

The Making of Chinese Meixue

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**LI Qingben and WANG Gang,
"The Making of Chinese Meixue"**

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Abstract: In "The Making of Chinese Meixue," Li and Wang discuss the Chinese translation of the term "aesthetics." It had been believed that it was the German missionary Ernst Faber who first coined the Chinese term "*meixue*," which is refuted in this paper. The view that the term "*shenmeixue*" in Japan was derived from Wilhelm Lobscheid's *English and Chinese Dictionary* also lacks factual basis. It is true that the term "*meixue*" was introduced to China from the West via Japan, but it was then a term that had not yet developed within a specific discourse, which would have never been achieved without Wang Guowei's unique insights. Wang Guowei's important contribution to modern Chinese aesthetics lies in his integration of Western-derived aesthetic terms into the construction of Chinese aesthetic discourse, establishing a new paradigm of cross-cultural aesthetics for Chinese *meixue*.

LI Qingben and WANG Gang

The Making of Chinese Meixue

For a long time, researchers believed that it was Wang Guowei 王国维 who first established the discipline of aesthetics in modern Chinese. For example, Nie Zhenbin 聂振斌 in *History of Chinese Modern Aesthetic Thought* dates the official beginning of modern Chinese aesthetics to Wang Guowei in the early twentieth century(55). Li Qingben 李庆本 in *Twentieth-Century Chinese Romanticism* also explicitly argued: "The real beginning of modern Chinese aesthetics was marked by the emergence of Wang Guowei's aesthetic thought" (1-18). However, after the publication of Huang Xingtao's 黄兴涛 paper "The Earliest Dissemination of the Word Aesthetics and Western Aesthetics in China" (2000), this generally agreed statement was doubted. And according to the clues provided by Huang, researchers began to trace the origins of modern Chinese aesthetics to Ernst Faber's *The Principles of Education* (1875) or even earlier to Wilhelm Lobscheid's *English and Chinese Dictionary* (1866-1869).

The naming of a discipline is one of the most important signs of its establishment, although it cannot be completely equated with the maturing of the discipline. Given the importance of the Chinese translation of "aesthetics" in the development of modern Chinese aesthetics, we have to take this issue seriously. Moreover, considering the widespread influence of Huang's paper "The Earliest Dissemination of the Word Aesthetics and Western Aesthetics in China," we also have to verify in depth some of the claims he has made.

Huang believed that it was Ernst Faber (1839-1899) who coined the Chinese term "meixue" as the translation of aesthetics:

In 1875, Ernst Faber resumed writing the book *The Principles of Education* (教化议), in which he argued: "The six things to heal the present wounds are: first, classics; second, characters; third, *gewu* (格物, examining the truth of things); fourth, calendar; fifth, geography; sixth, painting and music." After the words "painting and music," he wrote in parentheses, "because they both belong to aesthetics, they are related." That is to say, in his view, "painting" and "music" could be put in one category because they both belong to "aesthetics." If we put the term "aesthetics" here alongside the so-called "beauty of painting" and "beauty of music" in the part of the book which had been written previously, we can see that the term has been already generally used in the modern sense. It seems that no one had ever used it in this way before Ernst Faber¹. (Huang 75-84)

Huang's statement used to be the firmly held belief of the researchers of modern Chinese aesthetics. Many scholars in the field of aesthetics produced extensive research results based on his argument. Some works on the history of Chinese aesthetics also adopted Huang's statement directly and uncritically, thus spreading incorrect assumptions. It was researchers outside the aesthetic circle who noticed something unusual in the first place. Nie Changshun 聂长顺 pointed out that Huang's assertion that the earliest user of the term "meixue" was Ernst Faber, and it was based on the book *Co-printed Western Schools and The Principles of Education* published by the Commercial Press in 1897, rather than the 1875 edition ("The Course" 649-53). However, Nie did not locate the 1875 edition, and the earliest edition he read is the Oi Kamakichi kunten edition published by the Tokyo Meikyodo in October 1880, which did not contain the sentence in brackets that Huang had quoted. He boldly speculated that the sentence must have been added when it was co-printed in 1897.

