

Q #3 under Consider P. 53 (TV Makes You Smarter)

Steven Johnson's article, *TV Makes You Smarter*, makes an extremely refreshing argument. Today, most critics complain about how vile and despicable my generations' media is becoming. They usually bring up shows like "Teen Mom" and "Jersey Shore" to show that all we glamorize is sex and violence. However, Johnson goes against what the majority of critics argue. According to him, while watching modern television, "...you have to integrate far more information than you would have a few decades ago..." (Beyond Words, P. 50) which in turn makes us smarter.

While reading this article I began thinking about the shows and movies I usually watch on TV. To some extent, before I read it, I was beginning to believe the criticism that constantly puts down my generation as superficial and ignorant. However, Johnson's argument changed the way I feel. One example that came to mind was the movie, *The Hurt Locker*. On the surface, it seems to be a movie of war, simply depicting violence. But, when I considered Johnson's argument and looked deeper than the surface, I began noticing the various subplots and the numerous characters that reappear. As Johnson said, I had to "pay attention, make inferences, [and] track shifting social relationships." (P. 50) The movie is about more than just a man who is serving in the army to disarm terrorist bombs. There are multiple themes beneath the obvious plot: working as a team, compassion, and choosing between two loves.

If it were not for this article, I probably wouldn't have gone deeper to see the underlying plots of this film. ^{During} Beneath war, James, the main character and the leader of the bomb disarming team, faces more struggles than just bombs. His first struggle is working as a team. When he

refuses to do so, which is quite often, chaos arises. Furthermore, he puts the rest of his team in danger by not keeping them informed. However, throughout the movie he learns to work with his team and grows as an individual. The next subplot involves compassion and caring, James sneaks away in the middle of the night to find out what happened to the young boy ^{was} he ~~used~~ ^{to} seeing on base where he was staying. He suspects that someone ^{had} has murdered the young boy and he ^{was} ~~is~~ ^{was} willing ^{to} stop at nothing to avenge his death. The next struggle involves James' home life, When he gets home to his wife and son, he is at internal war with himself. He loves his family dearly, but he is an expert at what he does and he loves doing it. This internal struggle forces James to leave his family again to return to the army.

At first glance, The Hurt Locker is merely a movie depicting the evils of war. Most critics would agree that violence, as seen in this film, is what characterizes most of our media.

However, there are numerous subplots to this movie - plots that have nothing to do with the stereotypical argument that all we view is sex and violence. Above I have just described a few by "[paying] attention, [making] inferences, [and] [tracking] shifting social relationships." (P. 50)

By doing so I challenged and strengthened my cognitive abilities.

I definitely welcome Johnson's conclusions about modern television. The Hurt Locker is just one example, but there are thousands of other texts - movies, TV series, books, etc. - that solidify Johnson's argument that TV makes you smarter. We have to keep up with the constant advancements in society and technology these days. Complex and complicated texts and different forms of media challenge our cognitive abilities to keep up with these advancements. They test our brains to help us grow stronger mentally.