

The Aesthetic Thought of Zhu Guangqian (1897-1986)

Tae-Shik Shim

PhD

The University of Edinburgh

2008



Declaration:

All work, unless otherwise acknowledged, is my own. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed:

Date: 22 July 2008

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Abstract

INTRODUCTION

1

CHAPTER I: Early Education and Intellectual Background

- 1.1. Family and Primary Education in Tongcheng 11
- 1.2. Tongcheng Middle School 15
- 1.3. Hong Kong University and the New Culture Movement 19
- 1.4. Language: *baihua* and *guwen* 23

CHAPTER II: The Formation of Intellectual Attitude

- 2.1. Zhu's Attitude towards Social Background 27
- 2.2. An Effort to Set Up a New School System 32
- 2.3. Towards a New Philosophy of Life 38

CHAPTER III: Studies in Europe and Encounter with European Thinkers

- 3.1. Subjects for Studies in Europe 46
- 3.2. Zhu Guangqian and Croce's Aesthetic Theory 52
- 3.3. Zhu Guangqian and Philosophy of Nietzsche 59

CHAPTER IV: Aesthetic Theory as Aesthetic Experience

- 4.1. Zhu's Pragmatic Approach to Aesthetics 69
- 4.2. Aesthetic Experience as the Starting Point 74
- 4.3. Psychological Theories for Aesthetic Experience 83
 - Empathy, Inner Imitation and Psychological Distance

CHAPTER V: Defining Beauty with Associative Thinking and Morality	
5.1. Towards a More Flexible Theory: Associative Thinking	96
5.2. Sense of Morality in Aesthetic Experience	101
5.3. Evaluation of Beauty	110
5.4. Reinterpretation of Croce's Theory	117
CHAPTER VI: Towards Marxist Aesthetics	
6.1. Social and Intellectual Background in the 1940s and 1950s	125
6.2. The Influence of Thought Reform	128
6.3. Similarities between Zhu Guangqian and Karl Marx	132
6.3.1. Human Value and Art in Zhu and Marx's Thinking	137
6.3.2. Pragmatic Approach	143
6.3.3. Praxis and Action/Tranquillity	145
6.3.4. Reciprocity of the Subject and the Object	148
CHAPTER VII: Reconstruction of Marxism	
7.1. Zhu's Self-criticism in 1956	153
7.2. Zhu's Reply to Cai Yi and Li Zehou during the Debate	157
7.3. Zhu's Interpretation of Marxism	166
7.4. The Post-Mao Era: Discovery of Vico	172
CONCLUSION	180
Appendix: Table of Zhu Guangqian's Works	186
Bibliography	190

Acknowledgement

Many thanks are due to those who have helped and encouraged me in the preparation of this thesis. First and foremost, I wish to express my profound indebtedness to my supervisor Dr T McClellan for all his kind help and valuable insights throughout the research and writing of this thesis. He has been a constant source of enthusiasm, encouragement and refreshing inspiration. Often, it was through the discussions with him that my thinking on the topic became clearer and, as a result, I made progress in my studies.

I am also very grateful to Dr Susan Daruvala and Dr Julian Ward for their helpful suggestions that have contributed to the coherence of the thesis. I would also like to express my gratitude to Prof Natascha Gentz and Prof Bonnie McDougall who arranged a thought-provoking seminar series and gave me constructive criticism. I also owe a special note of thanks to the University and the staff, especially Ms Ferguson, in the Special Collections of the University of Edinburgh Library, for their kind assistance and for allowing me to consult Zhu Guangqian's student records.

I am also much indebted to my colleague and friends, Dr Xiaohuan Zhao, Dr Kazuki Takada, Radhi Ibrahim, Dr Ningyi Li, Meng Pei and Lina Cai for their warm encouragement and sustained support in many ways. Warm thanks are also due to George Daniels and Sarah Howard for their time and proof-reading.

Finally, I should also like to thank my family for their patience and encouragement while I spent many years staring at my computer screen.

Abstract

In modern Chinese aesthetics and literary criticism, Zhu Guangqian 朱光潛 (1897-1986) is one of the most well-known theorists and a writer renowned both amongst Chinese intellectuals and the many young readers who enjoy accessible versions of his theories. In the 1980s, Zhu's status as an influential figure was heightened once more through the debates over socialist alienation in Marxist humanism and 'Culture Fever.'

His emphasis on the aesthetic dimension of art was at odds with prevailing contemporary views on political utility in art. In consequence, the literary theory and aesthetics of his early stage were, until the 1980s, criticised in mainland China for their idealist tendencies. Although there have been some studies on Zhu's contributions to modern Chinese aesthetic theory and literary criticism, there has been little comprehensive research on the formation and development of his thought.

This thesis is, therefore, concerned to provide a detailed reconstruction and analysis of these relatively neglected aspects of Zhu's thought throughout his life. I seek to show that Zhu offers a unique attitude towards the intellectual turmoil of China since the 1920s and a highly original account of the reciprocity of traditional Chinese ethical ideals and Western thinking derived from his education in both China and Europe and developed throughout his further studies of Western thinkers. While examining Zhu's interpretation of aesthetic experience and Western theories of aesthetics and psychology, I argue that despite the apparent influence of Western ideas on the formation of his theories, his unique attitude is steeped in traditional Chinese thought. Unlike previous studies, this thesis also argues that there is consistency in his thinking between in the first half and the second half of the 20th century.

INTRODUCTION

Zhu Guangqian 朱光潛 (1897-1986),¹ also known by his pen name Mengshi 孟實, is one of the best-known modern theorists of Chinese aesthetics and literary criticism. At the same time he is a writer renowned amongst intellectuals in China, whose readable versions of his theories are enjoyed by a large number of young readers. In the 1980s, Zhu drew attention again as an influential figure during the debates over socialist alienation and Marxist humanism in 1983, Culture Fever in 1985, and the emergent problematic of subjectivity from 1985 onward. This is due not only to Zhu's emphasis on subjectivity in Marxist theory in his late phase but also to his fundamental question of how to retain the integration between human nature and the world.²

After his first nineteen years as a child and youth in Tongcheng 桐城 in Anhui province, China, Zhu obtained his BA at the University of Hong Kong in 1923 and went on to study Western philosophy, psychology, English literature and aesthetics at the University of Edinburgh, University College London (UCL) and the University of Strasbourg between 1925 and 1933. During his time at Strasbourg he completed a PhD thesis in English which was published in 1933. Following his return to China, he became a professor, initially at Peking University, until his death in 1986.

Zhu's academic career and his writings can be roughly divided into two phases. The first stage was from the 1920s to 1949 during the Republican era. In the first phase, Zhu Guangqian attempted not only to introduce modern Western philosophy and psychology,

¹ Zhu Guangqian is also known as Chu Kwang-Tsien in English. This English name was used until his death in 1986: from his student records in Edinburgh and on his English thesis to the complimentary copies of his books in the 1980s. For Zhu's student records at the University of Edinburgh, see the following: *First Matriculation Book 1925-1926*, vol. 60 (Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh), no publication date and not paginated; *Graduates in Arts 1928* (Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh), no publication date and not paginated. These two archives are in the Special Collections of the University of Edinburgh Library.

² For a detailed account of the 1980s debates, see Jing Wang, *High Culture Fever: Politics, Aesthetics, and Ideology in Deng's China* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996), especially Chapters 1, 2, and 5. Also see Liu Kang, *Aesthetics and Marxism: Chinese Aesthetic Marxists and their Western Contemporaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), especially Chapter 4.

but also to incorporate them into China's aesthetic traditions. In this period, his major theoretical works on literature and aesthetics, mainly completed or planned during his eight years in Europe, consist of the following: *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (1929), *Tan mei* 談美 [Talking about beauty] (1932), *The Psychology of Tragedy: A Critical Study of Various Theories of Tragic Pleasure* (1933), *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 [The psychology of literature and art] (1936), *Mengshi wen chao* 孟實文鈔 [Collected writings of Mengshi] (1936), *Shi lun* 詩論 [On poetry] (1943), *Tan xiuyang* 談修養 [Discussion of self-cultivation] (1943), *Tan wenxue* 談文學 [Discussion of literature] (1946), *Keluoqi zhexue shuping* 可羅齊哲學述評 [A study of Croce's philosophy] (1948).³

The second phase lies in the People's Republic of China (PRC) era, from the 1950s to Zhu's death in 1986. In this period, his writings were greatly influenced by Marxism, either as a result of his own initiative or because of political constraints. Although the total number of his theoretical writings declined during this phase compared to the previous era and he concentrated more on translations, which comprise nine out of the twenty volumes of *Zhu Guangqian quanji* 朱光潛全集 [Complete works of Zhu Guangqian],⁴ he continued to produce significant contributions to the development of Marxist theory of aesthetics, in particular the relationship between the subject and the object from the perspective of Zhu's emphasis on human values.⁵ Apart from his PhD thesis, which was not published in Chinese until Zhang Longxi, one of his students, translated it in 1983, most of these major works were widely read by young readers in the 1930s and are still read today, both academically and by the general public.⁶

³ For the publication details of these works, see the appendix at the end of this thesis.

⁴ This collection was published in Beijing by Anhui Jiaoyu Chubanshe between 1987-1993. Hereafter cited as *QJ*.

⁵ All these works produced during Zhu's life are included in *QJ* except his published PhD thesis in English. Instead a Chinese translation was included in *QJ*. For the publication details of these works, see the appendix at the end of this thesis.

⁶ There have been a large number of reprints of Zhu's early major works, both in Taiwan and mainland China. For example, in mainland China, *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* was so enjoyed by the public as to be printed in more than 200,000 copies in the 1930s and 1940s. See Zhu Guangqian, "Da Chongqing *Da gong bao wen*" 答重慶《大公報》問 [Reply to a question from Chongqian *Da gong*

Studies on Zhu Guangqian in mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong do not have a long history. His emphasis on the aesthetic dimension of art was at odds with prevailing views on political utility in art. In consequence, his literary theory and aesthetics were, until the 1980s, criticised in mainland China for their idealist tendencies or unorthodox approach to key issues in aesthetics. In Taiwan, Zhu's well-known book *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* and other theoretical works have been widely read in high schools and used in some literary theory courses at universities.⁷ However, beyond this, Zhu's works were rarely studied in Taiwan until the 1990s. One of the main reasons for this seems to be his choice to stay in Beijing in 1949, even though he was a member of the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang 國民黨, hereafter KMT).⁸

On the other hand in the West, advanced research on Zhu began as early as in the 1970s, for example, Mario Sabattini (1970) and Bonnie S. McDougall's articles (1977).⁹ In his detailed comparative account of Zhu and Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), Sabattini argues that it is true that Zhu's aesthetic approach was greatly influenced by Croce as well as by the Chinese traditional thinking of Taoism, especially Zhuangzi. However, it is incorrect to regard him simply as a follower of Croce, as Zhu's basic aesthetic ideas are different and sometimes contradictory to Croce's aesthetic concepts, even when Zhu

bao], *Da gong bao* 大公報 (Chongqing, Jan 1948), in *QJ*, vol. 9, p. 312. See also Bonnie S. McDougall, "The View from the Leaning Tower: Zhu Guangqian 朱光潛 on Aesthetics and Society in the Nineteen-twenties and Thirties," in Göran Malmqvist ed., *Modern Chinese Literature and its Social Context*, Nobel Symposium No. 32 (Stockholm, 1977), p. 83. In Taiwan and Hong Kong, a large number of Zhu's early works were published. For example, *Tan wenxue* (Taipei: Taiwan kaiming shudian, 1974) was the twelfth edition (first ed. 1958). For the publication of Zhu's works in mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, see the bibliography.

⁷ This is based on Dr Tzi-Cheng Wang's comments on my research and the recollection of graduate students from Taiwan. Dr Tzi-Cheng Wang, currently a lecturer at SOAS, University of London, grew up and was educated in Taiwan.

⁸ In 1942 Zhu joined the KMT during his tenure at Wuhan University [Wuhan daxue 武漢大學], Leshan 樂山 and became one of the Central Committee Members in 1948. See, Wang Youxin 王攸欣, *Zhu Guangqian xueshu sixiang pingzhuan* 朱光潛學術思想評傳 [A critical biography of the academic thought of Zhu Guangqian] (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1999), pp. 59-61.

⁹ Mario Sabattini, "'Crocianism' in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's *Wen-i hsin-li-hsueh*," *East and West*, vol. 20, nos. 1-2 (March-June 1970), pp. 179-198; Bonnie S. McDougall, "The View from the Leaning Tower: Zhu Guangqian 朱光潛 on Aesthetics and Society in the Nineteen-twenties and Thirties," in Göran Malmqvist ed., *Modern Chinese Literature and its Social Context*, Nobel Symposium No. 32 (Stockholm, 1977), pp. 76-122.

interprets aesthetic experience through Croce's notion of intuition [*zhijue* 直覺]. Sabattini points out that although Zhu showed his theoretical inclination towards Western theories, especially Croce, he was more interested in the way in which Western theories were interpreted in line with classical Chinese thought.¹⁰

McDougall's article is the first general study on the early works of Zhu, dealing with Zhu's works published in book form in the 1930s and 1940s in the light of his attitude to literature and society. Although McDougall has slight doubts about Sabattini's strong emphasis on Zhu's early studies in Chinese philosophy, in particular Taoism, she mostly agrees with his discussion and concludes that "the most obvious characteristics are the continual note of pessimism and a shrinking not only from realism in literature but from reality in general, which always overshadow his pleas for tolerance and experiment," summarising Zhu's attitude as defeatist, escapist, eclectic and transcendental. Both of these articles have been influential in China as well as in the West, since Sabattini's article was translated into Chinese in abridged form in the well-known literary criticism magazine *Dushu* 讀書 [Reading monthly] in 1981, and McDougall's article was fully translated in the authoritative academic journal of literary study *Xin wenxue shiliao* 新文學史料 [Historical material of new literature] in the same year.¹¹ In later studies published in both Chinese and English, these two articles have been extensively cited and debated.¹² One

¹⁰ See Mario Sabattini, "'Crocianism' in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's *Wen-i hsin-li-hsüeh*," p. 179.

¹¹ Mali'ao Shabadini 馬利奧 沙巴蒂尼 [Mario Sabattini], "Waiguo xuezhe lun Zhu Guangqian yu Keluoqi meixue" 外國學者論朱光潛與克羅齊美學 [A foreign scholar's study on Zhu Guangqian and Croce's aesthetics], abridged trans. by Shen Ao 申奧, *Dushu* 讀書, vol. 3 (1981), pp. 139-143; Bangni Maikeduge 邦尼 麥克杜歌 [Bonnie McDougall], "Cong qingxie de ta shang liaowang: Zhu Guangqian lun shijiu shiji ershi zhi sanshi niandai de meixue he shehui beijing 從傾斜的塔上瞭望: 朱光潛論十九世紀二十至三十年代的美學和社會背景," trans. by Shen Ao 申奧, *Xin wenxue shiliao* 新文學史料, vol. 3 (1981), pp. 237-255. There are two conspicuous mistakes in the latter translation. The information about the author Bonnie McDougall is incorrect and the article title in Chinese is also inaccurate. It should have been *ershi shiji* 二十世紀 [Twentieth century] instead of *shijiu shiji* 十九世紀 [Nineteenth century].

¹² For example, see Qian Niansun 錢念孫, *Zhu Guangqian yu zhongxi wenhua* 朱光潛與中西文化 [Zhu Guangqian and East-West culture] (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), p. 115, 251, and pp. 302-305; Kuai Dashen 蒯大申, *Zhu Guangqian houqi meixue sixiang lunshu* 朱光潛後期美學思想論述 [Discussion of the late aesthetic thought of Zhu Guangqian] (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2001), pp. 210-217; Wang Youxin 王攸欣, *Xuanze, jieshou yu shuli: Wang Guowei jieshou Shubenhua, Zhu Guangqian jieshou Keluoqi meixue bijiao yanjiu* 選擇, 接受與疏離: 王國維接受叔本華, 朱光潛接受克羅齊美學比較研究 [Choice, acceptance and distance - a comparative

of the main observations is that although Sabbatini clearly observes that Zhu's view shows a different approach from that of Croce, it is questionable whether Zhu's affiliation with Chinese traditional thinking is derived mainly from Taoism. This discussion will be dealt with in detail in this thesis.

In mainland China, studies on Zhu began to be published after the Cultural Revolution, including articles giving a brief introduction to his life and career, reviews of his books, interviews with him, obituaries and academic studies.¹³ Most of these articles, however, were short in length and lacked in-depth academic investigation and analysis, concentrating on Zhu's discussion of ideology under the influence of the official orthodox view of 'Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.' It was thus not until Zhu's death in 1986 that more studies in book form, together with the 20 volumes of *Zhu Guangqian quanji*, began to be published in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.¹⁴ With the emergence of a new generation of theorists¹⁵ whose thinking is less restrained by socialist ideology, study of Zhu's aesthetic theories is deepening. Some, such as Wang Yuxiong, attribute Zhu's emphasis on human creative activity to traditional Chinese origins¹⁶ while

study of Wang Guowei's adoption of Schopenhauer's aesthetics and Zhu Guangqian's adoption of Croce's aesthetics] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1999), pp. 130-131 and p. 202; Cui Zhiying, "Saving China from its National Crisis: A Defence of Zhu Guangqian's Aesthetics," *Journal of Oriental Society of Australia*, vol. 32/33 (2000/2001), pp. 28-46.

¹³ See Lu Rongchun 陸榮椿, "Ye tan wenyi yu renxing lun, rendaozhuyi wenti - jian yu Zhu Guangqian tongzhi shangque" 也談文藝與人性論, 人道主義問題 - 兼與朱光潛同志商榷 [Another talk about human nature, humanism and literature and art - discussion with Zhu Guangqian], *Fuyin baokan ziliao: Wenyi lilun* 複印報刊資料: 文藝理論, vol. 16 (1980), pp. 73-80; Hao Mingjian 郝銘鑒, "Meixue laoren de qingnian shidai" 美學老人的青年時代 [Youth period of an aesthetic old man], *Qingnian yidai* 青年一代, no. 5 (1981), pp. 54-56; Cheng Daixi 程代熙, "Fang Zhu Guangqian jiaoshou" 訪朱光潛教授 [An interview with Professor Zhu Guangqian], *Renmin ribao* 人民日報, 12 March 1982. reprinted in *Fuyin baokan ziliao: Meixue* 複印報刊資料: 美學, vol. 4 (1982), p. 76; Guo Yin 郭因, "Cong Tan mei dao Tan mei shujian - shilun Zhu Guangqian meixue sixiang de bian yu bubian" 從《談美》到《談美書簡》 - 試論朱光潛美學思想的變與不變 [From *Talking about Beauty* to *Letters of Talking about Beauty* - on change and continuity of aesthetic thought of Zhu Guangqian], *Fuyin baokan ziliao: Meixue* 複印報刊資料: 美學, vol. 1 (1982), pp. 8-14; Li Pixian 李丕顯, "Zhu Guangqian meixue sixiang shuping" 朱光潛美學思想述評 [Review of aesthetic thought of Zhu Guangqian], *Meixue* 美學, vol. 4 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1982), pp. 88-113; For an obituary, see Hu Qiaomu 胡喬木 et al., *Zhu Guangqian jinian ji* 朱光潛紀念集 [Collected writings in memory of Zhu Guangqian] (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987).

¹⁴ In particular, more than five volumes were published by Anhui Jiaoyu Chubanshe in the 1990s. For details, see the section of Critical Studies on Zhu Guangqian in the bibliography of this thesis.

¹⁵ For a glimpse of the new generation of aesthetic theorists in the PRC, see Zhu Liyuan and Gene Blocker eds., *Contemporary Chinese Aesthetics* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995).

others, such as Zhang Qiqun, discern a link between Zhu's aesthetic theories and modern Western thought, although without shedding any light on the theoretical foundation and essential origin of Zhu's aesthetics and simply suggesting Zhu must have received some influence from Western ideas during his time in Europe.¹⁷

In contrast to the recent proliferation of studies in China, there has been little monographic research on Zhu in Western languages over the thirty years since McDougall's article in 1977.¹⁸ Recent development in discussions of Zhu offer different perspectives in evaluating the many sides of his works, whose view on and attitude towards society, art and literature, were construed in McDougall's 1977 article as indecisive and defeatist idealism in the course of Chinese modernisation.

As observed above, both earlier and current studies on Zhu have been mostly within the narrow range of specific interpretations of Zhu's aesthetic approach and ideas, focusing on a short period of Zhu's long academic career, although they can be said to present

¹⁶ See Wang Yuxiong 王裕雄, "Zhu Guangqian lun shenmei duixiang: 'yixiang' yu 'wuyi'" 朱光潛論審美對象: '意象'與'物乙' [Zhu Guangqian's discussion of the aesthetic object: 'image' and 'object B'], *Fuyin baokan ziliao: Meixue* 複印報刊資料: 美學, vol. 4 (1997), pp. 7-9.

¹⁷ See Zhang Qiqun 章啓群, "Xiandai de yu gudian de zhi wo jian - Zhu Guangqian yu Zong Baihua de yizhong bijiao yanjiu" 現代的與古典的之我見 - 朱光潛與宗白華的一種比較研究 [My view on the modern and the classical - a comparative study of Zhu Guangqian and Zong Baihua], *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究, vol. 5 (1997), p. 64.

¹⁸ See Heinrich Geiger's research in German, *Chinesische Aesthetik im 20. Jahrhundert: Bibliographie Zhu Guangqian (1897-1986), Zong Baihua (geb. 1897) und Li Zehou (geb. 1930): mit einer einführenden Darstellung von Leben und Werk der drei Autoren* [Chinese Aesthetics in the 20th century: Bibliographies of Zhu Guangqian (1897-1986), Zong Baihua (1897-1987) und Li Zehou (1930-)] (Berlin: C. Bell, 1987); Mario Sabattini, "Tra critica e autocritica: Zhu Guangqian e il dibattito sull'estetica negli anni Cinquanta" [Between criticism and self-criticism: Zhu Guangqian and the debate on aesthetics in the 1950s], in Raoul Findeisen and Robert Gassmann eds., *Autumn Floods: Essays in Honour of Marián Gálik* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1997); Mario Sabattini, "Chu Kuang-ch'ien and Croce," *Tamkang Review*, vol. 23, nos. 1-4 (Taipei: 1992-93), pp. 601-626; Hans-Georg Möller, "Dionysian, Apollonian, Negation of Negation: Zhu Guangqian's Interpretation of Nietzsche," in Raoul Findeisen and Robert Gassmann eds., *Autumn Floods*, pp. 635-641; Cui Zhiying, "Saving China from its National Crisis." The latter three essays are the only articles on Zhu in English to have appeared during the last two decades. Although there are some passages and discussions relevant to Zhu in several articles and books, they do not deal exclusively with Zhu's theory. Major examples would be Octave Brière, *Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy 1898-1950*, trans. by Laurence G. Thompson (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), Liu Kang, *Aesthetics and Marxism* and Ban Wang, *The Sublime Figure of History: Aesthetics and Politics in Twentieth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). Also, in her well-known book, Michelle Yeh values Zhu highly as a theorist when she refers to Zhu's theory concerning the similarities between games and art. See Michelle Yeh, *Modern Chinese Poetry: Theory and Practice since 1917* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 17-28.

different approaches and thus opinions among them vary. Despite the fact that Zhu's ideas are spread over his lifetime's range of many works, little attention has been paid to comprehensive studies on the continuation and development of Zhu's views between his first stage in the Republican period and the second stage in the PRC era. Regarding Zhu's changes in the PRC era, some aesthetic theorists such as Cai Yi 蔡儀 and Li Zehou 李澤厚, who were Zhu's most severe critics in the 1950s debate on aesthetics, dismissed Zhu's interpretation of Marxism as a manifestation of his idealist tendency, arguing that his approach to Marxism was erroneous.¹⁹ In contrast, Yan Guozhong 閻國忠 and Zhu Shirong 朱式蓉 maintained that Zhu's adaptation of Marxism showed a thorough conversion from idealism.²⁰

With this argument in mind, this thesis searches for the underlying motivations and purposes of Zhu's aesthetic theories, and will thus investigate his intellectual unifying thinking which justify his specific ways of theorisation. This means that this study will by necessity focus on Zhu's intellectual background and its development, an area neglected by many researchers when they evaluated Zhu's aesthetic theories, thus making ahistorical comparisons between Zhu and other thinkers. In contrast, this thesis will take the contextual facts, such as the extraordinary diversity of the political and cultural milieu in modern China, into consideration when examining modern theory, whether intrinsically Chinese or largely Western-oriented. In his critical discussion of Chinese intellectuals' reception of Orientalism, postcolonialism, and postmodernism in the Chinese context in the 1980s and 1990s, Zhang Longxi lucidly points out that the Chinese tendency of discourse on Orientalism and the Third World ironically "compromises with the cultural orthodoxy and political authorities in China and discusses issues of culture and history with a simple 'blame it on the West' approach," whereas Western discourse on the Third World plays a significant

¹⁹ See the section "7.2. Reply to Cai Yi and Le Zehou during the Debate," in Chapter VII.

²⁰ See Yan Guozhong 閻國忠, *Zhu Guangqian meixue sixiang ji qi lilun tixi* 朱光潛美學思想及其理論體系 [The aesthetic thought and theoretical system of Zhu Guangqian] (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), Chapters. 5, 6 and 7 and Zhu Shirong 朱式蓉 and Xu Daoming 許道明, *Zhu Guangqian - cong mitu dao tongjing* 朱光潛 - 從迷途到通徑 [Zhu Guanqian - from a blind alley to a thoroughfare] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1991), Chapters 4 and 5.

role in forming a self-critique of the Western tradition, institutions, and the political cultural status quo.²¹ In other words, it is necessary to carry out my research carefully within the cultural and historical context in which Zhu produced his writings.

With this framework, this thesis makes the point that both Zhu Guangqian and his aesthetic theories were products of the time, at a point when both China and the West were experiencing a social and intellectual transition brought on by developments in science, technology and consequent modernism.

This thesis is an effort to unfold, in a chronological order, the development of Zhu's aesthetic theories: his early intellectual background (Chapter I), the formation of a view of life (Chapter II) and its refinement and development to a deeper level of study during his stay in Europe (Chapter III); the establishment of an aesthetic theory related to his view of life (Chapters IV and V); and the eventual maturation of an aesthetic system reaching beyond individual psychology towards Marxist humanity and Vico (Chapters VI and VII).

Zhu's intellectual foundations, assessed in Chapter I, will provide clues to understanding his unique way of approaching the issues which are discussed in subsequent chapters. The traditional education he received was the common background for most intellectuals of his time, but, as pointed out in Chapter I, I will examine what specific environment made it possible for him to maintain his connection with traditional influences, especially Confucian studies, until a mature age. This chapter sheds light on the details of how and to what extent Zhu undertook traditional classical studies, as well as possible influences on his mode of thinking. In doing so, the chapter suggests a way of understanding the reasons behind Zhu's inclination in his life to approach social, ethical

²¹ See Zhang Longxi 張隆溪, *Mighty Opposites: From Dichotomies to Differences in the Comparative Study of China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 204-205. In this sense, *He Shang* 河殤 [River Elegy], as Chen argues, is an example of "an expression of an anti-official discourse prevalent in China at the end of the 1980s which painted the Occident as an oppositional and supplementary Other," and the depiction of China as 'inferior' in this controversial work is "part of a strategy for exposing the inferiority of a monolithic, one-Party system." Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 41.

and philosophical issues in ways invariably betraying traditional Chinese points of departure.

By the time of the early 1920s when Zhu graduated from university and became a school teacher, the economic and political situation of China were in crisis. In sketching an overall picture of the intellectual setting of this time, Chapter II shows where Zhu stood when he, for the first time in his intellectual life, came into direct contact with both the intellectual and social reality of China. By establishing Zhu's position in this historical context, this chapter examines the extent to which inhuman and unjust conditions in China had contributed to his concern about their effects on social morality and explains Zhu's dedication to education with the aim of transforming the individual mind for the betterment of Chinese society. At the same time, elucidated in a series of essays he wrote for school students, Zhu's view of life will be discussed alongside an illustration of how Zhu remained positive and optimistic in contrast with the ideological confusion and emotional pessimism prevalent among the young at that time, focusing on his notion of individual cultivation based on an reciprocal process of action and tranquillity.

Chapter III sets out to show his theoretical inclination by demonstrating that Zhu's learning and scholarly research on Western ideas tended to revolve around the theme of humanity. The chapter assesses Zhu's interpretation of the philosophies of Croce and Nietzsche. In providing an assessment of Western intellectual development since Kant, Chapter IV further points out that the method applied by Zhu in setting up an aesthetic system was in step with the Western intellectual trend of the 1920s. The significance here lies in the coherence and relevance of Zhu's Chinese intellectual background with modern Western thought. Zhu formed an aesthetic system which synthesised various schools of modern philosophy and psychology within Chinese philosophical traditions. Chapter IV therefore traces how Zhu's intention to emphasise the dynamic and holistic totality of aesthetic experience was constructed with the help of psychological and physiological mechanisms (Lipps' Empathy, Bullough's Psychical Distance and Groos' Inner Imitation).

After Zhu returned from Europe in 1933, he found that some of his concepts conceived in Europe and in 1920s China needed revision in order to solve emotional and spiritual problems in reality. He was very much engaged in thinking about the moral state of mind of the Chinese people, resulting in his writing numerous essays on this topic. It was during this period that Zhu also supplemented *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學, a first draft of which he had written in Europe and revised later in China. Chapter V concentrates on a discussion of the new chapters added to this major book, through which some further developments in his aesthetics can be examined in line with his view of life.

After Marxism-Leninism was introduced as the sole orthodoxy after the Chinese Communist Party took over China, all other theories, notably idealism, were criticised as either politically incorrect or intellectually taboo. However, Zhu found the fundamental views of the young Karl Marx accordant to his own, and thus tried to justify his aesthetic system in the name of Marxist thought. In giving an assessment of this ideologically oriented environment, Chapters VI and VII show how Zhu managed to become involved in the debate on aesthetics in the 1950s and then discusses his interpretation of Marxist theory, which emphasised a reciprocal and dynamic relationship between the subject and the object. As intellectual restrictions eased after the Cultural Revolution, Zhu embarked at the age of eighty-three on a translation of Vico's work *New Science*. The last chapter thus includes an evaluation of Zhu's approach to Vico's ideas, which he claimed to be in line with Marx's, focusing on Vico's notion of history as created by human beings. While providing a detailed analysis of how Zhu reconstructed Marxist theory and how he viewed Vico's notion as revealing his affirmation of human value in aesthetic consciousness in accordance with Marx's own comprehension of uneven development in human consciousness, I argue that there is consistency in Zhu's thinking between his first and second periods.

CHAPTER I

Early Education and Intellectual Background

1.1. Family and Primary Education in Tongcheng 桐城

Zhu Guangqian was born in Wuzhuang 吳莊, a small village in Tongcheng county in Anhui 安徽 province,¹ on 14 October (19 September by the lunar calendar), 1897.² According to his retrospective writings, he was of a declining traditional landlord family.³ Being the first of the three sons, Zhu was treated as fresh hope for this declining family that had been wealthy two generations previously. His grandfather and his father, however, gradually lost the land that his great-grandfather had possessed, and neither passed the civil service examination. As the civil service examination was the only route for scholars to achieve 'gentry' status, failing to obtain a degree meant not only financial disadvantages

¹ Since 1949, Tongcheng county has been divided into two counties: Tongcheng county and Congyang 縱陽 county. Wuzhuang belongs to Congyang county.

² Zhu's birth date is different in some sources. For example, his birth date is 19 Sep 1898 in his first matriculation record of the University of Edinburgh and 19 Sep 1899 in his CV "Curriculum scientifique de l'auteur," published in his thesis. But the year of his birth date in these records seems to be incorrect or misprinted. According to his later autobiographical writings and the most recently published information on him, his birth date is 14 Oct 1897 (19 Sep 1897 by the lunar calendar). See *First Matriculation Book 1925-1926* and Chu Kwang-Tsien, *The Psychology of Tragedy: A Critical Study of Various Theories of Tragic Pleasure* (Strasbourg: Librairie Universitaire d'Alsace, 1933), not paginated. Reprinted in Hong Kong by Joint Publishing Co. in 1987. The page including Zhu's birth date and his brief CV does not appear in the reprinted edition.

³ The information on Zhu's early life and his schooling is based on his following four writings and others: "Zuozhe zizhuan" 作者自傳 [Writer's autobiography], *Zhu Guangqian quanji* 朱光潛全集 [Complete works of Zhu Guangqian], vol. 1 (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987. Hereafter cited as *QJ*), pp. 1-9; "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" 從我怎樣學國文說起 [How did I study Chinese literature?], *Wo yu wenxue ji qita* 我與文學及其他 [Literature and me and other essays] (Beijing: Kaiming shudian, 1943) in *QJ*, vol. 3, pp. 439-450; "Wo de wenyi sixiang de fandongxing" 我的文藝思想的反動性 [The reactionary aspects of my thoughts of literature and art], *Wenyi bao* 文藝報, vol. 12 (30 June 1956). This article was republished in *Meixue wenti taolun ji* 美學問題討論集 [Essays of the debate about aesthetic problems], vol. 1 (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1957) and *Meixue pipan lunwen ji* 美學批判論文集 [Critical essays of aesthetics] (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1958). Here refer to *QJ*, vol. 5, pp. 11-39. For an English translation of this, see *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, vol. VI, no. 2 (Winter 1974-1975). This English version has some crucial inaccuracies; "Huiyi ershiwu nian qian de Xianggang daxue" 回憶二十五年前之香港大學 [In memory of Hong Kong University twenty-five years ago], *Wenxue chuankan* 文學創刊, vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1944), in *QJ*, vol. 9, pp. 183-187.

but also a strong sense of failure for scholars such as Zhu's father, who was, nevertheless, accomplished in classical Chinese literature.

Similar to other intellectuals born at the turn of the century, Zhu began his very early education in a traditional family school from six up to fourteen years old. His father was his teacher, under whose stern supervision he was educated in a typical traditional way in which he recited the basic Chinese classics such as the *Sishu* 四書 [*Four Books*],⁴ the *Wujing* 五經 [*Five Classics*],⁵ the *Tang Song ba dajia wenxuan* 唐宋八大家文選 [Collected essays of the eight great masters of the Tang and Song] and *Tang shi xuan* 唐詩選 [Selected Tang poems].

Although he could not understand these books as a child, Zhu enjoyed reciting them rhythmically, sentence by sentence, as if he were singing songs. This was probably the only way he was able to entertain himself in order to continue with his learning. However, he came to realise years later that his intellectual life had greatly benefited because he was able to remember every detail in these books and now was able to better understand them.⁶ And it is precisely because he had a thorough understanding of the Chinese classics, which he admitted in later years, that his intellectual inclination and scholarship were significantly affected by Chinese traditional way of thinking, especially Confucian doctrines.⁷

Under the guidance of his father, the thorough memorisation of the classics was to be further imprinted and reinforced on Zhu's mind by verbalising the classics in writings. Zhu was taught to write civil service examination style essays such as *celun jingyi* 策論經義

⁴ *Sishu* 四書 [*Four Books*]: *Lunyu* 論語 [*Analects*], *Mengzi* 孟子 [*Mencius*], *Daxue* 大學 [*Great Learning*] and *Zhongyong* 中庸 [*The Doctrine of the Mean*]. *Zhongyong* and *Daxue* were originally Chapter 31 and 42 respectively in *Liji* 禮記 [*the Book of Rites*]. The author is unknown. Organised by Zhu Xi 朱熹, a Neo-Confucian scholar, two chapters stand out as a separate treatise. Zhu Xi grouped the *Great Learning*, *the Doctrine of the Mean*, along with the *Analects* and *Mencius*, as "the *Four Books*." These four books have been viewed as the Confucian classics ever since.

⁵ *Wujing* 五經 [*Five Classics*]: *Shijing* 詩經 [*The Book of Songs*], *Shujing* 書經 [*The Book of History*], *Yijing* 易經 [*The Book of Changes*], *Liji* 禮記 [*The Book of Rites*] and *Chunqiu* 春秋 [*The Spring and Autumn Annals*].

⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 439.

⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zhu Guangqian jiaoshou tan meixue" 朱光潛教授談美學 [Professor Zhu Guangqian's talk on aesthetics] (1981), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 533.

[essays on politics and Confucian classics]. Because the *celun jingyi* was designed for the examinations, its style became formalised. It had to start with a major principle followed by the theme with pro-and-con arguments to form the main body of the essay and had to finish with a conclusion. However, such a formula also presents coherent, logical as well as persuasive qualities which propose the essential requirements for future government officials. However, Zhu was ambivalent when he recalled the experience. On the one hand, he bitterly complained that being forced to write in such a rigid and conventional style for at least ten years stifled his childhood imagination.⁸ On the other hand, recalling that "this training built up his pattern of thinking as well as affected the destiny of his writing," he attributed his ability of being coherent and clear in his essay writings later in his intellectual life to the training he had received from his father.⁹

His father's attitude towards his education was so strict and dignified that Zhu was not allowed to pursue an interest in other miscellaneous books such as fiction. All he could do was to follow the traditional preparation for the examinations. Although the examination system had already been abolished in 1905 by the Qing monarchy as a part of its political reforms, it seemed that the geographical isolation of Zhu's village from the political centre did not put direct pressure on his father to catch up with the new trend. He still adhered to the traditional method of education in bringing up his son.

Although Zhu was forbidden to look into his father's books that were stored in a trunk, he stealthily read these books which included *Shiji* 史記 [The records of the grand historian], *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 [The stories of the Warring States], *Guoyu* 國語 [Conversations of the states] etc. After he had exhausted his father's book collection, he was so desperate to read more that he started to go through the eight-legged essays [*baguwen* 八股文] his grandfather had copied by hand from the original texts. Without much knowledge of eight-legged essays, Zhu taught himself about this type of writing by reading

⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 441.

⁹ *Ibid.*

several boxes of them; the years of training in writing *celun jingyi* may have played a role in helping him to appreciate eight-legged essays. Thus, unlike some of his contemporaries who thought eight-legged essays were mechanically formulated and weakened minds and talents,¹⁰ Zhu praised eight-legged essays for being well balanced, coherent and logical.¹¹

Zhu also developed a taste for Chinese novels and dramas from a young age. While Zhu's parents did not allow him to read any of what his father called idle books, his cousin, who lived in the same village, would go to a local market to buy books. Zhu was grateful that his cousin generously lent him the books he wanted to read. Unknown to his father, Zhu started to read "idle books" and it was in these books that he came across *Yinbingshi wenji* 飲冰室文集 [Collected works from the Ice-drinker's Studio] written by Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929). Zhu claimed that Liang Qichao's book opened a new world to him.¹² The notion of New Learning [*xinxue* 新學] advocated by Liang Qichao stimulated Zhu's young mind and encouraged him to take a step further away from the educational agenda that his father had designed for him.

Inspired by *Yinbingshi wenji*, Zhu became interested in Chinese novels and drama. For the first time in his life, he came into contact with Chinese romantic literature like *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 [*Dream of the Red Chamber*], *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 [*The Water Margin*], *Pipa ji* 琵琶記 [The story of the pipa] and *Xixiang ji* 西廂記 [The romance of the western chamber]. He started to fantasise about being a talented scholar or a "chivalrous lover" courting a beautiful woman. These newly found emotions may have been vague and naive, but the impact on a teenager whose life had been strictly limited to classical studies, must have been significant or, even disturbing. From then on, as he described, the small and isolated village where he could see nothing but a few scattered thatched cottages, some patches of fields and rows of hills, could hardly hold his heart.¹³

¹⁰ See Hu Shi 胡適 and Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, "Tongxin" 通信 [Correspondence], *Xin qingnian* 新青年 [New Youth], vol. 5, no. 4 (15 October 1918). reprinted in Chen Duxiu, *Duxiu wencun* 獨秀文存 [Collected works of Duxiu], vol. 2 (Hong Kong: Yuandong tushu gongsi, 1965), pp. 205-209.

¹¹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 441.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 442.

1.2. Tongcheng Middle School

In 1912 when he was fifteen years old, Zhu was sent to a public primary school in Tongcheng county. He stayed there for only a term before moving to Tongcheng Middle School [Tongcheng Zhongxue 桐城中學] because of his mastery of essay writing. Tongcheng Middle School was established by Wu Rulun 吳汝綸 (1840-1903), not only a prominent educational reformer and a distinguished *guwen* 古文 [ancient-style prose] writer but also a successor to the Tongcheng School [Tongcheng pai 桐城派].¹⁴ Wu Rulun set up primary and middle schools in Tongcheng county with the purpose of producing civil service examination candidates. After the imperial examination system was abolished, the Tongcheng tradition, with its emphasis on Confucianism, education and *guwen* writing, was still carried on by Tongcheng Middle School. In particular, *guwen* writing in the Tongcheng style was strictly kept in the school curriculum. The main school textbooks were *Guwen cilei zuan* 古文辭類纂 [Classified collection of ancient-style prose]¹⁵ edited by Yao Nai and *Jingshi baijia zachao* 經史百家雜鈔 [Selected works of

¹³ See Zhu Guangqian, *Tan mei* 談美 [Talking about beauty] (1932), in *QJ*, vol. 2, p. 15.

¹⁴ Tongcheng is renowned as the home of the Tongcheng School [Tongcheng pai 桐城派], one of the most influential schools of literary thought and their literary advocacy in the Qing dynasty. Most of the School's representative originators and founders, such as Fang Bao 方苞 (1668-1749), Liu Dakui 劉大魁 (1698-1780), and Yao Nai 姚鼐 (1731-1815), were from Tongcheng county. The Tongcheng School, according to Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft's discussion, "emphasised the study of great examples from the past (*Zuo zhuan* 左傳, *Shiji* 史記, the Eight Great Masters of the Tang and Song) and the didactic function of literature; ideologically this school was in favor of Zhu Xi's neo-Confucianism." Due to their stress on the didactic principle that "literature should convey the *Dao*" [Wen yi zai dao 文以載道], this school came under fierce attack from the May Fourth literary reformers, including the first two leaders, Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 and Hu Shi 胡適, who were also born in Tongcheng. See Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft, *A Guide to Chinese Literature* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1997), p. 188 and pp. 245-246; Ying-shih Yü, "T'ung-ch'eng p'ai" 桐城派, in William H. Nienhauser ed. and comp., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, vol. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 837-840. For an account of the origin of the name 'Tongcheng pai' 桐城派, see Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, *Zhongguo wenxue piping shi* 中國文學批評史 [A history of Chinese literary criticism], vol. 2 (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi chubanshe, 1999, 1st ed. 1949), pp. 310-312.

¹⁵ *Guwen cilei zuan* 古文辭類纂 [Classified collection of ancient-style prose] was compiled by Yao Nai in 1799. It was classified by twelve different *guwen* writing styles and also divided into 73 chapters according to the *guwen yifa* 古文義法 [*guwen* theory of substance and form] which Fang Bao formulated as the principle of ideal *guwen* writing. For a detailed account of the book, see William

Confucian classics and history] compiled by Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-1872). Zeng Guofan and Yao Nai were both proponents of the Tongcheng School, although Zeng Guofan was best known as the military leader who suppressed the Taiping Rebellion. In Tongcheng Middle School the students were required to memorise while reading aloud the text word by word in order to comprehend the charm and essence of *guwen*.¹⁶ All school assignments and projects including non-literary subjects such as physics and chemistry were to be written in natural, clear, simple and elegant style. By and large, the students were instructed to express their ideas in nothing but *guwen*.

Because of the systematic training he had received from his father, Zhu had no problems in adapting and soon stood out from other students with his writings. The teachers in Tongcheng Middle school were so impressed with this young man that they encouraged him to carry on the style of Tongcheng *guwen* writing. Zhu responded by exerting himself to excel in his *guwen* writing. He tried his hand at every style of *guwen* writing until he could comfortably imitate *guwen* masters such as Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) and Gui Youguang 歸有光 (1507-1571),¹⁷ who were well known for their natural, fluent and eloquent writings. Zhu's life-long interest in Chinese classical poetry, especially Tang and Song poetry, was also the result of his studies at Tongcheng Middle school. However, since he described himself in the 1930s as "a twisted mind stuffed with abstract principles,"¹⁸ he was never able to write poems himself. Nevertheless, later in his life, he always nostalgically attributed his capacity for appreciation of Chinese classical poetry to the years he spent in Tongcheng Middle School. "The teacher who gave me most was Mr Pan Jiye 潘季野 who was himself a poet of the Song Poetry School. Under his influence, I developed a strong interest in Chinese classical poetry."¹⁹

Schultz, "Ku-wen-tz'u lei-ts'uan" 古文辭類纂, in William H. Nienhauser ed. and comp., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, vol. 1, pp. 501-504.

¹⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zizhuan," in *QJ*, vol. 1. p. 1.

¹⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 443.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 441.

¹⁹ Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zizhuan," in *QJ*, vol. 1. p. 1.

When the Qing government decided to abandon the old civil service examination system in favour of a Western-style ministry of education in 1905, this institutional transformation provided the climate for the first generation of Western influenced intellectuals to emerge. Old-style literati who mainly lived in the countryside, started to give way to city-dwelling intellectuals. Being in the political centres and exposed to modern ideas, the new generation of intellectuals was no longer as faithful to the traditional heritage as their predecessors. In particular, when Western ideas together with Western technology flowed into China, the city intellectuals became even more doubtful of the Confucian legacy, resulting in a sense of ambivalence towards Confucian ideals.²⁰

However, Zhu's specific experience made him react differently to the change. As indicated above, although he was not under the pressure of sitting for imperial civil service examinations and occasionally even enjoyed secret reading of "idle books," Zhu was more in the shadow of the traditional way of thinking than some of his contemporaries. It would seem then that the isolated environment in the village where he grew up to the age of sixteen did not provide conditions enough for intellectual diversity. Such traditional influence was reinforced during the years he spent in Tongcheng Middle School from 1913 to 1916. By the time he started his middle school education, the Qing imperial system had already been overthrown and the Republic of China established. The new republican government tended to find its orientation more in Western ideas. The impact of Westernisation and iconoclastic mood in urban areas was becoming more and more distinct. As early as 1905 when the traditional examination system was abolished and Confucian classics studies gradually declined, Confucianism began to lose its relevance in education. Primary and middle schools drastically reduced Confucian classics teaching in their curriculums, and universities merged Confucian classics with Chinese literature. After the disassociation of Confucianism from the educational system, the vast majority of the gentry youth turned to Western studies with enthusiasm.²¹ On the whole, as Jerome Grieder sums up, "by the

²⁰ For an assessment of this period, see Jerome B. Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China: A Narrative History* (New York: A Division of Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1981), pp. 1-47.