However, this was not enough to prove that the original edition would have contained the sentence in brackets that Huang quoted. Nor was it convincing to conclude that the 1875 edition of it did not contain the word "meixue," because it was simply based on the absence of the word in the kunten edition by Oi Kamakichi. After checking the original edition of *The Principles of Education* against the edition of Tokyo Meikyodo, we found that Nie's claim that there is no difference between the two editions is incorrect. To confirm this, we had to find the original version of *The Principles of Education*.

Where there is a will, there is a way. After much research, Li Qingben finally purchased the 1875 woodblock edition of *The Principles of Education* on April 3rd, 2020, with the cover marked "engraved in the first year of Guangxu's reign of the Qing Dynasty in 1875 AD" and "The collection of the Rhenish

¹ All translations unless otherwise indicated are by Wang Gang.

Missionary Society." It is true that this book does not contain the bracketed sentence "because they both belong to aesthetics, they are related" (Faber, *The Principles* 46b), which confirms that Huang's statement that Faber was the first to coin the term "meixue" in 1875 is false. And this claim, which had been popular in the aesthetic world for 20 years, was finally refuted.

So, did Faber translate aesthetics into Chinese? We think he did. He translated aesthetics as "ruherumiaozhifa" (如何入妙之法 approaches to enter into a wondrous state), rather than "meixue." In 1873, Faber wrote *On the Great German Schools* in Chinese. This book's title was changed into *The Western School* and co-printed with *The Principles of Education* in 1897. In *The Western School*, Faber divided the curriculum of the *taixueyuan* (太学院 university) into four categories: classics, law, *zhixue* (智学 liberal arts), and medicine. When introducing the course of "zhixue," Faber subdivided it into "eight lessons," namely: "first, learning language; second, neo-Confucianism; third, soul studies; fourth, *gewu* (格物); fifth, the profound truth of God; sixth, behaviors; seventh, approaches to enter into a wondrous state; eighth, masters of *zhixue*" (*Co-printed* 4). Then, Faber explained that the lesson of "approaches to enter into a wondrous state" was on the form of beauty, that is, the interpretation of beauty: first, on the beauty of mountains and seas, which in general refers to animals flying in the air and swimming in the water; second, on the beauty of palaces in various countries, and the methods of constructing buildings; third, on the beauty of carvings; fourth, on the beauty of paintings; fifth, on the beauty of music; sixth, on the beauty of *cifu* (辞赋), an ancient Chinese literary genre originating in the Warring States Period); and seventh, on the beauty of lyrics in opera, which is not the root of the common schools, but refers to the rhythm of the text and the relaxation of the mind (*Co-printed* 6).

According to Xiao Lang 肖朗, the so-called "zhixue" of Faber covered humanities and social sciences, as well as the natural sciences. The former included linguistics, rhetoric, logic, ethics, psychology, and aesthetics; the latter included physics, astronomy, and biology (Xiao 87-95). Xiao does not indicate exactly what the "eight lessons" of *zhixue* were, but it was certain that aesthetics was included.

The subsequent development of disciplines has made it difficult to determine the correspondence between these eight courses and today's curriculum in a one-to-one manner, except in general terms. For example, it is likely that what Faber called "the study of *gewu*" included physics, biology, and astronomy, as Xiao suggests. This is, of course, a change in the connotation of the discipline and does not seem to be necessarily linked to its name. Just in the same way as the name "aesthetics," as Baumgarten coined the name of the discipline in 1750, its connotation has changed considerably, but the name has survived.

If we translate these eight lessons back into English, it should be "discourse study" ("learning language" is a misnomer for it), which corresponds to "philology"; "neo-Confucianism," which corresponds to "philosophy"; "the study of soul," which corresponds to "mental philosophy"; "*gewu*," which corresponds to "physics"; "the profound truth of God," which corresponds to "theology," and its relationship with "classics" is roughly equated with literature and literary theory; "behavior," which corresponds to "moral philosophy"; "approaches to enter into a wondrous state," which corresponds to "aesthetics"; and "masters of *zhixue*," which corresponds to "history of science." Of these eight lessons, the only one corresponding to aesthetics is the seventh, "approaches to enter into a wondrous state," which would lead to the conclusion that this is Faber's Chinese translation of aesthetics. As the name of the lesson, this translation, while somewhat verbose, more accurately conveys the original meaning of aesthetics. According to Baumgarten, the original meaning of aesthetics is the issue of perception, that is, the issue of how to perceive beauty, so it would be appropriate that Faber has translated it as "approaches to enter into a wondrous state." The so-called "on the form of beauty, that is, the interpretation of beauty" is a simple definition of the discipline, aesthetics.

