



## The Reception Process in Virtual Societies from the Perspective of Modern Trends in cultivation Theory

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### Abstract:

This Research Paper Focuses on Highlighting the New Approach in cultivation Theory regarding the Reception Process, specifically as it Relates to Mass Media. For a long time; The Focus was on Television as a Primary Medium Playing a Significant Role in Socialization, Education, or What is Known as Cultural Development, as well as in Constructing Social Reality and Adopting Many Social Truths about Daily Life; Truths that Can become Shared Meanings among Different Audiences. Although Television Still Holds Great Importance in Our Daily Lives and remains One of the Most Important Sources of Information for Many Audiences, the Internet, and in particular Virtual Communities, specifically Social Networks, have also become Important today as a Field for What is Known as Cultural Development. Many New Variables have emerged that Control the Reception Process and its Dimensions, as the Discussion has Shifted from Building Representations about Social Reality from Television to Social Networks, from Building Social Facts to Building these Facts in the Virtual Space, and from Focusing on the Reflections of What We receive from Television Content on Our Daily Lives and Concepts, to Focusing on the Impact of What We receive from Content and Information in Virtual Worlds on this Life, taking into account the Open Field for the Occurrence of Many Accompanying Phenomena such as Education.

**Keywords:** reception process, virtual societies, modern trends, cultivation theory.

### Introduction:

Theorizing in the Field of Reception Studies has witnessed Numerous Methodological and Intellectual Developments, in accordance with the Evolution of Modern Media and Communication Technologies. The Process of Reception Today, particularly within Virtual Societies, has Changed its Dimensions and Impacts, becoming Based on New Foundations that Differ from the Classical Approach to Reception Presented in the Context of Traditional Media.



However; The Pattern and Content of the Studies, in terms of Research Orientation, did not Change Significantly. Just as the Beginnings Focused on Highlighting the Construction of Social Representations of Lived Reality, Violence, Classism, and Racism, the Same Topics became Areas of Research within the New Communication Environment, where Discourse is no longer limited to the Active and Engaged Audience, but rather revolves More Around the Receiver-Sender who Contributes to and Participates in the Production of Communication and Media Content. Consequently; The Issue of Studying Influence in this Regard becomes Remarkably Complex. The Knowledge and Information Disseminated in the Digital Environment, in turn, work to Instill a Set of Concepts and Perceptions that may be Consistent with or Different from Actual Reality, which require Study, taking into account the Intervention of Social and Cultural Factors. The Social Construction Process of these Perceptions is Formed within the Duality of Receiving Media Content and Interactive Communication between Individuals, whether in the Same Society or from Different Societies.

Reception Studies within Virtual Societies have Yielded Several Important Findings, which We will attempt to Highlight in the Following Sections:

- 1) Returning to the Classical Approach to Educational Theory.
- 2) Characteristics of the Reception Process in Virtual Societies from A Cultural Studies Perspective.
- 3) cultivation Theory and Areas of Interest in Reception Research within the Digital Environment.
- 4) Methodological Tools Used to Analyze Reception in Virtual Societies.
- 5) cultivation Theory and the Issue of Constructing Facts and Social Reality in Virtual Societies.

### **1. Returning to the Classical Approach of cultivation Theory:**

Cultural Development Theory (also known as Cultural Cultivation or Analysis Cultivation) emerged in the United States as a New Perspective for Studying the Impact of Media. This Theory Posits that Prolonged and Regular Television Exposure Cultivates in Viewers the Belief that the World They See on Screen Is a Reflection of the Real World. This Theory is Linked to the Research of American Scholar George Gerbner through His Cultural Indicators Project, which aims to Provide Empirical Evidence of the Media's Influence on the Cultural Environment. Cultural Indicators Research Has Focused on Three Interconnected Issues:

- 1) Studying the Structures, Pressures, and Processes that Influence the Production of Media Messages.
- 2) Studying the Messages, Values, and Mental Images reflected by the Media.
- 3) Studying the Independent Contribution of Mass Messages to the Public's Perception of Social Reality.<sup>1</sup>

In Other Words; The Analysis of Cultural Indicators Focuses on Both Institutional Policy Analysis and Socialization Analysis, as well as Media Analysis itself, which is Called



“Message System Analysis”. Gerbner's Analytical Model is Based on A Comprehensive Perspective that Dennis McQuail Calls Socialization Theory. This Theory Posits that the Media, and Television in particular, play A Fundamental Role in Constructing the Symbolic Environment in which We live. Their Messages about Reality replace Personal Experience and Other Sources of Knowledge, and these Messages are Often Different from and Distort Reality in Many Essential Aspects. In Contemporary Societies; The Media Contributes Significantly to the Collective Socialization of Concepts about Life and Society. This Process is not limited to the Role of the Media; rather, it represents A Complex Social Process Involving All Other Collective Activities, such as Education, Socialization, Family, and the Entirety of Cultural Activities.

For Gerbner; The Historical Significance of Media does not Stem from the Concept of the Masses or Groups of People reached by Contemporary Media;<sup>2</sup> rather, it Stems from the Cultural Transformation brought about by Media, resulting from the Mass Production of Messages that form Message Systems Representing the Industrial and Technological Foundations from which They Originate. Mass Communication Media are Methods of Selecting, Composing, Recording, and Sharing Stories, Symbols, and Images. They are Social Organizations that Function as Governments within the Institutionally Organized Field of Mass Acculturation, and Communication here represents the Essence of the Cultural Process. Culture, according to this Researcher; Is A System of Messages that Organizes Social Relations and Creates Patterns of Unity and Homogeneity, as well as Alienation and Rebellion, depending on the Images Produced by the Media. Here; It does not Merely Teach; It Primarily Creates Images. It does not Entertain; It Stifles the Masses. It does not Reflect; It Shapes Attitudes, Moods, and Preferences, Providing the Conditions, Boundaries, and General Patterns within which Choices, Interpretations, and Personal Interactions take place. This Celebration of the Role of Communication Reformulates Socrates's Maxim “Know thyself”, transforming It into “Know the Means of Communication to Know Yourself”. One of the Fundamental Characteristics of Media Discourse is its Ability to Create General Communication Patterns and Systems that become the Basis for the Choices of Individuals who do not form Personal Images or Perspectives Unless these are Readily Available to them. The Systematic Analytical Procedures Developed by Gerbner and His Colleagues, which are Distributed across the Three Aforementioned Areas and which Examined Distortions in Reality Concerning Family and Work, Social Roles, Age, Education, Violence, and Crime, concluded that the Constructed Images of Reality are Neither Accurate nor Appropriate for the Perspectives of Marginalized Groups, the Poor, Women, and Ethnic Minorities.<sup>3</sup> Gerbner's Media Discourse Analysis is Based on Extracting its Basic Representations of Fixed Elements Identified by the Analysis, such as Importance, Value, Existence, Lifestyle, and Relationship, and then Grouping these Elements into Broader Patterns Organized along Specific Lines of Research.

It is Important to note here the Clear Distinction between the Real World and the Symbolic World. Studying Message Structures Necessarily Contributes to Revealing and Defining the Nature of the Symbolic World in which We live and which Shapes Our Values, Concepts, and Perceptions. Examining the Structures of a Particular Message and its Symbolic



Functions Reveals How Communication helps Define, Diagnose, and Determine the Course of Life, People's Destinies, and the Nature of Society within the Symbolic World. The Realities of this Symbolic World are Usually Different from those Found in the Real World. The Analysis here begins with the Assumption of Shared Collective Characteristics and Functions for Forming a Public Image, and Examines these Characteristics along Four Axes, distributed across the Following Elements Extracted from Media Discourse: [Existence, Importance (Sometimes referred to as Priorities), Values, and Relationships].<sup>4</sup>