1920s Confucian China had already become an abstraction: something to be described, analysed, and understood, if only the better to attack it; but no longer something that could be experienced or reacted to as a coherent system of intellectual and moral values or political institutions."²²

In contrast to this background, Tongcheng Middle School nevertheless maintained its loyalty to traditional Confucian studies. Zhu's dedication to *guwen* studies in Tongcheng Middle School under the full influence of the Tongcheng style must have helped further define his Confucian mentality. Although the possible link between studies of Confucian classics in his early years and *guwen* studies in his teenage years with his intellectual inclination in later years was not acknowledged by himself, he did repeatedly admit that his state of mind was initially framed with Confucian ideas. "From the age of about ten to that of twenty, I spent at least ten years writing such essays [*celun jingyi* and the Tongcheng *guwen* styles]. This training formed the pattern of my thinking as well as my writing style."²³ Therefore, it can be argued that the Chinese classical language which is strongly linked to Confucian ideals was responsible for shaping Zhu's ideas in his childhood and youth. When this language was not only passively learned by heart but also actively applied in writing, the influence can be profound. Don J. Wyatt observes: "Confucian language took on a status beyond a tool of neutral expression. Its correct or incorrect use necessarily displayed one's degree of acculturation as an individual within a large Chinese group-centred matrix of Confucian relationships and a still larger Chinese social order." This is because "Confucians felt that language, rather than being primarily descriptive as in the classical Western tradition, should affect conduct directly, by inculcating proper attitudes."²⁴

²¹ See Ranbir Vohra, *China's Path to Modernisation: A Historical Review From 1800 To The Present* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1987), p. 100.

²² Jerome B Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China: A Narrative History*, p. 213.

²³ Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 441

²⁴ Don J. Wyatt, "A Language of Continuity in Confucian Thought," in Paul A. Cohen and Merle Goldman eds., *Ideas Across Culture: Essays on Chinese Thought in Honour of Benjamin I. Schwartz* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 58-59.

After four years in Tongcheng Middle School, Zhu graduated in 1916. He subsequently worked as a primary school teacher in a small village not far from his home for half a year. While he was teaching, he developed an ambition to go to Peking University to study Chinese literature because he believed Peking University had the best teachers of Chinese literature. His ambition turned sour after he realised that his family was too poor to provide him even with travelling expenses. He had to give up his dream, but enrolled in the Department of Chinese of Wuchang Teachers' College [Wuchang gaodeng shifan xuexiao 武昌高等師範學校] in neighbouring Hubei 湖北 province in 1917. Although there were no tuition fees, he was disappointed when he learned that the teachers there were far behind those in Tongcheng Middle School. He particularly disliked the fact that some teachers vulgarised the Confucian classics by attaching their own decorative language to them. They violated the natural, simple and eloquent style to which he was accustomed in a way that he found hard to tolerate. He realised that he had made a big mistake in coming to this school.²⁵

1.3. Hong Kong University and the New Culture Movement

In 1918, the Ministry of Education of the Northern Warlord Government offered some scholarships for students in education in various teachers' colleges to study at Hong Kong University. Zhu passed the examination and arrived in Hong Kong the same year. The Western atmosphere of the school caused the initial cultural shock he experienced. Apart from the twenty newcomers from mainland China who looked shabby, awkward and out of place, the rest of the more than four hundred students were able to speak English fluently, were well-dressed, and confident, and felt at home. They played European sports such as rugby, tennis and chess, and they displayed their articulateness and eloquence in debates that Zhu could not even understand. He was either uninterested or unable to participate

²⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, pp. 443-444.

in these foreign activities. At the university where English and Cantonese were the only languages of communication, he was "crippled." The fact that he came the last of his class in an IQ test in English made him feel very inadequate.²⁶

After a year of catching up in English and mathematics, Zhu was transferred to the Department of Education to study subjects such as English literature, psychology, philosophy and biology. The subjects were new and challenging for him. As all the classes were taught in English and the books that he had to read for assignments were also in English, he had to spend extra time and energy to improve his English. Finally, he mastered the English language and soon became fond of English literature. By the time he graduated from Hong Kong University in the summer of 1923 after five years of uninterrupted studies, he was a mature man of twenty-six who had been educated in two completely different cultures.

Hong Kong University, which was operated under the English educational system and was geographically isolated from the intellectual as well as political centres of China, provided Zhu with a unique environment. Here, Western ideas were not to be learned on the assumption of the rejection of Confucian ideals. In fact, the new environment gave Zhu enough space and time to remain a detached observer with little emotional and ideological involvement in the depressing situation in China, especially in Beijing.

During the years Zhu spent at Hong Kong University from 1918 to 1923, China was experiencing unprecedented political, social and cultural upheavals. The anti-Confucian mood reached an explosive point when the Chinese government was about to sign the Versailles Peace Treaty after the First World War. The treaty would grant Japan the right to take over the German-leased Qingdao 青島 Peninsular (Shandong 山東 province) rather than returning it to China. The iconoclastic fever of the New Culture movement was joined with intensely emotional nationalism and the movement turned political. The May Fourth Incident (1919) followed.²⁷ More than ever before, many Chinese intellectuals blamed

²⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Huiyi ershiwu nian qian de Xianggang daxue," in *QJ*, vol. 9, p. 184.

²⁷ See Chow Tse-t'ung, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge(Mass.): Harvard University Press,

Confucianism for causing conservative framework of the Chinese mind which had resulted in China lagging behind the West. Apart from pressing the government to change its mind at the conference table in Paris, the New Culture movement campaigners pushed their advocacy of dumping Confucian traditions on a larger scale.²⁸

Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942), a leader of the New Culture movement, declared in 1919 that "in order to foster democracy, we must oppose Confucianism, chastity, old ethics, and old politics. In order to foster both democracy and science, we must oppose our national heritage and our old literature."²⁹ His views were strongly supported especially when the continuing national weakness of China became acutely revealed. During the period of the May Fourth movement, it was commonly agreed among iconoclastic intellectuals that Confucianism, in contrast with Western ideas, was an obstacle to progress and therefore worthy of destruction.

Being safely far away from the political upheaval and cultural crisis in China, Zhu's attitude towards the intellectual rebellion appeared to be relatively free from extreme intellectual tendencies. For instance, he was deeply hurt when he first learned from the *Xin qingnian* 新青年 ["La Jeunesse"; New Youth] magazine that iconoclastic intellectuals had launched all out attacks on the Confucian classics. He could not accept the fact that the Confucian heritage which he had learned for years, had suddenly become a target of criticism. "It was like a merchant having collected lots of money after years of frugal saving, discovering overnight that the cash in his hand is worthless."³⁰ Zhu's initial reaction was angry and defensive. He supported the idea of protest with those in China who shared a similar background. The severe attack on Confucian traditions by the New Culture intellectuals caused bitter reactions from some so-called "National Essence" conservatives

1960), pp. 84-144.

²⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 171-196 and pp. 289-313.

²⁹ Chen Duxiu, "Ben zazhi zui'an zhi dabianshu" 本雜誌罪案之答辯書 [Our answer to the charges against this magazine], *Xin qingnian*, vol. 6, no. 1, (15 January 1919). Here quoted from Chen Duxiu, *Duxiu wencun*, vol. 1, p. 362.

³⁰ Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 444.

such as Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924), Gu Hongming 辜鴻銘 (1857-1928) and Liu Shiwei 劉師培 (1884-1919).³¹

However, unlike other defenders of Confucianism in China, Zhu was at Hong Kong University studying Western ideas. He acknowledged that the scientific training he was receiving persuaded him to look at the change objectively. He accepted that the New Culture movement, which aimed at delivering scientific and systematic methods to the traditional values, was necessary and inevitable.³² Nevertheless, this acceptance of change was not purely Darwinist in its detailed sense. Paradoxically, because of his Western studies as well as his traditional Confucian background, he refused to worship Western ideas and cast aside Chinese traditions as a whole, simply because the West was a better survivor in a material sense. With an attitude which was characterised by a Confucian middle course of thinking and, at the same time, Western liberalism, Zhu made it clear that all he wanted to see in Chinese scholarship was the spirit of independent thinking and creativity rather than what he called blind competition. He criticised the New Culture movement for lacking intellectual independence, alleging that, as soon as they had abandoned their Confucian heritage, the campaigners of the movement started to imitate Western practices unconditionally. Zhu imputed this behaviour to more than two thousands years of "slavishness mentality" in Chinese intellectual history since the Han Dynasty.

Zhu observed, using the examples in Chinese intellectual history, that "once the literary styles of Yang Ziyun 揚子雲 [Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BC-18)] and Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179-117 BC) were established in the Western Han dynasty, pursuers of literature were excessive; relying on the Confucian studies of Zheng Kangcheng 鄭康成 [Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200)] and Xu Shucong 許叔重 [Xu Shen 許慎 (c.58-c.147)] of the Eastern Han dynasty, every Confucian scholar turned into an exponent of the Confucian classics ... in the Song dynasty, it was the Neo-Confucianists everywhere; and the

³¹ For this point, see Jerome B. Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China*, pp. 203-279.

³² Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 444.

classicism of Dai Dongyuan 戴東原 [Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724-1777)] and Wang Niansun 王念孫 (1744-1832) of the Qing dynasty yet again brought out a flock of followers to classical studies. This conformist atmosphere ... restrained scholarship from equal development. Even these so-called authoritative schools stopped progressing for lack of intellectual challenge."³³ Thus Zhu strongly urged that independent-minded intellectuals should be encouraged in China. Hong Kong was the unique environment where Chinese and Western values were not under pressure to contend against each other, whereas the New Culture iconoclasts fought passionately for an wholesale importation of Western values as opposed to the traditionalists struggling to retain Chinese fundamental values.³⁴

1.4. Language: *baihua* and *guwen*

Owing to this different environment, Zhu could afford to view the changes such as the *baihua* 白話 [vernacular] movement with a calm and yet critical mind. He declared that his change of mind about *baihua* taking over *guwen* was totally different from the motives of the New Culture intellectuals.³⁵ He claimed that while the New Culture intellectuals drew a separate line between *baihua* and *guwen* as if the latter deserved abandonment simply because it represented the old, on the other hand, he believed that any form of language is primarily the expression of human feeling and thought. It is a matter of training and habit to feel comfortable with a certain form of language: some may be more used to expressing themselves in modern language and others may be happier to express themselves in classical language.³⁶ From this perspective, Zhu found no

³³ Zhu Guangqian, "Zenyang gaizao xueshu jie" 怎樣改造學術界 [How to reform scholarship], in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 29.

³⁴ See Lin Yü-sheng, "Radical Iconoclasm in the May Fourth Period and the Future of Chinese Liberalism," in Benjamin I. Schwartz ed., *Reflections On the May Fourth Movement: A Symposium* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 23-58.

³⁵ For a brief overview of May Fourth iconoclasts' attitudes towards the *baihua* literature, see Merle Goldman, "Left-wing Criticism of the *Pai-hua* Movement," in Benjamin I. Schwartz ed., *Reflections On the May Fourth Movement: A Symposium*, pp. 85-94.

³⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, *Shi lun* 詩論 [On poetry] (Chongqing: Guomin tushu chubanshe, 1943), in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 102.

contradiction between *baihua* and *guwen*. Thus, since both forms of language served the purpose of self-expression, it would not be difficult for Zhu also to accept *baihua* if it suits better the modern life style and hence the modern mode of thinking.³⁷

As far as Zhu was concerned, a form of literature, whether it is traditional or new, must adequately reveal one's true feelings without pretentiousness and artificiality.³⁸ He noticed that his view was actually shaped in Western literary thought.³⁹ For instance, the English Romantic poet, William Wordsworth (1770-1850), whose works Zhu read and admired at Hong Kong University, also advocated plain language in poetry, emphasising its naturalness and truthfulness. Zhu claimed years later that he decided to adopt *baihua* writing because he was greatly inspired by Wordsworth's "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800)"⁴⁰ in which Wordsworth states that plainer language should be applied in poetry "because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated ... and ... because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature." Yet, the language that poets used, according to Wordsworth, tends to be elaborated "under the influence of social vanity." These poets "think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation."⁴¹

Based on the fact that Wordsworth saw the simplicity of plain language as associated with the beauty of nature, one cannot help but wonder if it was in one way or another

³⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 103.

³⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, pp. 448-449.

³⁹ See Zhu Guangqian, *Shi lun* [On poetry], in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 104.

⁴⁰ See Zhu Shirong 朱式蓉 and Xu Daoming 許道明, *Zhu Guangqian - cong mitu dao tongjing* 朱光潛 - 從迷途到通徑 [Zhu Guangqian - from a wrong path to a coherent road] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1991), p. 15.

⁴¹ William Wordsworth, "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800)," in Nowell C. Smith ed., *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism* (London: Henry Frowde, 1905), pp. 14-15.

reminiscent of Zhu's own intellectual background. If plain language was intended by Wordsworth to express the real feelings of men and to avoid the capricious vanity of poets, then the Tongcheng style which was also pursued by Zhu in his writings showed a similar purpose. Tongcheng style was grounded on the belief that a simple and natural style of writing should replace ornamentality and ostentatiousness. In addition, it was also the principle of Tongcheng writing to avoid too many unnecessary words. The Tongcheng style gradually became very easily influenced by superficiality during the late Qing dynasty due to its over-emphasis on rhetoric,⁴² but so far as its fundamental ideal is concerned, Wordsworth's approach would denote nothing totally antagonistic but would help enlarge the scope of such an ideal. Since Zhu also endeavoured to illuminate the beauty of simplicity in writings, it would not be difficult for him to accept the vernacular used by most people without negating the chastity of the classical language if both forms of language could serve the purpose of expressing true feelings.

While insisting that the Chinese classical language was succinct, stylish and flexible, Zhu conceded that the vernacular was more intimate with daily life, and therefore more available and expressive. He claimed that he preferred to see a situation in which the linguistic merits of both the Chinese vernacular and classical languages and even European languages were combined.⁴³ Zhu claimed that his training in classical writing and the English language helped him pick up the vernacular writing and excel in it within a short time. He earned himself a reputation as a persuasive vernacular writer.⁴⁴ Making his debut in the vernacular with an introductory essay on the German psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) in the magazine *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 [Eastern Miscellany] in 1921,⁴⁵ Zhu gradually became widely well-known, especially amongst young readers, for his

⁴² See Guo Shaoyu, *Zhongguo wenxue piping shi*, vol. 2, pp. 310-349.

⁴³ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 446.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, "Fuluoyide de yin yishishuo yu xinli fenxi" 弗洛伊德的隱意識說與心理分析 [The theory of Freud's unconsciousness and psychoanalysis], *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 [Eastern Miscellany], vol. 18, no. 14 (July 1921), in *QJ*, vol. 8, pp. 1-11.

simple but eloquent vernacular style. However, instead of treating his success as an ideological conversion, he invariably attributed it to his previous knowledge of classical writing: "According to my personal experience, I can say that the difference between classical language and the vernacular is not as big as some presumed ... I think my training in classical writing helps me greatly to improve my writing in the vernacular." He was convinced that vernacular writing could not be successfully established and improved without inheriting the legacy of classical language.⁴⁶

In comparison with the May Fourth intellectuals who failed to look for an opportunity to transform the Confucian tradition since they consciously rejected it completely,⁴⁷ Zhu treated Western ideas and Chinese traditions on the same intellectual scale. In other words, Zhu's thinking on values, old or new, Chinese or Western, would not be directed either to an absolute and totalistic rejection or to indiscriminate acceptance. As it appeared, the Western ideas that he was studying worked in a complementary manner to his consciousness of Chinese traditions and vice versa. Admittedly, the environment of being away from the crisis of consciousness in China provided Zhu with time and space to evaluate the two values more rationally in order to find common ground between them. He was probably one of the few in China at this time who had the advantage of scrutinising Western ideas as human knowledge rather than as an ideological paradigm opposed to Chinese culture.

⁴⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong wo zenyang xue guowen shuoqi" [How did I study Chinese literature?], in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 445-446.

⁴⁷ See Lin Yü-sheng, "Radical Iconoclasm in the May Fourth Period and the Future of Chinese Liberalism," in Benjamin I. Schwartz ed., *Reflections On the May Fourth Movement: A Symposium*, p. 56.

CHAPTER II

The Formation of Intellectual Attitude (1921-1926)

2.1. Zhu's Attitude towards Social Background

Following his graduation from Hong Kong University in the summer in 1923, Zhu became an English teacher at Wusong 吳淞 State Secondary School, near Shanghai, at a time when China was still in turmoil. In spite of the efforts of the iconoclastic intellectuals to modernise Chinese thinking,¹ the Republic of China had descended into a nation divided and at war. After the fresh education in Western philosophy, psychology and literature in Hong Kong, which complemented his strong Confucian educational grounding, Zhu started to assess the social reality of China in a way that was closely linked to the synthetic tendencies of the neo-traditionalists in the early 1920s.²

In his usual gentle and modest manner, from the very beginning Zhu developed his opinions and attitudes towards the social issues in China. These were not politically directed or intellectually factious but showed evidence of a mixture of scientific positivism and ethical idealism, rationalism and romanticism, dissolved in a solution of intellectual relativism.³ Zhu held that the cause of the turmoil of Chinese society stemmed from the education system. He stated that "society would not progress unless it was driven forward

¹ For an account of the general state of mind of the May Fourth intellectuals and the weaknesses and strengths of the May Fourth movement, see Chow Tse-tung, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1960), especially pp. 338-368 and Benjamin I. Schwartz ed., *Reflections on the May Fourth Movement: A Symposium* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1973).

² The neo-traditionalists are those, such as Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1928), Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893-1962), Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1886-1969), Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀 (1886- 1973) etc, who expressed their support of humanity and Eastern values as opposed to science and Western values during the debate in the 1920s. See O. Briere, *Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy, 1898-1950* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1956), pp. 27-32 and 66-72. Also see John K. Fairbank and Denis Twitchett eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12: Republican China 1912-1949 Part 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 437-444.

³ Zhu's attitude towards theoretical method was expressed in his article "Zenyang gaizao xueshujie" 怎樣改造學術界? [How to reform academia], *Shishi xinbao* 時事新報 [Daily current affairs] (Mar 30, 31 1922), in *QJ*, vol. 8, pp. 23-39, especially pp. 29-30 in which he firmly urged that all theoretical works should depend on verifiable facts.

by fully developed rational minds."⁴ Table 1 shows Zhu's strong interests in education in the 1920s.

Table 1: Zhu Guangqian's publications between 1921 and 1925

Date written	Title	Topic
	Place and date of publication	
Jul 1921	"Fuluoyide de yinyishi shuo yu xinli fenxi" 弗洛伊德的隱意識說與心理分析 [Freud's theory of the unconscious and psychoanalysis]	Psychology
	<i>Dongfang zazhi</i> 東方雜誌 [Eastern Miscellany], vol. 18, no. 14 (July 1921) in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 1-11.	
Nov 1921	"Xingweipai (behaviourism) xinlixue zhi gailue ji qi piping" 行為派 (behaviourism)心理學之概略及其批評 [Outline and criticism of behaviourist psychology]	Psychology
	<i>Gaizao</i> 改造 [Reform], vol. 4, no. 3 (Nov 1921) in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 12-22.	
Mar 1922	"Zenyang gaizao xueshujie" 怎樣改造學術界? [How to reform academia]	Education
	<i>Shishi xinbao</i> 時事新報 [Daily current affairs] (Mar 30, 31 1922), in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 23-39.	
Apr 1922	"Jinhua lunzheng" 進化論證 [Account of the theory of evolution]	Evolutionary theory
	<i>Minduo</i> 民鐸 [People's bell], vol. 3, no. 4 (April 1922), in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 40-61.	
May 1922	"Zhili ceyan fa de biao zhun" 智力測驗法的標準 [Standards of intelligence tests]	Education
	<i>Jiaoyu zazhi</i> 教育雜誌 [Education], vol. 14, no. 5 (May 1922), in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 62-69.	
Dec 1922	"Zai 'Daoerdun zhi' zhong zenyang yingyong sheji jiaoxue fa" 在'道爾頓制'中怎樣應用設計教學法 [How to adopt and design teaching methods from the 'Dalton Plan']	Education
	<i>Jiaoyu zazhi</i> , vol. 14, no. 12 (Dec 1922), in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 70-83.	
Feb 1923	"Maidugu yu Huasheng neng fou tonglie xingweipai" 麥獨孤與華生能否同列行為派 [Do McDougall and Watson belong to the same behaviourist school?]	Psychology
	<i>Shishi xinbao</i> (9 Feb 1923), in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 84-87.	
Apr 1923	"Xiaochu fanmen yu chaotuo xianshi" 消除煩悶與超脫現實 [Dispelling frustration and transcending reality]	Advice to youth
	<i>Xuesheng zazhi</i> 學生雜誌 [Student magazine], vol. 10, no. 5 (Apr 1923), in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 88-95.	

⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

Dec 1923	"Daoerdun zhi' xia de yingwen jiaoxue fa" '道爾頓制'下的英文教學法 [Teaching English under the 'Dalton Plan']	Education
	<i>Jiaoyu zazhi</i> , vol. 15, no. 12 (Dec 1923), in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 96-104.	
June 1924	"Siren chuangxiao jihua" 私人創校計劃 [My plan for founding a private school]	Education
	<i>Minduo</i> , vol. 5, no. 4 (Jun 1924), in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 105-118.	
(?) 1924	"Wuyan zhi mei" 無言之美 [Wordless beauty]	Aesthetics
	<i>Minduo</i> , vol. 5, no. 5 (Jul 1924), in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 1, pp. 62-72.	
May 1925	"Zhongxuexiao yingwen jiaoxue fa shili" 中學校英文教學法示例 [Examples of English teaching methods at secondary school]	Education
	<i>Jiaoyu zazhi</i> , vol. 17, no. 8 (Aug 1925), in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 119-133.	
1925	"Zhiqu" 旨趣 [Aims]	Education
	in <i>Lida xueyuan yilan</i> 立大學園一覽 [Lida Academy prospectus] (1926) in <i>QJ</i> , vol. 8, pp. 170-172.	

As Zhu thought that the way of forming a mental attitude was the key towards a better society, he focused his attention on the situation of Chinese intellectual life. Zhu published his opinions in influential journals such as *Shishi xinbao* [Daily current affairs] and *Minduo* [People's bell], implemented a new school system, and offered advice on ethical issues to youth. His shift from the academic pursuit of knowledge to the application of knowledge for the ethical needs of society showed a change of emphasis in his intellectual disposition. Although he expressed his concern and his views about social issues while still at Hong Kong University, it was from this stage onwards that Zhu became actively engaged in seeking a way to improve the spiritual state of the nation as the foundation of a healthy society.

Zhu's effort to reshape the Chinese mind, especially that of the young, is seen in "Zenyang gaizao xueshujie" [How to reform academia], which he published shortly before he graduated from Hong Kong University, in which he put forward an argument strongly influenced by social Darwinism as well as traditional Chinese ethics, and insisted on the urgency of educational reform. Zhu's ideas of education are formed on the assumption that a small group of "leaders of the future" guides the rest of society. "In fact, leaders of the future are the forerunners of social evolution,"⁵ because "in a society there are many more

ordinary people than outstanding figures. The ordinary people tend to follow the leaders; they do not have independent views and lack pioneering characteristics and exceptional resources." Thus in Zhu's discussion the outstanding figures who show these qualities "are the main force to push society forward."⁶

It would seem that Zhu's concept of outstanding figures who influence social progress is consistent with a social Darwinist and even a Nietzschean idea of 'Übermensch' [superman or overman] which seems incompatible with Confucian ethical benevolence.⁷ However, for Zhu, the outstanding efforts of progressive figures ultimately serve the purpose of improving society "like an external force setting in motion an object which is otherwise inactive."⁸ Therefore, his preference for heroes as leaders of society did not appear totally in line with Nietzsche's teleological emphasis on the "possibility of the emergence of exceptional human beings capable of independence and creativity which would elevate them above the level of the general human rule."⁹ Zhu's intention was rather simple. He states:

If we wish our society to be happy and progressive, we must make sure that all social activities are subject to intelligent consciousness. ... When social activities drift from the exercise of the intellect, society will become sick and thus need reform.¹⁰

In this way, Zhu's respect for knowledge, which presumably leads human beings to enlightenment, necessarily inclined him to the view that educated people do not have the privilege but the duty to exercise their knowledge to promote a better human society.

⁵ Zhu Guangqian, "Zenyang gaizao xueshuji" [How to reform academia], in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 35.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ For a detailed account, see David A. Kelly, "The Higher Chinadom: Nietzsche and the Chinese Mind, 1907-1989," in Graham Parkes ed., *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 161-169.

⁸ Zhu Guangqian, "Zenyang gaizao xueshuji" [How to reform academia], in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 35.

⁹ See Robert Audi general ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 535.

¹⁰ Zhu Guangqian, "Zenyang gaizao xueshuji" [How to reform academia], in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 23.

From this perspective, Zhu's society-oriented expectation of leaders of the future to improve society seems to have greater affinity with the Confucian ethical ideal of *ren* 仁 [humanity or benevolence] which involves the necessary relationship of a better self with others. In Tu Wei-ming's words, "self, in the classical Confucian sense, referred to a centre of relationships, a communal quality which was never conceived of as an isolated or isolable entity."¹¹ Since Zhu's concept of leadership talent is not grounded in ontology of substance but realistically and ethically related to society, it needs a process of learning exemplified by some better cultivated personalities such as Aristotle, Kant, Bergson, Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu.¹² With this hierarchical but transitional pattern of learning Zhu attached importance to an educational system that would encourage independent and creative thinking, which was the best way to produce leadership talent in his view.

However, the reality was by no means ideal. The existing educational system remained corrupt and unstable despite changes to the old system after 1905. As Jiang Menglin 蔣夢麟 (1886-1964), an American-educated educator observed at the end of 1922, "evidence has accumulated to prove that education is not only economically bankrupt, but spiritually bankrupt as well. So the blind faith of a few years back, the notion that 'one should talk only about education, and not about politics,' has gradually been discredited."¹³ Zhu also came to realise that the production of the leaders of the future would be limited since the state schools were hindered by the politically corrupt and conservative warlord government. It was therefore his duty to endeavour to continue promoting a new educational system above government control to train real leaders for the salvation of Chinese society.¹⁴

¹¹ Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood As Creative Transformation* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1985), p. 53.

¹² See Zhu Guangqian, "Zenyang gaizao xueshujie" [How to reform academia], in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 35.

¹³ Jerome B. Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China: A Narrative History*, p 276.

¹⁴ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zhiqu" 旨趣 [Aims], in *Lida xueyuan yilan* 立達學園一覽 [Lida Academy prospectus] (1926) in *QJ*, vol. 8, pp. 170-171.

2.2. An Effort to Set Up a New School System

Zhu's tenure at Wusong Secondary School was cut short because it was forced to close down after a territorial dispute between Jiangsu 江蘇 and Zhejiang 浙江 broke into a war. In 1924, he relocated to Chunhui 春暉 Secondary School in Zhejiang province, but his stay at this school was even shorter. When the Dean of Studies, Kuang Husheng 匡互生, an anarchist, resigned in protest against the school principal who had rejected his proposals for student representation and a co-educational system, Zhu himself resigned in sympathy. Kuang and Zhu subsequently went to Shanghai and later were joined by other Chunhui School colleagues such as Xia Mianzun 夏丏尊, Feng Zikai 豐子愷, and Zhou Weiqun 周為群 who had also resigned. In Shanghai, they met Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶, Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之, Zhou Yutong 周予同 and Xia Yan 夏衍 with whom they became friends through cultural circles. Zhu and his friends soon formed an academic society called Lida 立達 Society and prepared to establish a school to put their educational ideas into practice.¹⁵

When Zhu and his friends eagerly embarked on this project in 1925, the new education under the state school system, as Grieder observes, was "somehow an anomalous innovation, possessing neither traditions nor a character of its own. On the part of many Chinese intellectuals in the 1920s there was a growing conviction that the values of New Culture liberalism were not, in fact, generalisable. ... In the eyes of its critics, the vaunted 'new education' created only an intellectual elite divided in personal taste and style of life and even more important, in vocational competence and social expectations, from the masses whose welfare they were supposed to promote."¹⁶ In response to this situation, some reformers such as Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 moved their attention to the countryside

¹⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, "Huiyi Shanghai Lida Xueyuan he Kaiming shudian" 回憶上海立達學園和開明書店 [Recollections of Shanghai Lida Academy and Kaiming Publishing House], *Jiefang ribao* 解放日報 (2 Dec 1980), in *QJ*, vol. 10, pp. 520-523. Also see Chen Xing 陳星, *Baimahu zuojia qun* 白馬湖作家群 [Baima Lake writers] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe, 1998), pp. 134-156; Shang Jinlin 商金林, *Zhu Guangqian yu Zhongguo xiandai wenxue* 朱光潛與中國現代文學 [Zhu Guangqian and modern Chinese literature] (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), pp. 7-27.

¹⁶ Jerome B. Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China*, p. 277.

and set up Confucian style schools among the ordinary people, hoping to "shape a social ideology that would draw upon the energies of the masses in order to meet their needs, while once again rendering morally coherent the relationship between leaders and led."¹⁷

With a similar desire to restore the link between intellectuals as the leaders and the masses as the learners, Zhu and his colleagues sought to establish a system that would concentrate on training a group of talented leaders whose moral as well as intellectual qualities would spread throughout society. "If we intend to reform society through education within a reasonably short time, we must first of all produce a group of talented leaders to lead the community towards a brighter future."¹⁸

With this ambition, despite financial difficulties Zhu and his associates succeeded in founding a school called Lida Academy in 1925. The academy was named Lida xueyuan 立達學園 because it was modelled after the Confucian notion of learning as well as the Academy of Athens founded by Plato around 387 BC. As Zhu explained, the word Lida 立達 was taken from Confucian doctrine:

Fu ren zhe, ji yu li er li ren, ji yu da er da ren. Neng jin qu pi, ke wei ren zhi fang ye yi. 夫仁者，己欲立而立人，己欲達而達人。能近取譬，可謂仁之方也已。 [As for humaneness - you want to establish yourself; then help others to establish themselves. You want to develop yourself; then help others to develop themselves. Being able to recognise oneself in others, one is on the way to being humane.].¹⁹

At the same time, instead of the conventional words of 'school' or 'college,' the word 'academy' was adopted because it was recollective of Plato's 'Academy' which used the teaching method based on free discussion which Zhu favoured.²⁰

Zhu and his associates, who were advocates of the anarchism and intellectual liberalism popular among many intellectuals at this time, expected the school environment

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 278.

¹⁸ Zhu Guangqian, "Siren chuangxiao jihua" 私人創校計劃 [My plan for founding a school], *Minduo*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Jun 1924), in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 111.

¹⁹ *Analects*, 6:28., in William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom comp, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999 2nd ed.), p. 50.

²⁰ See Zhu Guangqian, "Huiyi Shanghai Lida Xueyuan he Kaiming shudian" [Recollections of Shanghai Lida Academy and Kaiming Publishing House], in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 521.

to form a breeding ground for talented leaders who would become what Zhu called "the quiet heroes" of society.²¹ Therefore, the school emphasised the cultivation of the whole personality of an individual as the academy's fundamental policy. The school constitution restated the moral requirements of the leaders of the future that he had proposed in an essay entitled "My Plan for Founding a School", written and published in *Minduo* in June 1924.²²

From Zhu's article, we may see three essential leadership qualities to be cultivated at Lida Academy. The first was a quasi-Christian altruism [*yesu de she ji wei qun de jingshen* 耶穌的舍己為群的精神]. Zhu complained that a deep-seated Chinese habit was to overemphasise security, wealth, and the glory of one's own family. As a consequence, people tended to be selfish and lacked a sense of sympathy. This mentality was so deep-rooted that even national humiliation and civil wars failed to change the spirit. He was determined to establish altruism as a fundamental principle to produce heroes who were willing to sacrifice their own interests to save society.²³

The second quality was to live a simple and frugal life like the Greek Stoics [*Siduoge xuezhe de jianpu keyu de shenghuo fangfa* 斯多葛學者的簡朴克慾的生活方法]. Zhu pointed out that secular indulgence in material possessions corrupted the spirit and generated greed. Thus, "one must overcome one's material desire to achieve this goal."²⁴ The Stoic ethic of pursuing moral progress by identifying with the impartial, inevitable and moral order of the universe is very similar to the Confucian ethical ideal that advises 'knowing the Mandate of Heaven' [*zhi tianming* 知天命]. To know the Mandate of Heaven is to follow the Way embedded in human nature and to cultivate one's personal life by perfecting the universal virtues of wisdom, humanity and courage.²⁵ Similarly, Zhu expected his future heroes to maintain peace with the material world, and he insisted that

²¹ See *ibid.*, p. 522.

²² See Zhu Guangqian, "Siren chuangxiao jihua" [My plan for founding a school], in *QJ*, vol. 8, pp. 105-118.

²³ See *ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

²⁵ See *the Doctrine of the Mean*, 20, trans. by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 104-107.

they endure and embrace hardship, poverty and death like Confucius, Buddha and Jesus. In this way, individuals would be able to keep a clear mind and a powerful will.²⁶

The third quality was to possess and apply scientific knowledge and methodology [*jindai kexue suo fuyu de zhishi he fangfa* 近代科學所賦予的知識和方法]. Unlike some of his contemporaries whom he criticised for blindly following Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and adopting a skeptical attitude towards science, Zhu gave his approval to science. He did not think that having scientific qualifications would conflict with the other three qualities which were morally oriented. While he opposed material desire which overwhelmed spiritual or moral character, he was convinced that "material civilisation would promote spiritual civilisation."²⁷ In this sense, not only did he disagree with the idea that science would displace morality but also he opposed the idea that morality could replace science. According to Zhu, the advantage of science was that "rational and analytical thinking could isolate patterns in a chaotic situation and allow for the action of feasible programs without emotional distractions."²⁸ In his view, a scientific way of thinking was particularly needed in China. "The characteristics of the Chinese way of thinking tend to be good at synthesising but poor at analysing; good at deduction but poor in induction. As a result, systematic theories were not fully developed in China. China's less concrete theories tend to cause intellectual confusion which consequently gives rise to misjudgement."²⁹ To avoid this "national weakness" which affected the way of thinking of talented leaders, Zhu strongly advocated scientific training at school.

Zhu continued to discuss what measures would need to be taken by the academy to ensure the development of these qualities. Instead of encouraging students to develop the pure knowledge of these qualities through the process of deductive reasoning in the sense of Plato's way of thinking developed in his school, the Lida Academy adopted a different

²⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Siren chuangxiao jihua" [My plan for founding a school], in *QJ*, vol. 8, pp. 112-113.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

method that combined knowledge learning with practice. The teachers and students were required to work occasionally in a nearby farm established by some anarchist educators. At the same time, they were encouraged to use their holidays to go among ordinary people "to make friends with them, persuade them to become organised for public benefit and talk to them in plain language on science and politics in order for them to learn more about public hygiene, the mechanism of the national organisations as well as their rights and duties."³⁰ This effort of combining education with social practice as well as physical labour was intended to build the personality and practical character of students for the future and is in line with the Confucian worldly way of personal cultivation, which presupposes that "only the human being who places themselves in the midst of worldly affairs is capable of transforming other people."³¹ That is to say, the students of Lida Academy were not trained to be simply another group of intellectual elite but problem-solving leaders for society. "Our society desperately needs help. We hope that our students will become the leaders of the future society. ... (*To realise this goal*) they should be prepared while they are still at school. That is why we encourage them to get involved in social affairs."³²

It seems that by involving the teachers and the students in physical work as well as social affairs, the academy attempted to avoid the possible disconnection of one's inner world and the outer world, knowledge and action, theory and practice.³³ The unification of these contrasting elements was the ultimate principle of the Confucian doctrines, because, as Hall and Ames point out, "the mutual immanence of the primary elements of the Confucian cosmos - heaven, earth and man - precludes the use of the language of transcendence and therefore renders any sort of dualistic contrast pernicious."³⁴

³⁰ Ibid., p. 115.

³¹ *The Doctrine of the Mean*, 1, trans. by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 95-96.

³² Zhu Guangqian, "Siren chuangxiao jihua" [My plan for founding a school], in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 116.

³³ The possible similarity between Zhu's emphasis of unity of knowledge and action (or knowing and doing), and that of Confucians, will be further discussed in the following chapters.

³⁴ David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 17.

To advance the aims of the academy broadly in society, Zhu and his colleagues also established a publishing house called Kaiming shudian 開明書店 [Enlightenment publishing house] as well as a magazine called *Yiban* 一般 [Ordinary issues] which later changed its name to *Zhongxuesheng* 中學生 [Secondary school student]. According to Zhu, despite the fact that the school was ideologically different from the government-run schools, it eventually became successful. "The educational liberalism practised at Lida Academy brought fresh air to a society which had been depressed by the despotic rule of the Northern Warlord government. Consequently the academy attracted many moderate and liberal-minded youths who were keen to enrol."³⁵

It can be said that Zhu's social practice of founding a non-government school in order to establish his educational ideal may indicate the tendency of anarchism and liberalism which was widely practised by some intellectuals of the early 1920s. However, Zhu's idea of education as a way of changing society reflected the fact that like many of his contemporaries he had not gone far from the traditional ethical theme. It seems that it was Confucian ethical principles that led him to the process of seeking a way to transform the deep structure of the Chinese mind.

For instance, his emphasis on character cultivation, the combination of theory and practice and an equal relationship between teacher and student is in tune with the educational principles of Liang Shuming's commune-cum-academy which followed a Confucian approach to education.³⁶ Liang's concept of rural reconstruction by linking the intellectuals to the working people was also intended to create "an underlying moral consensus and spiritual solidarity," and his advocacy of "the small face-to-face group, built around the traditional teacher-student relationship, was to be the central agency of spiritual transformation. Through mutual criticism and encouragement group members would

³⁵ Zhu Guangqian, "Huiyi Shanghai Lida Xueyuan he Kaiming shudian" [Recollections of Shanghai Lida Academy and Kaiming Publishing House], in *QJ*, vol. 10, pp. 521-522.

³⁶ Liang Shuming established his experimental commune-cum-academy in 1922 in order to revive Confucian values. He particularly followed the example of the Confucian teacher-student relationship as the central idea of spiritual transformation. See Guy Allito, *The Last Confucian - Liang Shuming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 137-138.

cultivate their moral character and spiritual qualities, thus energising themselves for action. They would also develop habits of cooperation and organisation for united efforts to achieve common goals."³⁷

2.3. Towards a New Philosophy of Life

Following the launch of the debate on science and humanity by Zhang Junmai 張君勱 in 1923, many intellectuals turned their attention to the problems of spiritual and moral life independent of science.³⁸ This debate created a group of new traditionalists who re-evaluated the quintessence of Chinese culture [*guocui* 國粹]. While the new traditionalists, unlike the pre-May Fourth movement traditionalists such as Lin Shu 林紓, Liu Shipai 劉師培 and Liu Yazhi 柳亞子, were mostly educated in the West and tended to apply Western ideas to validate the Chinese philosophy of life academically, Zhu, on the other hand, did not seem to be interested in the purely academic side of the debate at the time. Instead he sought a philosophy of life in the light of both Confucian and Western ideas and applied it directly to Chinese reality.

It seems that as a teacher, Zhu was very concerned about the young people who had become extremely low-spirited when the excitement of the May Fourth movement was declining and the achievements of the New Culture movement deteriorated under the corrupt and weak government. As part of his plan to create talented leaders for a healthy society, he saw that it was important to transform the decadent tendency among young people in addition to his institutional reforms in the school system.³⁹ Although his stay

³⁷ Guy Allito, "The Conservative as Sage: Liang Shuming," in Charlotte Furth ed., *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 232.

³⁸ The debate was started by Zhang Junmai (Carson Chang), a professor of philosophy at Qinghua University, in a lecture given on February 14, 1923. He "declared in his lecture that day that the philosophy of life could in no manner be governed by scientific, deterministic principles, but that it had its origin in the intuitive moral conscience of human being under the impulsion of the free will." See O. Briere, *Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy, 1898-1950*, p. 29. Also see Chow Tse-tung, *The May Fourth Movement*, pp. 327-337.

³⁹ An early expression of Zhu's concern about young people can be found in his essay "Xiaochu fanmen

at the Lida Academy lasted only a few months before he went to study in Europe, Zhu dedicated much of his time and energy to offering advice on affairs concerning young people. His involvement in giving spiritual and moral support to young people was continuous and conscientious. Even after he left China, he did not stop writing about his concerns for young people's lives.

In the magazine *Yiban* 一般 [Ordinary issues] from 1926 to 1928 a year after he arrived in Edinburgh, he wrote twelve essays in the form of letters discussing the philosophy of life.⁴⁰ In these letters, particularly aimed at secondary school students, Zhu took the same approach as in the Lida Academy and wrote in a friendly style starting with 'pengyou' 朋友 [Dear friend] and ending with 'ni de pengyou Guangqian' 你的朋友 光潛 [Your friend Guangqian]. The message which Zhu tried to deliver was widely received among educated youth in the 1920s.⁴¹

Shortly before he graduated from Hong Kong University in 1923, Zhu was already aware that there was a gloomy mood prevalent among young people who faced perplexity in their view of life. Zhu suggested:

Without a strong inner existence one tends to be vulnerable to changes of outer environment. That is to say, when the circumstances are favourable for one's ideal, one may be optimistic and full of visions; when circumstances are not favourable, one may feel defeated and consequently pessimistic. Many people are originally very determined to overcome their environment but end up being overcome by their environment. We may say that this is because they are not determined enough. But why aren't they? We may suggest that it is because their spirits are not able to be detached from reality.⁴²

yu chaotuo xianshi" 消除煩悶與超脫現實 [Dispelling frustration and transcending reality], *Xuesheng zazhi* 學生雜誌 [Student magazine], vol. 10, no. 5 (Apr 1923), in *QJ*, vol. 8, pp. 88-95.

⁴⁰ See Zhu Guangqian, *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1.

⁴¹ According to Zhu, this series of letters published in book form in 1929 was so popular that he did not have any difficulty in publishing his works thereafter. According to O. Briere, the book was printed more than thirty times after it was first published in 1929. See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuoze zibai" 作者自白 [Autobiography], in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 4-5; and O. Briere, *Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 96-97.

⁴² Zhu Guangqian, "Xiaochu fanmen yu chaotuo xianshi" [Dispelling frustration and transcending reality], in *QJ*, vol. 8, pp. 90-91.

Zhu did not think that detachment from reality was built on a coward's philosophy of life and argued:

If one is able to detach oneself spiritually from reality, one will not be crushed by the difficulties of reality because one will find comfort in the spiritual realm. If one's spirit cannot be conquered by reality, then one will of course persist in carrying on one's ambition to overcome one's environment.⁴³

The spiritual realm in Zhu's view of life is religion in the first place. Zhu accepted religion as a way of detaching oneself from reality. However, he did not seem to favour it as much as art. He admitted that religion was not necessarily a good point of human nature since "it indicated the self-deceiving character of human beings."⁴⁴ It appears that he did not reject the function of religion as a spiritual comfort for some people and yet did not recommend it as highly as art. This tendency became more obvious as his theory developed.

In contrast, art, as a human creation, provides people with the opportunity to release repressed vitality and elevate and purify emotions. In this way, human beings are not only detached from reality but more importantly, according to Zhu, see beauty in reality only from a detached point of view:

Art not only enables one to detach oneself from reality but helps one to comprehend beauty in reality and to enjoy an existential link with nature.⁴⁵

Zhu's connection of reality with nature may be traced to Confucian thought. Tu Wei-ming points out that the Confucian Way is realised in the experience of ordinary human existence, because "one's own existence, body and mind, provides the primary context wherein the Way is pursued concretely. ... The Way does not in itself give full expression to humanity; it is through human effort that the Way is manifest."⁴⁶ It seems that instead of regarding art as a transcendental realm in the Kantian sense,⁴⁷ Zhu held his notion of

⁴³ Ibid., p. 91.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 93.

⁴⁶ Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, p. 67.

⁴⁷ Strictly speaking, Kant himself did not employ art as a transcendental realm but Kant's notion of

detachment from reality within the human world. In this regard, Zhu's notion of detachment became an interrelated concept and implied human value. In doing so, Zhu was confident of reality even though it was by no means perfect. In one of his essays written in 1924, he summarised this idea:

If the world were perfect, how would we have the pleasure of achievement? The world is beautiful because it has defects. A world with defects gives us hope and imagination. In other words, an imperfect world means more potential. ... It is in this imperfect world that prospects of perfection are inspirational just like beauty which cannot be put into words.⁴⁸

It can be seen that the source of Zhu's confidence in reality originates from confidence in human value. In Zhu's philosophy of life, the concept of reality is not an ontological entity that externally determines the fate of human beings. In Zhu's understanding, if there are no human concrete activities, reality is void. Therefore, when he said that reality is beautiful, he was in fact pointing out that human beings create their own reality. Zhu treats the relationship between human beings and nature or reality as an interrelated and mutual existence. Zhu explained in another essay:

We are merely the slaves of nature. To overcome nature, we must obey nature. Only when we violate nature, do we start to feel inadequate. ... Human beings are inherently active, progressive and creative, which means that giving free control to these qualities is to obey nature. Disturbing these qualities would damage the vital nature of human beings and result in unhappiness.⁴⁹

Here, an interrelated and adequate relationship between human beings and nature or reality connects Zhu's theory to the fundamental Confucian approach. Namely, since neither human beings nor nature are the creation of an inactive entity, they come into a meaningful relationship through a continuous, holistic and dynamic process. Then human

'disinterest' has been invoked to support the 'art for art's sake' estimation of art. See David Cooper ed., *A Companion to Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 23-25 and 250-254.

⁴⁸ Zhu Guangqian, "Wuyan zhi mei" 無言之美 [Wordless beauty], *Minduo*, vol. 5, no. 5 (Jul 1924), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 72.

⁴⁹ Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dong" 談動 [About 'action'], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 12.

beings can cultivate their sensitivity and deepen their feelings towards nature in this process. As seen in the *Doctrine of the Mean*, "what Heaven [*tian* 天] imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way... Before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused it is called equilibrium [*zhong* 中, centrality, mean]. When these feelings are aroused and each and all attain due measure and degree, it is called harmony. Equilibrium is the great foundation of the world, and harmony its universal path. When equilibrium and harmony are realised to the highest degree, heaven and earth will attain their proper order and all things will flourish."⁵⁰

According to Zhu, this equilibrium and harmony between humans and nature is realised through their actual 'doing' (action). "The purpose of life is to live it."⁵¹ It is through actually 'doing' things that human beings demonstrate their being and, consequently, receive a sense of delight.⁵² In his writing, Zhu identified his concept with the Mencian doctrine of *jinxing* 盡性 [fulfilment of one's nature]. He claimed that "the concept of *jinxing* deeply and profoundly illuminates the significance of human life."⁵³ This is probably because in the light of Mencius, human activities are not merely directed by blind or instinctive impulse for survival but purposeful, imaginative and creative transformations of human beings and nature. Human activities therefore show a holistic process of learning that consists of thinking and feeling as well as 'action'. "One who has fully developed his mind knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he knows Heaven. By preserving one's mind and nourishing one's nature one has the means to serve Heaven. When neither the brevity nor the length of a lifespan engenders doubts, and one cultivates one's person in an attitude of expectancy, one has the means to establish one's destiny."⁵⁴

⁵⁰ *The Doctrine of the Mean*, 1, trans. by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 98.

⁵¹ Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dong" 談動 [About 'action'] (1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p.12.

