學術對談

以媒介為視窗瞭望世界——
心繫公眾的傳播學者托德・吉特林

對談人：托德・吉特林(Todd Gitlin)、黃煜
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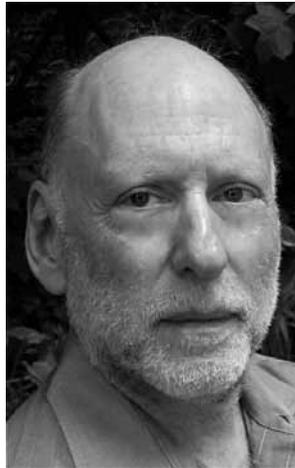
托德・吉特林教授
(Prof. Todd Gitlin)

「從某種意義上説，我的政治生涯就是我的研究根基。」

「我發現媒介在廣泛的社會生活中有多種呈現形式，因此媒介也為一系列研究主題提供了切入點。通過研究媒介，你可以將媒介作為視窗去觀察更廣闊的世界。」

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「我在 1978 年出版的《媒介社會學》中提出對當時存在的方法有所質疑的原因。但我必須繼續去探究我們還須要做甚麼，而不僅僅是批判已有的研究成果。」

「我認為媒介的地位始於人們的認知 …… 使用媒介的人的生活也包括沒有媒介捲入的一面 …… 在研究過程中，我們應該同時兼顧這兩方面。」

Dialogue

Academic Dialogue with Todd Gitlin

Discussants: Todd GITLIN, Yu HUANG
Editors: Yu HUANG
Translator: Jing WANG

Abstract

In this interview, Gitlin explains his fundamental views on the media's role in society. Media producers, for their own interests, direct people's lives and attitudes toward political and social issues. Meanwhile, the media satisfy people's wants derived from their lives without media. Gitlin also suggests examining media and human communication with a holistic view and critical sociological approach. Gitlin grounds his intellectual practice in social and political movements. He has credited his academic achievements to his previous political experiences. In his research agenda, Gitlin keeps focusing on the politically engaged public. By actively participating in movements and continuing to write, Gitlin wants to further his critical study of media and communication for people's rights and freedoms in their political and social lives.

Yu HUANG (Professor). School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University. Research interests: media in Hong Kong and mainland China, political economy of media and communication studies

托德・吉特林教授簡介

　　托德・吉特林(Todd Gitlin)教授是一位著名的傳播學者，現任美國哥倫比亞大學新聞學院博士項目主任，他同時也是一名作家和社會學家。早年就讀於哈佛大學，密芝根大學，獲得加州大學栢克萊分校社會學博士學位。二十世紀六十年代，他參加了美國新左派(New Left)運動成為一名政治活動家。近年來，Gitlin 在報章雜誌上發表諸多文章和影視評論，並出版了十餘部著作。因其獨特的視角、批判的風格及理論建樹，Gitlin 被視為美國二十世紀批判學派代表人物之一。在媒介研究方面，Gitlin 的批判社會學方法也為我們提供了更廣闊的研究視角。

TG: 托德・吉特林
HY: 黃煜

HY: 請您描述一下您特別關注的研究領域及所參與的政治活動。眾所周知，您參與了許多美國的政治運動，能否談談這方面的經歷？

TG:　整個二十世紀六十年代，我參與了美國的新左派運動。那時，我並沒有明確的職業抱負，也未曾預料會在大學裏工作。我只是在從一項政治活動到另一項政治活動的過程中，不斷感知自己未來的道路。（這種生活方式在那個年代非常普遍，有千千萬萬像我這樣的人並不在意收入有多少。）那些年豐富而複雜的經歷耐人尋味，以至我 1974 年重返校園攻讀博士的時候，花了大量的時間去研究我在「新左派運動」中所積累的材料，並且取得成果。從某種意義上說，我的政治生涯就是我的研究根基。二十世紀六十年代後期，我視自己為一名運動學者──一個參與政治運動的學者。我為報章雜誌撰寫文章，同時也對電視文化產生興趣，因為我感覺到電視也是影響政治發展的要素之一，儘管在 1968 年的時候，這種感覺似乎是很難被接受的。我讀了馬歇爾・麥克盧漢的著作並被他的思想所觸動。對於電視如何影響我們的世界觀，我有了一些基本的想法。1970 年代中期，我返回校園讀博士，我的一位

