

5 Dangers of TV

It's not that technology is intrinsically bad. It is that it has both positive and negative impacts, it is not neutral. We therefore should be alert to those impacts, particularly the negative.

On this topic, Joost Meerloo delves into the impact of TV on the population, particularly children. Interestingly, he published his opinions back in 1956 in *The Rape of the Mind*, when TV was just beginning its invasion of homes. One wonders what he would think of an America in which many houses have a TV in every room, with 200 channels ready at the click. Thoughtful individuals who are aware of history and live through such transitions are often in a better place to see the differences than those of us who are immersed in the new reality.

As Meerloo asks,

“What is the ultimate result of technical progress? Does it drive people more and more to the fear and despair brought on by a love-empty push-button world? Does it create a megalomaniac happiness won by remote control of other people? Does it deliver people to the unsatisfying emptiness of leisure hours filled with boredom? Is the ultimate result *living by proxy*, experiencing the world only from the movie or television screen, instead of living and laboring and creating one's own?”

All good questions and certainly applicable to any of us. Here is what he saw as five dangers of TV:



He concludes with this warning about TV:

“As in all mass media, we have to be aware of the

hypnotizing, seductive action of any all-penetrating form of communication. People become fascinated even when they do not want to look on. We must keep in mind that every step in personal growth needs isolation, needs inner conversation and deliberation and a reviewing with the self. Television hampers this process and prepares the mind more easily for collectivization and cliché thinking. It persuades onlookers to think in terms of mass values. It intrudes into family life and cuts off the more subtle interfamilial communication.”

How right he is. Few of us can admit to not having gone on a near-all-night-Netflix binge. We all know the hypnotizing power of the TV, especially after a long, crappy day at work. It shapes us and even manipulates our speech and phrases. TV *is* powerful. The same is true of video games.

And they do take time away from family and reality. I am reminded of the words of a friend’s dying father: “I wish I watched less TV. Of all the things in my life, it was such a waste of the short time I had.”