⁵² See *ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Mencius*, 7A:1., in William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom comp., *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, vol. 1, p. 155.

To know and understand one's nature, one must learn to cultivate oneself so that one can fully realise those human possibilities in human nature.⁵⁵ The moral significance here lies in the fact that "if he (*junzi* 君子 [the morally exemplary man]) reveres virtue and delights in righteousness, he can be content. ... In obscurity a man makes perfect his own person, but in prominence he makes perfect the whole Empire as well."⁵⁶ In Tu Wei-ming's interpretation, this process "opens oneself up to an ever broadening and deepening horizon of values shared by the enlarging community of like-minded moral persons. This is a concrete path leading towards a universalisable experience of personal identity and communication."⁵⁷

In the light of Tu's interpretation, Zhu's concept of 'action' (doing) [*dong* 動] as making a process of human natural existence must involve conscious learning since pursuing progress and being creative are also a human being's given nature.⁵⁸ In another essay, Zhu's idea of combining 'action' with tranquillity [*jing* 靜] as an interrelated human experience gave his readers a deeper understanding of his view of life: "Enjoyment of life can be obtained half in 'action' and half in sensual and mental reflection. ... Sometimes you may by accident rid yourself of worldly affairs and indulge in imagination. You may suddenly experience an inspiration and a stream of spiritual revelation."⁵⁹ However, in Zhu's theory tranquillity is not a gift but comes through intellectual cultivation. He cited the Neo-Confucianist Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200)'s poem: "in a small pond the blue sky and floating clouds can be seen; if one asks how it can be, it is because the clear water comes in."⁶⁰ Zhu Guangqian explained that the pond symbolised the mind and the running water symbolised taste.⁶¹ That is to say, one is able to understand the real beauty of life on a higher

⁵⁵ See Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, p. 73.

⁵⁶ *Mencius*, 7A:9., in D. C. Lau trans., *Mencius* (London: Penguin Book, 1970), p. 183.

⁵⁷ Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, p. 73.

⁵⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dong" 談動 [About 'action'] (1929), p.12.

⁵⁹ Zhu Guangqian, "Tan jing" 談靜 [About 'tranquillity'], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 14-15.

⁶⁰ Zhu Xi 朱熹, "Guan shu you gan" 觀書有感 [Feelings while reading], quoted from Zhu Guangqian, "Tan jing" [About 'tranquillity'], in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 15.

⁶¹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan jing" [About 'tranquillity'], in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 15.

spiritual level because one constantly cultivates one's taste and taste has to be obtained through learning. Therefore, tranquillity (tranquil observation) involves the constant renewal of knowledge.

In another essay, Zhu urged young people to study and read as widely as possible because reading helps one develop taste and resist vulgar material temptation.⁶² He regretted that Chinese society was sick with hypocrisy, superficiality and insensibility. As a result, the nation could not establish its dignity in the world. So he warned his young readers of the danger at the "cross-road" and encouraged them to "sometimes look back at the "ivory tower" after they graduated from school."⁶³ He disagreed with a socialist activist who claimed that two thousand years of study of Confucius and Mencius had not helped China at all and therefore, instead of studying, young people should join the revolutionary movement.⁶⁴ Zhu asserted that the success of the French Revolution was not just because of Danton and Robespierre's contributions but had also benefited from Rousseau and Voltaire's thought. Zhu declared that "only if a revolution of thought succeeds, can a revolution of the system turn into reality."⁶⁵

In Zhu's philosophy of life learning plays a significant role in transforming the mind. Yet, as observed above, in Zhu's view the learning process does not exclude 'action' (doing). This is because Zhu did not treat tranquillity as a static state of mind. He once noted that a perfect form of life is "to attain the sublime while performing the common task."⁶⁶ Thus,

⁶² See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dushu" 談讀書 [About reading], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 5-6.

⁶³ Zhu Guangqian, "Tan shizi jietou" 談十字街頭 [Discussion of the cross-road], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp.23-5.

⁶⁴ This activist was Yun Daiying 惲代英 (1895-1931). He took an active part in the May Fourth movement and was one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. He was arrested by the Nationalist government in May, 1930 and died in prison the next year. The comment he made on Confucian studies was quoted by Zhu Guangqian in "Tan zhongxuesheng yu shehui yundong" 談中學生與社會運動 [Discussion of secondary school students and social movement], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 18.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶⁶ Zhu Guangqian, "Dao Xia Menggang" 悼夏孟剛 [In mourning of Xiao Menggang], *Lida xueyuan xiaokan* 立達學園校刊 [School magazine of Lida Academy] (May, 1926), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 76.

'tranquillity' and 'action' are not separable and they both contribute to cultivate a personality. In this way, both action and tranquillity are forms of knowledge which are achieved by human beings through existential harmonisation between self and nature.

It would seem that Zhu's emphasis on the combination of action and tranquillity is based precisely on the idea that through a human being's own physical practice and theoretical reflection, they are capable of improving their own environment.

On the whole, the essays that Zhu wrote about the spiritual and emotional problems of youth during the period from 1923 to 1926, showed his Confucian background as well as Western influences. It is apparent that his faith in the intellectual transformation of society through better education is very strong and his effort to establish a philosophy of life in order to influence young people is also persistent. Although Zhu never explicitly declared his underlying traditional attitude towards life as equilibrium and harmony through his Middle Way inclination to Confucianism, it would become a starting point for the future development of his thinking and affect both his Western studies and aesthetic theorisation in later years.

CHAPTER III

Studies in Europe and Encounter with European Thinkers

3.1. Subjects for Studies in Europe

After working a couple of years as an English teacher at Wusong State Secondary School, near Shanghai, and Chunhui 春暉 Secondary School in Shangyu 上虞, Zhejiang 浙江 province, Zhu had the opportunity to study in Europe after succeeding in an examination sponsored by the Chinese government.¹ In the summer of 1925 Zhu went to Britain where he enrolled in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.² He chose Edinburgh since not only had it been recommended by a Scottish professor at Hong Kong University, Dr Simpson, whom he admired, as an excellent academic institution for the humanities, but also because the university was located in a non-industrial city which had a reputation as an academic centre.³

Zhu chose five subjects which he was most interested in: English literature, philosophy, psychology, European ancient history and European history of art.⁴ His choice of subjects emphasised reading in the texts of ancient Greece and Rome, the Renaissance and 19th century romanticism. Zhu's preference for European classicism revealed his lack of interest in "modern culture" which, according to him, focused too much on "efficiency"

¹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuoze zizhuan" 作者自傳 [Author's autobiography], in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 2-3; Wang Youxin 王攸欣, *Zhu Guangqian xueshu sixiang pingzhuan* 朱光潛學術思想評傳 [A critical biography of Zhu Guangqian and his thought] (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1999), pp. 20-25.

² According to what he wrote in the *First Matriculation Book 1925-1926*, his contact address in Edinburgh appeared as '7 Argyle Place.' He gave his permanent address as 'Lida Academy, Kiangwan' (Jiangwan 江灣), Shanghai. See *First Matriculation Book 1925-1926*, vol. 60, Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh. Located in the Special Collections of the University of Edinburgh Library. No publication date and not paginated.

³ See Zhu Guangqian, "Huiyi ershiwu nian qian de Xianggang Daxue" 回憶二十五年前香港大學 [In memory of Hong Kong University twenty-five years ago], *Wenxue chuankuan* 文學創刊, vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1944), in *QJ*, vol. 9, pp. 185-186.

⁴ See *Graduates in Arts 1928*, Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh. Located in the Special Collections Division of Edinburgh University Library. No publication date and not paginated. Also See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuoze zizhuan" 作者自傳 [Author's autobiography], in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 3.

and tended to show superficiality. He criticized the modern world for its loss of the specific human elements of devotion and zeal, and expressed admiration for the spirituality, harmony and tranquillity, deeply revealed in great works such as *Venus de Milo*, Beethoven's concertos, Goethe's *Faust* and especially Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*.⁵

In Zhu's view, although modern science brought convenience and happiness to the human world, at the same time it produced the side effects of frivolity and perfunctoriness. He thought what was missing in the modern concept of efficiency was an emphasis on "human elements" embodied in the process of an effort to achieve human ideals and hopes. This process took not only the result but also the effort itself as the standard of success because the effort affirmed human spirit and value irrespective of its success. And it was in classical culture that such human efforts were cherished and flourished.⁶ He remarked that what distinguished the cathedral of Notre Dame in Reims and the great Gothic Cathedral of Notre Dame in Amiens from the Empire State Building in New York was that "the Empire State Building was merely commercial and functional whereas the cathedrals built in the Middle Ages were infused with human efforts and enthusiasm."⁷ That was why it was in cathedrals not in steel buildings that people sought spiritual consolation.

Zhu's preference for classical culture also extended to European romanticism. He admired Goethe as well as the English romantic poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. He devoted much time and energy to the study of the theories of romanticism and became increasingly convinced that human creativity not only "yielded beautiful images (as emphasised by classicism) but also originated in true feelings (as emphasised by romanticism)."⁸ Therefore, he dismissed the controversy between romanticism and

⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan zai Lufuergong suode de yige ganxiang" 談在盧佛兒宮所得的一個感想 [On an impression gained in the Louvre], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 52-56.

⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 52 and 55.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁸ Zhu Guangqian, "Shenme shi gudianzhuyi" 什麼是古典主義 [What is classicism?], in Fu Donghua 傅東華 ed., *Wenxue baiti* 文學百題 [One hundred questions of literature] (Shenghuo shudian, 1935), in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 388.

classicism.⁹ Taking the approach of the Confucian "Middle Way," he saw mutual complementarity between the two different literary trends in the same way that he found balance in a combination of action and tranquillity. He claimed that classicism and romanticism were correlated: "while classicism stressed harmony and unity in form, romanticism emphasised emotional abundance and depth; while classicism focused on discipline, romanticism admired freedom; while classicism sought tranquillity and solemnity, romanticism sought inspiration and the free expression of emotions."¹⁰

As Nicholas V. Riasanovsky described, if romanticism was "linked especially to the *id* in contrast to classicism which was linked to the *superego*,"¹¹ Zhu believed that the unity of the two in one holistic thinking being should not be epistemologically indescribable. In fact, romanticism did not necessarily cut itself clear of its classical humanist traditions and *vice versa*. According to Zhu, "a first class artistic work should be a combination of romanticism and classicism, that is true feelings expressed in beautiful forms."¹² It would seem then that Zhu's equal interest in both classicism and romanticism for their humanist traits in their different aspects derives from his own intellectual inclination.

Since the May Fourth period, Zhu had harboured reservations about the ideas proposed by prominent intellectuals such as Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao and Hu Shi, who supported the superiority of science. Western positivism, pragmatism, materialism and social Darwinism had been more popular than idealism in early 20th century China. On the other hand, Zhu seemed to be equally persistent in his view of social progress as a matter of personality refinement. Before going to Europe, he dedicated much time and energy

⁹ An antinomy between classicism and romanticism was "devised by Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829) and expressed in *Das Athenaeum* (1798)." See J. A. Cuddon, *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (Penguin Books, 1991 3rd edition), p. 150. There is an enormous scholarly literature on the nature and definition of classicism and romanticism. Some scholars even denied the validity of these terms. For a more general account of classicism and romanticism, see René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 128-221.

¹⁰ Zhu Guangqian, "Shenme shi gudianzhuyi" [What is classicism?], in *QJ*, vol. 8, in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 387.

¹¹ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *The Emergence of Romanticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 69.

¹² Zhu Guangqian, "Shenme shi gudianzhuyi" [What is classicism?], in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 388.

to the establishment of Lida Academy in order to promote his ideas not in external power but in internal power, namely human initiative. This humanistic approach, which was somewhat opposed to the scientific modernism advocated by many other Chinese intellectuals, continued after Zhu arrived in Europe and influenced his choice of subjects for study in Edinburgh. By attributing the value of humanity to European classical as well as romantic literature and art, to some extent he found his native intellectual tradition reinforced because both values adopted the human spirit of creativity.

The antinomy of classicism and romanticism seems to remind one of Zhu's ideal of action complemented with tranquillity which is derived from the Chinese traditional notion of the unity of knowledge and action.¹³ While reason, balance, objectivity, restraint and adherence to form as pursued by classicism became the vital elements of tranquillity for the purpose of comprehending the beauty of this world, emotion, imagination, individual creativity and spirituality as emphasized in romanticism form the fundamental base for action. Probably because of this similarity, Zhu did not seem to encounter problems in treating both values in the same way. In one of the twelve letters to Chinese youth which he wrote for *Yiban* 一般 [Ordinary issues], the school magazine of Lida Academy, during the first two years after arriving in Britain, he urged his young readers to read widely both Chinese and European literature as a necessary step to intellectual and emotional refinement of personality.¹⁴ In the book list he made for young people, it is noticeable that he put more weight on the classical and romantic literatures of both cultures. His recommendations of traditional Chinese literature included the *Guofeng* 國風 [Airs of the states] in *Shijing* 詩經 [The book of songs], *Chuci* 楚辭 [Songs of Chu], *Shiji* 史記 [Records of the Grand Historian], *Gushi yuan* 古詩源 [The wellsprings of verse],¹⁵ *Wenxuan* 文選

¹³ Zhu's discussion of action and tranquillity can be found in his writings: "Tan dong" 談動 [About 'action'] and "Tan jing" 談靜 [About 'tranquillity'], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 11-13 and pp. 14-17. For an account of Zhu's notion of action and tranquillity, see "2.3 Towards a New Philosophy of Life" in Chapter II in this thesis.

¹⁴ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dushu" 談讀書 [About reading], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 5-10.

¹⁵ *Gushi yuan* is an anthology of pre-Tang *shi* poetry compiled in the early Qing period by Shen Deqian

[Anthology of literature],¹⁶ *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 [New account of tales of the world],¹⁷ *Tao Yuanming ji* 陶淵明集 [Collected works of Tao Yuanming], *Li Bai ji* 李白集 [Collected works of Li Bai], *Huajian ji* 花間集 [Among the Flowers Collection],¹⁸ *Cixuan* 詞選 [Selections of *ci* poetry]¹⁹ and *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 [The Dream of the red chamber]. Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, and Browning were his favourite European romantic poets and the following European literary works were also included among his recommendations: Sophocles' (495-405 B.C) seven tragedies,²⁰ Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Othello*, Goethe's *Faust*, Ibsen's plays, Turgenev's *Virgin Soil* and *Fathers and Sons*, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and de Maupassant's fiction.²¹

However, Zhu's interest did not seem to concentrate merely on the literary value of these works. Since he had been preoccupied with ethical issues in China and had written twelve letters for young people whom he expected to become the leaders of the future, he appeared to be more concerned with finding an effective way for Chinese youth to save themselves from spiritual crisis. Throughout the twelve letters, he tended to use European

沈德潛 (1673-1769). For a more detailed account, see William H. Nienhauser Jr. ed. and com., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington, IL: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 491-492.

¹⁶ *Wenxuan* is a highly influential anthology of verse and prose compiled by Xiao Tong (501-531), Crown Prince Zhaoming 昭明 of the Liang 梁 dynasty which includes "thirty-eight genres and more than 700 pieces written by 129 authors from the period of the Han through the Liang dynasties. The work itself and its generic division provided models for subsequent anthologies." Nienhauser ed. and com., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, p. 891.

¹⁷ *Shishuo xinyu* is an anthology compiled under the patronage of the Liu-Song prince Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403-444), which consists of "anecdotes, noteworthy conversations or remarks, and brief characterisations of historical persons who lived in the period between the declining years of the Latter Han and the founding of the Liu-Song state (roughly A.D. 150-420)." Nienhauser ed. and com., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, pp. 704-705.

¹⁸ *Huajian ji* is one of the oldest *ci* poetry collections, compiled during the Later Shu 蜀 dynasty by Zhao Chongzuo 趙崇祚 (934-965) and including five hundred poems, mainly concerning love and separation. See Nienhauser ed. and com., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, pp. 441-442.

¹⁹ *Cixuan*, compiled by Zhang Huiyan 張惠言 (1761-1802) and his brother Zhang Qi 張琦 (1765-1833), consists of 116 *ci* poems from the late Tang, Five Dynasties and Song periods. See Nienhauser ed. and com., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, p. 216.

²⁰ The seven plays are *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Ajax*, *The Trachiniae*, *Electra* and *Philoctetes*.

²¹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dushu" 談讀書 [About reading], in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 8-9.

examples in the context of his ethically oriented concerns. The fact that Zhu blended European classical and romantic humanity with his ethical ideals indicates his inclination to a universal aestheticism. With regard to the epistemological issue of romanticism, Laurence S. Lockridge argues that many of the romanticists believed in "an interdependency of the subjective and objective, of mind and nature."²² As Lockridge points out, if the imagination emphasised by romanticists "is not an exclusively subjective power; its sympathy leads the self towards the world," and if the sense of sympathy "described by Coleridge and Shelley as an intense kind of knowing"²³ can be therefore identified with the humanist aspect of European classicism especially during the Renaissance, it would seem that an appreciation of universal beauty in any form of humanity would help to create an aesthetic order of social existence.²⁴ This seemed to be the message that Zhu consistently tried to deliver in his twelve letters.

It may be worth noting that, like many of his contemporaries, Zhu had been preoccupied with ethics in China before he went to Europe. Following his work at the Lida Academy to help to heighten the state of mind through education in China, and after arriving in Europe, he developed his view that life was a combination of *dong* 動 [action or doing] and *jing* 靜 [tranquil observation or tranquillity] which he believed to be a harmonious mode of existence especially in an environment of political and moral turmoil like China.²⁵ His selection of undergraduate courses in European classical and romantic literature showed his intellectual tendency to search for an answer to human existence and human value. The intellectual environment in Europe in the 1920s provided him with an opportunity to implement his view of life through Western thought, a desire which had grown since his days at Hong Kong University. Zhu became

²² Laurence S. Lockridge, *The Ethics of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 70.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

²⁴ For a more detailed account of the humanist aspect of European classicism, see Frederick B. Artz, *From the Renaissance to Romanticism: Trends in Style in Art, Literature, and Music, 1300-1830* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), Chapter II and III.

²⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dong" 談動 [About 'action'] (1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 11-13 and "Tan jing" 談靜 [About 'tranquillity'], in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 14-17.



particularly interested in two philosophers in European modern history, namely Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) and Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844-1900).

3.2. Zhu Guangqian and Croce's Aesthetic Theory

During Zhu's first years in Europe, Croce was probably the first philosopher who profoundly attracted his attention and affected his intellectual life. A lecturer in British history, Mr Thomson who shared the same accommodation in Edinburgh, introduced Croce and his theory. Thomson's discussions of Croce's ideas impressed Zhu greatly.²⁶ Zhu expressed his respect and admiration for Croce in an article of 1927. He claimed that while he did not necessarily agree with Croce on every issue, he had never been so inspired before.²⁷ He stated that "since Aristotle Croce is the first philosopher to combine philosophy brilliantly with literary criticism."²⁸

Concerning this inspiration obtained from Croce, Mario Sabattini argues that "what mainly interests Chu Kuang-ch'ien [Zhu Guangqian] is not so much their [Western theories] specific content but the way they are broadly seen to hark back to ideas and notions that are an established part of Chinese classical thought."²⁹ There is no doubt that Sabattini's comment illuminates the link between Zhu's Chinese background and his interpretation

²⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zhu Guangqian jiaoshou tan meixue" 朱光潛教授談美學 [Professor Zhu Guangqian's talk on aesthetics], *Meiyu* 美育, vol. 1 and 2 (1981) in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 530.

²⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, "Ouzhou jindai san da piping xuezhe (san) - Keluoqi" 歐洲近代三大批評學者 (三) - 克羅齊 [Three great critical scholars of modern Europe - One: Benedetto Croce], *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 [*Eastern Miscellany*], vol. 24, no. 15 (Aug 1927), in *QJ*, vol.8, pp. 229-246.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

²⁹ Mario Sabattini, "'Crocianism' in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's *Wen-i hsin-li-hsüeh*," *East and West*, vol. 20, no. 1/2 (March/June 1970), p. 179. For Sabattini's general view on Zhu Guangqian's aesthetic theories, also see his two articles below: Mario Sabattini, "The Concept of 'Aesthetic Experience' in the Theory of Chu Kuang-ch'ien," *Papers Presented to the XXI International Congress of Chinese Studies*, Senigallia 7-13 September 1969 (Roma-Napoli: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente and Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1971), pp. 204-211; Maliao Sabadini 馬利奧薩巴蒂尼, "Lun Zhu Guangqian xiansheng duiyu jianli xin jiazhi tixi de gongxian" 論朱光潛先生對於建立新價值體系的貢獻 [Zhu Guangqian's contribution to the construction of a new value system], *Zhongguo ren de jiazhi guan - Guoji yantaohui lunwen ji (xia ce)* 中國人的價值觀 - 國際研討會論文集 (下冊) (Taipei: Hanxue yanjiu zhongxin, 1992), pp. 769-781; "Chu Kuang-ch'ien and Croce," *Tamkang Review*, vol. 23, nos. 1-4 (1992/93), pp. 601-626.

of Western thought. However, Zhu's specific interpretation of Croce's theories may suggest something more than mere "formal" relation.

First of all, as Wang Yuxiong points out, "Zhu's general approach is evidently based on his way of thinking in which he is critically synthesising contending thoughts in order to reach a common truth."³⁰ This approach tends to embrace things in change and hence see truth in many-sided instead of one-sided reality.³¹ This means that Zhu's way of looking at ideas was not motivated by an isolated and absolute truth, as traditional Chinese philosophy believes rather in relative and correlative truth.³² In this way, it is quite possible that the internal logic of Croce's system is broken in order to establish a bigger truth. But this does not mean that the truth adopted from Croce's system becomes invalid.

Secondly, Zhu's traditional intellectual background was not a static and unchangeable state of mind; it had extended to a wider range of thinking as a result of his Western studies at Hong Kong University. It seemed that Zhu's continuing concern about the condition of ethics in China led him to seek the truth of human existence and human value from both East and West. His initial interest in human reality rather than metaphysics in the West seems to explain why he was inspired by Croce's thought.

Croce's theories were unique in the early 20th century because in the development of Western modern thought they endeavoured to change the philosophical thinking mode from dualism to monism, from otherworldly to this-worldly, from mysticism to realism, from the static to the dynamic, and from the abstract to the concrete. On the whole, Croce highlighted the freedom of humanity and endeavoured to criticise the tradition of metaphysics.³³ Therefore, as Angelo Crespi observes, "through the instrumentality of

³⁰ Wang Yuxiong 王裕雄, "Zhu Guangqian lun shenmei duixiang: 'yixiang' yu 'wuyi'" 朱光潛論審美對象: '意象'與'物乙' [Zhu Guangqian's discussion of the aesthetic object: 'image' and 'object B'], *Fuyin baokan ziliao: Meixue* 複印報刊資料: 美學, vol. 4 (1997), p. 9.

³¹ See Cheng Chung-ying, "Chinese Metaphysics as Non-Metaphysics: Confucian and Taoist Insights into the Nature of Reality," in Robert E. Allinson ed., *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 173-177.

³² See Wang Yuxiong 王裕雄, "Zhu Guangqian lun shenmei duixiang: 'yixiang' yu 'wuyi'" (1997), pp. 7-9.

³³ Douglas R. Anderson, "Benedetto Croce," in David Cooper ed., *A Companion to Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 96-99.

Croce ... man, as spirit, always carries his freedom and destiny within himself and, through making nature and history the objects of our thinking, we break their spell, we make them ours."³⁴ Croce dismisses metaphysics and materialism by saying that "if being is conceived as external to the human spirit, and knowledge as separable from its object, so much so that the object could be without being known, it is evident that the existence of the object becomes a position, or something placed before the spirit, given to the spirit, extraneous to it, which the spirit would never appropriate to itself unless it would courageously swallow the bitter morsel by an irrational act of faith."³⁵

In the early decades of 20th century Europe where metaphysics faced a dilemma in its search for the truth of human existence, Croce's proposal to depart from the dualistic way of thinking toward a monistic approach was naturally appealing to a Chinese thinker like Zhu. For Croce, the relation between spirit (mind) and nature is "no longer a dualistic one ... but a unity in which spirit, for its own purposes, fashions the idea of nature or the external world, and thus any intrusion of transcendence is absolutely excluded."³⁶ Zhu similarly held a realistic point of view toward life although it was more ethically oriented than epistemologically focused. In another aspect, Zhu treated spiritual life as the creative interaction of human beings with nature.³⁷ Zhu's perception of nature may be different from Croce's as the former accepted nature as homogeneous with human beings whereas the latter regarded nature as a subjective category.

However, while Zhu's monistic concept of human beings as an integral part of nature derives from traditional Chinese thinking which regards human beings and nature as an organic whole regenerating itself through a dynamic process of infinite potential for activity, development and creativity,³⁸ Croce sheds light on the role that human beings

³⁴ Angelo Crespi, *Contemporary Thought of Italy* (London: William and Norgate Limited, 1926), p. 37.

³⁵ Benedetto Croce, *Logic as the Science of the Pure Concept*, trans. by Douglas Ainslie (London: MacMillan and Co. Limited, 1917), p. 172.

³⁶ Benedetto Croce, *My Philosophy and Other Essays on the Moral and Political Problems of Our Time*, trans. by E. F. Carritt (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1949), p. 18.

³⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dong" 談動 [About 'action'] (1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 12.

³⁸ For an assessment of Chinese traditional concepts of human beings and nature, see Tu Wei-ming,

play in forming the concrete world of experience at a different level of this complex integration.³⁹ In essence, Zhu's concept of human beings is not necessarily opposed to Croce's. Since both theories are based on human reality excluding external or transcendental causes, it may be more appropriate to mention that the common ground between Zhu and Croce was to establish the value of humanity within the arena of this-worldly affairs.

It seems that on this basis Zhu was most impressed with Croce's aesthetics, which reflected his own view of life at a deeper level. Zhu's view of life aimed at a harmonious combination of action and tranquillity which together formed the wholeness of human life. Croce's aesthetic theory intends to support the primordial and yet expressive mode of human relationship with the world. In Croce's view, human beings intuit a particular image through an actual experience and fulfil their nature of being active and creative. By doing this, human beings are afforded the concrete basis for conceptual thinking. Conceptual thinking or theory and aesthetic activity or praxis form an interrelated movement pattern. According to Crespi's interpretation, "praxis ever provides art and knowledge with new material for expression, and philosophy and theory ever provide praxis with a new groundwork for creating deeds, and so on *ad infinitum* through an historical process in which the system of the ever recurrent forms and degrees of experience is cyclical, but in which the content admits of indefinitely progressive enrichment."⁴⁰ This reciprocal connection of theory and praxis constructed in Croce's aesthetics gives logical foundation to Zhu's concept of action and tranquillity which derives also from the ideal of unity of knowledge and action.

Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation (New York: State University Of New York Press, 1985), pp. 35-47. Also see Cheng Chung-ying, "Chinese Metaphysics as Non-Metaphysics: Confucian and Daoist Insights into the Nature of Reality," in Robert E. Allinson ed., *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots*, pp. 173-191.

³⁹ See H. Wildon Carr, *The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce: The Problem of Art and History* (London: MacMillan and Co. Limited, 1917), pp. 3-4.

⁴⁰ Angelo Crespi, *Contemporary Thought of Italy*, p. 64.

On the other hand, Croce's notion of intuition as expression also gives Zhu confidence about his own idea of emotion as the fundamental application for human activities. Zhu's notion of emotion is also in association with Chinese traditional thought manifested both in Confucianism and Taoism. In Kuang-ming Wu's words, emotion in Confucianism and Taoism yields "a pervasive attitude and atmosphere in which one moves and has one's being,"⁴¹ It also attracted attention in modern psychology such as abnormal psychology and Freud's psychoanalysis for scientific evidence.

Zhu took a particular interest in abnormal psychology with its focus on the study of the unconscious as opposed to the conscious. In an introductory essay on the subject in 1929, he claimed that "what abnormal psychology discovered by searching deep in human mind was that the motive force [*yuandongli* 原動力] of the mind was not intellect but instinct and emotion."⁴² This reconfirmed his view that emotional cultivation was the fundamental step to spiritual wholeness because "emotions deep-rooted in the unconscious were sublimated at the level of consciousness and formed inner mental motive force. ... Rationality, on the other hand, floated on the surface of the conscious, unable to match the dynamic shifting of feelings."⁴³ After studying Freud's psychology, Zhu became convinced that if emotions, as the unconscious instinct which is suppressed in the *id*, are not allowed cathartic discharge or sublimation [*shenghua* 昇華], they will emerge in the distorted form of physical symptoms such as hysteria and depression. As a result, the dynamics and equilibrium of the mind will be inhibited.⁴⁴

Zhu's belief in emotional cultivation as the initial requirement for a better society was not only formed during the process of his involvement in the Lida Academy in China

⁴¹ Kuang-ming Wu, "Chinese Aesthetics," in Robert E. Allinson ed., *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 236.

⁴² Zhu Guangqian, *Biantai xinlixue paibie* 變態心理學派別 [Schools of abnormal psychology] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1930), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 85.

⁴³ Zhu Guangqian, "Tan qing yu li" 談情與理 [Discussion of emotion and rationality], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 41-42.

⁴⁴ See Zhu Guangqian, "Fuluoyide de yinyishi shuo yu xinli fenxi" 弗洛伊德的隱意識說與心理分析 [Freud's theory of the unconscious and psychoanalysis], *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌, vol. 18, no. 41 (July 1921), in *QJ*, vol.8, pp. 2-10.

but reinforced by his study of Western culture, especially romantic literature and art. In one of the twelve letters, he urged his readers to pay more attention to the cultivation of the emotions because the emotions lead one to a better human existence and a better society by fostering the mind. Therefore, he said "humanity [*ren* 仁] as encouraged in Confucian doctrine is more morally truthful than the sense of righteousness [*yi* 義] in Mencian doctrine because whereas the latter is accompanied with rationality, the former appeals to the emotions."⁴⁵

Considering the context of the development of Zhu's notion of the emotions, it can be said that he became attracted to Croce's aesthetics primarily due to the fact that Croce tried to prove from an epistemological as well as historical point of view that imagination is the root of human knowledge and this theory supports Zhu's own conception of the emotions. If in Croce's theory, "intuition is ... the kind of knowledge which is aroused by artistic nature which every man in some degree possesses by reason of his human nature,"⁴⁶ Zhu's ideal of emotional cultivation for a better society receives more philosophical support. In this sense emotional cultivation is not just a moral and psychological expedient for a better society or for individual mental health, but indicates the great potentiality of human beings. Moreover, Croce's notion of intuition as an image-forming activity which fuses emotion and image into an organic whole⁴⁷ may have been more attractive to Zhu. His strong interest in Chinese classical poetry afforded him more intellectual room to understand the importance of Croce's idea. The holistic characteristic of Chinese classical poetry requires the structural entirety of an ideographic pattern including sound, vision and rhythm. As Kuang-ming Wu observes, "Chinese literature is a composition patterned after music and dance; it is something rhythmic and auditory, in sympathy with the natural rhythm inside our body and outside it. ... There is, then, a felt unity of seeing and hearing in Chinese literature."⁴⁸ In *On Poetry* [*Shi lun* 詩論], one of his important works completed

⁴⁵ Zhu Guangqian, "Tan qing yu li," in *QJ*, vol. 1, p.46.

⁴⁶ H. Wildon Carr, *The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce: The Problem of Art and History*, p. 70.

⁴⁷ See Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. by Douglas Ainslie (London: Transaction Publishers, 1995), pp. 1-11.

as a draft in Europe and published in the 1940s, Zhu tried to prove in the light of Croce that emotion or feeling is not some kind of vague perception or pure subjectivity but a concrete process of expression.⁴⁹ This means that, for emotion to be felt or expressed, it has to be infused with image; "it has to be objectified. Poetic feeling, as alleged by some, which cannot be expressed in language in a broad sense is not real emotion, but illusion or vain fancy." According to Zhu, "if one is clearly aware of his emotions, he naturally has the language to express it either directly or symbolically."⁵⁰

Zhu did not deny that he had differences with Croce, although he did not fully understand the theoretical conflict until later. One thing that Zhu could not accept in Croce's theory was that intuition as expression becomes complete at the moment of infusion of the emotion and the image. For the time being, he seemed to think that Croce's system could be compromised by treating willing, feeling and thinking as different categories. Before long, however, Zhu realised that such a compromise would not work without taking human beings as an organic being into consideration. Zhu recognised later that what could be separated in theory were in fact inseparable.⁵¹ Thus, "aesthetic experience is not necessarily pure intuitive knowledge without inter-relation to concepts."⁵²

The problem is that while Croce intended to overcome the dualism that had dominated Western thought for centuries, in the fundamental structure of Zhu's thinking things external to the mind were not excluded in a dualistic sense. In Chinese traditional thought, expressed in both Confucianism and Taoism, human beings are an integral part of nature, hence human beings and nature are treated holistically as two parts of one entity, blending with each other dynamically and constantly.⁵³ Croce's idea that related nature to the

⁴⁸ Kuang-ming Wu, "Chinese Aesthetics," in Robert E. Allinson ed., *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots*, p. 243.

⁴⁹ See Zhu Guangqian, *Shi lun* 詩論 [On poetry] (Chongqing: Guomin tushu chubanshe, 1943), in *QJ*, vol. 3, pp. 51-59.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁵¹ Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zibai" 作者自白 [Writer's preface], *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 [The psychology of literature and art] (Shanghai: Kaiming Shudian, 1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 197-199.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁵³ See Fung Yu-lan, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. by E. R. Hughes (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1947), pp. 81-111.

absolute area of human mind may not have seemed perfect to Zhu because the empirical side of thinking was not recognised. Zhu found some solution in modern psychology with which he was also enthusiastically involved. Although after some years of study he expressed doubts if any school of psychology could provide defensible arguments for spiritual phenomena,⁵⁴ Zhu hoped to "form a comprehensive synthetic view in which prejudices are wiped out and contradictions reconciled."⁵⁵

Nevertheless, Zhu's preference for introspective psychology over experimental psychology is clear. He complained that the Behaviourist and Gestalt schools of experimental psychology relied exclusively on stimulus-response without any consideration for the initiative of the mind.⁵⁶ On the other hand, he took an interest in subjective psychology, which dealt with sensations, perceptions, ideas, emotions and volition despite being aware that such introspective psychology was vulnerable as theory since it lacked physiological data as verifiable evidence.⁵⁷ It can be seen that Zhu's interest in modern psychology was one of his pragmatic projects to develop his concept of humanity. However, since psychology was science and yet still struggled to answer the questions of human emotions in association with mind, Zhu was not satisfied with relying on psychology.

3.3. Zhu Guangqian and Philosophy of Nietzsche

The other philosopher who caught Zhu's attention in Europe was Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Many Chinese intellectuals from the May Fourth period onwards were also

⁵⁴ See Zhu Guangqian, "Wanxingpai xinlixue zhi gailüe ji qi piping" 完形派心理學之概略及其批評 [A critical introduction to Gestalt psychology], *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌, vol. 23, no. 14 (July 1926), in *QJ*, vol.8, p. 155.

⁵⁵ Chu Kwang-Tsien [Zhu Guangqian], *The Psychology of Tragedy: A Critical Study of Various Theories of Tragic Pleasure* (Strasbourg: Librairie Universitaire d'Alsace, 1933), reprinted in Chu Kwang-Tsien, *The Psychology of Tragedy* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1987), p. 9. Unless otherwise indicated, footnotes refer to the latter edition.

⁵⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, *Biantai xinlixue paibie* [Schools of abnormal psychology], in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 85. and "Wanxingpai xinlixue zhi gailüe ji qi piping" [An introduction to Gestalt psychology and criticism], in *QJ*, vol. 8, p. 168.

⁵⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, *Biantai xinlixue paibie* [Schools of abnormal psychology], in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 147.

drawn to Nietzsche although their interpretations and what they appreciated from Nietzsche were various.⁵⁸ It seems that the relations between West and East, Nietzsche and Chinese intellectuals, may well indicate two possibilities. Apart from the possibility that Nietzsche developed his system under the influence of traditional Chinese philosophy, as his mentor Schopenhauer was influenced by Eastern ideas such as Taoism as well as Buddhism,⁵⁹ it is also possible that the cultural context of nineteenth-century Europe fostered a certain philosophical idea. With the dehumanisation of industrialisation, the corruption of religious authority and rationalism as opposed to romantic individualism, Nietzsche's deep concern for the problem of human existence and values in a transitional time may have many similarities with the concerns of Chinese intellectuals as China was a nation in moral and spiritual crisis as well as political and economic turmoil.

Admittedly, Zhu's encounter with Nietzsche may show these possibilities, as with other Chinese intellectuals of the May Fourth era, but on closer examination, we may discern Zhu's original interpretation of Nietzsche's conceptions. By the mid-1920s when Zhu became interested in Nietzsche, Nietzsche's theories had for almost a decade inspired writers such as Shen Yanbing 沈雁冰 (Mao Dun 茅盾), Li Shicen 李石岑, Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Li Dazhao 李大釗, Lu Xun 魯迅 and so on. According to Gálik, they mainly drew from Nietzsche a passion for the individual infused with a strong Darwinist influence:⁶⁰ "shortly after Ch'en Tu-hsiu [Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀] and Lu Hsün [Lu Xun], values, in particular "ethical" and "aesthetic" values, became forgotten in China. The vision of a happy future of social and political progress dimmed everything else. The important aspect of material existence overshadowed the not less important aspect of inner life."⁶¹ In Gálik's

⁵⁸ For instance, according to Raoul D. Findeisen, the Nietzsche whom Lu Xun read was the cultural critic rather than the philosopher and Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927)'s interest in Nietzsche could be seen as pessimistic. See Raoul D. Findeisen, "The Burden of Culture: Glimpses at the Literary Reception of Nietzsche in China," *Asian and African Studies*, vol. 6 (1997), p. 77 and p. 84.

⁵⁹ See Christopher Janaway, "Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's Educator," in Christopher Janaway ed., *Willing and Nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's Educator* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

⁶⁰ See Marián Gálik, "Nietzsche in China (1918-1925)," *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur und Völkerkunde Ostasiens*, vol. 110 (1971), pp. 46-47.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

view, Chinese intellectuals invariably failed to understand Nietzsche's concept of Übermensch [overman].⁶² Hence it was inevitable that some bias and distortion resulted.⁶³ Gálik maintains that Nietzsche's overman cannot be explained in terms of Darwinism for the overman "at any rate cannot be dissociated from the conception of Überwindung, of overcoming. Only the man that overcomes himself can become an overman."⁶⁴ As a consequence, "the will to power," as W. Kaufmann observes, "is a striving which cannot be accurately described either as a will to affect others or as a will to realise oneself: it is essentially a striving to transcend and perfect oneself."⁶⁵ Therefore "Nietzsche does not use the words "noble," "strong" in their currently accepted sense, but as expressing the inner substance of life."⁶⁶ It is probably on this point that Zhu differed significantly from many other Chinese intellectuals.

As Jaroslav Průšek suggests, if "subjectivism and individualism, joined with pessimism and a feeling for the tragedy of life, along with an inclination to revolt and even the tendency to self-destruction, are the most characteristic qualities of Chinese literature from the May Fourth Movement of 1919 to the outbreak of war with Japan,"⁶⁷ then Zhu appeared to be relatively calm. In terms of the way he set up Lida Academy and his views of life expressed in the letters he wrote to Chinese youth, Zhu was more interested in seeking balance and harmony in one's inner life despite the crisis of reality. This led him to Nietzsche in a different way from these iconoclasts in China.

⁶² Although in Gálik's article and many other places, 'superman' is still used to denote the German term Übermensch, 'overman' will be used throughout this thesis as the translation of Übermensch as 'superman' may cause misunderstanding. Über is the German equivalent of the prefix over- or trans-. One of the examples of prefixed words is Überwindung [overcoming]. It is also because the meaning of the Übermensch in Nietzsche's works is that human beings need to overcome themselves and combat nihilism.

⁶³ See Marián Gálik, "Nietzsche in China (1918-1925)," p. 13.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

⁶⁵ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (New York: Meridian Books, 1966), p. 215.

⁶⁶ Marián Gálik, "Nietzsche in China," p. 24.

⁶⁷ Jaroslav Průšek, *The Lyrical and the Epic: Studies of Modern Chinese Literature*, ed. by Leo Ou-fan Lee (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 3.

While Zhu studied the cultivation of the individual mind to improve society, Nietzsche was "a passionate believer in the capacity of the human mind to undergo fundamental change and in the possibility of seeing things - all of life, all of history, all of men's relations with each other and with nature - in a fundamentally new way."⁶⁸ While the sublimation of the emotions formed the key point of Zhu's view of life, for Nietzsche, "art served to prepare for the emergence of a sensibility and manner of life reflecting the highest potentiality of human beings."⁶⁹ Both Nietzsche and Zhu held a view of life that accepted reality as imperfect on the one hand and embraced it wholeheartedly on the other.

In 1928, Zhu graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a Master of Arts Ordinary degree.⁷⁰ After a short period of further study at University College, London (UCL), he went on to Strasbourg University, where he started to read for his doctoral dissertation on the psychology of tragedy. The thesis was developed from a paper entitled "Pleasure in Tragedy" which he read in 1927 to a discussion group of advanced students in psychology at the University of Edinburgh. His professor of psychology, Dr James Drever was so impressed that he suggested Zhu extend the paper into a thesis.⁷¹

It seems that Zhu's intellectual inclination and especially his view of life became clarified in the process of his study of theories of tragedy, which marked a turning point in his intellectual life.⁷² The reason Zhu gave for taking a special interest in theories of tragedy was that "tragedy is infused through with a deep sense of fate, yet it exalts strenuous efforts and heroic resistance. It shows the greatness and nobility of man at the very moment when it depicts his feebleness and his insignificance. There is in it an unmistakable note

⁶⁸ J. P. Stern, *A Study of Nietzsche* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 47.

⁶⁹ Richard Schacht, "Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900)," in Robert Audi ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999 2nd ed.), pp. 616-617.

⁷⁰ In Scotland this was and still is the equivalent of a B.A. in England. Zhu followed a three-year general arts curriculum and did not take the degree with Honours, which required a fourth year. See *Graduates in Arts 1928*, Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh. Located in the Special Collections Division of Edinburgh University Library. No publication date and not paginated.

⁷¹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Preface," *The Psychology of Tragedy* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1987), p. 1.

⁷² See Zhu Guangqian, "Zhongyiben zixu" 中譯本自序 [Writer's preface of Chinese version], *Beiju xinlixue* 悲劇心理學 [The psychology of tragedy] (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1983), in *QJ*, vol. 2, p. 209.

of pessimism and melancholy, and yet it inspires and uplifts us with its profound truth, magnificent poetry and heroic grandeur."⁷³

In studying theories of tragedy, Zhu encountered the writings of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and Nietzsche. Zhu found Nietzsche's theory of tragedy especially inspiring because he could identify with it more intrinsically than with other theories such as that of Schopenhauer. Zhu pointed out that although both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche held similar propositions that while "art reflects life, art is an escape from life," Nietzsche surpassed Schopenhauer by "regenerating life in the wake of artistic events with a higher form of vitality and humanity."⁷⁴ Unlike Schopenhauer who understood tragedy as the depiction of the worthlessness of life and artistic contemplation as the resignation of individual's will-to-live, Nietzsche combined an individual's will as a resource of pain in life with the experience obtained in art and treated the pain as a dynamically interactive element.

Zhu explained that this is because "Nietzsche makes the distinction between the universal primordial will which is reality and the individual objectification of will which is phenomenon. The primordial will which animates the individual wills is always in the state of change: its being consists in becoming ... In the perpetual destruction of individual wills we can see the eternal force of the primordial will, for destruction always leads to regeneration."⁷⁵ In this discussion, Zhu distinguished Nietzsche's concept of tragedy from Schopenhauer's and claimed that Nietzsche's theory "is the utmost antithesis and antipode to a pessimistic philosopher"⁷⁶ like Schopenhauer. Impressed by Nietzsche's aesthetic justification of life, Zhu declared that "life, though eternally rooted in pain, is after all worth living, when you regard it with the eye of an artist."⁷⁷

⁷³ Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 21.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Nietzsche's affirmative attitude towards life reassures Zhu's view of life which derived from the Confucius notion of *zhi tianming* 知天命 [knowing Heaven's Will or the Mandate of Heaven]⁷⁸ and the Taoist notion of *qiwu* 齊物 [the equality of things].⁷⁹ Similar to Nietzsche who warned that when human beings used their energy for "egoistic aims of individuals and peoples, then we realise that in that case universal wars of annihilation and continual migrations of peoples would probably have weakened the instinctive lust for life to such an extent that suicide would have become a general custom,"⁸⁰ Zhu regarded the pains in life as human being's own consciousness of self-importance which caused an off-balance with nature and asserted that "we are not born into this world for pleasure and happiness; we are here to live a life following our heavenly endowed nature."⁸¹ In this sense, Zhu's thinking was implemented by human active involvement as he also emphasized that "the happiest event in one's life is the achievement of success after diligent effort. If the world were flawless and perfect, one would not enjoy one's own creative success."⁸²

While Roger Ames observes an analogy between Nietzsche's "field and focus" relationship of self and the cosmos and the Chinese traditional concept of *dao-de* 道德 [the Way and its virtue], he points out that "*de* [personal virtue] is a means of interpreting *dao* and making it determinate and unique. Hence, it is discriminatory. But it is also a principle of synthesis and integration. While *de* is most often used to define *dao* as a particular focus, this focus is elastic, and can be extended from its centre even to the extent of embracing its whole."⁸³ In the Confucian social and political model of humanity,

⁷⁸ To know the Mandate of Heaven is to follow the Way embedded in human nature and to cultivate one's personal life by perfecting the universal virtues of wisdom, humanity and courage. See *the Doctrine of the Mean*, 20, in Wing-tsit Chan trans. and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 104-107.

⁷⁹ Zhu Guangqian, "Tan rensheng yu wo" 談人生與我 [About life and the self], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* (1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 58-59.

⁸⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, in Walter Kaufmann trans. and ed., *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: The Modern Library, 1992), 96.

⁸¹ Zhu Guangqian, "Tan rensheng yu wo" [About life and the self], in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 58.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁸³ Roger T. Ames, "Nietzsche's 'Will to Power' and Chinese 'Virtuality' [*de*]: A Comparative Study," in Graham Parkes ed., *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, p. 137.

personal activity is consciously directed at integration with one's community, but humanity starts from individuals. As the *Analects* states, "to discipline oneself and practise ritual action is to realize one's humanity ... one's humanity emerges out of oneself: how could it emerge out of others?"⁸⁴ In this regard, "the particular person is the focus, and the community is the field. As the pattern of one's relationships is extended and deepened, one becomes increasingly definitive of humanity."⁸⁵ "It is the person who extends *dao*, not *dao* that extends the person."⁸⁶

Taoism, which shares the same cultural origin as Confucianism,⁸⁷ illuminates the relationship of *dao* and *de*, or the world and the self. Zhuangzi holds that "this man and this kind of *de* will enfold all things within itself as one."⁸⁸ And this oneness, according to Ames, "is the coherence discernible in the concrete particular rather than some systemic unity. It is a harmonious order, a regularity, a discernible pattern that is emergent in the process of existence which brings coherence to diversity, oneness to plurality, similarity to difference."⁸⁹ Based on Ames' interpretation, it is highly probable that Zhu was able to adopt Nietzsche's system without having to negate his concept of will to power because of underlying affinities between the Chinese traditional view of humanity held by Zhu and Nietzsche's view of humanity. Zhu was able to integrate his own general view with Nietzsche's. As Zou Shifang 鄒士方 and Wang Desheng 王德勝 observe, "Zhu's attraction to Nietzsche was more spiritual than philosophical; it was his strong Confucian spirit that

⁸⁴ *Analects*, 12:1, quoted from Roger T. Ames, "Nietzsche's 'Will to Power' and Chinese 'Virtuality' [*de*]: A Comparative Study," p. 139.

