

Experts discuss how television affects children

By HOLLY D. REMY

Television has the potential to turn children into exploiters, sexist, materialists and racists, say two Yale University psychologists.

But two education experts point out that television has given inner-city children a headstart in school.

It's hard to believe that an electronic device could be responsible for psychological changes. After all, the shows are make-believe.

The debate, however, about the effects of media on youth has raged since the 1930s, when a study concluded that movie violence has "a marked effect" on juveniles. Many more studies have been done since the popularity of television grew. Some find good and some find bad influences of television programming on children.

Jerome and Dorothy Singer of Yale have conducted studies which show that children who are left alone much of the day in front of a television set lose their ability to engage in imaginative play.

BUT GERALD LESSING and Edward Palmer of the Children's Television Workshop, which created "Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company," disagree. They think their shows have successfully combined education with entertainment.

"Children expect television to be interesting," Lessing says, "and if it isn't, they don't watch."

"To be interesting, you must know your audience. You must know what appeals to them, what their needs and interests are, and how your educational objectives can connect with these characteristics."

Not all programs are like "Sesame Street," though. Evening shows are mostly about police, detectives and disasters. There are many fights and plenty of blood. Such spectacles could have an adverse emotional effect on children, says Michigan State University Prof. Bradley Greenberg, who has theorized that aggressive children go to the television to be aroused.

A THREE-YEAR STUDY of television violence was completed by the Office of the Surgeon-General of the U.S. in 1972. The report of the study expressed two opinions: first, that television violence instigates more violence, and second, that it is cathartic for children to watch violence.

The Surgeon-General's findings said that there seems to be a link between screen violence and aggressive behavior among children, but the connection was not proven in the research. There was speculation, however, about the long-range effects of television on emotional behavior.

"The more violent the programs preferred by boys in the third grade, the more aggressive their behavior, both at that time and 10 years later," the report said. "The effect of television violence on aggression is cumulative."

Get out your needle and take a craft class

If you've been semi-hibernating through this long winter, you may want to check out the list of offerings at the Farmington Community Center. And if you're inclined to get your needle, a number of craft classes await your registration.

Three varieties of needlepoint classes are all on tap this spring. Creative Needlepoint I emphasizes 15-20 creative stitches, and students will make a sampler during the class. Three-session courses, at a fee of \$16 plus a kit are scheduled from 12:30-2:30 p.m. Thursdays, beginning April 21; and from 7:30-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays, beginning April 25.

Creative designing, Creative Needlepoint II, offered from 12:30-2:30 p.m. Thursdays, beginning May 12, is open to all with needlepoint experience at a fee of \$16 plus a kit for the three-session course.

Needlepoint Finishing, a course emphasizing blocking, making pillows.

Concert band plays Mar 25

Leonard B. Smith will conduct the Detroit Concert Band in its first concert of the 1977 season at 7:30 p.m., March 25 at Southfield-Lathrup High School Auditorium.

Imogene Bird, soprano, and William E. Lane, trombonist, will be featured. The concert is sponsored by the Southfield-Lathrup Band. Reservations tickets at \$4 each are available by mailing a check payable to the Southfield-Lathrup Band, 19301 Twelve Mile, Lathrup Village 48078.

For further information, call Mr. Aalto at 354-7968.

The study also noted the more time children spent watching television, the lower their IQ's and educational achievements.

Another study on the effects of violence was conducted by Ronald Drabman and Margaret Hanratty Thomas at Florida Technological University.

Third and fourth graders were divided into groups by sex and were shown a violent cowboy film. A control group did not see the film.

THE CHILDREN then were taken to a room with videotape monitor. They were told to watch the behavior of two younger children who would appear on the screen, and to call for help if the children misbehaved.

The younger children played quietly at first but became progressively destructive. The watchers measured the time it took the watching children to call for help.

Drabman and Thomas found that the children who had seen the cowboy film took longer to respond. They attributed this delay to a reduced emotional responsiveness toward real violence due to the fictional violence in the film.

One thing young people apparently don't respond to is drug ads. An extended study of teen-age boys in two midwestern cities showed that although illicit drug use went up as the boys got older, there was no connection between illicit drugs and television commercials for over-the-counter drugs.

ANOTHER CONCERN which has been recently examined at the State University of New York is sex role stereotyping on children's television programs. There are more male than female characters on the shows. The few females are generally passive and indecisive. The males stereotypically stick to their plans and rarely express admiration for others.

With all the violence and stereotyped characters on television, shielding children from their influences seems like an impossible task.

"Parental control is an available safeguard," say John Rossiter and Thomas Robertson of the University of Pennsylvania.

Rossiter and Robertson note discrepancies in reports by parents and children of television use in their homes. Parents claim their children watch an average of 2.5 hours of television daily but the kids say they watch 5.88 hours. Parents also report stricter rules over what can be watched, more co-viewing with children, greater parental interest in viewing the shows, and greater ability of the children to see persuasiveness in commercials.

Rossiter and Robertson tend to believe the children's comments, thinking that parents express these ideas in an attempt to conform to social norms about television viewing.

and finishing, is offered from 12:30-2:30 p.m., on two successive Thursdays, June 2 and 9 for \$9.

QUILTING FOR BEGINNERS, for three sessions at a cost of \$18 including the kit, is offered from 7:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesdays, beginning April 20 and May 11.

Sewing for adults, taught by Irene MacKinnon, will be offered in six sessions this spring. All eight-session courses are priced at \$24, and there is a class limit of 10. Beginning, intermediate, and advanced classes are all scheduled.

Teens will have their opportunity to try their hand at sewing when Peggy Freeman conducts her Sewing for Teens class from 3:30-5:15 p.m. Mondays, beginning April 18. The eight-session course is priced at \$18, and there is a class limit of eight.

Tattling, a course in tying knots in a form of lace-making, will be taught by Edith Walker from 1-3 p.m. Mondays, beginning April 18. The eight sessions have a \$20 fee.

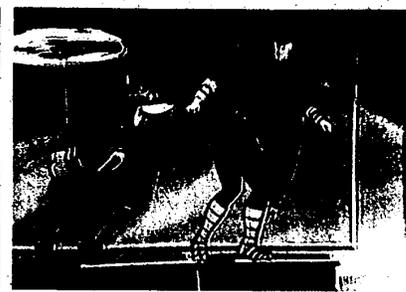
Both Weaving I and II also will be spring offerings at the center. Weaving I is scheduled from 7:30-9:30 p.m. and from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays, beginning April 20 and 21. Each eight-session course is offered for \$24 plus materials.

Weaving II, offering a second step in frame loom method, will be offered from 7:30-9:30 p.m. and 9:30-11:30 a.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays, beginning April 6 and 7. Each eight-session course is offered for \$24 plus a \$5 loom fee.

All courses are taught in Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road.



In Saturday morning cartoons there is a lack of compassion between characters. The heroes seem to be out for themselves.



Take a look at Saturday cartoons

Now that the question in the news no longer is "Do you know where your children are?" but "Do you know what your children are watching?" it's time to take a hard look at Saturday morning cartoons.

The fun begins with "Oppsy the Clown" at 6:30 a.m. and lasts through the early afternoon. Young persons who get up early enough can see more than six hours of short educational films, moral lessons, youth-directed ads, and fights between the good and the bad guys.

The first half of the morning features animated cartoons. A few of the old characters are there: Sylvester and Tweety, Woody Woodpecker, Tom and Jerry. Even Wiley Coyote still is showing antics over cliffs at the Road Runner on "The Bugs Bunny Show."

There are plenty of new cartoon characters. Most of them are crime-fighters. And most of them resort to violence to catch the bad guys.



There's a striking lack of female characters in shows.

Library offers clinic

As spring rolls around, it's time to get out the bicycles, and the downtown Farmington Branch Library will sponsor a Bicycle Clinic at 7:30 p.m. March 22 to prepare them for the bike season ahead.

Maintenance, selection, and repair are among the topics to be covered by an expert from Smith Bicycle Shop in Farmington Hills. The clinic will include time for questions at the program's conclusion.

The Young Adult department of the library is sponsoring the clinic at the downtown branch, 23500 Liberty. For further information, call 474-7770.



Farmington Hills resident Alan H. Fletcher has been appointed as industrial relations manager of Ford Motor Company's Glass Division. Fletcher assumes his new position after two years as personnel and organization manager of Ford's Design Center. A native of Detroit, Fletcher joined Ford's Mercury Division in 1955 and moved to the Automotive Assembly Division in 1961. He attended Wayne State University and earned his MBA under Michigan State University's advanced management program.

The shows in the second half of the morning feature actors, not cartoons. Many of them are crimefighters, too. They do not contain as much physical violence, presumably because actors make the shows more real.