Hegel taught aesthetics at Heidelberg University and Berlin University in Germany from 1817 to 1829, and it is worth discussing the relation between the aesthetics courses at the German universities mentioned by Faber and Hegel's aesthetics classes. In Hegel's philosophy, the art of beauty emerges as the first part of the Absolute Mind. Hegel pointed out, as cited in *The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Science in Outline*: "In this ideal, or the concrete shape born of the subjective spirit, its natural immediacy, which is only a *sign* of the Idea, is so transfigured by the informing spirit in order to express the Idea, that the figure shows it and nothing else: the shape or form of *Beauty*" ("The Encyclopedia" 155).

The so-called "shape or form of Beauty" should be the original meaning of what Faber called "the form of beauty." As for Hegel's statement that "this realization of the Ideal amounted only to the still purely inner production of art within the sphere of the universal world-views into which it was elaborated" (*Aesthetics* 613), Faber had left the question open. He had defined aesthetics mainly in terms of the external spatial forms of beauty from Hegel, which could indeed be reflected in the seven aesthetic forms he mentioned. Volume III of Hegel's *Aesthetics* focuses on five artistic categories: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and language. In terms of language art, Hegel discussed specifically epic poetry, lyric poetry, and drama. With the exception of the first, beauty of mountains and seas, Faber's order of the forms of beauty was generally consistent with Hegel's, while the sixth, "beauty of *cifu*" and seventh, "lyrics in opera," mentioned by him were Chinese expressions of Hegel's language art. Faber used Chinese *cifu* to correspond to Hegel's lyric poetry, and lyrics in opera to correspond to drama; however, he avoided talking about epic poetry. He should have expanded on the third volume of Hegel's *Aesthetics* to explain the specific content of the German university aesthetics course. However, Hegel's aesthetics belongs to the philosophy of art, and he rarely dealt with the beauty of natural mountains and seas. Thus, it is clear that Faber's definition of the connotation of the name of aesthetics course is not identical to that of Hegelian aesthetics. Hegel probably understood the name of the course mainly on the basis of Baumgarten's interpretation of aesthetics; in fact, his translation of aesthetics as "*ruherumiaozhifa* (approaches to enter into a wondrous state)" was inspired by Baumgarten.

At about the same time, the Japanese scholar Nishi used the term "*meimiauxue*" (美妙学 the kanji form of the Japanese *bimyogaku*, literally meaning "the study of the delicately and wondrously beautiful," or theory of aesthetics) to translate aesthetics. It is significant that both he and Faber coincidentally chose the word "*miao*"(妙) to define "aesthetics." Ye Lang 叶朗 once pointed out, "in the classical Chinese aesthetic system, the word 'miao' is also a remarkably important aesthetic category, and in a sense it is even more significant than the word 'mei'"(34). Unfortunately, although the term "*meimiauxue*" was popular in Japan for a while, it did not spread far.

In the development of modern Chinese aesthetics, "*shenmeixue*"(审美学) has also existed as the Chinese translation of aesthetics, and so it is worthy of great attention. It is generally recognized that "*shenmeixue*" was also introduced to China via Japan. However, Huang believed that the term "*shenmeixue*" that had been popular in Japan probably came from the translation by Wilhelm Lobscheid (1822-1893). Wilhelm Lobscheid's *English and Chinese Dictionary* translated aesthetics as "*jiameizhili* (佳美之理), *shenmeizhili* (审美之理)." In Huang's view, "*shenmeixue*" was probably a development of Japanese scholars based on the word "*shenmei*," since some data showed that Wilhelm Lobscheid's *English and Chinese Dictionary* "had reached Japan quite early and influenced the translation of new names in Japan" (Huang 75-84).

Huang was merely speculating here. He mentions the 1879 re-titled and reprinted *A Dictionary of The English, Chinese and Japanese Languages with the Japanese Pronunciation* and other updated editions in Japanese, which seemed to imply that "*shenmeixue*" used by Japanese scholars later can probably be traced to Wilhelm Lobscheid. However, there is no conclusive evidence to justify this speculation.

