“Cultivation Theory claims that television promotes us to believe a view of real life that is inaccurate.”

- The word cumulative is important to understanding cultivation. Watching television over a long period of time has effects on viewers’ beliefs and world views (Wood, 2004, Pg. 245).
- By age 6 the average child in the United States has watched 5,000 hours of television; by the age of 18 the average person has watched fully 19,000 hours of television (Wood, 2004, Pg. 245).
- According to the Statistical Abstract of the United States (2000), each year the average person in America spends 3,297 hours engaged with media and approximately half of that time is spent watching TV about 68 24-hour days each year (Wood, 2004, Pg. 245).
- There is so much violence on TV and because of that violence the viewers are left perceiving the world to be more violent than it really is.
- The average 18-year old in the United States has viewed 200,000 separate acts of violence on TV, including 40,000 murders (Wood, 2004, Pg. 246).
- From our perspective the media today is responsible for most of the violent acts that go on today. A lot of people are drawn to the violent ways of the media.

Main Concepts:

- Cultivation—because television portrays the world as more violent and dangerous than it really is.
- The Power of Synthetic Reality—where Mean World Syndrome can play a role. Gerbner claims that by age 6 a child's world view has been established by television.
- Mainstreaming—the power of television to insinuate it's views into mainstream cultural life.

The Power of Synthetic Reality

- George Gerbner claims that by age 6 a child’s world view has been established by television (Wood, 2004, Pg. 247).
- It was proven in a study that it was harder for adults to recall a time or event that happened in their lives if they watched television a lot as a child and also if you watched a lot of violent TV as a child then your reality will be towards more violent when an adult (Riddle, K., 2009, Pg. 1-29).
- Children who watched commercial TV had notably more sex-stereotypical views of women and men than children who didn’t watch commercial TV (Wood, 2001, Pg. 247).
- We begin to believe that sexual violence and any kind of violence is normal in any relationship and begin to accept these things because of TV.

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**Televisions Ability to Cultivate World Views**

- **Mainstreaming** is television’s ability to stabilize and homogenize views within a society. If television programs from Saturday morning cartoons to prime-time dramas feature extensive violence, then viewers may come to believe violence is common (Wood, 2004, Pg. 248).
- The media has always given out hidden messages for everything, but lately the messages have been about violence and victims of violence (Klein, H., & Shiffman, K.S., 2008, 181-201).
- **Resonance** is something a viewer relates to, a personal experience. If they have been raped, or robbed then they can identify with that violence. What we see on TV can impact how we feel or think and the way we act.

**Six Key Assumptions That Guide Research**

- Television is Unique
- Television Forms the Cultural Mainstream
- Television Cultivates Broad Assumptions About Life Rather Than Specific Attitudes and Opinions
- Television Is a Medium of Mainstreaming and Resonance
- The Observable Effects of Television on Culture Are Relatively Small

(Wood, 2004, Pg. 251-252)

**Evaluating The Theory**

- Does the theory provide a full description and explanation of communication? YES!
- Can the theory be tested? YES! More studies can be done on the effect of television on viewers/children.
- Is the theory as simple as it can be? We think it is simple because the ideas are simple. (Ex. Violence is bad, and people watch it for something to do which eventually has an effect on one’s self)
- Does the theory have a practical utility? Yes, it shows how TV shapes the world we live in and how it affects us as human beings.
- Does the theory generate new thinking? Definitely!!!
References


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For more information about cultivation theory and research this book is available on Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble.com: