

學術對談

文化研究往哪裏去？

對談人：Lawrence Grossberg、馮應謙、陳韜文

統稿：馮應謙、陳韜文*

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高士柏 (Lawrence Grossberg)

「很多人假設形勢是由地理和時間所界定，但對我來說，形勢是以脈絡為核心的體現，不管是哪一種脈絡，它又是對複雜性的承擔，而這亦正是文化研究的中心。形勢必須由共存性與及一些不同的矛盾、掙扎、衝突、力量等的接合所定義，它必須由這些互相競爭的力量和方向之間的平衡所定義，永不會單是支配或勝利這樣一種簡單的狀態。」

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高士柏教授簡介

高士柏是當代文化研究的重要學者之一，他的研究興趣廣泛，當中包括美國流行音樂及青少年文化等。他在傳播及文化哲學領域方面的研究貢獻是毋庸置疑的。

高士柏於1968年畢業於美國羅徹斯特大學，取得歷史及哲學學位。畢業後，他跟隨賀格(Richard Hoggart)及霍爾(Stuart Hall)在英國伯明翰大學當代文化研究中心接受訓練及參與研究工作。經霍爾教授推薦下，高士柏其後到伊利諾大學修讀傳播學博士課程，並跟隨凱里(James Carey)進行研究。

取得博士學位後，高士柏獲邀於伊利諾大學擔任助理教授，更於1990年被擢升為教授。1994年，高士柏轉到北卡羅來納大學教堂山分校的新聞及大眾傳媒學院任教。高士柏現為該學院的Morris Davis Distinguished Professor of Communication Studies and Cultural Studies。

高士柏參與不同期刊的編輯工作，包括*Cultural Studies*和*Public Culture*。高士柏的學術出版包括《後生可畏：後生、政治，與美國的未來》(*Caught in the Crossfire: Kids, Politics and America's Future*) (美國Paradigm Publishers出版社2005年出版)、《新關鍵詞：文化與社會詞彙的修訂本》(*New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*) (與Meaghan Morris和Tony Bennett合編，英國Blackwell出版社2005年出版)、*Dancing in Spite of Myself: Essays on Popular Culture* (美國Duke University Press出版社1997年出版)。

FC: 馮應謙、陳韜文

LG: 高士柏

FC: 第一個問題是關於文化研究的發展的。作為文化研究的表表者，你當初是怎麼樣發現傳播學跟你的關係的呢？

LG: 我想這問題是關於我作為一個從事文化研究的人與傳播學的關係，我不得不說我跟傳播學的關係是很矛盾的。我到伊利諾大學跟隨凱里 (James Carey) 修讀博士學位是蒙霍爾 (Stuart Hall) 推薦的，凱里是當時他在美國唯一認識、而且在試着從事一些霍爾認為是文化研究的東西的人。我到伊利諾跟隨凱里之時，我甚至不知道自己加入了一個傳播學課程 (傳播研究中心)，在那之前我根本未聽過有傳播系這個東西。因此，我對傳播學是充滿感激之情的，因為它不但為我提供了容身之所，更加願意聆聽文化研究，給它一個容身之所，而當時在美國的學界，除了某些教育學系以外，是沒有人願意認真對待文化研究的。美國的傳播學與文化研究的聯繫是有原因的，其一是凱里來自的芝加哥學派 (以及杜威 [John Dewey]) 跟威廉士 (Raymond Williams) 等人的理論和政治基礎有不少相通和相近之處，加上四五十年代在美國對於大眾文化的辯論，從公眾的領域進入了傳播學，便形成了一個跨學科的範疇，並與文化研究的一些研究興趣相通。所以，凱里和傳播學的人士對文化研究，特別是對我的寬容是有迹可尋的，我認為那是傳播學作為一個學科的長處。

FC: 凱里當日所從事的文化研究跟你現在從事的有沒有甚麼不同？

LG: 有很多不同，那是必然的。我從事的文化研究是在霍爾和凱里交匯下的混合體，但我們的歷史、形勢 (conjunctures)、理論和政治都有所不同，最明顯的是，我們用不同的方法去具體表達和實踐我們對文化研究這項工程的承擔。凱里跟我的背景很不一樣，我的本科是哲學，然後在當代文化研究中心唸文化研究，再進入傳播學。凱里本來所受的是經濟學的教育和訓練，然後進入傳播

學，再發展出一種傳播學以內的文化研究，因此我們的軌跡很不一樣。但我感到很幸運有凱里這樣的一位導師來指導和教育我，容許我按自己的方式去學習文化研究。

在這裏讓我扯遠一點，事實上，從事「文化研究」的人，不代表他們所做的所有東西全都是文化研究，意思是說，我曾寫過很多關於哲學和理論的文章，還有一些可能被稱為流行音樂理論的作品，但我不一定要認為那些作品都屬於文化研究，才足以支持我成為一個文化研究學者，固然我也希望這些工作有助我從事文化研究。同樣，雖然凱里致力於文化研究，但對於他自己的一些作品，他也不會認為是屬於文化研究的範疇。他跟傳播學也有一些其他方面的連繫，但我認為總體而言，他認為自己是在傳播學或者更闊的範疇上為文化研究護航的。雖然在維護文化研究的必要性和專門性上，他有時未必像我這樣直接和高調，但在他的整個學術事業之中，特別是後期，顯然他很相信文化研究的重要性。

FC: 可以多談一點你跟傳播學的關係嗎？

LG: 我跟傳播學的另一重關係要追溯到我起初的研究興趣。在我剛進入當代文化研究中心時，我的研究興趣是關於青少年文化與流行音樂，我很想研究流行音樂在組織青少年文化中所扮演的角色，顯然這個研究興趣在往後數十年依然是我研究興趣的重心。對我來說，當中一部分可視為文化研究，另外一些有某種貢獻，但無論別人是否認為我的作品全都是文化研究，這些作品是在傳播學的領域下才得以完成的。在七十年代，沒有一個音樂系，或者在美國沒有一個我認識的音樂系願意認真地看待樂與怒(搖滾)音樂。還有青少年文化，社會學家會談及它，但不會談到音樂，而他們那種對次文化的說法也不是我感興趣的。因此，傳播學不但容納了我對文化研究的興趣，更同時容納了我對青少年文化和流行音樂的興趣。

正如我剛才所說，傳播學是一個很棒的界別，因為它是一個十分開放的界別，而在它六十年的歷史中，它容許很多不同的事

情在它的庇蔭下發展出來，那是很棒的。很多其他學科不會認真看待、或不容許在其學系名下研究的題目，人們可以在傳播學裏研究。然後過一陣子，其他學科就開始發現他們還是應該關注一下那些題目和事物。所以說，我對傳播學是很有歸屬感的。

