

學術對談

電視研究的前沿思索

對談人：托比·米勒(Toby Miller)、馮應謙

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翻譯：譚麗珊、張瀟瀟



托比·米勒教授

(Prof. Toby Miller)

「我認為人們在其思維中越來越多地把電視和其他媒體聯繫起來，這理應如此。我所擔心的是很多新媒體研究忘記或忽視電視，正如文學研究過去關注電影，現今關注互聯網，而未曾留意廣播或電視。在主題方面，我希望我們能認真審視電視機及節目生產的環境，並能夠致力於電視對環境生態影響的考察。」

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Dialogue

The Forefront of Television Studies

Discussants: Toby MILLER, Anthony Y. H. FUNG

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Abstract

This is the transcript of an interview with a distinguished professor in media and cultural studies, Toby Miller. He shares his views on the changing role of television and its relationships with other forms of communication media, the changing development of television viewership in different countries and the expansion of media giants in emerging markets. He suggests that despite the popularity of new media nowadays, television is still influential, and television viewership is still rising in some regions. At the same time, television is taking up new forms around the world whereas transnational television corporations might lead to new exploitation in developing countries.

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托比·米勒教授簡介

托比·米勒(Toby Miller)，生於1958年，是一位跨學科的社會學家，主要研究領域為文化研究與媒介研究。但其教學與研究範圍廣泛，涵蓋媒體、體育、勞工、性別、種族、公民權、政治、文化政策，全球荷李活(Global Hollywood)及電子廢物的負效應(adverse effects of electronic waste)。米勒曾撰編逾30本書，在100多本期刊上發表過文章。同時，他還經常出現世界各地的電視台、電台的節目中，擔任評論嘉賓。

米勒生於英國，長於英格蘭、印度、澳大利亞，於1980年取得澳大利亞國立大學(Australian National University)歷史與政治學學士學位，11年後，米勒拿到默多克大學(Murdoch University)哲學與傳播研究博士學位。在正式開啟學術生涯之前，米勒曾在廣播、銀行業和公共服務部門工作。進入學界後，米勒曾執教於默多克大學、格里菲斯大學、新南威爾士大學及紐約大學，擔任過英文系、社會學系、女性研究的教授，以及電影與視覺文化專案的負責人。從2004年7月起，米勒開始擔任美國加州大學河畔分校(University of California, Riverside)的全職教授，並從2008年12月開始主持該校新近成立的媒體與文化研究系至今。

米勒著述甚多，其中部分已被翻譯成中文、日文、瑞典文、德文、西班牙文和葡萄牙文等多國文字。其中《文化研究指南》(*A Companion to Cultural Studies*)於2006年被譯成簡體中文，該書以其百科全書式的題旨，對文化研究領域進行了生動勾勒，被譽為該領域值得信賴的指南，可將其列入「真正有用」的藏書之中。此外，米勒的著作還包括*Sportsex* (坦普爾大學出版社，2001年)、*A Companion to Film Theory* (布萊克威爾出版社，1999年，與羅伯特·斯塔姆[Robert Stam]合編)、*Global Hollywood* (英國電影協會/加州大學出版社，2001年，與尼汀·高威爾[Nitin Govil]、約翰·麥克穆瑞[John McMurria]及理查德·馬克思威爾[Richard Maxwell]合著)，以及*Contemporary Australian Television* (新南威爾士大學出版社，1994年，與斯圖亞特·砍寧安[Stuart Cunningham]合著)等。

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AF: 馮應謙

TM: 托比·米勒教授

AF: 在你的《文化公民：新自由主義時代的世界主義，消費主義和電視》一書中(*Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism and Television in a Neoliberal Age*)，你似乎認為大多數美國公民都意識不到或漠不關心政府支配、霸權和壓迫性的意識形態。你將這種「病徵」歸因於來自美國主要電視新聞、娛樂集團帶有偏見性的媒介呈現。你如何看待電視這一雖然傳統但仍然深具影響力的媒體？你是否依然悲觀地認為電視無助於思辨與民主進程？

TM: 這都是很好的問題。我傾向於不以心理學來推論社會現象、科技媒體或觀眾，因此我不會在這裏使用「病徵」一詞。至於美國公眾對政治的無知及保守，我的另一本書*Makeover Nation: The United States of Reinvention*曾推論其成因（俄亥俄州立大學出版社，2008）（該書並不聚焦媒介，同時在我寫的書中，它是少數我自己也喜歡的書之一）。我認為根本原因在於經濟下滑、移民上升及對宗教堅持等多種因素的長期勾連。這成為美國政治保守主義的核心緣由，同時也在於及美國民眾其生活方式對於軍國主義和帝國主義的依賴。軍隊很容易就成為年輕人最大的僱主，其存在被精心廣泛呈現以得到美國國會和選民的支持。要理解公民社會(Citizenship)，必須基於新教、五角大樓、及軍隊與國家之間微妙奇特的相對獨立，這樣的國家其實不是與民主同行，而是跟那些「為人民服務」的人同行。

電視體現了這些趨勢，而不是起因。同時，電視顯然會令情況更惡化。在*Cultural Citizenship*中，我曾解釋美國電視新聞蛻化為固步自封與民族主義。其原因在於政治經濟情境變遷，使得媒體所有權、規管發生改變，同時美國新聞質素低下：簡單陳腐的自由—保守對立、那些「他說/她說」的陳詞濫調、在對外政策上對政府信息來源的輕信依賴、對外國新聞機構的不信任，以及他們對充斥智囊團的失敗學者之外的知識分子的焦慮憤恨。

電視可以更好嗎？可以，但在現時美國監管制度下是困難的，主要原因是美國聯邦通信委員會對市場的過度重視，對古典經濟學的過於崇信及對內容和觀眾的忽視。一些有用的政治資訊在某些美國電視、特別是在卡塔爾的半島電視台上能看到，但在美國的有線電視和衛星電視上卻很難能看到。

