

學術對談

在宏大理論外思索電影研究

對談人：大衛·波威爾(David Bordwell)、葉月瑜

統稿：葉月瑜

翻譯：呂琛、彭侃



大衛·波威爾教授
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「電影理論是電影研究的重要組成部分，但對它的思考可以有很多種。我們一則可以認為它是取材自有關社會、政治、文化或人類心志理論的一套信念，然後再將這套信念應用到電影的特定領域，姑且可稱其為『宏大理論』，或可把它叫做一個空降方法。但如果我們將理論建構視為一種活動，一種以電影的普遍性所提出的問題的推演，我們可能會取得更大的進展。這種方式是從我們自身所熟悉的特定事物出發，然後在回答所提出問題的時候引入各種對立的框架。這是一種比較中間層面的方法，沒有失去理論構想，但運用的概念是緊緊圍繞電影的具體問題。」

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Moving Beyond Grand Theory: Thoughts on Film Studies

Discussants: David BORDWELL, Emilie Yueh-yu YEH

Editor: Emilie Yueh-yu YEH

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Abstract

David Bordwell, the most cited film scholar in English, Chinese, French, Danish and many other languages, has been a regular visitor to the Hong Kong International Film Festival since the early 1990s.

This year we had the opportunity to talk to him about the formation of film studies as a recognized academic discipline in the United States. We discussed the subject's later diffusion driven by the "grand theory" of psychoanalysis, structural linguistics, neo-Marxism, feminism, queer theory, and cultural studies in the humanities. Instead of paying heed to the top-down model of grand theory, Bordwell suggested we take a different approach and see it as an accumulative, "progressive" intellectual undertaking. This progressive undertaking organizes itself around a problem-based agenda that seeks answers to clarify key issues in film as a communicative and industrial enterprise.

Citation of this article: Yeh, E. Y. Y. (Ed.). (2011). Moving Beyond Grand Theory: Thoughts on Film Studies. *Communication & Society*, 18, 1–15 .

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大衛·波威爾教授簡介

大衛·波威爾(David Bordwell)是美國威斯康辛麥迪森大學的 Jacques Ledoux 電影研究榮休教授。作為當今世界最為多產、讀者群最多與最具爭議性的電影學者，波威爾以其對電影藝術精準的分析著稱，奠定了電影研究方法的基石。他更是認知學派的創始人，強調人類對活動影像的普遍接收過程，以抗衡以後結構主義主導的抽象後設的電影理論。波威爾的著述豐富，迄今已出版了18本著作和大量重要的研究論文，其代表性著作包括 *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (哥倫比亞大學出版社，1985年，與珍妮特·施泰格[Janet Staiger]和克莉斯汀·湯普森[Kristin Thompson]合著)、*Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (威斯康辛大學出版社，1996年，與諾埃爾·卡羅爾[Noël Carroll]合編)、*Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment* (哈佛大學出版社，2000年)、*The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies* (加州大學出版社，2006年)以及最新出版的 *Minding Movies: Observations on the Art, Craft, and Business of Filmmaking* (芝加哥大學出版社，2011年，與克莉斯汀·湯普森合著)等。其著作中已有13本被翻譯成各種外文出版，包括中文、西班牙文、法文、意大利文、匈牙利文、波斯文、斯洛文尼亞文、希臘文和土耳其文等。他與克莉斯汀·湯普森合著的兩本電影教科書 *Film Art: An Introduction* (阿狄森-衛斯理出版公司，1979年)和 *Film History: An Introduction* (麥格勞-希爾公司，1994年)，已成為世界上使用最為普遍的電影教科書。其中 *Film Art: An Introduction* 已出版九版，翻譯成十種語言，並被英國電影協會評為1980年以來出版的五本最佳電影書籍之一，*Film History: An Introduction* 已出版三版，翻譯成六種語言。在迄今40多年的學術生涯裏，波威爾教授憑藉其權威的研究和出色的教學工作取得了數不清的研究基金和獎項，例如，他是香港國際電影節首屆亞洲電影獎「亞洲電影卓越學術獎」的首位得主；他也受邀擔任諸多國際電影節的評委或顧問，包括香港國際電影節、上海國際電影節和溫哥華國際電影節等；而自2006年和克莉斯汀·湯普森一起開始寫作電影博客「電影藝術觀察」以來，波威爾教授也成為了互聯網上最有影響力的電影批評家之一。