⁸⁵ Roger T. Ames, "Nietzsche's 'Will to Power' and Chinese 'Virtuality' [*de*]: A Comparative Study," p. 139.

⁸⁶ *Analects*, 15:29, quoted from Roger T. Ames, *ibid.*

⁸⁷ The divergence between Taoism and Confucianism does not lie in humanist inclination but distinctive methods of how humanity is realised. As Hall and Ames observe, "The focus of Taoism is to understand humanity from the perspective of the unfolding pattern of existence, while the Confucian direction is to pursue an understanding of all existence from the human perspective." See David Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (New York: SUNY Press, 1987), p. 57.

⁸⁸ Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi*, in Burton Watson trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 33.

⁸⁹ Roger T. Ames, "Nietzsche's 'Will to Power' and Chinese 'Virtuality' [*de*]: A Comparative Study," p. 138.

led him to Nietzsche." Zou further argues that "this spiritual link was based on a common desire to elevate human life from the ethical to the aesthetic."⁹⁰

Nietzsche's aesthetic attitude towards life was embodied in the dynamic duality of the Dionysian and the Apollonian.⁹¹ Similarly, Zhu's aesthetic attitude towards life belonged to a harmonious unity of action and tranquillity. The similarity between the two approaches brought Zhu closer to Nietzsche, from whom he drew not only intellectual but also emotional inspiration. In the Dionysian, Zhu noted that "man gives full rein to his primitive instincts, and abandons himself with his fellow-revellers to riotous orgies of wine, song, dance and sexual licence." Once human beings are engaged in such ecstatic art "in a state of mind akin to drunkenness," "all barriers between man and man are broken, and once more man becomes one with nature and sinks himself in the mysterious primordial unity."⁹²

Zhu's notion of action, which is originally based on the Mencian concept of *jinxing* 盡性 [fulfilment of one's nature],⁹³ fulfils the purpose of illuminating the true value of human life as expressing feelings through creative activities. Combining the concept of *jinxing* with Nietzsche's Dionysian power, Zhu found an aesthetic perspective to life and, at the same time, a psychological aspect to art, namely empathic emotion [*yiqing zuoyong* 移情作用]. This empathic emotion later became a part of his basic aesthetic theory later. On the other hand, from the Apollonian, Zhu saw the other side of human beings: "thoughtful, conservative and rational." In the state of intellectual harmony, Zhu says, human beings "take a quiet though intense delight in contemplating the beautiful appearance of the dream world. The follies of men, the tricks of fortune, indeed the whole Divine Comedy of life, pass before him like entrancing shining pictures. The sight gives

⁹⁰ Zou Shifang 鄒士方 and Wang Desheng 王德勝, *Zhu Guangqian, Zong Baihua lun* 朱光潛, 宗白華論 [On Zhu Guangqian and Zong Baihua] (Hong Kong: Xianggang xinwen chubanshe 1987), p. 26.

⁹¹ For a detailed assessment of Nietzsche's duality of the Dionysian and Apollonian, see Peter Putz, "Nietzsche: Art and Intellectual Inquiry," in Malcolm Pasley ed., *Nietzsche: Imagery and Thought, A Collection of Essays* (London: Methuen, 1978), pp. 18-21.

⁹² Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 138.

⁹³ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dong" 談動 [About 'action'] (1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p.13.

him delight and liberates him from the pain of becoming."⁹⁴ By creating a world of images "in the state of rapt repose," human beings "value above all things measured limitation, harmony, freedom from wider emotions, and philosophical calmness."⁹⁵ It seems that Nietzsche's idea of the Apollonian was again in tune with Zhu's notion of tranquillity (tranquil observation). Tranquillity is a state of mind without practical interests and focuses on images. In this moment, one can come to apprehend nature and a sense of beauty.⁹⁶

In his interpretation of Nietzsche's concept of the duality of the Dionysian and the Apollonian, Zhu asserted that while Dionysian art involved human beings subjectively, "Apollonian art objectifies the Dionysian feelings and holds them before the mind's eye as pictures." In other words, "opposed in spirit as they are, they are yet complementary each of the other."⁹⁷ He also set his own notion of action and tranquillity to this type of interactive relationship. He attributed the beauty of life equally to creative action and aesthetic contemplation. However, Zhu was not interested in Nietzsche's metaphysics, neither did he seem to be affected substantially by Nietzsche's speculation of Dionysian art as escape from the pain of being or Apollonian art as escape from the pain of becoming.⁹⁸ Rather he was interested only in the ethical consequences of the two spirits and their function in artistic appreciation. Therefore Zhu conceived the unity of the Dionysian and the Apollonian in aesthetic contemplation in a more positive light. As suggested by Zhu, the Apollonian, in uniting with the Dionysian, elevated human beings from a lower to higher state of mind. "Dionysus, the prototype of the tragic hero, is a symbol of the primordial suffering as well as of the primordial unity. Touched by the magic wand of Apollo, he is redeemed from suffering and becomes an Art-God."⁹⁹

It was the concept of action and tranquillity in association with Nietzsche's Dionysian and Apollonian powers that formed the foundation and boundary of Zhu's study of

⁹⁴ Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 139.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan jing" [About 'tranquillity'], in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 15.

⁹⁷ Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 140.

⁹⁸ See Peter Putz, "Nietzsche: Art and Intellectual Inquiry," p. 20.

⁹⁹ See Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 142.

aesthetics in the years to come. Affinities between his ideas and those of Croce and Nietzsche are definite and far-reaching in the sense that a new humanist way of seeing the world unites in their theories despite their different backgrounds. However, as soon as a theory turns to abstract speculation, Zhu avoided its way of thinking.

Although Zhu began his study of aesthetics from as early as 1927, two years after he arrived in Europe, he was later to claim in the preface of his book, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), that he "had never dreamed of taking the road of aesthetics."¹⁰⁰ He explained that he began to study aesthetics because his interest in literature, psychology and philosophy logically led him to it. "Because I liked literature, I had to study literary criticism as well as art and life, art and nature, content and form, language and thought; because I liked psychology, I had to study the relations between imagination and feelings, the psychological activities of artistic creation and appreciation, and individuality of taste; because I liked philosophy, I had to study Kant, Hegel, Croce and so on. In this way, aesthetics naturally became the medium for these studies."¹⁰¹

However, Zhu's analysis ignores the fact that his continuing emphasis on humanity and emotional transformation for a better society since the early 1920s may well have contributed to his adoption of the study of aesthetics. The subjects he chose, the philosophers he preferred and his letters to Chinese youth show that by this time this move to his study of aesthetics was not purely for academic reasons. His constant attention to ethical affairs in China on the one side and humanist theories in the West on the other side seemed to echo with each other around a certain category of intellectual inquiry.

¹⁰⁰ Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zibai" [Writer's preface], in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 200.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER IV

Aesthetic Theory as Aesthetic Experience

4.1. Zhu's Pragmatic Approach to Aesthetics

While writing his doctoral dissertation on tragedy at the University of Strasbourg, between 1929 and 1933, Zhu was simultaneously producing his most influential work, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 [The psychology of literature and art] (1936).¹ Zhu claimed that his inspiration for writing a book about aesthetic theories was Professor Delacroix, whose lecture on the psychology of art in Paris led him to the study of Western aesthetic theories.² Although Zhu himself insisted that the book was intended to introduce Western aesthetic theories to China,³ the book shows that he set up his own theoretical system, as he selected particular Western theories to suit his own preferences.

The method that Zhu adopted to deal with aesthetic issues was of induction from facts rather than deduction from pre-conceived premises. In his doctoral dissertation *The Psychology of Tragedy: A Critical Study of Various Theories of Tragic Pleasure* (1933), he provides a critical account of the prevailing European approach to the study of tragedy.

In the first place, tragedy is a concrete thing and not a mere abstract notion. Consequently any adequate discussion of the problem of tragedy must be based on facts, i.e. on the world's masterpieces of tragedy. It is a common mistake, however, among philosophers to start at the wrong end. Instead of building up a theory inductively from a careful examination of the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles,

¹ The first draft of this book was completed in Europe while completing his doctoral dissertation. Zhu Ziqing 朱自清, a renowned writer, wrote a preface for it in London in 1932. After returning to China, Zhu revised it and added five more chapters during the period when he taught using this draft at Qinghua University and Peking University. It was published in 1936. See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zibai" 作者自白 [Writer's preface], *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 [The psychology of literature and art] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 197-198.

² See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zizhuan" 作者自傳 [Writer's autobiography], *Yiwen zatan* 藝文雜談 [Informal talking about literature and art] (Hefei: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 1981), pp. 280-287, in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 4.

³ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zhu Guangqian jiaoshou tan meixue" 朱光潛教授談美學 [Professor Zhu Guangqian's talk on aesthetics], *Meiyu* 美育, nos. 1 and 2 (1981), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 533 and "Guanyu wo de Meixue wenji de jidian shuoming" 關於我的美學文集的幾點說明 [Some explanations to my *Collected Essays on Aesthetics*], *Shulin* 書林, no. 1 (1982), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 566.

Shakespeare, Racine and other great tragic poets, they deduce it *a priori* from some pre-conceived philosophical system. They set out with a major metaphysical premise, and, to prove it, they give tragedy as a particular instance. But in doing so, they use that very premise to explain the nature of tragedy, forgetting that it is the premise itself which requires demonstration.⁴

In other words, Zhu argues that the problem with a major metaphysical premise is that the premise itself has not been proved to be true and thus requires demonstration. However, since human beings are restricted within their own physical form, they can never prove, but can only assume, the truthfulness of a metaphysical premise; for Zhu, this is unreliable. In particular, he notes that those theories which have major metaphysical premises as points of departure tend to be "ill at ease when they descend from Heaven and try their strength at individual concrete problems," because these theories depend on "an abstract logical notion of causality." However, "in a world like ours where every event is inextricably related to an infinite mass of other events and where the whole determines the parts, there are no more isolated solitary causes than there are isolated solitary effects."⁵

Therefore, concrete and describable instances that are factually related are more reliable sources for a general truth, whereas deductions *a priori* from pre-conceived premises are, for Zhu, mere "phantoms" and cannot be trusted. Zhu claims that if he followed "an abstract logical notion of causality," he would end up "taking sides with one or the other and be left with no middle course." However, he believes that "truth lies elsewhere" - namely in the overlapping area where the different schools refuse to compromise. Zhu thus sees it as necessary for him "to form a comprehensive synthetic view in which prejudices are wiped out and contradictions reconciled."⁶

Following this approach, he asserts in the preface of *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936) that his intention is to "discard every philosophical prejudice and treat artistic creation and appreciation as psychological facts from which theories are drawn inductively

⁴ Zhu Guangqian, "Chapter I Introduction: Definition of the Problem and a Forecast of Our Programme," *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

to be applied in literary criticism."⁷ Zhu's focus on psychological facts and distinctive in-depth study of aesthetics, as Wen Rumin observes, was unusual and unique in 1920s and 1930s China because most critics and theorists at that time concentrated more on literary reviews and debates than on theoretical study of literary criticism, and their approaches were dominated by abstract deduction based on metaphysical premises.⁸

Zhu's words in the introduction of *The Psychology of Tragedy* and the preface of his *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學, indicate that Zhu made a conscious effort to develop his methodology before starting his theoretical inquiry. This effort shows that his underlying attitude was moulded in China and encouraged by the intellectual transition in 1920s Europe.

On the one hand, Zhu's pragmatic methodology of preferring facts to pre-conceived premises can be linked to traditional Chinese modes of thinking. According to Chung-Ying Cheng, unlike Western philosophical traditions that were inclined to pursue ontological being, the traditional Chinese philosophy searched for a balanced relationship between nature and human beings, and whole and part.⁹ In light of this approach, all knowledge starts from "the primordial existential situation of a human person when he finds himself in a network of relationships. A human person in such a network finds that he is related to other persons and things in the world, to nature (heaven and earth) and to the world as a *whole* (including things he may not understand)."¹⁰ From the same perspective, Hall and Ames also point out that it is through the process of interrelating with other individuals and the world as a whole that human beings make sense of human society. Classical Chinese philosophy, in particular Confucianism, is "more concerned with an explication of the

⁷ Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zibai" [Writer's preface], *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 197.

⁸ See Wen Rumin 溫儒敏, "Zhu Guangqian: zhijue lun meixue jianjia zhong de piping lilun" 朱光潛: 直覺論美學間架中的批評理論 [Zhu Guangqian's literary criticism embodied in the aesthetic theory of intuition], *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue piping shi* 中國現代文學批評史 [A history of modern Chinese literary criticism] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1993), pp. 249-250.

⁹ See Cheng Chung-ying, "Chinese Metaphysics as Non-Metaphysics: Confucian and Taoist Insights into the Nature of Reality," in Robert E. Allinson ed., *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 167.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

activities of specific persons in particular contexts," and does not propose any knowledge beyond human events.¹¹

On the other hand, the philosophical transition of methodology in 1920s Europe provided an encouraging environment for Zhu to implement his practical approach. After decades of rationalist influence in the West under which reason was predominant over the senses, *a priori* over *a posteriori*, deduction over induction, the 20th century schools of philosophy shared a common feature of drifting away from those uncertain and "nebulous assumptions about the ultimate nature of existence" and "disputable hypotheses of metaphysics."¹² Under the achievements of science in physics, biology, physiology and psychology, the modern philosophical schools tended to give priority to the process of events and hence incorporated all the facts in their theorisation.¹³ Moreover, modern pragmatism from America, which represents this theoretical trend, was exerted on "the reciprocity of theory and praxis, knowledge and action, facts and values."¹⁴ This indicated a new perspective of human experience in the Western mind. At the same time, experience is construed as "the ongoing transaction of organism and environment, i. e., both subject and the object are constituted in the process" of interrelating,¹⁵ in many ways resembling traditional Chinese thought.¹⁶

These two intellectual backgrounds in methodology, namely traditional Chinese thought and the newly developed inclination towards inductive and empirical studies in Europe, provided Zhu with a significant opportunity for the development of his study of aesthetics. Although Zhu never overtly acknowledged this environment, or may not even have been conscious of it, the fact that he was able to adopt the prevailing theories of

¹¹ See David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*, p. 15.

¹² William Listowel, *Modern Aesthetics: A Historical introduction* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967), p. xi.

¹³ See *ibid.*

¹⁴ Charlene H. Seigfried, "Pragmatism," in Robert Audi ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999 2nd ed.), p. 730.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ For a comparative study of pragmatism and Chinese traditional thinking, see David Hall, *The Uncertain Phoenix* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), pp. 169-228.

aesthetics as the constituent parts of his aesthetic theory, allows the possibility of some theoretical connections.

As Sabattini argues, it can be seen that Zhu's proposal to maintain a 'middle course' when confronting various aesthetic theories in order "to form a comprehensive synthetic view in which prejudices are wiped out and contradictions reconciled,"¹⁷ is eclectic.¹⁸ However, Zhu defended his attitude in *The Psychology of Tragedy* (1933), which he wrote at around the same time as he wrote the first draft of *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), by saying the following:

The enjoyment of tragedy is a complex phenomenon to which no single cause can be assigned as sufficient. This explains the fact that, though none of the previous theories of tragedy can be taken as satisfactory, yet almost every one of them has some grain of truth in it. They are not so much false as inadequate. The realisation of this fact has led us to the conviction that the best way of studying the problem of tragic pleasure is to examine impartially previous theories and sift out what is true in each of them.¹⁹

Methodologically, Zhu's open-mindedness appears to correspond to the *Doctrine of the Mean* which assumes that all diversities are polarised and yet interrelated, and thus mutually implementing, based on the traditional Chinese conception of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽.²⁰ In the *Doctrine of the Mean*, "the Way of Heaven and Earth may be completely described in one sentence: they are without any doubleness and so they produce things in an unfathomable way. The Way of Heaven and Earth is extensive, deep, high, brilliant, infinite and lasting."²¹

¹⁷ Zhu Guangqian, "Chapter I Introduction: Definition of the Problem and a Forecast of Our Programme," *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 9.

¹⁸ Mario Sabattini believes that Zhu Guangqian's synthetic approach to various theories is eclectic and he seems to disagree with Zhu's method. See Mario Sabattini, "'Crocianism' in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's *Wen-i hsin-li-hsüeh*," *East and West*, vol. 20, nos. 1-2 (March-June 1970), p. 179. For an account of Zhu's eclecticism, see also Bonnie S. McDougall, "The View from the Leaning Tower: Zhu Guangqian 朱光潛 on Aesthetics and Society in the Nineteen-twenties and Thirties," in Göran Malmqvist ed., *Modern Chinese Literature and its Social Context*, Nobel Symposium No. 32 (Stockholm, 1977), p. 76-122.

¹⁹ Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 9.

²⁰ In David Hall's study, "*yin* does not transcend *yang*, nor vice versa. *Yin* is always 'becoming *yang*' and *yang* is always 'becoming *yin*;' night is always 'becoming day' and day is always 'becoming night.'" See David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*, p. 17.

²¹ *The Doctrine of the Mean*, 1, trans. by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p.

Adopting this traditional Chinese methodology, Zhu planned, in his book *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學, to establish an aesthetic system that accommodates both philosophical and psychological theories regardless of where they are from and how controversial they may be, as long as they are reliable concrete aesthetic phenomena.²² That is to say, he would look at theories in terms of aesthetic facts, rather than aesthetic facts in terms of theories.

4.2. Aesthetic Experience as the Starting Point

After justifying the decision to base his theory on concrete facts instead of abstract premises, Zhu started his study of aesthetics by giving priority to an examination of particular aesthetic experiences. Zhu stated:

As psychology is the science of mind as well as of external behaviour, introspective evidences should never be ignored ... In aesthetic response especially, one can never do away with the subjective element. ... Any aesthetic theory without some personal aesthetic experience as its basis would be nothing short of dishonesty.²³

To define an aesthetic experience, he first provided some examples which would pave the way for further conceptualisation. He observed that aesthetic experience was actually a series of psychological activities which occur when we appreciatively contemplate natural scenery or an artistic work. He gave the following example: on a warm sunny day with a soft breeze, one may feel relaxed. Then one may see a bright and colourful world: flowers smiling at the sun, birds singing clear and melodious songs. Zhu explained that the beautiful image that forms in the beholder's mind at this moment brings them to an emotional enlightenment, that is, an aesthetic experience.²⁴

109.

²² See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuoze zibai" [Writer's preface], *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 197.

²³ Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 12.

²⁴ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 205.

The same experience can also be achieved in art and literature according to Zhu. He argued that "when one reads the lines of Wang Wei's 王維 (701-760) poem *xing lan ti niao huan, zuo jiu luo hua duo* 興闌啼鳥換, 坐久落花多 [at dusk, the chirping birds disperse, after sitting for a while, many flowers fall], one feels that one is in the same position as Wang Wei and appreciating this tranquil atmosphere."²⁵ This is also an aesthetic experience. Zhu could see and, through his examples, indicated that aesthetic experience achieved either through the appreciation of natural scenery or through art involves a number of psychological moments: the moment of perception, the moment of intuition and the moment of contemplation. Zhu observed:

If one feels something is beautiful, it is because one can see a concrete image or a fresh picture with the mind's eye. This image or picture will suddenly occupy one's whole consciousness, enabling one to focus one's attention on contemplating it, so much so that one temporarily forgets other things normally related to it.²⁶

Nevertheless, why human beings are suddenly able to attain a state of pure contemplation and how this is related to other psychological moments require further investigation.

At first, Zhu believed that Croce's notion of 'intuition as expression' could solve this problem, although he found later that the underlying differences between Croce's and his fundamental approaches lay in the constant and dynamic interrelation of theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge in human beings who are comprehended as an organic being. Before he recognised these differences, Zhu seemed to be convinced by Croce's theory in which the human way of knowing the world comes in two forms, one intuitive [*zhijue de* 直覺的], the other logical [*mingli de* 名理的]. While the former covers knowledge of particulars or images, the latter covers universals or concepts. In Croce's system, the intuitive way of knowing is synonymous with aesthetic activity and regarded

²⁵ Ibid., p. 206. The title of the poem by Wang Wei is "Cong Qi wang guo Yang shi bie ye ying jiao" 從岐王過楊氏別業應教 [Written at the prince's command on the occasion of the prince of Qi's visit to officer Yang's villa], in Wang Wei comp., *Wang Youcheng ji jianzhu* 王右丞集箋注 [An annotated collection of Wang Youcheng] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), p. 115.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 209.

as the autonomous degree of experience. Croce claims that from this point, human beings undertake a spiritual mastery of the world which constitutes humanity.²⁷

Most likely because of Croce's affirmation of this-worldliness and the psychological role of human beings in aesthetic experience, Zhu was confident to apply Croce's concept of 'intuition as expression' to aesthetic phenomena which are differentiated from conceptual thinking and involve nothing but image.²⁸ For instance, a plum blossom may stimulate three different attitudes. Thinking of its name, biological category, shape, features, growing conditions and growth period is a scientific attitude. Thinking of its usage and commercial value for the purpose of either trading it for profit or presenting it as a gift is a utilitarian attitude. However, differing from these two attitudes which apply logical thinking, an aesthetic attitude treats the plum blossom as a pure and isolated image, appreciating and contemplating it disinterestedly [*wu suo wei er wei de guanshang* 無所爲而爲的觀賞], because what interests the aesthetic beholder is neither the characteristics nor the value, but the beauty of the plum blossom.²⁹

Zhu argues that because the consciousness of the beholder is fully occupied with a whole but simple image, the beholder forgets not only the relational reality but also his own self: "in pure intuition, there is no consciousness of self."³⁰ Subsequently, the image achieved in aesthetic experience becomes an independent and autonomous world. However, Zhu's notion of intuition in aesthetic experience appears to be preceded by his intellectual maturation. Although this concept was clarified some years later after he returned to China,³¹ it seems that he took it for granted that intuition which produces the image in aesthetic experience implies epistemological and practical unity. This is shown in several of his remarks.

²⁷ See Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. by Douglas Ainslie (London: Transaction Publishers, 1995), pp. 1-23. Also see Angelo Crespi, *Contemporary Thought of Italy* (London: William and Norgate Limited, 1926), pp. 70-73.

²⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 209.

²⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

³¹ See Chapter V-3 and V-4 of this thesis.

In one place, he maintained that what differentiates human beings from other living creatures is that human beings not only follow the psychological pattern of stimuli [*ciji* 刺激], perception [*zhijue* 知覺] and reaction [*fanying* 反應], but, more importantly, are able to retain perceptions in the mind and to treat them as images. Zhu thought that the ability of 'introspection' [*fanxing* 反省] played a significant role in the process of aesthetic experience. In Zhu's account, "the ability of introspection is to hold back the instincts from reacting to stimuli and instead contemplate the perceived. It is this ability of human beings that creates the beginning of human civilisation, such as science, philosophy, religion, art, and politics."³² The problem here is that this ability to introspection is applicable only on empirical grounds, as Zhu claims that if introspection is "to contemplate an object as an image" during the process of perception, then the image must constitute the unity of the object perceived and the feeling expressed.³³

While intuition in Croce's theory excludes the interference of other knowledge such as scientific, economic and moral concepts from an epistemological point of view, Zhu's concept of intuition, on the other hand, assumes other knowledge such as perception and conception as its content. It therefore indicates the involvement of perception and conception as assistants to attain a sense of beauty in the course of aesthetic experience.

Zhu's practical and empirical tendency is further revealed in another passage. Zhu used a Taoist concept to present his comprehension of aesthetic intuition as if the Taoist concept accommodates Croce's notion of intuition, and vice versa. Compared to the Confucian ideal, Zhu seemed to think that the Taoist concept of intuition was more able to fit the perfect unity of the subject and the object, human beings and nature.

This connection with Taoist tradition rather than Confucianism, which appears to prevail in Zhu's theory, may require some justification, since the two seemingly different ways of attaining the unity of human beings and nature may merge under one tradition. The reason for this is that both Confucians and Taoists uphold the ideal of personal

³² Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 211.

³³ See *ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

cultivation by means of intellectual maturation. Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 points out that in achieving an elevated state of mind [*jingjie* 境界], the Taoist idea in *Zhuangzi* "philosophically and historically epitomises the emergence of aesthetic subjectivity in China."³⁴ Thus Taoism, as Wu Kuangming observes, "single-handedly influenced the Chinese aesthetic experience more than anyone else."³⁵ On the other hand, Confucian tradition "swung between aesthetic subjectivity and moral subjectivity, namely the goodness of benevolence (*ren* 仁) and righteousness (*yi* 義) largely overpowering the former."³⁶

As a result, in order to prove the aesthetic experience as a moment of "disinterested contemplation" [*wu suo wei er wei de guanshang* 無所爲而爲的觀賞]³⁷ of an image which involves an elevated state of mind, Zhu chose to cite Laozi 老子's words by saying "*wei xue ri yi, wei dao ri sun* 爲學日益, 爲道日損 [the pursuit of learning is to increase day after day. The pursuit of the *dao* 道 [the Way] is to decrease day after day]."³⁸ Zhu accordingly stated that to achieve aesthetic experience, one has to increase awareness of the *dao* which makes intuitive image possible by decreasing intellectual knowledge. The more one learns, Zhu claimed, the less easy it is to concentrate on the image itself. In consequence, it is more difficult to achieve a real and pure sense of beauty.³⁹ Paradoxically, however, it is intellectual knowledge that enables human beings to make a deliberate effort to increase awareness of the *dao*.

As Sabattini emphasised, the difference between Croce's concept of intuition and Taoist intuition lies in the fact that whereas the former is something one begins with, the

³⁴ Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, *Zhongguo yishu jingshen* 中國藝術精神 [Spirit of Chinese aesthetics], quoted in Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, p. 93.

³⁵ Kuang-ming Wu, "Chinese Aesthetics," in Robert E. Allinson ed., *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots*, p. 236.

³⁶ Zhang Jiemo 張節末, "Daochan dui rujia meixue de chongji" 道禪對儒家美學的衝擊 [The impact of Taoist Zen on Confucian aesthetics], in *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究, vol. 9, (1998), p. 55.

³⁷ This is Zhu's own translation. Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 211

³⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 210 and *Dao de jing* 道德經 [The Book of the Way and its virtue], 48., trans. by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 162.

³⁹ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 210.

latter is something one ends with.⁴⁰ He explains that, in Taoist terms, the intuition in aesthetic experience is substantiated with knowledge. It is knowledge of "a deeper sort, a 'knowledge that is not knowledge' which may be obtained only by long preparation and spiritual training. The ignorant person is incapable of achieving absolute happiness, identifying himself with *dao* and thereby intuitively understanding the real essence of things, because he is still sunk in his habitual existence, still fettered to certain instinctive reactions that can remove him from truth, and still exposed to all the dangers inherent in social life."⁴¹

However, this knowledge of a deeper sort does not mean that a long preparation and spiritual training would transcend the intellectual knowledge in the aesthetic experience. Since human beings and nature are considered in both Confucian and Taoist doctrines to be a holistic entity and nature as in a flux of change, every phase of self-cultivation, including a state of deepened subjectivity in aesthetic experience, is carried out in the dynamic process of uncertainty. Accordingly, aesthetic experience as intuitive knowledge and other intellectual knowledge must continuously interact with each other.

Although Laozi's notion of forgetting knowledge and the consequent elevated state of mind seems to be anti-rationalistic, according to Chad Hansen, it designates a negative form of knowing, that is to say "knowing to do the opposite of conventional wisdom" by applying a reversal method.⁴² This means that interaction between the subject and the object does not stop, even at the moment of intuition. Hence, Taoist intuition as a form of knowing, especially in *Zhuangzi*, is still a practical rather than a cognitive process. Hansen explains that "our actions involve constant feedback mechanisms which operate at such speed and accuracy, that they resemble massive parallel processing."⁴³ Hansen draws an analogy between this cybernetic discovery and the traditional Chinese point of

⁴⁰ See Mario Sabattini, "'Crocianism' in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's *Wen-i hsin-li-hsüeh*," p. 186.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

⁴² See Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 224-225.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

view that "focuses on guiding behaviour. The mind receives reality-feedback inputs and processes them all at once (paralleling processing). The output is not a computational result stored in some memory cell or reported out as information. The output is an action. When we have learned to do anything *like second nature*, we constantly adjust our performance to myriad clues in the environment."⁴⁴

In the same way, aesthetic intuition involves the interchange of data concerning one's intellectual accumulations of knowledge although one may not consciously be making choices. This traditional way of blending cognitive stages of knowledge into an organic whole is present in Zhu's general view. For instance, Zhu's view of life, as discussed in Chapter II,⁴⁵ involves both the practical aspect (*dong* 動 [action]) and the theoretical aspect (*jing* 靜 [tranquil observation or tranquillity]) of human experience. This also shows that his comprehension of the aesthetic experience is based on an interrelated conception. Sabattini therefore maintains that Zhu's concept of aesthetic experience does not mean "an isolated and self-sufficient phenomenon, or ... an ingenuous way of seeing things." He suggests that Zhu's concept also "presupposes a long spiritual preparation that may vary from case to case, but will always directly or indirectly determine its varying degrees of intensity."⁴⁶

In yet another section, Zhu's inclination to treat aesthetic experience as an empirical rather than epistemological category becomes even more apparent. He maintained that image in aesthetic experience is not a static and fixed thing waiting to be contemplated through intuition, but instead is the reflection of the contemplator's personality, emotion and taste. Personality, emotion and taste vary from person to person, time to time and place to place. The image therefore changes accordingly.⁴⁷

Since Zhu looked upon aesthetic experience from the perspective of human beings associated with changing environments, aesthetic experience is no longer an independent

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ See "Chapter II 2.3. Towards a New Philosophy of Life" in this thesis.

⁴⁶ Mario Sabattini, "'Crocianism' in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's *Wen-i hsin-li-hsüeh*," p. 182.

⁴⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 214-215.

and autonomous realm as he had previously thought. Aesthetic experience becomes an embodiment of concrete personality, emotion and taste which intertwines with life in a dynamic manner. Such a relationship implies co-operation with other experiences to form a unity of aesthetic phenomenon. Accordingly, so-called artistic intuition becomes a kind of feeling of harmonious relation between contemplative human beings and the object perceived. Zhu's realisation and acceptance of the correlation of these components in aesthetic experience suggest an inseparability of theoretical activity from practical activity or, to be more specific, intuition from perception, conception and other human knowledge.

For Croce, intuition is independent and autonomous at any cognitive stage of human life. "Intuitive knowledge has no need of a master, nor to lean upon any one; she does not need to borrow the eyes of others for she has excellent eyes of her own."⁴⁸ As far as Croce is concerned, intuition is conceived to be the most basic cognitive mode of human spirit and does not stand in a reciprocal position with other cognitive activities.

In Zhu's theory, however, theoretical activity and practical activity are interrelated and the image can vary because of differences of personality, taste and emotion. If personality, taste and emotion are closely associated with one's theoretical as well as practical activities, then intuition that creates the image in aesthetic experience cannot be perceived only as an *a priori* or fundamental cognitive form. Accordingly, intuition in aesthetic experience has to be in constant exchange with other knowledge in order to produce an image that contains the wholeness of one's personality, taste and emotion.

In other words, aesthetic experience is a process through which image is created by intuition with the help of perception, conception and other knowledge. Zhu claimed:

Non-artistic image is not aesthetically synthesised. As a result, it is thrown into chaos and shows a tendency to sudden mental or emotional instability. This is normally called 'fancy' [*huanxiang* 幻想]. Artistic image that is aesthetically synthesised, on the other hand, can develop from chaotic images to become an organic entity, that is, a unity of variables. This is normally called 'imagination' [*xiangxiang* 想像]. Non-artistic image is formless whereas artistic image has form,

⁴⁸ Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. by Douglas Ainslie, p. 2.

which is the creation of the mind through communication with the object.⁴⁹

Although Zhu may have been inspired by Croce, his understanding of aesthetic experience was not in accordance with Croce's. This is because Croce's notion of intuition is based on dualistic epistemology and is considered as a primitive and independent stage of knowledge. In addition, Croce's concept of subjectivity appeared to be inconsistent with Zhu's aesthetic theories, since Zhu's Confucian and Taoist inclination did not separate subjectivity for a moment from objectivity. In his evaluation of the intellectual origins of Zhu's thinking, Sabattini also emphasises the characteristics of Chinese thought: "the Chinese conception of reality allows for no distinction between Man and Nature, between theoretical and practical activity, between thought and action. In his inner development, the individual moves *pari passu* with the organisation of society and the events of the Cosmos in accordance with the laws regulating the harmony of the Whole ... This involves an intimate union between thought and its practical expression, to such an extent that these two stages seem logically indivisible."⁵⁰ As a result, Zhu repeatedly showed variation away from Croce's theory of pure knowledge as Zhu could not help relying on the Chinese monistic view in order to rectify Croce's division of intuition and other cognitive ways of human knowledge.

It is worth noting that, by the time he reached Chapter Six of *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), he shifted his attention to a wider category of artistic activity which possessed reciprocal relationships with other cognitive activities. This is not, however, a drastic change. The notion of aesthetic experience as intuition of image [*xingxiang de zhijue* 形象的直覺] as an isolated phenomenon gradually evolved to the notion of artistic activity as expression of emotion through a dynamic process, which seemed more suited to the deeper structure of his thought.

⁴⁹ Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 354.

⁵⁰ Mario Sabattini, "'Crocianism' in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's *Wen-i hsin-li-hsüeh*," p. 185.

4.3. Psychological Theories for Aesthetic Experience

Zhu's approach to aesthetic experience as a process of constant exchange between emotion and rationality, perception and conception, led his theory to the modern empirical psychology which was inclined to study human consciousness and behaviour, inner experience and outer experience, as an organic whole. Modern psychology tended to base its discourse of the psychic state of individuals on a presupposition of previous experiences since to empirical psychologists, experience offers facts which appear to them to be the only way to approach human affairs.⁵¹ In relying on psychological data, Zhu believed that he could eliminate passive sensual feelings from aesthetic experience and thus establish the dominant position of reflective emotions. Subsequently, he would be able to mend the flaw in Croce's notion of intuition although, according to Sabattini, Zhu's corrections to some of Croce's key concepts "demolish the very foundations of Croce's theory."⁵² However, as Wang Yuxiong maintains, from Zhu's point of view, Zhu would rather respect psychological facts than be restricted by philosophical prejudice.⁵³ In Zhu's own words, "when 'plurality of causes' appears admissible, we shall not falsify concrete experience by sticking to a particular abstract dogma that we have no interest to serve."⁵⁴ Zhu may have "demolished" the foundation of Croce's system, but Zhu was nevertheless studying aesthetic phenomena and trying to prove their credibility with what he believed to be sound evidence. Therefore, it could be argued that Zhu's apparent misunderstanding of Croce's theory of intuition paradoxically served to partly develop his own theory of aesthetic experience. As for the theoretical incompatibility between Zhu and Croce's notions, Zhu simply turned away from it to locate some more theories for support.

⁵¹ See Thomas Hardy Leahey, *A History of Psychology: Main Currents in Psychological Thought* (Englewood Cliffs (N. J.): Prentice-Hall, 1987 2nd ed.), pp. 13-25.

⁵² Mario Sabattini, "'Crocianism' in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's *Wen-i hsin-li-hsüeh*," p. 180.

⁵³ See Wang Yuxiong, "Buju xialou, zhanghuang youmiao - chongdu Zhu Guangqian xiansheng de *Wenyi xinlixue*" 補苴罅漏, 張皇幽渺 - 重讀朱光潛先生的《文藝心理學》 [Mending the flaws to illuminate the profundity - Reread Zhu Guangqian's *The Psychology of Literature and Art*], *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究, vol. 6 (1989), p. 57.

⁵⁴ Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 10.

For Zhu, aesthetic experience is a complex process which involves all the qualities of the beholder such as personality, taste and emotions within a social context. To illuminate every aspect of the beholder as an organic whole being, Zhu adopted three psychological theories of the 20th century, namely, 'Empathy' [Einfühlung; *yiqing zuoyong* 移情作用], 'Inner Imitation' [*nei mofang* 內模倣] and 'Psychical Distance' [*xinli de juli* 心理的距離].

4.3.1. Empathy: Emotional Sympathy for Aesthetic Experience

Zhu maintained that one derives perception, feeling, will and action only in the context of one's own life experience and peculiar circumstances. To gain knowledge of others' perceptions, feelings, will and action, one has to subjectively draw an inference from one's own personal experiences.⁵⁵ He borrowed an example from *Zhuangzi* to explain the subjectivity of one's knowledge of the outside world:

Zhuangzi and Huizi were taking a leisurely walk along the dam of the Hao River. Zhuangzi said, "The white fish are swimming at ease. This is the happiness of the fish."

"You are not a fish," said Huizi. "How do you know its happiness?"

"You are not I," said Zhuangzi. "How do you know that I do not know the happiness of the fish?"⁵⁶

Zhu found that the psychology of empathy or aesthetic sympathy [Einfühlung; *yiqing zuoyong* 移情作用] as expounded by Theodor Lipps (1851-1914)⁵⁷ explained the phenomenon of emotional projection which presupposes personal experience. According to the psychology of empathy, aesthetic experience is purely a psychological event in which human feelings such as pride, melancholy, or longing are projected into an object which expresses human spiritual life.⁵⁸ This means that beauty exists solely in the contemplative

⁵⁵ Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 235.

⁵⁶ *Zhuangzi*, Chapter 17, trans. by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 209-210; See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 235.

⁵⁷ Theodor Lipps (1851-1914) is a "German philosopher, particularly interested in psychology and aesthetics. ... He is best known for his concept of 'empathy' which he used in his theory of knowledge and which played a central part in his aesthetics." Thomas Mautner, *Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 318.

⁵⁸ See Theodor Lipps, *Asthetick, Psychologie des Schönen und der Kunst*, vol. II, in William Listowel,

mind at the aesthetic moment when the mood and feelings of the contemplator vibrates sympathetically with the object.

Regarding the subjectivity of the aesthetic subject, Lipps insists that aesthetic enjoyment is not enjoyment of an object, but enjoyment of a self; it is an immediate feeling of a value that is lodged within oneself. "This is not a feeling that is related to an object. Rather, its characteristic consists in this ... that there is no separation in it between my pleased ego and that with which I am pleased; in it both are one and the same self, the immediately experienced ego."⁵⁹ For Lipps, the aesthetic character of an object is not "a quality of the object, but rather an activity of our ego, an attitude we adopt towards it, a particular way of envisaging it, of observing it, of hearing it, of interpreting it."⁶⁰

Yet Zhu explained the mechanism between the subject and the object during the course of aesthetic experience in his own way, a way that not only showed his intellectual tendency towards dynamic holism but also differed from the conception of Lipps: instead of illuminating the subjectivity of the aesthetic subject by devaluating the function of the object, Zhu chose to concentrate on the reciprocal relationship between the two. On the one hand, he held that the reason why human beings feel that nature also has life and emotions is because they psychologically project their own emotions onto the object they perceive. So, "when we are happy and joyous, mountains and rivers smile with us; when we are sad, flowers and birds are also gloomy; when we part with friends, candles weep; when we reunite with friends, green mountains nod with joy."⁶¹ On the other hand, from the animated [*shengminghua* 生命化] or personalised nature in Zhu's words we can also be emotionally affected: "feeling exuberance by looking at leaping fish and flying birds, and in awe when facing a lofty mountain or the vast sea." Even when we are in a bad mood, we can recover with the remedy of aesthetic appreciation. "Majestic bamboos and clear

Modern Aesthetics: A Historical introduction, p. 60.

⁵⁹ Theodor Lipps, "Empathy, Inner Imitation, and Sense-feelings," in Morris Weitz ed., *Problems in Aesthetics: Book of Readings*, (London: Collier Macmillan, 1970 2nd ed.), pp. 375-376.

⁶⁰ William Listowel, *Modern Aesthetics: A Historical introduction*, p. 57.

⁶¹ Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 237.

creeks ease our emotional pain; Beethoven's 5th symphony lifts up our low spirits. This interflowing of human beings and the object [*wu wo jiao gan* 物我交感], the mutual vibration [*huxiang huihuan zhendang* 互相回還震蕩] of human life and that of universe, derive from empathy [*yiqing zuoyong* 移情作用].⁶²

In affirming the initiative and projective vitality of the emotions with the help of the psychology of empathy, Zhu seemed to be cautious of the trap of absolute subjectivity. He let in the element of mutuality between human beings and the object in the sense that human beings voluntarily seek a relationship with the universe. Zhu stated:

As one contemplates an ancient pine one may project one's own spirit of sincerity and courage to the pine on the one hand, and conversely, may be affected by its peculiar features of huskiness and forcefulness on the other hand.⁶³

As Kuang-ming Wu maintains, such mutual constitution of the subject and the object in aesthetic experience can only be realised in polar motion. He writes: "as *counterparts* are constitutively involved, the form and the content, the natal and the actualised, and the like, realise their self-referential unity and consistency. It is then dispersed, and then realised again, in a dancing rhythm."⁶⁴ It can be seen then that empathy of aesthetic experience in Zhu's theory is not a matter of illusion independent of associative thinking, but more like a reflective state of mind which constantly communicates with past experience in the process of communicating with the aesthetic object. As Zhu further suggested, "the significance of an aesthetic object should be in direct ratio with the contemplator's cultural background; the well-cultivated sees more while the poorly-cultivated sees less."⁶⁵ That is to say, personal experience and thus personal feelings play an important role in aesthetic experience because the former is directly responsible for the success or failure of an aesthetic experience.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 233.

⁶⁴ Kuang-ming Wu, "Chinese Aesthetics," in Robert E. Allinson ed., *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots*, p. 239.

⁶⁵ Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 238.

It seems that this holistic empirical approach kept the distance between Zhu's own theory and empathy psychology, probably without his realisation. Although most empathy psychologists hold the view that perception and emotion, the object perceived and the feeling expressed by it, constitute an indivisible unity, they reject the dynamic recurrence between the two.⁶⁶ Unlike Lipps and his supporters, Zhu regarded personal feelings as a legitimate position in aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience in Zhu's theory not only involves subconscious infusion with nature in a broad sense, but also conscious interchanging with nature in a narrow sense.

This is probably why Zhu continued his conceptualisation with apparently inconsistent evidence. For instance, Zhu agreed with Richard Müller-Freienfels (1882-1949), who allowed two attitudes towards aesthetic experience: the participant [Mitspieler; *fenxiangzhe* 分享者] and the contemplator [Zuschauer; *pangguangzhe* 旁觀者]. These two attitudes represent the extreme attitudes of almost exclusively emotional and almost exclusively contemplative appreciation in art. Zhu stated that while the participatory type, like the Dionysian in Nietzsche's words, interprets art in the light of personal feelings expressed in music or dancing, the contemplative type, like the Apollonian, holds back and retains a cool observation of beauty found in art such as painting and sculpture.⁶⁷

Although Zhu did not dismiss emotional involvement with the object perceived and still believed that emotional sympathy and emotional detachment as two types of aesthetic experience are both able to attain a lofty realm within their own states of minds, he nevertheless did not hide his preference for the reflective mode of tranquillity or, simply, intellectualism [*lizhi* 理智].⁶⁸ He argues that, in the state of emotional sympathy [*zai ganshou qingqu shi* 在感受情趣時], joys and sorrows, hatred and love, remain

⁶⁶ See Katharine Everett Gilbert and Helmut Kuhn, *A History of Esthetics* (New York: Dover, 1953), pp. 538-539.

⁶⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 248.

⁶⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, *Shi lun* 詩論 [On poetry] (Chongqing: Guomin tushu chubanshe, 1943), in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 61.

antagonistic feelings, whereas in the state of tranquil appreciation [*zai chenjing zhong de huiwei shi* 在沉靜中的回味時], these conflicting feelings are elevated to a detached artistic attitude. Therefore, "from emotional sympathy to tranquil appreciation, there is an elevation from reality to the poetic realm, from the utilitarian attitude towards the aesthetic attitude."⁶⁹ That is to say, when an image [*yixiang* 意象] is infused with feelings and becomes an aesthetic object, the weakness of the empathic state is not rejected, but transcended. It can be seen then that aesthetic experience is primarily based on emotional sympathy of the object and then, through reflective contemplation, attains an image. Zhu holds that his approach stemmed from Nietzsche's notion of the antagonistic drives of Dionysus and Apollo, claiming that image [*yixiang* 意象] is like Apollo, while emotion [*qingqu* 情趣] is like Dionysus. It is the Apollonian that illuminates the objects of the world in their serenity and redeems the Dionysian from the feelings of pain through the beautiful images.⁷⁰

Another way to understand Zhu's apparently ambiguous attitude towards emotion as the necessary condition for aesthetic experience and tranquillity as the conqueror of emotion is to set his theory against his Chinese background. In Wang Yuxiong's view, Zhu's approach is based on Chinese traditional thinking patterns, that is, from personal experience to intuitive apprehension, from intuitive apprehension to introspective tranquil self-questioning. These three stages present a self-recursive integral system evolving with constant realisation of the truth of life.⁷¹ In other words, feeling and knowing are perceived to be opposite in the sense that they unite in synthesis at a higher level. The correlative relationship between tranquil introspection and emotional sympathy in aesthetic experience also follows the pattern set up in Zhu's own view of life. Action [*dong* 動] and tranquillity [*jing* 靜] dialectically interchange for a better life. Action informs tranquillity with ever-changing emotions and tranquillity plays the role of reaching deeper insights

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 64.

⁷⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

⁷¹ See Wang Yuxiong, "Zhu Guangqian lun shenmei duixiang: 'yixiang' yu 'wuyi'" [Zhu Guangqian's discussion of the aesthetic object: 'image' and 'object B'] (1997), p. 8.

into life which, by turn, are actualised in practical human activity. This is the dynamic pattern of human life that Zhu had tried to illuminate and seemed also to have pursued in his notion of aesthetic experience.