曾經，美國本土主義者、歷史學家認為，二十世紀五十年代中期是媒介的「黃金時代」，因為那個時代的媒介呈現了現實生活中劇場的人際關係與規範。我看過一些那個時代的電視劇，簡直是無聊透了。對於美國的電視劇而言，現在才是一個黃金時代。例如，電視劇Dexter的質素、機智、嫺熟及諷刺都是有啟發性的。但是該劇只有在付費有線/衛星電視才能看到，對於它們，收視率並不重要，只需訂閱。這些劇集的財政支援，來自在同一頻道觀看拳擊節目的拉美裔和非洲裔美國觀眾。我很想看到一個新聞頻道嘗試同樣的事情，但不希望剝削工人階級來為其付錢！

AF: 你認為電視能夠重建你所提到的那種文化公民權嗎？即是，公民有知情權和言論自由！

TM: 另一個很好的問題！它可以是的。想一想GRITtv及半島電視台的電視節目。這些都是深具自我反思性同時又是外向型的替代性媒體，他們機智、嫺熟、國際化，並鼓勵公眾參與。除了這些舉措，我們也需要大學做他們在二十世紀六十年代為搖滾音樂做的事，就是將大學媒體系統（當時的電台）變成呈現本地和其他地區節目內容的替代性渠道。可以聯合主要的基金會籌劃，並有潛力成為全國聯網，以網絡為平台的大規模電視服務，同時以新聞及時事為重點。

AF: 你創辦了*Television & New Media (TVNM)*，並將它發展為該領域的主要期刊之一。從該雜誌的標題看出，你試圖將電視這一成熟媒介與融合中的新媒體連接起來。在一個2010年的公眾座談會上，你被問到電視是不是在11年前已是一個已死的媒體。你的回答似乎暗示了在世界許多地方，包括中國和拉美，電視仍然是一個重要的媒介，很多年輕人仍然與電視一同成長。你現在依然如此認為嗎？你怎麼去解釋收視率在香港等發達國家和城市的下降。

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TM: 多謝你對期刊寶貴的意見。經過以總編輯為首的大量艱苦工作後，TVNM已開始自己運作。

我不是一個研究香港的專家，我已經十年沒到過香港，我亦只能說英語。我須要看一些數字和定性數據去找出觀眾看的是甚麼、他們如何觀看，以及這些文本從何而來，然後再跟像您這樣的人交談，才可以推測香港的具體情況。

更廣泛地說，我的書 *Television Studies: the Basics* (羅德里奇出版社，2010) 提供了豐富信息反辯電視趨於滅亡論點。收視率在世界大部分地區都是顯著增加的。美國人看電視比十年前更多，比有網絡之前的時代每天多看一小時的電視。2007年，超過四分之一的美國人每天看電視超過三小時，而13%的人每星期觀看多過30小時，比2005年增長了5%。93%的成年人每天至少看一個小時的電視，但只有4%的人每天在網上看一小時視頻。在2008年的統計數據中，最顯著的變化就是人們看更多的電視來打發閒暇的時間。四分之三的人都曾上網看電視，但他們每個月看有線或衛星電視的時間是上網看電視的70倍之多。近20年來，6至14歲的兒童收看电视的情況以前所未有的速率增長；他們之中，69%的兒童在自己的臥室有電視，相比而言，只有18%的兒童有互聯網服務而49%的兒童擁有或訂閱可視遊戲。在2006年，2至11歲之間的兒童每星期看電視17.34小時，多於上一年。最熱衷的美國觀眾是年輕的女孩。她們也很喜歡新科技，並對新科技趨之若鶩，但情形正如The Tubes樂隊的經典老歌《電視為王》。1984年和1990年之間出生的人，更多通過電視而不是互聯網和手機來娛樂和獲取資訊。在6至11歲的兒童瀏覽的互聯網網站中，有一半是先得通過電視或平面廣告吸引兒童的注意力。對所有年齡階段的觀眾而言，電視都是最有影響力的廣告媒介。其影響力甚至大過網絡流行之前的時代。

在世界各地，相比十年前，現有數以千計的無線、有線電視和衛星電視台：俄羅斯有7,000多家電視台，據我的最新瞭解，中國有3,000家電視台，而整個歐洲聯盟有2,700家電視台。在經合組織國家中，有線電視和衛星電視網絡的數量從2004年的816增

至2006年的1,165，增長幅度為43%。在2007年，全世界有25億人平均每天看電視三個多小時。在放鬆管制後的十年，歐洲開闢了越來越多的商業電視台和小眾電視頻道，電視收視在數十個國家持續增長，就平均情況而言，觀眾們每天多看20分鐘電視。中國從1958年50部電視機增加至50多年後的五億多部電視機，這一切都在互聯網時代發生。

印度亦經歷了電視頻道、網絡及報紙的爆炸式增長。繁盛的印度電影業已經成為電視節目庫的一部分，大小電影明星進軍電視界，電視演員憑藉電視提高大眾曝光率，從而尋找大螢幕之路。想一想阿根廷，一個生活水平居全球平均線的國家，只有三分之一的家庭擁有電腦，其中又只有一半連接到互聯網。對於年輕人來說，電視是首選媒介。它擁有最大的信譽和使用率，到目前為止，每20個青少年中只有一個會以互聯網作為獲取社會和政治知識的首要渠道。在我所居住的墨西哥城，世界上最大的城市，電視顯然是主導。雖然約有2,500萬人如同我一樣聚集於墨西哥城，但全國人口的絕大多數住在農村，而大多數城市居民很貧窮。電視居於主導地位。互聯網，如同大眾消費和參與式公民權一樣，對大眾而言沒有意義。

電視亦在拓展其領域。世界上最大的零售連鎖企業沃爾瑪有自己的電視網絡，在美國其3,000多家分店內播放節目。有140家企業在沃爾瑪的六個電視頻道投放廣告，這一模式已被世界各地仿效。將互聯網與電視對立起來是令人匪夷所思的，其實互聯網使我們多了一種方式發送和收看電視，至少營銷專家和新自由主義的學者希望是這樣。我也認為，一旦人們不再通過電視機、手機、平板電腦、台式電腦等各種方式看電視，台式電腦和筆記本電腦消失的危險其實遠遠大於電視本身消失的危險。無論是作為機構，抑或作為電子設備，電視都在世界各地興盛發展。

