

转向观念：晚期现代主义的理论及历史 —— 鲁明军对话皮力

鲁明军（以下简称鲁）：新著《从“行动”到“观念”：晚期现代主义理论的转型研究》是你的博士论文，三四年前就读过，那段时间国内正好在讨论格林伯格，当时觉得你是将格林伯格拉到了一个更为具体的历史场境中，这和其他人的视角和路径都不太一样，比如易英、冷林、张敢，包括你书中提到的沈语冰、何桂彦以及河清等都做过格林伯格的翻译和研究，其要么侧重批评理论内部的争论，要么侧重批评理论与意识形态的关系，从而忽视了它与艺术现场、艺术系统以及文化政治之间复杂的互动。你这本书虽然比较概括，但为我们勾勒了一个相对比较清晰的历史线索。当然我觉得，这可能也是这本书的问题，因为它过于概括，所以忽视了很多细节，或者说，由于它过于清晰了，反而去历史有点远——因为历史往往是模糊不清的。因此，如果从方法论的角度讲，是不是更侧重批评性的历史建构，而不是艺术史探究？

皮力（以下简称皮）：这本书本质上来说其实关注的批评的场域以及发生在这个场域中的话语的交锋。如果我们关注这个时期的历史的话，我们还要发现在格林伯格的话语理论之外，还有很多艺术家的重要理论；所以这本书的重点还梳理出来一个多面向的话语交锋和思考。而更重要的是，我希望能理论和具体创作之间，找到一些可以辨认和分析的线索和互动模式。所以在我看来，这本书开始是想写一些批评史的东西，但是后来写成了艺术史之间的一个东西，其目的还是重构批评与创作的现场。

鲁：书名中的“行动”这个概念是特指罗森伯格关于波洛克的解释，还是一种相对的泛指呢？全书包括了两条线索，一是罗森伯格的“行动”，这个跟历史前卫、“达达”是密切相关的，一直到后来的情景主义、偶发艺术以及波普等；二是格林伯格及其“形式主义”这条线。书中也提到了，50年代以后，格林伯格的文章中已经看不到“前卫”这个词了，但是极少主义对他的反叛恰恰开启了另一个观念化的进路。显然，这两条线都是抽象表现主义甚或是波洛克引出来的——尽管你在叙述中也不断地和欧洲联系起来讨论。这是不是说，极少主义对形式主义的背叛也在“行动”的范畴之内吗？或者说，在罗森伯格的“行动”与弗雷德的“剧场”之间有没有一个关联？

皮：书名中的“行动”就是罗森伯格的所归纳的“行动绘画”的“行动”。其初衷是想恢复那些被格林伯格遮蔽住的声音。但是你的问题其实提的非常尖锐，确实在从未来主义，到达达主义，再到超现实主义，经过波洛克再到后来的偶发艺术，确实一直有“行动”的线索。但是从未来主义开始，到偶发艺术，如果微观到行动和行为本身来看，这个过程又是剧场性逐渐减弱，观念性逐渐加强的过程。这也是行为艺术最终和先锋剧场之间没法混为一谈的原因。这几年行为艺术又开始回到剧场感了，但是只是剧场感，而不是剧场。我在我的书中写到，极少主义对形式主义的背叛其实是一个无心的结果。他们的理论动机无论是对图底关系的分析，还是对于媒介和物性的分析，或者是空间与场域的类比，其话语框架都还是在形式主义内部发生开来，而结果不同是因为“观念”开始取代“自我”成为一个因素被引入到这个对话中来了。所以我觉得极少主义的反叛不是行动的结果，而是因为观念性的确立。

鲁：整本书与其说是从抽象表现主义或波洛克出发，不如说是从罗森伯格和格林伯格出发的，因为无论前者还是后者，对于抽象或波洛克本身的认识还是一种批评性的建构，也只是限于某个侧面，并不能代表全部。比如最近出版的迈克尔·莱杰（Michael Leja）的那本《重构抽象表现主义：20世纪40年代的主体性与绘画》中，已经修正了以前的“行动性”和“形式主义”这两种解释框架，历史要比这个复杂得多。那么，这里面就有一个问题，虽然你在书中也提到这是一部批评理论史，但是在涉及到艺术家实践的时候，你的论述过于简略，从而忽视了艺术与批评之间的缝隙和错位，感觉更侧重批评与批评之间的观念分歧？比如波洛克的绘画，其实既不是单纯的形式主义，他的画面中很多是有具象成分的，也不是单纯的“行动绘画”，他有些绘画语言实际来自他的对手超现实主义和立体派（尤其是毕加索）。

