

BreakPoint - Desensitizing Ourselves - How We Get Used to Pop Culture Evil



<http://www.dfamily.com/philosophy/teach/hswtl/journal.html>

[The things we do in the name of "fun" in this world. We embrace Pop Culture depravity?]
Break down in Society

BreakPoint - Desensitizing Ourselves - How We Get Used to Pop Culture Evil

BreakPoint with Charles Colson

Commentary #030428 - 04/28/2003

The latest fad in the world of toys is pop musician action figures. McFarlane Toys makes a miniature Alice Cooper figure with a little guillotine, a little severed head, and a little basket to catch it in. From Art Asylum comes an Eminem figure, screaming and swinging a chainsaw, his face distorted with rage and malice. That's only the beginning: The next Eminem action figure will include a dead woman in a car trunk, memorializing the lyrics and cover of the rapper's first album. The company's promotional literature says that "the traditional jack-in-the-box, once the king of every kid's toy box, is being reinvented for the twenty-first century." Its slogan is "Psycho Toyz for Crazy Kidz," and they are being sold in toy stores.

[Do these seem like gifts you would wish to give to a child you love?]

You would expect widespread shock, outrage, and horror over this. But if you're expecting any of these things, you'd better revise your expectations. Nobody seems to care. Commenting on Eminem's fantasies of incest, one music critic writes that he is just "one of those charming rogues" -- "indubitably dangerous" but "exceptionally witty," "thoughtful," and "good-hearted." The critic says that if these things bother you, you need to "disable your prejudgment button." Prejudgment means judging before the facts are in, but he isn't asking us to delay judgment about whether the music is evil. He more or less admits that it is. What he means is that we should **delay judgment about whether or not evil can be fun.**

["indubitably dangerous" but "exceptionally witty," ...

What is wrong with this statement?

Do you ever go to movies which are disturbing in one way or another, but, find it is a MUST SEE because it is so "funny" or the "historical" content is to realistic (*pretending for the moment you go to movies to learn about history*).

Does "exceptionally witty" over ride "indubitably dangerous"?

If yes, how does the reasoning go?

How is it measured?

How are you interpreting those two values? As "evil" verses "entertaining"?]

[Delay judgement about evil being fun?

For how long?

Why?

Why would someone want us to withhold our judgement for "a while"?

Why should we?

When can a value judgement be made?

Must we experience evil first before we can make the judgement?

Is judgement of our actions, after the fact, really judgement, or reflection?]

In his powerful book *What We Can't Not Know*, J. Budziszewski says we shouldn't be surprised by any of this. Our society has been desensitized to evil. Desensitization is one of the ways that an organism adapts to its environment. If you touch the tiny creature called a hydra, it flinches. But if you touch it fifty times, by the fiftieth touch the flinch is much less pronounced. Eventually the hydra stops flinching.

Like the hydra, we too have been desensitized. "Mainstream" movies outdo the ancient Roman amphitheater by showing every spurt of blood close up and ten feet tall. Video games allow the player to feel that every time a victim is stabbed, shot, dismembered, eviscerated, decapitated, or burned to death, he is doing the killing himself. Lust and gore beyond the dreams of cruelty fall into our waiting hands. Hardly a word of protest is heard; merely the ironic murmur, "We need more research."

[We have all heard about Roman barbarianism with the gladiators and the colosseum.

Is the comparison accurate to suggest we are going along the same path, only via a more high tech and much cleaner method?]

You see what has happened. We were touched by abomination, and we flinched. But nothing seemed to happen. We were touched again and again. And by the five-hundredth touch, we stopped flinching. But something *did* happen. We've become the sort of people who endure the abominable touch and have ceased to notice.

[Is it important to seek entertainment?

Is "entertainment" a valid goal?

Why do people seek "entertainment"?]

In his excellent book *What We Can't Not Know*, J. Budziszewski explains how we got into this mess and what we need to do to get out of it. I know of no better resource for understanding the effects of sin on our contemporary culture.

[Can you define in words your limits which you will not cross for the "moral" reasons you can identify with?

If you cannot identify your limits in words, can you point out the examples around you which go right up to the end, which fall just short of the line, and which go over the line?]

By the grace of God, the task before us is to be *re*-sensitized. Instead of "adapting" to our fallen society, we need to seek to be salt and light so that our culture might be redeemed.



<http://www.dfamily.com/philosophy/teach/hswtl/journal.html>