T.V-Is The News Blood Driven Essay, Research Paper

Negative Effect of TV News Crime and Violence

Television news, due primarily to its obsession with crime and violence, definitely has a negative impact upon our society. TV news is basically an oxymoron; giving us the skin of the truth stuffed with a lie. A news program should be focused on the facts, with perhaps some objective analysis. However, for business purposes, TV news broadcasts use dramatic, usually violent stories and images to capture and maintain an audience. What we see and hear on the news affects us both consciously and subconsciously, and sends us about our lives unnecessarily fearing the remote dangers that we see excessively portrayed on the evening news. This fact is especially true for children, who are defenseless against this onslaught of malice being brought into our living rooms in the form of informative reporting.

Why is it that bad news is the only news? Is that all the public finds interest in? Take the story of Jessica Dubroff.

Jessica was to become the youngest person to fly across the continent of America. At the start of her voyage, there was only a smattering of news reports granting her a few seconds of recognition. However, after her plane crashed, and she, her father and trainer were killed, Jessica was front-page news. To see the latest horror / thriller, there’s no need to go to your local theater; it’s on television at 6 PM. Yet the news isn’t completely at fault; the people who complain that these stories are exaggerated are the very people who tune in to watch them every evening.

The long-standing news producer motto, “if it bleeds, it leads,” is alive and well, and the network broadcasts are no better than the locals are. The world news shows are virtually indistinguishable from local news, both leading with blood and guts. Clearly, advertising revenue and the constant pressure to keep the viewers tuned to the station are the driving forces behind the “dumbing down” of TV news. News producers must figure that if they can scare the wits out of people, the people will be more inclined to watch the prominence of gore and violence on daily TV news broadcasts. They are experts at creating a visual entertainment package that appeals to our instinctive obsession with the horrendous. It interests us, captivates us and rivets us. In a way, we experience vicariously the very things we dread. It is our curiosity which keeps us glued to the screen night in, night out, gawking at the misfortunes of other while at the same time praying we never experience the same thing. These stories are a highly charged, mental experience for viewers, and when one of them breaks, there isn’t a TV station that’s not covering it or a person that isn’t talking about it. From a journalist s point of view, violent crime pays; it s cheap to report and it grabs attention. Common sense dictates that stations whose newscasts stress crime-and-violence reporting can cut staff (fewer are needed because the visuals and story line are provided by the events) and improve ratings at the same time (the visuals are compelling for viewers).

TV news terrifies school kids by its constant preoccupation with violence and crime. Graphic coverage of wars, bombings, murders and natural disasters can quite possibly lead to nightmares, depression and other lasting reactions. They are innocent and impressionable. We have the ability to tell the difference between reality and deception; children don’t. The world presented to them on TV is usually a lot scarier than the world they actually live in. Crime is being cleaned up around the world, yet coverage of crime on TV news increases.

Television news seems compelled to “inform” its viewers of all of the latest crimes, tragedies, and disasters, as though these are the only stories worth presenting. But is this really news, and is it a responsible thing for the networks to be doing, or is it a blatant abuse of power? The journalistic “powers that be”, rather than to simply show us the devastation that has already occurred, just for its “entertainment” value.

Thus, violence generates violence; fear generates fear; and the dismal world depicted on the evening news becomes one that we all relate to and live by.