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JMC 330 Exam #2

Concerning Sexual Content in the Media

A thing must be prurient in nature. A thing must be completely devoid of scientific, political, educational, or social value. A thing must violate the local community standards. Currently there remains to be a three-part definition of “what constitutes obscenity” that our U.S. Supreme Court holds to be true. This definition provides a vague explanation to what obscenity would be considered if brought to the attention of the courts. However, unless there is a huge uproar and all three parts are proven true there usually is no real case for obscenity.

I’m not completely positive to whether or not I agree with this definition. For lack of a better word, I’m probably Switzerland. I see value in the current definition and I do agree with the vagueness of it. However, I believe being vague could have it’s pro’s and con’s. As it allows the local court systems to have more control over what is obscene as apposed to follow a strict guideline; however, is that also giving the courts to much rule? For example, a small town may consider selling Sports Illustrated-Swimsuit Addition obscene and have it band in the town stores when the publication meant no real offense besides what it was, a swimsuit magazine. Overall, if I were pressed to make a decision, I would agree that the current definition holds value in the courtroom and system.

I would agree that obscenity could be defined by location. I would also agree that obscenity could be defined by collective moral beliefs that are held in the local area. Obscenity by definition, according to Dicitionary.com, is considered offensive to morality or decency, disgusting and repulsive. These would all be factors that I would integrate into my personal definition of obscene. Anything thing that goes against the natural environment of the local area, not including political or educational, causing an indecent or repulsive uproar against the collective moral values of the people would be considered obscenity.

To access a website with pornographic images is not difficult by any stretch of the imagination. Never visiting a pornographic website myself, I went and asked a few of my male friends if they ever had. After a few laughs, several red faces, and me promising them that they will never be named in this paper, they finally confessed. To access many of the web pages, you must first click a little black box “confirming” that you are at least 18 years of age. However, I find that this little black box would do anything if the viewer was younger than the legal age but forged. Even though, several web pages do try to control viewership by asking for memberships, they also usually allow viewers to download 3-10 minute short clips of videos they would normally offer in full length. That doesn’t seem like much “legal age control” for me.

Although, I’m not a huge fan for how the government is controlling pornographic images online, I don’t really feel it should be a main concern of theirs. If one chooses to click on a website that offers pornographic images that is their choice. If it doesn’t seem obscene to them, that is their right. Bottom line, even if we did get ride of pornographic images online, there will be plenty of young 13-year-old males, full of hormones, still buying the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit addition.