Cultural Development Research Focuses on Trying to Answer the Third Pattern of the Research System (the Study of the Independent Contribution of Mass Messages to the Public's Perception of Social Reality), where this Theory assumes that People who watch Huge Amounts of Television Programs, usually referred to as [Heavy Viewers], differ in their Perception of Social Reality from those who watch Few Amounts of Television Programs or do not watch at all, usually referred to as [Light Viewers]; This is because Heavy Viewers will have a Greater Ability to Perceive Lived Reality in a Way Consistent with the Mental Images Conveyed by the World of Television.<sup>5</sup>

## **2. Characteristics of the Reception Process in Virtual Societies from A Cultural Studies Perspective:**

### **2.1. Changes in the Concept of the Audience:**

**The Sender:** Anyone Browsing the Internet Can Now Create and Broadcast a Message Instantly, even without Possessing Media Writing Skills. Anyone Can be A Journalist. Furthermore; The Sender has Simultaneously become A Receiver. Consequently; The Prevailing Concept of the Audience has Changed. The Audience is Now Described as A User, Communicator, Producer User, Citizen, or Socializer User. In this Context; Some Research has Pointed to the Concept of the User within the Framework of the “Media Consumer”, the User who is Free and Independent in their Movements and Interactions with Others. They also Actively Consume and Select Communication Content in light of their Personal Needs (Khaled Zouari, 2008 CE). In this Context; The Text is Presented for Individual Consumption and becomes a Tool for Demassification, whereby the Internet User gathers and selects the Information that Interests them, and then decides whether to Delve Deeper into the Information or be Content with the Superficial Information They Have Obtained. This Freedom of Movement is Linked to the Individual Process in the Communication Practices enjoyed by the User of New Media and Information and Communication Technologies.

In Another Development; The User, according to (Mehdi Mohsenian, 2008 CE), Gained [Upper Status] with the term [Communicatee], and the [Message Bazaar Theory]. The Researcher believes that the Recipient Online User, who is the Person on whom the Communicative Act is Performed, plays A Role Equal to the Act Performed by the [Communicator], as He initiates the Transmission of Information.

As the World Wide Web Entered a New Phase, and Applications Emerged that Empowered Users to Communicate and Create Content to Achieve their Own Goals and



Projects; The Concept of the “Productive User” became a Central Focus for Media Theorists. In this Context; The Importance of the Concept of “Productive Interaction” was Emphasized, where the Productive User Plays a Role in Generating Meaningful Content and Ideas, and in Creating and Producing Designs that Meet their Needs, rather than Passively Consuming Pre-Made Designs (Philip Van Allen, 2004 CE).

In this Context; Some Researchers have Pointed to the Term “Citizen” in light of a Concept that transcends the “User”, who is Preoccupied with Defending their Own Interests and Privacy, while the “Productive Citizen” goes beyond this Individualistic State to Join and Participate with Others in Managing Public Life. Thus; The Citizen-User Seeks the Common Good through their Active Use of Communication Content in the Digital Sphere.

The Recipient, therefore; Has Gained the Ability to Actively Participate in the Communication Process. The Public Now Seeks Information and Chooses the Appropriate Time to Access it. Distinguishing between Sender and Receiver has become Difficult; the Sender has become a Receiver, and the Receiver a Sender. In this way; The Internet has given a New Dimension to Feedback, which was almost Absent in Traditional Media. While Online Communication is Characterized by Immediacy and Directness, bringing it Closer to its Face-to-Face Counterpart, interactivity is its Most Important Feature.<sup>6</sup>

## **2.2. The Overlap between Old and New Media in the Individual's Media Environment:**

In Traditional Media; The Focus is Mostly on Addressing One Sense, or Perhaps Two Senses. Journalism addresses Sight, Radio addresses Hearing, and Television addresses Sight and Hearing. As for the Internet; It Came to address the Human Senses as a whole, and the Individual's Mental Perceptions through (Multimedia) that Imposes Patterns of Comprehension, Behaviors, and Different Responses.