AF: 你覺得甚麼是電視研究中最重要及最新的研究主題？在電視研究中有哪些新的分析工具？或者，我們在分析時下的電視劇仍然局限於運用舊的法則？

TM: 我認為人們在其思維中越來越多地把電視和其他媒體聯繫起來，

這理應如此。我所擔心的是很多新媒體研究忘記或忽視電視，正如文學研究過去關注電影，現今關注互聯網，而未曾留意廣播或電視。在主題方面，我希望我們能認真審視電視機及節目生產的環境，並能夠致力於電視對環境生態影響的考察。我與 Rick Maxwell 合著的書 *Greening the Media* (牛津大學，準備出版) 試圖做到這一點。我也希望媒介研究中政治經濟學，文本分析和受眾研究之間毫無意義的對立能就此消解。長期以來，很多出色的學者已經同時採納這三種路徑。也許這將成為規範，而不是落入不必要的對立。至於電視劇研究，仍然須要綜合運用這些方法。我可以舉一個多元研究電視劇的例子。

《24》是開播時間最長的美國間諜電視劇之一，並已在世界各地放映。在2009年，有一億人通過236個頻道經常收看該劇。僅僅出於這個原因，我們就須要了解它的觀眾、意義和它的生產和傳播。不同於現今佔據主流（質量簡陋）的真實電視，《24》作為高品質的電視劇而受到歡迎，並因其所提倡的一種存在主義哲學而受到讚賞。它塑造了一個對抗失信的強權機構的孤膽英雄，但一些批評者認為，《24》集中體現了美國人的恐懼。John Downing 稱它為「自911事件發生以來的情勢最為強化的電視反映」——對出於「公眾利益」而採取非法行動的公然鼓吹。《24》明確贊同通過折磨恐怖分子而獲取信息，該劇認可其主角 Jack Bauer 拒絕醫治一個已經被他打傷的恐怖分子，他還開槍打傷了另一個恐怖分子妻子的腿，然後威脅道若她的丈夫不招供，就要朝她的膝蓋再開一槍。在劇中，由於 Bauer 反覆念誦「不惜一切代價」，美國總統甚至容許向一位內閣成員施以電擊進行逼供。

該劇由共和黨人製作，它所塑造配角的原型是基於該劇在政界 (John McCain) 和新聞界 (Laura Ingraham 和 Larry Elder) 的意識形態一致者。《24》還得到屈膝於布殊政府的知識分子的背書，如聲名狼藉的學者 John Woo 將不人道的暴行予以法理合法化。該節目的創作者 Joel Surnow 為他「完美的右翼之作」而自吹自擂。傳統基金會，作為守舊的右翼智庫，曾召開記者招待會慶祝該劇描繪了時任國土安全局局長的切爾托夫，身為極端主義者的電台談話

節目主持人Rush Limbaugh宣稱當時的副總統切尼和國防部長拉姆斯菲爾德都是該劇集的觀眾。有時候，該節目甚至在實質上推廣了極端非法主義。來自West Point，一個美軍主要的軍事訓練基地的代表團訪問了《24》的製作公司，以表達他們對於該節目影響的焦慮。很多新入伍者因為受到這個電視劇的影響而對酷刑持有非法和不道德的態度。同時，調查人員的報告指出美軍施加於伊拉克戰俘的行為是受到《24》激發後對該劇的直接模仿，人權觀察組織也注意到同樣的情況。與此同時，如同許多Fox製作的節目，《24》的生產過程是無碳的，這是美國電視黃金時段的第一個無碳電視劇，從而節約能源。我們須要融合這些類型的知識來分析和理解電視節目。否則，我們會把它們的複雜性簡單化。

AF: 你是否認為電視的本質正在轉變？你會如何描述當下的新電視(new television)的特徵？它會如何影響我們研究電視的方式？

TM: 電視絕對是處於變化之中。電視發展始於無線電視，是全國性媒介，由國家支配；而今卻已變遷為有線和衛星電視，與互聯網相融合，成為國際性媒介，由商業支配。但同時，電視的發展也可以超越今天所發展的模式。在二十一世紀的俄羅斯，電視業重新採納國家所有制。而在英國，BBC憑藉避免商業化來爭取觀眾。

互聯網現正趕上電視，提供電視的高清畫質，如用Hulu、TV.com，iPlayer和Beoh，在網上轉播電視劇。僅在12個月之後，以30歲以上人群為廣告目標受眾的Hulu網成為全美排名第六的視頻網站。在線合法收看電視節目的美國成年人在2008年增長了141%。而在2010年1月，TV.com的觀眾增長了1,261%。網上收看比下載更受歡迎，因為它通常是免費和合法的。在13歲至54歲的美國互聯網用戶中，有五分之一現正觀看這些視頻網絡，從而在電視台播放新的一集前，可以重溫自己喜歡的電視劇。BBC的iPlayer一直是引人注目的成功。韓國的手機電視亦如是。廣告商湧向Hulu而不是YouTube。原因何在？原因在於Hulu是電視節目庫的一部分。

同時，我們嶄新的平板電視屏幕可能很快被拋棄，就像我們的舊屏幕。索尼(Sony)、三星、LG、東芝、聲寶(Sharp)及樂聲

(Panasonic)承諾播放電影，裝載提供氣象預報及股市價格的Yahoo!/Intel插件，以及裝載藍光影碟播放機(Blue-ray players)連接到網絡。這些公司所生產的電視機從過去優雅的清心寡欲變為無所不包的互動性。但先不談索尼和聲寶，即使是MySpace和Jupitermedia這樣的網絡巨頭，也堅持認為觀眾希望電視仍然是傳統的電視，增加幾個附屬功能就夠了。觀眾希望看到的是電視節目，有幾個互動元素便足夠。

在世界範圍內，顯而易見，互聯網吸引觀眾的能力在於採納可信的節目來源與形態：英國廣播公司（僱用很多受過良好訓練的記者，如同二十世紀時的情形一樣），YouTube（播放從電影、電視中「解放」出來的材料，如同二十世紀時的情形一樣），Wikipedia（其網站遵循的也是十八世紀時的形態）。本質上沒有甚麼真正是新的！