YY: 葉月瑜

DB: 大衛·波威爾

YY: 您能簡要地回顧一下電影研究在美國的歷史嗎？

DB: 學術性電影研究於二十世紀六十年代晚期開啟，在大學部與研究所開設的電影研究課程同時起步。起初主要吸引的是來自於人文學科的學生，第一代研究生大部分來自文學、戲劇專業。由於電影研究課程的文學導向，教學和研究都較趨向於影片分析與闡釋。

YY: 之後的發展？

DB: 來自法國的結構主義、新馬克思主義、新弗洛伊德主義等思想浪潮很快地進入了電影研究，對理論的反思因此成為電影研究的尖端課題。女性主義、性別理論(包括酷兒研究)也在那時異軍突起。這些變化使得歷史影研究退居其次，而對個別電影的解讀也深深被理論觀念所塑造。

YY: 能否談談法國理論對電影理論構成更深層的意義？

DB: 電影理論是電影研究的重要組成部份，但對它的思考可以有很多種。我們可以認為它是取材自有關社會、政治、文化或人類心志理論的一套信念，然後再將這套信念應用到電影的特定領域。我們姑且可稱其為「宏大理論」，或可把它叫做一個空降方法。精神分析研究在電影的應用就是一個好的例子。它就是把弗洛伊德、拉岡等思想家的觀點以空降的方式應用到電影觀看體驗的領域。大多數精神分析理論的倡導者都不是從電影觀看體驗的具體層面出發，而是從一種先驗的思想出發，探究人的思維是怎樣運作的、「主體」是如何建構起來的等等。

YY: 所以電影理論的構成不應只有一種？

DB: 如果我們將理論建構視為一種活動，一種以電影的普遍性所提出的問題的推演，我們可能會取得更大的進展。這種方式是從我們自身所熟悉的特定事物出發，然後在回答所提出問題的時候引入各種對立的框架。這是一種比較中間層面的方法，沒有失去理論構想，但運用的概念是緊緊圍繞電影具體問題的。二十世紀八十

年代出現的認知電影研究，在我看來，就是源於電影理解中的特定問題（如觀眾怎樣理解電影敘述），然後再進行解答。

YY: 認知理論有效干擾了宏大理論嗎？

DB: 有趣的是因為精神分析那時統治着電影研究領域，認知電影研究也被逼變得更加辯證。面對精神分析派理論家對持不同觀點學派的漠視傾向，認知理論家們不得不努力證明他們的闡釋是更加準確或富有成效的。他們從特定的問題出發，不僅使研究結果更加精確，同時也強化了另類闡釋的意識。空降式的闡釋與精細分析之間的分野在其他學術潮流裏也很明顯。如對早期電影的研究最初顯現為一種焦點明確的實證性研究，所提出的具體問題聚焦於1920年代之前電影的形式、制度以及歷史沿革。但很快，與之相對的宏大理論，即文化研究取向出現了。它強調電影製作與電影接收中運作的各種勢力。學者們將注意力轉移到觀眾，以及觀眾的文化差異上。但他們的研究仍是在諸如現代、後現代、國族認同、後殖民主義等理念的宏大框架下進行的，而非專門針對電影。

YY: 空降模式為何歷久不衰？

DB: 在西方的大學裏，人文學科不鼓勵通過觀點相左的理論間的論戰來尋求對共同問題的最佳答案。這便是多元主義模式：不斷地增加問題，不斷地加入新的「方法」，只要這些方法有夠多的追隨者。所以研究電影的學者們不太會被逼面對一個他們很不適應的處境。交集還是有些。在二十世紀八十年代，實證歷史學家提心吊膽地將理論融入他們的研究項目中。之後，那些秉持宏大理論的學者們，尤其是文化研究的學者，也把歷史性資料帶入到自身的論述中。但總的來講，這兩種取向之間很少有富成效的方法論對話。

