

历史之后：作为摄影师的亚历山大·科耶夫 AFTER HISTORY: ALEXANDRE KOJÈVE AS A PHOTOGRAPHER

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View of 'After History: Alexandre
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因为诸多机缘, 路易斯·格罗伊斯得以策划了“历史之后: 作为摄影师的亚历山大·科耶夫”这样一个项目。可以说, “历史之后”(或“后历史”)是科耶夫对于法国现代思想最重要的贡献, 也是其政治哲学的核心论点。虽然这并非科耶夫首创, 而是源自黑格尔, 但恰是经由科氏, 它深刻地影响了法国现代思想和后现代哲学。准确而言, 科耶夫是黑格尔与后现代哲学之间的一座桥梁。在黑格尔这里, 所谓历史, 就是主奴之间相互作用或斗争所建构的。当有一天没有了主人和奴隶的界分, 他们之间的对立、差异消失了的时候, 历史也将终止。因此, 科耶夫认为, 主张自由、平等, 使人的欲求得到普遍承认的法国大革命正是历史终结的标志, 亦即“后历史”的开端。

当然, 科耶夫的思想比这个要复杂得多, 但若没有这点铺陈, 他的那些不是摄影的摄影将变得毫无意义。对于科耶夫而言, 这些摄影作品的意义不在于摄影(语言)本身, 因为它与普通游客所拍的旅行照片没有什么区别, 而是在于, 它们为我们提供了一个观看世界的智者之眼, 或一种智人的美学。我们发现, 科耶夫镜头对准的, 多是建筑名画和历史遗迹, 比如教堂、宫殿等等, 很多徘徊画面中只有建筑自身, 或是其某个角落, 极少出现人或关乎生活气息的其他事物。格罗伊斯认为, 注视本身就是对于历史和记忆的一种体验。说到底, 它其实是在暗示我们, 一方面, 历史将历史推至“后历史”的境地, 另一方面, “后历史”的现实状况也不是理想生

活的去处, 同样是值得反省和检讨的对象。

不过, 科耶夫的摄影并非没有丝毫的审美意识。从拍摄对象的选择到画面构图的意识, 都兼具光影的意味和形式的自觉。格罗伊斯提醒我们, 这可能与科耶夫关于其舅父康定斯基抽象绘画的研究有关。科耶夫曾指出, 纯粹的形式实践可以拯救(超越)后历史时期可能堕入动物性的人类。他说, 尽管抽象绘画最终还是沦为装饰, 但它的兴起本身即与大众文化的反思息息相关, 包括摄影术, 本身就是大众文化的产物。若如此, 科耶夫无疑是以“后历史”的方式反思“后历史”。为了尽可能地忠实于科耶夫的“本意”, 格罗伊斯以幻灯的形式呈现在展厅(尚不知科耶夫是否曾经冲洗过, 但据说格罗伊斯最初是通过幻灯的形式接触到这批摄影作品的), 而且, 他在每一个幻灯前, 还特意设置了一个看台, 以便观者保持对于——科耶夫眼中的——历史、记忆和时间的尊重。在我看来, 这一观者的仪式恰切地回应了科氏对于形式的诉求。

只是, 迄今我们并没有看到任何史料可资证明科耶夫的摄影与他的政治哲学思想是一体的或直接相关。所有的论述(包括格罗伊斯的解释), 即便再丝丝入扣, 也终究只是一种理论想象和硬性链接, 或只是一种更加猜测。话既至此, 不得不说, 格罗伊斯的“小阴谋”已经暴露无遗。要知道, 格氏自己虽是哲学家, 也是策展人, 甚至可以说, 他也是一位智者, 但不要忘了, 他还有一重身份: 艺术家。若从这个角度看, “历史之后”这个项目其实更像是他的另一

件作品。表面上意在建立科耶夫摄影与其政治哲学的内在关联, 试图探讨一个人的思想与其视觉意识的内在联系, 但事实上, 它恰恰揭示了问题复杂的一面, 即作为一个哲学家, 他的摄影及审美趣味, 就必然与他的思想相关吗? 鲁明军

It was a series of very fortunate events that led Boris Groys to his discovery of the photographs and postcards that became “After History: Alexandre Kojève as a Photographer.” It could be said that Kojève is partially responsible for popularizing the concept of “post-history,” or what happens after history ends. It remains his greatest contribution to French modern thought, as well as the core principle of his political philosophy. Although this “end of history” originated from Hegel, it was through Kojève that the concept grew to strongly influence French modern thought and post-modern philosophy. More accurately, Kojève acted as a bridge between Hegel and post-modernism. In Hegelian thought, history is the conflict between master and slave. When the distinction between master and slave no longer exists, when their opposition and difference have disappeared, it would mean the end of history. In Kojève’s thought, this was achieved after the French Revolution and its successful advocacy of liberty, equality, and recognition of individual desire, thus marking the end of history and the beginning of post-history.

Certainly, Kojève’s system of thought is more complicated than this. But without even a simplified introduction, his non-pictorial photographs become without meaning. For Kojève, the meaning of these photographic images does not derive from an analysis of the conventions of photography, since they are not much different from pictures taken by any other tourist. Instead, they present the worldview of a sage; in other words, a philosopher’s aesthetics. We see that Kojève’s camera is frequently pointed toward architectural and historical sites, such as churches and palaces. Often, the picture only contains a building, or its corner, and very rarely shows people or other indications of life. Groys posits that the gaze itself is a way to experience history and memory. The photographs remind us that it was events from the past pushing history toward the condition of post-history; yet the reality of post-history is not ideal, and it too deserves reflection and critique.

This is not to say that Kojève’s photo-

graphs are without considerations of beauty. From subject to composition, he showed awareness of light and shadow as well as attention to form. Groys reminds us that Kojève had closely studied the works of Kandinsky, who also happened to be Kojève’s uncle.

In post-history, humanity returns to its animal nature, but Kojève believed that a practical focused on form could rescue—or transcend—this descent. Kojève had postulated that even though abstract art will ultimately become merely decorative, its rise remained closely related to the critique of popular culture; this includes photography, which is a product of popular culture. Clearly, Kojève used post-historical critique to reflect on post-historic conditions.

Groys projects the photographs as slides and provides viewing stations that allow the audience to experience the image from Kojève’s perspective, while maintaining respect for history, memory, and time. All of this is done as a way to preserve what Groys believed to have been Kojève’s original intent. Yet we do not even know whether any of the film now projected was ever developed during Kojève’s lifetime, since apparently Groys’s first encounter with these photographs was in the form of slides. Regardless, I find this structured viewing experience as a perfect response to Kojève’s demands of form.

What we do not see, however, is any historical evidence to support the idea that Kojève’s photography practice was in any way integrated into or related to his political philosophy. Rigorously reasoned though it may be, all of the discourse—including Groys’ explanations—remains as theory that was forced upon the evidence, or at worst just wild speculation. At this point of the discussion, we should also address Groys’ role in this project. Groys is a philosopher and curator. We could even say that he too is a sage, and must not forget his identity as an artist. Viewed from this perspective, “After History” becomes more like an artwork by Groys. On the surface, the exhibition seeks to establish a linkage between Kojève’s photography and political philosophy; it is presented as an attempt to investigate the inherent relationship between a person’s philosophical and visual consciousness. But in fact what is revealed is a more complicated problem: for a philosopher, must there be a relationship between his aesthetics—in this case expressed through photography—and his system of thinking?

Lu Mingjun (Translated by Jialing Liu)