**Cultivation Theory:**

Cultivation theory was composed originally by G. Gerbner and later expanded upon by Gerbner & Gross (1976 ) they began research in the mid-1960s endeavoring to study  media effects, specifically whether watching television influences the audiences idea and perception of everyday life, and if so, how. Cultivation theory states that high frequency viewers of television are more susceptible to media messages and the belief that they are real and valid. Heavy viewers are exposed to more violence and therefore are affected by the Mean World Syndrome, the belief that the world is a far worse and dangerous place then it actually is.

* Cultivation research is one that studies media effects. Cultivation theorists posit that television viewing can have **long-term effects** that gradually affect the audience. Their primary focus falls on the effects of viewing in the attitudes of the viewer as opposed to created behavior.
* **Heavy viewers** of TV are thought to be ‘cultivating’ attitudes that seem to believe that the world created by television is an accurate depiction of the real world. The theory suggests that prolonged watching of television can tend to induce a certain paradigm about violence in the world.
* The theory suggests that this cultivation of attitudes is based on attitudes already present in our society and that the media take those attitudes which are already present and re-present them bundled in a different packaging to their audiences.
* **One of the main tenets of the theory is that television and media cultivate the status quo, they do not challenge it. Many times the viewer is unaware the extent to which they absorb media, many times viewing themselves as moderate viewers when, in fact, they are heavy viewers.**
* The theory suggests that television and media possess a **small but significant** influence on the attitudes and beliefs of society about society. Those who absorb more media are those we are more influenced.
* Theorists of this persuasion are best known for their study of television violence, a hotly debated, and beaten to death topic. However, there are many studies that expand beyond the study of violence to cover gender, demographics, cultural representations, and political attitudes among many others.
* The delta between those considered to be light viewers and heavy viewers is called the **cultivation differential**. This describes the extent to which an attitude on a particular topic is shaped by exposure to television.
* On notable and oft discussed piece of the theory is know as the **“mean and scary world syndrome”** (or “mean world syndrome”). In a nutshell, heavy viewing of television and the associated violence leads the viewer to believe that the world is a much more dangerous place than it actually is, with a serial killer, rapist, or pedophile lurking around every corner.