

# Hurricane Ellen

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A storm is brewing over the unveiling of Ellen DeGeneres' lesbianism both in her real life and television character. What is and is not significant about crossing this threshold? First, the television industry insists that it is merely a mirror of society, a reflection of what already exists rather than an active influence. This is either bald-faced lying or extreme naiveté. According to the homosexual magazine *Advocate*, there are presently at least 22 homosexual characters portrayed on television, prompting one of *Ellen's* producers to remark, "(they) have become the new stock character, like the African-American pal at the work-place" (*Time*, 4/14/97, p. 80).

Homosexuality is thus grossly overrepresented on TV. Why? Because television executives wish to force the issue; they are using the medium to alter public perception.

Further, even granting that TV is only a mirror, is this complimentary? The truth is, TV is an *amoral* reflection of society which tends to legitimize the downward spiral of degeneracy. Ponder this observation: "It would be a mistake ... to think of TV history as one long, uninterrupted drift toward un-trammeled license. *Moral values are, of course, relative*" (emphasis jj, *ibid*, p. 81).

It is precisely this belief that produces the "wrecking ball" mentality of television. The medium has hammered away at the concept of objective moral values until prime time is now full of vulgarity, nudity, simulated sexual activity, broken families and other "real-life" deviancy. And TV executives self-righteously crow, "*NYPD Blue* is reality, not *Leave It To Beaver*." If true, that is something to lament, not celebrate.

What is **not** at issue is an irrational fear of homosexuals (homophobia) or the implication that homosexuals have no redeeming qualities whatsoever. Not all homosexuals dress in black leather, adopt an "in your face" persona or prowl for children. The issue is the detrimental medical, moral, and social consequences attached to this practice which cannot be responsibly ignored.

What is also **not** an issue is censorship. When Birmingham's ABC affiliate refused to air *Ellen's* "coming out" episode, vociferous homosexual advocates cried, "It is my right to decide what to put into my mind!" True, in the privacy of your own home you may do as you please. But the issue here involves public airwaves and access to young, impressionable minds.

This *cannot* be offset by a simplistic, "Just turn off the TV set!" Television's influence relentlessly invades every nook and cranny of society and, in spite of the denials, *does* affect the way children (not to mention adults) think and act.

There are some who argue that to forcefully oppose evil is to aid it through publicity. There is an element of truth to that, for some things should not be dignified with a response. But television's moral influence has been chronically regressive. It has its own relentless agenda which must be exposed.