



The Saturated Self: Dilemmas Of Identity In Contemporary Life

By Kenneth Gergen



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Today's ever-expanding communications technologies force us to relate to more people and institutions than ever before, challenging the way we view ourselves and our relationships. This powerful and provocative book draws from a wide range of disciplines—from anthropology to psychoanalysis, from film and fiction to literary theory—to explore these profound changes in our understanding of self-identity and their implications for cultural and intellectual life.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"Social saturation" is Gergen's term for ordinary people living with constant change, bombarded by electronic messages, open to a vast range of personal relationships. Under this sensory assault, the self as a known entity breaks down and the post-modern woman or man, cast adrift in a world of limitless possibilities, advances from the "pastiche personality" to the energy vortex of the "relational self" ("the relationship replaces the individual as the center of human action"). This dizzying scenario is anchored by a discussion of "self-reflective" movies and TV shows (Woody Allen, David Letterman), coalescing artistic genres, anthropological comparisons, deconstructivism, with examples drawn from popular culture. Swarthmore psychology professor Gergen touches raw nerves, scrutinizing unmoored selves naked to experience in this highly stimulating, mind-expanding original work which dusts away the cliches surrounding that tiresome phrase, "the post-modern condition."

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About the Author

Kenneth J. Gergen, Ph.D., is professor of psychology at Swarthmore College. He is the author of, among other works, *Toward Transformation in Social Knowledge* (1982) and, with co-editor John Shotter, *Texts of Identity* (1989).

From The Washington Post

"Enlightening...a brilliantly argued though disturbing book that offers an intriguing explanation for some of the more maddening and puzzling aspects of contemporary life."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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