

I would like to quote Dr. Marshall McLuhan, the communications expert who made the other day the frightening prediction that the United States will have an economic depression in about 5 years because its youth lacks direction and described "The TV generation as being in a slump of human drive and ambition."

Television is one of the most powerful means of influencing the human mind that the world has ever known. We accuse conventional TV of having failed to make adequate, beneficial use of the medium. Twenty years of brainwashing the American public by a fare of mediocrity was bound to produce a negative, paralyzing impact, particularly on the minds of the impressionable younger generation. There is little that conventional TV can do about it. Advertiser-financed TV and mediocrity are as inseparable as Siamese twins.

Can STV do better? It can and it will. I have great ambitions for STV. I firmly believe that STV will be able to evolve a new programming format, that it will be able to create programs that will awaken the mind, programs that will stimulate the brain, and a new generation of creative writers, directors, actors—who have little chance to get ahead in conventional TV—will be attracted to pay-TV and to its challenge to produce new ideas, new forms. A new approach that will be able to capture the attention of both the older as well as the younger generation will emerge. Not dependent on the advertising dollar, pay-TV producers will not be afraid to experiment. A new dynamism will be introduced into American TV, and herein lies the great promise and the real future of pay-TV.

Cultural programs do not have to be synonymous with dullness. Viewers can and will be educated—via pay-TV to appreciate and desire operas, concerts, ballet, and the like.

I am not impressed by the way by the lipservice contribution made by some of the networks to bringing in an occasional concert or an occasional ballet. The history of the ballet is rather illuminating.

A company in Britain called British Home Entertainment, Ltd., started making programs for pay television for Britain and the American market. They are now a part of a British experimental pay television operation called Pay Television, Ltd.

Incidentally, in a part of London, Westminster, I think they only started about 18 months ago, in January it will be 2 years, and I think the last figure I had was that they had 9,000 or 10,000 subscribers.

They started in February in a part of Sheffield with only 3,000 subscribers. The experiment has been working so well that there is a firm belief that the British Government is going to approve permanent pay-TV licenses, possibly at the end of this year or early next year.

Now this British Home Television, Ltd., produced the Royal Ballet with Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev. They were unable to sell it here. By that time the California operation was suspended. They were going to sell it to California.

I don't remember whether Hartford did show it or not, but the British company needed money. They succeeded to sell it to CBS. CBS kept it in cold storage for a year or 2 years until Christmas 1965 and then during the Christmas season they offered it as a sustaining program.

I would not call that a particularly remarkable contribution to cultural TV.