FC: 那麼，你對文化研究的概念是甚麼？你認為文化研究在西方仍是一個被邊緣化的界別嗎？它跟學術界其他學科有甚麼不同？

LG: 我對文化研究有很專門的定義，那是霍爾和我在英國曾經一起唸書的朋友們、以及我在世界各地的朋友和同事們正試着做的，就是追隨威廉士和霍爾早期的作品，也是我認為凱里在試着做的。那與很多人稱為文化研究的東西是不同的，我知道你過一會有一個問題會問及文化研究的去政治化，我不認為那是文化研究。人們可以稱之為「文化研究」，而我也不能阻止他們，我可以不讓他們在我的期刊內刊登文章，但我不能阻止他們怎麼樣叫他們的工作。我不認為那是去政治化的「文化研究」，因為我不認為有一種叫去政治化的「文化研究」存在。我認為文化研究不止於此，文化研究是對政治、文化、理論和脈絡一種獨有的進路，它可以容納很多不同的理論、政治和方法的派別，但你大概也知道，我認為文化研究的企圖是一種顛覆性地脈絡化的做法，它是對脈絡的脈絡化理論。霍爾在最近一個訪問內提及，文化研究從來所關注的就是形勢 (conjuncture)。在另一個談及《控制危機》 (*Policing the Crisis*) 的訪問中，霍爾說，大概意思就是，看，我從沒有寫過關於種族與身分，我只是寫關於種族化的社會和形勢。文化研究關注的是脈絡，而不是電影、電視、流行音樂，或其他東西，雖然那些東西是進入了解脈絡的方法，但不是關注點。

那要是你問我，文化研究是否被邊緣化？在我的角度它從來都是被邊緣化的，它違反了學術界主流的慣例，主流要求你表明你的理論和你的政治立場，一個脈絡化的進路跟學術界那種標準化的做法顯得格格不入。在學術界，人們會問我：你的理論是甚麼？你的政治立場是甚麼？而我還是會說：嗯，你先得告訴我你想我研究的是甚麼，那我可以告訴你我大概會從甚麼理論出發，

但當我研究不同的脈絡、不同的問題和不同的政治，我的理論就不斷在變。

另一方面，要是你問，文化研究成功嗎？它是成功的，但只限於今日在每一個地方、每一所大學，都能找到一些它的蹤影這個意義而言。

FC: 那樣說來它是成功的，我會說絕對是。

LG: 在那個意義上，當然它是成功的，我是說這個詞變得成功了，但我認為很多自命為文化研究的東西並不是真正的致力於這項工程（或者如威廉士曾說，遺忘了這項工程）。但同時，你得知道，無論你是否從事文化研究，事情不是如此非黑即白的。有很多東西，我完全不想它和文化研究扯上關係：一些十分去政治化的作品、一些很專科卻裝成是跨學科的作品、一些完全理論化而全無實證內容的作品，因為我覺得雖然文化研究需要理論，它並不是只有理論，它是要用理論去理解現實世界，所以必需要有實證研究。許多人基於某些理論基礎而書寫關於這個世界，彷彿世界的存在就是為要闡釋或證明我們的理論觀點。也許他們讀了德勒茲 (Deleuze) 的一些文章，他們就「發現」我們是活在控管社會 (society of control) 中。我常常想問他們：你們是活在哪一個宇宙的？或者你們是在哪個星球度日的？因為那個世界不是我所活的世界。又或者他們拿福柯 (Foucault)，或是亞甘賓 (Agamben)，或是哪個人的一個概念，譬如說治理術 (governmentality)，或是赤裸人 (bare life)，然後，看！他們四處都可以找到這個東西。其實，也許這些概念的某些元素是存在的，但你得指出它，你得研究它，你得把它展示給我看，以致我可以跟你辯論，然後我們就看到世界的複雜性和矛盾。理論並不定義答案，因此我不想合理化這些論調，說這些作品也是文化研究，因為它們用理論代替研究，代替建構事物關係那個麻煩的工作。但我同樣不希望把文化研究等同於那些只做社會學實證研究而沒有理論和政治理念的人。但在這兩類人中間，有不少的人，在某種或多或少的程度上，我是願意說，他們在做的東西看來有點像是文化研究。而我

也很相信扣連 (articulation) —— 締造聯繫和盟友，特別是在學界，若是可行的話，那是需要的。所以，回到你的問題，文化研究這個詞變得很流行，四處都可找到它，它是美國甚至全世界其中一個領先的學術能指，也成為批判研究和跨學科研究的場景，而同時，跨學科又是學術界的一個潮流用語。所以，我想它大概是成功的，但它也同時受到攻擊。

FC: 我們知道文化研究總是受到攻擊，但同時它也的確成功地併合到傳播學，或至少成為傳播學裏的一個重要領域。

LG: 它算得上頗為成功，但其成功不能說是徹底或安全得不可動搖的。至少在美國，跨學科性又正面臨着攻擊，當然，知識政治化又正被攻擊，文化研究本身也被攻擊，因此我想文化研究持續地處於四面受敵的狀態，我寧可說它是四面受敵多於是被邊緣化。若說到邊緣化，那些自稱是在做文化研究但其實對文化研究毫無頭緒的人把它邊緣化的程度，其實跟反對它的人不相伯仲。

FC: 剛才你評論到去政治化的文化研究，追溯到文化研究在伯明罕學派的起源，抗爭、從屬、支配一直是其中心主題。你認為抗爭這類問題仍然是文化研究的標記嗎？還是已不再重要了？

LG: 這些問題在以下的意義上是重要的：我相信文化研究是企圖去明白世界是如何被組織起來的，而其組織方法就顯示在世上的權力不平等之中。因此，文化研究感興趣於理解權力如何在世上運作，以致能開啟一些可能性，讓其他「世界」變得可行，套用世界社會論壇的詞藻可以這樣說。意思是，文化研究的大前提是如果你能理解世界是如何被造成它現在的樣子，你就可以找到方法令它有所不同。在這方面來說，它不但與馬克思主義、女性主義和福柯等的承擔相通，也與很多知性運動相通，它致力於生產一套有助改變世界的知識。那是伯明罕學派與法蘭克福學派的一大爭論，就算我在那邊的時候也是這樣，他們對法蘭克福學派的批評之一是，若他們對世界的診斷是正確的話，那麼，你沒甚麼可以做的。這甚至令法蘭克福學派也感到沮喪和絕望，把一個故事講

