

# Psychologist: TV 'Rapes' our Mind

According to The Nielsen Company's "[The Total Audience Report](#)" for the 3rd quarter of 2015, the average American adult spends 4 ½ hours each day watching TV and a total of 9 ½ hours each day being entertained through all devices.



A typical critique of time spent watching TV and being entertained usually follows the thought that it is all a waste of time. Whether or not you believe that, let's just think about the power to influence a person's mind if he's willing to watch TV for 4 ½ hours each day and plugged into something electronic of any kind for 9 ½ each day.

The TV really is an incredible tool for those wanting to influence and shape a culture. The end-users freely give themselves to you each day for many hours to be influenced in front of a screen. As a result, not only do you purposefully alter the opinions and attitudes of the audience, but you also make heaps of money in the process. What's not to love if you're the one running things?

On the other hand, for a smaller minority of thinkers it might be a bit alarming to consider that happening day in and day out for many decades to millions upon millions of Americans. Arguably, if you find yourself in that camp you probably think there is a great danger to such a passive conditioning of the population. And if you do, you're not alone.

Joost Meerloo, a 20th century psychologist and author of *The Rape of the Mind*, had much to say about the power of TV and entertainment in general to alter and twist the opinions of the public. He argued that it is actually a hostile invasion of the mind, a rape of our intellect. Here's more:

“If we are to learn to protect our mental integrity on all levels, we must examine not only those aspects of contemporary culture which have to do directly with the struggle for power, but also those developments in our culture which, by dulling the edge of our mental awareness or by taking advantage of our suggestibility, can lead us into the mental death – or boredom – of totalitarianism. Continual suggestion and slow hypnosis in the wake of mechanical mass communication promotes uniformity of the mind and may lure the public into the ‘happy era’ of adjustment, integration, and equalization, in which individual opinion is completely stereotyped.

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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.

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All this may sound extreme. But the fact remains that any influence – overt or concealed, well- or ill-intentioned – which reduces our alertness, our capacity to face reality, our desire to live as active, acting individuals, to assume responsibility and to face up to danger, takes from us some part of our essential human-ness, the quality in us which strives toward freedom and democratic maturity. The enforced mental intervention practiced by the totalitarians is deliberate and politically inspired, but mental intervention is a serious danger even when its purpose is nonpolitical. Any influence which tends to rob man of his free mind can reduce

him to robotism. Any influence which destroys the individual can destroy the whole society.”

Yes, Meerloo’s warnings do sound extreme in an age immersed in seductive entertainment. It’s hard for us to recognize that there may be an alternative way of living and thinking. But maybe that’s what should trouble us – the comfort we take in being hypnotized for many hours every day.

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