… violence is blue. It shows, and it is a growing concern. In the UK today: a domestic violence incidence takes place every 6-20 seconds; every 10 seconds in England and Wales domestic violence injures someone; 1 in 5 men claim to have used violence on their partner or ex-partner at least once; 1 in 10 women are violently abused each year, and 1 in 4 will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives.

I won't even begin to describe the various kinds of abuse meted out, but running the gamut of smacking through to murder. In some shape or form these abuses are either directly sexual in nature or used as a means of coercing sexual behaviors in gratifying selfish desires and displays of power. Children under age 16 are to be found in around half the homes where people are abused, and in many instances are forced to watch the unnatural forms abuse takes in much of what is perpetrated.

Women figure high in the statistics because of the sexual element involved in domestic abuse. Under differing circumstances it is the men in the house that are abused, but these are frequently 'one off' events rather than the repeated patterns of abuse that women and children, increasingly, are subject to.

The intense fear element means that abuse is repeated without outside intervention to halt the process. Victims of abuse: account for about 3% of calls to Social Services and local Housing departments, around one call every 3 minutes (24 hours a day and through 365 days a year); 1 in 10 victims will contact a doctor or nurse (roughly one call a minute); and the police will be called to 1 in 8 domestic assaults (at slightly more than one call a minute).

A US domestic violence hotline reported receiving its 700,000th call for help. Multiplied across the various agencies these calls must be considerable in number. However, in England and Wales (at the last recorded date) 6.6 million incidents of domestic violence took place, with 2 out of every 5 resulting in injury. Another 13.6 million people (lowest estimate) reported frightening threats. To call our society sick would be a gross understatement, small wonder people turn to alcohol or drugs to ease the pain.
All sorts of reasons have been given for the increase in domestic violence from sport to wars and to television in which much, if not all, of the violent action is totally gratuitous. Whether or not the television is the main culprit is a matter of debate. Believing that it might be, last year 6.4 million people in the US participated in a TV-Turnoff week, an event that had the support of more than 70 national organizations including public health bodies. It has been calculated that American children aged 2 to 17 average around 20 hours of television per week. By age 18 these average viewers will have seen 200,000 acts of violence.

The writer David Schwantes reminds us: 'The media are what we make them. They are, after all, extensions of man and his moral philosophy. Consequently they show us at our best and at our worst.' So, if we have to get angry about something, rather than pick on those around us, let us get angry about the sickness and sadness inherent in domestic violence. We can channel our passions in ridding our society of this blight of abuse and fear so that our homes may be healthy places in which to live and grow.

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