

不同文化的不同解讀—

李安

談《少年Pi的奇幻漂流》

原作者：Katharine Rust (凱瑟琳·拉斯特)

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譯者：羅穎琳、鄧穎珊、黃楚喬 (應用翻譯高級文憑課程)



做導演的把一本被認為「無法拍成電影」的小說搬上大銀幕是一回事，而觀眾怎樣看這部電影又是另一回事。這就是《少年Pi的奇幻漂流》(Life of Pi)一個令人驚訝的地方：該片由李安執導，先給觀眾一個帶來視覺震撼的故事，然後（劇透，小心！）質疑故事的真實性，而這部電影卻十分賣座，扣除一億兩千萬美元製作預算，國際票房總收入超過五億美元。

電影賣座的原因很可能是這部電影有多種演繹方法。電影改編自楊·馬泰爾(Yann Martel)在2001年所寫、內容令人費解的同名小說，講述了一個少年在一塊木筏上漂流了227天，而與之相伴的只有一隻老虎。電影獲得各種各樣的反應，李安表示這些反應的本質在某種程度上是文化差異。

我與李安探討過這部電影在海外的反應。

把「無法拍成」拍成賣座電影

李安：先說一下背景，這部電影改編自同名小說，結尾處充滿疑問。它顛覆了你之前所看的劇情，然後告訴你殘酷的「第二個故事」。你會陷入沉思。我十年前讀這本書的時候，有人說它「無法拍成電影」。對我來說，我們做電影

的總會尋找不同的方法去製作電影，但故事的結局對製片人和觀眾都是巨大的挑戰，這就電影而言是不常見的。常見的是，電影會遵循特定的模式、軌道，並且按風格依從特定的規則，使你不用太花腦力，因電影畫面本身非常引人入勝，會讓你全神貫注，與讀書相比更是

這樣。書中文字，是符號，所以你會做出間接的想像。但電影把逼真的畫面放大並呈現在你面前。兩個小時你都坐在那裏，電影必須要深深地把你吸引。

我花了一年半時間去做後期製作，當然大量的工作花費在視覺效果上，完成老虎和海洋的部分，但我在剪輯上特別花費心力。為電影設定一個怎樣的節奏、怎樣去處理結局才不會讓觀眾覺得「第二個故事」有令人失去重心、陷入迷茫的感覺，這是很大的挑戰，我覺得自己最後勉強做到了。剪輯快結束時，我還以為要重拍，以確保蘇瑞吉·沙瑪(Suraj Sharma)的演出、付出，以及他對情感哲學的專注、奉獻和承諾能夠打動觀眾。我覺得對大部分人來說，這部電影做到了，只是我不知道它在世界各地會得到甚麼反應。

我得說，無法一概而論，但我發覺整體而言，亞洲的觀眾由印度至中國、台灣，真的最喜歡第三幕，這是我意想不到的。他們認為這是部需要思考的電影，大概是文化的緣故，他們對所見所聞都慣於懷疑；又可能是由於佛教、印度教或道教文化的原因……我沒有確切的看法，但他們一般都會重看這部電影，對「第二個故事」頗為認真，並把整個旅程當作精神之旅程來看，特別著重理清老虎對Pi的意義，而不是人獸之間的關係，視老虎差不多為Pi的第二自我。他們一方面喜愛那悲劇式的結尾，既費解又發人深思，能打動人心；另一方面

喜歡老虎就這樣不辭而別，繼而又開始解讀「第一個故事」，為甚麼Pi那內在的暴力傾向必須與生存本能共存呢？他失去了甚麼？天堂失落了，他從男孩長大為男人，這是甚麼意思？老虎是父親的縮影嗎？大眾非常渴望解開這部電影的謎團。

世界各地讚歎電影精彩

在北歐，常常有人問我上帝是甚麼，他們說：「在你看來，上帝是甚麼呢？」想必這正是他們看這部電影時所關心的，所以當他們問起我來，我認為他們也在自問電影的內在或外在的哲理所在。

我聽說很多美國觀眾對這部電影讚歎不已，特別是大海那部分，他們覺得談及信仰能振奮人心，不論信徒還是無神論者，如果純粹以非常寬容、理智的態度談論信仰，就能得到啟迪，感到振奮，我想這是普遍的反應，有些人驚喜的是，觀眾在結尾能有一點思考空間，得出不同的視角。

拉丁美洲把這部電影評為G級，即老少咸宜的電影，其中以墨西哥的反應最明顯，他們大多是天主教徒，我問他們：「『第二個故事』怎麼樣？」他們



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說：「噢，那無所謂，電影很精彩，不管『第二個故事』如何，我們依然喜歡第一個。信仰是好東西，我們應該擁有信仰，頌讚信仰。」

我不知道真正原因，但我想很多人喜歡這個結局。我回到台灣，到了個小鎮，有人會騎著摩托車經過大喊說：「電影好棒！」就颯一聲的疾駛而過。當然，網絡上也瘋傳百萬計的文章和討論：「這意味著甚麼？那意味著甚麼？那座島又意味著甚麼呢？」