First of all, judging from the fact that Obata Jinzaburo (小幡甚三郎, 1846-1873) was the first to adopt the term "*shenmeixue*" (审美学) in Japan (Nie, *Comments on* 65-77), there is no evidence that it originated from Lobscheid's "*shenmeizhili* (审美之理)." There is no evidence that Jinzaburo Obata has read Lobscheid's dictionary. Even if he had read it, there is no evidence that the "*shenmeixue*" he created and translated originated from the dictionary. Thus, this notion remains a speculation and a hypothesis. In the case of Jinzaburo Obata himself, he was fully capable of completing the translation of *shenmeixue* by himself and didn't need to learn from others' translation. He once co-edited, with his brother Tokujiro Obata, *Common English Idioms* (published by Shokodo in 1868, the fourth year of the Keio era), and later he studied in the United States. Thus he acquired a high level of English. It is a pity that he died young; otherwise he would have given a more detailed illustration of *shenmeixue*. Jinzaburo Obata's *Common English Idioms* does not include any entries for the word "aesthetics." A comparison of it with Lobscheid's *English and Chinese Dictionary* also shows that there is no factual relationship between the two dictionaries.

Secondly, judging from the spread of Lobscheid's *English and Chinese Dictionary* in Japan, it is also difficult to establish a substantial relationship between the influence of his "*shenmeizhili* (审美之理)"

and the "shenmeixue" popular among Japanese scholars. We would like to note that, even if Jinzaburo Obata had access to the dictionary, this would not prove that Japanese "shenmeixue" originated from Lobscheid's "shenmeizhili (审美之理)." This is because the use of the term "shenmeixue" in Japan after Jinzaburo Obata coincided with and did not run counter to the spread of Lobscheid's *English and Chinese Dictionary* in Japan, but the two did not establish a proven link with each other.

Generally speaking, those who engage in impact research lay great emphasis on empirical evidence, as the saying goes: "none can be trusted without evidence, or can be unacceptable as uncorroborated evidence (无征不信、孤证不立)." Although we often mention the need for "bold hypothesis," it must be followed by "careful verification." A bold hypothesis without careful verification is difficult to sustain. In the case of Lobscheid's *English and Chinese Dictionary*, if it is claimed that Japanese scholars derived the term "shenmeixue" from the dictionary, it would be better to have evidence that the earliest adopters of "shenmeixue" explicitly stated that they had acquired the term from it. However, in fact, no evidence of this kind has been found so far. We might, however, find the answer from the evolution of Lobscheid's dictionary instead. If after the dictionary was introduced to Japan, the English and Japanese dictionary is derived from it or the revised and enlarged English-Chinese dictionary corrected "shenmeizhili (审美之理)" to "shenmeixue," it can also be established that the term originated from Lobscheid. But so far, there is no such evidence, either.

The individual in Japanese academia at the time who was directly associated with Lobscheid's *English and Chinese Dictionary* was Inoue Tetsujiro 井上哲次郎(1855-1944), a philosopher, poet, and educator in Meiji-period Japan. He acquired the copyright of the dictionary on July 12, 1883, updated it, and printed pages 1-184 on September 29 of the same year. These were subsequently published in six parts. A combined edition was published on July 28, 1884. It is reasonable to assume that if Inoue had changed "jiameizhili (佳美之理)" and "shenmeizhili (审美之理)" into "shenmeixue" when updating the Dictionary, it would also prove that the term originated from Lobscheid. However, "aesthetics" still retains Lobscheid's interpretation and is not changed in Inoue's *Revised and Enlarged English-Chinese Dictionary* (增订英华字典).