導師建議我在 1968 年寫的一篇關於媒介與社會運動的文章的基礎上展開研究，而這項研究構成了我博士論文的框架。1977 年，我完成了博士論文，後來在此基礎上寫成了 *The Whole World is Watching* 一書。其實，我重返校園的研究初衷並非如此，我一開始是想追溯「稀缺性」這個概念的歷史，並研究它對社會思想的衝擊。後來也沒有人研究過這個，作為一個研究項目，它實在太宏大而不具可行性，我很高興我放棄了這個初衷。我一直希望為公眾、特別是參與政治的公眾而寫作，這是我不離不棄的宗旨。即使在我決定攻讀社會學博士之後，我也從未想把自己禁錮在學術化的寫作中。

為何將媒介作為一個研究領域去探討？我發現媒介在廣泛的社會生活中有多種呈現形式，因此媒介也為一系列研究主題提供了切入點。通過研究媒介，你可以研究社會和歷史。你可以研究相互關聯着的經濟、社會、文化、意識形態、道德和精神生活。你可以將媒介作為視窗去觀察更廣闊的世界。而這正是我所尋找的。*The Whole World is Watching* 一書的中心便是媒介與社會運動的相互作用，但我也涉及了更廣闊的領域。

出版了 *The Whole World is Watching* 之後，我也想看看類似的研究框架──媒體內容製造者與參與政治群體的相互作用之動因──能否運用於研究娛樂業。接下來的研究項目是關於荷李活電視業如何壓縮、引導並疏通政治衝突的。當時我發現，如果不瞭解娛樂媒體行業的整體運作，就無法理解電視行業是如何處理政治衝突的。

最終我寫了 *Inside Prime Time* 這本書。它超出了我研究政治衝突如何被（大眾傳媒）馴化這一初衷，整體分析了（媒體）行業如何作出決策。雖然書中仍有些章節談到了政治衝突被馴化的問題，但這本書總的來說是關於（媒體）行業的總體分析。

這項研究也將我引向了文化研究的內部動因問題。同時我也學到很多東西。相較於政治運動，荷李活娛樂產業對我來說是個

更陌生的領域，對這個領域，我過去的生活經驗無法賦予我對政治運動同樣敏感的直覺。我開始從零學起並覺得非常有趣。1980年代中期到1990年代，我越來越不滿足於在這項研究（指 *Inside Prime Time*）中提出的觀點；並非是這些觀點有錯，而是我需要提出另一類問題。我已經研究了意識形態的問題，並且認為媒體通過將自身的意志施加於人們的認知過程而作用於社會。但後來，我逐漸相信大眾文化的意識形態並非解釋人們生活的唯一途徑。

我開始思考被忽視了的與人類情感相關的因素。最重要的並非我們要從媒體學習甚麼，而是媒體如何影響人們產生各種慾望的情感。這些情感是可隨意支配的情感，淺情感——很快產生也很快消逝的情感。從這種意義上說，研究大眾文化的首要問題就不再是它所傳遞的意識形態資訊是甚麼，而是為甚麼會有這些資訊傳遞出來。為何我們總是陷於媒介激流之中？為何現代性對大眾文化求之若渴？這種需求對人們的影響如何？我開始對媒介現象學(phenomenology of media)感興趣，對人們的媒體經歷感興趣。對這些問題我有了一些直覺，並開始反思馬歇爾‧麥克盧漢關於媒介與人神經系統的宏大猜想。我產生了一些關於人類情感和感官在現代社會中的作用的看法。我開始對社會學家感興趣，並且首先研究了德國社會學家Georg Simmel關於日常生活的現象學。基於這些興趣和研究，我在 2002 年出版了 *Media Unlimited*，這是我最後一本充分思考媒介環境的書。這大約就是我所從事媒介研究的軌跡了。一路走來，我寫了不少評價媒體的文章，比如影評、評價新聞事件的報導、戰時的大眾文化以及其他許多與媒介相關的題目。伴隨我時間最長也最吸引我的是，人們是如何定論媒體、如何體驗媒體的。這也是我現在一直在研究的問題。

HY：社會對您冠以很多稱謂，包括學者、（政治）作家、社會學家等等。其實，您也在研究媒介和傳播，你在〈媒介社會學〉(1978) 一文中，立場清晰地批判了主流傳播研究。您為何自稱為社會學家而不是傳播學者？或者說，您如何看待傳播學科？到目前為止，關於傳播學是不是一門學科仍有爭議，有人認為傳播只是我們須要研究的跨學科的社會現象。例如在英國，學者們從未認為傳播

是一門學科,您如何看待這個重要問題?

