

With this piece, I am portraying the dark truth of media and entertainment facing that of the fake purity of unawareness and denial. I observed how media is viewed by the people around me - in both mindless and mindful nature. I found that there has been a decrease in the current generation's empathy, as well as their ability to focus. Increased usage of current technologies has been argued to impair our ability to take in information for prolonged periods of time, especially with printed materials. I then moved on to what I in turn called the "mindful" nature of these two massive influences on modern society. I saw this side as that of vast knowledge we usually take for granted. I wanted to have these two sides facing each other to show that between these two extremes, there can be a balance of awareness, but also enjoyment of what modern technology has to offer to our current and future generations.

Zoe L.

*“The image adds to the imagination and mobilizes us...”*

*-Slavoj Zizek, The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*

When I was younger, I kept to myself usually and found myself to grow into what people would categorize as “an introvert”. Instead of going out to social events, I would stay home and entertain myself with various books, films, or of course, the internet. Modern technology has played a great role in my life because of the different periods it marked in my growth from adolescence into adulthood. It also changed the way I learned. Because of my great distaste in the American school system, I turned to the knowledge that I could find organized and hidden in different layers of code, all perfectly laid out to me by a simple click of a mouse. It expanded my knowledge of literature as well as helped to update me on any recent discoveries of new information published online.

Yet through my usage of the internet so extensively in earlier years, I slowly realized how I was using it against my advantage. I was mindlessly learning unuseful information. I wasn't remembering anything I would read through and I began to have a harder time focusing on the literature that I had read so quickly and easily as a child. I was discovering new things I enjoyed, but there was so much of it that I would become easily overwhelmed and unable to process the information. Less people around me were reading anything at all, as if physical knowledge contained in the pages of a book were somehow outdated. Around the age of fifteen, I came to a sudden realization that books and simple experiences outside of television and computers were out of place amongst most of my peers. I couldn't figure out how to balance my usage of electronics with things from the past, and came to dislike modern tools of technology. When I went on to any types of social media I would feel embarrassed, as if I was doing something terribly wrong.

As I've grown older, my most appealing way of living has become clear to me. I would feel embarrassed when using the internet or watching television because I knew what I was doing was not the way I presented myself or wanted to live. I was going against my values by using an excess of modern technology. Currently, I am taking my time to slowly find a balance of technology usage by setting periods of time where instead of using the internet or watching television, I am focusing on a book or an art piece. I have come to a realization that using social medias are a form of mask to a way people want to live, but can't live realistically. If a child grows up in a world away from reality, then when they do come into reality, it's hard to take in and accept. The nonphysical world of the internet seems to instead of a web of accessible knowledge. Turning into a dream world of unrealistic goals and ways of living.

At what point is entertainment excessive, if not always a distraction on living? I have used my observations on technologies around me and the effect they have on people to focus my research on the aspect of technology revolving around entertainment, and how it can be either detrimental or helpful to a society and the people inhabiting it. I have also done research on the categories, or ideologies, that we decide to put ourselves in when using these sources. What are we taking from what we view everyday? In film, we use undertones to bring aspects of different ideologies into the story lines and introduce them to the audiences. People are able to pick up on underlying aspects of something because of the knowledge previously gained in other studies that are given by the usage of internet and other medias. In a way, we are categorizing ourselves with the knowledge we are now gaining. Without some of these previously known things, there

would not be the specific groups or ideas to ways of living that people have to choose from now. People are becoming more opened-minded, and in turn, close-minded as well. With the use of social medias such as facebook or instagram, individuals can take a look into someone else's life without the direct contact of the person they are observing. In turn, overusing this aspect of modern technology can take away what used to be much more comfortable in human interaction. Some arguments would conclude that the busy lives that some lead in their job or meditations causes them to simply run out of time. Humans in modern societies may be too busy to interact with each other, but that doesn't mean that they don't actually have enough time to interact. In fact, they may not care to make enough time for each other. The usage of technology as a short break from the face-to face interaction could possibly be just a way to get rid of the discomforts brought along with interacting with other people. Not only are our interactions changing amongst other humans, but also how we feel empathy, and how we are understadning and taking in knowledge.

By addressing how entertainment can be either mindful and mindless, I hope I can spread awareness amongst those who have not considered the idea of a balance between enjoying the entertainment or knowledge our modern technology provides for us and routine scrolling through different social medias. From various observations of those around me, I have come to realize that my peers need breaks from strenuous thinking and work, but also have trouble finding what is excess in the usage of technology. They also seem to be lacking in empathy as a result of this excess use. People aren't turning away when something is gruesome or violent because of a constant exposure of it. The constant new updates throughout the day on news networks are filled with terrible stories that are grotesque, but also interesting to us. Less emotion seems to be becoming an idealization. Recent research has uncovered that with the growing usage of internet, the more youth has grown less empathetic. After a collection of about 14,000 students' inputs to a well known questionnaire studying empathetic behaviors called "The Interpersonal Reactivity Index" created in 1979, almost 75% rate themselves less empathetic than the average student thirty years ago.

As the internet endlessly grows, the newer generations are growing along with it. Not only is the empathy of the most recent generations being dramatically altered, but the style of writing and communication shared through the online web is changing as well. In the words of Nietzsche, taken from a letter response to one of his friends, "Our writing equipment takes part in the forming of our thoughts."(Carr, "The Shallows") After a decline in his health, Nietzsche found he could only write with the use of a typewriter newly invented during this time. One of his friends noted that his writing had "...become tighter, more telegraphic. There was a new forcefulness to it, too, as though the machine's power- its "iron"- was, through some mysterious metaphysical mechanism, being transferred into the words it pressed into the page." (Carr, "The Shallows") New slurs are being made everyday because of the high speed power of the world wide web, websites promote different "memes", and most of the new generation's usage of the internet for communication has turned out to be similar to the way the internet is. Most of theses new slurs and "memes" are a comical piece of information that has to do with nothing and only makes sense in a certain context. They're simple and spread like wildfire throughout webs of social media accounts, stemming from popular television shows, games, music, or simply things made up in particular social settings. Because of these, social situations change and become more of a club for the people who know insider knowledge from the internet. Children are being raised in an environment dipped in that of both the physical world, but also the virtual. Our forms of entertainment are growing so complex and taking root in our lives so well that we are failing to

notice if this incorporation of constant entertainment is excessive or not. Internet usage is a social norm in today's society and most kids who fail to understand it and work with it are easily considered outcasts, something I had experienced in my childhood for quite some time.

Yet not only is the social setting of our generation becoming transformed, but also the access to knowledge and resource that are readily available to us at all times. There is an independence growing amongst younger minds because of the unlimited knowledge accessible at any time, and it isn't being overlooked. We now have a wide variety of tools and types of entertainment for our amusement that branches outside of what our ancestors used. These new types of technology help to connect us and teach us new things, but also are greatly misused and overused. They bring along with them new ideas of the world that are shared all together, making us much closer as a species as well as bringing new thoughts in philosophy and ideology. In anything, there can be an excess of something or a lack, and most of the time, humans have a hard time finding a balance in between those two, something that seems to be forgotten in ideologies and the process of gaining knowledge.

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