In the New Communication and Media Environment; We Find that old and new Media are Used Simultaneously—and Sometimes Interchangeably—in the Daily Lives of Individuals, and Both are also Integrated with a Series of Interactions and Engagements between Individuals. Jenkins adopts this View with regard to Entertainment Media (2006 CE), where He Says: “We Develop his Arguments a Step Further, and Emphasize that these Same Conditions and the Same Set of Uses Determine the Nature of the Process of Seeking Political Information in the New Media Environment. Hence; Isolating the Influence of One of these Media in this Environment becomes an almost Impossible Task”.

Studying and Receiving Media Texts in the New Media Environment is a Complex Process. The Lived Experience—Comprised of a Complex Interplay of Factors—is the Actual Arena in which Individuals Develop and Maintain their Beliefs, Opinions, and Biases, reflect on their ideas, and live their Lives. Qualitative Interviews, Observations, and Diaries, already Standard Methods in Many Studies, have been adapted to Investigate this Aspect of Human Social Life. These Studies have Found that Citizens Move Seamlessly between Traditional and New Media, from Updated Sources, Supplementing their Consumption of Newspapers and Television with Current Digital Information. Often; When Participants learned about an Issue



or Event from Television, or When They Sought to Verify Facts or Access Information Online, they would Consult Newspapers. This Prompted them to Seek More Information, and the Internet appeared to Occupy a Position of Particular Importance for those Seeking the Latest Information during Election Periods, for example.<sup>7</sup>

Jenkins Offers Example after Example of Such Cases, while also addressing What He Calls the Current Situation—the Place where old and new Media Collide—A “Convergence Culture”. Researchers have Increasingly Discovered that Studying the Use and Reception of New Media actually involves Studying Old Media as well; The New Media Environment is One in which All Types of Media are Used Simultaneously.

### **2.3. The Reception Process is Based on the Image:**

The Image has become Linked to the Act of Reception; The Recipient is Now Subject to A New Media System that Places them Directly within the Event. Since the Event is an Image; The Viewer's Personal Interpretation arises, along with the Individuality and Subjectivity of that Interpretation. All Human Interactions with Televised Images, and Everything that Can be Considered a Message in the Linguistic Sense on the Internet, have Now become Individualized Models. There is no longer a Universal, Comprehensive, and Standardized Discourse. This is a Shift in Discourse and in the Mechanisms of Interpretation, following the Massive Transformation in Media. Unlike Words; The Image is Accessible to Everyone, in All Languages.

### **2.4. Reception through Branching Texts:**

Currently on the World Wide Web; We Find that Hypertext Poses Major Problems at the Level of Reception, as the Succession of Transitions between Texts (with their Various Supplementary Components: Images, Videos, Links, etc.) Can turn reading into A Maze, or Even More than that, We Have Become.

### **2.5. Reception and the Crisis of Trust in Media Products:**

The Idea here relates to Leaks; These Leaks have Exacerbated the Already High Level of Distrust among Recipients regarding the News and information They are Bombarded with. In addition to this Crisis of Trust; The Reception Process has been Distorted, as Evidenced by the Changing Questions Recipients Ask in an Attempt to Prioritize Understanding.<sup>8</sup>

### **2.6. The Issue of Truth and Objectivity in the New Reception Environment:**

The Great Controversy that has been raised about the Values of Truth and Objectivity in Discourse Studies in General, and Media Discourse in Particular, has been Embodied by the Crisis of Trust, Doubt, and Fear of Misinformation, which have Created Factors of Separation and Distance between the Sender and the Receiver. These Factors Sow Doubt Even in Messages Characterized by Truth and Objectivity, thus Placing the Relationship that is Supposed to be Positive and Effective between Media Institutions and Recipients in a Tunnel of Doubt, Suspicion, and Unequal Exchange. Therefore; The Process of Media Reception Today has become Epistemologically Framed, as Truth in Electronic Media does not Mean that it Corresponds One Hundred Percent to Reality. Rather; Truth in Electronic Media is measured by the Extent of the Investigative Efforts Undertaken by the Journalist to Reach it, and the Rest