出來而它的結論是你不可能改變任何東西、你早已經失敗了，這有甚麼意義呢？文化研究致力生產一種可能有助改變世界的知識，因此在這個意義上，它致力於理解權力，以及各種抗爭、對立、矛盾、狹縫等有助權力改變、變化、被挑戰、被重組的東西，所以這樣來說，答案絕對是肯定的。但當人們認為某個關於抗爭的特定概念將永久通用，問題就來了。在英式文化研究歷史上的某個時刻，他們感興趣於(或建構)某個關於抗爭的特定概念，是與文化和象徵權力有關的，也關係到那種馬克思式的對革命主體的追尋，那是次文化的一代，而他們把它發展為一套適用於當時的世代、那一個脈絡的抗爭理論。但若是把那一套抗爭理論視為今日同樣適用的抗爭的文化研究理論，那是錯誤的。

FC: 那麼權力、對立和支配又如何？它們仍是文化研究的重要元素嗎？

LG: 是的，文化研究從來都關注權力、它的限制、它的可能性、它的轉化等。至於抗爭、對立，就是人們與權力可以產生的所有關係，包括支配與壓抑、從屬、充權與建設性等，那些全都是文化研究的關注點，為要理解某一特定的形勢，而怎樣去模塑、定義、演繹這些關注點，就視乎那個形勢以及做分析的人認為他們需要說一個怎樣的故事，以致能夠開啟其他可能的未來。

也許我該補充一下我所講的形勢是甚麼意思，因為我認為這是文化研究中一個關鍵的詞。很多人假設形勢是由地理和時間所界定，但對我來說，形勢是以脈絡為核心的體現，不管是哪一種脈絡，它又是對複雜性的承擔，而這亦正是文化研究的中心。形勢必須由共存性與及一些不同的矛盾、掙扎、衝突、力量等的接合所定義，它必須由這些互相競爭的力量和方向之間的平衡所定義，永不會單是支配或勝利這樣一種簡單的狀態。

FC: 社會學家賴許(Scott Lash)最近留意到文化研究正進入一個新的階段，他指出現在的政治和經濟環境已經跟1970年代有了根本的變化，認為今日的權力是屬於後霸權的形態。權力的流向愈趨內

化的同時，對權力的抗爭亦變得更複雜，權力和支配同時在自身和受壓者及受壓群體中(再)生產。你認同他的論點嗎？如果你認同的話，你認為文化研究未來的方向會是怎樣呢？

LG: 我視賴許為《理論、文化與社會期刊》(*Theory, Culture and Society*) 的同道，他們都一再提出我們生活在後霸權世界，這其實是後現代理論的另一個版本。十年前，他們稱這為後現代主義，後來人們不再想用後現代主義這個詞，所以他們現在就談一些概念，譬如控管社會。正如我說過，文化研究的任務是要分析，找出需用的理論資源和方法去分析形勢的複雜性。對我來說，當你留意這個世界，或者更好一點說，一個特定的形勢，他們說很多東西都已改變是對的，如果你要從英式文化研究霸權理論的高峰說起，從70年代後期到80年代早期、《控制危機》等等，沒錯，三十年來，很多東西都變了，政治上、經濟上、社會上、文化上、傳播上。科技改變了；勞動(labor)的形式改變了；經濟體系和傳播與文化的經濟學都改變了。但我要說明，這些改變是某程度的改變，我們需要說清是「某程度」，需要強調當中的複雜性、局部性、矛盾、承傳和抗爭。我不相信歷史是在斷裂、翻天覆地的割裂中改變的，這樣的故事娓娓道來的時候固然很動聽，但我相信複雜性、多重性、關係性和偶然性。當然，在傳播全球化下，新的文化形式出現了。Second Life、社交網站Facebook、真人實境秀、YouTube、新的音樂種類出現了；新的生產和消費模式出現了，這些全都是形勢的一部分。這些東西我們都必須分析，但不單是這些東西，只有當我們從形勢上和脈絡上去理解它們，文化研究的工作才真正開始。

所以，這大概是我看所謂傳播學學者跟文化研究學者的分別：傳播學學者會說，我有意研究新的音樂生產模式，我認為那很好，我們需要研究它。或者有人說，我有意研究Second Life，對，我認為那很好，我們也需要有人研究它。但文化研究學者會說，我有意研究這些東西怎麼扣進更大的脈絡裏，而你不能單靠一種類比的方式去把它們扣進更大的脈絡裏，說Second Life相對於整體的關係就如管控社會相對於霸權。我不同意你可以這樣跨

過去，雖然我看到今日許多傳媒研究和很多這類過度理論化的研究都會這樣。你看到一些東西，只是一個東西，然後你認為它就告訴你這個社會是怎麼樣的，可是那不是文化研究要做的。文化研究要看這些小東西怎樣全部連在一起成為整體，這個整體不同於每一個獨立的部分本身。只有研究和把這些關係化為理論，才能理解這形勢是怎麼回事和它如何運作。事實上，也只有研究和把這些關係化為理論，我們才能明白某一特定現象和物件是甚麼回事。

所以，我們若想理解世界怎樣改變，我們若想理解身邊正發生甚麼事情，我最近就提出，我們必須研究所有相關的關係，包括經濟學。其實文化研究和傳播學學者往往在很大程度上迴避經濟學。我所說的不單是隨便把我們對經濟的假設加進去，不單是找找我們最喜歡的經濟理論(而往往是根據政治理念去選擇)，而是要研究經濟體系和經濟學，找出從文化上、形勢上、脈絡上研究經濟的方法。

FC: 為甚麼是經濟學呢？我看經濟學並不是我們在文化研究裏慣常研究的問題。

LG: 也不單是經濟學，我們也往往迴避政治的一些核心，例如國家政治，我們不可以再忽視它了。當然並不是所有文化研究的人都忽視這些題目，事實上也有很多很好的研究是關於這些的，譬如不但在北大西洋世界，在亞洲和拉丁美洲也有人接受這些挑戰。但我認為太多的時候我們忽視它，而我們將自食其果，因為這意味着我們所講的故事、我們對四周所發生的事情的理解將會不足以迎接改變世界的任務。而我越來越覺得，這必然是一個集體合作的工程，因為它要求去檢視不同的零碎並嘗試將它們扣在一起，就像拼拼圖，或者抽象一點，就像集合論述形構的元素。

我可以就着這一片零碎說很多的東西，但對我來說，問題是要把每一片都拿出來並找到它們該如何拼在一起，那你就會有一個比較好的故事。而我們也不知道那個故事是甚麼，我們不知道甚麼是新的東西，甚麼不是，葛蘭西(Gramsci)談及關於形勢分