In the *Autobiography of Tetsujiro Inoue* (井上哲次郎自传), Inoue states: "I graduated from Tokyo University in July of Meiji 13 (1880), and the following year I published the *Dictionary of Philosophy ...* The word 'philosophy' was coined by Nishi, as were some other psychological words, but the terms for ethics, aesthetics, linguistics, and so forth came from me" (33). It is obvious that Inoue exaggerated his contribution when he said that the aesthetic vocabulary came from him, because before him, Amane Nishi 西周(1829-1897), an enlightener and educator in Meiji-period Japan, used the word "meimiauxue" to translate aesthetics. Nishi translated aesthetics as "shanmeixue" (善美学, the science of goodness and beauty) in *Hyakuichi Shinron* (New theory of the one hundred and one)(Nishi, *The Complete* 288), as "jiaqulun" (佳趣论, the discipline of good taste) in *Encyclopedia* (Nishi, *The Complete* 168) and as "meimiauxue" (美妙学, a theory on wondrous beauty) in *Bimyo Gakusetsu* (*The Complete* 477). According to Peng Xiuyin's 彭修银 testimony, Nishi's *Hyakuichi Shinron* was taught at Sijyuku (private schools) in Kyoto from 1866 to 1867 and published in 1874 (201). Moreover, *Encyclopedia* was a collection of lecture notes of Ikueisha, a private school Nishi opened in 1870 at his house in Torigoe Misuji-cho, Asakusa, and Tokyo. Nishi's *Bimyo Gakusetsu* was originally a draft speech for Emperor Meiji, and it was also the first book on aesthetics in Japanese history based on the two books mentioned above. In addition, Nishi had previously translated John Haven's *Mental Philosophy: Including the Intellect, Sensibilities and Will* (hereinafter referred to as *Mental Philosophy*). Peng points out that many of the contents of Nishi's *Bimyo Gakusetsu*, especially the part where Nishi discusses the "internal elements" of *meimiauxue*, namely "aesthetic perception," "was greatly influenced by Haven" (201). This suggests that the term "meimiauxue" used by Nishi to translate "aesthetics" was derived from Haven's *Mental Philosophy*, rather than Lobscheid's *English and Chinese Dictionary*. In the thesis "The Conception and Cognizance of the Beautiful" Chapter 3 of Part I of *Mental Philosophy*, Haven defined "aesthetics" as "the science of the beautiful" (*Mental Philosophy* 263). This was also the reason why Nishi translated the term "aesthetics" as "meimiauxue" and no longer used the terms "jiaqulun" or "shanmeixue."

After Nishi's translation of Haven's *Mental Philosophy*, Chinese scholar Yan Yongjing 颜永京(1839-1898), translated the same book in 1889 under the title of *Xinlingxue* (which literally means "the

theory of the minds"), in which he renders the word "aesthetics" as "yanlizhixue" (艳丽之学), which signifies "the theory of the gloriously beautiful" in Chinese (Haven, *Xinlingxue* 177). Although there were certain differences between Yan's and Nishi's versions, they were both based on the same source text, which means Yan's "yanlizhixue" was also derived from "the science of the beautiful." Both Yan and Nishi translated the word "aesthetics" from the perspective of the object of study. However, this should be considered as their last resort for translating, because aesthetics was a hard-to-define term for the Chinese language, while rendering the word based on the object of study could be a simplified approach to achieve the purpose. Yan adopted the same approach as Nishi in rendering "aesthetics" while translating Haven's *Mental Philosophy*. The only difference between the two translators is that Yan translated "the beautiful" into "yanli" (the gloriously beautiful), whereas Nishi rendered it as "bimyo" (the wondrously beautiful).

Haven's *Mental Philosophy* is indeed significant, as it has exerted a great influence on the birth of the discipline of aesthetics in both China and Japan, and played an important role in the naming of the discipline. Although Yan's contribution in translating the book cannot go unnoticed, we must admit that what he has done only counts as translating and introducing. Important as his work is, it cannot be deemed as the true beginning of the discipline of modern Chinese aesthetics.

In the development of modern Chinese aesthetics, the Chinese translation of "aesthetics" is indeed a matter of significance, as it is one of the major signs of the establishment of the modern Chinese discipline of aesthetics. Following the above analysis, we recognize that *meixue*, the Chinese translation of "aesthetics," did not originate domestically. On the contrary, it was introduced from Japan. According to the materials currently available, it was Nakae Chomin 中江兆民 (1847-1901), a journalist, political theorist, and statesman in Meiji-period Japan, who first translated the term "aesthetics" as "*meixue*" in Chinese in 1883, thus having an impact on later generations. However, obviously the mere introduction of the term cannot be regarded as the real beginning of modern Chinese aesthetics, in the same way that although Alexander Baumgarten defined aesthetics, it was Immanuel Kant who brought the subject to fruition.

It can be seen that the origin, formation and development of Chinese aesthetic concepts cannot be separated from the contributions of scholars from Germany, Japan and other countries, as well as the translations of Chinese scholars. However, there is no doubt that it was Wang Guowei who made the greatest contribution to the development of Chinese aesthetics and integrated Western-derived aesthetic terms into the construction of Chinese aesthetic discourse, establishing a new paradigm of cross-cultural aesthetics for Chinese *meixue*.

