

Comparison of Schopenhauer's Reception between Wang Kuo-wei's "Jing-jie" and Taoka Reiun's "Kyokai"

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1. Introduction

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) published his famous book *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1819 [1818]), which was translated into English as *The World as Will and Idea* (1883-1886) by R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp. From 1903, a talented Chinese scholar WANG Kuo-wei (1877-1927) started to read the English version when he saw some of Schopenhauer's arguments being quoted by his tutor—a Japanese scholar TAOKA Reiun (1871-1912). How did Schopenhauer influence Wang? And was Wang also influenced by Taoka's reception of Schopenhauer? Hermann Kogelschatz (1986) argued that Wang's concept of "jing-jie (境界)," which was proposed in his poetic critical essay "Renjian Cihua" (1908-1909), originated in Schopenhauer's "Idea (Idee)." Noriyuki TAKEMURA (1986) argued that Wang's theory of "jing-jie" came from Taoka's theory of "kyokai (境界)." However, they could not compare Wang's essays with the English version of Schopenhauer's book which Wang actually consulted. In order to investigate the receptions and transformations of Schopenhauer's thoughts in East Asia, this paper will use a documentary method and demonstrative research to examine Wang's reading of Schopenhauer. It will firstly compare Wang's essays with the English translation of Schopenhauer's book (1883-1886) to indicate the relationship between Wang's "jing-jie" and Schopenhauer's "Idea," and secondly, it will compare Wang's "jing-jie" and Taoka's "kyokai" to see if Wang's concept of "jing-jie" was also influenced by Taoka's reception of Schopenhauer. Finally, this paper will outline how Wang responded to Schopenhauer in his concept of "jing-jie" supported by a background of traditional Chinese literary theory, in order to show a possible transformation of Schopenhauer.

2. Schopenhauer's "Idea (Idee)" and Wang's "Jing-jie [State]"

I will analyse the first aesthetic use of "jing-jie" and its relation to Schopenhauer's aesthetics in this section. I suggest that "jing-jie" does not simply mean Schopenhauer's "Idee," which is proved by Hermann Kogelschatz², but it is a "state" in which to contemplate the "Idee" or aesthetic "state" from the mode of aesthetic contemplation.

¹ This article is a revised version of the manuscript entitled "Schopenhauer in East Asia—Schopenhauer's 'Idee (Idea)' and Wang Kuo-wei's 'jing-jie'" presented on December 2, 2023, at International Schelling Congress 2023 in Japan titled "Natur-Geschichte-Kunst. Schellings Philosophie im Zeitaler des Anthropozäns," organized by Japanese Schelling Society at the University of Tokyo, and is a partly revised version (especially section 2) of the manuscript entitled "The Reception and Reflection to Schopenhauer's Aesthetics in Wang Kuo-wei's Concept of 'Jing-jie'" presented on July 24, 2019, at 21st International Congress of Aesthetics at University of Belgrade.

² Kogelschatz1986.

In Wang's essay "Kongzi's Aesthetic Education Ideology" (1904), it is the first time Wang has used the concept of "jing-jie" aesthetically, and he considers Schopenhauer's "state of knowing beauty" to be "jing-jie." He expresses the following:

Quote 1: Schopenhauer divides the "state of knowing beauty" into two parts: (1) the knowledge of the object, not as a particular thing, but the form of the species of a [particular] thing; (2) the self-consciousness of the knowing person, not as particular me, but as pure will-less me. (*The World as Will and Idea* Vol.1, p.253.) [...] This "jing-jie" could only be achieved when knowing beauty. SU Shi said, "[We should] imply the ideas into the objects" (*Baohuitang Ji*); SHAO Kangjie said, "The sage can unify emotions of all things because he can opposite perceive. Opposite perception does not perceive an object by me. What does not perceive an object by me is what to perceive object by object. It already could perceive object by object, why it needs me to insert into them?" (*Huang Ji Jing Shi*, Guanwu neipian, §7) These are what the "state of knowing beauty" means.

