

off the bills from your job, what more could a body ask for except flaking down in front of the box? It lets us laugh, it lets us cry, it feeds us emotions. Why would you bother your arse wandering into the freezing cold outside when you can live your life from the comfort of the armchair?

I cant say that I am innocent either and I hate myself for it. I have it down to about two hours a week at this stage and I still go to bed with my head hung in shame. In previous times, people made their own fun. I used to scoff when my grandparents would wax lyrical about how when they were kids, they had no TV and had to do things themselves. Now I envy them with an insane jealousy. What did their generation do? Start a revolution, a Land War, set up their own state (e.g. the Limerick Soviet, the Farmers Republic in the West) a small cultural renaissance (e.g. the '98 clubs). I would rather see people doing anything except watching TV. I think I would even welcome an increase in people drinking in overpriced pubs because it encourages socialising and absenteeism from work. Some commentators talk about as TV as social glue, holding society together by a single common strand. I don't want that, I don't fucking want it for anyone. I want diversity – I want to see people sitting at PCs or Typewriters for hours and handing out freesheets like this miserable little rag all across the suburbs. I want to see thriving chess clubs, jammed swimming pools, active writers groups, anarcho-cyclists touring the city every day of the week, fight clubs, all night swinging public art orgies, food fights in Meeting House Square, art terrorism, impromptu street raves (that woman who dances in the middle of O'Connell Street is the greatest modern urban hero), speakers corners, Capel Street bridge jumps in summer, public homosexual displays of affection, races down city streets; people making their own fun and pastimes and not having it fed to them.



TV poisons the minds of the young and old. There even exists an acceptable thriving TV 'alterno' culture among reasonably intelligent people, who should know better and do...Cultural referencing. Its everywhere. You know what I'm talking about: it was in that episode of Friends where Joey and Monica have the big fight. Or maybe it was in the Simpsons where Homer gets a bucket stuck on his head. Or maybe it was in that film with that guy who... um... hang on... Can I get a reference? You bet I can. These days, its all people talk about. In fact, people nowadays don't talk about referenes, more to the point, they actually speak the referenes

themselves as part of their conversation. So when you're sitting in the pub, you can bet that the group chat will be peppered liberally with quotes from films, sitcoms, cartoons, soaps, docu-soaps, etc etc. The referencing is not very often lost in a group as the group consciousness will determine the cultural referencing that is considered appropriate. So where quoting from Friends might be frowned upon, lines from the Simpsons or Seinfeld would be well received and noted as being a slightly more intelligent programme. What does all this mean? When people can have entire conversations with each other when not a single word of out their head is their own? Its a simple sign of the times. Modern global pop culture is generally the only culture people have, and the single locus of all this is the black box of brain death, the TV. In a world where our main pastime is sitting on the sofa and flicking flicking flicking the remote, its no surprise that the art of conversation has been dumbed down into entertainment like its cathode ray cousin.

A satan spawn of Cultural Referencing is retro-referencing. This hasnt taken the same form as the modern day version as nobody can really remember lines from TV programmes from ten or fifteen years ago. But the horrible thing is people do still remember the programmes themselves. So now everyone can relive their (wasted) youth by harping on about the likes of Battle of the Planets, Auf Wiedersehn Pet, Cheers, MacGyver, Thirtysomething, Sport Billy, Fame, 21 Jump Street, Buck Rogers, Battlestar Galatica, the A-Team, and any other hour-long muck that was screened on Saturday afternoons on ITV. People discuss

these programmes at length; the characters, the plots, how they spent hours as a child watching them. This depresses me no end: to think that summer and Saturday childhoods were occupied in front of a flashing screen. Much more enjoyment was to be had disappearing out of the house at 9am and wandering back to the street as it was getting dark twelve hours later, with grassy knees and bloodied elbows, mothers frantically searching the green for their kids. If I didnt come back home with at least one serious open cut and four or five picked open pus-ridden scabs from the previous weeks exertions then I'd have considered the day a waste.

You are an intelligent individual with a life, friends, family, interests, pastimes. Your own memories are better than television's manufactured memories, or at least they should be, for fucks sake. Your group of friends should have better collective memories/phrases/incidents for you to drop references to rather than what was on the TV recently. If you don't, then its time you started making memories for yourselves. Why don't you switch off your TV set and do something less boring instead? (I am aware of the irony, thank you...)



