10829582

Dan Roberts

English 2010-024

12 November 2017

Don’t Watch the Movie

The reason you are reading this is probably different than others, it might be out of curiosity, it could be for research, probably not for fun, but most likely it’s because your parents told you that you couldn’t watch a violent movie and now they are giving you this paper to explain why. So, before you just refuse to read this or throw it away just hear me out first, I love movies. I’m guessing that your day looks a little like mine, get home from school, throw your stuff somewhere, take off your shoes, and go straight to the couch to see what they have on Netflix. After it has been a while I’ll get to the important things like homework and stuff. If this sounds like something you do, then it’s probably a good thing that you’re reading this, even if your parents weren’t the ones who gave you this paper. As great as movies are, violent ones aren’t the best for you to see. In fact, it would be best to limit how often you watch violent movies because, not only does watching movies take up a lot of your time, the violence in movies can increase your aggression, and movies have also become more violent. Let me explain that a little more for you.

Are movies a waste of time? Well the answer for that question really depends on a lot of factors. If you’re watching a movie on the weekend with some friends that is defiantly not a waste of time, well unless it’s a stupid movie, but that’s beside the point. Watching one or two movies a week probably won’t make that much of a difference in getting things done, but what if you watch more than that, a lot more than that? Well how much time do teenagers actually spend watching shows? In a study done by Nicoleta Ciacu and Alina Bratu, both faculty at respected universities, found that teenagers watch TV a lot. They found that 0% watched 0-1 hours of TV a day (23), that means that everyone they asked watched more than 1 hour a day. They found that 15% of teens watch 1-2 hours a day, 45% watched 3-5 hours a day, and 37% watched over 5 hours a day (23). So only 3% didn’t answer that’s still 82% of teens getting at least 3 hours of screen time every day. Also 100% of teens (assuming that the 3% that didn’t answer watched some TV) are sitting in front of their TV every day. Now let’s break this down, we’ll say that the average amount of time that teens spend watching is about 4 hours just for an example. If someone watched 4 hours of TV a day that’s 28 hours a week, that one day and 4 hours every week spent on TV. Just think of all the possibilities you could do with an extra day, there are so many things.

So TV is not the same thing as a Movie, but how often do they have movies playing on TV? A lot, in fact Nicoleta and Alina say 67% of teenagers said they watch movies on TV every day (24). So, looking at more numbers, if a movie is about 2 hours, and you watch one every day, that’s at least 14 hours a week just watching movies. That is a lot of movies, to be honest I’m not sure how people find new ones to watch if they see them that much. Let’s go back to that question I asked, are movies a waste of time? Well we will let the numbers decide that. If you watch 2-4 hours a day that would put you between 730-1,460 hours a year in front of a screen. It’s said that it takes 10,000 hours to become an expert at something, that mean it would take you about 7-14 years to become an expert at wasting time, you are only a teen for 7 years. You could take all that time you spend in front of your TV and go become an expert at something, like an instrument or a sport, instead of watching something that probably will never help you make money in the future.

Now that it’s easy to see that watching movies can take up a lot of your time, lets talk about the effect that the content in violent movies can have on you. This is probably a big reason why your parents care so much about the movies you watch. It’s not often that people think while watching a violent movie, “I’m going to go do what these people do.” I don’t think I’ve ever thought that, and I definitely haven’t done it, I’m pretty sure you haven’t either. So, if you’re not reenacting the violent scenes in movies do they still have an effect on you? Yes, yes they do. Brad Bushman et al., he has a doctorate and is a specialist in adolescent aggression, talks about a study done where they had weapons on a table or sports gear, the people who saw the weapons reacted with more aggression than anyone else in the study (1015). This shows that seeing an item related to violence can make people more aggressive. They also said that even hearing violent words like “gun” can make you more aggressive (1015). Most movies have weapons in them, and they are often used. Now if seeing and hearing violent things can make you more aggressive and movies have violence in them, I’ll let you put two and two together on that one.

Now if you don’t fully believe what Bushman said, even though he is one of the leading professionals, he is not the only one saying this. There are a group of professors in Pakistan who wanted to see if what everyone was saying about media violence increasing aggression was true, and they found that it was. In their own words, “exposure to action/violent movies was responsible for juveniles’ delinquency” (Saleem et al. 253). Even though they said it so perfect I’m going to say it again, seeing a violent movie was the cause of teens committing small crimes. These people did a lot of studding and looked at a lot of factors, including education and if their parent was a criminal. Even with those facts they said violence in movies was still the main factor. You can’t argue that one.

