



Smash the TV and Burn all the Books

Submitted by Sarah Fitz-Claridge on 27 April, 2004 - 05:19

A satirical piece by **Tom Robinson**



Everybody knows that television is responsible for increased violence among teenagers. Dammit, TV is a problem. But

let's not underestimate the danger of *books*. How many naive, well-meaning parents do you know who allow their child to keep an actual *bookshelf* in his bedroom? Nobody can say with certainty what the effects of unsupervised late-night reading will be.

The consumption of certain books outside the home may currently be on the rise. Too often I have witnessed rows of children staring glassy-eyed at thin sheets of paper. These sheaves of artificially-bleached cellulose are literally helping to create fantasy worlds within their minds. Not to mention the increased demand for wood pulp, which contributes directly to global warming. Consider also the low price and high availability of murder mystery and cheap thriller novels in airports and bookshops. It just makes effective parental censorship all the more difficult. Should we – as a society – be exposing our children to this kind of material? Where do murderers and rapists get their ideas from, if not from TV and books?

It's time to step back from industrially produced words and re-discover the more traditional childhood pleasures, like conversation. Recent studies have shown that just forty minutes of daily controlled conversation with your children can lead to increased levels of synapta-beta-trophin, a neurotransmitter associated with enhanced coordination and long-term memory skills.

So, have *you* burnt your books yet?

to post comments

Comments

child authors

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 29 May, 2004 - 09:20

As a child author whose chance to complete a book was ruined by abusive homework, so that the present successes of Catherine Webb and Luke Jackson are an open wound for me (please see www.phad-fife.org.uk (<http://www.phad-fife.org.uk>)), I can well imagine that religion or Marxism or intensive education would be motives for megalomaniac adults to stop children reading books.

to post comments

Real Problem

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 18 June, 2004 - 06:24

In fact there is a real problem here with books. I have several hobbies: Reading, computer games, computer programming, internet surfing, video games, sometimes I even watch TV. You will notice that all of these occupations involve providing attention. Attention given to these occupations is not being given to other people. Well other people resent this. A lot. When I read a good book I get engrossed. I don't want to stop reading the book, I want to know what happens next. I am enjoying myself and so I naturally want to keep doing this. Next thing I know my wife is upset because I am ignoring her. Well alternatively I could be bored stupid watching the TV show that she is watching. (I am not saying that she watches boring shows, just that our taste differs. She doesn't like some of the shows that I like.) Okay so that is the first problem. The next problem is when people ask me what I am reading. What on earth for? Why would anyone give a toss what I am reading? Surely if they wanted to get an interesting book the best thing to do is to look in a book store where there are sections for different types of books? Then they can go straight to the section with the types of books that they like. If I am reading something then I am probably enjoying it and want to keep doing so. I don't want to be interrupted to provide entertainment to a complete stranger on the bus. Also it is a private matter. What I choose to read is an expression of myself. I don't interrogate strangers about their thoughts and feelings so why should they expect me to share what goes on in my head. If I see a couple kissing I don't tap one of them on the shoulder and ask if it is any good. In politically correct society seems that there is a doctrine that reading is good, but when someone actually chooses to do it you find that people don't really approve. This reminds me of the Friends episode where Joey finds one of the girls "Porn" books. This is the most popular genre of reading material on the planet, but it is looked down upon by so many people. (If you missed the episode or series then the book was a "Romance Novel".)

to post comments

ehn...

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 3 July, 2004 - 19:01

I'm hoping that this is a parody site and that you really don't think that burning books is a good idea.

to post comments

Satire

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 4 August, 2004 - 04:12

I think the word is satire.

to post comments

Uhm, yeah

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 4 August, 2004 - 19:10

While we are at it, lets get rid of all the grade-school teachers. I am really PO'd at their biased teaching methods and their ability to brainwash today's youth's sponge-like brains with thier "educated" points of view.

[to post comments](#)

Guys,

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 11 August, 2004 - 09:37

This is a joke, showing how idiotic the idea about TV inspiring violence is, or at least that's the point.

Should we – as a society – be exposing our children to this kind of material? Where do murderers and rapists get their ideas from, if not from TV and books?

As someone said, satire.

[to post comments](#)

patricia tidmore

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 11 August, 2004 - 19:36

I have no more of a right to tell my child that he cannot read something he wants ,or to watch something on t.v., than I have the right to tell my neighbor that he doesn't have that right. Come on, people! We don't own these children, we don't have the right to censor them. I don't want to be censored. Just because we can overpower them means we've supposed to?

[to post comments](#)

You're too spineless to stop

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 27 August, 2004 - 03:21

You're too spineless to stop your kid from reading bomb recipes on the web or watching the porn channels?

Look, I'm a free speech advocate, and even I think you're being a silly bint. Please stop it, and please refrain from breeding any more.

[to post comments](#)

Experience?

