

Viewpoint

Violence on television. There seems to be a lot of talk about what can we can do to stop it. A lot of people believe it's the reason why people, especially children, are growing so increasingly violent. Television has become a monster and we need to stop it, right?

WRONG. The problem is not television. The problem is that we've allowed television to raise our kids. The classic example of this is the five-year-old boy who started a fire after watching "Beavis & Butthead." People were shocked when this happened. People questioned: How can television be so irresponsible?

My question is, how can parents be so irresponsible? Isn't it a parent's job, not television's job, to raise kids. What was a five year-old boy doing with access to matches? What was this five year-old doing watching MTV? This is in no way to defend television, it's to accuse parents of not doing their job. I believe parents should monitor what their children watch and not allow them to spend five hours a day watching television.

My fear is that we as a society have gotten to the point where we are no longer accountable for our actions. There is a BIG problem with violence and sex on television, but we've allowed ourselves to watch it. It's no longer our fault for watching violence, it's the network's fault for showing it. Let's get back to where WE are responsible for our beliefs and actions, not television.

Let us stop blaming things like violence on television, shock jocks on the radio, and sex on the Internet for societies problems. I would love to see these things disappear, but they are not the causes of problems; they are the effects of a bigger problem. The bigger problem is the decline in the morals of America. Let's start blaming ourselves for becoming conditioned to these things. Count on yourself to decide on what's right or wrong, not ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX.

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Off The Record

"Now we are forced to recognize our inhumanity, our reason coexists with our insanity. But we choose between reality and madness, it's either sadness or euphoria."

- Billy Joel
"Summer in Highland Falls"

THE PENDULUM

Informing the Elon College Community

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"My girlfriend slept with my father..."

...today on Ricki Lake."

This isn't something that has gone on in my life, and I hope not in yours either, but more and more it is happening on daytime T.V. talk shows. Reality is a thing of the past. Shocking the beezus out of middle America is the fashion of today's television programming.

When did your best friend sleep with your mom? Is your girlfriend really a guy? When did your cross-dressing brother change his name to "Starlight Express"? If you don't know the answer to these questions and more, you aren't watching the right channels.

In a world of declining moral and family values, people like Jenny Jones, Ricki Lake and Jerry Springer are no help. In their eyes, the abnormal is the new norm. Was it like this 10 years ago with Donahue? I don't think so. He has sold out like the rest of them. Now the father of the daytime talk show has become an incestuous member of the white-trash T.V. family.

If this world had never been introduced to this many dysfunctional people we wouldn't have missed out on anything spectacular. The world would have continued spinning on its axis. The tides would continue to roll in and social progress would probably be just that: progress. Instead, millions of



Tracey Stark

viewers tune in daily to see the freak shows. I can only hope that the shows will run out of shock value and people will crave something different like "lovers in love" or "the happy, successful, well-adjusted people's show."

We need this group of trash-mongers to act responsibly in their role in American television as people who can influence what we think. They need to bring class back to daytime talk shows. Of course there is Regis and Kathy Lee, but they are in a different category since they don't involve audience discussion.

I'm not going to sit here and critique all the morons, I'm going to offer solutions: Change the channel. When the ratings go down, the sponsors will leave and the show will either change for the better or cease to exist. A more complex form of protest against this constant diet of garbage being fed to the American brain is to avoid products that sponsor this cultural poi-

soning. Many people don't want to give up their favorite detergent or cereal on moral grounds, but some minor sacrifices can make a positive difference.

My final solution would be for me to host a show that only has other talk show hosts on the show. I would ask them personal questions and let my audience (who would be selected much like they do a jury) eat them alive.

If I have to continually hear about some moron who can't keep it in his pants, some bimbo who wants to appear on national T.V. tell her first love that she wants to become a porn star in all-female movies, or the mom who is dating her teenage son's classmate, I'm going to explode. These shows have the same attraction to me as the show "Ripley's Believe it or Not." The topics are so low on the taste scale that I do sometimes say, "I don't believe it."

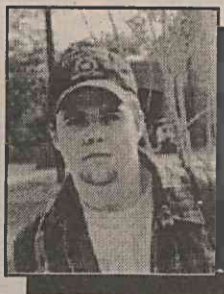
The television, being the center of our society (whether we like it or not), the household shrine of our American culture, is the main culprit in this downward spiral of taste. You must protect yourself. Change the channel. Watch "Leave it to Beaver" reruns. (Now I know why my father called it the "Boob tube.")

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Speaking of...

This Week:
Daytime Talk Shows...

What do you think of daytime talk shows?



Red Dixon, freshman: "They're full of ignorance. They got ignorant people on 'em... They're just putting something on T.V. It's all made up. It's a modern day 'Mr. Roger's Neighborhood.'"



Tatiana Malatesta, sophomore: "Funny. Pathetic. I just think they're sad. I think people thrive on the tragedies of other people's lives."



Erica Eustice, freshman: "I watch them for entertainment purposes only. I don't think they have any quality whatsoever. Oprah being the exception, but I don't really watch her. I think it's pretty lowly."

Sam O'Shields, sophomore: "I think they're just trying to do something controversial... It's all about bad values. I don't like 'em.'"

Liz Babb, senior: "I think there are way too many of them... I feel like anyone could have one. They're ridiculous. They totally undermine the good one's like

Oprah."

Kate VanCantfort, freshman: "Trash. Except for Oprah, of course. My whole suite is addicted to it... it's just awful. There's no point."

Andy Moller, freshman: "I think they're junk. I never watch them, all they do is fight. What you see,

you see on there everyday... I just want to get away from that when I watch T.V."

Jay Yates, junior: "I think T.V. talk shows today are concentrating more on ratings than issues that can help society."

Compiled by Tracey Stark