

How TV Shows Affected My Approach To The World

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Television as a Source of Worldview Formation

In today's media-driven world, television is regarded as the predominant medium of information and entertainment. With its high-speed visuals, attractive graphics, engaging music, and entertaining shows, it captures the interests of people all day long. Numerous studies have established the impact of television in shaping the worldview of individuals. It not only offers an alternative to human interaction but also develops values and ideals about the society we live in. It enables us to see the world around us and realize our place within society (Macey et al., 2014). Growing up as a 90s kid, I rarely got any time to watch television. However, when I did, I believed that I was viewing the world with my own eyes. During the formative years, children's brains are quite impressionable. Like a sponge, it absorbs all that stimulates our developing senses. This is not limited to goodness and virtue alone. Rather, our minds take in the bad as well, setting us up with our hopes for life. This paper aims to analyze the impact of a few TV shows that I watched growing up in shaping my expectations for the world.

Surface Viewing and Lessons From Television

Many individuals are surface viewers of TV shows. They base their opinions on a movie or a show without comprehending the underlying meaning that it intends to convey about the way we should or should not live our lives (Godawa, 2011). Their views of spirituality, too, are based on the Bible quote, "Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" (New International Version, 1984). However, one must identify evil and realize its repercussions. "Bad boys, bad boys, whatcha gonna do? Whatcha gonna do when they come for you?" (Tek & Williams, 1993). 'Cops' was one of the famous television shows of the 90s, and we watched it together every night after dinner. I was obsessed! It featured law and order by capturing on-the-field action. Since the stories depicted in TV shows and movies do not occur in a vacuum and aim to communicate values, I automatically developed a sense that law enforcement agents, such as the police officers, were the good guys, whereas the civilians were the wrongdoers (Godawa, 2011). Constant exposure to this TV show convinced me that if I ever did something erroneous, I would be publicly humiliated and taken away forever. This instilled in me a fear of which I was not aware until I was older. It was this fear of getting publicly persecuted that encouraged me to always behave well, do the right thing, and abide by the law. I consider this show to have had a great influence on my life as I got to see the real repercussions of our actions as adults.

Family Values in Full House

Another TV show that shaped my views about family systems is Full House. “The show chronicles the events of widowed father Danny who enlists his brother-in-law Jesse Katsopolis and best friend Joey Gladstone to help raise his three daughters” (Full House, 2021). Veering away from the traditional aspects of what a family should be like, this show depicted a family much like my own. I’m the youngest of three girls, raised by my only parent, my father. It furthered my views that families come in all shapes and sizes, and that’s okay! It also enabled me to reflect on the Bible verse, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (New International Version, 1984). I found this show quite relatable to my family situation, and it helped me realize that family is not defined by structure. Rather, it is a bond of love and care that matters.

Adolescence and Mentorship in Boy Meets World

The third TV show and my Friday night staple was Boy Meets World. This sitcom focused on the protagonist, Cory, his best friends, and his teacher, Mr. Feeny (Savage et al., 1993). As a student in middle school at that time, this was the most relatable show I could have been watching, even as reruns. It established the idea that even though life brings certain hardships, one can overcome them through resilience and positive relations. As stated in the Bible, Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me” I learned more about facing hardships through this show. (New International Version, 1984). It made me believe that maintaining good relationships with people around me would help me overcome every challenge. I put high hopes in this idea; however, that only made it harder when my life ended up differently than I had anticipated. The expectations I developed from this show seemed much more realistic than any show that followed.

Wealth and Unrealistic Expectations in The Fresh Prince

Lastly, the TV show that gave me the most unrealistic expectations was Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. At that time, I could not reflect on the true meaning of the Bible verse: “Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless” (New International Version, 1984). I could not have been the only child in the 90s wishing to be whisked away to live with my rich aunt and uncle in Bel Air. This show defined what it meant to be cool. However, it created unrealistic expectations about money and happiness. My worldview changed in the sense that I started believing that if I had money, everyone would love me and that money could buy happiness. The luxury of the life portrayed in that TV show, the new, interesting music, and wild clothing had me dreaming that every day as an adult would be full of promise.

Conclusion on Television and Personal Expectations

Conclusively, I believe that TV shows leave impressionable young minds to conclude the world around them. My expectations revolved around a perfect world where friends and family are always there for you and where you do not have to face any hardship alone. I presumed the world to be a lawful place where wrongdoings would always be punished and goodness would prevail. I believe that being an adult is the best thing that can happen to anyone. With my views of the world based on just a handful of TV shows, I had idealistic hopes and high expectations about beginning my journey in life.

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