Falls within the Scope of the Public's Right to Know What is Happening; This is on a Practical Level. On a Theoretical Level; This Approach believes that the Way Objectivity and Truth are Presented in Electronic Media Clings to a Naiveté that the Cultural Spirit of our time has tried to Overcome. Perhaps the Most Significant Factor Exacerbating the Crisis of Reception is the Transformation of Truth from A Given to A Construct.<sup>9</sup>

### **2.7. The Information Explosion:**

The Crisis here lies in the Fact that We Previously Suffered from a Scarcity of Information, and then We moved to Another Crisis related to the Abundance and Saturation of Information. Now; A Reception with New Characteristics is Emerging; It is the Reception of the Era of the Information Explosion, which is not based on Interaction or a Foundational Interpretation of the Event, News, Incident, or Information; But Rather on A Reverse Process, based on the Recipient's Search for What Reinforces His Conviction Amidst the Pile of Versions and Narratives related to these News and Incidents.<sup>10</sup>

This Explosion has rendered Meaningless Concepts like “Urgent” and “new”; What is Urgent and Novel One Minute may be so in the Next, only to be Overshadowed by Something Else Entirely, as Described in the Context of Information Overload. We are Now Faced with a Surge in Content and a Pressure of time, where Reality is reduced to a Series of Images, and the Focus of Attention on Topics Shifts from One Place to Another in the World. This Causes Major Issues to become Obsolete at an Unprecedented Rate, and They are no longer Discussed in the Same Way as before, devoid of Public Debate. All of this Confirms that the Trend is always toward Pushing Current Events into the Past as Quickly as Possible.<sup>11</sup>

#### **❖ The Beginnings of Cultural Studies in the New Media Environment:**

Studying Media Reception in the New Media Environment is A Complex Process that Media Studies Researchers are Only Just Beginning to Explore. In this Chapter; We address a Series of Issues Central to Current Media Studies Discussions about How the New Media Environment is Changing the Media Landscape. We Discuss How Text Analysis and Reception are Changing and the Implications of this for Media Portrayals of Race, Social Class, Gender, and Sexual Orientation; The Social Impact of Media on these Social Identities; The Increasing Importance of Globalization for Understanding New Media Production and Reception; And How the Current Media Environment Facilitates both Political and Cultural Participation in New and More Sophisticated Ways than before. We also Examine Media Convergence; The Convergence between Different Types of Media, between Traditional and New Media, and between Traditional and New Media Environments.

#### **❖ The Early Models (Prototypes) regarding Race and Racism:**

Among the Studies in this Field is “Takamura's Study” on Online Racial Representations, which argued that Studying Racial Representations Online is Complex because Racial Categories are Strongly linked to Individuals' Bodies in Everyday Life, but Online Representations are Detached from Actual Bodies. However; It was Concluded that Stereotypes remain Racist, as the Researcher attempted to Demonstrate How Visual Racial Metaphors are Reconstructed in Various Forms of Online Imagery. Consequently; These Same



Images Will Appropriate the Standards of Racial Representations in Our Physical Representations and Maintain these Standards Even in Cyberspace.<sup>12</sup> This does not Preclude Other Studies that have Proven the Opposite, asserting that “Virtual Communication reduces Patterns of Discrimination between Human Groups, Discrimination that was Once based on Gender, Socioeconomic Status, as Interaction between All People Occurs without these Considerations”.<sup>13</sup>