皮：你说得非常对。波洛克的问题确实非常复杂，他早期有过超现实主义和立体派时期，晚期格林伯格又把色域绘画作为对波洛克的升级版，因为色域绘画相比波洛克更少的情绪化的倾向。但是如果我们要分析这个具象成分的消长，是需要放在30年代晚期到50年代晚期纽约画派的“名利场逻辑”中来考察。但是如果这么考察就是艺术史的工作了。就好比前面说的，这本书我还是考察格林伯格阐释和后来理论话语场域中

的符号化“波洛克”，而不是艺术史中的作为一个个体的波洛克，从这个角度看，这本书也可以被看做是理论史，而不是艺术史。

鲁：有两个概念，一个是“晚期现代主义”，是一个线性叙事的产物；一个是“当代艺术”，在你这里也是基于线性叙事的一个定义吗？那么，在“晚期现代主义”与“当代艺术”两者之间的关系，你是怎么界定的？

皮：原来不想趟“晚期现代主义”浑水，我的标题是1956-1972年。1958年是波洛克去世，1972年是史泽曼的文献展开幕。此后就是全球的新自由主义抬头了。但是后来因为是博士论文，如果不用晚期现代主义，就又要花很长篇幅去解释为何是这个年代以及左派和新自由主义的关系等等。我的导论的写作其实还是保留了这个时间框架。但是我是会用晚期现代主义的概念还是在詹姆逊的意义上使用，即晚期现代主义不是当代之前的一个时期，而是一个开放的延绵之今的概念。之所以谓之晚期，是为了和18到19时期的现代主义建构形成区别，其显著区别就是这个时候的社会与经济不再是商品化，而是符号化和景观化。其实这个晚期更有点像“近期”的艺术。而“当代艺术”则是我们日常话语中的当代艺术，即从极少主义和波普艺术开始的艺术。你要说“晚期现代主义艺术”就又要造个词，那我就干脆用“当代艺术”来替换这个词。所以晚期现代主义和当代不是线性时间之中前后的概念。

当时论文交稿在即，所以没法再展开。这几年对于70年代的研究和阅读多了一些，我对新自由主义的崛起，以及随之而来的艺术市场化并深刻的影响到艺术的生产模式理解更深了。其实1972年以后，整个艺术生产的模式就更不同了。当时的感觉其实是对的。

鲁：60年代也被称为新前卫阶段，新前卫的一个核心是对于艺术体制的反思和批判，但是在你的论述中，感觉还是在一个建构系统和体制的过程。记得哈尔·福斯特（Hal Foster）说过，历史前卫（以达达为主）反对惯例，却依赖于“美术馆—画廊”这套体制，新前卫反思体制，却又肯定并执行一种新的惯例。所以，我觉得你在论述中是不是过分强调观念化的理论转向，而忽视了艺术家的体制性实践？而且这种体制性实践实际上是非常丰富的，可能有一个大的趋势，但在这个趋势内部充满了多重的张力，就像我们在本雅明·布赫洛（Benjamin H.D. Buchloh）那本《新前卫与文化工业》中所看到的。

皮：就像我前面说的，60年代的新前卫和70年代的新自由主义之间有个时间差。50年代，其实展览还没有杂志上的批评重要，这和19世纪以来的理论场域只有量的区别（因为传媒变多了），而没有质的区别。而美术馆，画廊，双年展三位一体的体制建立其实是60年代肇始，而到70-80年代才彻底形成新的艺术生产体制。这里面还有全球经济模式的变化导致的IT、广告、咨询产业的爆发和大量新钱出现的原因。没有这些，波普艺术就不会卖得那么贵。但是这个不是我在1958年到1972年里要解决的问题。这些问题都是到1970年代才开始尖锐起来。

鲁：有关“偶发艺术”，欧洲和美国还是有很大的差异，这个差异并没有在书中体现出来，而是被简化处理为一个潮流。比如，欧洲偶发艺术除了达达以外，还有一个背景就是阿尔托的戏剧，而且它更政治化，美国则不然，明显更侧重生活态度？

皮：是，这些其实是在激浪派和贫困艺术里面展开的问题。但是因为篇幅和时间后来没有展开。不过现在沈语冰他们已经功德无量的翻译了很多相关的书，包括本雅明·布赫洛和哈尔·福斯特他们的著作，所以这些问题在今天应该好解决和理解了。

鲁：书中涉及到达达与超现实主义的关系，我记得你只是强调了它们之间的连续性，但实际上二者还是有很大的不同，达达是连达达本身都要反对的，所以它是一种彻底的无政府主义，但超现实主义不一样，比如布列东，当他依附于马克思和弗洛伊德的时候，达达主义的原始信条“反”其实已经没有了，换句话说，超现实主义本身是不是并没有我们想象的那么革命？