TG: 我不認為傳播本身是一門學科,我認為它是一個領域(field),因為傳播是人們生活在這個世界上的一種方式。人們的文化和社會生活須要從許多方面去考量,而傳播正是其中的一個方面。傳播應被理解為人們互動的一種形式;正如哲學假設中所預測的那樣,傳播可以理解為隨歷史發展的文化形式和知識;傳播也是政治生活的一個要素,是人類(發展)的一個過程,也許是一個自然過程。沒有一個方法,甚至是一類方法是專屬於傳播學的,而我認為需要有一個方法。對我而言,傳播是一個研究對象。因此它不僅是跨學科(inter-disciplinary),而且是超越學科(trans-disciplinary)。傳播研究有一個優勢,我們可以廣泛利用各學科而不被局限在任何一個或一類學科中。像其他一些學科一樣,傳播研究在不同時期也有不同的範式佔據顯著地位。我的目標肯定不是要找到一個主導性的範式。我認為(傳播學)這個領域不存在一個核心範式。傳播研究的是人類的傳播和溝通。研究問題的多樣性決定了我們要理解不同的方法以支撐不同的研究。

HY: 還想請您談談美國傳播學批判學派的思想。自上世紀六十年代起,很多學者例如席勒(Herbert Schiller)在主流傳播學之外發展了批判傳播學。美國學者在批判傳播學方面取得了怎樣的成就?現狀如何?未來批判傳播學在媒介研究方面的研究議題可能會有哪些?

TG: 從某種意義上說,席勒以及他的同僚們不懈地提醒我們(資本主義的)傳播媒介服務於商業和國家利益。他們將傳播研究帶出了迷霧境地。他們提醒人們政治和經濟結構締造了媒介運作的框架,這是席勒等人的貢獻。但是從另一方面來看,他們的批判還不夠,他們沒有重視到人們是生活在文化環境中的。他們(指席勒等人)以馬克思主義經濟基礎/上層建築理論為前提的思維是機械化的。我認為這種對媒介的批判觀點是不充分的,也不可能解釋我所關注的問題:為甚麼我們的生活如此離不開傳播媒介?我明白他們的觀點對於我們研究媒介機構非常有用,但是我不是一個功能主義者(functionalist)。人類的經歷也是很重要的。這些經歷

值得我們關注、描述、分析及熟練掌握,並從不同的途徑去研究。我關注的是媒介在人們生活中的結構。是的,我非常理解媒介的發展很大程度上取決於資本家的興趣、對廣告商提供的服務等等。但為甚麼人們會那麼歡迎、喜愛甚至是對媒體行業提供的東西如獲至寶呢?這是須要解答的問題。我們需要更複雜、更全面並且思路更開放的方法去研究人們生活中的媒介。

HY: 文化研究與傳播政治經濟學方法起源於英國,而符號及文化的媒介研究產生於法國。在美國,也許您是媒介批評社會學的代表人物之一。您是否可以總結一下,媒介研究的批判社會學方法與其他方法的重要區別?

TG: 這是一個很有意思的問題。我在 1978 年出版的《媒介社會學》中提出對當時存在的方法有所質疑的原因。但我必須繼續去探究我們還須要做甚麼,而不僅僅是批判已有的研究成果。這是最基本的要素:媒介是社會生活的一部分。媒介是由人構成的組織,在媒介機構工作的人有他的動力,於是會被召喚去參與到媒體製造者的世界中去。這就是為甚麼人類學和深度訪談的方法會得以被運用。這些方法試圖重新敘述歷史事實,試圖理解一篇文章是如何寫成,一部電視劇或電影是如何製作的。對我而言,我的媒介社會學方法一直着眼於制度化以及這些作品的作者們的活動、技術、動機以及風格。