Scan through the pages of your most recent RTE guide or whatever section came with the imported paper last weekend. Go through the films one by one and see how many violent or machismo action flicks were screened. Now go through the list of films again and see how many of them were explicit pornographic films. We arent that much more evolved than chimps, and much as I'd like to believe it isnt so, it is a case of "monkey-see, monkey-do". We are affected immediately by things we see directly, various experiments have shown that the galvanic skin response (how easily the skin conducts electrical charges) greatly increases during viewing of violence, along with other physiological responses that occur before physical violence occurs in real life, such as increased pulse rate, higher blood pressure, heightened awareness of other senses. Anyone who buys that catharsis shit has their head up their arse (that any violent tendencies will be released through a viewing of violent acts that have no impact on the person themselves). And then you have the country up in arms about violence in the city when all the kids have to watch (watershed, as if) is Arnie-Segal type brawls with cars, guns, and broken limbs. The muscly male hero is the one who can beat up the most other bad muscly guys.

There should be porno films showing on the box every night, and more representative than the usual muck via video (e.g. no more mullets, much more safe sex, more sexual & non-sexual foreplay, better representation of women instead of the usual 2 on 1 action/slut syndrome). If the monkeys see then the monkeys will do. Parents of this city: ask yourselves, which do you want: your son getting lagered up at a wanker-aggressive club on Leeson/Harcourt Street with his footballing mates on a Friday night, stamping on someones head afterwards; or curled up in the spare bedroom giving his girlfriend (or even someone he met earlier on that evening, it doesn't matter) her second or third orgasm of the hour from the trick he learned in a porno film? The Slick and Carnage both recommended a film called "Strange Days" to me while sitting in their Phibsboro kitchen recently. They explained certain scenes to me where a rapist is able to transfer his feelings into the mind of his victim via a new neural technology transfer, to my disgust. This film is granted an 18 cert, to be distributed in every Xtra-Vision and ChartBusters across the country, and doubtlessly at some stage screened on TV; while a film containing oral sex (a beautiful, giving, natural act, the complete opposite of rape) is hidden away in a shop with blacked out windows. The content of TV has a lot to answer for considering there is virtually one in every home in the country. I'm veering slight off

the point here with the porn thing but you get my drift. The violence accepted on TV instead of sex has a huge trickle down effect into the minds of folk who watch it for 20 hours a week.

This is taken from whitedot.org, an anti-TV website: [A new policy statement of the American Academy of Paediatrics has made clear what many parents have suspected for a long time: Television is bad for young children. In the August issue of the Academy's journal Paediatrics the report's authors write: "Paediatricians should urge parents to avoid television viewing for children under the age of 2 years." It continues: "While certain television programmes may be promoted to this age group, research on early brain development shows that babies and toddlers have a critical need for direct interactions with parents and other significant care givers for healthy brain growth and development of appropriate social, emotional and cognitive skills." The Academy also recommends that viewing for older children be limited to two hours a day. Media commentators seemed unable to come to grips with the simplicity and directness of the Academy's message. Many were left clinging to their usual advice that 'moderation is best'. Anne Woods, producer of the Teletubbies, tried to reassure parents that watching her programme was somehow an interactive experience for children, and the programme's US marketer, Kenn Viselman, dismissed the advice of the 55,000 doctors as "a bunch of malarky". But the Academy is not going away. They have also advised their members to ask parents about "media history" when treating eating disorders and obesity. Their report will add to concerns raised in 1996 by a study in Manchester showing that exposure to television caused delayed acquisition of language in toddlers.] Not only does TV screw up your head, but its messing with your kids heads as well. Every time you sit them down in front of that 'babysitter' box rather than play with them you are forsaking a part of their childhood, and their brainpower. Do you want your kids to be retro-referencing the likes of Popular, Buffy, Dawsons, et al in ten years time? Or do you want them to be talking about how they built a treehouse, started a bonfire, painted pictures, made up a new board game, played football until they dropped?

