



Visual Media Critique

Chapter 1

About the Honor

Category: Vocational

Skill Level: 2

Approval authority: North American Division

Year of Introduction: 2016

The Various Types of Visual Media

Types of visual media include digital and printed images, photography, graphic design, fashion, videos, architectural structures and fine arts. Visual media is seen on billboards, smartphones, newspapers, screen projectors, posters, televisions, computers and various other mediums and devices. Visual media is interpreted using primarily what humans see, as opposed to aural or tactile media. It plays a role in advertising, art, communication, education, business and engineering. Visual media is often used as a learning aid, such as in presentations and training guides. Photography and video are major types of visual media and captures a location or moment in a visual form. Fine arts such as painting and drawing are also visual and communicate elements of life and interpretations. Graphic design and drafting use computer-aided imaging software to create visual representations of life or art. Architecture relies on visual guidelines and appeals to visual senses, as does fashion.

All these mediums can be used to spread the gospel message. Some examples include 3ABN, Adventist World Radio, Hope Channel, Advent Review, Event Posters and Banners.

In addition, media technology, live streaming broadcasting, archived media services, and radio webcasting are also mediums that are used to spread the Word

Chapter 2

“Keep thy heart with all diligence,” is the counsel of the wise man; “for out of it are the issues of life.” Proverbs 4:23. As man “thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7. The heart must be renewed by divine grace, or it will be in vain to seek for purity of life. He who attempts to build up a noble, virtuous character independent of the grace of Christ is building his house upon the shifting sand. In the fierce storms of temptation it will surely be overthrown. David’s prayer should be the petition of every soul: “Create in me a

clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. And having become partakers of the heavenly gift, we are to go on unto perfection, being “kept by the power of God through faith.” 1 Peter 1:5. PP 460.1

Yet we have a work to do to resist temptation. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind should not be left to wander at random upon every subject that the adversary of souls may suggest. “Girding up the loins of your mind,” says the apostle Peter, “Be sober, ... not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in ... your ignorance: but like as He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living.” 1 Peter 1:13-15, R.V. Says Paul, “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8. This will require earnest prayer and unceasing watchfulness. We must be aided by the abiding influence of the Holy Spirit, which will attract the mind upward, and habituate it to dwell on pure and holy things. And we must give diligent study to the word of God. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word.” “Thy word,” says the psalmist, “have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” Psalm 119:9, 11. PP 460.2

Chapter 2

Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) Classification Thematic Areas and Elements

i) Violence and crime

The depiction of violence may frighten, unnerve, unsettle or invite imitation, especially from children. Therefore, only mild portrayals that are relevant to the plot may be allowed in films meant for children. For the higher classifications, a stronger depiction of violence is permitted if it is justified by context. The classifiable elements in this thematic area include:

- Normalizing the use of violence as a solution to resolve problems;
- Depiction of violent gangster behavior (e.g. self mutilation rites);
- Emphasis on violent techniques/acts (e.g. Methods of torture, gang- ? Fights, combat techniques);
- Encouraging aggressive and sadistic attitudes towards infliction of pain and violence;
- Explicit and prolonged sexual violence or erotic portrayal of sexual assault /coercion.
- Works portraying excessive blood, gored/dismembered/disfigured parts of a body
- Images of seriously injured people
- Images of dead bodies
- Portrayal of anti-social behavior e.g bullying
- Portrayal of potentially dangerous behavior e.g. hanging, suicide
- Portrayal of ease of making and accessing weapons
- Detailed portrayal of criminal and violent techniques
- Explicit cruelty or violence towards animals

Restricted in this thematic area is work that induces, incites, justifies, reinforces or glorifies violence or terror or its perpetrators or contains anything against the maintenance of law and order or promote anti-national attitudes

ii) Sex, obscenity and nudity

The classifiable elements in this thematic area include:

- Exposure or fondling of female breasts/human/animal sexual organs.
- Explicit images of sexual activity
- Behavior/language that is sexually offensive

- Undressed
- Indecent exposure - A person is guilty of indecent exposure if he or she intentionally makes any open and obscene exposure of his or her person
- Portrayal of children being coerced and or induced to engage in sexual activity

Restricted in this thematic area is a film, poster or program that portrays, encourages, justifies or glorifies perverted or socially unacceptable sex practices such as incest, pedophilia, homosexuality or any form of pornography; content showing women as tools of sex; content endorsing sexual violence.