❖ **Moving on to the Search for Representations of Identity:**

Modern Technologies have Enabled New and Sophisticated Forms of Communication between People in New Configurations of Time and Space. For Example; “Turkle” Studied Young People who become Completely Immersed in the Identities They assume while Playing Online Games, a Microcosm illustrating How Difficult it has become to Establish a Boundary between the Real and the Virtual. Among the Studies in this Field is the Work of (Boyd and Ellison, 2008 CE) on How Young People Use Social Networking Sites Such as Facebook and MySpace. Through Interviews with Numerous Young Americans who Use Social Networking Sites; They Found that these Sites have Changed the Processes of Self-Presentation, Peer Socialization, and Interaction with the Adult Community for Many Young People. They Suggest that Social Networking Sites Should be Viewed as Connected Audiences, Simultaneously Imaginary Communities and Actual Technological Spaces. (Boyd and Ellison, 2008 CE) described, with Some Complexity; How the New Connected Audiences Differ from Disconnected Audiences in the Context of Audiences. They are Characterized by Persistence, Researchability, Reproducibility, and the Ability to Form Friendships, and in terms of their Dynamism, they are Composed of Invisible Audiences. They Indicate that they have Disrupted Our Traditional Thinking about the Boundaries between the Public and Private Spheres.<sup>14</sup>

In Most Cases, the Identity Presented to Others is Merely a Name (Username), which, according to Many Studies, is Often Fictitious. Virtual Communication is Characterized by the Complete Absence of Identity, sometimes Leading to the Construction of a Fictional, Imaginary Self. Through Text-Based Communication; Users reinvent themselves and Construct Feelings, Thoughts, and a Different Social Status. Their Entire Humanity Can be altered; They Can Manipulate their Self-Image More Effectively than in Face-to-Face Interactions, presenting themselves as they wish to be. This aligns with “Goffman's Argument” and Stems from the Absolute Freedom Individuals Enjoy in Virtual Communication—A Freedom that Could be termed “Toxic Freedom” due to the Lack of Control and Self-Regulation among those Communicating. This Issue has Sparked Considerable Debate in Numerous Studies Concerning Social Norms, Identity, Consciousness, Humanity, and Commitment.<sup>15</sup>

❖ **Building Perceptions about Social Reality in Virtual Space:**

(Pierre Chambat) States: “The Concept of Representation is an Essential Tool for Researchers interested in Understanding the Mental Images Individuals form based on their Experiences with New Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and in Understanding and Analyzing the Interaction between these Representations of New Technologies and Individuals' Actual Practices. The Benefit of Studying Representations lies



in their Ability to Help Us Better Understand the Ongoing Technological and Cognitive Changes and How Young People adapt to them. It also Helps Us, in particular, to Identify the Mechanisms by which Young People Acquire, Restructure, and Integrate (ICTs) into their Ways of Thinking and Acting”. (Pierre Chambat) Emphasizes that: “Understanding the Social Representations Individuals form of Technology is Fundamental because Individuals' Use of Technology goes beyond Mere Functional Use, and the Relationship between the User and the Tool is Never Purely Instrumental”.<sup>16</sup>

The Construction of Representations in the Virtual World is Now Shaped by a Duality that Combines Virtual Personal Communication with Exposure to and Interaction with Media Products. This Construction is Governed by New Variables that Differ from those that Governed its Construction in Traditional, Real-World Societies. In this Context; Researchers (Baudreau and Newman) Proposed a New Methodological Approach to Explain the Fundamental Elements that Now Govern the Construction of Social Realities and Representations in Virtual Societies. These Elements Include: Construction, Interaction, Culture, Reconstruction, Meaning, Vision, and Practice, with Virtual Interaction Considered the Foundation for All Other Elements. Regarding:

▪ **The Social Structure of Networks:**

We Find that It has become Shaped by What are Known as Nodes, Connections, and Flows. The Direct Impact of the Information Network on Social Structure relates to the Factor of Power, which was Considered an Integral Part of Authority in Institutions and Organizations Structured on a Hierarchical Basis. In the Network Society; These Centers have been Dissolved, disrupting the Hierarchy and Making the Exercise of Power, particularly in Virtual Societies, More Difficult. Technology as A Whole has Come to Play a Crucial and Fundamental Role in Framing Relationships, thus Facilitating the Process of Human Reproduction (the Production of Information and the Generation of Knowledge). That is, Technology, as A Material Tool; Has become A Means by which Individuals Produce and Reproduce Meaning, regardless of their Social Class.<sup>17</sup> The Systems that Once Controlled this Process Now Find It Difficult to do so within the Context of the Network World.

