropology, sociology, and psychology. How to deal with entertainment violence has been a public policy issue for many years, and it provides social studies classes with a high interest topic for investigating alternative policy choices and how various concerned

groups have worked to mobilize political support.

One approach is that taken by Senator Paul Simon, who has long been outspoken on the need to reduce TV violence, but who is also concerned about the effectiveness of regulation and the protection of the First Amendment. Although opposed to having government oversee television and film, Simon has vociferously advocated self-regulation by the entertainment industry, urging it to fund independent organizations to document the magnitude and effects of TV violence. This approach relies on increased information and public reaction to bring the media to voluntarily reduce violent content and improve program quality.

The entertainment media have been slow to change, however, and this is especially true in the movie industry. Its leaders continue to claim that research on the effects of media violence is inconclusive, and view any pressure for change as censorship and infringement of the First Amendment rights of writers and producers. The question remains: How can society bring about change in the violent programming that flows electronically into 95 million American households and yet avoid censorship?

Newton Minow, a former chairman of the FCC, thinks the response has been to over-agonize about the First Amendment, thus obstructing the policy debate rather than encouraging the search for a course of action that will give children a better television environment.¹⁵ He reminds the public that the Federal Communications Act of 1934 gave broadcasters free use of broadcast channels on condition that they serve the public interest. Moreover, the Children's Television Act of 1990 recognized children as a special audience that should receive educational programming from commercial broadcasters.

Congressional leaders other than Simon have proposed a variety of limits on television programming to protect children. One would give the FCC power to limit violent pro-

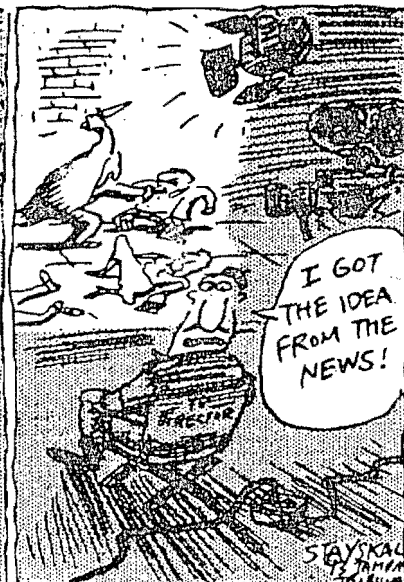
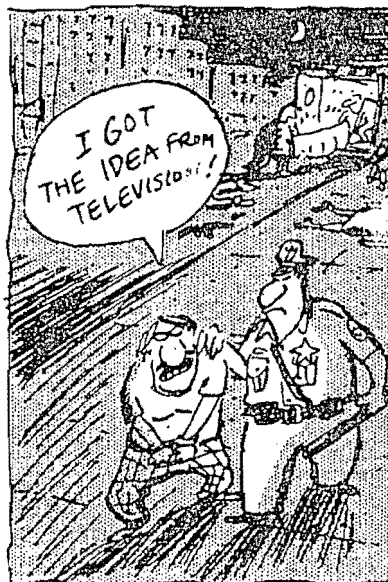
grams to times when children are least likely to be watching. Another would require the FCC to collect data and release an annual report card to inform the public about violent content. Still another proposes that the FCC have a toll-free number for the public to call with complaints about violence in programs, with the agency publishing a summary periodically.

One proposal passed into law in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 requires that all new television sets have a built-in technology, or V-chip, to allow owners to block out programs containing unwanted content. The V-chip would work in conjunction with some form of rating system. One such is the age-based system adopted by the broadcast industry's Implementation Group for TV Ratings in late 1996. However, in response to criticism of its being too vague, broadcasters are now considering a content-based system that would rate programs on a scale of 0-3 for violence, language, sexual content, and suggestive dialogue (a V-L-S-D system). An additional rating for fantasy violence (FV) is also a possibility. Opponents of this system raise the specter of the V-chip operating as an indiscriminating censor of television programming that contains mature content.

Secondary social studies students can collect information about existing and proposed policies for regulating violence on TV. They can consider varying interpretations of the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech and what constitutes the "public interest." This is a timely public policy topic, and one that can be easily researched. Books, magazines, daily newspapers, the Congressional Record, and the Internet all offer information and viewpoints that bear on the question.

