

Todd Gitlin summary on media

[Media](#)



Todd Gitlin is a notable author born in New York City. He attended the University of California at Berkeley, where he received a PhD in sociology and was heavily involved in the Students for a Democratic Society group. Gitlin is now a professor at New York University where he teaches culture, journalism, and sociology. Gitlin's selection, *Supersaturation, or, The Media Torrent and Disposable Feeling*, comes from his book *Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives* (2001).

In this selection, Gitlin describes how private lives and domestic spaces have evolved from the seventeenth-century until now. He feels as though our once private households are now dominated by other worldly things in the form of media. There are many ideas in Todd Gitlin's writings that support his view of our media influenced world, two of which, are the ideas of "supersaturation" and "disposable feeling." According to dictionary.com the definition of supersaturation is "to increase the concentration of (a solution) beyond saturation."

Gitlin uses the word "supersaturation" to describe the way today's world has completely absorbed the media and its relations. Society has become immersed in the gossip and images displayed by the media. The lines between living space and working space are no longer as distinct as they used to be. Gitlin states that, "the outside world has entered the home with vengeance - in the profusion of media" (Gitlin 558). Relating to this same concept, Gitlin uses the idea of "disposable feeling" to explain the way people of today are able to move from one worldly image to the next, one piece of gossip to another, with no concern.

We are able to shrug them off and come back to them later if we choose to do so. In some of Gitlin's research, he refers to the writings of analyst Raymond Williams who states, "What we have now is drama as habitual experience, more in a week, in many cases, than most human beings would previously have seen in a lifetime" (Gitlin 559). We have become immune to true feelings for individual images and stories, and thrive on the idea of the next gossip that will follow. In this selection of the book, Gitlin discusses a seventeenth-century Dutch painter by the name of Vermeer.

Vermeer was known for being able to "fr[ee]ze instants, but instants that spoke of the relative constancy of the world in which his subjects lived" (Gitlin 558). People collected Vermeer's paintings for display throughout their homes. Gitlin sees Vermeer as the seventeenth-century version of the media. In that time, the images painted were relative to the people's era and private world. In today's world Vermeer would be the equivalent to a celebrity photographer or movie director.

If Vermeer, or any other artist of his time, were to see today's households, they would find that the once private space inside the home is now much more dominated by images of the outside world than what would have been possible in the 1600's. As mentioned in Gitlin's research, statistics show that, " ' watching TV is the dominant leisure activity of Americans, consuming 40 percent of the average person's free time as a primary activity [when people give television there undivided attention]' " (Gitlin 560). Even the wealthier parts of poor worlds have access to some sort of media.

It would take someone from a third world country to be stunned by the fact that our lives are constantly portrayed through television, radio, internet and other forms of media. People of today come in contact with more “information” in a single day than any one person of Vermeer’s time could have ever imagined. The media surrounds our world in every aspect of society. Gitlin notes in his writings that the statistics referenced “don’t take into account the billboards, the TV’s at bars and on planes, the Muzak in restaurants and shops . . . and logos whizzing by on the sides of buses and taxis, climbing the walls of buildings, making announcements from caps, bags, T-shirts, and sneakers” (Gitlin 563). Thanks to all of the latest technology and communications systems people are able to connect to the outside world whenever we like. In Gitlin’s conclusion he goes on to explain that our personal opinion is no longer important to the world. People of our time are followers rather than leaders, and are consistently being sucked in to how the media says we should live our lives.

Gitlin feels that the way we live our lives, “or spend it,” (563) determines who we are. Our lives have become completely consumed with technology and the latest electronics. Gitlin argues that even in our most private times we cannot bring ourselves to stay clear of the media. “[Our] life experience has become an experience in the presence of media” (Gitlin 563). In seventeenth-century time this degree of media dependence would be unthinkable. Earls View

In my reading of Todd Gitlin’s *Supersaturation, or, the Media Torrent and Disposable Feeling*, I have come to the conclusion that I agree with Gitlin on the matter of an overwhelming media presence in today’s world. The media
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has become such a large influence on everything on society. From TV, internet, and cell phones to billboards, magazines, and newspapers, it has become nearly impossible to be media free. Going along with Gitlin's opinion on the subject, I agree that even in our seemingly private home lives, we continue to depend on media and other electronic entertainment.

In this day and age people are constantly fixated with staying connected with the outside world through the media using smart phones, emails, news, social networks and sports. As technology continues to advance we become consumed with the idea of having the latest and the best gadgets to keep us linked to media at all times. These gadgets have become part of our daily routine to check on society. People feel lost when they can't check their emails or their status on Facebook.

Dinner in a home used to be eating at the dining room table and having conversations about your day but has now become sitting in the living room and watching TV. Even children have been affected by this media trend. They watch more TV than reading books. There are TV shows to help them learn rather than reading books for math, science and English. It is clear that the world is being dominated by media. The world has evolved into a smart, fast pace place where we have to know everything that goes on, not just where we live and what's going on in our lives but the entire world as well. We spend all our money on top of the line, expensive electronics to keep up to date with media and worldly news * Technology continues to advance (walkman mp3 players, tapes blue ray) * Constantly fixated on staying "connected" to the outside world (using smart phones to check email, news, sports) * Has become part of daily routine to check for updates in society * <https://assignbuster.com/todd-gitlin-summary-on-media/>

Even watch tv while eating family meals, tv's in restaurants, portable computers, ect * Faster growing demand for careers in technology fields