總而言之，正如NBC總裁Noran E. Kersta在1942年所言：「電視，在速度、準確性和安全性上可以超越其他任何傳播媒介。」他當年是對的，如今他依然是對的。電視在概念上成為互聯網與商業的藍本，正如它在形態上成為個人電腦的藍本。而初步跡象表明互聯網和電視互相促使對方改變。用微軟首席執行官Steve Baller的話說：「我們將看到電視變得更加豐富和互聯。個人電腦與電視之間的區分將會消解。」正如《財富》雜誌的新文章〈電視正在滅亡嗎？電視萬歲！〉所指，電視的勢力範圍正在拓展，靈活性在提升，受歡迎程度在不斷增加——其影響和吸納新舊媒體的能力不容忽視。

AF: 像Vicki Mayer的新書所提到的，有些學者指出在全球化的新電視經濟中媒體創意工作者呈現新的形態。你能否預見媒體工作者的變化帶來新的媒介內容，繼而促發資本主義與消費主義之間的新關係？

TM: 這是很難估量的。文化勞動的新全球化分工(New International Division of Cultural Labour/NIDCL)中最關鍵的部分通常是不可見的。或者說，這一分工遠離電視劇和所有電視節目生產的中心，除非涉及到戰爭或世界盃等事件的報導，只有在這些時刻，節目

生產的工具和參與力量才呈現為盛大景觀的一部分，從而可見。換句話來說，文化勞動通常隱於耀眼的明星光環之下不為我們所見。

文化勞動的新全球化分工，我們仍然可以看到由少數國家支配出口的嚴重情況。在 *Global Hollywood 2* (BFI, 2005 年) 和 *Television Studies: The Basics* 中提到的少數變化跡象在某種程度上會造成顯著差異。因此在中國之外，美國在事實上支配了全球所有兒童節目。在講西班牙語的拉美地區，墨西哥是 *Telenovelas* 電視劇的巨頭。當然，新興的亞洲中產和精英會給本土和國際電視施加壓力，訴求合乎自身品位的節目。但是這只會影響到國內或美國電視生產選角的某些部分而非文化勞動的新全球化分工。我想當我們研究電視或講授有關電視的課程時，我們必須強調一些電視的相關議題，不論我們是關注公共政策、文本、生產、消費還是後消費。這將使我們進一步意識到我們須將這些主題進行綜合考量。當你看電視的時候，無論你是通過甚麼裝置來收看的，其消耗的碳能影響都是巨大的。而每次當你通過手機或者平板電腦看電視的時候，你都成為某個生產鏈上的一部分，而這個生產鏈會牽涉到非洲浩大的內戰或亞洲剝削式的勞動關係。這些在我們討論電視劇的勞動過程之前就已存在。

AF: 電視劇出現已久。當然，文化研究學者總是宣稱，就電視和性別研究而言，電視劇能賦權女性但卻持續加載並強化有關性別的刻板印象。但這似乎很難有任何明確的答案。就你看來，目前是否有何重要發現讓學者們得以達成共識？

TM: 我認為文化研究領域的爭辯已超越了刻板印象，因為人們不再有個所謂正確的模式去表徵性別。自從十九世紀七十和八十年代出版於 *M/F* 的著作開始，這一點就已經很明晰了（這套著作，我大概還有完整的一套）。與此同時，爭辯依然存在於公共論壇、其他領域以及我們文化研究學者中，即是商權電視生產者所賦予的主體性，這須要瞭解有關觀眾年齡等方面的更多信息。內容分析總還是有其空間，甚至還有我們並不陌生的深度審視文本。與此同

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時，人們也總是可以說，觀眾並不必然按照文本所昭示的意義去理解文本並採取行動。

AF: 我知道你是一位批判性的學者。你如何看跨國電視機構在中國或其他發展中國家的角色？你認為他們確實給中國帶來了自由觀念，還是說他們帶來的卻是如你開始所談的霸權意識形態？例如，你是否認為中國版的《醜女貝蒂》電視劇能真正改變中國人的性別價值觀、審美及有關性的價值觀？

TM: 「批判性學者」的概念讓我感到困惑。這是傳播學研究裏美國式的兩分對立，就如同拉扎斯菲爾德在「批判研究」和「管理研究」之間所做的嚴格區分。我並不接受這種對立兩分。因為我的工作致力於在已存知識、社會運動議程，以及持久的不公之上進行建構；而不是建構在主題和方法上，去適應這種美國佬式的兩分法及其訓練學者的本質主義方式。一些機構，如國際傳播協會和美國傳播協會，有如此低的公共立場和專業意識不是沒有原因的。

因為我不懂相關語言，我不想揣測你方才所問的核心問題，你們才是這方面的專家。我的確認為這些電視劇的全球本土化及商業化是令人矚目的。國際主義能威脅保護主義。Albert Moran就電視模式做了很多研究，其中也有Anthony的重要貢獻。就你們的研究來看，似乎很難說文本形式能夠產生激進的社會影響。他們在必要的情況下本土化，但這並不意味着文本或生產方法上的進步主義。

隨着都市化進程與財富增加，性/性別的價值觀也在變化。雖然電視呈現的變化是引人注目，但電視呈現不過是對現實資本主義發展的一小部分的反映。如果你想瞭解長久以來這些張力是如何運作的，你最好去讀齊美爾有關女性、金錢和陌生人的著作，或者是威爾遜的 *Spinx in the City*，這比聽我談會更好。

AF: 你如何看待跨國媒介集團將其勢力擴展到中國和很多第三世界國家的現象？你覺得他們會否將同樣的消費主義和霸權（或不同於美國式的其他消費主義和霸權）滲透到這些地區？既然我們都意識到了這些跨國巨頭或資本所存在的問題，你認為觀眾對此是否已經做好準備？

TM: 同樣，由於我不瞭解這方面的情况，我想我不是這方面的專家，你比我知道得更多！我可以提供一些已在中國運作很長時間的媒體的例子，如華納在中國的合拍電影，還有蘋果一直在剝削中國的製造勞工。蘋果掌門人喬布斯的不幸逝世所引發的全球哀悼，遠遠超過了富士康公司的眾多受害者。