YY: 電影研究最近的一些發展如何？與八、九十年代有如明顯的變化？

DB 目前，我認為這些學術潮流並沒有銷聲匿跡，但對於很多研究者來講，研究對象卻發生了變化。所有這些不同的研究構架已不再局限於電影，也被應用到了電影以外的其他動態影像媒體中，如

電視、互聯網、電子遊戲等。有時候，新的理論，比如「跨媒體」的理論已經被用來解釋這些媒介模式和類型中影音資料的多樣性。當然，科技在電影研究(例如方法、對象和學術項目)的擴散中也扮演了關鍵角色。

電影研究最成熟的領域，如對早期電影的探尋，採用了經典式的學術研究模式。這種模式包括提出精心構建的解釋性問題，然後，通過實證研究(歷史的或分析的)或者理論反思回答問題。這個模式還會探討針對核心問題的各种答案，並指出這些答案的不足。但在我看來，這種思考在電影研究中仍不常見。像舊有理論總被新理論取代一樣，通過宏大理論對電影、媒體或歷史過程進行闡釋的方法也有隨時幻滅的危險。媒介研究因為對此類闡釋的強調，而常被批評只是備受學術潮流驅動，而不是做進取性的研究。所謂「進取性的研究」，是指建立在先前工作基礎上的研究，致力於重新思考或強化那些在某種程度上被證實可靠的問題與發現。我所說的「進取性」不是政治意義上的(雖然我完全贊成派系性的學術)，而是強調去比較、判斷各個闡釋的優缺點以及功能。

YY: 您認為與媒介和傳播研究領域有關的電影研究有甚麼特點？

DB: 我認為傳播學研究，至少在美國，仍然主要是一個實證學科。傳播學者們用內容分析、問卷調查和實驗的方法來瞭解社會環境中各種各樣的人類傳播。在研究電影或者其他媒介時，傳播學者們較傾向於採取量化的研究方法，對內容條目或實驗結果進行統計分析。媒介研究的學者們就不那麼實證和量化了，而傾向於更加人文和詮釋的方法。像我之前提到的，我想說大體上媒體研究是在將從電影研究和文化研究裏浮現出的各種視角轉而應用至其他媒體，比如電視或者網路。

YY: 您長期以來一直從事着亞洲電影的研究。您覺得亞洲電影與電影研究範式間的關係有怎樣的特點？

DB: 我認為之前提到的電影研究的範式都已經被應用到不同時期的亞洲電影中。其中有細緻的分析，比如我的關於小津安二郎(Ozu)、Don Kiriara關於溝口健二(Mizoguchi)的著作。也有宏大理論驅

動下的對電影及其趨勢的讀解，比如周蕾(Rey Chow)的著作。還有對電影創作者和電影傳統的女性主義，同志及其他基於性別身份的解讀，例如Andrew Grossman的*Queer Asian Cinema: Shadows in the Shade*。還可以在丘靜美(Esther Yau)及其他學者的論著中看到各種文化分析。此外，一些學者，如傅葆石(Poshek Fu)、Michael Curtin、張真(Zhen Zhang)，以及你和戴樂為(Darrell Davis)則將亞洲文化潮流與區域電影業的實踐聯繫起來加以研究。

YY: 照您這麼說，亞洲電影研究和英美電影研究的範式有個天然的關係？

DB: 一些人可能會認為我之前提到的源於西方文化的知識框架不適用於理解其他文化。但值得注意的是，很多從亞洲觀點出發或在亞洲工作的學者都應用了這些框架，雖然有時會做些修改以更加契合他們所探討的具體研究問題。中國也正日益受到關注。學者們基於中國的特殊情境，提出了很多與國族電影、類型研究和電影工業等有關的有趣問題。