析的一部分就是，當中最難的部分就是辨認甚麼是新的，甚麼不是，你知道，很多堪稱是新的東西只是一些已經存在好一陣子的東西的最新修訂，而一些新的東西，我們有時甚至沒有把它們認出來。

FC: 那啟示是甚麼呢？

LG: 在某程度上我相信文化研究常常都需要重頭開始，不但是在它如何描述世界這方面得重頭開始，更加是在它的自我重塑方面。所以文化研究曾經是甚麼——容我說它從來都同時是許多東西——1970年代在英國有些人在做次文化研究，或者在七十年代和八十年代有些人在做《控制危機》和霸權理論，那些是很有用的模型和意念，但它們不能告訴你文化研究今日在美國、或者香港、或者中國，該是甚麼模樣。它不會跟以前一樣，不會用同樣的理論資源，雖然有一些可能有用，但其他卻未必。今日的文化研究也不一定有同樣的政治，問同樣的問題，因此文化研究是不斷地在自我打造中回應現狀。那就是為甚麼我想該是麥克羅比（Angela McRobbie）曾經說過，文化研究一面往前走，一面自我打造。當它嘗試去講這個關於世界在發生甚麼的故事時，它其實是在塑造它自己應有的模樣。這是違反學界的主流做法的，因為你不能把文化研究教給別人說，這就是文化研究，它是這個樣子的，拿去做你要做的東西吧。你得教授怎樣去做文化研究，怎樣脈絡化和形勢化地思考。

FC: 這樣的答案很合理。

LG: 所以你知道，在那方面來說，我認為福柯實在是文化研究的法國版本，他有一個意象說理論像個工具箱，你永不知道你將需要哪些工具來回應你要回答的脈絡和政治。所以你可以做的就只是把這個理論工具箱交給人們，再教一套實證方法論，再深度地教一些怎麼樣脈絡化思考的做法，但你不能對人們說：「這就是文化研究，走出去做吧。」你知道，這樣的話在學界就困難多了。

FC: 好吧，讓我們談談文化研究的跨學科進路。我們聽到太多人號召要做跨學科研究，它幾乎變成陳腔濫調。但我們確實相信文化研究是非常跨學科的，包含傳播、政治經濟學、社會學、人類學、比較文學、符號學、哲學等學科。可是，也有人批評這種跨學科的進路令文化研究缺乏學術的一致性和專業水平，並因此引致文化研究在英美學術世界的衰落。你會如何解釋它近年的衰落？

LG: 我不知道它是否真的衰落了，還是只是這個現象比較明顯。我覺得現時比較難找到一些對當代世界有深刻見解、有趣、重要的描述的文化研究作品，意思是，我現在很難對人說：「這是一部你了解世界上發生甚麼事就必讀的文化研究作品。」一部分是由於太多人聲稱他在做一個必讀的研究。你知道，人們可能會說《控制危機》是必讀的，而大概他們仍然應該這樣想，人們可能會說世界各地文化研究當中的某些作品是必讀的，但我不知道這問題是不是文化研究獨有的，就是，我看來覺得很難從任何人找到睿智、有用、在政治上有用而且理論圓熟或者理論通達的對世界上所發生的事情的分析。我的意思是，或許這裏有一丁點，那裏有對真人實境秀的一些有趣分析，那裏有對工會現況或者是甚麼的一些有趣分析。但你知道，就像麥克羅比最近一本關於貝里雅和新工黨下的女性主義的書，那部作品就能把零碎用一個我未想過的方法組合起來，然後我忽然發現那些零碎開始扣在一起了。有很多這樣的例子，但同時，又太少了，太少對話。我發現現在越來越難找到那樣的東西。但同樣，我在馬克思主義研究或是女性主義研究中也越來越難找到這些東西，這個問題不獨在文化研究中存在。

FC: 是的，為甚麼呢？

LG: 為甚麼，我想因為我們作為知識份子實在過分懶散，我們變懶了，我們不想認真的做甚麼工作。你知道，我們有我們的理論，然後我們可能想讀一下最新的理論學者，可是我們不願意真正的挑戰他們，直至一些更新的理論學者出現。理論學者不願意做實

證研究，也沒有人想挑戰他們的政治假設，於是最後我們其實還是在講我們一直在政治上講的故事，容許我們的理論和假設代替我們作為學者和知識份子真正該做的。我認為懶散的問題比跨學科的問題更明顯。

FC: 那你認為跨學科的傳統有可能也帶來你所講的懶散嗎？

LG: 不是，這不是跨學科的問題，這是那些太懶去把跨學科研究做好的人的問題。跨學科是不容易的，它比專科更難。我的意思是，跨學科的內涵裏面沒有甚麼是告訴你它是沒有標準的、你可以去做一些很爛的東西。在一個專科裡不保證你一定會把研究做好，跨學科也不代表沒有質量，可是，懶散地做跨學科研究卻保證你所做的會比大部分東西更爛。文化研究是跨學科的，像我之前說的，它檢視關係，它說的是關於關係，不是個體。大部分的專科是關於個體的，它們創造個體，好像經濟體系、或市場、或國家、或選民、或傳媒、或流行文化，或消費者。這些全都是我們可以研究的個體，那沒問題，像我剛才說，我認為那些研究是必須的。但文化研究想要做的是介入並嘗試把這些研究放在一起，來看當中的關係，因為當它們加起來，不但成為一幅更大的圖畫、一個關於某個形勢的故事，還可以重組這些個體。因此它必須是跨學科的，因為它是關於不同學科裏的個體之間的關係。所以，經濟學可以說，我們有市場，這是個純經濟學的詞，我們卻認為市場的存在，是必然與其他事情存在關係的，而那些事情在經濟學家的角度裏並不屬於經濟學，就正如文化的東西亦與經濟和政治範疇的其他東西存在關係。因此，文化研究檢視這些關係，它就必然是跨學科的。但你怎樣做跨學科研究就是問題所在，而我認為我們現在的地步是，人們認為做跨學科研究的意思就是你只需讀一些你在其他學科裏喜歡的東西，舉例說，我最近做了很多關於經濟學的研究，可能人們就讀幾本經濟學的書，我不知道在中文書裏有甚麼代表，但在西方，在英語世界裏，人們會讀哈維 (David Harvey)，或是《帝國》(Empire)，或拉扎拉托 (Lazzarato) 等等，他們讀了哈維就覺得自己明白了當代資本主