▪ **Virtual Interaction: In the Context of Electronic Communication:**

Individuals are More Likely to Acquire Experiences on Various Topics due to the Unlimited Flow of Information. In the Case of Virtual Communities; We Find Ourselves Discussing this Virtual Pattern of Interaction, which Occurs between Computers and Humans, and between Humans via Computers, with Technology Acting as the Intermediary. Furthermore; The Imagination and Interpretations held by Individuals Play a Significant Role in Shaping this Interaction. Social Networks, for example, are Now an Integral Part of Our Society, where Individuals Engage in their Social Activities, making them Tools Not Only for Constructing Personal Meaning;<sup>18</sup> “But also for Managing Various Aspects of Life, including the Formation of Entire Communities”.<sup>19</sup>



**Several Elements Underpin this Interaction, that is, Virtual Interaction; Including:**

▪ **Shared Background:**

It Can be Said that the Characteristics of Different Environments Influence Communication. They Provide a Framework for Understanding How Individuals and Groups Participating Online in Specific Technological Communities Develop a Shared Understanding in a Conversation or Setting—an Understanding that is the Same as the Intended Meaning within their Respective Contexts and Environments. This Process is the Matter of Shared Background, and it Varies from One Situation to Another, depending on the Forms, Technologies, and Types of Computer Communication. For Example; Face-to-Face Communication (Text, Voice, and Perhaps Video) Differs from Using Only Text Messaging, from Situations Involving Voice, from both Voice and Video, or from Public Chat Rooms Open to Everyone. The Amount and Type of Effort required to Establish Shared Background Varies from One Environment to Another.<sup>20</sup>

▪ **Remote Social Presence (TelePresence):**

Researchers Hypothesize that Social Presence reaches its Highest Levels in Face-to-Face Communication, while it decreases in Indirect Communication. This is attributed to the Disappearance of Personal Identity Elements and Physical Appearance during this Type of Communication. The Latter Expresses a Synonymous Term Formed based on this Description and Following the Emergence of Virtual Social Interaction; **(TelePresence)**. TelePresence has Come to Mean “the User's Feeling of Interacting and Connecting with Others. Here; Telepresence is Linked to Technological Immediacy”.<sup>21</sup> It is “A Technological Presence that Embodies a Shared Reflection between the Participants' Common Self and the Mechanism of Electronic Communication between them”.<sup>22</sup>

❖ **Digital Culture:**

In the Context of Virtual Societies; We refer to Culture according to the Socio-Anthropological Perspective, which Considers it to be a Fluid and Unstable Phenomenon within the Electronic Environment, given the Intermingling of Numerous Cultures within a Single Cyberspace.<sup>23</sup> Just as there is an Opportunity to Disseminate Local Culture, there is also an Equally, or Even Greater, opportunity to Engage with Diverse and Foreign Cultures within the Original Society. This opens the Door to the Possibility of Embracing Global Culture, or the Culture of Globalization. “In this Cyberspace; Local Particularities and Cultural Identities Can be Lost as an Attempt is Made to Shape Minds and Reproduce the Culture of Peoples, distancing them from their National Roots and Historical Heritage, in Favor of Promoting Western Culture and Serving the Interests of the New World Order. This Leads to Widespread Apathy, A Loss of Belonging, Anarchy, Cultural Alienation”;<sup>24</sup> And Other Phenomena Associated with Cultural Globalization, which, especially for Young People, only Serves to Further Detach them from their Local Communities. Consequently; The Values and Foundational Principles of Each Society's Culture are Undermined.