iii) Occult and horror

The classifiable elements in this thematic area include:

- Use of frightening elements and scary scenes
- Portrayal of magic/super natural forces/events and related practices such as hypnotism, mind-reading, faith healing.
- Portrayal of exorcism (process/action to get rid of evil spirits).
- The paranormal or mysterious events/facts that cannot be explained by science
- Human or animal sacrifice

Restricted in this thematic area is film, poster or program that promotes or encourage occult practices, black magic, witchcraft and similar practices and instills fear or revulsion about the consequences of not following such practices. Classification of horror films will take into consideration the impact and shock effect of such films to ensure that children are protected from disturbing materials.

iv) Drugs, alcohol and other harmful substances

The classifiable elements in this thematic area include:

- Use of illegal drugs
- Use of tobacco or tobacco products
- Abuse or misuse of drugs
- Use of alcohol, solvent or other harmful products

Restricted in this thematic area is film, poster or program that: portrays children being used in production, trafficking and distribution of harmful drugs without any real context; justify, promote, encourage or glamorize abuse or misuse of drug related products; attempts to associate drugs, alcohol and other illegal substances with sexual prowess and or a glamorous or successful lifestyle.

v) Religion and community

The classifiable elements in this thematic area include:

- Profanity in regard to a particular religion/community
- Distorting, demeaning, or depicting religious/community symbols, rituals or practices in a derogatory manner.
- Use of expletives with religious/community associations

vi) Propaganda for war, hate speech and incitement

The classifiable elements in this thematic area include:

- Communication manipulating people's attitude toward war
- Repetitious emotional phrases e.g. war on terror
- Exaggerated or misrepresented facts
- Name calling - use of offensive names to induce rejection, ridicule or condemnation

- Band wagon - a tool used in propaganda to rally people behind a course
- Demonizing of the 'enemy'
- Brainwashing
- Ethnic cleansing, massacre

Rating

During examination the frequency and intensity of all the classifiable elements shall be put into a scale of 0 – 5: Based on this scale the rating shall be given as indicated below.

0 – 1: Low impact classifiable elements – General Exhibition (GE)

2: Mild impact classifiable elements – Parental Guidance (PG)

3: Moderate impact classifiable elements - 16

4: Strong impact classifiable elements -18

5: Extreme impact classifiable elements – Restricted.

Chapter 3

Interpretations of the ratings

1. **GE (General Exhibition)** – It is suitable for general family viewing. Works in this category are suitable for all ages as they contain no content considered harmful or disturbing to even children.

Theme Themes are suitable for viewers of all ages.

Violence Mild portrayals of violence are allowed. The occasional mild threat or menace is acceptable if justified by context.

Sex No sexual activity is allowed. Sexual preference of any kind is unacceptable.

Nudity There should be no nudity.

Language No coarse language is allowed.

Drug Use No references to illegal drugs or drug abuse.

Horror Treatment of horror should be non-threatening, or tinged with humor. Fright scenes should be mild and not psychologically disturbing.

2. **PG-(Parental Guidance)** It may contain scenes that may upset children under the age of 10. Parental Guidance is advised. This is an advisory category that warns parents that the content might confuse or upset children who consume it alone. While the content may be suitable for children, parents are advised to monitor the content

Theme	<p>Themes should generally have a low sense of threat or menace, and be justified by context. Special attention should be paid to their impact on children.</p> <p>More serious themes such as crime and revenge may be featured but care needs to be taken as the audience may include children.</p>
Violence	<p>Moderate portrayals of violence without details, may be allowed, if justified by context.</p> <p>Portrayals of violence should not dwell on cruelty, infliction of pain or torture of any kind.</p>
Sex	<p>Sexual activity may be implied, and should be infrequent. Only mild sexual references (e.g. Kissing and hugging) and innuendo are allowed.</p>
Nudity	<p>Discreet and fleeting side profile nudity may be allowed in a non-sexual context. Infrequent portrayal of frontal nudity of the upper body may be allowed only under exceptional circumstances and in a non-sexual context. For example, films which feature historical or dramatized events such as the World War II Holocaust, tribal ways of life, or health programmes.</p>
Drug Use	<p>Only discreet references to illegal drug use are allowed on the condition that such references do not promote or endorse drug abuse and should be justified by context.</p>
Horror	<p>Frightening sequences should not be prolonged or intense.</p>

3. 16 – It may contain scenes unsuitable for persons under the age of 16. It is a legally restrictive category and no person under the age of 16 years is allowed to consume.