義。但我的問題是：如果他是錯的呢？你怎知道他說得對？你只是在讀一些你在政治上認同的人的著作罷了。

FC: 你所說的這個問題的精髓在哪裏？可以怎樣避免呢？

LG: 你要從他們那裏汲取的不是他們的政治，而是他們對一套具體實證的關係的分析，而他們有可能是錯的。你卻不知道有甚麼其他的選擇，你也不在論述和形勢上重構這些個體。我們這些左翼份子或者文化研究圈子裏的人大多一來就否定大部分的新古典經濟學，甚至整套新古典經濟學，但當然百分之九十九否定的人都沒讀過它的一個字。他們沒有足夠的理解去否定它，但他們想去談經濟學，可是他們有甚麼資格去談經濟學呢？你看，那就是我說的懶散。我們越來越傾向認為因為我們是知識分子，我們可以無所不談；我們可以只讀一點點書，然後就無所不談。我認為要是你想談談我現在感興趣做的那些經濟學在這個形勢分析中的關係，那會花上你好幾年時間，你才開始可以說，當我選擇這個經濟學理論，或是這個對金融危機的描述，我明白為甚麼我選擇它，然後我才可以開始重組我的分析，那並不是基於我的政治理念。你知道，大部分左翼分子仍然在講他們已經講了一百五十年的那個關於資本主義的馬克思主義老故事，然後他們反過來說資本主義是嶄新的，因為今日的是金融資本。其實金融資本主義並不新，資本主義也並不全是金融資本主義，也並非所有的經濟體系都是資本主義的。在這當中，那複雜性、那脈絡性，就無可避免地流失了。現在就是不停的在兩極之間來回反彈，一面說這是全新的，所有我們已知的東西都不管用了；另一面說其實全都跟舊的東西完全一樣，其實這兩個關於資本主義的說法都不是太有用。只讀馬克思一百五十年前寫的東西不能給你答案，不是說人們不該讀馬克思和用他的理論。另一方面，假設世界已完全不同了，我們以為自己知道的東西全都已經不再真確，然後說我們現在是活在資本主義的擬像之中，我的回應是：何不讀一點經濟學？你可能不喜歡它，但它可能讓你多一點理解你該從哪裏開始研究。你必須開始認真地看待經濟學的作者之間那種多樣性，你

得做些研究，你得明白他們的方法論。你可以批評他們，可以發展一些更好的方法論，但你必須先與他們開始對話，那才是跨學科，那跟今日大部分人的做法是很不一樣的。

高士柏著作選

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ACADEMIC DIALOGUE WITH PROF. LAWRENCE GROSSBERG

Whither Cultural Studies?

FC: Anthony Y. H. Fung & Joseph Man Chan

LG: Prof. Lawrence Grossberg

FC: The first question is about the development of cultural studies. As a leading scholar in cultural studies, how did you find personal relevance in the studies of communication?

LG: This question involves my relationship to communications, as someone who practices cultural studies, I suppose. I would have to say I have an ambivalent relationship to the field of communications. When I went to study with James Carey at the University of Illinois to do my doctoral degree, it was because Stuart Hall told me that he was the only person he knew of in the United States at the time who was trying to do something that Stuart recognized as cultural studies. So when I went to Illinois to work with James, I didn't even realize, till I got there, that I was in a communications program (the Institute of Communications Research). I had never actually heard of a department of communications till I got to Illinois. So, on the one hand, I am exceedingly grateful to the field of communications because it provided a home for not only me, but for cultural studies when almost no one else in the U.S. academy, with the possible exception of some departments of education, no one else in the American academy was willing to take cultural studies seriously, to listen to it or give it a home. There are reasons for why communications in the United States had such ties to cultural studies. One of reasons was the tradition that James Carey came out of, the Chicago School of Social Thought (and John Dewey) which has lots of connections and similarities to the theoretical and political foundations of the work of Raymond Williams, etc. And the other was the debate in the United States in the 40s and 50s over mass culture. Those debates, when they left the public realm, really filtered

into the field of communications as a kind of interdisciplinary field, so that connected it with some of the interests of cultural studies as well. So there were reasons why James and other people in communications were hospitable to cultural studies and to me in particular. I think that's one of the great strengths of communications as a discipline.

FC: Are there any differences between the cultural studies that James Carey did and what you are doing nowadays?

LG: There are many differences, there had to be. My own is a hybrid, formed at the intersection of Hall and Carey. But we had different histories, different conjunctures, different theories and politics, and most visibly, different ways of embodying and enacting our commitment to cultural studies as a project. James Carey has a different history than me. I was educated in philosophy as an undergraduate, and then cultural studies at the CCCS (The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies) in Birmingham and came to communications. James was educated and trained first in economics and then in communications, and developed a kind of cultural studies within communications. So we had very different trajectories. I was lucky enough to find James, someone who would mentor and help educate me within cultural studies as I wanted to do it.

Let me make a tangential point here—in fact, for people who work in “cultural studies,” not everything they do is necessarily cultural studies. I mean, I have written a great deal about philosophy and theory, as well as what you might call the theory of popular music. I don't have to think that such work is cultural studies, to call myself a cultural studies scholar, although I hope it contributes to my efforts as doing cultural studies work. And some of James' work, he wouldn't have thought of as cultural studies even though he was committed to the project. He had other connections with communications. But I think he broadly saw himself defending a kind of cultural studies within communications, and more broadly, although unlike me, he was not always quite so explicit and upfront as I about defending the need for cultural studies and the specificity of its project. But it is clear throughout his career, and especially towards the end of his career, that he believed in the importance of cultural studies.

FC: Can you elaborate more about your connection to communications?

LG: The other part of my connection to communications has to go back to my initial interest. I mean when I first went to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, my research interests involved youth culture and popular music. I was interested in the role of popular music in organizing youth culture. Obviously that interest remained a central interest of mine for many decades. And the fact is, once again, whether or not one thinks of all the work I did as cultural studies—and for me, only parts of it succeeded, while other parts contributed something, it was in communications that work could be done. In the 70s, no music department, or none that I knew of in the United States, wanted to talk about rock ‘n’ roll seriously, and youth culture. Sociologists talked about it but not about the music, and they had a very distinct way in talking about subcultures that I wasn’t interested in. So communications was a home not only for my interest in cultural studies but for my interest in youth culture and popular music.

As I said, communications is a great field because in fact it’s a very open field, and it has, over its 60 years of history, allowed a lot of different kinds of things to go on under its auspices, which is great. You know a lot of things that other disciplines wouldn’t take seriously or wouldn’t allow to be done under their names, people did it in communications. And then later on, other disciplines start to realize they’d better talk about those kinds of issues and objects. So I have a great loyalty to communications.