A Continuing Issue in Education

The scenes and sounds of television exercise great influence over young people. Television affects the way they play, their heroes, their humor, the clothes they want to buy, and their perceptions of family life and community. How can the television industry be made more responsible for protecting the public interest—our students, our children, ourselves—without jeopardizing democratic freedoms? What actions can be fairly taken to reduce electronic violence and



its contributions to violent behavior in our country? This issue is not likely to be quickly resolved; it will be a public issue for social studies students, teachers, and parents for some time to come. ■

Notes

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3. Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Commission on Television and Social Behavior, *The Impact of Televised Violence* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1972).
4. Brandon S. Centerwall, "Television and Violence: The Scale of the Problem and Where to Go From Here," *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association* 267, no. 22 (June 1992): 3059-3063; Mary A. Hepburn, "TV Violence: Myth and Reality," *Social Education* 59 (September 1995): 309-311, and *Vicarious Violence on TV: A Challenge to LRE*, Technical Assistance Bulletin #16, American Bar Association Special Committee on Youth Education (Chicago: American Bar Association, 1996).
5. Paul Simon, Remarks on violence to the National Press Club, Washington DC (September 16, 1993).
6. Media Dynamics, *TV Dimensions 1996* (New York: Media Dynamics, 1996).
7. Nielsen Media Research, *Nielsen Report on Television 1992-1993* (New York: Nielsen Media Research, 1993).
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9. American Psychological Association, *Violence and Youth: Psychology's Response*, Summary Report of the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1993).
10. UCLA Center for Communication Policy, *UCLA Television Monitoring Report 1994-95* (Los Angeles: UCLA, 1995).
11. *Ibid.*, 151.
12. Mediascope, *National Television Violence Study 1994-1995: Executive Summary* (Studio City, CA: Mediascope, Inc., 1996).
13. *Ibid.*, 26.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Newton Minow, "Making Television Safe for Kids," *Time* 145, no. 26 (June 26, 1995): 70-72; Newton Minow and Craig L. LaMay, *Abandoned in the Wasteland: Children, Television, and the First Amendment* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).
16. Farhi.

Teaching Resources

IN PRINT

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- Lloyd-Kolkin, Donna, and Kathleen R. Tyner. *Media & You: An Elementary Media Literacy Curriculum*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications, 1991.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children, "Position Statement on Media Violence in Children's Lives," *Young Children* 45, no. 5 (July 1990): 18-21.
- "TV Violence: Will Hollywood Tone it Down or Face Regulation?" *CQ Researcher* 3, no. 12 (March 26, 1993): 165-185.

WEBSITES

See the list of Media Literacy Groups in the pull-out section of this issue of *Social Education*.

Mary A. Hepburn is Professor of Social Science Education and head of the Citizen Education Division at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia, Athens.

To Donni

From: Carlos Sundermann <SundermC@nwrel.org>
To: "Robin Delany-Shabazz" <DELANY@ojp.usdoj.gov>
Date: 4/27/99 3:28pm
Subject: RE: press release, video games and phone converssation.

I will ask Ira and the staff to start compiling articles on the topic of violent video games and post those that may be of interest. There was an interesting article on violence and the media yesterday which I'll forward to you.

I may have to rearrange my schedule tomorrow. Let me get back to you towards the end of the day.

Attached below is the text of the article I mentioned.

I asked Ned to look this one up for you the staff. Interesting article

-----Original Message-----

From: Ned Howard
Sent: Monday, April 26, 1999 4:52 PM
To: Carlos Sundermann
Subject: Digital Commerce, New York Times 4/26/99, Denise Caruso

April 26, 1999

DIGITAL COMMERCE

Linking Entertainment to Violence

By DENISE CARUSO

By producing increasingly violent media, the entertainment industry has for decades engaged in a lucrative dance with the devil.

Over the years, parents and consumer groups have continued to sound alarms about the effects that violent films, television and ever-more-realistic video games are having on their children and society at large. The response -- from what may be the most influential industry in the world -- has consistently been a kind of indignant shock that anyone would think a silly old movie or game could have a measurable effect on anyone.

"Kids can tell the difference between fantasy and reality," these executives have repeatedly asserted. "Why can't you?"

But a growing body of evidence suggests it is the producers who may be having a hard time telling the difference between their apologist fantasy and grim reality.

The evidence, say those who study violence in culture, is unassailable: Hundreds of studies in recent decades have revealed a direct correlation between exposure to media violence -- now including video games -- and increased aggression.

This is not because people cannot distinguish between reality and fantasy, but because ultra-violent media systematically employ the psychological techniques of desensitization, conditioning and vicarious learning.