In *Comments on Wang Guowei's Thoughts on Aesthetics*, published in 1986, Nie Zhenbin made it clear that modern Chinese aesthetics stemmed from Wang Guowei's thoughts and ideas, therefore Wang (1877-1927) should be considered the founder of modern Chinese aesthetics. There are mainly two reasons to support his view. First, Wang was the first to have defined aesthetics as an independent discipline. As Nie pointed out, "the major difference between modern and classic aesthetics is that modern aesthetics defines itself as aesthetics and exists independently, while in contrast, back in ancient time, classical aesthetics was not systematized as an independent discipline, but was assimilated into philosophy, morality, culture and art" (*Comments on* 1). Second, Wang was the first to form a system of deep and abundant aesthetic thought among all modern aestheticians, and expressed his views on fundamental questions on aesthetics, some of which are unique, such as on essence, functions, types, categories of beauty, and aesthetic psychology. For this reason, Wang's thought has been highly regarded throughout the history of modern Chinese aesthetics, and he has come to be considered the earliest pioneer and the founder of modern Chinese aesthetics. As Nie elaborated, "Wang Guowei's aesthetic thinking preceded Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940) by almost 10 years, though he was nearly 10 years younger than Cai" (39).

According to Wang Desheng 王德胜 and Yang Guolong 杨国龙, although Wang Guowei was not the first person to use the word "aesthetics," he was the first to define "aesthetics" ("On the development" 19-29). Even Huang did not deny this, and he points out in *Basic Philosophical Vocabulary*, an article translated by Wang Guowei in 1902, that Wang defined "aesthetics" as "the theory of the beauty of things," and translated "aesthetics" as "*meixue*" and "*shenmeixue*" (75-84).

From 1903, Wang Guowei expressed his views on the construction of the discipline of aesthetics through his publications in *Education World*, China's first education journal, in such articles as "To Clarify a Few Misunderstandings about Philosophy," "On the Purpose of Education," "My Thoughts on Education," and "On Academia in Recent Years," among others. In 1906, Wang Guowei published "Comments on the Petition to His Majesty for Education and Management Reform of the Confucianism

College and the Literature College," criticizing that in his "Petition to His Majesty for Education System Reform," Zhang Zhidong 张之洞 (governor of the late Qing Dynasty, 1837-1909) had proposed that the philosophy department should be disbanded and aesthetics should be categorized in the architecture department of the engineering college. Wang Guowei advocated the merging of the literature college and the Confucianism college, and suggested setting aesthetics courses in the Confucianism, science, Chinese literature, and foreign literature departments ("Comments on the petition" 1-6;1-5). The suggestion made aesthetics return to its home in the liberal arts, which set a milestone for the development of aesthetics as a discipline in China. Therefore, as Huang states, "Wang Guowei was the first Chinese person to publicly appeal for setting aesthetics courses in liberal arts departments in universities" (75-84). His judgment was correct.

Indeed, we must admit that there were many aesthetic terms and theories which came close to the modern professional standard before those introduced by Wang Guowei. And the establishment of the modern discipline of Chinese aesthetics should not be credited to Wang Guowei alone. But at the same time, we must reaffirm that modern Chinese aesthetics started from Wang Guowei. It is undeniable that Wang played the role of the founder for the establishment of modern and contemporary Chinese aesthetics. Just as Du Wei 杜卫 has pointed out, "Wang Guowei constructed modern Chinese aesthetics in the respects of consciousness, axiology, and methodology, and has exerted a profound and long-lasting influence on aesthetics in China for the entire twentieth century" (169-79).

In *Review on Dream of the Red Chamber*, Wang Guowei borrowed terminology from Arthur Schopenhauer's theory of tragedy, believing that the tragedy of *Dream of the Red Chamber* was "caused by ordinary morality, ordinary sentiments, and ordinary situations" ("Review on Dream" 12) instead of "the extremely wicked" or "the blindness of fate." To make the comparison, Wang argued that Faust's suffering was "the suffering of a genius," which did not evoke sympathy or fear in normal people, whereas Baoyu's suffering was "the suffering of every ordinary person, which exists at the very root of a being, desperately calling for salvation" (10), which became more likely to make normal readers feel touched. Therefore, Wang concluded that *Dream of the Red Chamber* was "the tragedy of tragedies"; it was a tragedy more tragic than *Faust* (10). And this is exactly what Chinese discourse stands for. Even though Wang resorted to Western terminology of the theory of tragedy, he managed to interpret the aesthetic value of *Dream of the Red Chamber* in a deep and effective manner. He defended the dignity of Chinese classic literary works, and spoke for the mindset of most Chinese readers. These are the traits of typical Chinese discourses.