我的(媒介社會學)方法的第二個要素是關注那些運用媒介、沉浸於媒介當中的人們的生活,它和第一個因素同等重要。媒介是人們生活的組成部分,這就使得研究心理學、現象學成為必需。如韋伯(Max Weber)所提出的 *Verstehen*(理解)的概念,我們必須設身處地的想像,並試着去理解媒介對於人意味着甚麼。因此,(媒介研究)批判學派的第一要素是研究媒介對於媒介內容生產者意味着甚麼,第二要素是研究它對於媒介使用者意味着甚麼。對我來說,還有第三個要素。我認為媒介研究不能忽視操縱這個世界的最強大的力量。我不想局限於僅研究媒介行業。我希望把媒介行業作為一整個體系的一部分,這個體系中還包括金融行業、國家的和全球化的內部關聯的力量。換言之,媒介研究不

應當局限於研究媒介，這正是我提出批判社會學方法的用意所在。

HY: 目前，網絡和線上社交媒體不僅正在影響傳播學的研究，也改變了整個社會科學的研究。我們知道他們改變了我們的研究議題。您在這方面有何預見，或者說如何理解未來媒介研究的議題和趨勢？

TG: 我認為媒介的地位始於人們的認知。順便提一下，這個觀點並非我原創。我想這個觀點是由英國學者 Richard Hoggart 和 Raymond Williams 演繹來的，他們兩位是文化研究的真正奠基人。使用媒介的人的生活也包括沒有媒介捲入的一面。也就是說，媒介生活只是這些人生活的一個維度。被媒介陪伴的人同時也生活在媒介之外。在研究過程中，我們應該同時兼顧這兩方面。我的一個總的傾向是，研究一定要盡可能的以整體化的 (holistic) 方式進行。我希望能夠理解，至少是推測出，媒介在人們生活中的位置。媒介與家庭生活，與遷徙、政治經歷、謀生手段、宗教信仰等問題的關聯是甚麼？這是我自己的一個方向。

HY: 您自己的研究議程是甚麼？

TG: 我的研究議程總是出乎我自己的意料。下一項研究是關於媒介在最近一系列社會動亂中的地位，包括麥迪遜、威斯康辛、突尼斯、埃及，以及「佔領華爾街」等運動。有趣的是，這些動亂涉及到社交媒體的深度運用，但同時面對面溝通對運動本身也至關重要。從開羅的塔利爾廣場的集會，我們可以清晰地看到這一點。人們通過 fackbook 群收到消息，於 2011 年 1 月 25 日來到塔利爾廣場，並投身到群眾示威遊行之中。這一事件既包括電子化的因素也包括物質化的因素——他們現身廣場並聚集在一起。顯然，這一點在「佔領華爾街」運動中也同樣有所體現。警察的驅逐阻撓了運動。「佔領華爾街」運動既非單純歸功於電子化網絡，也非純粹通過人際溝通就能形成，它是通過兩種溝通來促成的。

我在我的新書 *Occupy Nation* 中詮釋了這個觀點。我開始對「集會」現象感興趣，並視其為能為許多人帶來回報的互動形式。如果去觀察人們的集會和遊行，你會看到社交網絡的溝通將人們匯集到一起，但這時候很重要的經歷是人們在進行面對面的相互

交談和互動。對集會形式，我很感興趣的一件事是「佔領華爾街」運動者們所謂的「水平主義者」(horizontalist)。意即（佔領華爾街）運動建立在一個橫向網絡而不是縱向階級制度的基礎上。這一運動不能簡單歸納為電子化的維度或者面對面（溝通）的維度，它提出了一個政治學和哲學的問題。運動能夠自我維繫嗎？能夠（自我）成長嗎？

最近，我認為「集會自由」這個概念很有意思並開始研究它。美國憲法第一修正案中提到了四個權利：信仰自由、言論自由、出版自由和集會自由（的權利）。「集會自由」很少在法律文獻中被瞭解和討論，也很少有人去寫關於「集會自由」的東西。我認為「集會自由」是很重要的，它其實改變着這個世界。不論是在突尼斯、埃及、利比亞、敍利亞、西班牙或是希臘，人們對集會的渴望是充滿激情的。這是一種人類的深層次的渴望。但是，我們來看看當局是如何詮釋「集會自由」的，在美國，對集會的限制是非常苛刻的，甚至存在軍事化干預的手段。（人們）集會的權利被隨意地、武斷地剝奪了，政治當局也不會認真考慮人們的這一權力，就如同它只擁有一個附屬地位。換言之，國家有權利建立「言論自由區」，你可以在這個區域發表「自由言論」，但是你不能在這個區域之外的地方自由發表言論。這實際上是對集會自由的一個限制。當局決定集會是一項受限制的活動。我認為這是對集會自由的實質的否定，而「自由」這一實質是極其重要的。不管怎樣，這是我的一個研究設想。其實，集會自由這一主題本身就很重要。

