

Kids initiated into the 'drek' with morning cartoons

By Pete Mason
Entertainment editor

There is no such word as "drek." I looked it up in every dictionary in the office. There just is no such animal.

television review

I must have made the word up but I'm going to stick with it, no matter what Web-

ster says. I use "drek" to describe a fat percentage of the shows beamed at us daily over the magic box.

Drek must be a combination of "dregs", the most worthless part of anything, and "gack", which I believe means clutter. I couldn't find that in the dictionary either. So "drek" must mean "the most worthless clutter." That's about as low as you can go.

The major networks, in the spirit of competition in the ratings race, have become drek experts. The best way to acclimate the viewer to drek is to hit him while he's young, hence, the Saturday morning cartoons. Our impressionable,

malleable little friends are assaulted by *Hong Kong Phooey*, *Superfriends*, *The Three Robonic Stooges*, *Scooby's Laff-A-Olympics*, *Batman/Tarzan*, *Baggy Pants*, *Krofft Supershow*, *Space Sentinels*, *Land of the Lost* and *Space Academy*.

In between the shows (cartoon shows have set the art of animation back 20 years) the toddlers are screamed at to buy everything from Kung-Fu killer dolls to chickens that make ice cream. Yessir, folks. Get 'em while kids and they'll never ask for anything better.

Of course PBS offers some alternatives. We can only hope there are enough parents out there who care enough about their kids' brains to change the channel occasionally.

There is drek for everyone. If the ratings are any indication, the country is full of "drekies," not to be confused with "Trek-kies," strange but totally innocuous people who believe an ancient, long-cancelled sci-fi show will rise again on a sort of Judgment Day.

It's easy to spot a drekkie. A drekkie hangs Charlie's Angels posters on his wall. A drekkie wears a Fonzie T-shirt. A drekkie wears his hair like Shaun Cassidy and says things like, "Up your nose with a rubber hose."

A drekkie is a person who is 16 and still buys clothes for Ken and Barbie. A drekkie buys Suzanne Sommers baby-doll pajamas. A drekkie thinks the *Gong Show* is a religious experience.

There is a formula for drek. If you know the formula, even you can write a hit show. You need a combination of three or more of the following to create good drek.

1. One or more beautiful, long-legged but slightly retarded girls who look great in wet T-shirts.
2. A wise-cracking, middle-aged, female Falstaff who has the hots for everything but the family dachshund.
3. A cop who thinks all judges are fairies and all criminals should be drawn, quartered and fed to the pigs.
4. A mother who looks younger than her two daughters.

5. A man whose pet bear has a higher IQ than his own.

6. A loveable high school teacher whose classes last an average of four and a half minutes.

7. A handsome young chemist who changes into a monster every St. Swithin's Day.

8. A couple of teenagers who can play rock instruments and solve murders with the same ease.

9. A dwarf who spends his time looking under tall women's dresses.

10. An impoverished family whose members spend a good part of their lives saying goodnight to each other.

All you have to do is to take a few of these factors in the drek equation, combine them, and voila... pure drek.

Sexual innuendo has become the key word in a lot of the drek lately, particularly in the sit-coms. The biggest offender is of course *Three's Company*, my choice for "Drek King of the Decade."

Suzanne Somers, America's new poster queen, spends most of her time in hot-pants or an extraordinarily short nightie and John Ritter and a good chunk of male America spend the whole half hour trying to get a couple of bun shots.

Mrs. Roper seems to be interested only in getting her tired and reluctant husband into the sack and uses every ploy short of shackling him to the bedpost and showing dirty movies on the wallpaper.

A wise man once said, "sex is the best fun two people can have without laughing." The people responsible for *Three's Company* seem to think talking and laughing about it is even better than doing it.

I'm not opposed to sex on television. Sometimes I think I'd rather see good honest porno than this sophomoric excuse for a comedy show. The writers of *Three's Company* seem to have taken sex back to behind the barn where they think it belongs. They've made it dirty again.

But that's the nature of drek. The proportion of good television to drek television is getting smaller all the time. And if certain producers and network programmers have their way, it's going to get worse. Next week, we'll voyage into television's uncertain future.


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