Dave Grossman, a former Army officer and professor at West Point and the University of Arkansas, says these are the same techniques that were used to great effect during the Vietnam War to increase the "firing rate" -- that is, the percentage of soldiers who would actually fire a weapon during an encounter -- from the 15 to 20 percent range in World War II to as much as 95 percent in Vietnam.

Grossman has written "On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society" (Little, Brown, 1995), in which he discusses how conditioning techniques were used to teach Vietnam-bound soldiers to kill automatically in battle encounters, yet respect authority and make split-second distinctions between friends and enemies.

The difference, he says, is that today these same techniques are not tempered by such respect or distinctions. What is worse, he adds, they teach

us to associate violence with pleasure.

America's adolescents spend countless hours watching action or horror movies -- the exquisitely detailed suffering and killing of human beings -- on television and in movie theaters, places we associate with entertainment, pleasure, favorite foods and the intimacy of dating.

And interactive video games, Grossman asserts, are even more directly connected to behavior. Addictive, increasingly hyperreal in their effects and long since shed of the goofy monsters that were targets in the old days, contemporary video games often are what he calls "operant conditioning firing ranges with pop-up targets and immediate feedback, just like those used to train soldiers in modern armies."

As a result, Grossman wrote: "We are reaching that stage of desensitization at which the inflicting of pain and suffering has become a source of entertainment; vicarious pleasure rather than revulsion. We are learning to kill, and we are learning to like it."

The two boys apparently responsible for the massacre in Littleton, Colo., last week were, among many other things, accomplished players of the ultraviolent video game Doom. And Michael Carneal, the 14-year-old boy who opened fire on a prayer group in a Paducah, Ky., school foyer in 1997, was also known to be a video-game expert.

Michael Carneal had never fired a pistol before stealing the gun he used that day. But in the ensuing melee, he fired eight shots, hit eight people, and killed three of them.

The average law enforcement officer in the United States, at a distance of seven yards, hits fewer than one in five shots, Grossman asserted in a interview in the current issue of Adbusters magazine.

"When Michael Carneal was shooting, he fired one shot at each kid," Grossman said. "He simply fired one shot at everything that popped up on his screen."

Grossman's sentiments are echoed by Joel Federman, co-director of the Center for Communication and Social Policy at the University of California at Santa Barbara. In his former job as the research director of Mediascope, a nonprofit policy organization that promotes media responsibility, he published an annotated bibliography called "The Social Effects of Interactive Electronic Games."

Although he says that only seven or eight studies specifically focused on aggression in interactive games, the majority of them showed that aggressive games increased the likelihood of aggression just as certainly as violent television did. "In games," he said in an interview, "aggressive behavior is not only seen as appropriate, but you're rewarded for doing it well."

Federman drew a parallel between producers of violent media and the tobacco industry, which denied causality in the face of irrefutable evidence of a direct correlation between smoking and cancer. A study proving that TV or video games cause violence would mean that at least one study participant would be inspired to commit murder -- clearly an untenable ethical situation for the entertainment industry.

"Same as the tobacco industry, the evidence is there," Federman said. "These effects do exist, and everyone from the American Psychological Association to the Surgeon General has acknowledged them. But since not every kid experiences the extreme effects, people can continue to deny them."

What, then, to do? The industry's attempts at self-policing were never intended to stem the creation or distribution of ultraviolent games; in fact, despite their superficial intent to protect, every producer knows the best way to guarantee a best seller is to give a movie or video game a "restricted" rating.

Nor is censorship seen as a solution.

"There's a very legitimate First Amendment concern," Federman said. "And because of freedom of speech, because there's a value that we don't want to compromise, then it really comes down to the people creating these games. That's where the responsibility lies."

Link to NY Times:

<http://search.nytimes.com/search/daily/bin/fastweb?getdoc+site+iib-site+52+0+wAAA+den/se%7Ecaruso>

Click here </library/tech/reference/indexdigicom.html> for a list of links to other Digital Commerce columns.

Related Sites

- * Adbusters <<http://www.adbusters.org>>
- * Mediascope <<http://www.mediascope.org>>
- * "The Social Effects of Interactive Electronic Games" <<http://www.mediascope.org/vidbib.htm>>

These sites are not part of The New York Times on the Web, and The Times has no control over their content or availability.