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 20 September, 2004 - 03:58

The theory of overpowering your child is an odd reach... the reason the power is used to tell the child to stop is because an adult has the experience and knowledge to tell them to stop. You do technically own the child until the age of 17 for a reason... and that reason is simply put... to teach them of life. Does a ten year old have the same knowledge of people's rights as a thirty year old? Has the child felt shame, embarrassment, love, hate, success, and failure? Has the child been a victim or an acuser?

To continue with that reasoning is to live in ignorance.

The children of today run wild simply because there have been no restrictions placed on them. I grew up on the same blood-bath smash everything Arnold Schwarzenegger as the child of today grows on the violence of everyday television. The difference was that by punishments, I realized that I should not do certain actions. Later in life, as I grew up and experienced more of life, I came to understand WHY those punishments were in place. Relative punishments to the crimes committed are no different than stopping a real crime before it happens.

to post comments

More opportunities from reading...

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 23 September, 2004 - 22:38

How would burning books help decrease the demand for wood pulp? How would that be healthier, more vital for the environment and atmosphere?

How would children be taught? How could children teach themselves? Not every parent is attentive and responsive, otherwise teenage violence would probably be reduced. There are neglectful parents, and then there are ignorant parents, who do not know much more than the learning child. Should these parents be responsible for the child's education?

I wonder, where does racism originate? Does a child in history class, reading a history book, watching a documentary on television take into custom an intolerance of other races? Does the hate arise from objective facts? Or does it originate in the parent's malice?

A child's world is fashioned around the teachings of mother and father. Habits and customs are developed through the parents. Beliefs, morality, toleration and often times temperance are instilled by parent's teachings or neglect. The parent is the teacher and the child the pupil, and there exists too many child delinquents today, either from the parent's neglect or ignorance.

If you take away books, you take away a greater many teachers, whose values, morality, and beliefs may instill better guidance and wisdom than the parents. If you destroy books, you destroy the history of thought, the history of liberation, the history of ideas, the history of tolerance and acceptance of differing beliefs and thoughts. You create more vice than virtue; you do more harm than good.

Lastly, if there were to be any books destroyed I see none greater, none more derogatory, not one filled with more passion for violence and hatred of liberty and thought than the Bible.

to post comments

None of this seems to have an

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 3 October, 2004 - 17:36

None of this seems to have anything to do with Taking Children Seriously theory. It is a big bummer because TCS is an incredible way to be in your family.

Coercing children from birth, spanking, refusal to be emotionally available to one's children, shaming them, allowing other people to do the same through daycare and school- these are all things that cause children to be violent. Our society doesn't get more violent along with TV, but with poverty and child abuse. Get it right. To blame things on TV and books is short sighted.

If you give your children a good base of attachment, security, the ability to know their own thoughts, wants, needs and opinions, I doubt they will go read a book and decide to act out the violence within. Tolkien has been my favorite author since I was 7 years old and funny, but I haven't impaled anyone with a sword yet.

to post comments

Answer the question

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 4 October, 2004 - 13:57

Where do murdereres and rapists get their ideas from?

to post comments

Re: Experience

Submitted by Pierre (not verified) on 20 November, 2004 - 02:03

Does a ten year old have the same knowledge of people's rights as a thirty year old? Has the child felt shame, embarrassment, love, hate, success, and failure? Has the child been a victim or an acuser?

I don't think that I had a particularly unusual childhood, and I certainly felt shame, embarrassment, love, hate, success and failure by the age of ten. I had also been victim and accuser. If anyone has not had all those experiences by that time, I suggest that they had a very sheltered life.

As for knowledge of a person's rights, I agree that that is something a parent should teach their children. However, I do not believe that punishment is an effective way to teach morality. If a person learns why something is wrong (such as through discussion or observation), it is very unlikely that the person will do that thing. If a person learns that something should not be done because it will result in punishment, the person will still do it if the expected

punishment is insufficient or the person believes that the punishment can be avoided (such as by not getting caught).

[to post comments](#)

Neglect

Submitted by a parent (not verified) on 3 December, 2004 - 13:42

I think that many parents may feel as if blaming tv and books for their children's behavior easier than taking responsibility at all for the kid's actions. I mean children are able to exercise free will but if they are shown verbal abuse (to any extent), emotional abuse, physical abuse, and just not being nurtured, they have more chance of being tempted by the negative behaviors seen and being acted out on tv and in books. I think moderation may be the key as well as communicating with your child.

[to post comments](#)

My opinion

Submitted by Kyle (not verified) on 27 December, 2004 - 07:58

I disagree with this article. I do not believe that there is anything wrong with either books or TV. Except for any inspirations or perhaps teaching the watcher/reader a lesson, however, TV and books are not productive. But reading/watching either won't do you any harm.

Personally, though, I believe that instead people should watch TV and read books sparingly and spend their time instead playing sports, playing video games, doing puzzles, exercising, expressing artistic creativity, and so on. But people shouldn't put so much criticism onto these two things. Besides, some TV and books are sometimes good for your soul and can help dramatically affect emotions.

