Chapter 16
Violence and Pornographic Violence as a Mass Entertainment Medium:
A Study on *Spartacus* Series

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ABSTRACT

Containment of violence and pornography in mass media as an entertainment medium is not a recent occurrence. Academic studies have been interested in this issue for many years. Many studies have questioned both the effects and existence of violence and pornographic violence. The main focal point of this chapter is to study the effects of the exposure of excessive graphic violence and pornography in a TV series in recent years. In this line of argument, Spartacus, which contains a high rate of both aspects was chosen as the sample. Firstly, violence and pornographic violence within the series and other basic concepts and their representation are manifested. However, the findings of the analysis all by themselves are not regarded as adequate in this research, and the results of an effect study are included in the chapter.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals of today's society, as a means of solution, avoid intense stressful conditions in which they are involved by spending time with media. A great deal of time that is spent with media is TV series. Especially, the ratings of recent high budget series are remarkable. Considering the series *Dexter*, *Spartacus, Game of Thrones, The Borgias, Tudors* (most of them are made in US) etc. it is acknowledged that they are constantly and regularly followed by millions of people around the world. The primary main aspect of the TV series in this study is the pornographic violence elements which often result with death, sadomasochistic violence and sadism.

Fundamentally, using graphic violence and sexuality as a means of mass entertainment is not a recent phenomenon. It can be inferred that violence and pornography (violent pornography) evoke a sense of interest in masses. The interest of the spectator can be explained

in different ways. When the violence is the subject, plenty of different sentiments like mercy or catharsis may emerge. Shows/visuals that contain pornographic violence are welcomed by the concept of catharsis and approach of "replacement of sexual satisfaction" (Oskay,2000, p.382). Whatever the reason is, it can be stated that shows/visuals that contains violence and/or pornographic violence are inevitably attractive for the society. In the light of this study, violence and pornographic violence phenomenon which can be relatively regarded as ignored in the field of communication studies and how these phenomenon's are involved in the series broadcasted on the internet and their influence on society will be examined. The series called "Spartacus" was picked in the study due to attention-grabbing high ratings. Examination is an analysis on race, social classes, sexuality and representation of emotions. In the second section, twelve people who had watched the series some questions were asked questions with standardized open-ended interview method and certain effects were managed to discover by their responses.

BACKGROUND

Violence and Pornographic Violence as a Means of Mass Entertainment Medium

In this headline the first concepts to deal with are violence and pornographic violence. Violence and pornographic violence are phenomenon that confronts us in various forms and their existence in mass entertainment tools is undoubtedly not a new fact.

It is possible to trace violence to the first occurrence of men. Violence have existed as individual or social in life but the meaning it imply has been interpreted in different dimensions Violence in terms of conceptual perspective is

the action, approach, manner and statement that lead to physical or mental damage by using power, oppression and force. Hence not only the manners and actions that involve brute force but also the statements, attitudes and behaviors devastating self-confidence and self-respect in social sphere, creating a sense of fear, anxiety and restlessness like involve insult, humiliation, threatening, restraining economic freedom and forcing somebody to do something belong to the definition of violence. It is possible to notice plenty of violence types including physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, economic and politic. (Yuksel, 2004, p.36)

Pornographic violence is a more specific and complicated concept. In various approaches (especially in feminist criticism) pornography is already a violent performance. However in this regard in order to discriminate pornography from conventional violent performances and specify the sort of violence, it is appropriate to use the term pornographic violence.

Scanning through the various sources, it is observable that the word pornography was originated from Ancient Greek. The Greek term pornographos is consist of the integration of the words porne (prostitute) and graphien (to write) and means "about the prostitutes". The word joined English in the mid of 19th century. (http://oxforddictionaries.com,2013) Since the ancient era wall paintings and similar visuals depicted naked male and female figures along with sexual intercourse. Pornography in current terminology can be defined as "material that explicitly displays sexual organs or activity in order to stimulate sexual excitement." It is important point is that a visual in anatomy course book is not pornography. The key term is stimulation of sexual excitement in this regard. (Sargın, 2007) Definition of pornography is carried out in such manner but the way of definition is directly proportional with point of view. Especially in feminist point of view pornography "is violence against women and it is this assertion that has

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