4.3.2. Inner Imitation: the Vitalistic Dimension of Aesthetic Experience

In Zhu's theory, as observed earlier, the polarities of human activities are not treated as an antagonism but as reciprocal processes following traditional Chinese thinking. According to Hall and Ames, apart from the typical conceptual polarity which requires related concepts to co-exist, each necessitating the other for adequate articulation, the mutual interconnection of human beings and nature as it is maintained in Chinese philosophy requires an attitude of treating human beings and nature as being constitutive of each other.⁷² In this way, human reactions to the world must be of a two-way character: projecting and receiving. Therefore, in an effort to complement Lipps' theory of the relationship between emotion and the object, Zhu introduced the psychologist Karl Groos' concept of inner imitation [*nei mofang* 內模倣], which emphasises the participatory aspect of empathy.⁷³ Zhu noted that Groos defines the aesthetic experience as 'sympathetic and symbolic imitation' in terms of physiology, assuming that pleasure accompanies this. In Groos' estimate, when one thinks of a tall pine-tree, one sweeps one's eye up and down its length, and out to the ends of its branches; and if one is forbidden to use one's eye muscle, then one cannot think of the visual image. In short, human beings perceive an object in space by carrying out its motor suggestions; more technically expressed, by virtue of a complex of motor impulses aroused by it; more briefly, by imitating it. Therefore, aesthetic contemplation is inner imitation.⁷⁴

Zhu thought that while Lipps' empathy illuminated the aspect of the self animating and humanising of the object, Groos' inner imitation revealed the other aspect of the self

⁷² See David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), pp. 17-18.

⁷³ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 245-247 and p. 264.

⁷⁴ See *ibid.*, pp. 255-268.

being symbolically reminded of past experience before reacting accordingly.⁷⁵ He defended Groos by saying that "when 'motor images' [*yundong de yixiang* 運動的意象] such as 'standing high' [*songli* 聳立], 'soaring up' [*tengqi* 騰起] and 'physical resistance' [*chuli dikang* 出力抵抗] appear in the memory, past experience of motor movements is at least partially revived. ... Such bodily change will be inevitably reflected in consciousness and, as a result, influence aesthetic experience."⁷⁶ This approach is echoed in Ames and Hall's comments on the Chinese concept of reflecting. "*Ssu* 思 [reflecting] is not exhausted by its psychical dimension. That is, it does not exclude the physiological apparatus involved in the process of reflecting. We would argue that in the Chinese tradition generally, and with respect to *ssu* specifically, the psychical and physiological are perceived as aspects of a continuum."⁷⁷

However, Zhu was also careful not to go to the other extreme, namely to give physical response full credit for aesthetic experience. He made it clear that aesthetic experience is primarily charged with emotions, and bodily or visceral response acts as an accompaniment to or stimulus of emotional changes. He criticised the James-Lange theory for neglecting the 'affective side' [*qing de fangmian* 情的方面] of emotional feelings and treating the emotions merely as a perceptual result.⁷⁸ For instance, William James' observation that it is bodily feelings [*shenti qiguan ganjue* 身體器官感覺] that emotionalise the consciousness, leads him to conclude that emotions or emotional states are the effect rather than the cause of bodily reactions.⁷⁹ Zhu, however, insisted that an impression has to affect our emotions before bodily changes can take place. He argued that bodily feelings presuppose psychological activity, which means that it is emotional

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 257.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 265. The English term 'motor image' for *yundong de yixiang* 運動的意象 is used by Zhu Guangqian himself in the text.

⁷⁷ David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*, p. 47. For an estimation of the body function in the process of thinking, see Roger Ames, "The meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Philosophy," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 24 (1984), pp. 39-54.

⁷⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 260-261.

⁷⁹ See William James, "What is an Emotion?," *Mind*, vol. 19, no. 34 (Apr 1884), pp. 188-205. Also, see *ibid.*

feelings that cause bodily feelings but not vice versa: without emotional feelings, bodily change would not occur.⁸⁰

Zhu's adherence to the emotional character of aesthetic experience either in the case of the subject to the object or in the case of the object back to the subject derives, according to Wang Yuxiong, from a Chinese traditional attitude towards humanism [*renwen jingshen* 人文精神]. He maintains that Zhu respected humanity because human beings, in Chinese traditional culture, are considered as the centre of heaven and earth. Human beings take an active part in world changes and act as the driving force in the whole process of cultural development. Thus, sophistication in humanity does not rely on an external power such as God, but on human beings themselves through the emotional cultivation of personality [*yiqing yangxing* 頤情養性].⁸¹ It is in this sense that Zhu registered the overwhelming power of emotional feelings in aesthetic consciousness, as only emotional feelings account for that human substance which differentiates human beings from mere animals. It seems then that Zhu endeavoured to retain an adequate equilibrium in respect to the dynamic organism of the human world by accepting the psychic aspect of aesthetic experience (as emphasised in Lipps' concept of empathy) as well as the physiological aspect of aesthetic experience (as accommodated in Groos' notion of inner imitation).

4.3.3. Psychological Distance: Adequate Balance as Fulfilment of Aesthetic Experience

Maintaining balance or equilibrium was constantly adhered to by Zhu as his method of approaching the formulation of his views of life, literature and philosophy. In the same manner, he tried to find the middle course in his study of aesthetics, not as a compromise but as harmony between the antithesis of reason and emotion, the psychological and the physiological, the utilitarian and the contemplative, the subjective and the objective.

⁸⁰ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 261.

⁸¹ See Wang Yuxiong, "Zhu Guangqian lun shenmei duixiang: 'yixiang' yu 'wuyi'" 朱光潛論審美對象: '意象'與'物乙' [Zhu Guangqian's discussion of the aesthetic object: 'image' and 'object B'] (1997), p. 11.

Zhu was impressed with Edward Bullough's (1880–1934) theory of 'psychical distance' [*xinli de juli* 心理的距離], although Bullough's theory did not attract much attention in the West.⁸² Zhu was convinced that Bullough's theory not only represented an appropriate criterion for literary criticism, but also offered an adequate explanation for aesthetic experiences.⁸³ He thus enthusiastically introduced Bullough's concept of psychical distance into his own system, claiming that the differences between idealism [*lixiangzhuyi* 理想主義] and realism [*xieshizhuyi* 寫實主義] in art would effectively dissolve once their defenders came to grips with the principles of psychical distance.

Although Bullough's theory is based on the presumption that the success of aesthetic experience lies in a psychic effort to maintain an aesthetic stance to the object by "putting it out of gear with our practical needs and ends,"⁸⁴ Bullough does not neglect the ambivalent relationship between emotion in aesthetic experience and its genetic link with real life. "Distance ... is obtained by separating the object and its appeal from one's own self. ... But it does not mean that the relation between the self and the object is broken to the extent of becoming 'impersonal' ... in the sense in which we speak of the 'impersonal' character of Science. ... On the contrary, it describes a *personal* relation, often highly emotionally coloured."⁸⁵

Bullough explicitly accepts that "a work of Art has the more chance of appealing to us the better it finds us prepared for its particular kind of appeal. Indeed, without some degree of predisposition on our part, it must necessarily remain incomprehensible, and to that extent unappreciated."⁸⁶ This apparent contradiction, which Bullough calls "the

⁸² References to Edward Bullough's psychological insight are invariably brief and sketchy in Western histories of psychology and aesthetics. For instance, in William Listowel's *Modern Aesthetics: A Historical introduction*, Bullough's concept of psychical distance, apart from being given merely one paragraph, is said to be "neither spatial nor temporal, but purely mental which is completely divorced from the normal outlook." (p. 98) Zhu was attracted to this theory because he did not seem to stop at the aesthetic moment, but evaluated the whole empirical process which enabled the distancing of the contemplative subject and the aesthetic object. Bullough's theory provided the psychological evidence needed for Zhu's holistic interpretation of aesthetic experience.

⁸³ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 225 and pp. 216-217.

⁸⁴ Edward Bullough, "Psychical Distance as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle," *British Journal of Psychology*, vol. 5, part 2 (1912/1913), p. 91.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

antinomy of Distance," between the self which is the product of a personal experience, and the aesthetic object which acquires distanced contemplation, is reduced to spatially and temporally dynamic relationships in favour of an empirical psychology.

On the one hand, Bullough makes it clear that aesthetic experience is not an absolute value attained *a priori*, but "stands in direct proportion to the completeness with which it corresponds with our intellectual and emotional peculiarities and the idiosyncrasies of our experience."⁸⁷ Such flexibility in personal experiences extends to its spatial and temporal sense. Psychological distance may vary according to an individual's capacity to maintain a greater or lesser degree of difference in taste or temperament. Even the same individual may differ from time to time due to different moods or intellectual progress.⁸⁸

On the other hand, Bullough allows such variable subjectivity to interrelate with objectivity, saying that psychological distance "admits naturally of degrees, and differs not only according to the nature of the *object*, which may impose a greater or smaller degree of Distance,"⁸⁹ but both "the actual spatial distance" and "the temporal remoteness" of a work of art also help produce Distance for the contemplator to develop a better appreciation of it. Therefore, Bullough concludes, there exists "two different sets of conditions affecting the degree of Distance in any given case: those offered by the object and those realised by the subject." Bullough particularly emphasises that "in their interplay they afford one of the most extensive explanations for varieties of aesthetic experience."⁹⁰

At this point of equilibrium where the subjective and the objective are reciprocally united, Zhu seemed to identify with his own dynamically organic approach. In his theoretical system, the fact that Zhu chose to furnish Croce's notion of intuition against Croce's intention with psychological instances such as empathy and inner imitation led Zhu to a theory which mediates the apparent antagonism between the subject and the object

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁸⁷ Edward Bullough, "Psychical Distance as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle," *British Journal of Psychology*, vol. 5, part 2 (1912/1913), p. 92.

⁸⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 92-94.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 94 and 96.

not in absolute idealism, but in dynamic holism. Croce's idealist theory of aesthetic experience yields an absolute value. As Croce remarks, "the beautiful does not possess degrees, for there is no conceiving a more beautiful, that is, an expressive that is more expressive, an adequate that is more than adequate."⁹¹

Yet Bullough's psychical distance, in accommodating variable degrees of Distance due to variable states of mind, environments and circumstances, allows relative values which, in turn, allude to an empirical intellectualism. For Zhu, psychical distance is not just a psychological phenomenon but, more importantly, the manifestation of one's intellectual cultivation. According to Zhu, what makes the artist and the poet different from ordinary people is that they are able to keep a distance from their crude feelings to reflect them as detached observers. Zhu added:

Those capable of appreciating a drama are more of a composed onlooker than an emotionally involved participant, because only the composed onlooker who keeps personal emotion curbed is able to see, for example, the whole plot of a drama by carefully examining the details, evaluating the relationship between these details and analysing the reasons behind the development of the characters.⁹²

Zhu argued that, although this may appear too rational to be an aesthetic pleasure, it nevertheless paves the way for the image in the artistic piece to appear more distinctively. As a consequence, the beauty of a work of art becomes more accessible and thus the aesthetic pleasure achieved from it is more powerful.⁹³

This seems to imply that for Zhu, aesthetic experience is a process of conscious knowing (*jing* 靜 [tranquillity]), resulting in intuition of image. This process of knowing plays a decisive role in the success of an aesthetic experience. Accordingly, it is the knowing state of mind which keeps the contemplator from being distracted by their personal emotion and, more importantly, elevates them not through emotion but through rationalisation to the intuitive state of mind. It does however strike one that Zhu mixes perception [*zhijue*

⁹¹ See Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. by Douglas Ainslie (London: Transaction Publishers, 1995), p. 79.

⁹² Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 251.

⁹³ See *ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

知覺], conception [*gainian* 概念] and intuition [*zhijue* 直覺] in such a way that it is difficult to split them. In fact, he continued to tread the path of traditional Chinese thinking, which is that body and mind, theory and praxis, human beings and nature, are perceived as developing within the dynamically interrelating process. Therefore, knowing and intuition do not perform in successive cognitive stages, but perform interchangeably in the same psychological process: as Zhu admitted, the three forms of epistemology, namely intuition, perception and conception, cannot be treated separately in concrete experiences.⁹⁴ He maintained that during the course of aesthetic experience, one's emotions keep interflowing and communicating with the aesthetic object through which human beings and nature merge into a whole.⁹⁵

Zhu established a structure of aesthetic theory in Europe based on Croce's concept of intuition as expression, Lipps' empathy, Groos' inner imitation and Bullough's psychological distance. It can be seen that Zhu's peculiar way of organising these theories into his own aesthetic system corresponds to his intellectual propensity. In positively receiving and synthesising these theories, Zhu created an aesthetic theory which incorporated the traditional Chinese way of thinking with modern Western ideas and, consequently, gains a unique perspective with which his epistemological and empirical emphasis on human activity in aesthetic experience is developed.

⁹⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 207.

⁹⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 237.

CHAPTER V

Defining Beauty with Associative Thinking and Morality

5.1. Towards a More Flexible Theory: Associative Thinking

As pointed out in Chapter IV, Zhu Guangqian developed his theory with the intention of illuminating aesthetic phenomena from a psychological perspective. Croce's theory of intuition as expression was regarded as an explanation for the instant of aesthetic experience, independent of other cognitive experiences. However, Zhu also implemented psychological theories such as Lipps's empathy, Groos's inner imitation and Bullough's psychical distance in order to help reconnect severed relationships among the experiences of the human being as a whole.

As Sabattini points out,¹ due to Zhu's lack of a deeper knowledge of Croce's epistemology and thus aesthetics, Zhu made efforts to try to find a compromise with Croce's approach until his knowledge of Croce began to grow in the 1940s. Before he realised the differences between his own theory and that of Croce, however, Zhu struggled to relate Croce's notion of intuition of image as a self-sufficient expression of other human experiences in the context of social life.

In his preface he wrote in 1936 for *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學, Zhu appeared to be convinced that the gap between aesthetic experience as intuition of image [*xingxiang de zhijue* 形象的直覺] and other empirical elements that Croce ignored could be bridged simply by superimposing psychological data onto the former:

I used to be bound by formalist aesthetics inherited from Kant and Croce and believed that aesthetic experience entailed purely the intuition of image and did not involve anything beyond the independent and isolated image ... Subsequently abstract thinking [*chouxixiang de sikao* 抽象的思考], associative thinking [*lianxiang* 聯想] and moral sense [*daode guannian* 道德觀念] were all excluded from aesthetic experience. Now I realise that human life is organic and inevitably involves all

¹ See Mario Sabattini, "'Crocianism' in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's *Wen-i hsin-li-hsüeh*," *East and West*, vol. 20, nos. 1-2 (March-June 1970), pp. 179-180.

of human activities of science, ethics and aesthetics. Although these activities can be analysed in a logical sense, they are nevertheless inseparable in real life. Thus what I cannot accept is Croce's mechanistic view of aesthetic experience.²

Throughout the 1930s, Zhu still seemed to support the notion of the disinterestedness of aesthetic experience and was reluctant to abandon Croce's notion of intuition as the epistemological backbone of aesthetics. At the same time, he nevertheless began to make aesthetic experience more concrete and tangible to suit the reality of politically and morally troubled China. In addition to writing numerous essays in which aesthetics was discussed in the context of human life, especially the ethical issues, Zhu endeavoured to revise and complete his representative work, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936). The most noticeable change was the addition of five chapters: Chapters Six, Seven, Eight, Ten and Eleven.³ In the additional chapters, 'associative thinking' [*lianxiang* 聯想] and moral sense, which he had previously rejected, were accepted as significant elements within the process of artistic activity.⁴

In *Tan mei* 談美 [Talking about Beauty] in 1932, Zhu insisted that although 'associative thinking' [*lianxiang* 聯想] is the base for art-related perception and imagination, it disturbs one's aesthetic appreciation of art because it leads one to associate one artistic image with another and then move from the second image to another image, becoming ceaseless disordered thinking.⁵

During the moment of aesthetic experience, one focuses only on the isolated image itself; no associative thinking occurs. Once the isolated image is interrupted by associations, the beholder becomes distracted from the image and ... as a result, the unity of the image disintegrates.⁶

² Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zibai" 作者自白 [Writer's preface], *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 198.

³ According to Zhu, Chapter Nine: Natural Beauty and Natural Ugliness was a part of the first draft. See *ibid.*, pp. 197-198..

⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 197.

⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, *Tan mei* 談美 [Talking about beauty] (1932), in *QJ*, vol. 2, pp. 34-35.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

He argued that during the course of aesthetic experience, one should concentrate on the image itself. Associative thinking would most likely distract the contemplator from the image and lead them to a series of irrelevant perceptions that happen to be associated with the image concerned.⁷

In order to explain the role of associative thinking in the process of aesthetic experience, Zhu gave the example of the following *ci* 詞 poetry written by Niu Xiji 牛希濟 (?-925 AD):⁸

Chun shan yan yu shou, Tian dan xing xi xiao. Can yue lian bian ming, Bie lei lin qing xiao.	春山煙欲收， 天澹星稀小。 殘月臉邊明， 別淚臨清曉。
---	--------------------------------------

Yu yi duo, qing wei liao, Hui shou you chong dao. Ji de lu luo qun, Chu chu lian fang cao.	語已多，情未了， 回首猶重道。 記得綠羅裙， 處處憐芳草。
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The spring mist above the mountains is dissolving,
The sky is tranquil, the stars are sparsely dotted.
The waning moon illuminates her face,
She weeps tears of parting until dawn.

Much has been said,
Love is not done,
She turns her head to say again.
"Please remember this green silk skirt,
Wherever you go cherish the green grass."⁹

⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 35.

⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, *Tan mei* 談美 (1932), in *QJ*, vol. 2, p. 31. Niu Xiji 牛希濟 was born in Longxi 隴西 in Gansu 甘肅 province. He was a nephew of Niu Qiao 牛嶠 (850? - 920?) whose *ci* poems are also included in *Huajian ji* 花間集 [Among the flowers collection]. Niu Xiji became a member of Hanlin Academy [Hanlin xueshi 翰林學士], and President of the Board of Censors during the Earlier Shu 蜀 dynasty. "When the Earlier Shu dynasty fell to the later Tang dynasty (923-936), Niu Xiji then entered the service of the new dynasty. He was appointed Assistant Military Governor of the area around Chang'an." His eleven *ci* poems are included in *Huajian ji*. See Lois Fusek trans., *Among the Flowers: The Hua-chien chi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 199.

⁹ Niu Xiji 牛希濟, "Sheng zha zi" 生查子 [to the tune "Mountain Hawthorns"], *Huajian ji*, compiled by Zhao Chongzuo 趙崇祚 (934-965) and annotated by Li Baomin 李保民 et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), p. 232. The translation is modified by myself with reference to the following two translations: Xu Yuancong 許淵衝 trans., *Golden Treasury of Chinese Lyrics Tang Song ci yibai wushi shou* 唐宋詞一百五十首 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1990), pp. 48-49; Lois Fusek trans., *Among the Flowers: The Hua-chien chi*, p. 113.

Zhu claims that in this poem, the reader may be reminded of her/his lover's green dress by the image of green grass, and, from the image of the lover's green dress, the reader can recall the lover's beautiful appearance. These three perceptive images, according to Zhu, do not constitute the state of an ideal aesthetic moment because the other two images, namely the green dress and the lover, were not derived from aesthetic sense but associative thinking. Thus, the other two images distract the contemplator from appreciating the beauty of the green grass itself. On that account, Zhu commented that he favoured the formalist approach, that is, aesthetic experience being derived purely from intuition and excluding any other forms of conception.¹⁰

In fact, however, he had not been able to isolate the aesthetic experience from other cognitive activities such as associative thinking. In particular, Zhu advocated living life in the spirit of art in which participatory and contemplative types were equally recognised as psychologically valid options according to one's personality and taste. Therefore, Zhu believed that it was theoretically impossible to ignore the psychological elements of one's manifold past experiences which caused various cognitive activities during a total aesthetic experience.

Zhu noticed this problem after he returned from Europe in 1933 and began to consider the possibility of expanding the aesthetic experience to make it empirically more acceptable. His more flexible attitude is embodied in the additional chapters of *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in which he regarded artistic activity as a broader concept while retaining aesthetic experience as an instant located coherently in the process of artistic activity.¹¹ Zhu stated that:

Aesthetic experience ... presupposes associative thinking because it helps comprehend the image before aesthetic experience takes place, although those associative connections cannot replace aesthetic experience itself.¹²

¹⁰ See Zhu Guangqian, *Tan mei* 談美 (1932), in *QJ*, vol. 2, p. 35.

¹¹ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 197.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 291.

He considered that by expanding the concept of aesthetic experience, he would be able to integrate associative connections without disturbing the integrity of aesthetic experience.

Accordingly, Zhu started to take into consideration those cognitive and affective factors that might contribute to the achievement of aesthetic experience. He assumed that, as artistic activity is a process of imagination and more than just a moment of intuition, it should involve associative thinking because "the latter functions as the fundamental mechanism for all mental activities, including perception, conception, memory and imagination."¹³ In Zhu's view, in the course of artistic activity, "associative thinking affords the artist or contemplator the opportunity of freedom from the restrictive force of reality" to retrieve a vast array of images that comprehensively echo with the image directly perceived.¹⁴

The best example of this is represented by poetry. Zhu stated that the key quality of a poem lies in its suggestive characteristics which induce associative thinking and thereby deeper sympathetic feelings. Thus, through a limited number of words with the appeal of poetic overtones, a poem leads the reader from the particular to the whole or from the finite to the infinite. A certain feeling is not articulated explicitly but signified sympathetically. It then requires further imagination to approach the meaning of the poem. Thus, he concluded that neither the poet nor the reader would be able to create the beauty of a poem without the assistance of associative thinking.¹⁵

It should be noted, however, that Zhu's acceptance of associative thinking in artistic activity is not unconditional. He agreed with Francis Hutcheson's principle of 'variety in unity' [*yu zaiduo yu zhengyi* 寓雜多於整一]¹⁶ and stressed that associative connections

¹³ Ibid., p. 280.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 280-281.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 287-289.

¹⁶ Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) asserts that the quality which the sense of beauty consistently finds pleasurable is a pattern of 'uniformity amidst variety,' just as the quality which the moral sense invariably approves of is grounded in the fact that humans are so constituted as to care about others and take pleasure in benevolence. See Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of*

must move in the same direction to unification with the image represented. In his discussion, Zhu distinguished between 'fancy' [*huanxiang* 幻想] and 'imagination' [*xiangxiang* 想像] in the process of associative thinking. He borrowed Bullough's concept of 'fused' [*ronghua de* 融化的] and 'non-fused' [*bu ronghua de* 不融化的] to argue that "if those associations do not fuse with the image, they are mere fancies."¹⁷ "Fancies are chaotic, mutable and not incorporated in variety in unity." Therefore, they are unable to harmonise the feeling embodied in the image with the feeling that derives from the fancy.¹⁸

To put the point another way, the relationship between the image represented and those images appearing in fancy is accidental and thus irrelevant. Zhu accordingly eliminated fanciful associations from artistic activity and claimed that they undermine the sense of beauty. On the other hand, associations arising in the imagination are encouraged because they are alleged to be consistent and coherent with the image perceived. Both the image perceived and its resultant imaginative associations interpenetrate each other to form one totality: their relationship is thus internal and necessary.¹⁹ However, it should be noted that Zhu did not make it clear on what basis we are able to decide which are fanciful and which are imaginative associations.

5.2. Sense of Morality in Aesthetic Experience

In *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學, Chapters Seven and Eight discuss moral sense in art.²⁰ Zhu accepted that one's moral sense would inevitably affect one's sense of beauty because these share one life. He held that human beings are both physically and psychologically

the Passion and Affections with Illustrations on the Moral Sense (1728), (Meston, Yorkshire: Scolar Press, 1972).

¹⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 293.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ See Zhu Guangqian, "Di qi zhang: Wenyi yu daode (yi) - lishi de huisuo" 第七章: 文藝與道德(一) - 歷史的回溯 [Chapter 7: Literature, art and morality (1) - historical review] and "Di ba zhang: Wenyi yu daode (er) - lilun de jianshe" 第八章: 文藝與道德(二) - 理論的建設 [Chapter 8: Literature, art and morality (2) - theoretical development], *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 294-325.

organic beings, which means that every part of this being depends on every other part to form an organic whole. Separation of the integral parts of human life would invalidate one's existence.²¹ Zhu presumed that human life as activity involves all sorts of experiences, none of which can be evaluated without reference to the others. In this regard, Zhu asserted that aesthetic experience must cause or have a relation with other experiences in spite of its disinterestedness as intuition of pure image. With this view, moral sense could play a contributory role in human beings' artistic activities and *vice versa*.

If Zhu's presumption that moral sense is able to affect or be affected by artistic activity is sound, one wonders in what way the former is related to aesthetic experience.²² To put it plainly, does moral sense affect aesthetic experience as it does artistic activity? In a similar way to his treatment of associative thinking in relation to artistic activity, Zhu seemed to apply two approaches to aesthetic experience and artistic activity and yet combined them for the convenience of his theoretical assumptions. In Zhu's view, whereas artistic activity is comparatively easily influenced by other experiences, aesthetic experience is somehow capable of separating its link to artistic activity and claims an absolute autonomy in spite of its momentary existence.

As far as aesthetic experience is concerned, Zhu would disagree that it is related to morality. He declared his unreserved faith in Crocian formalism insisting that, during the moment of intuition of an image, one does not have time to ponder the moral value of that image. All one can judge in a novel, for instance, is whether the characters, good and evil, are adequately and artistically depicted.²³

He cited Croce as saying that "since art is not born from the act of will, it likewise is not subject to any moral evaluation, not because an exemption privilege is accorded to it, but simply because no way is available to apply moral distinctions to it. An artistic image can depict a morally praiseworthy or blameworthy action. But the image itself, as such,

²¹ Ibid., p. 315.

²² See *ibid.*, p. 316.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

is neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy, morally. Not only is there no penal code which can condemn an image to prison or to death, but no moral judgment passed by a reasonable person could ever address itself to it as its object. Otherwise, to judge Dante's Francesca immoral or Shakespeare's Cordelia moral ... would be just as valid as to judge a square moral or a triangle immoral."²⁴ Zhu assented to Croce's opinion and claimed that:

In a sense, to see whether an artistic work is successful or not depends on whether or not it is able to divert the reader from his moral sense in order to fully appreciate the image which should be interesting and adequate.²⁵

That is to say, aesthetic experience itself is a self-rewarding activity and thus enjoys value unrelated to any other principles.

On the other hand, Zhu was apparently reluctant to detach art from real life, as this would be against his fundamental principle of art reflecting life and living life in the spirit of art. He asked himself whether aesthetic experience counts as the whole process of either artistic creation or artistic appreciation and expressed doubts as to whether the link between art and life can be fully embodied in the instant of aesthetic experience. In Zhu's view, artistic activity includes the relevant entire process in which "later events are the inevitable result of former causes" [*qian yin hou guo* 前因後果].²⁶ He stated that artistic activity is able to accommodate more empirical variables than aesthetic experience, which does not have the capacity to do so.²⁷

Based on this compromise, Zhu accepted that moral sense may affect an artist or a reader prior to the aesthetic experience, which in turn may affect one's moral sense. It seems that he designated a wider range of such activities in an effort to illuminate his holistic view. Yet he probably overlooked the fact that, by widening the range from aesthetic experience to artistic activity, the former is included in artistic activity. As a result, aesthetic

²⁴ Benedetto Croce, *Guide to Aesthetics*, trans. by Patrick Romanell (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995; 1st ed. 1965), pp. 12-13. See also Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 303.

²⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue*, in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 320.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

²⁷ See *ibid.*, pp. 314-315.

experience is also involved both in its cause and its effect within the field of artistic activity. His two approaches may thus prove to be less than sufficient to justify the actual link between aesthetic experience and artistic activity.

Zhu claimed that the problem with those such as Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) who defended 'art for art's sake'²⁸ lies in their ignorance of the mechanism of artistic creation and appreciation.²⁹ Zhu held that artistic activity is a process that does not focus merely on the moment of aesthetic experience but also involves a long period of preparation preceding the appearance of a perfect image. In the course of the period of preparation, the artist is not only an aesthetic subject but also a person who lives a real life by which they accumulate their experiences through observing and reflecting on things in this reality such as morality, religion, and politics, as well as art. While these activities are not explicitly acknowledged in aesthetic experience, they unconsciously foreshadow a certain tendency towards an artist's aesthetic intuition, which may eventually be translated as an aesthetic object in the form of character or in the tone of mood. Thus, in Zhu's view, for writers and poets such as Shakespeare, Tao Yuanming, Tolstoy and George Bernard Shaw, their respective backgrounds and even their moral attitudes may be assumed consciously or unconsciously from their artistic creations. Zhu believed that because their moral sense is entirely fused with artistic form, their creation does not remind one of any moral ideas apart from the pure image at the moment of aesthetic experience.³⁰

This means that moral sense, just like any other mode of feeling, seeks to express itself in artistic image without the need for conceptual clarification. It is noticeable that, as soon as Zhu addressed the issue of aesthetic experience as an intuitive moment rather than artistic activity in relation to morality, he seemed to return to Croce's notion of intuition

²⁸ Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) was a French poet, dramatist, novelist and literary critic. He sought a new direction for lyric poetry by linking idealism with aesthetics. He thus became an advocate of *l'art pour l'art*, or "art for art's sake"—a belief that art need serve no extrinsic purpose. See Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger eds., *Art in Theory 1815-1900* (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 96-99.

²⁹ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 301-302 and p.316.

³⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 320-321.

as expression. Similarly, Croce also preferred to dissolve various manifestations of human spirit into the moment of intuition, stating that "a work of art may be full of philosophical concepts; it may contain them in greater abundance and they may there be even more profound than in a philosophical dissertation, ... But notwithstanding all these concepts the total effect of the work of art is an intuition."³¹ What intuition reveals in a work of art is not the moral sense but, according to Croce, "its character, individual physiognomy."³²

The problem here is not whether Zhu was correct in confirming aesthetic value, but whether he accepted any possible intervention from various empirical elements such as moral sense to modify the notion of aesthetic experience. In one part of Chapter Eight, Zhu appeared to be more flexible than Croce about this, stating:

Intuition and conception keep swapping data and alternating accordingly in a pattern of continuous line during the course of artistic activity.³³

However, this acknowledged flexibility was inconsistent with the rest of the chapter. As far as aesthetic experience is concerned, according to Zhu, it is nothing more than an intuition of image [*xingxiang de zhijue* 形象的直覺] and does not even have time for conception. What then is the motivation for intuition to swap data with conception? He may argue that artistic activity is a process of composition during which the creator makes conscious choices about a series of images he perceives until a perfect image is attained. Yet he also proposed that the images perceived prior or posterior to aesthetic experience are either chaotic fancies or imaginative associations: whereas chaotic and mutable fancies do not fuse in unity, imaginative associations at best contribute to the achievement of a perfect image but are not the same as aesthetic experience.³⁴ This raises a question about what makes an artist choose a certain image among others as the perfect one.

³¹ Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. by Douglas Ainslie (London: Transaction Publishers, 1995), pp. 2-3.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³³ Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 315.

³⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 291.

Despite his well-developed attempt to consider the influence of moral sense in art, it is more likely that Zhu's view was actually still within the boundaries outlined by Croce. To use Zhu's words, aesthetic experience as pure intuition of a perfect image remains independent from other cognitive processes. Subsequently, one is still left wondering in which way moral sense affects aesthetic experience in the context of the alleged reciprocal processes of artistic activity.

Notwithstanding Zhu's effort to link moral sense to aesthetic experience, it is still difficult to explain the integration of two seemingly irrelevant acts in artistic activity. If aesthetic experience cannot carry any moral message, can it nevertheless affect one morally after it is completed? The general tendency of his answer to this question appears to be ambiguous, although his intellectual inclination is explicit.

Zhu agreed that some artistic products are successful not only in aesthetic excellence but also in delivering moral principles, such as the *Old and New Testaments*, Christian art of the Middle Ages, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Bunyan's *Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Hugo's *Les Misérables*, Tolstoy's novels and the dramas of Ibsen and Shaw.³⁵ He thus accepted that one may have to take into consideration their moral value together with the evaluation of their aesthetic excellence. He quickly added, however, that those which are intended to propagate morality but do not achieve aesthetic excellence would most likely fail in their purpose: "people rarely become more moral upon reading a couple of books which present moral instructions."³⁶ For instance, Wordsworth's "Ecclesiastical Sonnets" written for the purpose of teaching religious doctrine, the didactic poems produced at the end of the 13th century, the propagandistic dramas of the French Revolution, and in China the so-called *Shanshu* 善書 [Morality books],³⁷ such as

³⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 317.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 317-318.

³⁷ These books promote a moral sense that is highly syncretic, drawing values from the classics as well as Taoism and Buddhism. "This type of book, which had made its appearance in the Song period, became much more popular in the Yuan and Ming. Together with the encyclopaedias for daily use, the morality books served a wide public, especially in the late Ming." The best-known representative of this type is *Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇 [Treatise of The Most Exalted One on moral retribution]. See WM. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom comp., *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From*

Yinzhuiwen 陰鷲文 [The silent way of recompense],³⁸ are typical examples of promoting morality at the cost of artistic value. For this reason, "art should not be judged simply by virtue of the authors' moral intention but the aesthetic value which carries the moral emotion."³⁹ In other words, aesthetic value is the vehicle of moral value in the context of works of art but not *vice versa*.

As far as Zhu is concerned, since art reflects life generally, moral sense which derives from life is integrated in one's artistic activity. He noted that "most artistic works of the first class do not necessarily have hidden motives but are nevertheless morally effective." He argued that these works are effective because they "console the feelings, awaken the soul and cleanse the mind by reaching a deeper level of humanity."⁴⁰ It seems that what Zhu questioned is not whether art is able to affect moral sense, but whether it can do more than just promote morality, which he claims is too narrow.⁴¹

With his notion of living life in the spirit of art in mind, Zhu probably endeavoured to enlarge the category of what he believed to be the narrow moral sense of art to embrace the wider moral goodness of art. This step is critical, as it would enable him to unify aesthetic value with moral value once and for all. Zhu claimed:

The task of art is to reflect life sincerely but not to make judgements on it; judgements on life are for ethics to undertake and are not directly assigned to art.⁴²

Following this view, he decided that art should and actually does encompass a much wider and deeper field of human life rather than restricting itself to serve conventional

Earliest Times to 1600, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999 2nd ed.), pp. 899-908. For a more detailed account of the books and the rise of the genre of morality books, see Cynthia Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

³⁸ This is one of the well-known *Shanshu*. The full title of the book is *Wenchang dijun yinzhuiwen* 文昌帝君陰鷲文 [The silent way of recompense of deity Wenchang; also known as The hidden virtues of imperial sovereign Wenchang].

³⁹ Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 317.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 318-319.

⁴¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 246-248 and p. 325.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 311.

morality. Whereas morality in a narrow sense appeals to rationality for social obedience and subsequently restricts feelings, art appeals to the feelings for a truthful love of life. Although the two do not necessarily clash, because moral feelings expressed in art can also be truthful, art, in Zhu's view, aims at expressing the more profound feelings of human beings.

Zhu pointed out that, apart from physical needs such as eating, human beings have spiritual and emotional needs for truth and beauty as well as goodness. He was convinced by his eight years of study of 20th century psychology in Hong Kong and Europe that the encouragement of the separation of other cognitive experiences from artistic experience would result in a deformity of human nature as whole. Such a deformity of human nature can be found in Plato's denial of emotion in favour of rationality. Moral prejudice and hypocrisy, for example, are the inevitable consequences of such suppression.⁴³ Consequently, in accommodating the manifold nature of people's physical, emotional and spiritual needs, art reflects human life in quite a different dimension. Zhu noted:

Human life means activities. The more freedom these activities enjoy, the more meaningful and valuable human life becomes. While economic activities tend to be restrained by the actual environment, artistic activity enjoys disinterested freedom of imagination. In utilitarian activities, human beings are the slave of the environment, but in artistic activity, human beings are their own masters.⁴⁴

Therefore, it is in artistic activity through 'disinterested contemplation' [*wu suo wei er wei de guanshang* 無所為而為的觀賞]⁴⁵ of beauty that human beings are able to express

⁴³ See *ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁴⁵ The term 'disinterested contemplation' was prominently used in Kant's discussion on aesthetic attitude to objects. Kant explains the 'disinterested' attitude as one where the subject is "merely contemplative ... indifferent as regards the existence of an object," and focusing rather upon its 'appearance' or 'representation.' See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1966; originally published in 1790), p. 43. Although, strictly speaking, Kant himself did not employ 'disinterest' to distinguish the aesthetic from the non-aesthetic, but to distinguish, within the realm of what he called the 'aesthetic,' judgements of beauty and sublimity from those of mere pleasantness, Kant's notion of 'disinterest' inspired the most popular approach to aesthetic attitude. For example, Stolnitz "defines the aesthetics attitude as disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of any object of awareness whatever." See Jerome Stolnitz, *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism* (Boston (Mass.): Riverside, 1960), pp. 34-35.

themselves without restrictions and accordingly realise their value as a human being to the full. In terms of humanity, Zhu believed that this contemplation of universal harmony is of the highest morality, namely it is ultimate goodness.⁴⁶

In the words of Zhu, it is art that is responsible for setting up the real and solid foundation of morality by "extending sympathy, enlarging imagination and affording human beings profound and true insights of human life."⁴⁷ In this sense, judgments of art for its moral value have to be attached to judgements of its aesthetic value as well.

By defining art from a wider perspective in order to attain the ultimate goodness or the highest morality, Zhu seemed to believe that he had found the answer for the autonomy of aesthetic experience. However, he did not address in detail in what way the ultimate goodness is achieved. The question remains as to whether the achievement of the ultimate goodness is through artistic activity in the wider sense or through aesthetic experience in the narrower sense, since his theory seems to retain both. If it is through the former, then there is no reason to believe that one's moral sense does not contribute to the attainment of the higher moral goodness in aesthetic experience, as Zhu had already acknowledged that moral sense can affect one's sense of beauty or ugliness.⁴⁸ If one's moral sense does influence one's sense of beauty or ugliness, the notion of aesthetic experience as independent pure intuition of a perfect image should be modified.

At this point, Zhu seems to be in a theoretical predicament, as though he is returning to the stance of Croce's from which he was trying to depart. Nonetheless, it is observable that in comparison with his previous view in Europe, Zhu upheld human artistic activity as an organic whole while he attempted to modify his view of aesthetic experience as an autonomous stage of cognition in the Crocian sense. Zhu maintained that it is through artistic activity that a series of aesthetic experiences and other elements such as psychological reactions and moral sense correlate with each other.

⁴⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 324.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 321.

5.3. Evaluation of Beauty

Relying on the psychological evidence for aesthetic experience as a factual foundation as described in Chapter Four and motivated by his inclination towards the illumination of the social implication of art, Zhu proceeded to give an assessment of what beauty is in the following chapters of *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936).

He was aware of difficulties and contentions in defining the concept because divergent definitions are logically deduced from different philosophical premises. Since his first study of aesthetics from as early as the beginning of the 1920s, he had been determined not to be biased by what he called a 'metaphysical premise,' instead constructing a theory which was grounded on human facts.⁴⁹ This is probably why he commenced his aesthetic theorisation with aesthetic experience in the light of empirical phenomena rather than a definition of beauty as many Western philosophers did. According to Zhu, the evaluation of beauty becomes feasible only after individual concrete problems are clarified. He would rather approve the aesthetic with psychological facts which are tangible and thus verifiable, than with theoretical preconceptions which tend to depend on metaphysics regardless of facts.⁵⁰

Zhu's background of traditional Chinese thinking as well as Western intellectual development in the 20th century led him to tackle the issue of beauty from a practical and organically oriented humanist perspective. Instead of delivering a definition right away, Zhu chose to start by clarifying some facts within the existing conceptions of beauty and undertook to find an appropriate way of evaluating beauty.

First of all, Zhu illuminated the differences between the Western and traditional Chinese modes of thinking. He intended to inform his readers of his intellectual position

⁴⁹ See Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy: A Critical Study of Various Theories of Tragic Pleasure* (1933), p. 6. For a more detailed account of Zhu's criticism of 'metaphysical premise,' see "4.1 Zhu's Pragmatic Approach to Aesthetics," in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

⁵⁰ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zibai" [Writer's preface], *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 197.

to indicate a different point of departure. He remarked that the problem with Western ways of defining beauty as an entity derived from the Western dichotomous mentality which had developed alongside more than a thousand years of Christianity. As nature is conceived to be the incarnation of God, it is set above human reality; human beings worship nature with religious awe.⁵¹ Such a tradition attributes beauty exclusively to nature and, as a result, separates it from the human world.

On the contrary, based on traditional Chinese perspective, Zhu viewed that nature in China is not treated as separate from human beings but rather as interrelated. Zhu stated that in ancient Chinese art and literature, such as *The Book of Songs* [*Shijing* 詩經], nature appeared to be depicted as background or an effective complement,⁵² in order to induce an emotional state in the author and reader. Zhu further stated:

After the Jin 晉 and Tang 唐 dynasties, admiration for nature became more prevalent under the influence of poets, painters and Taoist monks. ... However, Taoist mysticism did not exert substantial influence in China. ... The Chinese attitude towards nature was grounded on the notion of *le tian zhi zu* 樂天知足 [rest satisfied with what you are], according to which human beings are an integral part of nature and should seek mutuality with nature and to live in accord and at peace with it.⁵³

In order to examine the Western attitude towards natural beauty, Zhu introduced two Western theories: naturalism [*ziranzhuyi* 自然主義] and idealism [*lixiangzhuyi* 理想主義].⁵⁴ Zhu pointed out that because Western naturalism and idealism in art draw their theories from the belief that human beings, being finite, are inferior to infinite nature or

⁵¹ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 327.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid. Zhu's comment about Taoism here may invoke criticism as it is common knowledge that Taoism, especially Zhuangzi's notion of nature, does not necessarily set nature above the human world as Western supernaturalism does. Despite the fact that Zhu did not explain what he meant by Taoist mysticism, the term used here may indicate that the principle of Taoism is obscure and incomprehensible to common sense. See for an brief account of Taoism, Wing-tsit Chan trans. and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 177-179.

⁵⁴ The notions of the two theories are not clear as Zhu does not give a conceptual explanation although he mentions that the notion of naturalism used in his account is not the theory in literature which Zola claimed, but an attitude to nature discussed in the book *Introduction a l'esthétique*, (Paris: 1912) by a French critic Charles Lalo. See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 327.

God, they both represent a belief in absolute beauty in nature. In Zhu's understanding, some writers and artists, such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), John Ruskin (1819-1900) and Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) are exemplary of this thought. Ingres, an influential painter of portraits in the nineteenth century, stated that since beauty can only be found in nature, one "must copy what one can see in nature like an idiot or an obedient slave."⁵⁵ Perfect art, for Ruskin, "is to reflect nature in total; only imperfect art tailors nature for the need of the artist."⁵⁶ Rodin also admits his absolute faith in nature, asserting that "for an artist worthy of the name, everything is beautiful in Nature because his eyes, boldly accepting every external truth, read in Nature without effort, as from an open book, every internal truth." For Rodin, therefore, the primal task for an artist is to maintain a firm confidence in nature as a perfect embodiment of beauty. Only when one keeps this principle in mind is one entitled to open one's eyes to observe nature.⁵⁷

Zhu did not agree with these views. From an empirical point of view, he believed that beauty is a relative concept. He first of all found a theoretical fallacy with the naturalist approach and questioned whether beauty in nature is valid without reference to ugliness. He argued that beauty and ugliness are a pair of relative concepts; without the other for comparison, neither exists.⁵⁸ Zhu's argument then indicates that, if beauty exists in opposition to ugliness and each serves the other as a contrast, the purpose of art is not merely to accept nature but to make a choice, and choice designates humane valuation. Zhu suggested that to make a choice about nature in the form of art is actually to borrow a certain part of nature to express one's feeling. Thus, beauty expressed in art is not to be exclusively attributed to nature.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres; quoted from Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue*, in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 328. This is my own translation from Zhu's book as I was not able to find the original text.

⁵⁶ John Ruskin, *Lectures on Architecture and Painting: Delivered at Edinburgh in November 1853* (London: Smith, Elder, 1855), pp. 8-9.

⁵⁷ See Auguste Rodin, *Art: Conversations with Paul Gsell*, trans. by Jacques de Caso and Patricia B. Sanders (London, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 11-20. Also see Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 329.

⁵⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 329.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

In this sense, he appeared to be more sympathetic toward classical idealism as it accepts the beauty and ugliness antithesis and only imitates what it sees as ideal or beautiful. It indicates that art can enjoy its own organic world in the sense that it involves the imagination and feeling of the artist in the process of idealised imitation. In other words, art is not the mechanical reflection of nature, but rather echoes the artist's personality and creativity.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, according to Zhu, classical idealism only allows the typical subject matter in art that best represents its category and denies the validity of the individual character of art. As a result, art loses its genetic link with nature through the individual organism and returns to an inhuman imitation of nature. Zhu warned that idealised stereotypes reduce art to a device that repeats rather than creates because such idealised stereotypes are invariably portrayed as superman and superwoman and always described as beauty.⁶¹

For Zhu, therefore, both naturalism and classical idealism are not acceptable because neither of them incorporates beauty into the interrelation of human beings and nature, but treats it instead as a self-sufficient entity. Zhu stated that, despite their differences, both naturalists and classical idealists presume that beauty belongs essentially and permanently to nature: while naturalism trusts nature as one sees it, classical idealism endows nature with an autonomous spiritual quality.⁶² Because of this presumption, naturalism and classical idealism regard art as the imitation of nature.

In his criticism of the two attitudes, Zhu cited Henry Delacroix (1873-1937), the professor of philosophy at Paris University whose lectures on aesthetics Zhu attended in 1929 while he was registered at University College London (UCL).⁶³ Delacroix held that "naturalism and idealism share a common presumption: beauty is the *thing in itself* existing either in the phenomenal world or in the transcendental world; artists can just distinguish

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 330-331.

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

⁶² See *ibid.*, p. 333.

⁶³ See Qian Niansun 錢念孫. *Zhu Guangqian - Chushi de jingshen yu rushi de shiye* 朱光潛 - 出世的精神與入世的事業 [Zhu Guangqian: the spirit of transcending the world and the undertaking of going into the society] (Beijing: Wenjin chubanshe, 2005), p. 328.

beauty from nature. In fact, however, art can never be a *thing in itself*. It does not exist either in the phenomenal world or in the transcendental world. Art is creation; it is the result of human ability. ... It is human beings who see the image, contemplates it and projects it onto an external object. It is a human product materialised in the outside world, not the product of nature itself."⁶⁴ From this perspective, Zhu acknowledged and welcomed the fact that, since the romanticism movement of the 19th century, modern idealist artists such as the poets Alfred de Vigny (1797-1863) and Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) shifted their attention from the stereotype to individuality. The task of art, on the other hand, is to create concrete images and images are the embodiment of individual character.⁶⁵

In Zhu's discussion, the issue now is whether or not art copies nature at all. Zhu's answer is conditionally negative. First of all, Zhu affirms:

Nature is only formless matter; it is art that gives it a vivid form which makes sense to human beings. The mind of an artist is like a furnace and a hammer which shape the crude materials of nature into an artistic product. Only then do form and beauty come into reality.⁶⁶

He thought that the remarks made by Goethe in a conversation with J. P. Eckermann best explained his own idea: "The artist has a twofold relation to Nature; he is at once her master and her slave. He is her slave, inasmuch as he must work with earthly things, in order to be understood; but he is her master, inasmuch as he subjects these earthly means to his higher intentions, and renders them subservient."⁶⁷ Therefore, Zhu concluded that beauty which is created in art is not the result of copying nature, but rather of transforming nature to human spiritual and emotional need. Even ugly things in nature, added Zhu, can be transformed into beautiful art such as the depiction of old people by Rembrandt

⁶⁴ Henri Delacroix, *Psychologie de l'Art: Essai sur l'Activité Artistique* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1927), quoted from Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 333-334. This is my own translation from Zhu's book as I was not able to locate the original pages.