[Original Text] 至叔本华而分析观美之状态为二原质：（一）被观之对象，非特别之物，而此物之种类之形式；（二）观者之意识，非特别之我，而纯粹无欲之我也（《意志及观念之世界》第一册，253页。）[……]此境界唯观美时有之。苏子瞻所谓“寓意于物”（《宝绘堂记》）；邵子曰：“圣人所以能一万物之情者，谓其能反观也。所以谓之反观者，不以我观物也。不以我观物者，以物观物之谓也。既能以物观物，又安有有我于其间哉？”（《皇极经世·观物内篇》七）此之谓也。³

Wang directly quotes part of 38th section of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*:

Quote 2: In the aesthetical mode of contemplation we have found *two inseparable constituent parts*—the knowledge of the object, not as individual thing but as Platonic Idea, that is, as the enduring form of this whole species of things; and the self-consciousness of the knowing person, not as individual, but as *pure will-less subject of knowledge*.⁴

According to Schopenhauer, in "aesthetic mode of contemplation," there are two inseparable constituent parts, namely the knowledge of the object "as Platonic Idea" and "pure will-less subject of knowledge." Through this "mode" we could reach "state of pure knowing" that is a "painless state," or a "peaceful, still frame of mind."⁵

In the English version of Schopenhauer's book, "Vorstellung" has been rendered as "idea" rather than "representation." "Idee" is translated by the same word, but spelled with a capital letter—"Idea." Again, "Anschauung" has been rendered either as "perception" simply or "intuition or perception," depending on the context.⁶

According to Schopenhauer, there are three types of perception: "perception of the senses," and

³ Wang (1904) 1996: 150.

⁴ Schopenhauer, (1819) 1883-1886: 253.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., "Translators' preface" v.

"pure intuition or perception" or "intelligent perception" in epistemology; "aesthetic perception" or "aesthetic contemplation," "quiet contemplation" or "peaceful contemplation" ⁹ with imagination in aesthetics.¹⁰

Wang translates Schopenhauer's "individual thing" to "particular thing," "the enduring form of this whole species of things" to "form of species of a [particular] thing," "individual [subject]" to "particular me," "pure will-less subject" to "pure will-less me." And Wang translates Schopenhauer's "aesthetical mode of contemplation" to "state of knowing beauty."

If we compare Schopenhauer's "state of pure knowing" with "aesthetic mode of contemplation" to Wang's "jing-jie" in "a state [mode] of knowing beauty," we will find that the former's "state of pure knowing" with "aesthetic mode of contemplation" is terminology by Wang, as "jing-jie [state]" in "knowing beauty." Therefore, Wang's concept of "jing-jie" is Schopenhauer's "state," which means Schopenhauer's "painless state," or a "peaceful, still frame of mind" of knowledge of the Idea through the aesthetic mode of contemplation.

And Wang corresponds Schopenhauer's aesthetic perception to Shao's "opposite perception," which is "object perceive object." In the next section, I will examine the relationship between "opposite perception" and Schopenhauer's aesthetics in comparison between Wang's "jing-jie" and Taoka's "kyokai."

3. Wang's "Jing-jie (境界)" and Taoka's "Kyokai (境界)"

At the Japanese School, Wang studied the works of FUJITA Toyohachi (1869-1929) and TAOKA Reiun, from which he became interested in modern western philosophy. According to Wang, "FUJITA Toyohachi and TAOKA Reiun studied philosophy. One day, I had seen Kant and Schopenhauer's philosophy which were quoted in Taoka's essays, and was quite excited."¹¹ Perhaps, Wang's reception of Schopenhauer was also influenced by Taoka.

The question of whether Wang's concept of "jing-jie [state]" originated in Taoka's "kyokai" has not yet been settled. Takemura insisted that Wang's poetic concept of "jing-jie" proposed in his essay "Renjian Cihua" directly originated in Taoka's "kyokai."¹² He speculated on their relationships, which were inferred their actual communications and the similarities in their expressions such as "kyokai without me" and "jing without me" etc..¹³ However, Takemura only identified the similar expressions between Wang and Taoka, but he could not analyse their similarities and differences. For this, I will focus on the reception of Schopenhauer's "Idea," and analyse the similarities and differences between Wang's concept of "jing-jie" and Taoka's "kyokai." In doing so, we will understand the reception of Schopenhauer in East Asia, and explore the possibility of Taoka's influence on Wang.

Taoka understood Schopenhauer's aesthetics, especially the relationship between I and things in

⁷ Ibid., 253.

⁸ Ibid., 231.

⁹ Ibid., 323.

¹⁰ Liu 2019.

¹¹ Wang (1907) 1996: 38.

¹² Takemura 1986: 146.

¹³ Ibid., 146, 143.

the perception of nature and its beauty, and he insists the following:

Quote 3: Only beauty or contemplation has no interest. [...] Maybe I realize myself when I see a thing, that is because I have desire or want. If I do not have desire, I simply forget that I am an individual person. Then, on the other side of un-me, what I desire or want means that I have the view of interest. [...] Now, if there is no interest when I see a thing, there will be no right nor wrong, no selection, no choice, no love nor hate, no there nor here, no following nor not following. It will be the thing itself. This is what SHAO Kangjie said, not to perceive an object by me, but to perceive object through object, namely opposite perception.

