

BEGIN YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 1 HERE.

The overwhelming amount of stress in each person's life is an undeniable fact, and throughout history humans have sought escapes from harsh reality. Forms of entertainment ranging from the soothing sounds of Beethoven to the bloody spectacles of the Roman Coliseum, have a huge impact on both the individual and society's culture as a whole. However, in the modern age, the advent of movies, television and radio has exerted such a force on the human mind that some fear ~~that~~ these forms of entertainment have the ability to destroy the values of society. These fears are well placed, as modern entertainment's never-ending search for the next "sensation" leads to the subversion of society's values and traditions.

Some argue that entertainment, especially the modern, "mindless" form (as stated by Neal Gabler), aids society in many ways. The art forms of film and television provide an outlet for creativity, for new ways of viewing the world around us. New technologies allow for the creation of fantastic worlds, expanding human imagination. In addition, entertainment provides a method of escape from the cruelties of the world into a realm of the fantastic, where dreams can ^{almost} always be realized. Some entertainment can be thought-provoking as well. Even video games, viewed by many as the epitome of useless entertainment, ~~provide~~ have positive benefits, such as improved hand-eye coordination and strategic thinking. The benefits of modern entertainment are boundless, some argue, and for these reasons it is a beneficial aspect of society.

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However, all of the positive arguments in this case are underscored by a deeper negative result: the ruin of society. The Nineteenth century critics cited by Gabler were more than likely concerned with the antics of Vaudeville theater, a popular form of entertainment in poor districts of cities. While they provided an escape from harsh living, the Vaudeville acts also promoted racial stereotypes and placed their humor on such a low level that, instead of raising the poor into higher mental capacities through thought-provoking tales, they dragged the audience down into a pit of licentiousness and stupidity. This resulted in a lower standard for respectable behavior. Many years later, a famous movie would have a similar effect. At the end of Gone with the Wind, the principle male character tells his former lover, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn." Before this time, swear words were strictly taboo, never ~~spoken~~^{spoken} in public society. This simple action opened the floodgates for cussing throughout society, especially in entertainment.

Moreover, entertainment distorts reality to an unhealthy extent. Modern "reality" TV bears about as much resemblance to reality as an elephant does to a naked mole rat. Sensational situations, hyped-up tension, and larger-than-life characters are portrayed as being common. In addition, most entertainment today features "physically perfect" people. Most ~~people~~ males can never hope to be as muscle-bound as a wrestling star or as handsome as Brad Pitt, yet we are told, time and time again, by our entertainment sources that if we do not look like them, we are less than human and of little, if any, worth.

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In the same way, distorted ideas concerning women remain prevalent in entertainment. ~~Parents should~~ The inability of an individual to match society's supposed ideal as portrayed in entertainment hurts the common person's self-esteem, and leads everyone down a false path to happiness.

Despite the positive benefits of entertainment, the modern version, most often in movies, television and radio, does more harm than good. Through their never-ending quest for the next "sensational" spin on the formulaic, mindless form of entertainment, the proprietors of these modern sources degrade society's values and harm the health of humanity. This is most unfortunate, as entertainment, when used properly, has the potential to uplift the human spirit to a higher understanding. Instead, it's used for cheap thrills and the degradation of the human psyche.

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