HY: 感謝您與我們學刊的讀者分享您的見解。

托德‧吉特林著作選

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Academic Dialogue with Todd GITLIN

TG: Prof. Todd Gitlin
HY: Yu Huang

HY: **We would like you to describe your research interests and your political participation. We understand you were involved in many U.S. political movements. What are your experiences?**

TG: I was involved in the New Left movement throughout the 1960s, at a time when I didn't have any particular career ambitions. I didn't even anticipate working at a university. I simply moved from one political project to another, feeling my way. (This sort of life was pretty widespread in those years. There were many thousands of us who were willing to live without much income.) My experience in those years was so rich, complicated, and intellectually challenging, that after I went back to university to obtain a PhD, in 1974, I could fruitfully spend a lot of my time working with the material that had come before me in the New Left experience. In a sense, my political life was also the ground of my research. In the late 1960s, I thought of myself as a movement intellectual—an intellectual whose primary public was the movement itself. I wrote articles and essays for magazines and newspapers. I came to be interested in television when I sensed, around 1968, that television was a factor in political developments, however strange that seemed. I had read Marshall McLuhan in 1967 and was provoked by his thinking. I had a few rudimentary ideas about how television was playing a part in how we see the world. When I went back to university to pursue my PhD, in the mid-'70s, one of my professors suggested that I further develop an article I had written in 1968 about media and social movements. That became the framework for my dissertation, which I wrote in 1977 and later became my book *The Whole World Is Watching*. This was a departure from my original intention when I re-entered graduate school. I had at first intended to trace the history of the idea of scarcity and its impact on social thought, a project that nobody has undertaken since then. That was a rather grand and almost impossible idea, and I'm glad I abandoned it.

I always saw myself as someone who wanted to write for the public, in particular, a politically engaged public. Writing for the

public was my abiding aspiration. I didn't want to confine myself to sealed-off academic language, even after I decided to undertake professional studies in sociology.

As I looked into media as a field of study, I came to understand that they are present in so many ways, in so much of social life, that they could serve as a point of entry into a vast array of topics. By studying media, you could study everything in society and history. You could study the inter-connected universe of economic, social, culture, ideological, moral, and spiritual questions. You could use media as windows to a larger world. That's what I was looking for. In *The Whole World Is Watching*, the center was the interaction between media and a social movement. But I gave myself permission to roam a larger territory.

Having published*The Whole World Is Watching*, I then wanted to see if I could apply a similar framework—looking at the dynamic of interaction between those who produce media and those who have political commitment—to the world of entertainment. My next research project concerned how the Hollywood television industry compresses, directs, and channels political conflicts in society. Then I discovered I couldn't write how the TV industry processes political conflicts without understanding how the entertainment media industry worked in general.

The book I ended up writing about that is called *Inside Prime Time*. It went beyond my original interest in the domestication of political conflict. It turned out to be a general analysis of how the industry made decisions. There are still a few chapters addressing the question of domestication of political conflict, but the book turned out to be a more general industrial analysis.

This piece of research turned out to be my introduction to the inner dynamics of cultural studies. It was very much an education for me. The world of Hollywood entertainment was more alien to me than the world of movement politics. I didn't start with the same quality of intuitions based on my own experiences. I started learning from zero, and that was extremely interesting for me.

Over the years, I would say through the mid-eighties into the nineties, I became increasingly dissatisfied with the line of argument that I had developed to that point. This is not to say it was mistaken, but I needed to ask a different question. Up to that point, I'd been

looking into questions of ideology, assuming that the media work by impressing themselves onto people's cognitive apparatus. Over the years, I became persuaded that the ideology of popular culture is not the only way in which it makes itself manifest in people's lives.