Theme	<p>Portrayal of mature themes (eg. gangsterism and transvestism) may be allowed, provided they are treated with discretion and appropriate to those 16 years and above.</p>
Violence	<p>The portrayal of infliction of pain and injuries may be allowed if it is not prolonged or detailed. Explicit sexual violence is not allowed.</p>
Sex	<p>Non-explicit depiction of sexual activities may be allowed but should not be detailed or prolonged.</p>
Nudity	<p>Infrequent, brief and discreet portrayal of non-sexual frontal nudity may be allowed if justified by context.</p>

Drug Use The film as a whole must not promote or encourage drug use.

Horror Frightening scenes which are more prolonged may be allowed.

4. 18 – It may contain scenes suitable for adults only. It is a legally restrictive category and no person under the age of 18 years is allowed to consume. Themes may be adult and results are not necessarily positive.

Theme Portrayal and exploration of mature themes are allowed.

Violence Realistic depiction of violence and gore with strong impact is allowed if justified by context. However, the portrayal should not be excessive, gratuitous or exploitative.

Sex Sexual activity may be portrayed if justified by context and without strong details.

Nudity Full frontal nudity with moderate detail is acceptable if justified by context. No close up of genitalia is allowed.

Language Coarse language is allowed if it is not excessive.

Drug Use Depiction should not promote or endorse drug abuse

Horror Prolonged and/or intense sequences that invoke fear and/or terror may be permitted.

5. Restricted/Banned – It may contain materials that erode the moral fabric of society undermine national interest and/or stability, or create disharmony among various racial and religious groups will not be allowed for commercial screening.

Themes that promote issues that denigrate any race or religion, or undermine national interest, and/or stability.

Theme Themes that glorify undesirable fetishes or behavior (e.g. pedophilia and bestiality).

Promotion or glamorization of homosexual lifestyle.

Violence Detailed or gratuitous depictions of extreme violence or cruelty.

Detailed instructions on methods of crime or killings.

Exploitative and pornographic sexual acts.

Sex Depictions of obscene and/or unnatural sexual activities (e.g. bestiality, necrophilia and pedophilia). Real sexual activity (e.g. actual penetration).

Gratuitous, exploitative or offensive depictions of sexual activity including fetishes or practices which are offensive or abhorrent.

Nudity Exploitative and excessive nudity.

Drug use Materials glorifying or encouraging drug abuse.

Mankind has attempted to develop a rating system for much of its visual media content. However, this is a manmade system and was not created with spiritual matters or God in mind. Some of these rating systems might consider a particular program "safe" for a general audience, but Christians would disagree with much of the content.

The Bible gives us a good and clear list of what we should ponder and think about when we consume visual media. It tells us to fill our minds with things that are true, lovely, pure, etc. When determining what kind of content to watch, don't let yourself be guided by the world's standard of morals, but by God's standard of truth and purity.

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things." — Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

Chapter 4

The impact violence in visual media plays in shaping society and its expectations.

The average person in North America watches nearly 5 hours of video each day, 98% of which is watched on a traditional television set, according to Nielsen Company. Nearly two-thirds of TV programs contain some physical violence. Most self-involving video games contain some violent content, even those for children.

In reality, the number of violent crimes has been falling, but the public's perception is that violence has increased. According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, the overall violent victimization rate (eg, rape and assaults) decreased by 40% from 2001 to 2010. Similarly, the murder rate in the US has dropped by almost half, from 9.8 per 100,000 people in 1991 to 5.0 in 2009.

A 2002 report by the US Secret Service and the US Department of Education, which examined 37 incidents of targeted school shootings and school attacks from 1974 to 2000 in this country, found that "over half of the attackers demonstrated some interest in violence through movies, video games, books, and other media."

In a 2009 Policy Statement on Media Violence, the American Academy of Pediatrics said, "Extensive research evidence indicates that media violence can contribute to aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares, and fear of being harmed."

In 2012, the Media Violence Commission of the International Society for Research on Aggression (ISRA) in its report on media violence said, “Over the past 50 years, a large number of studies conducted around the world have shown that watching violent television, watching violent films, or playing violent video games increases the likelihood for aggressive behavior.”