Turn it off. You don't need to hear the headlines every 15 minutes on Sky News. You don't need to see the same pop videos over and over again on MTV. You will be able to survive if you don't see Rachel, Ross, and the gang anymore (because they will still be there without you, season after season, repeat after repeat). You have a brain, and even if it is jaded after work, you can use it in other ways that have no relation to the mental exertion (or non-exertion) you have experienced all day. There is literature and music on you and your friends shelves that is crying out to be explored. You can be an artist, just pick up the crayon and take it for a walk, it doesn't have to be technically amazing to be brilliant (after all, look at modern art). You can sleep, and sleeping is better than watching TV because your dreams are your own inventions, your own experiences meshed into something bizarre and erotic. You don't need a TV in your house, trade it in to Power City for a packet of batteries, because that's about the intrinsic value of a box of circuits manufactured in the far east. Much more valuable are your friends, family, pastimes, your imagination. You have the power in your head to create a beautiful existence for yourself and those around you in your immediate sphere, so just TURN IT OFF and go outside the sitting room door into the light.

**the [path] cultural tong: respect the hex
freedom. culture. truth. pleasure.
new email address: path@lab.org
archive: <http://thumped.com/thepath>
contains: path. photo. video.**

the [isolated] path

[you need an intermission: 25 frames per second of hell]

All across this beautiful enchanted city tonight, a million weary heads will rest on pillows, their souls stripped down and made barren. Their minds are poisoned more than alcohol or drugs could ever hope to do (or die trying). Their imaginations atrophied to nothing. Their mobile phones sit on recharge silently, waiting like patient pets for a command, a nod, something to galvanise them into action. When the city-hive wakes in the morning, but before the worker-drones spread across the fields to collect the honey-money, they will check their mailboxes. There will be no love letters, no news from far-flung family cells; only bills and junk mail from the queen-system. They ignore each other on the train, they act as if other people are invisible in the elevator, they sit in cubicles all day on their own facing a VDU. And when it has been rinsed, lathered, repeated and they return home, they flap their wings until they reach the sofa and flop down in exhaustion with the infinitely shallow comfort of the Power City Universal Remote.

In splendid isolation, we divide our houses, wall our streets, alarm our apartments, fence off our greens. Because we are happy like village idiots. We are afraid to walk down from one end of Pearse Street to the other but we will happily walk down Coronation Street. Why would the residents of Smithfield Square want to converse with each other when they can hob-nob with the folk in Albert Square? Why would you want to sit and feed the ducks or stroll with your lover in a city centre park when you can sit at your ease in Central Perk? They say that for each cigarette you smoke, you can take ten minutes off your life expectancy. For each minute you sit watching that box in the corner of the room, a hundred of your braincells are instantaneously transported to the back of the TV via a receptor that uses brain matter detection and then transportation. The cable/dish/unsrambler/ariel sends them to the nearest signal upgrade tower, where they are incinerated into oblivion, used as fuel. Your brain cells are powering the blinking red lights of the signal tower in the corner of the field next to your estate. For each four hour stretch you spend on that sofa, your brain is slowly weathered down, eroded, destroyed.

People wonder why something like Big Brother was such a cultural phenomenon. Its because it was the last grasp we have at talking to each other any more. We can talk about the lives of ordinary people on TV to our work colleagues, but we cant talk about our own ordinary lives. People projected their own fears hopes dreams onto the characters on the TV and tried to relate them to other people via the conduit of the eleven internees personality traits. With Reality TV now approaching its zenith (how long before Ed TV?) it now appears that there is no distinction any more between reality and the TV. Except nothing could be further from the truth: TV may show reality, but it is NOT reality, it is not life, it is not the peak of human experience. What is stopping you from calling a friend, writing a letter, talking to a neighbour? You can switch off the TV but you cant switch off the world around you, short of suicide, and please don't do that. I nearly puked the other day upon seeing a Sky Sports ad where a newly born baby is greeted with tears by his father. A hospital intern then extols the values of releasing your emotion, via football. "A vision for everyone" is the slogan. The lucky child eh? He's just has his chord cut and he's in line for a subscription to a decoder. Rupert Murdoch is breastfeeding kids a lifetime of bad milk.

Why has TV taken over our lives in this way? Why has in the last forty or so years, one form of mass entertainment become more omnipotent than Allah himself? One answer is the relative price of the box itself, cheap and accessible. Another is that it's an easy escape. In a world that values money, fame, greed and "beauty" (shallower than skin deep) where most of us lack these things, it is easy for us to retreat into a "reality" that bares no resemblance whatsoever to the streets houses flats apartments estates that me, you and all your loved ones reside. Another is the lack of effort required to manufacture the entertainment for yourself. After a long day of being fucked around by your boss, sitting in another traffic jam, and paying

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