皮：是，超现实主义的反是一种表演性的。你就想像达利的样子就可以了。但是这个延续性在书中是为了强调布列东、墨西哥壁画和托洛斯基的关联。

鲁：今天来看，整本书想还原一个60年代艺术批评理论的历史情景。但我觉得，整本书还是以美国为核心的，附带了英国、法国、德国、意大利和前苏联，但是不是同时期还有阿根廷、巴西等南美国家以及波兰、捷克等东欧其他国家也不同程度地参与了这个运动？

皮：我觉得遗漏比较大的是德语地区的讨论。东欧部分的材料我们还在把握中。南美如果没有西班牙语，只能借助二手材料。我老了，交给年轻人吧。

鲁：这样一种叙述方式还是一个偏共时性，侧重大的历史环境与艺术发生的关系，而忽视了艺术史这个维度，就像福斯特所说的，艺术实际上是艺术史和社会双轴协作的结果。的确，里面当然也涉及到艺术史，但这个艺术史还是受限于大的历史背景，事实是，艺术有一部分是可以超越这些的，比如有艺术史家研究发现琼斯与梵高的关系，还有德·蒂夫（Thierry de Duve）说的，杜尚的《泉》和修拉的绘画，包括格林伯格所谓的“空白画布”其实都是现成品。你是怎么看待这些问题的？

皮：这是十月学派的观点。我当时没有看，最近还真是要找时间了解一下。

鲁：里面有一个核心的概念“主体的撤退”，但其实形式主义并没有放弃主体，格林伯格建构了一个更大的主体，就是美国主体，所以50年代当他宣称美国绘画的胜利的时候，我认为他已经赋予了形式主义一个新的主体，或者你认为这是两个不同的主体吗？

皮：我所使用的“主体”，其实是现代主义意义上的主体。而从琼斯到罗伯特史密森，甚至极少主义，你可以看到早期现代主义中自我与情感这些封闭的范畴不断被弱化被质疑，而与社会、政治和历史相关的记忆、回忆、身体、行动开始变得重要。所以是形式主义中主体的撤退，而不是真正的艺术中主体的撤退。如果在扯远一些，我觉得格林伯格建构的美国主体有点被夸大了，而抽象表现主义和美国文化政策以及中央情报局之间的关系问题，已经被中国批评家想当然的“庸俗化”了。包括桑德斯（Frances Stonor Saunders）那本《文化冷战与中央情报局》很多也是靠不住的，另外一些是偶然的。

鲁：对今天的中国当代艺术而言，你认为这本书的出版有何意义？

皮：我是希望这本书能抛砖引玉，一是能提供一个晚期现代主义的知识地图，二是让读者意识到现代主义与当代艺术之间关系的复杂性。现代主义的研究汗牛充栋，我的这本小书充气量只是入门的指南，希望对艺术和批评的后进有作用。如果要进一步了解当然要去读原文，或者看沈语冰他们的译著。与我个人而言，我是希望用这些东西作为一个工具，转回来关注中国的学问

注：删节版载于《艺术新闻》2015年12月号

Diversion to Concept :Theories and Histories of Late Modernism— Dialogue Between Lu Mingjun and Pi Li

Lu Mingjun (Lu in short): Your new book *From Action to Concept: Transformation Study of Late Modernism Theories* is also your doctoral dissertation and I read it three or four years ago. At that time, people at home were talking about Greenberg and thought that you've brought him to a more concrete historical context which was different from others' point of views. Many people like Yi Ying, Leng Lin, Zhang Gan and the mentioned Shen Yubing, He Guiyan and He Qing all did translations and studies about Greenberg. They either focus on the debate within criticism theories or the relations between criticism theories and ideologies, thus neglecting the interaction with the art scene, art system and culture and politics. Your book has provided a rather clear historical clue though it is a little general. I think it might also be the problem. Because it is general, it neglects many details. Or, because it is so clear that it is not history-based as history is always unclear. So from the perspective of methodology, does it focus more on the historical constructing of criticism rather than the study on art?

Pi Li (Pi in short): In the final analysis the book puts emphasis on the field of criticism and the confrontation of discourse in it. If we pay attention to the history in this period, we'll find that apart

from Greenberg's discourse theory, there were important theories of many artists; so the book also contains multifaceted discourse confrontations and reflections. More importantly, I wanted to find some recognizable and analyzable clues and interaction modes amid theories and concrete creations. So in my opinion, the book starts for history of criticism, but it turned out to be something between history of criticism and history of art. The aim is to reconstruct the site of criticism and creation anyway.