FC: So, what is your conception of cultural studies? Do you think that cultural studies is still a marginalized discipline in the West? How is it distinct from other disciplines in the academy?

LG: I have a very specific sense of what cultural studies is. It is what I think Stuart Hall and the people, my friends that I studied with and continue to be friends with in England, and my friends and colleagues around the world, are trying to do, going back to Raymond Williams and Stuart’s early work, it is what I think James Carey was trying to do. It is not the same as what lots of people called cultural studies. Now later on I know you have a question about the depoliticization of cultural studies. Well I don’t think that’s

cultural studies. They can call it cultural studies and I can't stop them. I can stop them from publishing in my journal, but I can't stop them calling it whatever they want. But I don't think it's cultural studies. I don't think it's depoliticized cultural studies because I don't think there can be such a thing as depoliticized cultural studies. But I think cultural studies is more than that. I think cultural studies is a very particular kind of approach to politics, culture, theory and context. It has room for lots of theoretical, political, methodological approaches, but as you probably know, I think cultural studies is an attempt at a radically contextual practice. It is a contextual theory of contexts. Stuart Hall in an interview recently says that what cultural studies has always been about is the conjuncture. In another interview, where he talked about Policing the Crisis, Stuart says, to paraphrase: Look, I've never written about race as identity. I've only written about conjunctures and societies that are raced. Cultural studies is about contexts, not about film, or television, or popular music, or anything else, although those things are its way into trying to understand contexts.

Now if you ask me, is cultural studies marginalized? It's always been marginalized in my sense. It violates the dominant practices of the academy, which want you to tell what your theory is and what your politics is. A contextual approach does not sit comfortably in that kind of normative practices of the academy, where people ask you what's your theory? What's your political interest? And I still say, well, tell me what you want me to understand, and I'll tell you what theories I might begin to use. But my theories change all the time as I work on different contexts, with different questions and different politics.

I suppose if you ask, on the other hand, is cultural studies successful, yes but only in the sense that everywhere you look, at every university, there are some presence of cultural studies.

FC: Then it is successful, definitely, I would say.

LG: In that sense, of course, yes. I mean the term has become successful. But I do not think that much of what located itself under the name is actually committed to the project (or it has, as Williams once said, lost sight of the project). But then, you know, it's not that black and white, either you are or aren't doing cultural studies. There is a lot of

work which I would rather not be affiliated at all with cultural studies, some very depoliticized work, some very disciplinary work that pretends to be interdisciplinary, some completely theoretical work that doesn't have any empirical content, because I think cultural studies is not just theory, although it needs theory. It is about using theory to understand the empirical world, so it requires empirical research. So all these people who write about the world on a kind of theoretical basis, as if the world were there to illustrate or prove our theoretical positions, so they've read some essays of Deleuze and then they "discover" that we live in a society of control. I often want to ask them what universe do you live in, or what planet do you spend your time on, because that isn't the world I live in. Or they take a concept from Foucault, or Agamben, or whomever, and lo and behold, they find that concept—for example, governmentality or bare life—everywhere. Now there might be elements of such concepts in it, but you have to point to them, you have to research them, you have to show them to me, so I can argue with you, and we can see the complexities and contradictions of the world. Theory doesn't define the answers. So I don't want to legitimate the claims that such work is necessarily cultural studies, because they do theory in the place of research, in the place of the messy work of constructing the relations. But I also don't want cultural studies to be identified with people who do purely sociological empirical research and have no theory and no politics. But in between all those people, there are lots of people who, to one degree or another, I'm happy to sort of say, well, they do something that looks a bit like cultural studies. And I am a great believer in articulation—in making connections, in forging alliances, especially in the academy, if possible. So, to come back to your question, the term has become very popular. It is everywhere. It is one of the leading academic signifiers used in the U.S. if not the world, as a site for critical and interdisciplinary work. And interdisciplinary work has become a buzz word in the academy. So, you know, I guess it's successful, but it's also under attack.

FC: We also know that cultural studies is always under attack, but it is also true that it is successfully incorporated into, or at least, becomes an important field in the communications discipline.

LG: It has become sort of successful, but its success was never so

complete or secure that it could not be driven back and come under attack again. And at least in the U.S., interdisciplinarity is under attack again. And certainly, the politicization of knowledge is under attack again. And cultural studies itself is under attack. So, I think cultural studies is continuously embattled. I would rather say it's embattled than that it's marginalized. If it's marginalized, it's marginalized as much by people claiming to do cultural studies, whom I think have little clue what it is, as by those opposed to it.

FC: You commented on depolitical cultural studies earlier. Dating back to the origin of cultural studies in the Birmingham School, resistance, subordination and domination have been the central themes. Do you think issue such as resistance remains a hallmark of cultural studies? Or, it doesn't matter now?

LG: Well, it is central in this sense: Cultural studies, I believe, is an attempt to understand how the world is organized in ways that manifest themselves in inequalities of power in the world. And therefore, cultural studies is interested in understanding how power operates in the world, in order to open up the possibility that other worlds are possible, to use the term of the World Social Forum. I mean, cultural studies operates on the premise that if you can understand how the world is being made the way it is, then you can figure out ways to make it different than what it is. And in that sense I think it shares commitment not only with Marxism and feminism and Foucault, etc, but with a wide range of intellectual movements. It is committed to producing a kind of knowledge that enables the world to be changed. That was one of the big arguments at Birmingham had, even when I was there, with the Frankfurt School. One of their arguments against the Frankfurt School was if their diagnosis of the world was correct, then, you know, you couldn't do anything. It even drove the Frankfurt School into depression and despair.

What's the point of telling a story the conclusion of which is you can't change anything, you've already lost? Cultural studies is committed to producing knowledge that may help to change the world. So in that sense it's committed to understanding power, and the resistances, oppositions, contradictions, gaps, etc, that enable power to change, mutate, be challenged and be reorganized. So in

one sense, the answer is yes entirely. The problem is when people think that a particular conception of resistance is always central; in a certain moment in the history of British cultural studies, they were interested in (or constructed) a certain conceptions of resistance that had to do both with the possibilities of cultural and symbolic power, but also with the kind of Marxist search of the revolutionary subject. And that was the subcultural moment, and they developed as it were a theory of resistance, for that moment, in that context. The mistake is to think that that theory of resistance is now generalizable as the cultural studies theory of resistance.

FC: How about power, opposition and domination? Do they continue to be important elements in cultural studies?