每部電影都有自己的生命

在（後期製作）第一次剪輯時，我還不知道這部電影會有甚麼效果。我永遠不能扭轉某部電影的本質，因為每部電影都有自己的生命，但這部電影……我以為它會是讓人摸不着頭腦、成本過高的藝術電影。我做後期製作的時候，感到心情沉重。最後，當所有配樂和效果都加上了，剪輯也完成了，不知怎的，整部電影就脫胎換骨了。我們在紐約電影節第一次播放電影的完整版本時，大家都起立鼓掌；每一場我去過的試映會，

都以掌聲結束。我從來沒有遇過這種情況。

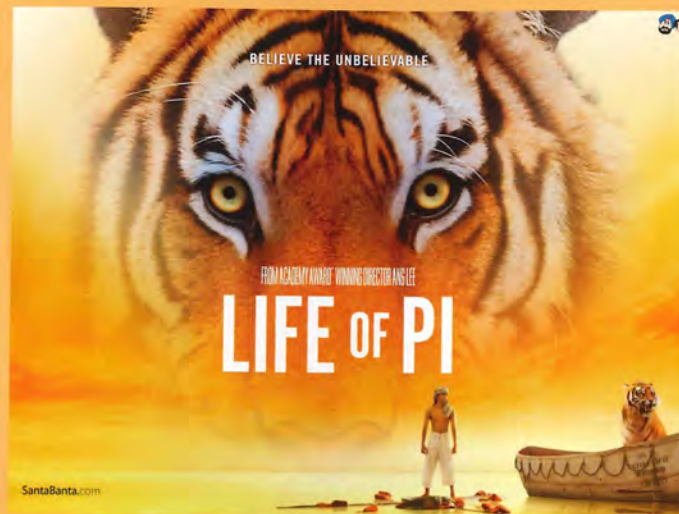
因為來到小島之前的那段旅程相當順暢，我猜想（觀眾的）反應會不錯。但對於那之後的部分，我就開始不安了。我猜想觀眾很難順暢地把整部電影看完；它看似是歷險求生的故事，那隻老虎又看似和男孩有某種關係，然後就一切都變了……而我也就開始不安了。但原著就是這樣的，我必須尊重，不能加以改變。我很希望能夠一直假裝這是個歷險故事，讓大多數觀眾從這個角度觀看這部電影，但故事發展到某個階段，我就不得不打破這個幻覺，教你不得不開始思考，而我認為這種思考是有深度的。這就是藝術電影，到最後我也不能避免把它拍成藝術電影。但我實在想不到，這部電影能獲得這麼好的反應，也想不到某些地區的人真的毫不抗拒這個結局，或完全忽視這個結局（笑）。

我為整個世界製作了一部電影

大家問了我很多關於這部電影的問題。他們問我對故事的看法，但我總是拒絕回答。故事是你自己的。我當然也有我的看法，但如果我說了，大家就會把我的看法視為標準答案，我認為那是不對的。如果讓我以製片人的身分說話，我會說「第一個故事」長75分鐘，「第二個故事」少於5分鐘。我覺得兩個故事很有關聯，我希望觀眾不要錯過這點，要懂得怎樣把兩個故事聯繫起來。

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較難回答的問題是亞洲、拉丁美洲和某些歐洲觀眾問的。他們問我，我對這個故事的個人看法跟我的個人成長及



事業發展的關係，也問我怎樣做電影、我屬於哪一種文化、我的電影又屬於哪一種文化。我覺得這較難回答，因為我還不大知道答案。我衷心希望我能夠回答那些問題，也感激他們提問、感激他們關心那些問題。

我覺得，我為整個世界製作了一部電影。不同人對這部電影看法不一，我認為不同文化、不同經歷的人有多種多樣的反應，（由此可見）大家所走的路各有不同。這就是這部電影該有的效果，我只是不敢相信會那麼成功而已。你知道，你把電影發行到較少地區就可以做到這點，但我對於票房數字能這麼理想感到意外。所有人都感到意外。

附錄：

'Which Story Do You Prefer?' How Different Cultures Saw 'Life of Pi'

Katharine Rust

It's one thing for a director to film an "unfilmable" novel; it's another for audiences to actually watch it. That's one astonishing thing about Ang Lee's *Life of Pi*: The movie, which immerses viewers in a visually stunning story and then (spoiler alert!) questions the veracity of that story, is an international box-office success, grossing more than half a billion dollars off of a \$120-million production budget. Part of that success, though, may have well come from the many ways that the film can be interpreted. An adaptation of Yann Martel's mind-bending 2001 novel about a teenager who spends 227 days on a raft with only a

tiger for company, *Pi* has seen a wide array of responses—the nature of which, Lee says, have to an extent differed from culture to culture. Ahead of this weekend's Oscars, where *Pi* will compete for 11 awards including Best Picture and Best Director, I spoke with Lee about the movie's reception abroad. Ang Lee: To give some background, the movie, adapted from the book, questions you at the end. It challenges what you've just seen and it tells you a grim second story. You scratch your head. When I read the book 10 years ago, people said "that's unfilmable." To me, we always find ways to make movies, but that ending was fundamentally

challenging to filmmakers and film viewers. It's unusual for a movie. Usually a movie flows in a certain pattern, a certain track, and goes with certain rules of genre. You've been taken care of because the images are very demanding and your focus is demanded. More so than reading books—a book is words and symbols, you do indirect imaginations. But movies are photo-realistic images enlarged and imposed right at you. For two hours you're sitting there. You have to be riveted.

