

Fuoco B. Fann

In the spring of 2020, the late Paul Rabinow invited me to his home. Paul's backyard garden was quiet and peaceful with fresh breeze under the clear blue sky in Berkeley. We had a heart-to-heart and knee-to-knee talk and decided to work together. However, things are impermanent and unpredictable. This outstanding thinker of our time, Paul the Elder (as Rabinow was called by his close friends) passed away unexpectedly in April 2021. For those who still care about "intellectual life" and "academic life" today, it is a profound and irreparable loss. I would like to offer my deepest condolences with this synopsis: the world has lost a wise man with a free mind and a good teacher and friend.

A Synopsis of the Unfinished Project with Paul Rabinow

January 18, 2021

Two Prints from Robert Motherwell

A Contemporary Conundrum—the Philosopher, the Artist, or the Unconsolable?

If "philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts," and "concepts need conceptual personae that contribute to their definition," according to Deleuze, "philosophers must no longer be content to accept the concepts that are given to them, *but must begin by fabricating and creating them...*" (Deleuze, "What Is Philosophy"). If the true nature of art was to make illusion, according to Motherwell, then the main industry in twentieth century art—what is called modern art—is to destroy illusion.

What then do artists do when illusion is no longer the task? Is there something else for artists to do besides destroying illusion? When Boulez says that Klee teaches artists "the power of deduction," (Rabinow, *Conceptual Interconnections of Problems*) is "deduction" a conceptual technique, namely, fabricating and creating modern concepts, or is it what Motherwell calls the "felt expression of modern reality"?

Motherwell proclaims: "The function of the artist is to express reality as *felt...*" and "The function of the modern artist is by definition the *felt* expression of modern reality." "Modern art is related to the problem of the modern individual's freedom." What Motherwell specifically stresses that still draws our attention to what is good or bad is: "By feeling is meant the response of the «body-and-mind» as a whole to the events of reality" since ideas often modify feelings. "The anti-

intellectualism of English and American artists has led them to the error of not perceiving the connection between the feeling of modern forms and modern ideas. It is the whole man who feels in artistic experience as when we say with Plato: 'The man has a pain in his finger' (The Republic, 462 D), and not, 'The finger has a pain'" (Motherwell, *The Modern Painter's World*, 72). It is easy to be confused about whether one's finger hurts or whether the finger itself hurts. Motherwell clarifies this art and philosophy conundrum in the case of Mondrian:

*Mondrian's work can be called scientific, since it consists of just the formulation of color-relations, and more important, spatial relations arising from a division of space. The scientific analogy is further confirmed by the fact that Mondrian clearly employs a hypothesis about the nature of reality, of which his work is an attempt at experimental confirmation. His hypothesis holds that it is possible to fulfill the artist's function, which is the expression of the felt quality of reality, with concrete color-spaces which contain no reference to the external world, either through representation or through the more condensed and ambiguous meanings of the image. (Motherwell, *The Art of Abstraction: Piet Mondrian*)*

On one hand, Mondrian "indomitably and tenaciously" has maintained the freedom of the artist for a long time; especially, the artist's work has been less subject to the pressures of the outside world during the twentieth century. On the other hand, in "seizing the laboratory freedom of the scientist," Mondrian fell into a trap from which he cannot be untethered—

*loss of contact with historical reality; or, more concretely, loss of the sense of the most insistent needs (and thus of the most insistent values) of a given time and place... he created a rational art when art was the only place where most men could find an irrational, sensual release from the commonsense rationalism and disciplines of their economic lives. (Motherwell, *The Art of Abstraction: Piet Mondrian*)*

Motherwell's conclusion is that Mondrian's failure is simple and plain: a bare Abstraction. Mondrian is unable to be proven false *a priori*. Images, shapes, and colors (as well as sounds or even fragmented melodies) communicate feelings that are impossible to reject or deny, even in "the laboratory freedom of the scientist." In the words of Motherwell: "No one can meet hostile reality

with the simple proposition that $2 + 2 = 4$. The proposition is true, but it is not enough." This is the end of Mondrian and the beginning of Motherwell.

In this perspective, Motherwell made himself a giant in the modern art world and for the Americans particularly. Motherwell joins Foucault and Richter, in Rabinow's sense, to converge on a common problematization in philosophy and art in the "serendipitously synergistic attempts" to a "distinctive kind of reduction of the present and the future involved in their work" (Rabinow, *Unconsolable Contemporary*).

Problematization

The problem: Does or can abstraction convey a concept (or *ontological reality*) or express emotion (or *felt reality*)? Motherwell thinks that Mondrian turns himself into a scientist; the abstract becomes pure abstraction (if so, Mondrian may be called an *ontologist*), thus Mondrian is out of history in the given time and space as an artist, whereas Motherwell claims that his abstract technique of "automatism" can solve the problem. Does Motherwell face the problem that Mondrian is accused of? How much does "automatism" rely on artistic training and practice and unconscious drive?

The concept: Whether illusion can be destroyed or not, and whether what Mondrian and Motherwell created are still illusions. Illusion can be seen as the "Order of Things." Illusion oscillates between pathos and bathos; the inquiry may be the oscillating or stopping points and the distance of illusion, not a simple reduction of the present and the future.