I came to think that the missing element has to do with human emotion. The most important thing about media was not the lessons that were to be learned. What was more important was how the media affect people's desire to have certain kinds of emotions. These emotions I came to think of as disposable emotions, shallow emotions—emotions that arise quickly and then vanish. In that sense, the most important question to ask about popular culture was not what its ideological message is, but why there is so much of it. Why are we embedded collectively in a torrent of media? Why does modernity want so much from popular culture? What does it do for us? I became interested in the phenomenology of media. I became interested in the experiences people have with media. I had a few intuitions about them and tried to rethink Marshall McLuhan's grand assumptions about the relation between media and people's nervous systems. I incubated some ideas about the place of emotion and sensation in the modern world. I became interested in sociologists, starting with the great German Georg Simmel, who studied the phenomenology of everyday life. From that came that book *Media Unlimited*, which was published in 2002, my last substantial piece of thinking about the media environment. That is more or less my trajectory in media studies. Along the way, I've written many appraisals of particular media, such as films, coverage of news events, popular culture in wartime, and many other media-related topics. The ideas that have stayed with me the longest, and appeal to me as the most central, are ideas of what people make of and how they experience media. Those are the ideas I work with now.

HY: You are an intellectual, a political writer, a sociologist, and so on. At the same time, you also studied media and communication. In 1978, in *Media Sociology*, you sharply criticized mainstream communication research. Why do you call yourself a sociologist, rather than a communication scholar? In another way, how do you view the communication discipline? So far, it is controversial whether we should establish communication as a discipline. Or is

communication still an inter-disciplinary social phenomenon we enter to study? In the UK, for instance, scholars do not regard communication as a discipline. They prefer people to use different approaches to study it. How do you view this big issue of our field?

TG: I don't think that communication can be a discipline of its own. I think it is a field, because communications are a mode in which people are acting in the world. Cultural and social life should be understood in many dimensions, of which communication is one. Communication should be understood as a form of human interaction, as predicated on philosophical assumptions, historically evolving cultural forms and knowledge, as an element within a political life, as a human process, perhaps as a natural process. There is no single method, or even a group of methods, that is distinct to communications. I think there needs to be one. To me, communication is a subject. So it's not only inter-disciplinary but also trans-disciplinary. It is a privilege to use a wide range of disciplines, but we need not be confined to any or even a group of them. There are, as in other fields, paradigms that assume prominence at different times. It is certainly not my objective to move toward a master paradigm. I don't think there is a central spine to the field. Communication is the study of humans communicating. There are many varieties, requiring many different methods and underpinnings to understand.

HY: **I would like to ask you more about the critical school of thought of communication in the United States. In the past years, since the sixties, many scholars, such as Schiller, developed critical studies vis-à-vis mainstream communication studies. What kind of achievements have U.S. scholars obtained? What is the current status and possible future research agenda for a critical scholar in terms of media studies?**

TG: In some way, Schiller and his group did something important when they reminded us consistently that communications media are accountable to commercial and state interests. They brought communications studies out of the cloud that they shouldn't have been in. They reminded us that there were political and economic structures that created a framework within which media operated.

That was their value. On the other hand, Schiller and his group were not critical enough. They didn't take seriously that people live in culture. They had a mechanical idea, premised on an old-style Marxist base/superstructure division. I think this is an insufficiently critical idea about what media are and cannot possibly address the question that interests me, why we are living so much of our lives with media. I understand how it benefits media institutions that we do so. But I am not a functionalist. The experience of human beings matters. It's worth attention, description, analysis, proficiencies, approaching in a number of ways. It is the texture of life that people have with media that gets my attention. Yes, I understand very well the foundation for much of the development of media rests on capitalist interests, services to advertisers, and so on. But why is it that people welcome, like, and even cherish these offerings from the media industry? This remains to be explained. It requires a more comprehensive, more thorough, and more open-minded approach to how people live with media.

HY: The United Kingdom developed a political economy approach and cultural study for media, while France also formed semiotics and culture studies of media. In the United States, you are one of the representatives of critical scholars for media sociology. Can you summarize the distinct feature of the critical sociological approach to study media?

TG: I suppose I am thought of that way. But it is an interesting question. What I provided in *Media Sociology* (1978) were reasons to be skeptical about the existing approaches. I had to move on from there to what ought to be done, rather than simply confining myself to criticism of work already done. This is elementary. Media are part of social life. There are human institutions. People who work in media have motivations, and one is therefore called upon to try to enter into the worlds of the people who produce media. This is where ethnography and interview come in, attempting to reconstruct historical fact, trying to understand how a certain article got written, how a certain television [program] or movie was produced. To me, my approach to the sociology of media is always looking at institutionalizations and the activities, the techniques, the motives, the styles of people who actually produce artifacts.