YY: 您的*Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment* (港譯：《香港電影王國》，哈佛大學出版社2000，Irvington Way Institute Press, 2011)將香港電影推進了電影學術的版圖。現在這本書已經出到第二版。鑒於香港融入中國大陸的現實，很多人擔心香港電影的明天。對於您在書中描繪過的香港電影產業的未來，您怎麼看？

DB: 任何電影都不免經歷起落，香港電影也不例外。我認為香港電影已經歷了超乎尋常的繁榮期。從二十世紀六十年代中期到九十年代中期，香港生產了很多叫好又叫座的電影。兩種製片廠體制，一種是非常集中化的(邵氏兄弟)，另一種非常鬆散的(嘉禾)，以及一些並存的小公司，給了電影製作者很多的工作機會。其間，立足於製片廠的電影製作者，像成龍、吳宇森，與學院派出身的導演許鞍華、徐克齊頭並進。同時，區域市場的繁榮以及一些西方發行管道如電影節，藝術院線等的發展，為香港電影帶來了很多機會。

今天，情況則大不相同了。很多關鍵人物離開了電影圈或者

移民國外。每部電影獨立運作的專案模式取代了製片廠體系，依賴於精力充沛的製片人去彙集劇本、演員、導演和其他元素以迎合市場，特別是中國大陸市場。老一代的八十年代電影製作者，像吳宇森、徐克，也不得不適應這種模式，但有時成功，有時並不成功。一個獨特的生存策略是像銀河映像公司那樣專注於本地觀眾和地區性觀眾，並通過電影節去吸引歐美觀眾。但是更通常的做法是把香港電影全面納入新的中國電影工業中。大陸的決策者通過對時機和策略的精確把握，得以控制了香港電影人進入大陸市場的門檻。

新的市場保證了大量的觀眾和很好的票房，但是也有一些弊端，比如說即便非常商業化的影片也會面臨更嚴格的審查和壓力。任何一個歷史學家都不應該試圖預測這個市場的未來，但是當我進行 *Planet Hong Kong* 中新的一章關於電影產業的研究時，我無法作出香港在地電影將會復興的結論。香港將有可能繼續出現一些有價值的電影和有才華的電影人，但是全面復興卻希望渺茫。我們恐怕再也看不到六十年代、七十年代和八十年代在香港運轉的成熟電影工業體系的復活。對中國而言，香港有很多人才和巨大的商業資本；但是在讓創造力全面發酵方面，中國政府的政策並非全然支持。中國政府會允許甚至推動電影產業必要的基礎建設和投資，但它是否能讓電影藝術家和觀眾找到一個共同立場，找到富有表現力、激動人心並可持續發展的電影和電視形式呢？

YY: 感謝您與我們學刊的讀者分享您的見解。

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本文引用格式

葉月瑜 (編) (2011)。〈在宏大理論外思索電影研究〉。《傳播與社會學刊》，第 18 期，頁 1-15。

Academic Dialogue with Prof. David BORDWELL

Moving Beyond Grand Theory: Thoughts on Film Studies

YY: Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh

DB: David Bordwell

YY: Can you briefly recap the history of film studies in the US?

DB: Academic film studies started in the late 1960s, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. It chiefly attracted students in the humanities, and most of the first generation of grad students came from literature and drama. Because of the literary orientation of the programs, teaching and research tended to concentrate on film analysis and interpretation.

YY: What were the subsequent developments?

DB: Fairly quickly, however, ideas from the French trends of structuralism, neo-Marxism, and neo-Freudianism came into film studies, and theoretical reflection became the leading edge of the field. Feminism and theories of gender, including queer studies, also came into prominence at this period. These changes had the effect of making historical research a secondary area, and the interpretation of individual films came to be heavily shaped by theoretical ideas.

YY: What are the deeper implications given the domination of these French theories?

DB: Film theory is an important component of film studies, but there are different ways of thinking about it. We can think of it as a body of doctrine that is derived from large-scale conceptions of society, politics, culture, or the human mind and then applied to particular aspects of cinema. Call this the “grand theory” or top-down method. A good example is the way that psychoanalytic studies of film, drawing on Freud, Lacan, and other thinkers, were applied in a “top-down” fashion to aspects of film spectatorship. Most proponents of those ideas did not start with particular aspects of cinematic

spectatorship but rather from a priori ideas about how the mind worked, how subjects were constituted, and so on.