According to Schopenhauer, tragedy is powered by "the antagonism of the will with itself which is here most completely unfolded at the highest grade of its objectivity, and which comes into fearful prominence" (253). In *The World as Will and Presentation*, Schopenhauer classified tragedy into three types, just as Wang did: "the first is by means of a character of extraordinary wickedness, and the second is by blind fate, the third being the time when characters are so situated with regard to each other that their position compels them" (Wang, "Review on Dream" 11). In Schopenhauer's theory, the first type of tragedy is exemplified by Shakespeare's *Richard III*, *Othello*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, Friedrich Schiller's *The Robbers*, Euripides's *Hippolytus*, and Sophocles' *Antigone*; the second type includes Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and *The Women of Trachis*, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Voltaire's *Tancredi*, and Schiller's *The Bride of Messina*; and the third type of tragedy includes Goethe's *Clavigo* and *Faust*, Schiller's *Wallenstein*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid* (Schopenhauer 352-3).

In Schopenhauer's theory, the most typical example of the third type of tragedy was Western tragedies such as *Faust*, whereas in Wang's opinion, *Dream of the Red Chamber* was a more salient example to convey the enormity of agony of the third type rather than *Faust*. In this sense, Schopenhauer's theory of tragedy and *Dream of the Red Chamber* were bonded together by this enlightening "intertextuality." In *Review on Dream of the Red Chamber*, Wang helped the theory of tragedy break away from the Western context. He cut the tie between the "signifier" and the "signified," which means detaching the term "tragedy" in Schopenhauer's theory from Western tragedy works such as *Faust*, *Clavigo*, *Wallenstein*, *Hamlet*, and *Le Cid*. The term "tragedy" was neutralized: it became a "sliding signifier," signifying the classic Chinese literary text *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Wang Guowei redefined the term "tragedy" with a Chinese literary text by making the judgment that *Dream of the Red Chamber* was indeed a tragedy. And such a judgment becomes part of typical Chinese aesthetic discourse in the Chinese context.

In *Review on Dream of the Red Chamber*, Wang recognized that Schopenhauer's theory of tragedy was paradoxical. He argued, "Schopenhauer only mentioned the salvation of one person and ignored the salvation of the world, which contradicts his theory of the unity of will and representation"

("Review on Dream" 16). As a result, the "suffering of a genius" in tragedies such as *Faust* only leads to the "salvation of one person" without extending to the "salvation of the world." This means that Wang came to realize that Schopenhauer's tragedy theory was flawed, and he made the attempt to supplement and correct his theory with the example of "the suffering of ordinary people" leading to the "salvation of the world" in *Dream of the Red Chamber*. And this is how Wang formed a unique theory of tragedy that is different from Schopenhauer's.

In the Chinese context at that time, Wang's advocacy of the tragedy of "the suffering of ordinary people" was rooted in his profound insights into "nationality." As Wang pointed out, "the Chinese people's spirit is naturally earthly and optimistic, as in many plays and fictions, optimism always prevails: what begins in sorrow ends in happiness; what begins with separation ends with reunion; what begins at misfortune ends up a success" ("Review on *Dream*" 10). For this particular reason, Wang Guowei stood strongly against happy endings, and attached great significance to the tragic ending of *Dream of the Red Chamber*. And this is why his tragedy theory differs from Schopenhauer's. In Schopenhauer's theory of tragedy, whether there is a happy ending or not is not a crucial factor to a tragedy. For example, *Richard III* and *Le Cid* both end with the villains being punished and the lovers being together. However, Schopenhauer himself still saw *Le Cid* as the perfect example of the third type of tragedy regardless of its lack of a tragic ending. In comparison, Wang Guowei paid more attention to tragic endings, and decided to elevate tragedy to a level contrasting with "the spirit of Chinese people." Such a spirit of tragedy was certainly in relation to his own pessimistic personality. More importantly, it was in line with the zeitgeist in China's historical transition, and it mirrored the internal demand surfacing from the development of Chinese aesthetic practice.