⁶⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue*, in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 332-333.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

⁶⁷ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "A Conversation with Eckermann on Rubens' Landscape in Engraving on April 18, 1827," in J. P. Eckermann ed. *Conversations with Goethe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1935), p. 196.

(1606-1669), the portraits of dwarves and idiots by Velázquez (1599-1660), and Rodin's sculpture of an old courtesan by Rodin.⁶⁸

Since beauty, in Zhu's estimation, does not live purely in nature as claimed by naturalists or in the mind as claimed by subjective idealists, then a middle ground somewhere between mind and nature must be sought to provide a meeting point of the two. Such a compromise, however, is not necessarily without theoretical problems if the two are taken into further investigation against each other. Zhu's middle-way approach seems to be able to sustain the fact that beauty appears both subjective and objective. It may appear objective when certain things are characterised "symmetry [*duicheng* 對稱], golden section [*huangjin fenge* 黃金分割], unity in variety [*yu zhengqi yu bianhua* 寓整齊於變化], and verisimilitude [*ru qing ru li* 入情入理]" and tend to achieve agreeable appreciation by the majority.⁶⁹ In some other cases, it may be subjective when personal values such as moral sense, view of life and propensities of feeling are attached. Nevertheless, the burden that Zhu's theory had to bear was to conjoin the subjective and the objective in a genetic way so that neither side would be able to claim an exclusive right to beauty without the help of the other.⁷⁰

First of all, as Zhu pointed out earlier, any effort of looking for exclusive authority either in the object or in the subject is invariably due to a dichotomous mode of thinking. Zhu commented that, in light of dualism, many Western philosophers are inclined to set their theories above facts and to indulge in pure abstract speculation. They endeavour to fix beauty either with the object or with the subject and fail to consider them as a whole. Subsequently, "they can only arrive at pure concepts such as 'idea' [*gainian* 概念], 'freedom' [*ziyou* 自由] or 'infinite' [*wuxian* 無限]." In real terms, however, these concepts are not applicable as they are intangible in real aesthetic experience and one "would not entertain the concepts of freedom and infinite before feeling that something is beautiful."⁷¹

⁶⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 336.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

⁷⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 340-341.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 344-345.

While criticising this view, Zhu chose to rely on aesthetic facts themselves rather than on metaphysical concepts. He believed that, in the determination of beauty, even when the subject and the object are apparently in conflict, a compromise could be reached if one evaluates beauty in terms of fact. To look at concrete and individual aesthetic phenomena, then, is to logically adhere to human reality. In actualising an aesthetic consciousness, human beings involve not only their own mind in the form of feeling internally, but also the object in the form of an image externally.⁷²

During the course of aesthetic experience, the subject and the object establish an interrelationship; and this reciprocal relationship has to be activated by the subject which needs expression of its feelings through the object. ... Artistic creation is to express feelings in external image while artistic appreciation is to sympathetically apprehend the feelings expressed in the image. In this way, beauty designates an adequate and pleasant feeling on the part of the subject through an image which adequately expresses the emotion harboured in the mind of the subject.⁷³

Zhu argued that, once the subject and the object are genetically united in an aesthetic experience, there should no longer be any problems with content and form: content is feeling [*qingqu* 情趣] and form is image [*yixiang* 意象]. Without either, aesthetic experience would be void. It also follows that beauty, no matter whether it is in art or nature, has to be the adequate expression of feeling through an image and the subject invariably creates the image. In other words, what is embodied as beauty both in art and in nature is not an abstract generalisation but concrete individuality. It is through the successful expression of individual personality and emotion that art or nature appears to be beautiful.⁷⁴

It is worth noting that Zhu did not treat beauty as an attribute or characteristic of either mind or matter. He did not resort to the analytical conceptualisation of beauty by dissociating it from the totality of human experience. All he had offered so far, in defining beauty, was but a method or a way of looking at the relationship between the subject and the object. For Zhu, beauty is a pervasive attitude involving human beings and nature rather

⁷² Ibid., pp. 346-347.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 347.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 348-350.

than a specific subject matter of pure speculation. Zhu, borrowing the words of Edgar F. Carritt (1876-1964), remarked that beauty "is not a quality of things or of the mind, but a relation between us and an expressive object."⁷⁵ This means that basically there is no ready-made beauty in nature waiting to be represented. Zhu held that beauty, being a value, has to be created through the mind, namely that the subject expresses their feelings through the image of the object.⁷⁶ With this presumption as an affirmation of human subjectivity, Zhu added that since the concept of beauty is set against the relationship between the subject and the object rather than the abstract speculation, and since the subjectivity is deep-rooted in the variety of individual attitudes towards aesthetic object due to their varied backgrounds and experiences, then beauty, being the product of the subjective, must be a relative value given in accordance with one's emotions and tastes.⁷⁷

5.4. Reinterpretation of Croce's Theory

In another added chapter, Chapter Eleven of *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), Zhu Guangqian endeavoured to clarify how he differed from Croce to justify his attaching 'associative thinking' [*lianxiang* 聯想] and moral sense to aesthetic experience. While admitting that his theory accepted Croce's notion of aesthetic experience as only intuition of image [*xingxiang de zhijue* 形象的直覺], Zhu claimed that aesthetic experience is temporally and spatially inadequate for containing perceptual as well as conceptual associations. Since human beings, who are the agents of aesthetic experience, are simultaneously agents of ethical activity and scientific activity, Zhu was convinced that Croce's aesthetics, in isolating aesthetic experience from other activities, is flawed on psychological grounds. Zhu thus modified Croce's mechanical explanation of theoretically distinguishable stages of aesthetic experience in order to incorporate other psychological

⁷⁵ Edgar F. Carritt, *An Introduction to Aesthetics* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1949), p. 124.

⁷⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 347.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 347-352.

aspects (perception, empathy, inner imitation and associative thinking). Zhu affirmed that Croce's aesthetics would be closer to the truth if it were flexible enough to treat art as a process of deliberation rather than a mere moment of intuition.⁷⁸ Thus, he held that his work was not to deny Croce's theory, but to 'amend' the flaws engendered by Croce's mechanical conception.⁷⁹

With this view in mind, Zhu left Croce's notion of aesthetic experience as intuition intact and the only problems which he found with Croce's aesthetics by this stage concentrate on such issues as whether intuitive image is mere physical fact and whether artistic value is absolute. In Chapters Six, Seven and Eight of *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), as has been discussed in the previous sections in this chapter, he had already given his assurance that he regarded art as the product of aesthetic experience and associative connections, including moral sense. While endeavouring to justify his view on the holistic nature of art, Zhu appeared inclined to a methodological approach respecting all facts and the relativity of aesthetic experience to associative connections. He was willing to give priority to facts even at the cost of logical credibility. Zhu announced in his preface to *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936) that he intended to "ignore any preconceived philosophical premises and to treat artistic creation and appreciation purely as psychological facts and phenomena."⁸⁰

By referring to larger contexts and the complex process of artistic activity, Zhu opposed Croce's conviction that the externalisation of intuition is mere empirical fact and irrelevant to successful art.⁸¹ Not realising that he would contradict some of his own fundamental points established in earlier chapters of *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), such as the independence of aesthetic experience in the context of artistic creation, Zhu

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 361-362.

⁷⁹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zibai" 作者自白 [Writer's preface], *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 198.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 197.

⁸¹ For Croce's argument on this issue, see Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. by Douglas Ainslie, pp. 111-117. In Croce's account, the notion of externalisation of aesthetic experience is "to preserve or communicate to other practical activities." See *ibid.*, p. 111.

claimed on the basis of facts that it is common practice that artists imagine images with the help of certain media [*chuanda meijie* 傳達媒介]. "A painter imagines bamboo in lines, hues and shadows; a poet imagines bamboo in words, their sounds and meanings, and a musician imagines bamboo in tunes and melodies."⁸² He argued that artists are simply not able to carry out their imagination without the support of external media; in the absence of linguistic signs, for example, a poet cannot compose a poem. He therefore declared therefore that "Croce's intuition or artistic creation and practice of materialisation of it cannot be dissociated from each other as a matter of fact."⁸³

Moreover, Zhu claimed that the media employed by the imagination may in return exert an influence on artistic practice (imagination, creation and appreciation) and, by saying so, took a step further away from Croce's system. Zhu justified his argument through observable facts:

The history of art reveals how architectural style varies because of available materials as well as historical reasons: ancient Greek architecture used stone slabs and thus columns prevailed; Roman architecture used a mixture of mud and pebbles and thus walls and ceilings were dominant features; the Gothic architecture of the medieval era, on the other hand, paid more attention to arches to compensate for high windows and pointed roofs.⁸⁴

In allowing both sides into artistic creation, Zhu established an interrelated mechanism by which the artist incorporates images (inner environment) with the medium (outer environment) in a flux of feedback and adjustments before the artistic product as the final goal is achieved. That is to say, artists remain in a state of purposive intercommunication with certain media. The important implication of this exposition, according to Zhu, is that the motivation of applying external media to express internal feelings is itself one of human beings' basic social actions. He added:

⁸² Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 363.

⁸³ Ibid. For an account of identity of thought and linguistic symbols, see Zhu Guangqian, "Sixiang jiushi shiyong yuyan" 思想就是使用語言 [Thinking is to use language] (1948), in *QJ*, vol.9, pp. 383-395. This essay was written in English as a contribution to the 50th Anniversary of Peking University in 1948. The essay was translated into Chinese by Zhang Jinyan 張金言 in 1988 and published in *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究, vol. 1 (1989).

⁸⁴ Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 363.

Human beings are social creatures. By the time people are able to distinguish their own selves, as opposed to and in association with others, they long to extend their selves to society for sympathy and recognition. ... It is in terms of such mutual orientation that language is given birth. As a form of language, art thus becomes a medium for artists to express themselves. Although it is true that artists sometimes show contempt for society for its lack of taste for higher art, they cannot help craving for ideal sympathisers [*lixiang de tongqing zhe* 理想的同情者].⁸⁵

After Zhu Guangqian translated Croce's *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic* into Chinese in 1947⁸⁶ and studied Angelo Crespi's *Contemporary Thought of Italy* around 1947, Zhu's knowledge of Croce's theory deepened.⁸⁷ At the same time Zhu started to re-evaluate Croce's philosophical system in his monograph on Croce published in 1948.⁸⁸ With the help of Crespi's criticism, Zhu became convinced that the problem with Croce's theory did not lie in Croce's mechanical separation of aesthetic experience from the context of artistic activity, but in his very concept of intuition as art. Zhu started to query whether all forms of intuition could be subsumed to art. In other words, Zhu started to tackle the weak point of Croce's aesthetic theory.

Zhu realised that Croce's premises, such as intuitive knowledge [*zhijue de zhishi* 直覺的知識] being expressive knowledge and thus art, are deduced from his idealist epistemology. Croce's epistemology, in an effort to seek to overcome the traditional philosophical dualism of the object and the subject, resolves the object into an experience of the subject. That is, it attributes all sensible matter to human spirit. Zhu noted that Croce's concept of matter [*wu* 物] is very dubious in terms of its cognitive relation with the human mind [*xin* 心].⁸⁹

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

⁸⁶ Zhu's translation of Croce's work *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic* published in 1947 included Part I, the first half of the original. See Keluoqi 克羅齊 [Croce], *Meixue yuanli* 美學原理, trans. by Zhu Guangqian (Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1947), in *QJ*, vol. 11.

⁸⁷ Zhu acknowledged Angelo Crespi's *Contemporary Thought of Italy* (London: William and Norgate Limited, 1926) and admitted that he owed his views on Croce's aesthetics to Crespi's work. See Zhu Guangqian, *Keluoqi zhexue shuping* 可羅齊哲學述評 [A study of Croce's philosophy] (Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1948), in *QJ*, vol. 4, p. 306.

⁸⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, *Keluoqi zhexue shuping* 可羅齊哲學述評 (1948), in *QJ*, vol. 4.

⁸⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 379-381.

On the one hand, Croce transfers a relation between human spirit and something outside it into a relation between the two forms of knowledge and their activity in hierarchical degrees encompassing all the human experience in order to overcome traditional dualism. On the other hand, Croce has to assume the existence of matter as a limiting concept [*xianjie de gainian* 限界的概念] and admits that without matter no human knowledge or activity is possible.⁹⁰ Zhu observed that the ambiguity of Croce's concept of matter betrays a hidden dilemma within his philosophical system. That is, if matter is believed to derive from the human mind, it would mean that matter is already synthesised by the human spirit as the latter is considered as *bona fide* activity. In this case, matter cannot be treated as formless and passive sensation or impression which, in Croce's view, explicates nothing but animality. If matter is accepted as existing outside the human mind, then Croce's idealist system would defeat itself as yet another form of dualism.⁹¹

Having disagreed with the domination of mind-derived intuitive activity in cognition and replaced it with mind-matter reciprocal perceptive activity, Zhu then looked at aesthetic experience in a different light. Instead of treating it as an autonomous moment out of the mind's intrinsic faculty, as he did under the influence of Crocian intuition as expression in the 1930s as in *Tan mei* 談美 [Talking about beauty] (1932), *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 [The psychology of literature and art] (1936) and *Shi lun* 詩論 [On poetry] (1943), he placed aesthetic experience within the context of human cognitive activities as a whole. Accordingly, aesthetic activity in art is differentiated from intuitive perception [*zhijue* 直覺] (sensation [*ganjue* 感覺]) at the primordial stage of cognition.⁹²

Since it seems that aesthetic activity takes place only at a relatively mature stage of cognition, Zhu held that the fundamental difference between intuitive perception [*zhijue* 直覺] and aesthetic activity lies in the different types of forms they produce.

Whereas intuitive perception, in recognising qualitative differentiation [*zhi de*

⁹⁰ See Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, p. 6.

⁹¹ See Zhu Guangqian, *Keluoqi zhexue shuping* 可羅齊哲學述評 (1948), in *QJ*, vol. 4, pp. 377-378.

⁹² See *ibid.*, pp. 380-381.

fenbie 質的分別] of matter, attributes epistemic forms as mere acknowledgment, aesthetic activity in art, based on cognitive yields, creates forms in unity [*wanzheng* 完整] through imagination. ... If intuitive perception is postulated as primordial cognitive activity, the aesthetic experience, on the other hand, contains not only sensation [*ganjue* 感覺], intuitive perception [*zhijue* 直覺] but conception [*gainian* 概念] as well.⁹³

Zhu explained that, in the process of aesthetic activity, the subject is not merely in a state of being aware of the shape of a certain object, but actively uses imagination to transfer the feeling to an artistic form that adequately expresses the former. Because feeling is unequivocally interpreted as being the result of empirical experience, Zhu felt entitled to include the knowledge achieved at every stage of cognitive activity within aesthetic expression.⁹⁴

In this way, aesthetic experience is no longer treated as of primacy and hence of absolute value, despite its recognised relative value in artistic activity. Instead, he evaluated artistic creation by degrees, not just for the convenience of categorising artistic types,⁹⁵ but according to their content being harmoniously blended with form. Zhu added:

When we claim that a certain artistic work is better than another, apart from judging if it is adequately expressed in artistic form, we at the same time take into consideration the moral profundity it reaches. Deeper and more profound content brings us more truth about life and it must involve more effort to attain a unity of form and such content.⁹⁶

Thus, artistic value is proportional to what (content) as well as how (form) the feeling of the subject is expressed. The more adequately truth of life is revealed, the more valuable or more beautiful the work becomes.

Although Zhu admitted his appreciation of Croce's holistic attempt to establish a theory, which is probably the very point he found particularly compatible with his own

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 384.

⁹⁵ In *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), Zhu accepted degrees of artistic value only for the sake of differentiation of artistic types; content or morality though does not affect artistic value.

⁹⁶ Zhu Guangqian, *Keluoqi zhexue shuping* 可羅齊哲學述評 [A study of Croce's philosophy] (1948), in *QJ*, vol. 4, pp. 388-389.

traditional Chinese approach,⁹⁷ the completion of his book *Keluoqi zhexue shuping* 可羅齊哲學述評 [A study of Croce's philosophy] in 1948 marked a significant departure in Zhu's aesthetic theory from Croce's idealist epistemology. By re-evaluating Croce's theory, Zhu clarified his real difference from Croce. That is, if knowing is such a dynamic process through which the self or subjectivity interflows with the matter or objectivity (to use Zhu's terminology, *wuwo jiaogan* 物我交感⁹⁸), it is incomprehensible and thus impracticable in real life to isolate a cognitive stage such as intuition. By doing this merely for the sake of emphasising its cognitive status as primordial and initiative in a logical sense, the dynamic movement and mechanism in the whole process of human cognition are subsequently obscured.

It seems then that the real incompatibility between Zhu and Croce's theories resides in their different interpretations of the relationship between human beings and nature. Whereas Croce's theory of aesthetics focuses on the subjective aspect of human activities to the extent of subsuming the object to the subject, Zhu's aesthetics is inclined towards a holistic interrelationship between human beings and nature. As far as Zhu is concerned, there is no doubt that human beings, naturally endowed to be creative, are the subjective initiators of human cultural activities such as art. However, human beings are at the same time taken for granted in Zhu's theory as a part of nature and thus never stop communicating with nature.

While Zhu's theory, which inherited the traditional Chinese viewpoint, accommodates both human beings and nature as cognitive polarities to form a holistic process and accordingly proceeds to the empirical interpretation of human experiences, Croce's theory relies solely on the self-introspective presumption at denial not of the object but of the objectivity of the empirical data. Croce's epistemology leaves neither temporal nor spatial room for a concrete subject or individual to effectively communicate with the object. As a result, the reciprocity of the subject and the object as the phenomenal

⁹⁷ See *ibid.*, pp. 318-331.

⁹⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 237.

occurrence of the dynamic totality becomes unattainable. As M. E. Moss comments, in Croce's theory, "this act of mind that created a synthesis among feelings and also provided the *sine qua non* for knowledge was an *a priori* one."⁹⁹ In Croce's own words, "We have intuitions without space and without time: the colour of a sky, the colour of a feeling, a cry of pain and an effort of will, objectified in consciousness: these are intuitions which we possess, and with their making space and time have nothing to do."¹⁰⁰ The discrepancy between Zhu and Croce, then, illuminates the fundamental difference in the notion of truth between traditional Chinese thought and that of the West. While truth in traditional Chinese thought, is realised through the process of interrelation between human beings and nature, it is considered by the Western mind to be the substance discernible through pure thinking. Just as Donald H. Bishop points out, "the point here is that, while the Chinese view advocates seeing as a whole, it rejects epistemological, as well as metaphysical and theological, absolutism and exclusivism. It does not demand ultimate explanations but is content with functional ones enabling man to live the best that time and circumstances allow."¹⁰¹

It seems that, by the time Zhu made his second effort to re-evaluate Croce's epistemology in the late 1940s, his theoretical approach was more clarified. If, at the first stage from the 1920s to the 1930s, Zhu's aesthetic theorisation merely showed a propensity without obvious intention for an holistic approach echoing traditional Chinese thinking despite his theoretical affiliation with Croce's absolute idealism, then, by the second stage in the 1940s, his theorisation appeared to endeavour deliberately to illuminate human activity in aesthetic experience through an ever-present interrelationship between the subject and the object. In this way, various aspects of human knowledge such as intuition, sensation, perception and conception are legitimately included in artistic activity and, as a result, his aesthetics breaks away from the epistemological category in the Crocian sense.

⁹⁹ M. E. Moss, *Benedetto Croce Reconsidered: Truth and Error in Theories of Art, Literature, and History* (London: University Press of New England, 1987), p. 24.

¹⁰⁰ Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, p. 4

¹⁰¹ Donald H. Bishop, "The Chinese Contribution to World Thought," in Donald H. Bishop ed., *The Chinese Thought: An Introduction* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985), p. 460.

CHAPTER VI

Towards Marxist Aesthetics

6.1. Social and Intellectual Background in the 1940s and 1950s

After the eight years of the War of Resistance against Japan ended in 1945, Zhu returned to Beijing and became Head of the Department of European Languages at Peking University in Aug 1946.¹ Although Zhu was not particularly interested in politics and saw his role as being to teach well and to write,² the situation soon deteriorated again as civil war erupted. After years of war, the Nationalist government was faced with enormous economic, political and social problems. In particular, corruption, internal schisms and widespread inefficiency accelerated its decline. The Nationalist government began to take extreme measures to suppress political unrest by threatening dissent with harsh action from the secret police. By the late 1940s, not only leftist intellectuals who had turned to the Communist Party since the 1920s, but even many intellectuals who favoured non-violent reform had lost confidence in the Nationalist government. With over 70 percent of population living in utter poverty and the educated elite disillusioned, by 1948 the prevailing sentiment in the country was in favour of change of any kind and peace at any cost.³

In this climate of anti-government sentiment, the Red Army successfully gained control of vast areas of China with one victory after another. In addition to its human sacrifices in the War of Resistance against Japan, the Communist Party made a strong

¹ See Qian Niansun 錢念孫. *Zhu Guangqian - Chushi de jingshen yu rushi de shiye* 朱光潛 - 出世的精神與入世的事業 [Zhu Guangqian - the spirit of transcending the world and the undertaking of going into the society] (Beijing: Wenjin chubanshe, 2005), p. 288.

² See Zhu Guangqian, "Ziwo jiancha" 自我檢查 [Self-criticism], *Renmin ribao* 人民日報 [People's daily] (12 Nov 1949), in *QJ*, vol. 9, p. 536.

³ For an analysis of the reasons why a drastic change was preferred in 1940s China, see Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999 2nd ed.), pp. 473-488 and A. Doak Barnett, *Communist China: the Early Years, 1949-1955* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964), Part I.

impression on the people with its ability to show responsibility. While the Nationalist government had lost the people's support in rural areas due to its failure to recognise the overwhelming rural crisis, the Communist Party committed itself to the most urgent matters such as land reform and thus gained support from the peasants who accounted for the majority of the Chinese population. Support for the Communist Party expanded when it appeared that the Communists were adopting a strong nationalist stance in their political practice, as the Chinese had not only reached a psychological breaking point under harsh living conditions, but had also long been disappointed with China's continually weak position in the world.

According to H. G. Creel, writing in 1953, "even Chinese who are strongly anti-Communist can not avoid being gratified that their country again wields an influence, in world affairs, such as it has not enjoyed in many, many years."⁴ Generally, what seemed to have impressed Chinese people is that the Communist Party was enthusiastic and efficient whereas the Nationalist government was impotent and corrupt. Through this big contrast the Communist Party gained an unquestionable advantage over the Nationalist government.⁵

Zhu was aware of problems such as corruption in the Nationalist government and even protested against some of its policies. For instance, he had encouraged the students of Sichuan University to walk out of classrooms in 1938 when the Nationalist government interfered in academic appointments for political purposes.⁶ In a series of critical articles written around this period, he maintained that the problems were caused by the government's undemocratic policies and that the suppression of opposing opinions would kill the vitality of the nation, strongly urging the government to give people freedom of

⁴ H. G. Creel, *Chinese Thought from Confucius to Mao Tse-tung* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 252.

⁵ See Peter S. H. Tang and Joan M. Maloney, *Communist China: The Domestic Scene 1949-1967* (South Orange, New Jersey: Seton Hall University Press, 1967), pp. 72-73.

⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zizhuan" 作者自傳 [Writer's autobiography], *Yiwen zatan* 藝文雜談 [Informal talking about literature and art] (Hefei: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 1981), pp. 280-287, in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 6.

speech.⁷ However, towards the late 1940s, he became increasingly disillusioned with the Nationalist Party, of which he had been a member since 1942, not only because of its totalitarian policies, but also because of its reckless attitude towards the livelihood of the people. In 1948, he and sixteen other professors from Peking University wrote to the Chairman of the Nationalist Party, Chiang Kai-shek, pleading with the government to consider the people's hardships and misfortunes.⁸ The request failed to draw any response and the government itself was soon forced to flee to Taiwan. In the following year, when he was invited by the Nationalist government to fly to Taiwan, Zhu declined and decided to stay.

One might argue that Zhu's decision to stay with the Communist government was merely due to his bitter disappointment with the Nationalist government. However, when his view of life and especially the development of his aesthetics over the years are taken into consideration, his decision may not on balance seem surprising. One can see that what the Communist Party achieved in China in the late 1940s, in term of boosting national dignity, creating a new order and unifying the nation, was not necessarily out of the tune with Zhu's aesthetically derived social ideal which seeks humanity in harmony, dignity and unity. In other words, Zhu's thinking, hitherto established and embodied in his study of aesthetics, did not appear to him to have to be abandoned because of its "reactionary" propositions. The ideological struggles that Zhu was later forced to be involved in did not corrupt his intellectual integrity. On the contrary, Zhu was able to find other theoretical angles and developed his aesthetics to a new stage in which the emphasis on humanity in his theory was to some extent politically as well as academically justified.

⁷ See Zhu Guagnqian, "Xianzheng cujin yu yanlun ziyou" 憲政促進與言論自由 [Promotion of the constitution and freedom of speech], *Da gong bao* 大公報 (9 Apr 1944), in *QJ*, vol. 9, pp. 172-175.

⁸ See Qian Niansun 錢念孫, *Zhu Guangqian yu zhongxi wenhua* 朱光潛與中西文化 [Zhu Guangqian and East-West culture] (1995), pp. 410-411.

6.2. The Influence of Thought Reform

In the Summer of 1949, shortly before the establishment of the communist government, Mao Zedong stated that merely gaining political power by no means completed the Long March. "In the twenty eight long years of the Party, we have done only one thing, and that is, we have won the basic victory and a victory in a large country like China. But there is plenty of work before us, and, as on a march, what work has been done in the past is like the first step on a march of 10,000 li. Remnants of the enemy still have to be wiped out, and the grave task of economic reconstruction still lies before us."⁹ He believed that the mentality of the people, especially the intellectuals of old China, had to be cleansed of bourgeois and individualist liberalism in order for them to offer loyalty to the new ideology. He asserted that "ideological remoulding, primarily that of all types of intellectuals, is an important condition for the completion of democratic reforms in all fields and gradual industrialisation."¹⁰ Thus, intellectuals were urged to change their political attitudes to become completely in tune with the Communist Party's official ideology. Accordingly, the Thought Reform movement which involved over seven million intellectuals was launched in 1951 throughout China.¹¹

As estimated by Barnett, the campaign was "amazingly effective, particularly since 'individualism' was considered a cardinal sin."¹² Intellectuals were organised into study groups to study Communist ideas and policies on a daily basis and continuous criticism and self-criticism were practised until every member of the group achieved a "correct"

⁹ Mao Zedong, "Lun renmin minzhu zhuanzheng" 論人民民主專政 [On the people's democratic dictatorship] (1949), the translation is based on Xinhua News Agency translation in *China Digest*, vol. 16, no. 7 and reused in Tony Saich ed., *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party: Documents and Analysis* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 1374.

¹⁰ Mao Zedong, "Great Victories in Three Mass Movements," opening speech made at the Third Session of the First National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference held on 23rd October 1951, in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1977), p. 60.

¹¹ For an account of the effect of the thought reform movement in the 1950s China, see A. Doak Barnett, "Part I," *Communist China: the Early Years, 1949-1955*, pp. 29-116.

¹² A. Doak Barnett, *Communist China: the Early Years, 1949-1955*, p. 20.

understanding of the Party's policy or point of view.¹³ Because the campaign put into practice a method of indoctrination which took advantage of subtle psychological techniques and the principles of collective dynamics to serve political purposes, it effectively submitted intellectuals to ideological conformity. Helmut Callis remarks that "by their indoctrination methods - group discussion, self-criticism, public confession - the Chinese communists often generate a fervor in their converts comparable with that observable in fanatical religious sects. In all of these techniques they make use of the general craving in human beings to find personal recognition in a group and the corresponding fear of being shamed. Hence conformity has a high value in the Communist state."¹⁴ In addition to that, however, various external factors should also be taken into consideration as part of the explanation of the readiness on the part of intellectuals to submit to ideological conformity.

Since the Reform Movement of 1898, Chinese intellectuals had been widely involved in various activities aimed at saving China from its ongoing troubles, both culturally and politically. Despite political differences, many Chinese intellectuals, who, like most ordinary Chinese, possess what Benjamin I. Schwartz calls an absolute faith in the universality of their kinship founded on a much firmer cultural base than in some other cultures,¹⁵ preferred the idea of a centralised politics supported by the duty-oriented individual-family-community foundation of the society akin to the Confucian ideal. The success of the Chinese Communist Party, according to Helmut G. Callis, was partly due to the fact that "they are set on transforming the pattern of Chinese society from one of *family* loyalty to one of *national* and community responsibility."¹⁶ Especially, under the rule of an incompetent government, first the Qing and then the warlord governments and then the Nationalist government, both the intellectuals and ordinary Chinese people had

¹³ See *ibid.*

¹⁴ Helmut G. Callis, *China: Confucian and Communist* (New York: Holt-Dryden, 1959), p. 317.

¹⁵ See Benjamin I. Schwartz, "The Chinese Perception of World Order, Past and Present," in John K. Fairbank ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 281.

¹⁶ Helmut G. Callis, *China: Confucian and Communist*, p. 314.

developed a psychological urge for unity and security provided by a strong and competent government. Since the establishment of the Communist Party, Chinese intellectuals had witnessed its impressive achievements and growing confidence. Its eventual victory was genuinely celebrated, first by leftists but later also by moderate intellectuals, as the autocratic but efficient leadership of the new government was not necessarily opposed to their social ideals. This was particularly the case as the Communist Party went through over a decade during which people's interests genuinely seemed to be placed uppermost and turned into reality in policies such as land reform.

Zhu did not feel (or at least he did not declare) that he was trapped when he found himself involved in the mass campaigns of ideological reform. After the Communist Party took Beijing in early 1949, he had the opportunity to see Chinese communism with his own eyes for the first time. He was grateful that despite his previous membership of the Nationalist Party, the Communist government did not treat him as the enemy. On the contrary, he was allowed to continue teaching at Peking University and believed himself to be politically trusted, although he resigned from his position as Head of the Department of European Languages.¹⁷ He expressed his favourable opinion of Communist Party members thus: "tenacious, conscientious, hard-working, modest and prudent; they showed genuine enthusiasm in serving the people and a dauntless spirit in the face of difficulties."¹⁸ These moral qualities were precisely what Zhu sought to achieve as his own ideal when he was at Hong Kong University.¹⁹ He declared that "since the Revolution of 1911, we have had a lot of frustrations and always ended up in disappointment. Now we have finally been led to the correct path and regained our vitality."²⁰

Zhu's favourable response to the new policies had a positive effect on his attitude in the study group to which he was assigned at Peking University. He seems to have taken

¹⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, "Xinchun ji yu Taiwan de pengyoumen" 新春寄語台灣的朋友們 [Some words at New Year to our friends in Taiwan], *Dagong bao* 大公報 (19 Jan 1974), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 423.

¹⁸ Zhu Guangqian, "Ziwo jiancha" 自我檢查 [Self-criticism], *Renmin ribao* 人民日報 [People's daily] (12 Nov 1949), in *QJ*, vol. 9, p. 537.

¹⁹ See Chapter I of this thesis.

²⁰ Zhu Guangqian, "Ziwo jiancha" 自我檢查 (1949), in *QJ*, vol. 9, p. 537.

an active part in the group discussions, although it must be pointed out that his fear of being politically incorrect due to his sense of guilt about his own bourgeois past must have also occupied much of his mind.²¹ In the course of five years of ideological reform 1949-1954, he did not engage in any academic studies, but instead he delivered several articles of criticism and self-criticism which were either published in newspapers or read to the study group.²² As these articles often contained new political expressions and superficial rhetoric, they could be seen to discredit his sincerity. For a time, he may not have been able to fully comprehend his new situation. Like most of his contemporaries, he was perhaps overwhelmed by the new authoritarian ideology.

On the one hand, under such impact, Zhu was willing to conform to the Party's line and display shame about his past. On the other hand, he was suspect as a symbol of bourgeois liberalism and was hence suppressed. Zhu stated in an article entitled "Self-criticism" published in *The People's Daily* in 1949:

From the perspective of my new understanding of the Communist Party, I have realised that my fault does not lie merely in the fact that I used to be a member of the Nationalist Party, but in the fact that my old education cultivated a liberal individualist, an intellectual divorced from reality, conservative and weak-willed. I am willing, however, to study hard and correct my shortcomings in order to catch up with the times and with the masses and become a useful person in the new society. I do have some good points to offer. I am conscientious, modest and optimistic; these good points may be able to give me the seeds of new life.²³

It seems on the surface that Zhu's past ideology was opposed to his new self in terms of the orthodox view. The guidelines of the ideological reform campaign were based on the thought of Mao Zedong and Marxist-Leninist historical materialism with a Soviet

²¹ Zhu admitted some years later that, when the Communist government launched another campaign called "Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom and a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend," he did not do any academic research for fear of social pressure. See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong qieshen de jingyan tan baijia zhengming" 從切身的經驗談百家爭鳴 [On the policy of "Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend" from personal experience], *Wenyi bao* 文藝報, vol. 1 (1957), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 79.

²² All these articles are collected in *QJ*, vols. 5, 9 and 10.

²³ Zhu Guangqian, "Ziwo jiancha" 自我檢查 [Self-criticism] (1949), in *QJ*, vol. 9, p. 538.

interpretation. Any other ideas were considered unorthodox and reactionary. As Marxist historical materialism was based on the concept of class, that is, class struggle being the prime mover of history, Zhu was given the impression that his aesthetic theory, which sought common ground in human activity focusing on humanity, was certainly not in tune with Marxism. Besides, his confidence in his own moral intention was shaken when he realised that his social existence in the old China had placed him in the category of the exploiting class. In another article written in 1951, Zhu maintained that his "bourgeois ideas" were caused by his class status as well as by "feudalist" and foreign imperialist education. He claimed that the fact that his father had become a landowner in old age and his wife had bought land during the War of Resistance against Japan logically put him in the landlord class, and declared that this must have contributed to his reactionary consciousness.²⁴ From 1949 Zhu then abandoned his research on aesthetics for about six years, yielding not only to social pressure but also to his own sense of class guilt.

However, the irony is that while he was stricken with a sense of guilt for being anti-Marxist, he knew next to nothing about Marxist theories. He admitted some years later that he had fallen silent about his own theories only because he realised that his idealist aesthetics, as labelled by himself under pressure during the campaigns, were opposed to Marxism.²⁵

6.3. Similarities between Zhu Guangqian and Karl Marx

After six years of intensive ideological campaigns, at a special conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on January 14 of 1956, the Premier and Secretary of the Party Central Committee Zhou Enlai delivered a report entitled "On the Question of the Intellectuals." The report stressed that ideological rectification was still the primary task but gave assurances that the Communist Party would trust most

²⁴ See Zhu, Guangqian, "Zuijin xuexi zhong jidian jiantao" 最近學習中機點檢討 [My confessions in recent group study], in *QJ*, vol. 10, pp. 19-24.

²⁵ See *ibid.*

intellectuals politically and try to improve their working conditions, living standards and academic placements.²⁶ Following Zhou's report, Lu Dingyi, the secretary of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, made a speech to a meeting of scientists, social science researchers, doctors, writers and university scholars in May entitled 'Bai hua qi fang, bai jia zheng ming' 百花齊放, 百家爭鳴 [Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend], promising his audience that the Party encouraged freedom of thought, debate, creation and criticism. He told them that China should learn from the entire world, even from her enemies, rather than mechanically transplanting Soviet experiences.²⁷ Although the majority of intellectuals were very cautious about his speech at first, they gradually started to voice their opinions with reduced fear of a backlash.²⁸

The new policy of the Hundred Flowers movement brought considerable relief to Zhu, who expressed his pleasure not because he would be able to revive his bourgeois idealism, but because he would be able to reassess it in a rational and convincing way.²⁹ In other words, he was content that he would be able to study issues in an academic way, free of political coercion. Thus, despite becoming a target of criticism in a debate on

²⁶ See Zhou Enlai 周恩來, "On the Question of the Intellectuals" (14 January 1956), in *Communist China 1955-1959: Policy Documents with Analysis*, prepared at Harvard University under the joint auspices of the Centre for International Affairs and the East Asian Research Centre (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 128-144. According to the forward by Robert R. Bowie and John K. Fairbank, the author-editor of this collection was a visiting fellow of the Centre for International Affairs at Harvard University, who edited this volume and wrote the introductions to the chapters and commentaries preceding the documents. However, for unknown reasons, the author remained anonymous.

²⁷ See Lu Dingyi, "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom, Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend" (26 May 1956). This article was revised by the author and published in the *People's Daily* on 13 June 1956, in *ibid.*, pp. 151-163.

²⁸ During this time, some intellectuals at Peking University did challenge the domain of Mao Zedong Thought and Marxism-Leninism. See Rene Goldman, "The Rectification Campaign at Peking University, May-June 1957," in Roderick MacFarquhar ed., *China Under Mao: Politics Takes Command* (Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press, 1966), pp. 255-270. However, since radical views were only on a comparatively small scale and mainly concentrated among university students, I choose not to treat them as influential to the main trend among the intellectuals during this period.

²⁹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong qieshen de jingyan tan baijia zhengming" 從切身的經驗談百家爭鳴 (1957), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 80.

aesthetics launched soon after the new policy was announced in 1956, he felt it was safe to express his views.

It should be noted that the seeming freedom extended to intellectuals was not without limitations: the Party's official ideology was seen as faultlessly correct and accordingly the only standard for thought, debate, creation and criticism. In particular, the Communist Party was intolerant of appeals for democracy by liberalist intellectuals, in many universities in the wake of the policy of the Hundred Flowers campaign. The Anti-rightist campaign in 1957 constituted exactly a direct reaction to this political dissidence.³⁰

In comparison, the debate on aesthetics appeared to be less political and thus more flexible in terms of controversial issues, or to put it another way, the ideological battle lines were less exclusive and Zhu was able to join the debate and defend his views. Perhaps due to the fact that aesthetic issues were less politically sensitive than other issues such as human rights and freedom of speech, Zhu's arguments against his critics were not considered as being opposed to the Party. Besides, his willingness to conform to the Party's line allowed him to undertake a serious and relatively independent study of Marxist aesthetic theories, for example Marx's *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, "Theses on Feuerbach," *The German Ideology*, and Engels's *Dialectics of Nature*.³¹ At the same time, he started to translate the first volume of Hegel's *Aesthetics*, which must have given him an opportunity to review the real context of Marxism from the perspective of the history of Western ideas rather than of Soviet orthodoxy. The fact that Zhu's interpretation of Marxist aesthetics differed from the orthodox one widespread among aesthetic theorists in the 1950s must be related to his positivist way of studying Marxist philosophy. The

³⁰ For a general account of the application of the Hundred Flowers policy, see Roderick MacFarquhar ed., *The Hundred Flowers* (London: Stevens, 1960).

³¹ Marx's early work *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* was written between April and August of 1844. Marx "produced the rough draft of what, judging by his preface, was to have been a book. He did not finish it for publication, however, and it lay unpublished for more than eighty years. The surviving parts, comprising four manuscripts, were given the name shown above. An incomplete version in Russian translation was published in Moscow in 1927. The first full edition in German ... was published in Berlin in 1932." Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978 2nd ed.), p. 66.

translation of the first volume of Hegel's *Aesthetics* published in December 1958 may have contributed to his study of Marx, since the philosophy of Hegel largely influenced the development of Marx's views on human beings and human history as well as aesthetics.³²

A year later, Zhu claimed that it was the study of Marxist aesthetic theories that had led him to do some serious thinking on aesthetic issues and that as a result, he had become aware of problems such as the social aspect of aesthetics which he had not thoroughly dealt with before.³³ Zhu admitted that he used to treat aesthetic fact mainly from a psychological point of view, neglecting the social aspect which would have provided helpful support to his effort to attach morality to art in his work *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936). Zhu also realised that he had struggled to justify the unity of the subject and the object through Croce's aesthetics because Croce regarded the relationship between the two solely from the perspective of epistemology, whilst Marx treated it as a matter of praxis.³⁴ He was convinced that a Marxist interpretation of the relationship between subject and object in virtue of praxis would offer a better explanation of aesthetic facts. According to Zhu, his discoveries of Marxist theory brought him and his aesthetic theories closer to Marxism. Thus he confidently predicted that Marxism rather than idealism would come to dominate his thinking.³⁵

Regarding Zhu's change of thinking in the 1950s, some aesthetic theorists such as Cai Yi 蔡儀, Hong Yiran 洪毅然 and Li Zehou 李澤厚 (who were his most severe critics

³² See Heige'er 黑格爾 [Hegel], *Meixue* 美學 [Aesthetics], vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1958) in *QJ*, vol. 13. The second and third volumes published in 1979 by Commercial Press are included in *QJ*, vols. 14 and 15. For an account of Hegel's influence upon Marx, see Nancy S. Love, *Marx, Nietzsche, and Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 20-32.

³³ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong qieshen de jingyan tan baijia zhengming" 從切身的經驗談百家爭鳴 [On the policy of "Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend" from personal experience] (1957), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 81.

³⁴ Praxis is an important concept in Marxism and can be interpreted as action, doing, or activity. In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* which appeared to be largely influential in the development of Zhu's idea in the post-1949 era, Marx "sometimes contrasts it with mere labour; it is for him and later Marxist writers the free, conscious, creative, essentially human activity, alone capable of generating knowledge and a new and better social order." Thomas Mautner, *Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 442.

³⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, "Cong qieshen de jingyan tan baijia zhengming" 從切身的經驗談百家爭鳴 (1957), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 81.

in the 1950s debate on aesthetics) denied Zhu's interpretation of Marxist theories and argued that his more favourable attitude towards Marxism was merely a false impression which glossed over his idealist essence. In some recent studies, Yan Guozhong and Zhu Shirong have maintained that Zhu's adaptation of Marxism was the sign of a thorough conversion from idealism.³⁶ Even Zhu himself declared that he "had pulled himself out of the swamp of decadent thought through primary studies of the Marxist-Leninist theory of literature and art."³⁷ It is generally accepted amongst aesthetic theorists in the People's Republic of China that Zhu's earlier aesthetics was incompatible with Marxist ideas, or at least irrelevant to them.

However, it seems that many critics overlooked the reason for Zhu to feel particularly comfortable with Marxist theory after he had gained a deeper knowledge of it. As Sabattini suggests, it seems reasonable to assume that Zhu's general aesthetic ideas do not necessarily deny Marxism-Leninism.³⁸ It should be pointed out that the academic atmosphere in 1950s China, especially during the ideological reform process, was overshadowed by the orthodox interpretation of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, which were treated as unquestionable dogma and thus unaffected by historical and theoretical contexts.

As a consequence of this, any ideas which were not explicitly recognised as orthodox were discarded as anti-Marxist. This environment was so overwhelming that even the carriers of unorthodox ideas themselves believed that their ideas could not possibly share anything with the approved dogmas. However, internal similarities and historical and

³⁶ These two studies are typical examples of the popular view of Zhu's adoption of Marxism as ideological conversion rather than intellectual assimilation. See Yan Guozhong 閻國忠, *Zhu Guangqian meixue sixiang ji qi lilun tixi* 朱光潛美學思想及其理論體系 [The aesthetic thought and theoretical system of Zhu Guangqian] (1994), Chapters. 5, 6 and 7 and Zhu Shirong 朱式蓉 and Xu Daoming 許道明, *Zhu Guangqian - cong mitu dao tongjing* 朱光潛 - 從迷途到通徑 [Zhu Guangqian - from a wrong path to a coherent road] (1991), Chapters. 4 and 5.

³⁷ Zhu Guangqian, "Wo de wenyi sixiang de fandongxing" 我的文藝思想的反動性 [The reactionary nature of my thinking on literature and art], *Wenyi bao* 文藝報, vol. 2 (Jun 1956), in *QJ*, vol. 5, pp. 38-39.

³⁸ Mario Sabattini, "Tra critica e autocritica: Zhu Guangqian e il dibattito sull'estetica negli anni Cinquanta" [Between criticism and self-criticism: Zhu Guangqian and the debate on aesthetics in the 1950s], in Raoul Findeisen and Robert Gassmann eds., *Autumn Floods: Essays in Honour of Marián Gálik* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 363.

theoretical associations in ideas often tended to justify themselves in spite of apparent mechanical separations. Thus, while Zhu willingly accepted that he had to abandon his "bourgeois idealism" in order to adopt Marxist historical materialism, he was able to defend his ideas by borrowing arguments from Marxist theories. As D. W. Fokkema observes,³⁹ this paradoxical attitude is reflected in his article "Wo de wenyi sixiang de fandongxing" 我的文藝思想的反動性 (1956)." While he dismissed his ideas for being non-Marxist in the general sense, Zhu tried to justify his ideas by looking for moral support from Marxism in individual cases.⁴⁰

Zhu may have not realised or chosen to explain that he was able to identify at times with Marxist ideas although there were in fact similarities between his own ideas and Marx's. Since the academic environment of China in the 1950s was restricted within a single ideological orthodoxy, this sense of comparison certainly could not emerge. Nevertheless, if there were similarities, it was by no means surprising that they reflected the common concerns of nineteenth and twentieth century intellectuals about human existence and human value in the wake of industrialisation, inhumanity, warfare, social turmoil and moral deterioration which overshadowed modern society both in the West and in China. This may help explain why Zhu was able to turn to Marxism so quickly and to adhere to it for the rest of his life.

6.3.1. Human Value and Art in Zhu and Marx's Thinking

As discussed earlier, Chinese traditional thinking, especially Confucianism and Taoism, appeared to be greatly influential upon Zhu Guangqian's ideas in his formative years. This influence was then blended with European humanist trends when he undertook

³⁹ Fokkema observes that "throughout the essay, however, very little and perhaps only formal regret is shown. The question of the degree of his sincerity can be left aside here; the important fact is that Chu Kuang-ch'ien actually gives much information which generally was not presented to the readers of *Wen-i pao*." Under these circumstances, Zhu's self-criticism and even some self-degrading remarks should probably be taken at the semantic level and assessed contextually. See D. W. Fokkema, *Literary Doctrine in China and Soviet Influence, 1956-1960* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1965), pp. 93-94.

⁴⁰ See Zhu Guangqian, "Wo de wenyi sixiang de fandongxing" 我的文藝思想的反動性 [The reactionary nature of my thinking on literature and art] (1956), in *QJ*, vol. 5, pp. 11-39.

Western studies. Almost inevitably, he followed the evolutionary path of Western emphasis on human value, namely to see human beings as part of nature and interrelating with nature with their specific gifts for creating their own reality. In an effort to find a perfect combination of idealism and naturalism to explicate the true nature of human beings in a Chinese way, he traced Western thinking from Greek Classicism to 19th century Romanticism, from Romanticism through German idealism to Nietzsche and Croce.⁴¹

It may be worthwhile to note that Zhu's attraction to Nietzsche and Croce may have stemmed from the fact that both of these thinkers endeavoured to overcome Kantian transcendentalism and Hegelian mystical tendencies. As observed earlier, Zhu was impressed by the notion of the this-worldliness and unreserved affirmation of human value illuminated in the theories of both Nietzsche and Croce. Nietzsche especially impressed Zhu with his notion of the Dionysian reconciling with the Apollonian. This notion set up a sensible value of humans as rational beings in nature and, at the same time, echoed Zhu's paradigm of 'action' interrelating with, and being directed by, 'tranquillity'.