YY: It seems that you have a different view toward the conception of theories in film studies.

DB: I think that we make more headway if we consider theorizing as an activity, a way of posing questions about more or less general aspects of cinema. That way we start with particular matters in which we have expertise, and then bring to bear rival frames of reference in answering the questions we set forth. This is a more middle-level approach, not bereft of ideas, but using concepts that are tightly contoured to particular questions about films. The cognitive film studies that emerged in the 1980s, it seems to me, started from particular problems of filmic comprehension (such as, how do viewers follow film narratives?) and then proposed answers.

YY: Has the intervention of cognitive theory been effective?

DB: Interestingly, because psychoanalytic accounts then dominated the field, cognitive ones were forced to be more dialectical. Cognitive theorists had to show that their explanations were more precise or fruitful, while psychoanalytic theorists tended to ignore rival accounts. Starting with particular problems not only yielded more precise results but also sharpened the sense of alternative explanations. This splitting of paths between top-down and fine-grained accounts was evident in other trends. The study of early cinema emerged as a tightly focused empirical enterprise, posing precise questions about cinematic form, institutions, and historical change in pre-1920 film. At the other extreme, there soon emerged another grand theory—cultural studies—which emphasized the vast forces at work in filmmaking and film reception. Scholars turned their attention to audiences and their cultural differences, but again within large-scale frameworks that were usually not specific to cinema, such as conceptions of modernism and postmodernism, or ideas of national identity, including postcolonial ones.

YY: Why this persistence of the top-down model?

DB: In Western universities, the literary humanities do not encourage

debates among rival theories in search of the best answers to shared questions. The model is pluralism: multiplying the questions and adding on new “approaches” as they gain a critical mass of adherents. So there was little chance that film scholars would ever be obliged to confront positions with which they were not comfortable. There was some crossover. In the 1980s, empirical historians nervously integrated theoretical ideas into their projects, and somewhat later grand theorists, especially those practicing cultural studies, brought historical information into their arguments. On the whole, the two extremes were seldom brought into fruitful methodological dialogue.

YY: What are the most interesting developments in film studies of late?

DB: At present, I think that these trends are still in play, but for many researchers the object has changed. Instead of concentrating on film, all these varied frames of reference have been applied to other sorts of moving-image media: television, the internet, videogames, and the like. Sometimes new theories, such as those of “intermedia,” have been constructed to account for the diversity of audio-visual materials across these modes or genres. Of course technology has played a key role in the diffusion of film studies in terms of method, object and academic program.

The most mature areas of film studies, such as inquiries into early film, have adopted the classic academic model of research. This involves asking a carefully framed explanatory question that is answered by either empirical research (historical, analytical) or theoretical reflection. This model also involves considering alternative answers to the central question and indicating how these rivals fall short. In my view, this sort of thinking is still not common enough in film studies. Interpretations of film or media by historical processes by means of grand theory risk becoming ephemeral as old theories are pushed aside by others. The emphasis on such interpretations exposes media studies to the criticism of being driven by intellectual fashion rather than progressive research programs. By “progressive” I mean inquiry that builds upon work that has come before, refining and sharpening the questions and findings that have proven reliable to some degree. I don’t mean progressive in a political sense (although I’m all for partisan scholarship) but in the sense of

attending to explanations that are compared and judged for their respective strengths, weaknesses and functionality.

YY: How do you characterize film studies in relation to the fields of media and communication studies?

DB: I think that communication studies, at least in the US, remains largely an empirical discipline. Communication researchers draw on content analysis, surveys, and laboratory experiments to understand all the varieties of human communication in social settings. If they work on film or other media, communication researchers tend to take a quantitative approach, using statistical analysis of items or experimental results. Media studies researchers tend to be more humanistic and interpretive and not so empirical and quantitative. As I've already mentioned, I'd say that by and large, media studies consists of transferring the various perspectives that emerged in film studies and cultural studies to other media, like television or the web.

