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*Should Children’s Cartoon and Games be Censored?*

Children today are surrounded by technology of all sorts, from Televisions, to Gaming systems, to phones, to computers. Kids almost always has a source of entertainment in the form of technology. With this technology, more and more games and shows are being made to catch the attention of kids and get them hooked. With kids to spending so much time watching and playing these shows and games, should there be more censorship to protect these impressionable minds, and if so, what should the limitations on this censorship be?

Since television was created there was always a debate on how much can be censored and whether that’s an infringement on the First Amendment, the law that people are entitled to their freedom of speech. If censorship is allowed, then the government can censor anything they deem not suitable for television. Just like how other countries censored LGBT moments within a children's show *Steven Universe.* Erin Thurman from The Guardian states “That might be a question best addressed to Cartoon Network UK, which censored one of the show’s more explicitly gay moment. The network edited the episode We Need to Talk to remove an intense moment when Pearl, one of the gems aggressively embraces Rose Quartz (Steven’s Mom) playing up their closeness as a way of making Greg (Steven’s Dad) jealous.” The government was able to censor what they deemed ‘not suitable for television’. This prevents people from expressing their opinions which infringes on their right to freedom of speech.

The Government has even censored positive influences on television and pulled whole episodes from television due to the people within the episodes. Such as an episode in *Arthur* which contained Lance Armstrong, a profession road racer cyclist. Within this episode It included section in which Armstrong explained that he had been diagnosed with Cancer. The episode wasn’t pulled for talking about Cancer but instead because of Louis Armstrong’s doping scandal. They pulled a very informative episode due to a scandal revolving around the actor. The episode being pulled gave audiences a mixed opinion. Some people thought the episode shouldn’t have been pulled due to the information it gave but at the same time others thought it was good that it was being pulled due to the bad influence that the athlete gave. People did believe that the episode shouldn’t have been pulled since most kids would not even know what the episode was about.

Censorship also has its positives such as preventing children being exposed to graphic images. Children are young and impressionable, so exposing them at a young age to such graphic thing can have an impact psychologically. Dartmouth University stated in Science daily “The study builds on the research teams growing body of work that investigates the impact of video games on children’s behavior, including the link between mature-rated, risk-glorifying video games and deviant behavior (e.g., smoking, drinking, and risky sex). These messages showing bad habits can make them more likely to do so in the future, due to them being showed the main character do these things which are glorified in such games like *Grand Theft Auto.* These young Impressionable minds can also be shown violent images, that glorify violence, such *Halo, Grand Theft Auto, Call of Duty,* and other games along these lines, which can lead these kids to believe that violence is okay and cause more violent behavior. According to Psychology Today its states “In fact, there was enough research leading to this conclusion that the American Psychiatric Association (APA) published a policy statement in 2015 concluding that playing violent video games leads to more aggressive moods and behaviors and detracts from the players’ feeling of empathy and sensitivity to aggression.” This demonstrates that since children are being shown violence in a glorified manner, and a way to solve their problems than that they too can solve their problems with violence as well. Exposure to such images from drinking, smoking, and intercourse to killing, beating up people, and a lack of anger control can really leave a mark on kids’ psychology especially since their minds are young and vulnerable.

Suicide jokes have been in many well-loved cartoons, like *Looney Tunes,* and *Tom and Jerry*. Even though these cartoons are well-loved, it is not okay to expose children to suicide and normalize it. In an episode of Tom *and Jerry* called “Downhearted Duck” a duckling believes he is hideous and has suicidal thoughts and actions. This Duckling proceeds to try to kill himself in multiple ways such as killing himself with an axe and when that doesn’t work he asks Tom the cat to eat him. Another example of suicide within kids shows is in multiple episodes of *Looney Tunes* in which beloved characters enter a state of hopelessness and proceeds to blow their brains out because they feel as if they cannot do anything else to solve that problem that they are having or that what they saw was horrifying. Showing children such violent images can impact a developing child’s mind. Suicide within children’s cartoons can influence children into think that suicide is normal, that you can merely kill yourself if something goes wrong in life. This is not okay to show children and normalize. It can lead to many psychological problems and lead to violent behavior due to being shown guns. Being shown gun can impact a child mind and normalize guns. In the article “Children influenced by gun violence in TV” Laura Kelly states “Researchers at Ohio State University showed one group of children a video with gun violence and a second group a video without images of guns or people using them. They then observed the children in a room where a real but disabled pistol was stored in a cabinet. Those who had watched the violent film held the gun longer and pulled the trigger more times than children who had watched the video without guns.” This shows how more how presenting guns to children at a young age can affect them to normalize guns and leading to children finding them more appealing. Kids who find guns more appealing are more likely to have violent tendencies. This is not good for the youth and the future of America due to the gun violence occurring now in America.

Most people believe that it’s the governments job to protect the youth of this world’s impressionable minds, when its not. It is the parent’s job to ensure that their child is not watching nor playing anything that can leave a harmful impact to the child’s mind. The government can’t monitor whether a child has picked up a rated R game to play, It the parent’s job to ensure prevent this does not happen. You can’t blame the government if your child switched to a rated R movie on television that’s the parent responsibility to educate their child to not watch nor play these types of games and movies till an appropriate age. Educating children and yourself on the risks of exposing themselves to such graphic images can help prevent the need for censorship.

Censorship is what some people call a double-edged sword. It causes many positives like preventing the expose of graphic images to young impressionable minds but does infringe on the first amendment, which allows people the right to freedom of expression. Censorship has been apart of the world since books has been created from religious censorship, moved to cartoon drawing censorship to censorship with music, to censorship within television to video games, and now censorship within the internet. Censorship is a debate that has been around for centuries and will probably still be debated far into the future.

Exploratory Essay Reflection

This essay has been a challenge for me due to the amount of research that is needed. I have always hated information-based essays due to research. I quite tedious for me to have to find an article relating to my topic, then make sure the source is credible and then find how to fit it perfectly into my essay with a smooth transition. I always run into the trouble of either having too much evidence yet not enough analysis of the evidence or too little evidence but way too much analysis. I need to work on having a solid balance of both to make my essay and thesis stronger. Another problem that I ran into with writing this essay was closing the essay up. I have always been taught that for your conclusion are supposed to sum up all your points, but in a college essay it seems lack luster to do so. It feels like a cop out conclusion. So, I spend a lot of this essay just revising my conclusion repeatedly.

This essay was especially hard due to me trying to keep my opinion out of it but failing a lot. I am a very opinionated person who enjoys expressing this opinion, so to try to hold my opinions back was a challenge. I do not believe this essay was my strongest and I’m honestly disappointed in it. I know my standard and what I can do but this is not it. Next essay I will make sure to due better in the areas that I struggle with.