Lu: Does the concept of "action" in the title refer to Rosenberg's explanation about Pollock or is it a relative general reference? There are two clues in the book, one is the "action" of Rosenberg, which is closely linked to the history of progressive and "Dada", and to the later situationism, happening art and pop art; the other is Greenberg and its formalism. It also mentioned that after the 1950s we seldom see the word "progressive" in Greenberg's article but the rebellion of minimalism against him exactly opened another conceptual path. Obviously, both of the two paths were derived from abstract expressionism or Pollock—although you kept relating to Europe while narrating. Does it suggest the rebellion of minimalism against formalism is also within the "action"? Or, is there a connection between Rosenberg's "action" and Fred's "theater"?

Pi: "Action" in the title is from what Rosenberg concluded "action painting". It originally tends to restore the voice covered by Greenberg. But your question is quite acute actually. Indeed, from futurism, Dadaism to surrealism, from Pollock to the later happening art, there have been clues of "action". But from futurism to the happening art, if seen from a micro perspective of the action itself, the process has seen diminishing theatricality and increasing conceptualization. That's also why action art and pioneer theater are apples and oranges. Recent years have witnessed the action art going back to theatricality, but just theatricality, not theater. I've written in my book that the rebellion of minimalism against formalism is actually an accident. The theoretical motivation, no matter being the analysis of figure-ground relation, of media and physical property, or the analogy between space and field, the discourse framework is within formalism, and the reason for different outcome is that the "concept" has replaced "self" and has been introduced to this dialogue. Therefore, I think the rebellion of minimalism is not because of action but the establishment of conceptualization.

Lu: Instead of saying the book starts from abstract expressionism or Pollock, rather, it's from Rosenberg and Greenberg. Because both the former and the latter have a critical constructing towards abstract expressionism or Pollock, which is limited to one aspect, not representing the whole picture. For example, the recently published *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s* by Michael Leja has corrected the two former frames of explanation of "action" and "formalism" as history is more complicated. So here is a question, although you mentioned that the book is theoretical history of criticism, when it comes to the practice of artists, your narration is too simple to involve the gap and malposition of art and criticism. Did you put more emphasis on the conceptual division among critics? Take Pollock's paintings for instance, it's neither simple formalism as there are many things concrete in his paintings, nor simple "action painting" because some of his painting language actually comes from his opponent surrealism and cubism (especially Picasso).

Pi: You are very right. The discussion about Pollock is very complicated indeed. He favored surrealism and cubism in the early times. During the later period, Greenberg considered the color-field painting an updated version of Pollock's as it has fewer tendencies to emotion. However, if we are to analyze the growth and decline of the concrete elements, it should be put in the logic of vanity fair of the New York school from the late 1930s to the late 1950s. But it'd be the work of art history. Like what I said before, this book deals with Greenberg explanation and the symbolic "Pollock" in the theoretical discourse field, not the Pollock as an individual in the art history. From this aspect, the

book can be seen as theoretical history instead of art history.

Lu: There are two concepts, one is “late modernism” derived from a linear narration; the other is “modern art”, is it also a concept based on linear narration? How do you define the relation between “late modernism” and “modern art”?

Pi: I didn’t want to involve “late modernism”, and the title was “the year 1956-1972”. Pollock died in 1958 and the documenta curated by Szeemann opened in 1972. And then it was the rising of global new liberalism. Because it was a doctoral dissertation, if I didn’t use “late modernism”, I had to explain in detail why it is in this period and the relation between the Left and the new liberalism, etc. The introduction part do kept the time frame though. But I used the concept according to Jameson’s category, that is, late modernism is not a period before the modern era but an open concept till now. It is called “late” to differentiate the modernism in the 18th and 19th century, and a significant difference is that the society and economy had no longer featured commercialization, but symbolization and landscapeization. In fact, the “late” is more like “recent” art. However, “modern art” is the one in everyday language, which starts from minimalism and pop art. If we say “late modernism art”, it’s another coined word, so I just resorted to “modern art”. Therefore, late modernism and modern are not before-and-after concepts according to linear time. At that time I had to hand in the dissertation right away so I couldn’t linger on this matter. In recent years, I have done more studies and readings about the 1970s, and I have had more profound understanding towards the rising of new liberalism, the upcoming art marketization and the deeply affected production mode of art. Actually after 1972, the mode of art production has gone totally different. I had the right feeling then.

