

Television Censorship

Good or bad for American society?

PRO

Censorship defines difference between appropriate, indecent

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The world watches in awe as Hollywood glamorizes risky behaviors such as promiscuous sex, substance abuse, and violent conduct in magazines, online, and on television. It is a parent's nightmare to imagine their child might become one of the stereotype-perpetuating, idiotic public figures that are the media's focus and the role models for today's youth. Most parents try to avoid exposing their children to such images and foul language too early in life.

But everyday on TV, children can find plenty of vulgar language, sexual references, substance abuse, and violence, even if they are not looking for it, due to the severe lack of censorship seen on TV in recent years. TV needs a return of censorship to maintain the line between appropriate and inappropriate viewing material.

While some argue it is a parent's job to censor what their children watch on TV and not the government's, adults know what it is like to be told not to do something; there are ways to get around restrictions. Kids can go to a friend's house, or somewhere else to watch the shows on TV that they might not be allowed to see

at home.

If there is more censorship and control over what content is allowed, then parents who do not effectively shelter their children will not have to worry about the negative side effects

something done on TV and they might think that it is okay for them to do or try. If they see violent behavior on TV, they might act aggressively. If they hear swear words on TV, they might repeat them," Advanced Placement Psychology

overall plot development.

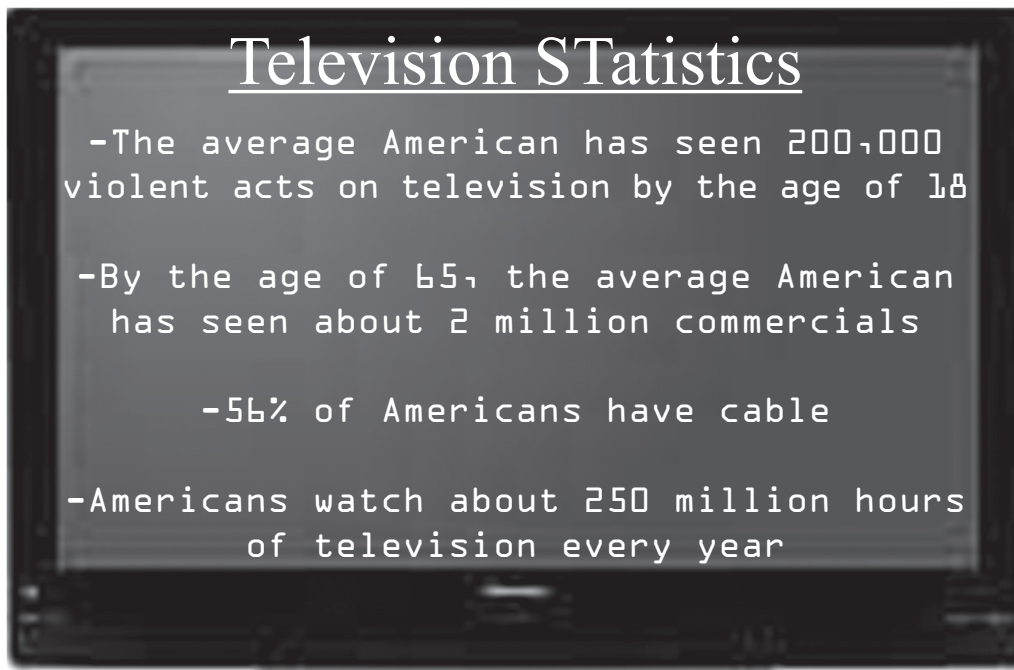
"The envelope is constantly being pushed on TV. The amount of foul language and sexual content they allow is just ridiculous, and [the producers of these TV shows] say that these things are important to the plot, or are part of creative expression," Sophomore Rachel Mayer said.

There are ways to creatively express aspects of a show without using sexual themes, violence, or foul language. There are many well-written, enjoyable, critically acclaimed TV shows that do not have these inappropriate elements, such as *The Office* or *My Name is Earl*.

Sometimes not even adults want to watch shows that have a lot of vulgar language or sexual content because they do not enjoy watching or hearing it.

"You're not always in the mood to watch something on TV with a lot of violence or swearing or sex, but those are the only kind of shows that are on right now. It's much more difficult to find shows that are enjoyable but aren't so 'in-your-face'," Senior Kelly O'Connor said.

If television censorship becomes stricter, parents will feel safer about their kids watching shows and will not have to worry about them acting out.



Source: csun.edu
Graphic by Julie Carlisle

that TV can have on their children.

"There are plenty of negative side effects that TV has on viewers, especially children. [Children] see

teacher Jennifer Juenke said.

Others would argue that these elements of a violent or sexual nature are a part of a TV show's atmosphere or



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Television censorship violates First Amendment

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Bleeps. Edits. Scrambled screens. Dubbing.

These signs of censorship are more than annoying sights and sounds that populate modern television. They represent a disturbing trend in contemporary American society: censorship of entertainment mediums.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates interstate and international communications by radio and television. Due to the controversy of Janet Jackson's 2004 Super Bowl "wardrobe malfunction," former FCC Chairman Michael Powell and current Chairman Kevin Martin have beefed up restrictions and regulations against racy or violent programming according to CNN.

Television censorship not only restricts artistic expression, it is a violation of the basic First Amendment rights of American citizens. It is not the responsibility of the government to serve

as a watchdog for the media. It is instead the duty of good parents. It is simply not right that any group of individuals assume the moral responsibility and right to regulate what the American public views on television.

"TV censorship is silly when parents have control over what their kids watch, especially when most cable systems have

special parental controls that can be set," Junior Angie Coderre said.

There are definitely some programs on television which are entirely inappropriate for young people. It is the responsibility of parents to decide if and how shows like *Nip/Tuck* and *Sex and the City* should be restricted from their children. The FCC is giving American parents a vote of no confidence when their practices are performing parental

responsibilities for them.

There are exceptions to this rule. Censorship is occasionally necessary for restricting harmful material such as pornography from reaching American children. The Janet Jackson Halftime Show incident at the Super Bowl was inexcusable, because the Super Bowl is intended to be a family event. Overall,

however, TV censorship is not appropriate on a national scale.

Television can be an outlet for creative expression, like film or literature.

Suppression of free expression is indicative of a totalitarian regime, not the American government. Although shows such as *Lost*, *Weeds*, *The Sopranos*, *Nip/Tuck*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *24* are not appropriate for family viewing, they are tremendous pieces of adult entertainment that should not be tampered with.

Some of the best shows on TV right now are the ones with edgy material.

-Katie Woodward
Sophomore

Adult material on these programs is sometimes necessary to add to the overall atmosphere that was intended by the creators of the show. In order to make their show more cutting-edge, writers sometimes add adult content. It is the network's obligation to make the distinction between necessary adult material and pornography.

Oftentimes well-written shows allow their viewers to relate to characters that handle real life situations in a variety of ways that are documented on the show. Shows with some adult content are easier to relate to because real life is not censored. Not everything in real life is appropriate for all ages.

"Some of the best shows on TV right now are the ones with edgy material. They enhance their entertainment value," Sophomore Katie Woodward said.

American censorship is not merely inconvenient for millions of adult consumers, it is unethical for the government of a democratic country to regulate what is viewed by its people.