至於銷售方面，Andrew Ross 和一些人指出，外國公司滿懷期待他們在中國能夠賺取巨額財富，但卻未能實現這一點。歐洲、美國和日本現在的市場邏輯是通過彰顯的品牌消費來開拓中國客戶。營銷專家鼓吹說富裕起來的中國人，對現代化的生活設備沒有興趣——他們需要的產品要能夠在公共場合吸引競爭對手、熟人、朋友和家人的關注，而不是留於家中的消費。據說這些產品應當是汽車和珠寶，而不是家庭影院系統或起居室。但我懷疑，包括我自己在內的外國人缺乏足夠的知識，卻對此作無端的揣測。世界上充斥着講英語的白人男子，他們反覆地寫有關全球風雲國家的書籍和文章，他們告訴我們中國是未來，中國是獨特的，將會控制一切事物和所有人——或者反之不看好中國。有關這一主題的最新爭論，發生在 Martin Jacques 與 Will Hutton 之間，非常無聊，毫無新意可言。

AF: 感謝您與我們學刊的讀者分享您的見解。

托比·米勒著作選

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Academic Dialogue with Prof. Toby MILLER

The Forefront of Television Studies

AF: Anthony Y.H. Fung

TM: Prof. Toby Miller

AF: In your book, *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism and Television in a Neoliberal Age*, you tend to argue that many American citizens seem so unaware of and feel disinterested in the dominant, hegemonic and oppressive ideology of the government. You attribute this “pathology” to the biased performance of the country’s major TV news and entertainment corporations. How would you see this traditional, but still influential TV medium? Would you still hold the pessimistic view that TV would simply not contribute to the democratic process and deliberation?

TM: These are excellent questions. I tend not to psychologize social phenomena, technological media, or audiences, so I’d not use the term “pathology” in quite the way implied here. My wider thoughts on the reasons for US political ignorance and conservatism are in my next, less media-centric, book, *Makeover Nation: The United States of Reinvention* (Ohio State UP, 2008) (one of the few books I’ve written that I like). I argue there the cause is a long history linking economic downturns, immigration upturns, and religious adherence. This is the core element of US political conservatism, along with the dependence of huge swathes of the population on militarism and imperialism as ways of life. The military is easily the largest employer of young people, and its presence is carefully spread across the country to ensure support throughout Congress and in the electorate. Citizenship can only be understood in terms of Protestantism, the Pentagon, and a bizarre disarticulation between the military and the state, such that the nation is identified with those “serving” but not with democracy.

Television is an index of such tendencies, rather than a cause. At the same time, it clearly exacerbates the tendency. In *Cultural*

Citizenship, I explain the retreat of TV news into self-absorption and nationalism in the context of shifts in the political economy of media ownership and regulation alongside the poor quality of US journalism: its simplistic binarization of topics between liberal and conservative, its infantile “he said/she said” divorce-attorney patter, its credulous reliance on government sources on foreign policy, its antagonistic mistrust of foreign news organizations, and its anxious *ressentiment* against intellectuals other than the failed academics who populate coin-operated think tanks.

Can TV be better? Yes, but it’s difficult under the existing regime of US regulation, due to the Federal Communications Commission’s absorption with markets, epistemological devotion to neoclassical economics, and neglect of content and audiences. Some useful sources of political information are available on US TV, notably Al Jazeera, but it has had a hard road to hoe obtaining space on cable and satellite systems.

That said, nativist Yanqui historians blather on about the 1950s being the medium’s “Golden Age,” because it resembled the proxemics and norms of live theater. I’ve seen some of that era’s drama and been bored out of my mind. In terms of drama on US TV, *this* is a Golden Age. The quality, wit, sophistication, and irony of *Dexter*, for instance, is constantly inspiring. But that’s all about premium cable/satellite, where ratings do not matter, only subscriptions, and the viewers of such series have their tastes buttressed financially by Latinos and African Americans who pay to watch boxing on the same channels. I’d love to see a news channel try the same thing—but hopefully not doing it by exploiting the working class to pay for it!

AF: Do you think that TV is able to reconstruct the kind of cultural citizenship that you mentioned? That is, citizens have the right to know and speak!

TM: Another excellent question! It can, yes. Consider GRITtv (<http://grittv.org/>) and Al Jazeera’s media show (<http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/listeningpost/>). These are self-reflexive yet outward-looking alternatives that are slick, sophisticated, international, and participatory. Alongside such initiatives, we need universities to do what they did for rock music in the 1960s—turning college media systems (in those days radio) into alternative venues for presenting

material made locally and elsewhere. This could be done in accord with major foundations. It would make for a great, potentially nationally-linked, television service over the web with news and current affairs a focus.

AF: You founded *Television & New Media* and developed it into one of the major journals in the field. As I can tell from the title of the journal, you attempt to link up the established medium of television with the converging new media. In a public exit interview in 2010, you were asked whether TV was a dead medium 11 years ago. Your answer seems to suggest that in many parts of the world, including China and Latin America, TV is still an important medium, and many young people still grow up with television? Do you still believe that is true? How do you account for the declining viewership of TV in developed states and cities such as Hong Kong?

TM: Thank you for your kind comments on the journal. After a lot of hard work, mostly by its managing editors, *TVNM* began to run itself. I am not an expert on Hong Kong—I haven't been there for a decade—and only speak English among its relevant languages. I'd need to look at the figures and the qualitative data, find out what people watched, how they watched, and where these texts came from, then talk to people like you in order to hazard a guess on the SAR's specificities.

More broadly, my book *Television Studies: The Basics* (Routledge, 2010) offers a wide array of information to counter claims that TV is dying. Viewership is increasing massively in most parts of the world. The US population watches more television than a decade ago—an hour more than in that basically pre-web era. In 2007, over a quarter of the population said they watched more than three hours a day, while 13% watched more than thirty hours a week, up five points from 2005. Ninety-three percent of adults watch at least an hour of TV a day, but just 4% watch an hour of video online each day. In 2008, the statistically most significant change in how people passed their leisure time was the increase in television watching. Three-quarters of people have experienced TV online—but spend 70 times more each month viewing it through cable or satellite. Children aged 6 to 14 tune in at rates unprecedented for twenty years; 69% of them have sets in their bedrooms, versus 18% with Internet access and

49% owning or subscribing to video games. Children between 2 and 11 devoted 17.34 hours to television a week in 2006, an increase on the previous year. The keenest US viewers are young girls. They quite like new technology, and adopt it at a frenetic pace—but “TV is king,” in the words of the old song by the Tubes. People born between 1984 and 1990 choose TV over the Internet and the cell phone for both entertainment and information. Half the Internet sites that children aged between 6 and 11 visit, first attract their attention through advertising on television or in print. Right across the age spectrum, TV is the most influential advertising medium. Its influence is greater than during the pre-web period.