Lu: The 1960s is also called a period of Neo Avantgarde with reflection and criticism of artistic mechanism at its core. But in your book it’s still like a process of constructing systems and mechanisms. Hal Foster once said, historic avantgarde (mainly dadaism) opposes to tradition, but relies on the mechanism of “art museum-gallery”; neo avantgarde reflects on mechanisms but acknowledges and practices a new tradition. So, did you put too much emphasis on the theoretical diversion of concept so that neglect the mechanical practice of artists? Also, the mechanical practice is very rich and there might be a general trend which contains multiple tensions, as written in the *New Avantgarde and Culture Industry* by Benjamin H.D.Buchloh.

Pi: Like I said before, there is a time gap between new avantgarde in the 1960s and new liberalism in the 1970s. In the 1950s, exhibition was even not as important as critics on magazines. It differs from the theoretical field only in quantity (as the mass media had been increasing) but not in quality. The establishment of the trinity mechanism of art museum, gallery and biennale started in the 1960s, and it was not until 1970s and 1980s did the new production mechanism of art formed to the full. The reasons also include the appearance of new money and explosion of industries of IT, advertising, and consulting which were attributed to the change in global economic pattern. Without these, the pop art would never be that expensive. But that’s not what I have to deal with between 1958 and 1972. They didn’t become acute until 1970s.

Lu: There is a significant difference between Europe countries and America as for “happening art”. It doesn’t show in the book; however you simplified it into a trend. For example, apart from Dada, Aalto’s drama is also included in Europe’s happening art, and it’s more politics-based. America is not like this; it seems that it focuses more on the life attitude?

Pi: Yes, it’s actually a question of fluxus and arte povera. I didn’t explain in detail as space and time were limited. Luckily, people like Shen Yubing has contributed a lot to translating relative books including books by Benjamin Buchloh and by Hal Foster so such questions should be easily solved and understood now.

Lu: The book deals with the relation between Dadaism and surrealism, and I remember you only emphasized the continuity, they are very different though. Dada would oppose Dadaism itself so it's an absolute anarchism. But surrealism is different. For example, the original creed of Dadaism "reverse" has gone when Breton stuck to Marx and Freud. In other words, is surrealism that revolutionary like we thought?

Pi: Yes. The "reverse" in surrealism is histrionic. Just think about Dali. But the continuity in the book is to emphasize the connection among Breton, Mexico mural and Trotsky.

Lu: It seems that the book intended to restore a historical scene of art criticism theories in the 1960s. I think it still centered on the United States, along with the UK, France, Germany, Italy and former Soviet Union. Didn't South American countries like Argentina, Brazil and eastern European countries like Poland and Czech Republic participate in the campaign at different levels?

Pi: The book didn't mention enough facts about the German-speaking region, I think. We are still collecting materials about Eastern Europe. And if there is no material about southern America in Spanish language we have to resort to second-hand materials. I'm too old for this; leave it to young people.

Lu: The narration also explains a synchronic relation between historical context and art starting, and neglects the art history aspect. Like Foster said, art is actually attributed to the dual coordination of art history and society. Surely it involves art history but it is limited to the general historical context. The truth is, some part of art can transcend it, for example there were art historians discovering the relation between Jones and Vincent van Gogh. Also, like Thierry de Duve said, Duchamp's Fountain, Seurat's paintings and the "blank canvas" by Greenberg were all ready-made. What's your opinion?

Pi: That's from the October school. I didn't read it, and it seems I have some work to do later.

Lu: The core concept in it is the "withdrawal of subject", but formalism doesn't give up subject and Greenberg has constructed a larger one that is the United States subject. Thus when he claimed the victory of American paintings in the 1950s I think he has already endowed formalism with a new subject, or do you think they are two different subjects?

Pi: The "subject" I used is the one in the sense of modernism. From Jones to Robert Rauschenberg even minimalism, you can see the closed category of self and emotion in the early modernism being constantly weakened and questioned while the memories, bodies and actions related to society, politics and history became important. Therefore, it is the withdrawal of subject from formalism, not from real art. To tell you more, I think the subject of the United States was a bit exaggerated while the abstract expressionism, America's cultural policies and the relations among CIA has been vulgarized by Chinese critics. Something in Frances Stonor Saunders' *Cultural Cold War and Central Intelligence Agency* is also untenable, and some are accidental.

Lu: What's the significance of your publication for the modern art in today's China?

Pi: I was hoping the book can serve as a modest spur to provide knowledge about late modernism for one thing, and to let viewers realize the complexity between modernism and modern art for another. There have been numerous studies on modernism, my book is an introduction at most, and I hope it helps later art and criticism. For further knowledge, one must read the source text or the version translated by people like Shen Yubing. For me, I wanted to use it as a vehicle guiding me back to the learning of China.

Note: The abridged version was published on *Arts Journalism* in December, 2015.