Le Coq 1974-75

Lithography from two stones printed in black; silk screen printed in red
Image 24 3/4 X 19 in (62.9 X 48.3 cm) edition of 40



Poe's Abyss 1974-75

Lithography from one stone printed in brown
Image 46 X 42 (116.9 X 106.7 cm) edition of 16

范炳輝与保罗·拉宾诺合作课概要：

《罗伯特·马瑟韦尔的两幅石版画》，2021年1月18日

二〇二〇年春天，拉宾诺邀我去家中做客，在伯克利的清澈蓝天下，他的后院花园草木清新，安静祥和。我俩促膝畅谈，意兴盎然，决定携手合作。然而世事无常，这位时代的杰出思想家，“保罗长老”（亲近朋友称拉比诺为 Paul the Elder）在二〇二一年四月意外去逝。对于今天仍然关心“心灵生活”和“学术生涯”的人来说，这是一个无法弥补的损失。在此我以这个概要表达深切哀悼：世界失去了一个有自由头脑的智者，一个良师益友。

当代难题：哲学家、艺术家是无法安慰的人？

德勒兹认为，如果“哲学是形成、发明和编造概念的艺术”，并且“概念需要有助于其定义的人物概念”，“哲学家就不能再仅仅满足于接受赋予他们的概念，而必须从编造或创造概念开始……”（德勒兹《什么是哲学》）。如果艺术的真正本质是制造幻象（幻觉），按照马瑟韦尔的说法，二十世纪艺术的主要产业，也就是所谓的现代艺术，就是摧毁幻象。

如果编造幻象不再是艺术任务时，艺术家将干些什么呢？除了摧毁幻象之外，还有事情可做吗？当布列兹说克利教导艺术家，“演绎的力量”（拉比诺《问题的概念互连》）时，“演绎”就是一种概念技巧，即编造和创造“现代概念”，或者是马瑟韦尔所说的“现代感觉表达”出来的“现实”？

马瑟韦尔宣称，“艺术家的功能是表达所感受到的现实……”“现代艺术家的功能从定义上来说，就是现代现实的感觉表达，”“现代艺术与现代个体的自由问题有关。”马瑟韦尔特别强调，那种仍然引起我们对好坏所关注的是：“感觉是指‘身体和心灵’作为一个整体对现实事件的反应”，因为思想经可以常改变感觉。“英国和美国艺术家的反智主义使他们所犯的错误的，没有认识到现代形式的感觉与现代思想之间的联系。但这是整个人类在艺术体验中的感受，就像柏拉图说的那样，“这个人的手指疼痛”（见《理想国》，462D），而不是“手指疼痛”。（马瑟韦尔《现代画家的世界》，72页）我们很容易将手指的疼痛与人物本身的疼痛混淆，马瑟韦尔以蒙德里安为例，澄清了这个艺术和哲学难题：

蒙德里安的作品可以说是科学的，因为它不仅包含色彩关系的表述，而更重要的是由空间划分产生的空间关系。蒙德里安显然采用了关于现实本质的假设，他试图通过作品来实验证实这一假设，这一事实进一步证实了他的艺术是一个科学类比。蒙德里安的假设认为，可以通过不包含外部世界参考的具体色彩空间来实现艺术家的功能，即表达现实的感觉质量，无论是通过再现还是通过更浓缩和模糊的含义。（马瑟韦尔《抽象艺术：皮特·蒙德里安》）

一方面，蒙德里安“不屈不挠、顽强地”长期保持了艺术家的自由，特别是 20 世纪艺术家的作品较少受到外界的压力。另一方面，蒙德里安在“抢夺科学家的自由实验室”时，却陷入了一个无法摆脱束缚的陷阱——

失去了与历史现实的联系；或者更具体地说，失去了对特定时间和地点最迫切的需求（以及最持续的价值观）的感觉……当艺术成为大多数人可以得到的，非理性的、感性的唯一场所时，而创造一种理性的艺术，使人们从常识性的理性主义和经济生活规律中解放出来。（马瑟韦尔《抽象艺术：皮特·蒙德里安》）

马瑟韦尔的结论是，蒙德里安的失败简单而明了：因为它只是一个纯粹的抽象概念。蒙德里安无法证明“先验性”的错误。图像、形状和颜色（以及声音甚至支离破碎的旋律）所传达的情感，是无法拒绝或否认的，即使是在“科学家的自由实验室”中。用马瑟韦尔的话说就是：“没有人能够用 $2 + 2 = 4$ 这个简单的命题来应对敌对的现实。既是这个命题是正确的，但远远不够。”这是蒙德里安的终结，也是马瑟韦尔的开始。

从这个角度来看，马瑟韦尔使自己成为现代艺术界，尤其是美国艺术巨人。从拉宾诺提出的观点及其意义上来看，马瑟韦尔与福柯、里希特一起，同样在“偶然的协同尝试”中，集中讨论哲学和艺术中的一个共同问题，做到了“对他们的工作中所涉及的现在和未来，实践者独特的还原”。（拉宾诺《无法安慰的当代》）

“问题化”之后的问题与概念

问题探讨：

抽象视觉是否或能够传达概念（或本体论现实），或表达情感（感受到的现实）？马瑟韦尔认为蒙德里安把自己变成了科学家，把抽象视觉艺术变成了纯粹的抽象理念（如果是这样，蒙德里安可以被称为本体论者），因此，蒙德里安作为一个艺术家，在所给定的时间和空间里脱离了历史（失去了价值和意义）。而马瑟韦尔则声称，他的抽象技巧“自动主义”，可以解决这个难题。那么，马瑟韦尔是否也面临自己指控蒙德里安的问题？马瑟韦尔的“自动主义”技术，在多大程度上依赖于艺术训练和实践，以及无意识的驱动？

概念探讨：

无论幻象能不能被取缔或摧毁，蒙德里安和马瑟韦尔所创造的艺术仍然是幻象。如果幻象被视为“事物的秩序”，那么幻象一直在“感知”与“常规”之间摇摆不定，需要追索探讨的可能是：幻象的游动、停止的点、或距离的位置，而不是幻象如何在现在与未来之间被简化而消失。