Worldwide, there are thousands of broadcast, cable, and satellite TV stations by contrast with a decade ago: over 7,000 in Russia; 3,000 in China last I looked; and 2,700 across the European Union. In OECD nations, the number of cable and satellite networks increased from 816 in 2004 to 1,165 in 2006—43% growth. In 2007, 2.5 billion people averaged over three hours a day watching television worldwide. In the decade since deregulation opened up TV in Europe to more and more commercial stations and niche channels, viewing has consistently increased, across dozens of nations, by an average of twenty minutes per day. China went from fifty sets in 1958 to over 500 million fifty years later and all of this in the Internet era.

India is seeing an explosion of TV channels and networks, and newspapers. The vaunted Indian film industry has become part of the televisual warehouse, with big and little stars alike charging towards television, and TV actors brokering their way into cinema through mass exposure. Consider Argentina, a country on the cusp of the Global North and Global South in living standards. Only a third of households have computers, and half of those are connected to the Internet. For young people, television is the preferred medium. It boasts the greatest credibility and use, by far—just one in twenty adolescents privilege the Internet for social and political knowledge. In Mexico, where I live, is the world’s biggest city, and TV is clearly dominant. Although maybe 25 million people jostle alongside me in the Distrito Federal, the vast majority of the country’s population is rural, and most urban dwellers are poor. TV rules where it is available. The Internet is irrelevant to many, just like mass

consumption and participatory citizenship.

Television is expanding the venues where it is seen, as well. Wal-Mart, the world's largest retail chain, has its own network, broadcast over 3000 stores in the US. One hundred and forty corporations advertise on its six channels, and the model has been emulated around the world. It's odd to see the Internet in opposition to television; rather, it is one more way of sending and receiving it. Marketing gurus and neoliberal academics might wish it were otherwise. Once people stop watching programming produced for TV on television sets, phones, tablets, or computers, will also change my opinions. The desktop and laptop are much more at risk of disappearing than the TV right now. As both an institution and an object, it is growing virtually everywhere.

AF: What are the more important latest and upcoming important themes in TV studies, as you conceive? What new analytical tools are available in TV studies? Or, are we merely applying the old principles to the analysis of more recent TV drama nowadays?

TM: I think people are increasingly tying TV to the other media in their thinking, as they should. My concern is that a lot of new media studies forgot TV, or dismissed it, rather as literary studies went to film, then the Internet, without paying heed to radio or television. In terms of topics, I hope we are turning towards a serious examination of the conditions under which TV sets and programs are produced and that we are capable of engaging with the environmental impact of television. My book with Rick Maxwell, *Greening the Media* (Oxford UP, in press) seeks to do this. I also hope that the disabling opposition between political-economic, textual and audience approaches breaks down. Many able scholars have drawn on all these approaches for a long time. Perhaps that will become the norm rather than folks falling into unnecessary antagonisms. As for work on TV drama, there still needs to be an integration of these methods. Let me give an example of such a multi-faceted approach.

24 was one of the longest-running spy Yanqui television shows and has been screened around the world. In 2009, one hundred million people were regularly watching it across 236 channels. For that reason alone, we need to know about its audiences, its meanings—and its conditions of production and distribution. 24 was welcomed as a return of high-quality drama that runs counter to the

hegemony of reality television, and celebrated as a grand piece of existential philosophy, because it foregrounds a solitary figure battling untrustworthy institutions. But for some critics, it represents *la suma de los miedos americanos* [the sum of American fears]. John Downing has termed the show “the most extended televisual reflection to date on the implications of 9/11”—an egregious argument for illegal action in the “public interest.” 24 clearly endorses torture as a means of extracting information from terrorists: it’s fine for the protagonist Jack Bauer to deny medical assistance to a terrorist whom he has wounded, shoot another’s wife in the leg, then threaten a second shot to the knee unless her husband confides in him; and fine for the US President to subject a Cabinet member to electric shocks to interrogate him, as Bauer endlessly intones “Whatever it takes.”

Produced by Republicans, it featured cameos by their ideological *confrères* in politics (John McCain) and the news media (Laura Ingraham and Larry Elder) and was endorsed by the intellectual lackeys of the Bush regime, such as the disgraced academic John Woo, who wrote legal justifications for inhumane brutality. The show’s creator, Joel Surnow, boasts of being a “right wing nut job.” The Heritage Foundation, a reactionary, coin-operated think tank, held a press conference to celebrate the series that featured Michael Chertoff, then the Secretary of Homeland Security, and extremist talk-radio host Rush Limbaugh, who announced that then Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld were fans of the program. Sometimes extreme illegality took the program too far even for its fellow-travelers: a delegation from the US military’s major officer-training site, West Point, visited 24’s producers to express anxiety that many military recruits had adopted illegal and immoral attitudes to torture based on their interpellation by the series, while interrogators reported a direct mimesis between the show and actual practices in Iraqi prisons by US forces inspired by the show. Human Rights Watch also weighed in. Thank heavens for Stella Artois’ Godardian spoof of the show (guardian.co.uk/media/video/2009/mar/23/stella-artois-viral-ad). At the same time, like many Fox productions, 24 was carbon-neutral—the first prime-time US network TV drama to be so, thanks to offsets and energy savings. We need to blend these types of knowledge in order to analyze TV shows

and make sense of them. Otherwise we are reducing them from the complex entities they really are.

AF: Do you think that the nature of television is taking new shape? How would you characterize new television as such? How may it affect the ways we study television?