In this Regard; The Anthropologist (Hershovits) points out that “The Intercultural Communication that takes Place in Our Time is (The Symmetry Game - ‘Analogie jeu le’ Game), which the Symbols of Globalization Seek to Embody in terms of Economy, Consumption, and Imagination. Currently; The Culture of Analogy, as (Alain Mons) Calls it, is Spreading. It has become the Paradigm of Current Societies, which are the Product of a Form of Organized and Coercive Acculturation in which Social Relations, including Real Communication, are Suspended, so that Virtual Relations Prevail in a Society mediated by the Culture of the Image, a Culture that does not Exchange the Different as much as it absorbs the Similar and the Alike. Every Image is Nothing but an Image of Another Image. This System of Images Uproots the Individual from His Field, to Fly Him in a Metaphorical Space that Evokes the Dream and the Desire; The Dream of Traveling without Achieving it, and the Desire to Penetrate the Walls of Borders without Reaching them. The Image, with its Imaginative Elements, takes on a Compensatory, illusory Character for the Individual's Dreams, with the Aim of Fixing them in His Imagination”.<sup>25</sup>

The Digital Space of the Network (Cyberspace) and the Screen Strips Exchange of its Earthly, Real-World Character, rendering it, in Words of (Baudrillard), an Impossible Exchange. This is because the Global Context, marked by Technological Inequality, does not Provide Equal Opportunities for Different Cultures.<sup>26</sup> “The Dominant Culture Here is that of the Countries that Control this Virtual Space. On the Other Hand; We are Currently Facing an Unprecedented Stage of Cultural Change in Contemporary Societies, where the New Culture Possesses Unique Characteristics that Distinguish it from What was Familiar. Digital Sources are Diverse and almost Universally Accessible, ranging from Comprehensive E-Books and Electronic Journals to Films, Databases, and Educational and Knowledge Websites, in addition to Numerous Other Vast Information Resources. This Sheer Volume leads to Fragmentation and an Inability to Keep Up with Continuous Learning. This Information Overload makes it Difficult to Acquire a Coherent Culture”.<sup>27</sup>

#### ❖ **Adopting An Ethnographic Approach to Studying Reception in the Digital Environment:**

Cultural Researchers Emphasize the Necessity of Studying the Use of New Media Using Ethnographic Methods, Interviews, and Observation. These Methods help Researchers Contextualize Media Reception and Use, complementing Broader Statistical Approaches.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore; Work in this Area Now relies on Exploring Several Emerging Concepts that Explain the Importance of the Social, Cultural, and Economic Context in Studying the Impact of New Media and Communication Technologies on Users' Daily Lives. These Concepts and Terms Include:

##### ▪ **Home Technologies:**

Although Studies on the Uses of Home Technologies began about a Quarter of a Century ago, and Despite the Tremendous Development in these Technologies; Understanding the Place of Television in Contemporary Society remains A Crucial Issue within Modern Research. This Research views these Technologies Primarily as A



Home Media Outlet, which must Simultaneously be Considered within the Family Context and within the Broader Context of Social, Political, and Economic Realities. Television is Considered, on both the Domestic and National, Private and Public Levels; (An Active Agent in Consumer Culture and Technological Culture).

▪ **Family Dynamics:**

This Perspective Introduced a Significant Modification to the Concept of the Audience, which is no longer Merely an Individual Viewer, Listener, or Reader, but rather a Member of the Receiving Group (the Family). It transformed the Family into an Active Arena for Social practices that are Simultaneously Influenced by the Social and Cultural Environment, as well as by the Specificities Inherent in Each Family, such as Customs, Traditions, and Rituals. Family Dynamics, therefore; Is the Family's Capacity to Control these Technologies, integrate them as Ordinary and Necessary Tools in Daily Family Life, and Interpret and Assign Symbolic Meaning to the Technologies they Embody. It also means the Ability of Families to Comprehend the Explicit and Implicit Messages Contained in Media and Communication Technologies. Families interpret and decode those Contents within the Framework of Interactions that Create Differences between Individuals.<sup>29</sup>

**Footnotes:**

1 - Hassan Emad Makawi, Laila Hussein El-Sayed, *Communication and its Contemporary Theories*, Without Edition Number, Egyptian-Lebanese House for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 2004 CE, p. 299.

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