I still though don't understand the whole emphasis on reading. Adults everywhere want their children reading, but really that won't do much. It is important to learn to read, but why is so much emphasis put on it, with parents and schools forcing children to read like it's their only hope for a successful future? And schools having reading become a regular routine among school schedule, having it become homework with children having to write book reports? And how in some families when a child tries to sit down to play a video game or go out to run around, their parents will stop them and force them to read, setting rules and expectations throughout the house of how much their children have to read, in which the children would otherwise facing vast consequences? I just do not understand it, someone please help me here.

[to post comments](#)

Being a mom of small children

Submitted by cj_malott on 6 January, 2005 - 19:23

Being a mom of small children (3 & 1.5 yrs), and working so hard to give my children the best foundation of love and security (I like the term attachment parenting) makesmw really appreciate this reader's comments. I look to the

future and wonder what it holds. How can I prepare my children for all the harshness of the world? I really pray that my efforts now will make a difference in helping to form strong adults from my precious babies.

[to post comments](#)

I don't know the answer--test

Submitted by Kimberly (not verified) on 8 February, 2005 - 08:40

I don't know the answer--test scores? We've forgotten how to enjoy our hands and the things they can do, such a draw, cook, knit, garden, play piano, climb a tree?

[to post comments](#)

Experience is no replacement for knowledge

Submitted by Phi-Theta-Kappa on 23 February, 2005 - 16:49

I graduated high school at 13. I entered college a few months later, shortly after my 14th birthday. I have been in College for a little over a year and a half now, and this semester I changed majors. I don't need to be 30 to have the intellect of one. I understand what people speak of, what liberals insinuate on TV, I know what Republicans use to pass their beliefs on to the next generation. I fight for my personal freedom because I need to be released from the prison I have been placed in since birth. I don't need a parent anymore, because I can take care of my self, I am in the process of proving this with my stay in the local dorms. I am an educated person and because of my age I am separated from others immediatly, and no one will believe me when I say something obvious like "dont grab the ground wire with your bare hand" literally, because I am "to young to understand the speech of my elders".
GAAAH!

[to post comments](#)

No, I haven't burned them yet

Submitted by beatmom (not verified) on 7 March, 2005 - 00:33

No, I haven't burned them yet. But I do help my four year old select what he will watch and read. Mostly I trust that he will make good or acceptable choices for himself but sometimes I do say "no." Mostly I say "of course" and sometimes I regret it. After watching Peter Pan (both the movie and animated Disney feature) and reading the novel I seem to spend most of my day following the four year old around making sure he isn't stabbing the one year old.

[to post comments](#)

I think another issue...

Submitted by Tara (not verified) on 16 March, 2005 - 20:41

...is the fact that TV is very passive entertainment. Often times, unless you are watching a particularly intellectual, informative, thought provoking show--television is telling you what to think, what conclusion to make, you see exactly what people are wearing, exactly how they are moving, exactly what weapons they are using (in a violent show) etc and so on...

...there is no thought involved really. In books for the most part, unless it is an accutely detailed, painstakingly descriptive book, the reader is left to find their own conclusions on certain matters, make their own judgements, imagine how the characters are dueling, what they are wearing, branch out on the reasoning for why they are arguing and what led to the conflict etc....

Most violent television shows are gratuitous (sp?) fighting and killing for fighting and killings sake...I am not necessarily debating whether or not violence begets violence, but rather that most books usually have some kind of intelligent thought process behind it, and isn't usually violent acts from start of finish just for the sake of violence... Of course I am not suggesting NO books exist just for violence's sake, as I am, sure there are... ...but I can't imagine a book getting published and having wide circulation if all the jacket read was:

"This cool guy blows stuff up and kills people....this time it's serious!!!!" ...Usually the story will engage you enough to purchase it...

Whereas, a film or television show can show an advert where it is nothing but explosions and head kicking and shooting and blood, with no discernable story...and the masses will flock to it like flies to sh*t...

So in conclusion, I would rather my child pick up a book off the shelf which suggests a thought provoking story, even if there was violence sprinkled through it, rather than passively watch a TV show or movie in which violence and murder etc was the prevailing theme, with a loose script sprinkled through it....know what I mean?

That is kind of my point on it...

[to post comments](#)

Wow

Submitted by other reader (not verified) on 23 March, 2005 - 19:28

Lots of people did miss the irony.

[to post comments](#)

Prayer

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 26 March, 2005 - 23:44

I pray for the sake of the human race that this little tirade was simply an attempt at comedy. If you were in any way being serious, I feel my IQ has been lowered by reading this stupidity.

[to post comments](#)

Too Much TCS

Submitted by Another reader (not verified) on 27 March, 2005 - 01:57

They wouldn't have missed the irony if TV time had been restricted and they were forced to read as children.

Sincerely, A Victim of Compulsory Literacy (Happily able to understand the satire of a TCS advocate, who no doubt was also forced to read as a child!!)

[to post comments](#)

Parents are the problem not

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 20 February, 2009 - 15:37

Parents are the problem not TV, not books.

Why do you people get bored!! I never get bored I enjoy life.

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