TM: TV certainly is changing. What started in most countries as a broadcast, national medium, dominated by the state, is being transformed into a cable, satellite, Internet, and international medium, dominated by commerce. And it can shift beyond this narrative, as per the reintroduction of state ownership in 21st century Russia, and the BBC winning audiences away from commercial systems.

The Internet is catching up to television, borrowing television's resolution standards, via Hulu, TV.com, iPlayer, and Veoh—rebroadcasters of network drama online. In just twelve months, and with its service advertised exclusively to people over thirty, Hulu became the sixth most-watched video site in the US. Legal online viewing of TV shows by US adults grew by 141% in 2008, and TV.com viewers by 1,261% in January 2010. Streaming is becoming more popular than downloading, as it is often both free and legal. Of US Internet users aged 13 to 54, a fifth now watch these services, in order to get back in touch with favored series prior to new episodes on TV. The BBC's iPlayer has been a striking success, as has Korea's cell-based TV access. And advertisers flock to Hulu even as they shun YouTube. Why? Because it's part of the televisual warehouse.

Meanwhile, our spanking new flat television screens may soon be tossed cavalierly away, just like our old fat-screen ones. Sony, Samsung, LG, Toshiba, Sharp, and Panasonic promise streaming movies, Yahoo!/Intel widgets for connections to meteorology and stock prices, and Blu-ray players that access the Internet, moving from their newfound elegant anorexia to a bulimic interactivity. But even the cyberbarians at MySpace and Jupitermedia, not to mention Sony and Sharp, insist that viewers want television to remain television, with a few add-ons—their preference is to watch programs, with some interactive elements.

Worldwide, the power of the Internet to attract audiences is clearest in the deployment of venerable sources and genres: the BBC (employing a lot of properly-trained journalists, as per the 20th century), YouTube (featuring material “liberated” from film and TV,

as per the 20th century), and Wikipedia (following an 18th century format). Not much there that is new!

To conclude: in 1942, NBC executive Noran E. Kersta wrote that: “Television...can surpass in speed, accuracy, and security any other communication medium.” He was right then, and he’s right now. Television modeled the Internet and commerce conceptually, just as it modeled the personal computer stylistically. And the early signs are that the Internet and TV transform one another. In the words of Steve Ballmer, Microsoft’s chief executive, “we will see TVs become more sophisticated and more connected. The boundary between the PC and the TV will dissolve.” As *Fortune* business magazine put it recently, “TV is Dying? Long Live TV!” Television’s reach is extending, its flexibility is developing, its popularity is increasing—and its capacity to influence and incorporate older and newer media is undimmed.

AF: Some scholars, such as Vicki Mayer in her new book, talked about the new types of creative and professional media workers in the globalizing New Television Economy. Do you see that the changing dynamics of labor in media could give rise to new content that has a set of different relations with capitalism and consumerism?

TM: This is difficult to assess. The key aspect of the New International Division of Cultural Labor (NIDCL) is that it is usually invisible or far from central to television drama and programming more generally, other than at such moments as wars or World Cups, when the means and forces of production are foregrounded as part of the spectacle. Put another way, labor is generally fetishized away apart from stars. It is hidden from view or rendered humorous.

Inside the NIDCL, we still see the vast domination of exports by a small number of countries. The dynamics identified in *Global Hollywood 2* (BFI, 2005) and updated in *Television Studies: The Basics* show few signs of change in a way that will make for massive differences. So outside China, the US dominates virtually all children’s TV across the globe. And across *hispano hablante* Latin America, Mexico is dominant in *novelas*. Of course, the new Asian middle class and élite will provide pressure for domestic and international television that appeals to its tastes, but that impact will be felt either at home or in some components of casting in the US

rather than in terms of the NIDCL, I suspect. When we teach and write about TV, we must highlight these issues, whether we are focused on public policy, textuality, production, consumption, or post-consumption. That will increase awareness of how these topics must be thought through in concert. Every time you watch a television program, on whatever device you use, the carbon impact is massive. And every time you do so on a cell phone or tablet, you are part of a chain of production that is connected to a monumental civil war in Africa and exploitative work relations in Asia. That's before we even start talking about the labor process of drama!

AF: TV drama has been around for so long. Of course, cultural studies scholars always claim that, say, for TV and gender studies, TV drama can empower females and yet is continuously loaded with gender stereotypes. But there seems hardly any conclusive answer. Do you think that there are some major findings in TV studies that researchers have found agreeable?

TM: I think much of the debate in cultural studies has moved on from stereotypes, because one no longer has a model of the *right way* to represent gender. That's been pretty clear since the work published in *M/F* during the 1970s and '80s (I think I still have a complete set somewhere...). At the same time, questions remain in public fora, in other disciplines, and among many of us in cultural studies about the narrow band of subjectivities drawn on by television producers—the need for a richer vein in terms of age and so on. There will always be room for content analysis and even dear old close reading to point this out and call for enrichment, at the same time as there'll always be room for acknowledging that audiences do not necessarily interpret and act in accord with the denotative meanings presented to them.

AF: I know you are a critical scholar. How do you see the role of transnational television operators in China or in other developing countries? Do you think that they really can bring in liberal values in China or do they bring in the same hegemonic ideologies as you mentioned? For example, do you think the localized *Ugly Betty* in China can really shake Chinese gender values, aesthetics, and values of sexuality?

TM: The idea of a “critical scholar” puzzles me. It forms part of the Yanqui binarism in communication studies instantiated by Paul

Lazarsfeld that draws a rigid distinction between “critical” and “administrative” research. I don’t accept it, because I endeavor to work based on existing knowledge, agendas from social movements, and abiding inequality rather than on topics and methods that suit Gringolandia’s bifurcation and its essentialist forms of training scholars. There are reasons why bodies such as the International Communication Association and the National Communication Association, for example, have such low public standing and professional significance!

As I do not speak the relevant languages, I don’t want to prognosticate a great deal on the core aspect of your question. You’re the experts! I do think that the international travel of the series and its local customization is fascinating. Internationalization can threaten protectionism. But it seems to me that Albert Moran’s work on formats, to which Anthony has contributed so much, hardly suggests that these are socially radical influences in textual terms. They domesticate where necessary, but that does not signify progressive politics in terms of either texts or production methods.

