

Television is the best distraction. It doesn't require much brain power on the watchers part whilst watching it, yet the audience would never get bored with the hypnotic screen even if it was stared at for hours on end. With the way that Ehrenreich portrayed the “American root vegetable” one would instantly think that she was describing modern day society. However, shockingly her insights are from 1980, around 30 years ago. To think that television has the same effects today on its watchers today just as much as it did in the 1980s is slightly disturbing. Another point she drove home was the peculiarity of no people shown on the screen actually spend time watching it. Who would want to watch people watching T.V?

Entertainment for the human race is not a recent affair, even during the times the ancient Rome reigned supreme there were a large entertainment center called the Coliseum. While not in similar in the sheer number people gathered in the Coliseum versus the number gathered around a T.V, they are similar in the purpose that they both serve; to appease the masses with distractions and wonderfully shocking events that don't happen in the day to day occurrences of their life. Using mass entertainment and food to appease the poor became to be known as “Bread and Circus.” In times of turmoil the Roman government would feed the poor and provide them with entertainment so they don't cause trouble for the government, rebellion, and generally forget how miserable their lives are. That can be seen as a parallel to the T.V in modern day, it provides to be a distraction for someone's own life; it would just be common sense to have the distraction to be as far from everyday life as possible to keep the masses watching the screen and entertained while doing so. The reason why no one would see someone on T.V watching T.V would be because that would be too similar to everyday life and would lose interest in something that does not distance the watcher from reality, or at least their own reality. It also provides an activity to keep someone occupied so they'll be less likely to be bored in their leisure time and cause trouble, not to rebel against the government, but make a nuisance of themselves for the local police.

While entertainment and the nature of the game share some fault for the inevitable hours that eyeballs are glued to the television, another reason might reside in human nature itself. According to Tomas Hobbes, an English philosopher disillusioned by the English civil war, began to formalize that humans are naturally “evil” and “goodness” does not naturally exist. While having a very harsh view on humanity it does carry truth in the depiction of the American couch potato. The natural evil of the humans would be sloth or laziness and an unwillingness to act on the desire to move and do something more productive than hours of watching T.V. While the goodness would be the thought of stopping, they just never naturalize or are ignored in favor for the easier path of just staying on the couch and watching someone else live instead of doing something with your own life. Another point is that philosophies of human nature must stand the test of time and hold true; Ehrenreich wrote this passage in 1980 and since then 30 years have passed and yet in modern times it still holds true. This means while for 30 years people have watched T.V and decided that watching T.V is easier than living life. In this aspect, Hobbes's philosophy about the natural nature of human evil has held fast for 30 years in regards to television.

So why do we keep on watching the little box with moving pictures inside of it? Is it to cure boredom? Or is it just another distraction from living life? Or maybe it's just the nature of human beings to crave some distractions from the short span of time that we exist on the spinning rock known as Earth.