Opposite perception does not perceive an object by me. What does not perceive an object by me is what to perceive object by object. It already could perceive object by object, why it needs me to insert into them?

[Original Text] 唯美なる者あり、唯観（Contemplete）すべくして利害の念を動かすとなし。[……] 蓋し吾人が物に對してこの箇我あるとを自識するは、我に於て念ふ所あり、欲する所あればなり。もし我にして無念無想ならば、我は箇我あるとを忘了せむのみ。而して此我が念ふ所あり、欲する所あるは、非我なる者に對して、利害の見を抱けばなり。[……] 今もし物に對して利害の一念起らざらむ乎。我其物に於て是非なし、揀擇なし、取捨なし、愛憎もなし、彼此もなければ、違順もなし。物そのまゝにして之に對する。邵康節が所謂不以我觀物して以物觀物ものなり、反觀なるものなり。

所以之謂反觀者，不以我觀物也。不以我觀物者，以物觀物之謂也。既能以物觀物，又安有我於其間哉。¹⁴

Here, Taoka explained Schopenhauer's aesthetic contemplation. He changed Schopenhauer's "subject of will" to "me" or individual person, his "object" to "thing," and his "will-less subject" to "un-me" or what forgot me. In Taoka's essay "Beauty and Good," Taoka pointed out that "subjective mental state"¹⁵ of forgetting the differences between things and me in Schopenhauer's aesthetic contemplation is "kyokai without me."¹⁶ According to Taoka's explanation of Schopenhauer's aesthetics, when pure will contemplate aesthetically, "there is no separation between our body and the universe, they become one," and this is termed as the "will-less mental state."¹⁷ Taoka further said that "kyokai without me is in an 'un-started' state which is Schopenhauer's pure will."¹⁸ That is, following the contexts of Schopenhauer, we could see that Taoka's "kyokai without me" corresponds to Schopenhauer's "pure will" or "will-less," and it means "will-less mental state" that there is no

¹⁴ Taoka 1900: 42.

¹⁵ Taoka (1900) 1986: 142.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Taoka (1895) 1986b: 143.

¹⁸ Taoka (1895) 1986a: 140.

separation between things and me, or it means "an 'un-started' state."

According to Taoka, "kyokai" does not exist in the human world, but exists in chaos before the birth of will, and so "kyokai" reaches to "(Schopenhauer's) will-less' state."¹⁹ Here, Taoka explained his "kyokai without me" with traditional Chinese philosophy such as Laozi's "Dao." Taoka indicated that pure will "could feel a will-less subjective mental state"²⁰ in the contemplation of Laozi's Dao. In other words, Taoka found the similarities between "un-started" mental state in Laozi's Dao and Schopenhauer's aesthetic contemplation.

In contrast, Taoka indicated that "kyokai of knowledge (識の境界)"²¹ is the opposite of "kyokai without me," and he has a positive view of the latter.

Furthermore, Taoka corresponds to "contemplation" by "un-me" or aesthetic perception with Shao's "opposite perception." When we contemplate, because of the absence of "me," there will have no "differences between object and me."²²

According to Shao, to "perceive object with object" does not mean to see things with our eyes or the heart, on the contrary, it means to perceive with "truth (理)." Shao discusses the following:

Quote 4: What is termed perceiving an object is not seeing it with the eyes, but seeing it with the heart; it is not seeing it with the heart, but perceiving it with the truth. All things have truth, nature and life.

[Original Text] 夫所以谓之观物者，非以目观之也。非观之以目，而观之以心也。非观之以心，而观之以理也。天下之物莫不有理焉，莫不有性焉，莫不有命焉。²³

However, Shao's formula "object perceives object" does not simply mean to perceive object with "truth," it means that "truth perceives truth" or "Dao perceives Dao." Shao said as following:

Quote 5: Nature is the shape of Dao. When nature is hurt, Dao is hurt too. The heart is the outer city of nature. When the heart is hurt, nature will be hurt too. The body is the palace of the heart. If the body is hurt, the heart will be hurt too. Things are the ships and the cars of the body. If things are hurt, the body will be hurt too. From these, we know that they follow rules when we perceive nature with Dao, perceive heart with nature, perceive body with heart, perceive things with body. However, they have not yet separated from the interest. It is better to perceive Dao with Dao, perceive nature with nature, perceive heart with heart, perceive body with body, and perceive thing with thing, in which although want to hurt each other, will they realize it?