According to the commission, more than 15 meta-analyses have been published examining the links between media violence and aggression. Anderson and colleagues, for instance, published a comprehensive meta-analysis of violent video game effects and concluded that the “evidence strongly suggests that exposure to violent video games is a causal risk factor for increased aggressive behavior, aggressive cognition, and aggressive affect and for decreased empathy and prosocial behavior.”

In 2007, Anderson’s group reported on a longitudinal study of violent video games. The study queried children and their peers as well as teachers on aggressive behaviors and violent media consumption twice during a school year. The researchers found that boys and girls who played a lot of violent video games changed over the school year, becoming more aggressive.

“There now are numerous longitudinal studies by several different research groups around the world, and they all find significant violent video game exposure effects,” Anderson said.

There is growing evidence, Anderson said, that high exposure to fast-paced violent games can lead to changes in brain function when processing violent images, including dampening of emotional responses to violence and decreases in certain types of executive control. But there also is some evidence that the same type of fast-paced violent games can improve some types of spatial-visual skills, basically, ability to extract visual information from a computer screen.

Chapter 5

Inspirations from the spirit of prophecy

"The talent of time is precious. Every day it is given to us in trust, and we shall be called upon to give an account of it to God. It is to be used to God's glory, and if we would prolong our lives, if we would gain the life that measures with the life of God, we must give the mind pure food. No time should be wasted that might have been used to good account.

Jesus Christ is our spiritual touchstone. He reveals the Father. Nothing should be given as food to the brain that will bring before the mind any mist or cloud in regard to the Word of God. No careless inattention should be shown in regard to the cultivation of the soil of the heart." -- Manuscript 15, 1898.

"Upon the right improvement of our time depends our success in acquiring knowledge and mental culture. The cultivation of the intellect need not be prevented by poverty, humble origin, or unfavorable surroundings. Only let the moments be treasured. A few moments here and a few there, that might be frittered away in aimless talk; the morning hours so often wasted in bed; the time spent in traveling on trams or railway cars, or waiting at the station; the moments of waiting for meals, waiting for those who are tardy in keeping an appointment—if a book were kept at hand, and these fragments of time were improved in study, reading, or careful thought, what might not be accomplished. A resolute purpose, persistent industry, and careful economy of time, will enable men to acquire knowledge and mental discipline which will qualify them for almost any position of influence and usefulness.

It is the duty of every Christian to acquire habits of order, thoroughness, and dispatch... Decide how long a time is required for a given task, and then bend every effort toward accomplishing the work in the given time.

The exercise of the will power will make the hands move deftly." -- Christ's Object Lessons, pg. 343-344

"It is wrong to waste our time, wrong to waste our thoughts. We lose every moment that we devote to self-seeking. If every moment were valued and rightly employed, we should have time for everything that we need to do for ourselves or for the world. In the expenditure of money, in the use of time, strength, opportunities, let every Christian look to God for guidance." -- The Ministry of Healing, pg. 208

"God grants men the gift of time for the purpose of promoting His glory." -- Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, pg. 354

Assessment 1

(To be submitted via email arkcherubs.jkusda@gmail.com and a copy kept in your repository)

1. Discuss the importance of parental involvement in the selection of media.
2. Follow the current news for three days and evaluate the sources and accuracy of what has been reported. Evaluate on a scale of one to five where each report falls, with one representing pure entertainment and five representing strictly informational news. Prepare and present your findings to your group.
3. Keep a detailed record of the amount of time and types of all visual media you consume during a four-day period. Include the following data in your records
 - a. Time spent viewing
 - b. Media rating and rating organization (if available)
 - c. The plot or theme
 - d. Purity of content vs sexual and/or violent themes
 - e. The message that was presented by the media

Prepare a graph or chart illustrating your findings. What changes, if any, do you need to make to your viewing habits? Evaluate how being a Christian should affect your use of media. Be detailed and honest, taking into account what you have experienced in this honor. Share your evaluation in a letter, report, or journal with a trusted friend or leader.

4. View a media presentation with your family. After the viewing, interview your family members using the following questions:
 - a. Did you find the presentation entertaining?
 - b. Did you learn anything valuable?
 - c. Would you watch the presentation again? Why or why not?
 - d. Did you feel your time was well spent in watching the media?
5. Create a speech, presentation, or game that shows what you have learned about the critique of visual media while earning this honor. Share this presentation with a group.