Now that you know that violence in movies can increase your aggression, it would probably be important to know how much violence is actually in the movies you are watching? A lot more then when your parents were growing up, that’s for sure. The nice thing is that Brad Bushman et al. even gave us a graph to look at. Looking at this it shows that in the 1950’s there was about 6 or 7 violent acts per hour compared to 2012 when there was about 15, that’s more than doubled (1016). Well why is that such a big deal? If it’s your parents that are telling you not to watch a movie because it’s to violent, this might be the reason why, our movies now a days are twice as bad as theirs were.

Now seeing that movies are more than they used to be, there are also a lot more R rated movies too. Maybe you don’t watch R rated movies, well that doesn’t make a difference. In Bushman et al.’s research they looked at the different rating to see which had more violence in it. He found the since 2009 PG 13 movies are just as and often more violent than movies that are rated R. That means even if you’re not watching an R rated movie that you will still see the same amount of violence. I don’t know about you but that doesn’t seem right, PG 13 movies shouldn’t be as bad. Well when it comes to language and sex they aren’t. Joseph Price, a professor at BYU, says that the U.S. movie rating system puts the lowest weight on violence (249). That means that Hollywood can get away with violence but when it comes to other stuff there are a lot more restrictions. That’s why movies are twice as violent now.

It’s always nice when you see that everyone agrees on stuff. Well there is another group of people who agree with a lot of things, but they bring a very import piece of information to the table. To make this easier let’s look at their graph and talk about it (Markey et al. 163). It’s easy to see that the lines are going in two different directions. The one that goes up is the amount of gun violence in movies. with that they completely agree that movies are a lot more violent then they used to be. But what about the other lines that go down? Well those represent aggravated assault, homicide, and gun related homicide. That’s good that those major crimes are a lot lower than they used to be, but how does that make sense? If movies are more violent, and violence increases aggression, shouldn’t that mean that there would be more crimes? That’s what I thought at first too but look at the word “aggression”, it means hostile or violent behavior or attitudes. Now that could lead to major crimes but more often than not it’s just minor things, in fact this group say it better than I could, “Although watching a violent film does not seem to be related to shifts in homicide or aggravated assault rates, such exposure may affect other types of less severe aggressive behaviors such as bullying, spreading gossip, minor fights at school, pushing and shoving, or hurling insults” (169). Movies won’t make you assault people, but it can still make you an aggressive person.

There was a lot said here so let’s wrap this all up. Movies are usually a waste of time especially if you become an expert at watching them over your teenage years. Just be careful not to let them get in the way of more important things like real people, or school. Violent things can make people more aggressive, not killers, but its still not good. And over all movies are a lot more violent these days. So, is watching a movie the worst thing in the world, no but, there are so many better things that you can do with your life. Now if it was your parents that gave this to you, now you know why. It’s because they don’t want you to be a jerk, and they want you to do great things, and that won’t happen sitting on your couch watching Netflix.

Works Cited

Bushman, Brad J., et al. "Gun Violence Trends in Movies." *Pediatrics*, vol. 132, no. 6, Dec. 2013, pp. 1014-1018. EBSCO*host*, doi:10.1542/peds.2013-1600.

Ciacu, Nicoleta and Alina Bratu. "Television and the Social Effects on Adolescents.” *Communication & Marketing / Revista De Comunicare Si Marketing*, vol. 4, no. 6, Mar. 2013, pp. 17-30. EBSCO*host*, ezproxy.uvu.edu/login?url=http://search. ebscohost .com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=91920128&site=eds-live.

Markey, Patrick M., et al. "Violent Movies and Severe Acts of Violence: Sensationalism Versus Science." Human Communication Research, vol. 41, no. 2, Apr. 2015, pp. 155-173. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1111/hcre.12046.

Price, Joseph, et al. "What Matters in Movie Ratings? Cross-Country Differences in How Content Influences Mature Movie Ratings." *Journal of Children and Media*, vol. 8, no. 3, July 2014, pp. 240-252. EBSCO*host*, doi:10.1080/17482798.2014.880359.

Saleem, Noshina, et al. "Violent Movies and Criminal Behavior of Delinquents." *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)*, vol. 33, no. 2, Dec. 2013, pp. 243-254. EBSCO*host*, ezproxy.uvu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=97295850&site=eds-live.

Audience assessment

For this assignment I choose to write to teenagers, I was specifically thinking of my little brother as I wrote this paper. The reason I choose to write to this audience is I felt like it might do more than writing to the parents. Parents usually already have their opinion on this matter and are harder to persuade differently, but teenagers are still finding their values so it is easier to help them come to a conclusion. I’m hoping that this paper could help them understand better why their parents have the values they do too.