YY: You have been working in Asian cinema for a long time. How do you see relations between Asian cinema and paradigms in film studies?

DB: I think that all the paradigms of film studies I mentioned above have been applied to Asian cinema at various times. We have close analyses, such as my book on Ozu, or Don Kirihiro's book on Mizoguchi. We have had readings of films and trends driven by grand theory, as in the work of Rey Chow. We have feminist, gay, and other sexual-identity-based interpretations of filmmakers and film traditions, such as Andrew Grossman's *Queer Asian Cinema: Shadows in the Shade*. Varieties of cultural analysis can be seen in the work of Esther Yau and many others. Several scholars, like Poshek Fu, Michael Curtin, Zhen Zhang, and you and Darrell Davis, consider Asian cultural trends in relation to the practices of the region's film industries.

YY: Is there a natural connection between the studies of Asian cinema and the paradigms of film studies?

DB: Some would argue that the intellectual frameworks I've mentioned, which originate in Western cultures, are inappropriate for understanding other cultures. It's therefore significant, I think, that

many scholars hailing from or working within Asia have adopted these frameworks, though they've sometimes modified them to fit the particular research questions they're pursuing. China, of course, is getting a lot of attention, and many interesting questions are being raised about national cinema, genre study, and the film industry in relation to China's specific conditions.

YY: *Your Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment* (Harvard University Press 2000, Irvington Way Institute Press, 2011) helped put Hong Kong cinema on the map of film scholarship. Now that it is in its second edition, many worry about the future of Hong Kong film given our integration with the mainland. Is there a future for the Hong Kong film industry that you elaborate on in your book?

DB: National cinemas typically go through strong and weak periods, creatively speaking, and Hong Kong film is no exception. I think that Hong Kong film had an extraordinary run. It produced many films of merit and interest from the mid-1960s through to the mid-1990s. Two versions of the studio system, one very centralized (Shaw Brothers) and one rather decentralized (Golden Harvest), synchronized with smaller firms to give filmmakers a lot of opportunities to work. Over the same period, the studio-based filmmakers, like Jackie Chan and John Woo, were paralleled by directors who came out of film schools, like Ann Hui and Tsui Hark. At the same time, the opportunities were enhanced by the vigorous market for Hong Kong film in the region and in some Western venues, such as festivals and art house releases.

Today, most of those conditions don't remain. Many of the key players have left the field or emigrated. Instead of a studio system, there is a packaging model that works film by film and depends on energetic producers assembling scripts, actors, a director, and other factors into a mix that can fit into the market—specifically the mainland China market. Older filmmakers from the 1980s generation, like Woo or Tsui, have had to adapt to this, sometimes successfully and sometimes not. A unique survival strategy is that of Milkyway Image, which has managed to address local and regional audiences, and, through the festival circuit, even European/American ones. More common, however, is a general absorption of Hong Kong film into

the new Chinese film industry. The mainland decision-makers, through a mix of good timing and careful strategies, were able to control the terms under which Hong Kong filmmakers could enter their market.

The new market promises a large audience and a good box office return, but there are the drawbacks of greater censorship and pressures toward ever more commercial projects. No historian should try to predict the future, but when I was researching *Planet Hong Kong*'s new chapter on the film industry, I couldn't summon up much hope for a new flourishing of local Hong Kong cinema. Hong Kong will probably continue to bring forth some worthy films and talented creators, but the prospects for a broad rebirth look rather bleak. We probably won't be seeing anything like a reprise of the established industrial system that worked here in the 60s, 70s and 80s. As for China, it has considerable talent and commercial capital but the state has a mixed track record when it comes to letting creativity flourish. The state can allow and even facilitate necessary infrastructure and investment in the screen industry, but will it be willing to let film artists and audiences find common ground in the forms of film and television that are expressive, exciting, and sustainable?

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

Selected works by David Bordwell

Please refer to the end of the Chinese version of the dialogue for David Bordwell's selected works.