A quick glimpse at some of last Saturday's shows by network:

***NBC—"The Pink Panther,"** 8:30-10 a.m. Features the Pink Panther, the Texas Toads, and Super Shark in cartoons. A 10-minute "Panther" segment showed stealing, car accidents, physical violence, destruction of property. No friendly acts.

"The Monster Squad," 10:30-11 a.m. Half-hour crimefighter story features actors playing Dracula, Wolfman and Frankenstein. Worst type of violence on show was a pretend-looking fist-fight. Monsters thanked each other at end of show for help in catching crooks.

"New Adventures of Batman," 10:30-11 a.m. Crimefighters are back in animated half-hour program, teaching kids that crime doesn't pay. Saturday's episode was unrealistically violent, unless crooks can create water vortices to suck ships into the sea and giant clams wait hungrily at the bottom for Batsubs.

"Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids," noon to 12:30 p.m. Characters in cartoon usually each other like real kids. Comedian Bill Cosby pops in to point out what young persons can do to be better informed citizens. Saturday's lessons: it's not helpful to make fun of someone, don't fear the dentist, don't eat too much junk food.

In addition, CBS puts short "In the News" features between shows.

***ABC—"Jabberjaw,"** 8:30-9 a.m. Crimefighting shark and helpers threaten crooks and steal back what crooks have taken. Saturday's story featured vicious plants which the crimefighters tied in knots. Watch out, Mom!

***CBS—"The Bugs Bunny-Road Runner Show,"** 9:10 a.m. Short cartoons. In one "Road Runner" segment, coyote was hit by a train, fell off a cliff, fell down a well, was foiled by his own destruction machine, got tangled in glue spread across the road. No friendliness between Road Runner and Coyote — that would violate the rules of nature.

"Tarzan," 10:10-10:30 a.m. Animated half-hour show featuring the Lord of the Jungle and philosophies about the jungle environment. Surprisingly, no violent and compassionate toward people and animals.

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"Scooby-Doo—Dynomutt," 9:10-10 a.m. Half-hour segments. In "Scooby-Doo," dog and teenage helpers fight crime. Saturday's show featured destruction of museum dinosaur bones, throwing paint in crook's face and pushing bad guys into brick wall. Heroes at least showed teamwork in helping each other capture bad guys.

"The Kroffts Supershow," 10:30-11:30 a.m. Features actors in crime-fighter segments. Saturday's segment showed evil scientist with machine to shrink people. Escape of rood guys, one of them a girl, was unmarred by physical violence. Girl did have a habit of insulting the intelligence of one of the boys.

All the networks have at least one crime cartoon and two have shark cartoons. The only show that features an ethnic group is "Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids."

There is a striking lack of female characters in the shows. Only "Issa" has a female heroine, a compassionate teacher who turns into the Egyptian goddess to rescue students from danger. A few of the other shows have girls as crimefighters' helpers.

Another surprise is the lack of compassion between characters. The heroes seem to be out for themselves. They seldom praise others for helping them and they don't seem concerned about how they hurt their enemies.

If children pattern their actions after what they see on Saturday morning television, as psychologists speculate, we may be in for a future of "friendlessness, sexism and physical abuse."

HUDSON'S ANNUAL MOTOR CITY SALE

Wonderful finds from the Woodward Shops

- sale 21.99**
reg. \$30 to \$40
Shirts for collectors. Classic tailored looks, stock tie blouses and more. In everything from silky polyester to plaid polyester/cotton. Misses' sizes.
- sale 29.99**
reg. \$38 to \$45
Famous-maker dresses. Pretty pickings in spring fabrics and colors. Find your favorites in misses' sizes.
- sale 15.99 to 55.99**
reg. \$25 to \$72
Famous-maker separates in seersucker. Crisp polyester/cotton in a plaid of taffy, gray and white. Blazer, sale 55.99; culottes, skirt or pants, sale 25.99; vest, sale 25.99. Coordinated shirt in white rayon, sale 15.99.
- sale 14.99**
reg. \$29 to \$31
Famous-maker tops. Silky polyester is the nicest knit for spring. Long-sleeved turtle-necks, short-sleeved mock turtle-necks and sleeveless mock turtle-necks.
- sale 29.99 to 49.99**
reg. \$29 to \$78
Famous maker coordinates. Usher in the season with pants, skirts, sweaters, blouses and jackets that go together in misses' sizes. The works at savings.
- sale 69.99 and 75.99**
reg. \$90 and \$96
Famous-maker all-weather coats in Contemporary Collections. Lots of colors in poplin and canvas. Misses' sizes.

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