LG: Yes, cultural studies is always interested in power, its limits, its possibilities, its transformation, etc. And resistance, opposition, you know all the possible relations people could have to power as domination and repression, as subordination, as empowerment and productive, etc. All of those are the interest of cultural studies, in its attempt to understand a particular conjuncture. The ways those interests are shaped, defined, played out will depend upon the conjuncture and the story that the people doing the analysis think they have to tell in order to tell a better story, in order to open up other possible futures.

Perhaps I should say a word about what I mean by conjunctures, since this is for me a crucial term in cultural studies. While many people assume that a conjuncture is defined by some geo-temporal boundary, for me, the conjuncture is a way of embodying at the heart of any notion of context, the commitment to complexity that is at the heart of cultural studies. A conjuncture is always defined by the co-existence, the articulation of a number of different contradictions, struggles, conflicts, forces, etc. It is always defined by a balance among these competing forces and directions, never as simple state of domination or victory.

FC: Sociologist Scott Lash has recently observed that cultural studies is entering a new phase. Arguing that the existing political and economic milieu is fundamentally different from that of the 1970s, he conceives that power nowadays is largely post-

hegemonic. As the flow of power is increasingly internalized, resistance to power has become more complicated, with power and domination being (re)produced within oneself and within exploited people and groups. Do you agree to his argument? If yes, what is the future direction of cultural studies that you can think of?

LG: I think of Scott as part of a group associated with the journal *Theory, Culture and Society*, which has been making this argument that we live in a world that is post-hegemonic. It's another version of postmodern theory. Ten years ago they were talking about this as postmodernism and then postmodernism became a word no one wants to use, so now they talk about things like societies of control. As I have said, the work of cultural studies is to analyze, to find the theoretical resources and the methodological tools necessary to analyze the complexity of the conjuncture. It seems to me if you look at the world, or better a particular conjuncture, well they are right to say a lot has changed even from, if you want to take the high point of British hegemonic theory in cultural studies, *Policing the Crisis*, etc., the late 70s and early 80s. Yes, in 30 years, a lot has changed—politically, economically, socially, culturally and communicatively. Technologies have changed, the forms of labor have changed, the economies have changed as have the economics of communication and culture. But I want to add, after each of those phrases, somewhat. We need the “somewhat,” the complexity, the partiality, the contradictions, the inheritances, the resistances. I don't believe that history changes in ruptures, in totalizing breaks, although such stories are always wonderful to tell in retrospect. I believe in complexity, multiplicity, relationalities, and contingency. Of course, under the globalization of communication, new forms of culture have come into being. Second Life, Facebook, Reality TV, YouTube, and new forms of music have come into being. New forms of production and consumption. All of those are part of the conjuncture. We have to be analyzing all those things, but not just such things. It is only when they are understood conjuncturally, contextually, that the work of cultural studies has begun.

You see, here is where I might locate the difference between what I might call a scholar of communications and a cultural studies scholar; a scholar of communications can say I'm interested in

studying the new modes of musical production. I think that's great. We need to be studying that. Or someone could go in and say, I'm interested in studying Second Life. Right, I think that's great. We need people to be studying that. But the cultural studies scholar says, I'm interested in how those things fit into the larger context. And you can't fit them into the larger context by simply producing, you know, a kind of homology. So Second Life is to the totality as the society of control is to hegemony. I don't think you can make that kind of leap, even though, it seems to me, to be dominant nowadays in so much media studies, and so much of this kind of over-theorized work. You look at something, one thing, and then you decide this is what it tells you about the society. But that's not what cultural studies does. Cultural studies looks at how all these bits relate together to form a totality that is different from any single part of it. And only in studying and theorizing the relations do you understand what the conjuncture is about, and how it's working. And actually, only in studying and theorizing the relations do we understand what the specific phenomenon or object itself is.

So if we want to understand the way the world is changing, if we want to understand what is going on, I have recently argued, we need to be studying all these relations, including economics. Cultural studies, and communications scholars by the way, have, to a large extent, have avoided economics. Not simply to add whatever our assumptions about the economy may be, not simply to turn to our favorite (usually based on political grounds) economic theories may be, but to study economics and economics, to find a way to do economics culturally, conjuncturally, contextually.

FC: Why economics? I suppose economics is not the sort of problematic that we used to study in cultural studies.

LG: But it is not just economics. You know we have largely avoided the nitty-gritty of politics, state politics, for example, we can't afford to ignore that anymore. Not everyone in cultural studies has ignored such matters—certainly there is wonderful work being produced—not only in the North Atlantic world, but in Asia and Latin America, for example, that does take on such challenges. But I think, too often, we ignore them, and we do so at our peril, because it means that the stories we tell, our understandings of what's going on, will not be

adequate to the task of changing the world. And I'm increasingly thinking, necessarily, it's a collaborative collective project. You know, because it requires looking at all these different bits and pieces and trying to fit them together, like pieces of a puzzle or, if you prefer less everyday images, like elements of an assemblage of discursive formation.

I can say lots of things about that one piece. But it seems to me the problem is to get all the pieces out and figure out how they fit together, and then you have a better story. And we don't know what the story is. We don't know what's new and what isn't. Part of what Gramsci said about conjunctual analysis is that, the hardest part of it is recognizing what's new and what isn't new. You know, much of what passes for new is simply the latest modification of what has been around for some time. And sometimes what is new, we don't even recognize.

FC: So, what is the implication?

LG: In a certain way I believe cultural studies has to start over again all the time. It starts over not only in its attempt to describe the world, but in its attempt to create itself. So what cultural studies was—and let me say that it was always many things—in Britain in the 1970s when some people did subcultural work, or in the 1970s and 80s when some people did *Policing the Crisis* and hegemony theory, those are useful models and they are useful ideas but they don't tell you what cultural studies should look like today, in the United States, or in Hong Kong, or in China. It won't look the same. It won't use the same theoretical resources, although some of them might be useful, but others may be necessary. It won't necessarily have the same politics. It won't necessarily ask the same questions. So cultural studies is constantly responding by making itself up. That's why, I think it's Angela McRobbie who said once, cultural studies makes itself up as it goes along. As it's trying to do the work of telling the story about what's going on, it's actually creating what it's supposed to look like. It is counter to the dominant practices of the academy, because you can't teach cultural studies, in the sense that here it is, here is what it looks like, take it up and go do your thing, to someone. You have to teach how to do cultural studies, how to think contextually and conjuncturally.

FC: That is a very legitimate answer.