Marx was born in times when the growth of capitalist production was degrading human value. He was passionate about the value of human beings and their fate, and his concern about the alienation of humanity under the capitalist mode of production preoccupied his entire intellectual life. In his earlier writings, on which Zhu focused particular attention, Marx characterised his position as 'humanist' and 'naturalist.' He studied from Romanticism to the philosophy of Hegel, then through left-Hegelianism and a brief period of bourgeois liberalism, to the agnostic materialism of Feuerbach, developing his philosophy of dialectical historical materialism. His theory gives full recognition to the dynamic, ever-changing character of existence and to the infinite interrelatedness of phenomena in both nature and society. While human thought is considered a function of the bodily organism, the mind is seen not merely as a passive reflector of the external world

⁴¹ For the development of Zhu's thought, see his own summary in the article, "Wo de wenyi sixiang de fandongxing" (1956), in *QJ*, vol. 5, pp. 12-38.

but as possessing a fundamental initiative and creativity, a power of working upon and re-moulding the environment through the force of new ideas.⁴²

On the one hand, Marx tried to show that human consciousness is held in bondage by the relations of capitalist production and thus advocated the abolishment of private property. On the other hand, he stated that human beings are dominated by the total product of their own labour. Since conscious existence is associated with human beings' actual life-process, consciousness is able to indicate beforehand changes in the mode of production, for instance in forms of the superstructure such as law, philosophy, religion or art. For Marx, "Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. ... real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms."⁴³ In this way, although consciousness is shaped by the material base, it is able to transcend its material base and accordingly change history. Therefore, as Maynard Solomon suggests, Marxism not only allowed for the heightening of consciousness as a necessary precondition for historical progress, but also demanded it.⁴⁴

In an article published in 1941, Zhu Guangqian did not develop his perspective of consciousness from a politico-economic point of view, although he did affirm politics as the other important element for social progress, alongside education.⁴⁵ However, Zhu already shared Marx's confidence in regard to the affective role of consciousness and gave priority to the transformation and cultivation of the individual mind for the betterment of society. He acknowledged that social progress needs change in external conditions, in other words in the material base of Marxist theory, but warned of the danger of materialist determinism, which may deprive human beings of freedom of will, moral responsibility and subsequently human value. He asserted that human power is able to transform society

⁴² See Robert C. Tucker, "Introduction," *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. xix-xlii.

⁴³ Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 36.

⁴⁴ See Maynard Solomon, "Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels," in Maynard Solomon ed., *Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979), p. 15.

⁴⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zheng yu jiao" 政與教 [Politics and education], *Sixiang yu shidai yuekan* 思想與時代月刊, vol. 3 (Oct 1941), in *QJ*, vol. 9, pp. 87-93.

and that it is therefore everyone's responsibility to organise society for the satisfaction of human ideals.⁴⁶ Based on this assumption, he placed considerable emphasis on the cultivation of consciousness of human being's own value as creator by means of education, especially aesthetic education.

Zhu and Marx both regard aesthetic feeling achieved through art as the highest form of consciousness. Although Marx discusses art under the category of the material base of the superstructure and considers that it is closely related to class consciousness, he nevertheless sees the transcending power of art as being able to transport human beings from the negative reality of an alienated class society to a different stage of reality by means of its consciousness-transforming essence. This means that art as the historical product of labour in the environment of material production does not necessarily run parallel with the development of material basis. In Marx's words, "it is well known that certain periods of the highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organisation."⁴⁷ This is because, instead of ideological consciousness, art appeals to the universal awareness of human essence. A work of art, then, is an embodiment of something new born out of the old, or, to be more specific, assumes a deeper dimension out of socially inherited materials.⁴⁸

In Marx's view, therefore, art or artistic activity is a process of humanisation rather than ideological transformation. Art, in the course of revealing the inner truth of nature and society, educates human senses. According to Sidney Finkelstein's interpretation, such a process of education involves first the humanisation of nature by progressively revealing the secrets of nature for human being's benefit, then humanisation of human relations which have suffered dehumanisation due to profit-oriented production. In progressive discovery,

⁴⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, *Tan xiuyang* 談修養 [Discussion of self-cultivation] (Chongqing: Chongqing zhongzhou chubanshe, 1943), in *QJ*, vol. 4, pp. 38-39.

⁴⁷ Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse (Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy)* (1857-58), in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 245.

⁴⁸ See Sidney Finkelstein, "Art as Humanisation," in Maynard Solomon ed., *Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979), p. 278.

understanding, mastery and reshaping of the laws governing the organisation of society, human relations become more humane in the sense that destructive antagonisms are replaced by cooperation, and ignorance and fear by kinship and understanding, and through cooperation the individual is enabled to develop more freely.⁴⁹

In Mikhail Lifschitz's account, the ultimate purpose of Marx's aesthetic is to offer the resolution of the contradictions between the growth of productive forces and the increasing alienation of the productive classes, and to provide a means of abolishing the contradictions between oppressors and the oppressed and between physical and mental labour, thus making possible the creation of a classless, un-alienated, universal culture.⁵⁰

In a similar manner, Zhu saw the transcendental side of art in human life and possessed a high ideal of aesthetic cultivation to achieve a state of mind in human beings where the sense of beauty [*mei* 美] unites with the sense of truth [*zhen* 真] and goodness [*shan* 善]. From the very beginning of his studies on aesthetics, Zhu was clearly more interested in the expressive aspect of aesthetic phenomena. Placing human emotions in the critical position within aesthetic activity, he claimed that without emotions aesthetic experience is void. In his writing published in the 1930s, he demonstrated that human beings relate to the outside world through their own emotions:

Emotions are projected onto things as if things possess an inherent propensity to cause certain emotions. We treat lifeless objects same as ourselves as being full of life, just like ourselves, feeling that they also have personality, emotions and actions.⁵¹

This does not mean, however, that human emotions are the the prior source for aesthetic images. In aesthetic activity, Zhu added, so-called empathy is an interflowing process between the subject and the object mediated by subjective emotions,⁵² and yet emotions are derived from nowhere but real life.⁵³ The underlying claim is that human

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 279.

⁵⁰ See Mikhail Lifshitz, *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx*, trans. by Ralph B. Winn (London: Pluto Press, 1973), p. 68.

⁵¹ Zhu Guangqian, *Tan mei* 談美 [Talking about beauty] (1932), in *QJ*, vol. 2, p. 22.

⁵² See *ibid.*

beings, with unique mental capacities and an active way of living, are able to communicate with the objective world with full confidence of their own value. Zhu asserted that "human life is a form of art in a broad sense because, in actively living life, human beings create their own history."⁵⁴

Zhu was acutely aware, however, that life in China had in reality been far from his ideal status for many years. Nevertheless, his confidence in humans' ability to improve their social existence never weakened. In numerous essays written between the 1920s and 1940s, Zhu endeavoured to make the point that "it was human nature to pursue truth, goodness and beauty,"⁵⁵ and attributed the decline of morality, human value and dignity to the impotent political system and general ignorance. Therefore, apart from hoping for better politics, he applied his efforts to education and especially aesthetic education in order to awaken people's self-knowledge of human creativity.⁵⁶ He held that once one achieves internal harmony and order through aesthetic education, one is emancipated from basic sensuousness, narrow-mindedness and the restrictions of nature. That is to say, human beings will reach a level of mental and emotional freedom, and total humanity where they may attain the sublime experience of self-consciousness through art.⁵⁷

Although Zhu did not reach the same conclusion as Marx in terms of seeing the alienation of human beings as a consequence of the capitalist mode of production, his humanist inclination equals that of Marx as regards its concern for the human condition, expectations of human society and confidence in human value. Expectations of humanity and concerns about the fragmentation of modern society characterise their theories of both. In Zhu's case, the social evils that hamper human progress are ignorance and social injustice. Marx, on the other hand, maintained that it is the commoditisation of labour that is guilty

⁵³ See *ibid.*, p. 91.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Zhu Guangqian, "Tan meigan jiaoyu" 談美感教育 [About aesthetic education], *Tan xiuyang* 談修養 (1943), in *QJ*, vol.4, p. 143.

⁵⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zheng yu jiao" 政與教 [Politics and education] (1941), in *QJ*, vol. 9, pp. 87-93.

⁵⁷ Zhu Guangqian, "Tan meigan jiaoyu" 談美感教育 [About aesthetic education] (1943), in *QJ*, vol.4, pp. 143-151.

of denying human beings the full enjoyment of their creative potential. Despite differences in perspective, Zhu and Marx seem to share a similar interpretation of human happiness as the emancipation of the consciousness.

6.3.2. Pragmatic Approach

Since their theories are based on human reality and put human destiny in human hands, both Zhu and Marx reject the method of deductive reasoning. They adopt an approach which draws conclusions not from preconceived premises but rather from tangible human facts: social relations in Marx's case and daily activities in Zhu's. Both make similar efforts not to be trapped in either crude materialism or absolute idealism, but instead find a middle ground where the object and the subject come into a meaningful relationship through human activities.

Marx states that "it will be seen how subjectivity and objectivity, spirituality and materiality, activity and suffering, lose their antithetical character, and thus their existence, as such antitheses only within the framework of society; it will be seen how the resolution of the *theoretical* antitheses is *only possible in a practical way*, by virtue of the practical energy of men. Their resolution is therefore by no means merely a problem of understanding, but a *real* problem of life, which *philosophy* could not solve precisely because it conceived this problem as *merely* a theoretical one."⁵⁸ So, "in direct contrast to German philosophy that descends from heaven to earth," Marx claims that he only seeks to "ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh"⁵⁹ For Marx, it is by virtue of the living and concrete individuals that consciousness is assigned to.

⁵⁸ Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 89.

⁵⁹ Marx, *The German Ideology*, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 154.

Similarly, in his *The Psychology of Tragedy*, Zhu expressed his disapproval of the speculative philosophies of either materialism or idealism which, in his view, ignore individual concrete problems and start their speculations at the wrong end.

Instead of building up a theory inductively from a careful examination of the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Racine, and other great tragic poets, they deduce it *a priori* from some preconceived philosophical system. They set out with a major metaphysical premise, and, to prove it, they give tragedy as a particular instance. But in doing so, they use that very premise to explain the nature of Tragedy, forgetting that it is the premise itself which requires demonstration.⁶⁰

Zhu criticised Hegel for affording "a typical instance of such arguing in a vicious circle" by starting "with the general philosophical notion of the Absolute, ... and that every thing in this world, evil and misfortunes not excluded, may be ethically explained and justified."⁶¹

In order to avoid what he saw as theoretical inversion, Zhu ensured that his views derived directly from below and that all his arguments were backed up with factual evidence. It seems to be his style to appeal to facts and common sense no matter whether in scholarly theses or in advisory letters to young people.

In *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), Zhu explicitly declared that his purpose in writing the book was not to deduce an aesthetic theory out of a philosophical principle, but to induce some applicable theories from psychological facts occurring in aesthetic creations and appreciations.⁶² His initial approval of Croce's notion of intuition as expression seemed to be grounded in evidential data from the psychological fact of "empathy." His disapproval of the same concept in relation to other artistic activities, on the other hand, was also supported by the psychological fact of "associative thinking." This is probably the reason for which Sabattini criticises him for being ready to "respond to any type of inquiry" in order to "bring unity to theories that may seem wholly contrasting at first sight."⁶³

⁶⁰ Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, pp. 6-7.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 197.

Zhu, however, would rather rely on observable facts, no matter how distracting they may appear to be, than on what he called an abstract logical notion of causality. He once argued:

In a world like ours where every event is inextricably related to an infinite mass of other events and where the whole determines the parts, there are no more isolated solitary causes than there are isolated solitary effects. ... both isolated causes and isolated effects are phantoms created by formal logic and atomistic psychology; they never exist in actual mental life.⁶⁴

6.3.3. Praxis and Action/Tranquillity

Since Zhu and Marx both agree that theorisation must derive from fact, it logically follows that they both see human activities which engender facts as the fundamental standpoint for making sense of the world. In Marx's view, the notion of praxis is applied to show that "the coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionising practice."⁶⁵ In Zhu's case, the action/observation paradigm was adhered to as his perspective for evaluating a cultivated way of life. For Zhu, life consists of a flux of moments of realisation that involves actual action and reflective thinking. In interacting with the objective world both physically and mentally, human beings' selves are obtained.⁶⁶

In Marx's theory, praxis is the central concept for his historical materialism because it constitutes the meeting point of and the unity between human beings and nature, the social and the material, consciousness and reality. Granted that human beings are part of nature and that human essence is somewhat conditioned by external objects,⁶⁷ Marx nevertheless

⁶³ Mario Sabattini, "'Crocianism' in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's *Wen-i hsin-li-hsüeh*," *East and West*, vol. 20, no. 1/2 (March/June 1970), p. 179.

⁶⁴ Zhu Guangqian, *The Psychology of Tragedy*, p. 8.

⁶⁵ Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 144.

⁶⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Kan xi yu yan xi - liang zhong rensheng lixiang" 看戲與演戲 - 兩種人生理想 [Watching and performing a drama - two different ideals of life], *Wenxue zazhi* 文學雜誌, vol. 2, no. 2 (Jul 1947), in *QJ*, vol. 9, p. 257 and "Shengming" 生命 [Life], *Wenxue zazhi* 文學雜誌, vol. 2, no. 3 (Aug 1947), in *QJ*, vol. 9, p. 274.

⁶⁷ In Marx's own words, "as a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being he is *suffering*, conditioned and limited creature, like animals and plants. That is to say, the *objects* of his impulses exist outside him as *objects* independent of him; but these objects are *objects* of his *need*, essential *objects*,

stresses that "to say that man is a *corporeal*, living real, sensuous, objective being full of natural vigour is to say that he has *real, sensuous objects* as the objects of his being or of his life, or that he can only *express* his life in real, sensuous objects."⁶⁸ In other words, it is human nature to externalise or express oneself in changing ways and forms. Accordingly, "it is just in the working-up of the objective world, therefore that man first really proves himself to be a *species being* ... Through and because of this production, nature appears as *his* work and his reality. The object of labour is, therefore, the *objectification of man's species life*: for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created."⁶⁹

This perspective of Marx's, which positions human beings in an organic relationship with their environment, with various human activities acting as mediating agents, coincides with Zhu's fundamental attitude towards human beings and human life. Originally, Zhu did not doubt either that human beings are a part of nature in the sense in which human beings are physically limited or conditioned by nature like other creatures such as animals and plants.⁷⁰

However, he also stressed that it is human nature to be creative, expressive and assertive of one's vitality at any possible moment. That is why Zhu adopted Mencius' concept of practical fulfilment of one's nature [*jinxing* 盡性] as the explanation for his viewpoint. For Zhu, human life is not to predict or to reduce repeatedly in the same way, but to take an actual part in the process of realising or doing because the purpose of life is embedded in living itself. In giving shape to a goal, human beings simultaneously realise

indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers." See Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 115.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 76.

⁷⁰ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan rensheng yu wo" 談人生與我 [About life and the self], *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people] (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 57-58.

their being.⁷¹ To use Zhu's own words, "happiness is achieved through the process of action [*dong* 動]."72

It seems that both Marx's concept of praxis and Zhu's concept of action claim all-rounded human experience which includes not only the activity of the five senses like other living creatures, but also thinking, wanting, loving and willing. The paradigm of action/tranquillity [*dong/jing* 動/靜] which characterises Zhu's theories assures that actual human involvement with nature is not blind and instinctive but rather intentional and purposive. Thus, apart from action, tranquillity is integrated to form the whole experience of human life. However, Zhu's notion of tranquillity does not transcend beyond this world but, as a process of gaining knowledge of this world, it returns to serve in the actual doing [*dong* 動].⁷³

In Marx's view, labour or production transforms nature in two ways: it changes natural objects to suit human needs but, in changing the objective world, human beings also change their subjective condition. When human beings are satisfied with their needs, this satisfaction will challenge the subject to perceive new need, in a never-ending process of dialectic development between the subject and the object. The constant challenges then require human beings to develop their powers, perceptions and ideas in order to adapt a more complex labour process. Therefore, human beings' essential power developed in the process indicates the maturation of human mental capacity which is acquired through creative production. As Marx says, "only through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective *human* sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form - in short, *senses* capable of human gratifications, senses confirming themselves as essential powers of *man*) either cultivated or brought into being. For not

⁷¹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dong" 談動 [About 'action'] (1929), *Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信, in *QJ*, vol. 1, pp. 11-13. and "Shengming" 生命 [Life], in *QJ*, vol. 9, p. 274

⁷² Zhu Guangqian, "Tan dong" 談動 [About 'action'] (1929), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 13. For the concept of *dong* 動 [(actual) doing], see "2.4 Towards a New Philosophy of Life," in Chapter II above.

⁷³ See Zhu Guangqian, "Kan xi yu yan xi - liang zhong rensheng lixiang" 看戲與演戲 - 兩種人生理想 [Watching and performing a drama - two different ideals of life], in *QJ*, vol. 9, pp. 258-259.

only the five senses but also the so-called mental senses - the practical senses ... - come to be by virtue of its object, by virtue of *humanised* nature."⁷⁴

6.3.4. Reciprocity of the Subject and the Object

Since the theories of Marx and Zhu maintain a comprehensive view of human reality whose multiple aspects, to borrow Henri Arvon's words, can be understood only if they are consistently dealt with from the point of view of the whole,⁷⁵ they both apply the method of drawing evidence from the interrelationship between the subject and the object or, more specifically, between human beings and their environment. That is to say, as far as human reality is concerned, human beings and their external existence are interpreted to be in the process of holistic, dynamic and reciprocal interactions and neither side may claim absolute autonomy from the other. While Marxist doctrine focuses more on the socio-economic aspect of reality by emphasising the interrelationship between the forces of production and social relations, the social infrastructure and the superstructure, Zhu's theories tend to scrutinise the individual state of mind or emotion as related to his way of living. The former tends towards sociology, economics and politics whereas the latter inclines to physiology, psychology and aesthetics. Nevertheless, both Marx and Zhu reject looking at human reality in fixity, either from the perspective of social relations in the Marxist sense or daily life in Zhu's sense.

Marx's methods which deny Hegelian mystical ideas and at the same time avoid Feuerbach's materialism, are intended to affirm the development of human beings and society as reciprocal historical interactions between economic and superstructural forces. Although Marx's doctrine takes the view that economic production is the ultimate element which determines historical development as its point of departure, it does not deny the reaction of the superstructure to the economic base; the totality which Marxist doctrine

⁷⁴ Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 89.

⁷⁵ See Henri Arvon, *Marxist Esthetics*, trans. by Helen R. Lane (Ithaca (N.Y.): Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 24.

pursues does not allow it to take sides and give credit to only one side at the expense of the other. As Engels explains, "political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary evolution, etc., is based on economic evolution. But they all react on each other, and also react on the economic base. The economic situation is not the *cause*, it is not the *sole agent* and all the rest merely a passive effect; rather there is a reciprocal effect stemming from economic necessity which *ultimately* is always the determining factor."⁷⁶

However, in setting the economic base and superstructure or material condition and consciousness in a perspective of historical evolution, Marxist theory also accepts that human consciousness may transit to the stage where the processes of thought are not traceable with precision from material conditions. When consciousness develops to the higher stage of abstractions, it enjoys a relative autonomy.⁷⁷

Accordingly, art and literature come into the Marxist concept as cultivating activities that raise human beings above their animal state through an enlightenment which develops the potential of humankind and offers people a vision of the future inherent in the world. Thus, in comprehending the truth of art, human beings become aware of their internal value or self in the context of the whole of humanity.⁷⁸ Engels highly appreciated the artistic perspective of Balzac's *Comédie humaine* and claimed that these stories provided "a complete history of French society" from which he had "learned more than from all the professional historians, economists and statisticians of the period together."⁷⁹ Therefore, as an intellectual production, unfolding social truths, revealing the inner workings of society and piercing the veil of false consciousness, art is able not only to surpass material

⁷⁶ Engels, "A letter to W. Borgius on Jan 25, 1894," in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, vol. 50, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2005), p. 264.

⁷⁷ The evolution of Marx's parallelism of material base and consciousness reflected in the *German Ideology* is examined in Philip J. Kain's *Marx' Method, Epistemology, and Humanism: A Study in the Development of His Thought* (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1986), pp. 70-76.

⁷⁸ See See Henri Arvon, *Marxist Esthetics*, p. 26.

⁷⁹ Engels, "A Letter to Margaret Harkness in April 1888," in Marx and Engels, *On Literature and Art A Selection of Writings*, ed. by Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1973), p. 43.

production but also in turn to affect the latter through the activities of enlightened human beings.⁸⁰

Marxist method, as asserting reciprocity of the object and the subject with acceptance of uneven development of consciousness, is echoed in Zhu's theories, especially his aesthetics. It is also Zhu's approach that human beings and their environment are mutually dependent on each other, but human beings are seen as the creators of human history.⁸¹ Zhu understood this relationship from two levels. From the fundamental level, he agreed that human beings, together with their consciousness, are primarily the product of their time. In criticising the Crocian concept of intuition as expression and art for defying social influence on the artist, he made his view clear:

An artist is also a social creature who is inevitably affected by the social environment she/he is in. Artistic motive may derive from one's heart, but external forces may stimulate it, encourage it, restrain it or suppress it. ... As a result, each period of history has its literary genre associated with the concurrent social milieu.⁸²

He also attributed personal taste and emotion in artistic creation or appreciation to one's background, experiences and education. In short, social upbringing makes marks on consciousness and accordingly emotions. Because of this essential relationship between human beings and their social environment, Zhu strongly believed and repeatedly emphasised that art has to reflect life.

However, the fact that the content and even form of art are mostly conditioned by the social milieu does not lead to the conclusion that art has to trail behind its social influences. Zhu also saw the relative autonomy of consciousness and possible counter-influences which it may exert on society. In his aesthetic theories, art is counted on as the educator of consciousness because it offers human beings the opportunity of disinterested contemplation which inspires human confidence to be their own masters.

⁸⁰ See Marx, "The English Middle Class," *New York Tribune* (1 Aug 1854), in *Marx Engels on Literature and Art* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), p. 524.

⁸¹ See Zhu Guangqian, *Tan xiuyang 談修養* [Discussion of self-cultivation] (1943), in *QJ*, vol. 4, p. 35 and 39.

⁸² Zhu Guangqian, *Wenyi xinlixue 文藝心理學* (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 364.

Artists who are more sincere, sensuous, observant and imaginative in the face of the fetishes of society are therefore responsible for "lending their eyes for us to see" the truths of the world.⁸³

Since it is individuals that constitute the totality of a society in Zhu's theories, he placed emphasis on the development of individual consciousness, and aesthetic education was thus regarded to serve this purpose. The underlying claim here is that cultivated individual consciousness can be expected to form an intellectual force which would give power to the progress of society.⁸⁴ Although Zhu did not seem to see that the reactions of individual consciousness towards society specifically contain class awareness as Marx did, the prospect of emancipated consciousness offered in Zhu's aesthetics coincides with Marxist expectations of the future of the human world, namely liberation from class bondage in which human consciousness has been held by the relations of material production.⁸⁵

⁸³ See *ibid.*, p. 324.

⁸⁴ See Zhu Guangqian, *Tan xiuyang* [Discussion of self-cultivation] (1943), in *QJ*, vol. 4, pp. 35-41 and "Tan meigan jiaoyu" 談美感教育 [About aesthetic education] (1943), in *QJ*, vol.4, pp. 143-154.

⁸⁵ See Maynard Solomon, "Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels," in Maynard Solomon ed., *Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979), pp. 20-21.

CHAPTER VII

Reconstruction of Marxism

Although the nationwide ideological reform officially ended in 1952, it continued to gain momentum among intellectuals, especially in literary circles. The Communist Party gave particular attention to the thought reform of writers, wanting to ensure that all literary works followed the strict guidelines of the Party and loyally assisted the Party with its ideological reform. Through Party-controlled "people's organisations" such as the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and the Chinese Writers' Union, the Communist Party either launched public criticisms against writers who deviated from the Party line, or, in extreme cases, exercised security discipline by arresting those who ventured overt criticism of the Party's policies.¹

Between 1953 and 1956, major public criticisms were levelled at eminent scholars such as Yu Pingbo 俞平伯, Hu Feng 胡風 and Zhu Guangqian to coerce intellectuals into abandoning what the Party called bourgeois idealism. Yu Pingbo, the leading scholar of classical Chinese literature, was criticised for failing to apply the Marxist concept of class struggle in his literary evaluation of the novel *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. After Feng Xuefeng 馮雪峰, the editor of *Wenyi bao* 文藝報 (the influential forum for the Party's policies), was stripped of his position for taking Yu Pingbo's side in the course of criticism, Yu Pingbo backed down and adjusted his opinion to the then standard Marxist interpretations. The biggest political reaction was against Hu Feng. As Denton observes, Hu Feng claimed that "an empirical approach to literary creation is superior to one dictated by doctrinaire ideology or inflexible party policy, and the writer's individual subjective spirit is the necessary means of capturing objective reality in language."² His persistent argument for the relative autonomy of literature and his criticism of orthodox realism had

¹ See Merle Goldman, *Literary Dissent in Communist China* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 87-105.

² Kirk A. Denton, *The Problematic of Self in Modern Chinese Literature: Hu Feng and Lu Ling* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 154.

caused considerable resentment among the leftist writers of the 1930s and 40s who by then occupied important positions in the literary establishment. After Zhou Yang 周揚, the deputy director of the Propaganda Department, who had long been in both political and personal discord with Hu Feng, made a speech entitled "We Must Fight" in which Hu Feng was charged with being anti-Marxist, an all-round attack started and continued against Hu Feng and his so-called "Hu Feng Clique" in 1954. Hu Feng and more than sixty of this so-called "conspirators" ended up either in labour camps or in prison in 1955 despite their self-criticism.³

7.1. Zhu's Self-criticism in 1956

It was within the context of this enforcement of the Party's line that the 'Big Debate on Aesthetics' was launched in 1956 in which Zhu Guangqian, who had been criticised by leftist writers for advocating idealist aesthetics since the 1930s, became the main target.⁴ Ironically, the campaign following the arrest of Hu Feng was hailed as the implementation of the Party's new policy of 'Bai hua qi fang, bai jia zheng ming' 百花齊放, 百家爭鳴 [Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend]. Unlike Hu Feng, Zhu was never critical of the Party's official line after 1949. As a matter of fact, he was grateful that Zhou Yang had given him a 'friendly' warning shortly after the campaign to criticise him started in early 1956.⁵ Thus, instead of insisting on his own theoretical terminology which might sound bourgeois and politically inappropriate, Zhu applied the Party's ideology to argue his point with his critics. First of all, he wrote an article entitled "The Reactionary Nature of My Thinking on Literature and Art" and categorically rejected

³ See Merle Goldman, *Literary Dissent in Communist China*, pp. 106-157 and Kirk A. Denton, *The Problematic of Self in Modern Chinese Literature: Hu Feng and Lu Ling* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 81-84 and pp. 152-155.

⁴ See Zhang Daming, Chen Xuechao and Li Baoyan, *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue sichao shi* 中國現代文學思潮史 [A history of the trend of modern Chinese literary thought], vol. 2 (Beijing: Beijing shiyue wenyi chubanshe, 1995), p. 900.

⁵ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zhu Guangqian jiaoshou tan meixue" 朱光潛教授談美學 [Professor Zhu Guangqian's talk on aesthetics], *Jiaoyu* 教育, vol. 1 and 2 (1981), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 534.

his own aesthetic theories as decadently idealist. Throughout the article, however, as Fokkema observes,⁶ it seems that Zhu found it painful to juggle the side of himself which was keen to gain the Party's acceptance with the other side which sought academic sincerity.

On the one hand, the article was filled with political expressions labelling his own intellectual background as 'feudal,' colonial, bourgeois and idealistic, and Zhu, echoing the Party's logic, now criticised himself as anti-people and anti-society.⁷ On the other hand, Zhu defended his theories under the cloak of this jargonised self-accusation. For instance, he accused his own theories of subjective idealism for following Croce's concept of intuition as expression, denying abstract thinking [*chouxiang siwei* 抽象思惟], although his theories never denied the possible intervention of abstract thinking. He then argued that he found his self-accusation of previous theories to be inconsistent with the fact that he had made efforts to make corrections:

I discovered that these conclusions (i.e. that intuition does not involve abstract thinking and therefore is irrelevant to morality or politics) do not agree with the facts known to common sense, nor do they accord to my own general views of art. I tried to compromise by saying that intuition is limited to merely a moment and yet artistic activity extends to the preceding as well as succeeding periods of the intuitive moment. Accordingly, abstract thinking such as moral or political considerations may affect art. Up until today, I still believe that this view is basically correct because it agrees with the dialectic unification of thinking in images and abstract thinking.⁸

Zhu reminded his readers of the fact that when he published his *Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 in 1936, he had come to the conclusion that idealism does not after all succeed in overcoming the dualism of mind [*xin* 心] and matter [*wu* 物]. He stressed that his effort to add the psychological theories of empathy and psychical distance was intended to amend what he believed to be the theoretical error of Croce's notion of intuition as expression.

⁶ See D. W. Fokkema, *Literary Doctrine in China and Soviet Influence, 1956-1960*, pp. 93-94.

⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, "Wo de wenyi sixiang de fandongxing" 我的文藝思想的反動性 (1956), in *QJ*, vol. 5, pp. 11-16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Therefore, he had always attributed beauty neither to mind nor to matter, but to the interrelationship of the two.⁹

However, as soon as Zhu came to politically sensitive issues such as art serving the people, he backed down and filled the other half of the article with self-accusation. He unconvincingly criticised himself for setting art above ordinary taste while Lenin and Mao Zedong saw art as belonging to the working people and being deeply rooted in them. Ignoring the possible inconsistency from a positive assessment of his own general views of art in the first part of this article, he accused himself of denying the working people their artistic taste by giving the right of art exclusively to the cultured few. He expressed his regret for saying that what was directly reflected in art could be commonly seen or felt, and yet it was usually the part not commonly seen or felt that begged for real taste,¹⁰ and that such taste was, in most cases, attained first by a cultural elite group.¹¹ Accordingly, he charged his own theory with the crime of being anti-people and anti-society.

Given that such ideological prejudice may sound absurd, Zhu pointed two problematic views on art. The first one is that, according to Zhu's writing in the 1930s, taste develops with one's experiences in life and real taste is thus the reflection of one's thorough understanding of human life,¹² hence there is no necessary conflict or insurmountable hurdle between good taste and ordinary taste, or elite and working people. That is, the possibility of improvement of taste from ordinary to excellent is not eliminated. If in order to conform to the political orthodoxy, he insists that his previous interpretation of refined taste treats it as the privilege of an elitist minority to an exclusion of popularisation

⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 21-27.

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 32. For the whole essay where the citation comes from see Zhu Guangqian, "Tan xue wenyi de ganku" 談學文藝的甘苦 [About the advantage and hardships of studying art and literature], *Mengshi wenchao* 孟實文鈔 [Collected writings of Mengshi] (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1936), in *QJ*, vol. 3, pp. 340-344.

¹¹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Wo de wenyi sixiang de fandongxing" [The reactionary nature of my thinking on literature and art], in *QJ*, vol. 5, p. 33. For the whole essay where the citation comes from, see Zhu Guangqian, "Tan quwei" 談趣味 [About taste], *Mengshi wenchao* 孟實文鈔 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 346.

¹² See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan du shi yu quwei de peiyang" 談讀詩與趣味的培養 [About reading poetry and cultivating taste], *Mengshi wenchao* 孟實文鈔 (1936), in *QJ*, vol. 3, p. 352.

of it, it not only contradicts his views on art with his emphasis on human value, but also his concept of aesthetic education through which it is possible to improve human taste from ordinary to excellent.

Another problem which would have created a dilemma for Zhu is that if he accepts that art only accommodates popular taste without requiring the help of higher taste to progress, then he must come to the conclusion that contrary to his claim, art does not perform the function of education, but passively reflects reality. In fact, he did not believe this, but rather still believed that art is able to affect people, or otherwise dies.¹³ In this way, art does have the capacity of leading ordinary taste.

However, Zhu chose to ignore the existence of any conflict or, under the circumstances, had to make his thinking conform to meet the guidelines. As a result, his article went from the absurd to the fallacious. Apart from belittling the cultural elite, the implication is that artists are a group of decadent escapists who "take advantage of their position of detached contemplation to enjoy other people's actual miseries."¹⁴ He then invalidated his own notion of aesthetic education since his own theories allegedly showed little confidence in ordinary taste.¹⁵ This strange logic carried him forward to a stranger conclusion that art served reality not in the manner of emotional affection, but through deliberate edification.¹⁶

Although Zhu claimed at the end of the article that, "with the help of ideological reform and the study of Marxist-Leninist ideas in literature and art, I have managed to pull myself from the swamp of decadent thought,"¹⁷ his troubles were far from over.

¹³ See Zhu Guangqian, "Wo de wenyi sixiang de fandongxing" 我的文藝思想的反動性 [The reactionary nature of my thinking on literature and art] (1956), in *QJ*, vol. 5, p. 33.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 36-38.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

7.2. Zhu's Reply to Cai Yi and Li Zehou during the Debate

Theorists, especially young theorists who had received an orthodox Marxist- Leninist education since 1949, unleashed intensified attacks on Zhu shortly after the publication of his article in June 1956. What his critics could not accept was that, despite his self-criticism, his aesthetics theories were not compatible with Leninist reflective materialism.¹⁸ Zhu, on the other hand, refused to change the substance of his aesthetics in many ways. Interestingly, both sides in the debate sought support from Marxism, in a similar way to the controversy between orthodox Marxism and Western Marxism in the West.¹⁹ However, orthodox Marxism in the mode of Leninist reflective materialism dominated the debate in China leaving Zhu very isolated in fighting to justify his theory aided by his own interpretation of Marxism in which he placed more emphasis on the recognition of complicated human activity and value.²⁰

Since both sides sought recourse to Marxist theories, they were to some extent politically protected from the danger of being labelled bourgeois rightists, especially in Zhu's case. The Anti-Rightist campaign launched in the following year of 1957 not only overshadowed the Hundred Flowers policy, but also reconfirmed ideological purity. This prescribed that the general form of the so-called big debates should go no further than orthodoxy. Paradoxically, however, the fact that Marxist historical materialism attracted various interpretations was because neither Marx nor Engels published their ideas on this question in a single systematic context. Instead, their ideas were scattered over a large number of writings and letters. In particular, it was widely though arguably accepted that Marxist thought could be divided as 'early Marx' and 'later Marx' because of his apparent change from a humanist and naturalist approach to that of historical materialism.²¹ As a

¹⁸ Qian Niansun 錢念孫, *Zhu Guangqian: chushi de jingshen yu rushe de shiye* 朱光潛: 出世的精神與入世的事業 [Zhu Guangqian: the spirit of transcending the world and the undertaking of going into the society] (2005), pp. 177-204.

¹⁹ See Robert Audi ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 539-540.

²⁰ Qian Niansun 錢念孫, *Zhu Guangqian* [Zhu Guangqian] (2005), pp. 179-186.

consequence, there was a grey area where different interpretations can be taken without obvious contradiction of Marxist theories. In 1950s China, this provided intellectuals with a political environment which had the capacity to accommodate controversies as long as they remained within the accepted ideological boundaries. For Zhu, this assured a political room which enabled him to practise a relatively independent interpretation of Marxist theories without having to submit himself to the standard dogmas.

The criticisms of Zhu during the debate concentrated on his approach to aesthetics, accusing it of opposing Marxist historical materialism. The criticisms came from two factions of theorists at different levels. One faction represented by Cai Yi 蔡儀, an aesthetician whose criticism of Zhu went back as far as the 1940s,²² accused Zhu's aesthetics of neglecting the material base by attributing beauty exclusively to the mind.

In his numerous articles on Zhu's aesthetics from 1956 to 1960, Cai Yi endeavoured to prove that the way in which Zhu dealt with art as the creation of the mind or expression of subjective emotions denied the existence of the objective world and its primordial influence on the human mind. With an assumption of the separation between subject and object derived from Leninist reflective materialism, Cai Yi maintained that Zhu wrongly put the human sense of beauty ahead of objective beauty while the human sense of beauty was in fact the consequence or the reflection of the later. Cai Yi's argument relied on what he believed to be Marxist-Leninist epistemology and asked, since being determines consciousness and consciousness only reflects being, how a natural scene can be said to express some sort of emotional state. At the same time, successful artistic production that

²¹ See Robert Audi ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, pp. 539-540.

²² Cai Yi's criticism of Zhu's aesthetic ideas started from 1944 in his book *Xin meixue* 新美學 [The new aesthetics] in which he accused Zhu's aesthetics of being subjective and based on idealism and metaphysics, claiming that "beauty is an objective reality, [and] the beauty of objective reality is the source of the aesthetic sense and of artistic beauty." See Cai Yi 蔡儀, *Xin meixue* 新美學 [The new aesthetics], 2 vols., Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1985 and 1991 (1st ed. 1948). This view was carried on in the debate in 1956. See Zhang Daming, Chen Xuechao and Li Baoyan, *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue sichao shi* 中國現代文學思潮史 [A history of the trend of modern Chinese literary thought], vol. 2, p. 872 and Octave Brière, *Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy 1898-1950*, trans. by Laurence G. Thompson (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), pp. 98-99.

generates a sense of beauty achieves this because it faithfully, realistically and profoundly reflects true social life - but not vice versa.²³

Cai Yi thus concluded that the beauty or truth which human beings see in the object or reality is not a creation of the human mind but rather a feature of the object or a characteristic of reality. All that consciousness can do is to comprehend the beauty of the object or the truth of reality.²⁴ By arguing that beauty exists in the objective world, Cai Yi opposed Zhu's concept that beauty is conceived only through human beings' aesthetic experiences. Cai Yi held that "if beauty or ugliness was based merely on the foundation of aesthetic experience, then it would be impossible to make a judgement of beauty or ugliness which varies from person to person. It follows then that beauty or ugliness would become an absolutely relative concept."²⁵ Although Cai Yi admitted that Zhu's theory of aesthetic experience was actually explained as an interrelated process between the subject and the object, he was still convinced that this process would only serve the purpose of the subject since "aesthetic experience is to express one's feeling by borrowing the image of the object."²⁶ Cai Yi argued that, as the image of the object in Zhu's sense was no longer the crude appearance of the object (which in Cai Yi's mind, was the primary cause for the sense of beauty) Zhu's idea thus deprived the object of any reasonable influence on the subject and relied completely on the subject.²⁷

Li Zehou, a member of another theoretical faction, also criticised Zhu's aesthetics for putting undue stress on subjective initiative despite its superficial recognition of the objective world as a material condition for aesthetic experience. Making the same assumption as Cai Yi, Li held that beauty possesses objectivity independent of human

²³ See Cai Yi 蔡儀, "Weishenme Zhu Guangqian de meixue sixiang shi weixinzhuyi de" 爲什麼朱光潛的美學思想是唯心主義的 [Why Zhu Guangqian's aesthetic thought is idealist] in Liu Changjiu 劉長久 and Pi Chaogang 皮朝綱 eds., *Zhongguo dangdai meixue lunwen ji* 中國當代美學論文集 [Collection of essays on aesthetics in contemporary China] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1988), p. 28.

²⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁷ See *ibid.*

consciousness and emotions. The human sense of beauty, in his view, is on the other hand a mere reflection or copy of such objective existence. Thus beauty is primary, basic and objective, while the sense of beauty and consciousness are secondary, derivative and subjective.²⁸

Unlike Cai, however, Li conceded that beauty is the product of mankind and thus should not be taken out of its human context and be treated solely as an original attribute of nature. Li observed that "without the social praxis of the human subject, a mere objective existence ruled by natural law would have nothing to do with mankind much less with value and beauty."²⁹ Nevertheless, Li's concept of mankind took a different point of departure from that of Zhu. While Zhu treated mankind as the whole progressive process of human consciousness in dealing with the objective world both in a narrow sense (i.e. aesthetic experience) and in a broad sense (i.e. social life), Li separated mankind's social praxis from the conscious actions of individuals. The social praxis of human beings is included in Li's discussion within the category of species being, constituting independent existence without the complement of individual consciousness. Accordingly, beauty which is interpreted to be the product of social praxis by species being simultaneously becomes an objective entity free from individual consciousness.

Li based his dichotomous view on Lenin's concept of the objectivity of nature and social praxis. His view was in accordance with Lenin, who maintained that the objectivity of social praxis does not mean that like nature, it exists independently of consciousness; indeed, social praxis would be meaningless without human activity, but nonetheless does not rely on individual consciousness for its existence. Whereas consciousness is variable,

²⁸ See Li Zehou 李澤厚, "Meigan, mei yu yishu - jianlun Zhu Guangqian de weixinzhuyi meixue sixiang" 美感, 美與藝術 - 兼論朱光潛的唯心主義美學思想 [On sense of beauty, beauty and art - comments on Zhu Guangqian's idealist thought of aesthetics], *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究, vol. 5 (1956), in *Meixue lunji* 美學論集 [Collection of essays on aesthetics] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1980), p. 25.

²⁹ Li Zehou 李澤厚, "Meixue san ti yi - yu Zhu Guangqian xiansheng jixu lunbian" 美學三題議 - 與朱光潛先生繼續論辯 [Three issues on aesthetics - a continued debate with Mr Zhu Guangqian], *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究, vol. 2 (1962), in Liu Changjiu 劉長久 and Pi Chaogang 皮朝綱 eds., *Zhongguo dangdai meixue lunwen ji* 中國當代美學論文集 [Collection of essays on aesthetics in contemporary China] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1988), p. 286.

social praxis is being.³⁰ "Materialism in general recognises objectively real being (i.e. matter) as independent of the consciousness, sensation, experience, etc., of humanity. Historical materialism recognises social being as independent of the social consciousness of humanity. In both cases, consciousness is only the reflection of being, at best an approximately true reflection of it."³¹ It seems that it is on this presumption of Lenin that Li Zehou set out his theorisation. Li accordingly stated that "since the objective world is independent of subjective will and follows its own track, then conscious and purposive human praxis, in order to make mark of its own will on the objective world, must accord, grasp and apply the laws manifested in the objective world."³² In Li Zehou's account, it is only through this adequacy and suitability of social praxis to the objective world that a sense of beauty or happiness arises on human's part. Beauty, then, must be the constitution of perceptual form which is in accord with the laws of nature and realistic content which boasts of the accumulation of social praxis. In this sense, beauty is objective and primary whilst a sense of beauty, on the other hand, is subjective and secondary.³³

Li Zehou maintained that the mistake in Zhu's theory was that it confused the different aspects of so-called subjective activity. Although social praxis and consciousness (i.e. knowing) are both subjective activities of mankind, consciousness as a mere knowing entity to itself does not realistically produce an effect on the outside world, whereas social praxis purposively changes the world through its own existence by establishing its own attributes, phenomena and patterns of development. Therefore, social praxis should be considered as an objective material force vis-à-vis individual consciousness. It follows then that beauty, as the product of social praxis, exists in its own right whereas individual consciousness can only passively reflect such beauty.³⁴

³⁰ See *ibid.*

³¹ Lenin, Vladimir I., *Materialism and Empiric-Criticism: Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947), pp. 337-338.

³² Li Zehou, "Meixue san ti yi" 美學三題議 (1962), in *Zhongguo dangdai meixue lunwen ji*, p. 286.

³³ See *ibid.*, pp. 286-290.

³⁴ See *ibid.* Also see Li Zehou, "Meigan, mei yu yishu - jianlun Zhu Guangqian de weixinzhuyi meixue sixiang" 美感, 美與藝術 - 兼論朱光潛的唯心主義美學思想 (1956), in *Meixue lunji* [Collection of essays on aesthetics], p. 25.

The problem exists that Zhu's aesthetics, at the very beginning, was intended to be a theory of events; he never seemed interested in discussing philosophical premises such as being and entity, believing that this would lead nowhere. This intellectual tendency was formed partly as a result of his Chinese traditional foundation, which treats human reality in terms of concrete events constituted by individual experience, and partly because of the influence he came under in Europe in the 1920s, where a trend of organism replacing mechanism and pragmatism replacing metaphysical rationalism was taking shape.³⁵

However, the fact that he was the target of the debate and his theories were widely believed to be idealist, a label which was a political taboo at the time, pressured him to shake off the shadow of idealism as soon as possible. It is discernible that Zhu also set his theories, at least in form, against Lenin's reflective materialism, trying to draw up a defence against critique of this in his own aesthetic theories. The issue between him and his critics became that of whether beauty originates in objective reality where social praxis unites with the objective world, or in the consciousness which is materialistically and socially conditioned but shows the characteristic of creativity in daily social practice.³⁶

While his critics remained faithful to Lenin's conclusion that the dialectic of consciousness and the objective world should be interpreted materialistically, Zhu, on the other hand, turned to Marx's more humanist and ethically oriented early writings. After reading Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, "Theses on Feuerbach" and *German Ideology*, Zhu was convinced that his concept of beauty as created by concrete human beings through specific interrelating activities with the object can be explained by the Marxist notion of praxis and dialectical method. He thus wrote several critical essays

³⁵ For an account of Western academic influence on Zhu, see Chapter III and for the influence of Chinese tradition on him, see Chapter I and II.

³⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Meixue zenyang cai neng gai shi youwu de you shi bianzheng de - ping Cai Yi tongzhi de meixue guandian" 美學怎樣才能既是唯物的又是辯證的 - 評蔡儀同志的美學觀點 [How can aesthetics be materialistic as well as dialectic? Comments on comrade Cai Yi's view on aesthetics], *Renmin ribao* 人民日報 (25 Dec 1956). Reprinted in Zhu Guangqian, *Meixue pipan lunwen ji* 美學批判論文集 [Critical essays of aesthetics] (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1958), in *QJ*, vol. 5, pp. 40-50. I referred to Elma E. Kopetsky's translation published in *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, vol. VI, no. 2 (Winter 1974-1975), pp. 4-18.

in which he endeavoured to illuminate the humanist dimension of Marx's historical materialism, which he believed had been distorted by his critics' invariable application of Lenin's theory of reflection to it.³⁷

Zhu held that the difference between himself and his critics was not the question of whether his theories deny that human consciousness is determined by social being but whether the former is also able to actively influence the latter in the process of practice. Zhu believed that the reason that his critics insisted on a one-way influence from the object to the subject was because of the metaphysical method they had adopted. He noted that his critics derived all aesthetic facts solely from Lenin's theory of reflection.