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> -----Original Message-----

> From: Robin Delany-Shabazz [SMTP:DELANY@ojp.usdoj.gov]

> Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 1999 8:14 AM

> To: adamse@nwrel.org; sundermc@nwrel.org

> Cc: bryan_williams@ed.gov

> Subject: press release, video games and phone converssation.

>

> Carlos and Betsy: good morning...

> Attached is the news release as I have revised, primarily to make
> current. I have meetings much of today, but think it is self explanatory.

> I

> should be available between 3:30 and 5 pm ET.

>

> Carlos -- a question from the administrator's staff as to whether the

> center has any info/research on the association of video games, i.e.,

> those with violent imagery, and youth violence/school violence. Not TV,
> but specifically video games.

>

> Also: we have a phone call tomorrow re: pubs. Carlos -- can you and I

> talk after that call re: other project stuff?

>

> Thanks, r << File: WordPerfect 6.0 >>

also get bk by Michael Medved
on media

CBS 212 975-4321

From: John P Murray <jpm@ksu.edu>
To: OJP4.PO6(DONNI)
Date: 5/6/99 3:51pm
Subject: Youth & Media Effects Summary

Dear Donni Leboeuf: Barbara Stowe, at AESOP, mentioned that you are interested in media violence and children and would welcome some recent reviews of this topic. I am enclosing a very brief (2 or 3 page) summary of research issues that I prepared for an article in the forthcoming Encyclopedia of Psychology, which will be published later this year. Also, there are more detailed reviews of the TV violence issue available at a website (www.ksu.edu/humec/fshs/tele.htm) that I have developed over the past few years.

Please let me know if you need further information. Also, I would welcome your thoughts on the forthcoming White House meeting on Media and Youth Culture--scheduled, I think, for May 10th.

Cheers, John Murray

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TO BE PUBLISHED IN:
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New York: Oxford University Press, 1999

MEDIA EFFECTS

John P. Murray, Ph.D.
Interim Associate Vice Provost for Research and
Professor of Family Studies and Human Services
Kansas State University

Contemporary discussions of media effects are focused on the impact of television on children, because television is the most extensively-studied medium and children are among the most extensive users of the medium and the target of the most extensive research. However, it is important to note that research questions about the impact of TV have their roots in similar questions raised about movies, comics, and radio (e.g., Charters, 1933; Wertham, 1954; Wolfe & Fiske, 1949; Zajonc, 1954). In the case of movies and comics, most studies were focused on the effects of violent content on children's values and behaviors. The title of a review of movie research published in 1933, *Boys, Movies, and City Streets* (Cressey & Thrasher, 1933), gives a flavor of the concern. In general, these early studies of movies found some relationships between viewing violence and attitudes favoring aggression, but cited the need for much more research (Lazarsfeld, 1955; Maccoby, 1951).

The major questions raised about the effects of any medium include concerns about the amount of time spent with the medium, the nature of the content encountered in the medium, and the extent of effects (i.e., the magnitude, scope, and duration). In the case of television, the initial studies by Wilbur Schramm and his colleagues in the U.S. and Canada (Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961) and Himmelweit and her associates in England (Himmelweit, Oppenheim, & Vince, 1958) were focused on the amount of time children spent viewing TV and the effects on school performance and reading, as well as influences on other leisure activities and social interaction. The influence of TV violence on aggressive behavior was not as extensively studied in these early investigations, but violence was one of the concerns, which led to more extensive later research.

Research on the impact of media, particularly television, has been largely undertaken by scholars in four disciplines: Psychology, Sociology, Communications, and Education. In addition to the early survey research noted above by Wilbur Schramm (a communications scholar at Stanford) and Hilde Himmelweit (a social psychologist at the London School of Economics and Political Science), the other early contributors who shaped the research field were Albert Bandura (a psychologist at Stanford) and Leonard Berkowitz (a psychologist at the University of Wisconsin). These early researchers and their professional orientations are important because they shaped the nature of the questions asked and the research findings obtained (Schramm, Chaffee, & Rogers, 1997). These differing professional orientations resulted in a differential preference for correlational vs. experimental approaches to studying media effects; sociology and communications researchers favored correlational studies; and psychology and education favored experimental studies. It is the experimental studies, largely conducted by psychologists, that ask §1

J.P. Murray
Effects/Encyclopedia of Psychology

Media

questions about media "effects" or "impact." The correlational studies conducted by sociologists and communications researchers tended to ask questions about media use and the gratifications derived from media.