I spent a year and a half doing post-production. Of course a lot of the work goes to the visual effects, completing all the tigers and water, but I particularly struggled with the editing. How do you pace the movie? How do you handle the ending so the second story that comes up doesn't feel like you pulled the rug from under the audience's feet? It's very challenging. I thought I barely made it at the end of the day. I thought toward the end I would have to do a re-shoot, to make sure the performance and the investment of Suraj [Sharma] and his focus, devotion, and commitment to his emotional philosophy held the audience. I think we did that for most people, but what I didn't know is would play out around the world.

I have to say, I cannot generalize. But in Asia, I found, as a group—from India to China and Taiwan—they really enjoyed the third act the most, which is a surprise to me. They perceive it as a thinking movie. Maybe it's because the culture is more skeptical about what they see and what they're told, or maybe it's the Buddhism, Hinduism, or Daoism culture ... I don't know what

it is exactly, but very commonly, they return to watch the movie again. They take the second story quite literally and start to view the whole journey as a psychological journey that really focuses on what the tiger is to Pi, and not so much as a relationship between a man and a beast. They see it almost as the alter ego of Pi. They love that tragic, disturbing, challenging, and therefore, emotional ending. They love the fact that the tiger doesn't look back. And then they start to decipher what the first story is, why he has to coexist with inner violence and survival instinct. What did he lose? The paradise lost in order to grow up from a boy to a man, what does that mean? Is the tiger related to the father? People really try to decipher the movie.

In Northern Europe, I got a lot of questions about what god is. They would ask me, "What is god to you?" When they see the movie, I would assume, that's what matters to them. So when they ask me, I think they're asking themselves where that internal/external kind of philosophy is.

I hear a lot of the American audience is amazed by the journey, the ocean part. But they find the mention of faith uplifting. Whether you're religious or atheist, just to talk about faith in the very tolerable, reasonable way was uplifting, I would say that's the bulk of reaction. Some were amazed that you can put a little bit of thinking at the end and give a different perspective.

In Latin America—particularly Mexico—they rated the movie G. It's a family movie. They really enjoy the journey. They're Catholic, most of them, and I asked them, "what about the second story?" They say, "Oh, it doesn't matter. How wonderful [the

film] is, regardless of the second story, we can still enjoy the first one. Faith is a good thing. Let's enjoy it and celebrate it."

I don't know exactly what it is, but I think a lot of people found the ending enjoyable. I went back to Taiwan, to a small town, and there were people who would motorcycle by and yell, "Great film!" then just whiz by. Then, of course, the Internet goes crazy with millions of writings and debating, "what does this mean, what does that mean, what does the island mean?"

From the first cut in the post [production], I still didn't know how the movie would do. I can never turn around the nature of a movie—a movie has certain life—but this ... I thought it was going to be an over-priced art film with people scratching their heads. It felt heavy when I did post. Finally, when all the music and all the effects were in, the cut is done, and somehow it just turned around. The first time we showed the complete film in the New York Film Festival there was a standing ovation. And every screening I went to, there was applause at the end. I've never experienced that. Because the journey before you reach the island is pretty smooth, I imagined that that would go well [with audiences]. But then after that I start to sweat. I don't see someone just watching it smoothly. It looks like a survival-adventure story. It looks like the tiger has a relationship with the boy. And then it just flips ... and I start to sweat. But that belongs to the book and I have to honor it. I cannot change that. I was hoping I could fake my whole way so most people can watch it like an adventure story, but at some point the illusion has to break. You have to start thinking,

and to me, it's some profound thinking. That's art house, I cannot avoid being art house at the end. But it just surprised me how well it worked and how some parts of the world really embraced the ending ... or ignored the ending (laughs).

People ask me a lot of questions about the movie. They ask me my take on the stories a lot but I always refuse. The story is yours. Of course I have my versions, but if I tell, people would take that as a standard answer and I think that'd be wrong. As a filmmaker, I would say that the first story is 75 minutes and the second story is less than five. I think the two stories are very much related. I hope the audiences don't miss that—how to relate the two stories.

The question that's harder for me to answer that I get from Asia, from Latin America, and somewhat Europe, is my personal take on the story in relation to the development of myself and my career, how I make movies, culturally where I fit in, and where my movie fits in. So that's harder to answer because I don't quite know yet. And I sincerely wish I could answer those questions, and I appreciate that they ask that question and they care for that.

I think I made a movie for the whole world. There's not a universal look at the film and I think the diversity of response based on the culture and personal life experience [shows that] people go different directions. I think that's how the movie is supposed to work. I just didn't dare dream that it would work out that way. You know you could do that with a smaller release but I was surprised at this that the box office is doing so well. And that surprised everybody.