[Original Text] 性者，道之形体也。性伤则道亦从之矣。心者，性之郭郭也，心伤则性亦从之矣。身者，心之区宇也，身伤则心亦从之矣。物者，身之舟车也，物伤则身亦从之矣。是知，以道观性，以性观心，以心观身，以身观物，治则治矣。然犹未离乎害者也。不若以道观道，以性观性，以心观心，以身观身，以物观物，则虽欲相伤，其可得

¹⁹ Taoka (1895) 1986b: 141.

²⁰ Taoka (1900) 1986: 138.

²¹ Ibid., 139.

²² Taoka 1900: 42.

²³ Shao 2021b: 740.

乎?²⁴

According to Shao, to “perceive object with object” is not to perceive nature with Dao, but to perceive Dao with Dao.

Taoka corresponds to Shao’s “object perceive object” or “Dao perceive Dao” with Schopenhauer’s aesthetic perception by “un-me” which was opposed to “individual me” with will.

If we compare quote3 with quote1, we will see a similar structure—Schopenhauer’s aesthetic contemplation=Shao’s “opposite perception”—in Wang’s essay and Taoka’s arguments. However, as it was discussed above, Wang’s concept of “jing-jie” means Schopenhauer’s “painless state” of knowing the Idea through the aesthetic mode of contemplation. In contrast, Taoka’s “kyokai without me” means “will-less mental state,” in which there is no separation between me and objects. Although both two mean a “state” in pure will, but they have different kinds of states. The former one is the result of aesthetic contemplation in pure will, but the latter one is the condition in pure will. The former one is a kind of “still” state, but the latter one is “an ‘un-started’ state.”

Conclusion

Takemura insisted that Wang’s poetic concept of “jing-jie” proposed in his essay “Renjian Cihua” was directly derived from Taoka’s “kyokai.”²⁵ However, as it was discussed above, Taoka’s “kyokai” and Wang’s “jing-jie” have different meanings. And in section 2, I clarified that from an aspect of Schopenhauer’s reception, Wang’s concept of “jing-jie” originated in Schopenhauer’s “state,” through which I disagree with Takemura’s view on the origin of Wang’s “jing-jie.” Takemura’s problem is that he only noticed Wang’s concept of “jing-jie” in Wang’s essay “Renjian Cihua,” but failed to notice the first aesthetic use of “jing-jie” in Wang’s other text. For example, he pointed out the similar expression between Wang’s “jing without me”²⁶ in “Renjian Cihua” and Taoka’s “kyokai without me.”²⁷ But he could neither notice quote 1, nor compare quote 1 with quote 3. Quote 1 and quote 3 have a similar structure, so that we could not deny Taoka’s possible influence to Wang’s concept of “jing-jie” as Takemura tried to insist in other examples, however at least the origin of Wang’s “jing-jie” is not Taoka, but directly from Schopenhauer.

Both Schopenhauer and Taoka have negative attitudes to “intelligent perception” in epistemology and conversely they have positive attitudes to aesthetic contemplation. In contrast, Wang has positive attitudes towards both “intelligent perception” and aesthetic perception. Wang’s poetic concept of “jing-jie” includes not only Schopenhauer’s contemplation of aesthetics, but also the perception of the “individual thing” by the “individual [subject],” which Schopenhauer rejects in his

²⁴ Shao 2021a: “Preface” 2.

²⁵ Takemura 1986: 146.

²⁶ Wang proposed “jing without me” in his essay “Renjian Cihua,” “There are “jing with me” and “jing without me,” [...] in the jing-jie by a particular me, because I perceive the particular things, things are all covered with my colours; in the “jing-jie by a pure will-less me, because the thing is perceived by an object, it cannot be known which one is me, and which one is the thing. [Original Text] 有有我之境有無我之境[……]有我之境以我觀物故物皆著我之色彩無我之境以物觀物故不知何者為我何者為物 (Wang 1908-1909: §3.) ”.

²⁷ Takemura 1986: 143.

aesthetic contemplation. The reason is that Taoka's "kyokai" was discussed on the basis of aesthetics, but Wang's "jing-jie" was discussed on the basis of aesthetics and his aesthetics and poetics. He stressed the importance of "jing without me" in his poetic critical essay "Renjian Cihua," and at the same time, he emphasized the value of poets' individual emotions in "jing with me." He said, "Jing does not only mean scenes, joys and sorrows are also a kind of jing-jie in the person."²⁸ It shows that Wang's concept of "jing-jie" in his essay "Renjian Cihua" has the meanings of "state" which was based on Schopenhauer's aesthetics in his first aesthetic use of "jing-jie," and "emotion and scene" which was discussed in his poetics.

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²⁸ Wang 1908-1909: §6.