This "effects" vs. "use" distinction continues in more recent research and gives rise to continuing debates about the extent of media effects. The history of research on media effects is largely a mid-to-late 20th Century phenomenon. Research on movies, radio, and comics began in the 1930's, and studies of television began in the 1950's and 1960's. With regard to television, one of the most extensively-studied areas of media effects is the impact of televised violence. The initial survey research conducted in the U.S. and Canada (Schramm, et al., 1961) found that children who had high exposure to television and low exposure to print were more aggressive than those with the reverse pattern. Similarly, early experiments conducted with preschool children by Bandura and his colleagues (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961; 1963) demonstrated that children imitated or modeled the aggressive behavior that they saw displayed in simulated television programs. So too, Berkowitz (1962; Berkowitz & Rawlings, 1963), studying young adults, found that viewing aggressive film portrayals led to heightened aggression.

These early studies of media effects grew out of a common basis of public concern about media violence that has been manifested in a series of hearings and reports by legislative and scientific committees and

commissions. For example, the history of concern about television violence began within about a decade of the establishment of television broadcasting in the U.S. The first television broadcasting license was issued in 1941, and the first public hearings investigating the impact of TV violence took place in the U.S. Congress in 1952 and 1954 (U.S. Congress, 1952; 1955). Other major investigations and reviews included the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Baker & Ball, 1969), the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior (1972), the National Institute of Mental Health, Television, and Behavior study (1982), and the American Psychological Association Task Force on Television and Society report (Huston, Donnerstein, Fairchild, Feshbach, Katz, Murray, Rubinstein, Wilcox, & Zuckerman, 1992). Each of these reports reviewed research and provided interpretive summaries of the effects of television on children and adults. All of these reports concluded that televised violence negatively affected the attitudes, values, and social behavior of viewers. The magnitude of the relationships between media violence and aggression has been estimated by Eron and his colleagues (Donnerstein, Slaby, & Eron, 1994) to be in the range of .20 to .40 and explaining, on average, about 10% of the variance.

The issue of television violence provides a paradigm for understanding the research and public policy processes involved in studying media effects because it reflects the broad range of experimental and correlational studies undertaken by diverse scholars. It has been noted that the early concerns about movies, radio, and comics served as the basis for addressing concerns about the newer medium of television. However, it is equally clear that the research on television occurred at a later stage in the evolution of psychology and other social sciences and, therefore, benefited from a more diversified and robust research profession. Thus, the studies of TV violence evolved from early surveys of viewing patterns and the relationship to ratings or observed behavior in correlational studies (e.g., Himmelweit, et al., 1958; Schramm, et al., 1961) and the basic experimental studies of Bandura (Bandura, et al., 1961; 1963) and Berkowitz (1962; 1965) to more extensive field studies of television viewing and behavior in natural settings (Friedrich & Stein, 1973; Murray & Kippax, 1978; Park, Berkowitz, Leyens, West, & Sebastian, 1977; Williams, 1986). For example, a study by Friedrich and Stein (1973) involved preschool children who were shown either violent or nonviolent programs, and the short-term or longer-term behavior outcomes were assessed (e.g., children who watched Batman and Superman cartoons were more aggressive in their preschool setting than those who watched Mister Rogers's Neighborhood). In addition, we now have a longitudinal study of over-20-years duration that demonstrates a relationship between early television violence viewing in childhood and later aggressive behavior in mid-adulthood (Eron, 1963; Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1984). Finally, we have moved from the social construction of social behavior in studies of TV violence in the early Surgeon General's study (Murray, 1973) to the neurological correlates of social behavior in brain imaging studies of children's response to viewing TV violence (Murray, 1998). In the more recent studies, functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) is being used to identify areas of the brain that are involved in processing video violence. Initial results of a study of 11- to 13-year-old children suggest that TV violence activates right hemisphere emotional arousal and control (e.g., right prefrontal cortex, right amygdala) and enhanced long-term memory storage and access due to the emotional content (Murray, Lioti, Ingmundson, Pu, Zamarripa, Mayberg, Woldorff, & Fox, 1999).

In conclusion, media effects have been studied by scholars in a wide range of social science disciplines, but psychology has provided an integrating force in the study of the individual in the social context. These studies have included correlational investigations that assess the extent to which media exposure is related to attitudes, values, and behavior, and experimental studies that provide an understanding of the causal processes. We have learned much about the effects of media (Asamen & Berry, 1998; Huston & Wright, 1997; Murray, 1998), from patterns of use to patterns of effects, but there is much yet to learn.

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