LG: So you know, in that sense I think Foucault was very much a French version of cultural studies. He has the image of theories as a toolbox, and you never know which tools you're going to need to respond to the context and the politics that you're answering. So all you can do is to give people a theoretical toolbox, and a set of empirical methodologies, and some sophisticated practice in how to think contextually. But you can't tell people, "This is what cultural studies is. Go out and do it." And you know, that's a lot harder in the academy.

FC: Okay, let's talk about the interdisciplinary approach of cultural studies. We hear the call for interdisciplinary research so often that it has almost become a cliché. But we truly believe that cultural studies is very interdisciplinary, involving disciplines such as communications, political economy, sociology, anthropology, comparative literature, semiotics, and philosophy. However, it has been argued that this interdisciplinary approach results in the lack of academic coherence and professional standards in cultural studies which in turn leads to the decline of cultural studies in the Anglo-Saxon academic world? Anyway, how do you account for its recent decline?

LG: I don't know if there's a decline, or if it's just more obvious. I think, it is harder to find cultural studies work that gives insightful, interesting, important descriptions of the contemporary world. I mean, it is hard to say, "Here's a work to cultural studies that you have to read in order to understand what is going on in the world." In part that's because there is so much that claims to be doing it. You know, one might have said that—and maybe one still should—about Policing the Crisis. One might have said that about certain works in cultural studies around the world. But I'm not sure that that problem is unique to cultural studies; that is, it seems to me that one would be hard pressed to find intelligent, useful, politically useful, and theoretically sophisticated or theoretically informed analyses about what's going on in the world from anyone. I mean, you know there're little bits, that's an interesting analysis of reality TV, that's an interesting analysis of the state of unions or something. But you know, like Angela McRobbie's recent book on feminism under

Blairism and the New Labor, there's a book that puts the pieces together in ways I've never thought of, and I suddenly find the pieces are beginning to fit together. There are many examples, and yet, there are too few, and too few conversations. I find it harder and harder to find those kinds of things. But again, I find it harder and harder to find in Marxist or feminist studies. Not just cultural studies is having this problem.

FC: Yes, why?

LG: Why, I think because we are, as intellectuals, extraordinarily lazy. We have become lazy. We don't really want to do any work. You know we have our theories, and we might like to read the latest new theorists, but we don't really want to challenge them, not unless some other newer theorist has come along. The theorists don't want to do the empirical work. And no one wants to challenge their own political assumptions. So in fact we end up telling the same stories that we have always told politically, and allowing our theory and our politics to do the work that we are supposed to do as scholars and intellectuals. It seems to me that laziness is more visible than the problem of interdisciplinarity.

FC: So do you think that interdisciplinary tradition might also create that kind of laziness?

LG: No, it's not the fault of interdisciplinarity. It's the fault of people who are too lazy to do it well. Interdisciplinarity is not easy. It's much harder than disciplinarity. I mean, there's nothing in the fact of interdisciplinarity that means you don't have standards, and you go in to do shitty works. Being in a discipline doesn't guarantee that you produce good work. And interdisciplinarity doesn't guarantee the lack of quality. But, being lazy about interdisciplinarity does guarantee that the work you produce is going to be even more shitty than most work. Cultural studies is interdisciplinary because as I said before, it looks at relations. It's about relations. It's not about objects. Most disciplines are about objects. They create objects, like the economy, or the market, or the state, or the voter, or media, or popular culture, or the consumer. These are all objects we can study, and that's fine. As I said before, I think those kinds of work are necessary. But what cultural studies wants to do is come in and take

that work and then try to put them together and see the relations that, taken together, not only produce a bigger picture, a story about a conjuncture, but also reconfigure these objects. So it has to be interdisciplinary because it's about the relations across the objects of the disciplines. So while economics can say, we can have a market and it's a purely economic term, we know that market exists only in relationship to all sorts of other things that are not economic in the economists' sense, just as cultural things exist only in relationship to things that are also economic or political or etc. So, cultural studies looks at the relationship, it has to be interdisciplinary. But how you do interdisciplinary work is the question. And I think what we have come to is the idea that what it means to do interdisciplinary work is that you read a few things that you like in another discipline. So to use the example, that I've been doing a lot of research recently, of economics, people read a couple of books in economics, I don't know who the Chinese ones would be, but you know in the West, in the English-speaking world it's people like David Harvey, or Empire, or Lazzarato, or ... People read David Harvey and they think they understand contemporary capitalism. But my question is: what if he's wrong? How do you know he's right? You're reading the people that you agree with politically.

FC: What is the essence of the problem that you are talking about? How would it be possibly avoided?

LG: What you're trying to take from them is not their politics, but their analysis of a concrete empirical set of relations, and they could be wrong. You don't know what the choices are. And you don't reconstruct the object, both discursively and conjuncturally. Most of us on the left or in cultural studies reject out of hand most of neo-classical economics, even all of neo-classical economics. But of course 99% of the people who reject it have never read a word of it. They don't understand it enough to reject it. But they want to talk about economics. But what qualifies them to talk about economics? Ha ... You see that's what I mean by lazy. We tend to think increasingly that because we are intellectuals, we can talk about anything. We can talk about anything just with a little bit of reading. I think if you want to talk about the relations as I'm interested in doing now, of economics into this conjunctural analysis, it's gonna

take you a few years, to begin to be able to say that I understand when I choose this theory of economics or this description of the financial crisis, I understand why I'm choosing it. And I can begin even to reconfigure the analysis. It's not because of my politics. You know, most of the leftists are telling the same old Marxist stories they've been telling for 150 years, about capitalism. And then they turn around and say, capitalism is entirely new because it's finance capital. Finance capitalism is not new. And capitalism is not all finance capitalism. And not all economies are capitalist. It's the complexity, the contextuality, that's missing, inevitably. So it keeps bouncing back and forth between it's entirely new and everything we know is irrelevant and actually it's the exactly the same old things. Neither of those two stories about capitalism is a very useful one. Reading Marx who wrote his work 150 years ago is not going to give you the answers. Doesn't mean that one shouldn't read Marx and use him. And on the other hand, assuming that the world is so entirely different that nothing we thought we knew is true, so we now live in some kind of simulacrum of capitalism or something, my answer is, why don't you read some economics? You may not like it, but it may give you some understanding of where you have to begin to do the research. You have to begin to take seriously the diversity of people writing in economics. You have to do your research. You have to understand the methodologies. You can criticize them. You can develop better methodologies. But only after you have begun to enter into dialogue with them. That's interdisciplinarity, and that's very different from what most people practice today.

Selected Works by Lawrence Grossberg

Please refer to the end of the Chinese version of the dialogue for Lawrence Grossberg's selected works.