From Arthur Schopenhauer to Wang Guowei, the term "tragedy" has undergone a process of contextualization, decontextualization, and recontextualization. The contextualization of Western theories means that we need to put the so-called universal Western theories in a certain historical context for reconsideration; the decontextualization means that we have to free Western theoretical discourses from their Western context, put aside axiological disputes, deem them as neutral knowledge, and convert the discourses into terminology. Recontextualization means that we need to learn from Western theories while holding on to our stance of Chinese historical context, in order to better solve Chinese problems. As what is argued by Liu Kang 刘康, behind the localization, or the Sinicization of Western theories "there is a hidden presupposition: the Sinicization of Western theories is accomplished by putting a universal and truthful Western theory into practice" ("What is Liberal" 160-73), therefore such expression is inappropriate for its Western-centric connotation.

Wang's tragedy theory is not the mere localization or Sinicization of Schopenhauer's theory, but it transports the theory to fit into the Chinese context, eventually transforming it into a Chinese question. The main purpose of his borrowing Schopenhauer's theory was to answer the Chinese question, which refers to all the happy endings in Chinese arts and culture. This localization, or Sinicization, is concluded from the perspective of influence, and entails a hidden prerequisite: Western theories are deemed universal. Conversely, Chinese contextualization, or the process of turning a matter into a Chinese question, is concluded from the perspective of cross-cultural study, with the prerequisite that the exchange of Chinese and Western theories is deemed as a dialogue on an equal footing. Wang did not plagiarize Schopenhauer's theory. Although he borrowed the terminology of tragedy from Schopenhauer, he reshaped the discourse in the special historical context of China; he reconstructed the relation of the signifier and the signified of the term "tragedy," and eventually he successfully formed his original theoretical discourse, which later constituted Chinese aesthetic discourse.

Meanwhile, it is because Wang undertook his review of *Dream of the Red Chamber* using the Western terminology of tragedy that this Chinese classic had the opportunity to be moved into the spotlight of the global literature platform and earn so-called "International discourse power." And ever since then, *Dream of the Red Chamber* has its place among the world's most famous literature works, and has effectively promoted Chinese literature and culture to the world. Therefore, we cannot deny the value of this article simply because Wang chose to interpret *Dream of the Red Chamber* using Western theoretical terminology. On the contrary, today we ought to discover such Chinese academic resources since modern times which interpret Chinese literary and artistic texts using Western theories in order to introduce and promote Chinese culture in the West. The first step to successful cultural transmission is to make the materials understandable. Those Chinese academic resources backed by Western theories are perfect for Western readers to understand, and therefore they can more effectively help promote Chinese culture.

In "What is an Author?" Michel Foucault mentions the concept of "founders of discursivity," and comments on authors like Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, "they are unique in that they are not just the author of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts" (154). And, as what Liu Kang argues, Foucault's "founder of discursivity" is similar to the creators of the scientific paradigm in Thomas Kuhn's theory: they both construct paradigms with their discourses. However, the paradigms of discourse and natural science are different in the way that they are heterogeneous in the process of transformation, and that their moldings are unpredictable after the transformation. Liu has reminded us to pay more attention to "the transformation and reshaping in different cultures," "that is, in a specific historical context (in this case, China), how a Western knowledge system with a façade of universality goes through a myriad of contradictions, raptures, mutations, and shifts, continuously transforming and reshaping itself" ("China Question" 1-19).

In conclusion, a "founder of discursivity" is exactly who Wang Guowei is. He not only introduced Western aesthetic terminology into China, but also created Chinese aesthetic discourses such as the theories of "tragedy" due to the intrinsic requirement of the development of Chinese aesthetics; he generated his own theoretical discourse of aesthetics, as well as the discourse paradigm that sets examples for future works. Although before Wang, the term "aesthetics" had been introduced into China by lexicons or through books about pedagogy, psychology, and philosophy, the most important contribution he made to Chinese aesthetics is that he merged Western aesthetic terminology into the construction of a Chinese aesthetic discourse, realized the transformation and reshaping in different cultures, and finally created a new cross-cultural aesthetic paradigm in modern China.

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