Transformations in sexual *mores* come with urbanization and wealth. Cognate changes in TV are a small component of this capitalist reality, albeit a spectacular one. Better to read Simmel on women and money or the stranger and Elizabeth Wilson’s *Sphinx in the City* than listen to me if you want to understand how those dynamics have traditionally functioned.

AF: How do you conceive the transnational media corporations which extend their arms in China and many third world countries? Do you see that they will perpetuate the same kind of consumerism and hegemony (of different kinds as in the case of the US) in these areas? Given that we are all aware of the problems of these transnational giants or capitals, do you think that audiences are prepared for it?

TM: Again, I am doubtful of my expertise in this area, given the limitations of my knowledge. You know much more than I do! I can offer this—some media companies have been working in China for a while, such as Warner’s, via co-production of film. Others, like Apple, have been involved by exploiting Chinese manufacturing labor at arm’s length. The recent sad death of Apple’s figurehead Steve Jobs was accompanied by global lamentations that far exceeded

what was accorded to FoxConn's many victims!

When it comes to sales, Andrew Ross and others have pointed out that the road to China is littered with foreign companies that expected to make a great deal of money from sales there but did not. The current marketing logic in Europe, the US, and Japan on how to exploit Chinese customers focuses on conspicuous brand-name consumption. Marketing experts preach that affluent Chinese are uninterested in mod cons for the home—they want objects that will attract attention in public from rivals, acquaintances, friends, and families, rather than living in homes articulated around consumption. It's said to be all about cars and jewels rather than home movie systems or lounge suites. But I am wary of foreigners without adequate knowledge, such as myself, prognosticating on this topic. The globe is full of white English-speaking men writing state-of-the-globe books and articles that tell us China is the future, is unique, and will control everything and everybody—or the opposite. The latest debate on this topic is Martin Jacques versus Will Hutton. Very tiresome, very predictable.

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

Selected Works by Toby Miller

Please refer to the end of the Chinese version of the dialogue for Toby Miller's selected works.

專輯序言

後電視年代的電視研究

馮應謙

「電視已死？」是二十一世紀媒介評論中對電視媒體的常見質疑。隨着網絡時代到來和新媒體的出現，電視由新媒體變成舊媒體，再由舊媒體變為被預言瀕臨淘汰的媒體。是次電視研究專刊特意訪問了文化和電視研究著名學者Toby Miller，他是《電視與新媒體》(*Television and New Media*)的創刊編輯；本刊試圖以他的研究和分析，再次肯定電視研究的重要性，並探索電視研究(*television studies*)在「後電視年代」的研究議題。在Toby Miller的答問中，他特別指出在很多發展中的地區，電視的收視率不但沒有因網絡的興起而銳減，觀眾反而在不斷增加，這說明地沿經濟和政治直接影響公眾對電視的需求和具體要求。在二十一世紀這資訊年代，電視仍扮演擁有最具廣泛觀眾面(*mass appeal*)的媒體之角色。

當代的電視研究通常泛指一種從批判角度去研究電視文本、觀眾，以至於電視機構的結構、擁有權、節目和製作等研究。今天電視研究也跟文化研究(*cultural studies*)和流行文化(*popular culture*)研究的議題互相重疊，或許我們也可視電視研究為文化研究和流行文化研究的一個範疇(*sub-domain*)。電視研究當然並不是一個新的傳播學研究領域，在七、八十年代，美國傳媒學的主流研究都是分析當時的新媒體

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——電視——尤其是電視對觀眾、對青少年健康、暴力行為和價值觀的影響。從八十年代開始，又有不少媒介批評(media criticism)和文學研究(literary studies)的學者加入電視研究的行列，主要研究電視節目和劇集的文本。然而這個研究電視的「潮流」，隨着互聯網作為傳播媒介的興起，似乎有衰退的跡象，傳媒學者或許也持有電視研究慢慢變為一個過時議題的印象。

事實上，近年來電視研究未必有實質的減少，只是探討的研究問題(problematic)有所改變。近五年在國際上以Television Studies為題的書籍最少有四、五本，如Gray 和Lotz (2011)、Butler (2011)、Miller (2010)、Calvert、Casey、Casey和French (2007)等。當中Graeme Turner和Jinna Jay在2009所編的書提出了「後電視的電視研究」的概念(Television Studies after TV)。雖然書中未有對「後電視」作任何結論，不過可以肯定的是，在「後電視年代」湧現出一系列新的議題，如電視內容全球化、跨國/境電視媒介、電視模式(TV format)的貿易、新電視科技和製作形式、轉變中的電視廣播法規及地區性電視體制的差異等，這些是都是以前從未充分探討過的重要研究領域。

為深度地研究全球化或地沿性的電視內容的影響、意識形態和形式，本特刊特意選擇了在中國社會中「新電視」的其中一個重要範疇——電視劇——作為是次特刊的中心。我們選擇了五篇來自香港中文大學新聞與傳播學院於2011年所舉辦的「『時代媒介』：華人社會的電視劇文化」會議的文章，對這些議題進行深入探討。

本特刊所討論的電視劇包括偶像劇、肥皂劇、愛情劇和時代劇。在眾多的流行文化中，電視劇是一種最具延續性的日常生活與文化。它既是我們日常談天的題材和話語，也是最貼近社會脈絡的「時代媒介」。網絡年代雖代表文化斷裂的後現代社會，觀眾在網絡中自由並主動地進行選擇性閱讀、自我製造內容，但是新媒介不能承擔一代傳一代的文化承傳的角色，也不能充分反映地沿政治、經濟和文化。這一重要社會功能仍是落在「時代媒介」——電視，特別是電視劇的手中。

作為「時代媒介」，電視劇可充分反映當下社會不同性別、種族、階層、年齡和族群的矛盾、文化抗爭及主流和對抗的意識形態的鬥爭。在某些華人社會中，要在公共領域中討論以上的問題仍是不可

能，研究當代的電視劇也許是一個相對容易發掘這些問題的方法。本刊收錄的這五篇文章，除了從文本和製作的角度探討電視如何反映和表徵華人社會與文化、政治以及經濟相關的社會議題外，也從消費角度，闡釋跨文化、跨地沿的電視劇內容對本土的影響和衝擊。

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