The second element of my approach is to be equally interested in the life-world of the people who are using media, who are immersed in media. Media is an element of living that entails psychological elements, phenomenological elements. One has to enter into an imaginative way, if I can use Max Weber's term, of *Verstehen*, trying to understand what media are to people. Thus, what media are to the producers is the first component of the critical study. The second critical component is what media are to the people who are the holders or the users of media.

There is a third element that also matters to me. I never wanted a study of media to be completed without considering the biggest forces operating in the world. I don't want to confine myself to media industries. I want to look at media industries within an ensemble that includes financial industries and forces of national and globalized inter-connection. In other words, I don't want the study of media to be confined to media. This is what I mean by a critical sociological approach.

HY: Nowadays, the Internet and online social media are not only transforming our studies of communications but also changing the entire social sciences. We know it transforms our research agenda. What is your predication for, or understanding of, the future media research agenda, the trend in research?

TG: To me, media's place begins with recognizing people. By the way, this is not a thought original to me. I think it derives chiefly from the British scholars Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, really the founders of cultural studies. People who use media are also living their lives, which are not completely involved with media. That is to say, the life with media is a dimension of life. The people who live with media also live outside media. We should always try to remember one when we study the other. That is my general bias, which is to view general humans in as holistic a way as possible. I want to try to understand, at least to speculate on, the place of media in their total lives. What is their connection with family life, with migration, political experience, their ways of making a living, attitudes toward religion? This is my own orientation.

HY: What is your own research agenda?

TG: My research agenda always surprises me. The next item on my research agenda is the place of media in the recent upheavals, including Madison, Wisconsin, Tunisia, Egypt, and so on, up to "Occupy Wall Street" here. There is something interesting here. These upheavals involve intense use of social media, but also, crucially, face-to-face communication. You can see this most clearly in the gatherings in Tahrir Square. People receive a message through a Facebook group, go to Tahrir Square on January 25, 2011, and proceed to immerse themselves in public manifestations there. The event consists of an element that is electronic and another element that is material—they are in the square together. Obviously, that was also true in the case of the "Occupy Wall Street movement" here, and the police evictions from public spaces set the movement back. The movement cannot be contained within the electronic networks or within inter-personal spheres. It operates through both.

I developed this idea in my latest book *Occupy Nation*. I became interested in the phenomena of assembly as a form of interaction that obviously has proved rewarding to many people. If you look at people's gatherings and mobilizations, you can see there are network communications that bring people there, but then there is a quality of experience taking place there when people are talking face-to-face, talking with each other, interacting with each other. One thing I am interested in the form of assembly the "Occupy Movement" calls horizontalist. That is to say, it is built on lateral networks and not hierarchies. It cannot be reduced to either the electronic dimension or the face-to-face dimension. It offers a political challenge, and a philosophical one. Can it sustain itself? Can it grow?

I became interested in the concept of the "Freedom of Assembly," and I am doing research on this now. The First Amendment [of the U.S. Constitution] mentions four rights, the freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly. Assembly is little understood or discussed in the legal literature, and there is very little written about it. I think it is extremely important. It actually moves the world. The desire to achieve assembly, whether in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Spain, or Greece, is something that many people feel passionately about. It is a deep human desire. Yet if you look at how the authorities address it, the infringements upon assembly are very severe now in the United States. There is a militarization in the

official approach. The right of assembly has been very casually and arbitrarily dismissed, and is not taken seriously by political authorities, as if it has only a derivative place. In other words, the state is entitled to establish "free speech zones." You can have "free speech" over there, but you cannot have it here. But that is an infringement of the freedom of assembly. The authorities decide that assembly is a confined activity. I think this is actually a denial of the spirit of freedom of assembly, which is extremely important. Anyway, that is my hypothesis. The subject of freedom of assembly is actually very important in its own right.

HY: Thank you for taking the time to share your views with our readers.

Selected Works by Todd Gitlin

Please refer to the end of the Chinese version of the dialogue for Todd Gitlin's selected works.