We can observe in the writings of those who participated in the debate on aesthetics that they intend to apply Marxism, but almost without exception they apply simply and without analysis Lenin's theory of reflection, and most of their references are to Lenin's book *Materialism and Empiric-Criticism*.³⁸

That is, "human beings' perception, conception as well as senses directly reflect the objective world which exists independently and determines human consciousness."³⁹ As a result, both social and natural beauty are autonomous entities which human consciousness is able only to reflect. Art, as human creation, may be beautiful not because it transcends social beauty or natural beauty but because it correctly typifies primary beauty either in nature or in social life. As an instance of this argument, Zhu stated in 1957:

We know the flower is red and this 'redness' is an attribute of the flower which exists objectively. Only when this attribute passes through the sense of vision and is reflected in the brain, is there the perception of 'redness'. ... The 'redness' which is perceived is just the 'redness' of the flower itself. Many aesthetic theorists

³⁷ These essays published between 1956 and 1958 were included in *QJ*, vol. 10 and his book *Meixue pipan lunwen ji* 美學批判論文集 [Critical essays of aesthetics] (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1958) in *QJ*, vol. 5.

³⁸ Zhu Guangqian, "Lun mei shi keguan yu zhuguan de tongyi" 論美是客觀與主觀的統一 [A discussion of beauty as an unity of the objective and the subjective], *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究, vol. 4 (August 1957). Reprinted in Zhu Guangqian, *Meixue pipan lunwen ji* 美學批判論文集 [Critical essays of aesthetics] (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1958), in *QJ*, vol 5, p. 62. I used Elma E. Kopetsky's translation with some modifications as there are critical errors. See Elma E. Kopetsky's translation of the article in *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, vol. VI, no. 3-4 (Spring-Summer 1975), p. 18.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

think that beauty is like that, too, that beauty exists objectively in the flower. (According to Cai Yi, beauty is a natural attribute of the flower, and in Li Zehou's view, it is a social attribute of the flower.) Only when this 'beauty' passes through the organs of sense and is reflected in the brain, is there the sense of 'beauty'; it does not depend on the consciousness of human beings who appreciate it. Therefore, it is objectively determined. In their views, this 'beauty' which is perceived is also just the 'beauty' of the flower itself; it is only a reflection of the beauty of the flower itself. Consequently, they say "beauty is primary and fundamental whereas the sense of beauty is secondary and derived." It follows that there are no differences between the assertions that "the flower is beautiful" and "the flower is red." ... However, is this appropriate reasoning?⁴⁰

Zhu observed that it is true that perception of the redness of a flower, the natural property of the object, is not what we subjectively create but rather what our consciousness reflects through the visual sense. Nevertheless, Zhu claimed that it would be absurd to accordingly deduce that the beauty of the flower is also its natural property like the colour red and projects its image onto our consciousness thus generating our sense of beauty.

Instead, Zhu asserted that beauty is the product of human creative activity, namely art, and that belongs to the category of social ideology or social consciousness. If this is so, according to Zhu, the crux of the problem is that Marx's historical materialism does not exclude ideological reaction to the social being. "Social ideology, being superstructure as opposed to material base, comprises politics, laws, philosophy, religion, literature and art. Its relation to the material base is more complex than sensuous reflection."⁴¹ While the material base (such as economic conditions, certain social relations and cultural resources) may well affect one's way of thinking, thinking nevertheless does not necessarily duly reflect the current material base.⁴² Zhu, therefore, concluded:

There is a fundamental difference between sensuous or scientific reflection and ideological reflection. Ideological reflection, motivated by the subjective aspect of one's ideological totality, reflects matter refractively, which may lead to modifying or even misrepresenting matter. In contrast, sensuous or scientific reflection is hardly affected by ideology and mirrors matter factually.⁴³

⁴⁰ Zhu Guangqian, "Lun mei shi keguan yu zhuguan de tongyi" 論美是客觀與主觀的統一 [A discussion of beauty as an unity of the objective and the subjective] (1957), in *QJ*, vol 5, pp. 62-63; Elma E. Kopetsky's translation, pp. 18-19.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64

⁴² See *ibid.*, pp. 63-65.

As far as art was concerned, Zhu considered Lenin's theory of reflection as applicable only to the perceptive stage of artistic activity. For instance, before comprehending the beauty of a cherry blossom, one has to perceive the colour, the form and the smell in order to distinguish this object from another. At this stage, one does indeed reflect matter sensuously or scientifically because one's ideological background is not involved. It is only at the stage of artistic representation of the previously cognised material that the influence of one's ideological background comes to play its part and certain values (such as beauty) may be attached.⁴⁴

In giving this assessment, Zhu hoped to justify the role of both subject and object by placing them in the context of human activity. He tried to persuade his critics that the relationship between human beings and the world was not a static one-way mechanism, but a dynamic process where human beings know the world and act upon it for purposes of their own. Zhu was aware of the fact that his critics were more than reluctant to acknowledge the active role of the subjective due to their mechanical materialist approach as well as their fear of being labelled as idealist.

In order to support his view, Zhu quoted Marx: "the chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism ... is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of *contemplation*, but not as *human sensuous activity, practice*, not subjectively. Hence it happened that the *active side*, in contradistinction to materialism, was developed." Zhu argued alongside Marx that "the question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. Man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question."⁴⁵ Zhu thus drew the attention of his critics to the question of whether

⁴³ Ibid., p. 65

⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, pp. 65- 68.

⁴⁵ Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" (1845), in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 144. See Zhu Guangqian, "Lun mei shi keguan yu zhuguan de tongyi" 論美是客觀與主觀的統一

aesthetics should be understood from an epistemological point of view in the first place.

He pointed out:

Since the German scholar Baumgarten established aesthetics as an independent discipline in 1750, aesthetics has long been treated by philosophers such as Kant, Hegel and Croce solely as epistemology. Some current aesthetic theorists who consider literature and art only from the point of view of reflection also regard beauty simply as epistemology.⁴⁶

Zhu endeavoured to pull the debate out of the trap of the question of the metaphysical approach to the essence of beauty which his theories had sought to avoid, and instead to encourage concentration on the actual aesthetic phenomena through which beauty was produced.⁴⁷ He thus hailed Marx's theory of praxis because it gave him a legitimate right to return to his original interest in the actual process of the artistic activities of human beings.

7.3. Zhu's Interpretation of Marxism

The inspiration which Zhu obtained from Marx's notion of praxis lies in its humanist, historical, realistic and dialectical treatment of the relationship of human beings and the objective world. Firstly, Zhu agreed with Marx that it is through human praxis that human beings make their marks on nature as species being, which in turn provides human beings with humanised sensibility.⁴⁸ As Marx says:

Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material re-actions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to

[A discussion of beauty as an unity of the objective and the subjective] (1957), in *QJ*, vol 5, pp. 72-74.

⁴⁶ Zhu Guangqian, "Lun mei shi keguan yu zhuguan de tongyi" 論美是客觀與主觀的統一 [A discussion of beauty as an unity of the objective and the subjective] (1957), in *QJ*, vol 5, p. 70. Elma E. Kopetsky's translation, p. 28.

⁴⁷ See *ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

⁴⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, "Shengchan laodong yu ren dui shijie de yishu zhangwo - Makesizhuyi meixue de shijian guandian" 生產勞動與人對世界的藝術掌握 - 馬克思主義美學的實踐觀點 [Productive labour and human artistic appreciation of the world - the concept of praxis in Marxist aesthetics], *Xin jianshe* 新建設, vol. 4 (Apr 1960), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 200.

his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature.⁴⁹

This reciprocal process of human and nature, in Zhu's view, not only acknowledges interdependency between the subject and the object, but also more importantly indicates the prospect of gradual sophistication of human mental power as the result of constant feedback from objectified reality. In other words, the more human essential power is objectified, the higher the demand becomes for human consciousness to adjust. It thus follows then that human praxis is not mere instinctive activity solely for the purposes of crude practical needs; indeed, it develops ceaselessly from a lower condition to a higher condition through constant trying in the light of theorisation.⁵⁰ Thus, as Zhu cited Marx, "the objectification of the human essence both in its theoretical and practical aspects is required to make man's *sense human*, as well as to create the *human sense* corresponding to the entire wealth of human and natural substance."⁵¹

Secondly, this would be possible only if knowledge and action, or theory and practice, were not divorced for a moment in the whole process of objectification of human essence. Their continuous mutual dependency and stimulation must then be embodied in the real daily life of individual human beings. Zhu criticised Li Zehou for abstracting practice from theory by placing the former in the category of objective social being which is independent of individual consciousness.⁵² Consequently, social praxis is deprived of the realness, concreteness and purposiveness, which are considered by Marx to be created by real individual social beings. As Marx observes, "man, much as he may therefore be a *particular* individual (and it is precisely his particularity which makes him an individual, and a real

⁴⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 344.

⁵⁰ See Zhu Guangqian, "Shengchan laodong yu ren dui shijie de yishu zhangwo" 生產勞動與人對世界的藝術掌握 - 馬克思主義美學的實踐觀點 [Productive labour and human artistic appreciation of the world] (1960), in *QJ*, vol. 10, pp. 190-200.

⁵¹ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 89; Zhu Guangqian, "Shengchan laodong yu ren dui shijie de yishu zhangwo" [Productive labour and human artistic appreciation of the world], in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 201.

⁵² See Zhu Guangqian, "Lun mei shi keguan yu zhuguan de tongyi" 論美是客觀與主觀的統一 [A discussion of beauty as an unity of the objective and the subjective] (1957), in *QJ*, vol 5, pp. 73-74.

individual social being), is just as much the *totality* - the ideal totality - the subjective existence of thought and experienced society present for itself; just as he exists also in the real world as the awareness and the real enjoyment of social existence, and as a totality of human life-activity."⁵³ Zhu argued in favour of Marx's approach, namely that individual consciousness should not be separated from social relations, religious beliefs, nationality, education and so on.

Thirdly, from the corresponding relationship between knowledge and action, or theory and practice, engendered in actual social life, Zhu readily accepted Marx's proposal of a genetic link between productive labour and artistic activity, and thus their shared common characteristic, that is the creative appropriation of the world. To Marx, productive labour is the specific form of production performed by human beings. "We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. ... At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his *modus operandi*, and to which he must subordinate his will."⁵⁴ Nature, then "appears as *his* work and his reality. The object of labour is, therefore, the *objectification of man's species life*: for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created."⁵⁵

Zhu was convinced that it is precisely through this self-realisation, self-affirmation and self-contemplation of the object that human beings establish an artistic relationship with the world. He regarded productive labour as a form of artistic creation because they both apply to the objectification of human essential power. Zhu held that, in realising the

⁵³ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 86.

⁵⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital*, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 344-345; Zhu Guangqian, "Shengchan laodong yu ren dui shijie de yishu zhangwo" 生產勞動與人對世界的藝術掌握 [Productive labour and human artistic appreciation of the world] (1960), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 195.

⁵⁵ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 76; Zhu Guangqian, "Shengchan laodong yu ren dui shijie de yishu zhangwo" 生產勞動與人對世界的藝術掌握 (1960), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 196.

object as their own 'product' and through the recognition of their own power as species being, human beings feel pleased - this sense of delight can also be called sense of beauty. Thus all creative labour, including material production and artistic production, engenders a sense of beauty. To use Marx's words, "human *efficaciousness* and human *suffering*, apprehended humanly, is an enjoyment of self in man."⁵⁶ Looked at from this angle, namely that of human praxis as creative appropriation of the world, beauty no longer appears to be separable from the human sense of beauty which is the direct result of the creative activity of human beings themselves. Zhu declared that neither beauty nor ugliness exist in crude nature without human beings actually making their mark on it.⁵⁷

However, Zhu did not want to identify material production for utilitarian purposes and artistic production for spiritual or emotional purposes in a static condition despite their being recognised as historically associated in the process of human praxis. He maintained from a Marxist point of view:

The real need of human beings is not merely to satisfy their practical need but to realise themselves as human beings in totality.⁵⁸

In Zhu's view, art can play a substantial role in satisfying this self-realisation in human beings. According to Marx's approach, Zhu pointed out that since art develops its relative autonomy as spiritual production, resulting from the division and alienation of labour under the capitalist mode of production, it appeals directly to human thought and emotions by promoting an intellectual aspect of human praxis or a mental form of social life. Zhu was then convinced that art, in an ideal form of free production, is a perfect example of human creativity. Artistic activity, as a natural expression of human emotion by overcoming labour alienation, coincides with human productivity.⁵⁹ Although Marx considers art, as

⁵⁶ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 87.

⁵⁷ See Zhu Guangqian, "Shengchan laodong yu ren dui shijie de yishu zhangwo" 生產勞動與人對世界的藝術掌握 (1960), in *QJ*, vol. 10, pp. 196-199.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

part of the superstructure, to be based on material production and social relations, he also concedes that uneven development in human consciousness does occur:

It is even recognised that certain forms of art, e.g. the epic, can no longer be produced in their world epoch-making, classical stature as soon as the production of art, as such, begins; that is, that certain significant forms within the realm of the arts are possible only at an undeveloped stage of artistic development. If this is the case with the relation between different kinds of art within the realm of the arts, it is already less puzzling that it is the case in the relation of the entire realm to the general development of society.⁶⁰

For Marx, the inconsistency and discrepancy between the major assumption (i.e. economic base decides superstructure) and the minor assumption (i.e. uneven development in human consciousness) should not represent a problem if human beings as thinking agents do not forget that they are simultaneously agents of concrete practice. "The difficulty consists only in the general formulation of these contradictions. As soon as they have been specified, they are already clarified."⁶¹

Since art can be singled out to represent human spiritual or emotional needs, it implies some specific character of human consciousness. Zhu noted this and quickly raised the issue of the universality of human consciousness during the debate. The question is whether all people regardless of their various social relations, class or even historical background, share certain human emotions expressed in art. His concern is very similar to that of Marx, who observes:

... the difficulty lies not in understanding that the Greek arts and epic are bound up with certain forms of social development. The difficulty is that they still afford us artistic pleasure and that in a certain respect they count as a norm and as an unattainable model.

A man cannot become a child again, or he becomes childish. But does he not find joy in the child's naïveté, and must he himself not strive to reproduce its truth at a higher stage? Does not the true character of each epoch come alive in the nature of its children? Why should not the historic childhood of humanity, its most beautiful unfolding, as a stage never to return, exercise an eternal charm? There are unruly children and precocious children. Many of the old peoples belong

⁶⁰ Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse (Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy)* (1857-58), in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 245.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

in this category. The Greeks were normal children. The charm of their art for us is not in contradiction to the undeveloped stage of society on which it grew. [It] is its result, rather, and is inextricably bound up, rather, with the fact that the unripe social conditions under which it arose, and could alone arise, can never return.⁶²

Although Marx, as Zhu pointed out, does not offer a satisfactory answer except for acknowledging the transcendental character of art, Zhu was convinced that Marx was on his side and proposed that people with different ideological backgrounds tend to be able to appreciate the art produced on different material bases and under different ideological influences, which can be explained as the continuation of historical life.

Every historical period inherits many useful traditions, like a person establishing his/her maturity in adulthood on the basis first of his infancy and then his youth. In this sense, the life of each historical period fuses with the living experiences of previous history. ... The reason why classical masterpieces are still attractive to us today is because they truthfully and profoundly reveal some fundamental elements which universally concern human beings.⁶³

Thus, asserted Zhu, "art possesses universality simply because its derivation, namely history, is a continuation of mankind."⁶⁴ If this is so, then certain common characteristics in human beings must exist which differentiate them from lower forms of life such as minerals, plants and animals. This character, in Zhu's view, is included in human consciousness. For instance, human beings of all eras share common ethical ideals such as praising good and loathing evil. Despite various ways of expressing love across different forms of society (including slave society and capitalist society) a need for love is universally applicable.⁶⁵

It is worth noting that, while applying Marx's theories to re-evaluate his theory of aesthetics during the debate, Zhu reaffirmed the stance which he had initially adopted in

⁶² Marx, *The Grundrisse (Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy)* (1857-58), in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 246; Zhu Guangqian, "Lun mei shi keguan yu zhuguan de tongyi" 論美是客觀與主觀的統一 [A discussion of beauty as an unity of the objective and the subjective] (1957), in *QJ*, vol 5, p. 91.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁶⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 93.

the construction of his aesthetic theories from the 1920s to the 1940s, namely setting his aesthetics on the basis of human values in the course of reciprocal human activity in aesthetic experience. The way he approached aesthetic issues based on Marx's concepts of humanity, praxis and dialectics seemed to be gradually leading him back to his previous psychological assessment of concrete aesthetic phenomena.

The fact that he could not help raising the issue of the universality of human consciousness during the debate where such an assertion was considered ideologically opposed to the official orthodox view, indicates the theoretical coherence which he was obliged to follow. However, he was not able to pursue the issue further due to its political sensitivity, as it did not accord with the dominant doctrine of class struggle and, in fact, could not receive any positive attention in China where, under Soviet influence, the objective laws of aesthetics were now the dominant methodology.

7.4. The Post-Mao Era: Discovery of Vico

It was not until after the Cultural Revolution in the late 1970s that Zhu had the opportunity to review the issue which he had to leave behind during the Big Debate on Aesthetics of 1957. Despite the fact that the Cultural Revolution totally deprived him of academic life as well as human rights for over ten years, it played an influential role in strengthening his belief in the universality of human emotions.⁶⁶ This reversing effect engendered by the Cultural Revolution, not only on Zhu but also on many other Chinese intellectuals, was commented upon by Zhang Han, who observed that "just like the West that turned its attention to the question of human life and destiny in the wake of the Second World War, the Chinese people were awakened to think about the fate of the nation and

⁶⁶ For a detailed account of Zhu's life during the Cultural Revolution, see Kuai Dashen 蒯大申, *Zhu Guangqian houqi meixue sixiang lunshu* 朱光潛後期美學思想論述 [Discussion of the late aesthetic thought of Zhu Guangqian] (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2001), pp. 141-151 and Wang Youxin 王攸欣, *Zhu Guangqian xueshu sixiang pingzhuàn* 朱光潛學術思想評傳 [A critical biography of the academic thought of Zhu Guangqian] (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1999), pp. 107-112.

human value after the ten years of the disastrous Cultural Revolution. As a result, attention has taken a sudden turn from the object to the subject; the study of aesthetics in China has started to explore multi-dimensional, multi-directional and multi-perspective aesthetic experience and aesthetic psychology. ... The issues of universal beauty, imagination, realism, humanism and socialist tragedy have become the focal point."⁶⁷

This new trend gave more room for Zhu to illustrate his ideas of human value, which he was not able to advocate fully during the debate on aesthetics. After 1977, he reaffirmed that human beings, through their active interrelation with nature, engender both economic value and spiritual value - physically, emotionally and mentally. Thus, the study of values such as beauty has to be derived from human beings. In an essay entitled "Talking about Human Beings," he clearly renewed the reciprocal approach that characterised his early works by treating human beings not only as a part of nature but as the conscious beings that feel and think.⁶⁸ He strongly urged Chinese theorists to abandon metaphysical materialism⁶⁹ and to adopt an holistic way of thinking by treating human beings and their activities as a whole. He cited Goethe:

The artist would speak to the world through an entirety; he does not find this entirety in Nature - it is the fruit of his own mind; or, if you like it, of the aspiration of a fructifying divine breath.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Zhang Han 張涵, "Zhongguo dangdai meixue xianzhuang yu zouxiang" 中國當代美學現狀與走向 [Current situation and inclination of the study of aesthetics in contemporary China], *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究, vol. 5 (1989), p. 52.

⁶⁸ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan ren" 談人 [About human beings], *Tan mei shujian* 談美書簡 [Letters of talking about beauty] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1980), in *QJ*, vol. 5, pp. 243-250.

⁶⁹ Zhu seemed to be frustrated to see that some theorists were still trying to deduce the essence of beauty metaphysically and ignoring human factors. He wrote several articles to show his concerns. For instance, see Zhu Guangqian, "Cong xianshi shenghuo chufa haishi cong chouxiang gainian chufa" 從現實生活出發還是從抽象概念出發 [From the viewpoint of real life or abstractive conception], *Tan mei shujian* [Letters of talking about beauty], *Tan mei shujian* 談美書簡 (1980), in *QJ*, vol. 5, pp. 235-242 and "Guanyu Makesi zhuyi yu meixue de yixie wudu" 關於馬克思主義與美學的一些誤讀 [Some misunderstanding of Marxism and aesthetics], *Tan mei shujian* 談美書簡 (1980), in *QJ*, vol.5, pp. 251-257.

⁷⁰ Goethe, "A Conversation with Eckermann on Rubens' Landscape in Engraving on April 18, 1827," in J. P. Eckermann ed. *Conversations with Goethe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1935), p. 196; Zhu Guangqian, "Tan ren" [About human beings], *Tan mei shujian* 談美書簡 (1980), in *QJ*, vol. 5, pp. 249-250.

From 1979 to 1981, during which the intellectual atmosphere in China became more relaxed, Zhu made another effort to include the issues of the universality of human emotions and thus a common sense of beauty in his study of aesthetics. He was convinced that once human beings are accepted as the initiator in mediating with nature and the designer of human history, issues in aesthetics such as natural beauty versus artistic beauty, realism versus romanticism, in a word, objective beauty versus subjective beauty, can be resolved accordingly.⁷¹ What is more interesting is that for the first time he placed Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) on his theoretical agenda although he had become acquainted with Vico's theory as early as the 1920s when he studied Croce, whose aesthetic theory was largely inspired by the former. When he wrote *A History of Western Aesthetics* from 1961 to 1962 while the debate on aesthetics was still going on, he introduced Vico without trying to identify with Vico's theory as he had done with that of Marx, probably deterred by the fact that Vico's theory tends to be reminiscent of Croce's.⁷²

In 1980, however, Zhu explicitly expressed an interest in Vico's theory, so much so that he decided at the age of eighty-three to dedicate his time and energy, aside from teaching, to translating Vico's *New Science* (1725). On top of that, he wrote five essays between 1981 and 1983 introducing Vico's theories in a strongly favourable light. It seems that what impressed Zhu most was Vico's principle of *verum ipsum factum* [the true is the made], which designates human beings as the makers of their own history and which was also the point of attraction for Zhu in the early Marxist theory of praxis. The affinity in this area between Vico and Marx lies in the fact that both share a belief in human consciousness being the distinguishing characteristic of human nature; accordingly, both thinkers explain the social nature of human beings and the social nature of human knowledge in terms of the origin and development of consciousness. The philosophical

⁷¹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Tan ren" 談人 (1980) and "Guanyu renxing, rendao zhuyi, renqingwei he gongtongmei wenti" 關於人性, 人道主義, 人情味和共同美問題 [About human nature, humanism, human touch and universal beauty], *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究, vol. 3 (1979), in *QJ*, vol. 5, pp. 388-395

⁷² During the debate on aesthetics, Zhu was accused of pursuing Crocian idealism. He therefore made efforts to distance himself from Croce. His own accusation of Crocian idealism seemed however to become weaker in the 1980s though.

issue of the relationship between human beings and their knowledge is therefore inseparably tied to the problem of human nature: ultimately, what human beings are cannot be divorced from what human beings know and the means by which they arrive at this knowledge.⁷³ In other words, it is through human beings' own activities, both mental and physical, that human beings come into meaningful existence. Vico stated:

The world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that its principles are therefore to be found within the modifications of our own human mind ... This aberration was a consequence of that infinity of the human mind by which, immersed and buried in the body, it naturally inclines to take notice of bodily things, and finds the effort to attend to itself too laborious; just as the bodily eye sees all objects outside itself but needs a mirror to see itself.⁷⁴

With regard to a pattern of development which accounts for the uniformity, continuity, and totality of human history, Vico sees the internal value of concrete human activities as a genetic realisation of human nature. He thus formulates his universal principle of human history based on an original mentality and form of life, and consequently, the common nature, feeling, imagination and creativity embodied in language. For Vico, "the expression of imaginative universals does not depend on logical deduction and speculative rationalisation but on rhetorical forms and tropes of poetic logic which constitute the means of accomplishing imaginative acts of predication and of conceptual interrelations."⁷⁵ Accordingly, human struggle or human differences are not treated as the obstacle for the flux of human consciousness in the broad context of the whole of human activity. On the other hand, Marx presupposes the division of labour as a division of consciousness and insists that true universal consciousness presupposes the elimination

⁷³ Adrienne Fulco, "Vico and Marx: Human Consciousness and the Structure of Reality," in Giorgio Tagliacozzo ed., *Vico and Marx: Affinities and Contrasts* (New Jersey: Humanities Press Inc., 1983), p. 127.

⁷⁴ Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1948), pp. 96-97.

⁷⁵ Donald Phillip Verene, "Vico's Science of Imaginative Universals and the Philosophy of Symbolic forms," in Giorgio Tagliacozzo and Donald Phillip Verene eds., *Giambattista Vico's Science of Humanity* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 309. Also, see Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, pp. 128-129.

of the capitalist mode of production. This means, in Shlomo Avineri's words, that "the imperfect modes of consciousness will exist as long as bourgeois society continues to exist."⁷⁶ Yet Marx also holds a vision of consciousness extending beyond the mere understanding of reality and towards willfully changing it for the better: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."⁷⁷ Furthermore, he emphasises the artist as a thinker, an educator and an unfold of social truths, as one who reveals the inner workings of society and as an ideologist who pierces the veil of false consciousness.⁷⁸ In his evaluation of the writings of British novelists such as Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte and Elizabeth Gaskell, Marx remarks that their "eloquent and graphic portrayal of the world has revealed more political and social truths than all the professional politicians, publicists, and moralists put together."⁷⁹

As far as Zhu's theory is concerned, it preserves some of the characteristics of both Marx's and Vico's concepts of consciousness. While accepting that reality is imperfect and assigning art as an educator for the betterment of consciousness in a Marxist light (although Marx expected the proletariat, truly universal because of its economic status, to be the force affecting the change from false consciousness or ideology to universal consciousness or human freedom⁸⁰), Zhu validated the effectiveness of aesthetic experience by affirming the imaginative universals or the common sense of beauty within the realm of art, in Vico's light, something not explicitly covered by Marx. Within the domain of art and its close relations with reality, therefore, Vico's theory seems to offer more evidential support in terms of universal sense of human activity by substantiating the latter with data from all peoples at all times and all places. In other words, Vico's *New Science*, in looking for a universal law of human history not in a certain form of society

⁷⁶ Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 69.

⁷⁷ Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 145.

⁷⁸ See Maynard Solomon ed., *Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979), p. 11.

⁷⁹ Marx, "The English Middle Class," *New York Tribune* (1 Aug 1854), in *Marx Engels on Literature and Art* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), p. 524.

⁸⁰ See Marx, *The German Ideology*, in Robert C. Tucker ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 173-175.

but in the general pattern of historical development itself, attaches more immediate significance to real daily life and thus gives a more positive light to human power.⁸¹

Despite the fact that Zhu apparently conceded once during the 1950s debate that human consciousness was conditioned by the material base because, together with politics and law, it belonged to the superstructure which serves the material base, he nevertheless endeavoured - first in the long Preface to the second edition of his *A History of Western Aesthetics* in 1979 and secondly in an interview in 1981 to clarify his view of human consciousness.⁸² Zhu argued that, under the conditions of division of labour in the Marxist sense, consciousness may indeed entail some fetish concepts due to one's social background (including education, cultural upbringing, socio-economic status etc). Nevertheless, human consciousness is able to actively approach universal truth through the dialectical process of action in which those concepts inputted are then critically evaluated.⁸³ Such procedures for making new truth, according to Vico, follow the pattern of tri-stage development of human consciousness, namely the age of myth, the age of the hero, and the age of human beings.

It seems that Zhu's attraction to Vico's theory in his late career results from some close link to his life-long concern with human position and role in human life, in turn explaining his persistent practice of an aesthetic theory which pays particular attention to the psychological aspects of aesthetic experience. In Vico's concept, Zhu seems to find not only his sense of human consciousness but also justification for his own reciprocal approach to aesthetics. That is, as expression of human feelings, art must give priority to

⁸¹ See Zhu Guangqian, "Weike de *Xin kexue* jianjie" 維柯的《新科學》簡介 [A brief introduction to Vico's *New Science*], *Waiguo wenxue* 外國文學, vol. 4 (Dec 1981), in *QJ*, vol. 10, pp. 581-582.

⁸² See Zhu Guangqian, "Zaiban xulun" 再版序論 [Preface to the second edition], *Xifang meixue shi* 西方美學史 [A history of Western aesthetics], vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1964 first ed. 1979 2nd ed.), in *QJ*, vol. 6, pp. 16-41; "Zhu Guangqian jiaoshou tan meixue" 朱光潛教授談美學 [Professor Zhu Guangqian's talk on aesthetics], *Jiaoyu* 教育, vol. 1 and 2 (1981), in *QJ*, vol. 10, pp. 528-543.

⁸³ See Zhu Guangqian, "Zaiban xulun" [Preface to the second edition] (1972), in *QJ*, vol. 6, p. 39 and "Zhu Guangqian jiaoshou tan meixue" 朱光潛教授談美學 (1981), in *QJ*, vol. 10, pp. 536-537.

imaginative thinking which is instanced in empathy, inner imitation and psychical distance. In this way, human value as the creator of their own world is appropriately acknowledged.⁸⁴

By and large, the affinity Zhu recognised between his own theory and that of Vico seemed to strengthen his confidence in his enduring efforts to establish his theory of aesthetics. With the help of Vico as well as Marx, Zhu again picked up a human-oriented reciprocal approach which started from his traditional Chinese background, converged with Western thinkers such as Croce, matured with Marx, and was summed up in Vico. Unfortunately, Zhu himself did not explicitly speculate upon the trace of this intellectual development, although he did briefly give an affirmation to the pattern of his intellectual development in 1981, saying that his ideas "were first of all affected by the Chinese thought of the feudal age, then received some influence from [Western] bourgeois thought, and finally matured after the study of Marxism."⁸⁵

During the course of translating Vico's *New Science*, from 1981 to 1984, Zhu also realised how congenial the theories of Marx and Vico are to one another, despite their differences. The effort made by both to comprehend the world in terms of human beings whose development lies in human activity fundamentally accords with his own. In Zhu's view, both the Marxist concept of praxis and Vico's principle of 'the true is the made' were aimed at solving the age-old problem of the dichotomy of theory and praxis, which coincided with the traditional Chinese doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action.⁸⁶ In this way, Zhu saw the theories of Marx and Vico as possessing the intellectual affinity

⁸⁴ See Zhu Guangqian, "Weike" 維柯 [Vico], *Zhongguo da baike quanshu: waiguo wenxue* 中國大百科全書: 外國文學, vol. II (Beijing: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe, 1982), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 625. Also, see Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, pp. 21-22, 23-24 and p. 32.

⁸⁵ Zhu Guangqian, "Zhu Guangqian jiaoshou tan meixue" 朱光潛教授談美學 (1981), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 535. Some ideologically affected words such as 'feudal thought' and 'bourgeois thought' was used in his talk due to the political environment in China. All he wanted to say, perhaps, was that his ideas had gone through three stages, namely traditional Chinese, Western and Marxist and that there is a link between the three stages manifested in his intellectual formation.

⁸⁶ See Zhu Guangqian, "Weike de *Xin kexue* ji qi dui zhongxi meixue de yingxiang" 維柯的《新科學》及其對中西美學的影響 [Vico's *New Science* and its influence on Chinese and Western aesthetics], *Xifang zhuming zhexuejia pingzhuan* 西方著名哲學家評傳 (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1984), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 711.

with his own thinking, as from the very beginning and throughout the years, his own theories had also been intended to bring together what he called action and tranquillity, natural beauty and ideal beauty, the subjective and the objective, - in short, human beings and the world. This unity was understood by him to be best illuminated by aesthetics which sees human consciousness universalised. Around the time when Zhu retired from his positions as the Professor of Philosophy at Peking University and Research Fellow of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in the early 1980s, he noted similar efforts by Western contemporary philosophies (such as structuralism and cybernetics) to unite the subject and the object and to affirm subjectivity. Zhu was reassured by the parallel development of these theories, but due to his old age and weak health, could not pursue his new discovery which, he believed, was fully in line with Vico's principle of 'the true is the made'.⁸⁷

As Zhang Qiqun pointed out, Zhu's aesthetic theories, which seek unity and harmony of the subject and the object, remain significant and influential because Zhu's persistent belief that the human mind is responsible for images of objects during the course of correlating with nature manifests a strong character of modernity, both in a historical and a scholastic sense.⁸⁸ That is, he rejected the crude forms of objectivity or subjectivity of beauty and sought after the internal correlativity of the object and the subject. Therefore, the most significant contribution of Zhu's aesthetic theories is its pivotal role between China and the West, the past and the present, the traditional and the modern, by seeking truth and value in human reality at the vantage point of both traditional Chinese values and Western intellectual achievements.

⁸⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 719 and also Zhu Guangqian, "Lüetan Weike dui meixue jie de yingxiang" 略談維柯對美學界的影響 [A brief talk on Vico's influence on the study of aesthetics], *Meixue he Zhongguo meishu shi* 美學和中國美術史 (Shanghai: Shanghai zhishi chubanshe, 1984), in *QJ*, vol. 10, p. 672.

⁸⁸ See Zhang Qiqun 章啓群, "Xiandai de yu gudian de zhi wo jian - Zhu Guangqian yu Zong Baihua de yizhong bijiao yanjiu" 現代的與古典的之我見 - 朱光潛與宗白華的一種比較研究 [My view on the modern and the classical - a comparative study of Zhu Guangqian and Zong Baihua], *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究, vol. 5 (1997), p. 64.

CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this thesis to demonstrate the necessary connections and possible common ground between modern Western and traditional Chinese modes of thinking by examining Zhu's personal experiences, intellectual influences, historical context and theoretical development. In so doing, one is able, through the formation of Zhu's aesthetic theories, to discern the continuity, coherence and inner principle of twentieth century concerns shared by both Chinese and Western minds.

First of all, Zhu's theories constitute the necessary result of the peculiar times and environment in which he lived. Being a member of the modern Chinese generation, if he had not been physically isolated from the political centres and had not received a systematic education in the traditional Chinese classics first at home and then at Tongcheng Middle School, Zhu could easily have become an iconoclast like many of his contemporaries who were involved in the New Culture movement of the May Fourth period. Away from the intellectual turbulence experienced in major cities, this particular environment contributed to building a solid intellectual foundation based on traditional Chinese values. Zhu was not substantially affected by the negative attitudes towards the Confucian doctrine simply because he did not have the opportunity to mix with the rebellious intellectuals concentrated in major cities. The direct transition from his hometown to Hong Kong to study Western ideas provided him not only with an environment relatively free of passionate extremes but, more importantly, a unique opportunity to practice independent thinking. This meant that if there was a common ground between Chinese and Western values, Zhu was able to discern it with a calm, detached mind rather than being ideologically overshadowed by totalistic acceptance of Western values and outright denial of Chinese values (this being widely practiced by the New Culture intellectuals in the 1920s).

The reason for Zhu's development of a unique attitude towards the intellectual turmoil of 1920s China and his emphasis on emotional cultivation as a basic measure to improve society may well have stemmed from his combination of traditional Chinese ethical ideals

with European romantic and idealist attitudes towards human value and the new theories of psychology. It seems that the bleak reality of 1920s China, especially moral degeneration, and the over-emphasis on science, stimulated Zhu to dwell more upon the meaning of ethically oriented human value. His enthusiasm in running the Lida Academy and offering advice to young people with ideals which are substantiated by traditional Chinese values as well as Western humanist ethics, shows that he was already preoccupied with the question of human value before he began his study of aesthetics in Europe. His inclination towards examining the meaning of life was manifested in his view of the true value of human existence lying in harmonious relationship with nature (reality). Such harmony is attained by human beings through action (realising the heavenly-endowed nature of creativity) and tranquillity (recognising the human being as a thinking creature). The dynamic interchange of action and tranquillity as the totality of human activity was recognised not only by Zhu, but also in the traditional Chinese doctrines of Confucianism and Taoism. This reciprocal duality subsequently became the theoretical paradigm of Zhu's further studies.

After travelling to Europe for further studies in 1925, Zhu lost direct contact with social reform projects, although moral welfare, especially of young people, was always at the back of his mind. In his first few years in Europe, Zhu continued to exert an influence on moral issues by sending back essays for publication. Despite being physically distant from China, he became increasingly preoccupied with issues of human consciousness and human value which he, like many of his Chinese contemporaries, believed to be the core problem of social backwardness in China. During his eight years of study in Europe, Zhu's Western studies in philosophy, psychology and classical literature caused him to develop a tendency towards a more systematic theorisation. After he became acquainted with Croce's idealism and the life-affirming philosophy of Nietzsche, Zhu's aesthetic attitude towards life was elevated to a higher level. It was under the influence of these thinkers that Zhu decided to undertake the study of aesthetics to inquire into a deeper level of human consciousness for answers to his questions on human activity in aesthetic experience.

In Europe, Zhu's theoretical paradigm based on this presumption of human value was not weakened, as the philosophical issue of the relationship between human beings and nature was also very much in the minds of Western thinkers at that time. The obsession of the modernist mind in Europe to establish the validity of human reality by justifying human knowledge without resort to metaphysics or transcendentalism was in tune with traditional Chinese thinking of human beings and nature as an organic whole in a flux of change, although the Western thinkers' general approach was not yet free from dichotomous dualism. This may explain why Zhu found a spiritual affinity with Croce's idealism and yet could not completely assimilate Croce's ideas into his own theory. Zhu's approach, on the other hand, does not construe the coherence of human activity as an ultimately separate order; human action (doing) and tranquillity (knowing), as emphasised in Zhu's view of life, are reciprocally fused and led his theorisation in the direction of empirical psychology. It is not surprising that Zhu turned to empirical psychology for support when he started to organise an aesthetic system.

From the time when he began his study of aesthetics, Zhu, as a matter of principle, kept his theorisation pragmatic. Under the influence of the traditional Chinese approach and Western pragmatism, Zhu placed his focus on a practical assessment of aesthetic experience rather than an abstractive analysis of the essence of beauty. He believed that aesthetic experience as the highest attainment of human creativity was best presented in Croce's concept of intuition as expression because the latter, in finding its intellectual resources in human history and thus human reality, affirms human activity not only as existence but also as value giving. Zhu found this inspiring as he was able to identify it partly with the traditional Chinese ideal of the mutual reciprocity between human beings and nature, exemplified in Taoist intuitionism. However, he was not able to recognise the incompatibility between Croce's theory and the Taoist theory of intuition, which may have led him to resort to psychological empiricism for evidence (as in the theories of empathy, inner imitation and psychical distance, which were against Croce's original intention). Zhu

treated the aesthetic experience as an empirical formation of cognitive variants including intuition, perception and conception from the perspective of concrete human reality.

In accepting the psychological aspect (Lipps' notion of empathy) as well as the physiological aspect (Groos' notion of inner imitation) of aesthetic experience, Zhu's aesthetic theory actually uses modern psychology to echo the traditional Chinese notion of emotional cultivation as a process through which the self, being a vital force in tune with the rhythm of life, is concretely and fully realised. This comprehension was further manifested in his application of Bullough's notion of psychical distance. The relativity of aesthetic experience due either to personal history or to objective feedback accommodated in Bullough's theory accords with Zhu's general view that art is the reflection of life: since human life is a dynamic process of action and tranquillity, aesthetic experience taking place during this process must work in a similar manner.

It is worth noting that apart from seeking scientific and positivistic evidence in modern psychology, Zhu's aesthetic theories also served philosophically to unfold a deeper sense of human existence, particularly after he returned to China, where there was not only an economic, political and moral but also a national crisis. Although Zhu seemed to agree with Croce's view on the role of the autonomy of intuition in aesthetic experience when he wrote *Wenyi xilixue* 文藝心理學 during his stay in Europe, he nevertheless established his theory in such a way that aesthetic experience is genetically related to other experiences such as empathy, inner imitation and psychical distance. However, in attempting to apply his aesthetic theory to reality in China after his return there, the underlying incompatibility emerged and accordingly demanded revision. Zhu's understanding of Croce's notion of intuition had to be corrected in order to justify his more flexible system, which should allowed for the dynamic interaction of human activities in aesthetic experience. Particularly as Zhu developed his theory alongside his faith in aesthetic education as a step to moral enlightenment, it seemed even more necessary for him to review the aesthetic theory he had established in Europe. The most noticeable adjustment was his acceptance of associative thinking in aesthetic experience which accordingly aligns itself with other

psychological and cognitive data derived from perception and conception. Moral sense hence made its way legitimately into the process of artistic creation and therefore played an affective role in aesthetic experience. Despite the fact that by justifying associative thinking he allowed moral sense to intervene in aesthetic experience, Zhu did not sacrifice the unity of content and form in art. He made his intention clear that morality is signified in art not as a conceptual discourse but as something harmoniously blended with artistic image, which in turn elevates the socially derived moral sense into a sense of ultimate goodness.

In holding his view on the reciprocity of the subject and the object in aesthetic experience, Zhu made an effort to define the concept of beauty. In deciding that beauty resided neither in the subject nor in the object but in the interrelationship of the two, he not only maintained his inclination towards an organic view on human activity in aesthetic experience, but also rejected the absolute idealism of Benedetto Croce which subjected the objective world completely to human mentality.

Although compelled to accept Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Zedong as an ideological dogma after the Communist Party took power in 1949, Zhu learned to manoeuvre his thinking within these circumstances. In the so-called 'Big Debate on Aesthetics,' he succeeded in putting his studies of Marxist political and aesthetic theories to the advantage of his own theory. The irony was that Zhu's intellectual inclination towards the unity of the subject and the object was by and large echoed in Marxist aesthetic theories, especially in Marx's notion of praxis. Some essential similarities between his own general stance and Marx's brought Zhu closer to Marxism, especially Marx's concern with the alienation of humanity under the capitalist mode of production in early Marxism. Marx's view of human beings as the physical and mental creators of their own history through their specific praxis reassured Zhu of his own concept of aesthetic experience in art to form the totality of human activity. It is through Marxism that Zhu, at least in his own belief, established justification for the holistic and concrete interrelationship of the subject and the object with human subjectivity as the initiating agent.

As intellectual restrictions eased after the Cultural Revolution, Zhu endeavoured to set the Marxist concept of human value into its proper historical perspective. In allocating Vico's notion of history as the creation of human beings, Zhu tried to find the coherence of his reciprocal approach to human reality paralleled in modern thinking such as the ideas of Marx and Vico. In so doing, Zhu put his own aesthetic theories in their context; from the turmoil of 1920s China to the transformation of thinking methods in 20th century Europe, from the Chinese national crisis of the 1930s to the communist victory of 1949, from ten-year-long studies of Marxism to final reflections on its historical significance in the wake of the Cultural Revolution, and from a new vision of early humanist Marxism to tentative attempts to fuse it with Vico's historicism. The breadth of this context also illustrates his life-long commitment to an illumination of human value and creative activity in art and society.

Appendix: Table of Zhu Guangqian's Works¹

Publication date	Date written	Titles	Place & Publisher	Details	QJ
Mar 1929	Nov 1926 -Mar 1928	<i>Gei qingnian de shier feng xin</i> 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people]	Shanghai: Kaiming shudian 開明書店	A series of letters of advice to young readers. Originally published in the magazine <i>Yiban</i> 一般 [Ordinary issues], which later changed its name to <i>Zhongxuesheng</i> 中學生 [Secondary school student], between Nov 1926 and Mar 1928. When published in book form, a preface, a postscript and two articles were added: "Wu yan zhi mei" 無言之美 [Wordless beauty] published in <i>Mindao</i> 民鐸 [People's bell] in 1924 and "Dao Xia Menggang" 悼夏孟剛 [In memory of Xia Menggang] published in <i>Lida xueyuan xiaokan</i> 立達學園校刊 [School magazine of Lida Academy] in May 1926.	1
Apr 1930	1929	<i>Biantai xinlixue paibie</i> 變態心理學派別 [Schools of abnormal psychology],	Shanghai: Kaiming shudian	A study of the psychology of the unconscious in the early 20th century, classified by psychologists and their schools, such as C. G. Jung, Sigmund Freud, the Paris School, the Nancy School etc. The preface was written by Gao Juefu, one of Zhu's best university friends in Hong Kong.	1
Nov 1932	1932	<i>Tan mei</i> 談美 [Talking about beauty]	Shanghai: Kaiming shudian	Originally some parts of this book called "the thirteenth letter after <i>Gei qingnian de shier feng xin</i> " were published in the magazine <i>Zhongxuesheng</i> 中學生 [Secondary school student]. Zhu mentions this book as a smaller version of <i>Wenyi xinlixue</i> . ² Zhu Ziqing 朱自清 wrote a preface which has been said to be one of the most insightful reviews on Zhu's thought.	2
1933	1931 -1933	<i>The Psychology of Tragedy: A Critical Study of Various Theories of Tragic Pleasure</i>	Strasbourg: Librairie Universitaire d'Alsace	PhD thesis written in English at Strasbourg University, France. In February 1983, Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe published a Chinese version translated by Zhang Longxi 張隆溪. In 1987, the original English version was reprinted in Hong Kong by the Joint Publishing Co. Zhu states that this book is "the starting point of his thought on literature and art. At the same time, <i>Wenyi xinlixue</i> and <i>Shi lun</i> originated from it." ³	2

¹ This table only includes Zhu Guangqian's works published in book form and therefore excludes his many articles and translations. For a more detailed list of Zhu's works, see the following references: Wen Xiaoli 溫笑俐, "Fulu: Zhu Guangqian zhuyi mulu" 附錄: 朱光潛著譯目錄 [Appendix: List of Zhu Guangqian's writings and translations], in *Zhu Guangqian meixue wenji* 朱光潛美學文集 [Collected essays on aesthetics by Zhu Guangqian], vol. 5 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1984), pp. 554-640; Wang Youxin 王攸欣, "Appendix 1 and 2," *Zhu Guangqian xueshu sixiang pingzhuan* 朱光潛學術思想評傳 [Critical biography of academic thought of Zhu Guangqian] (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1999), pp. 259-292.

² See Zhu Guangqian, "Zuo zhe zizhuan" 作者自傳 [Writer's autobiography], in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 5.

Publication date	Date written	Titles	Place & Publisher	Details	QJ
1933	1930	<i>Biantai xinlixue</i> 變態心理學 [Abnormal psychology]	Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館	Adopting some materials used in <i>Biantai xinlixue paibie</i> 變態心理學派別, it is classified by topics with more attention to Freud's theory such as history of abnormal psychology, hypnosis, hysteria, unconsciousness, Freud's interpretation of dream and libido.	2
1936	1930 -1936	<i>Wenyi xinlixue</i> 文藝心理學 [The psychology of literature and art]	Shanghai: Kaiping Shudian	The first draft was completed during his study in Europe. After returning to China in 1933, it had been revised and five more chapters were added while Zhu was teaching using this as a textbook at Qinghua University, Peking University and Central College of Art between 1933 and 1936. In 1981, when this book was included in <i>Zhu Guangqian mexue wenji</i> 朱光潛美學文集 [Collected essays on aesthetics by Zhu Guangqian] published by Shanghai Wenyi Chubanshe, Zhu put additional remarks at the end of some chapters. Zhu explains: "This book is a study on aesthetics not in the light of philosophy but in the light of psychology." ⁴	1
April 1936	1933 -1936	<i>Mengshi wen chao</i> 孟實文鈔 [Collected writings of Mengshi]	Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi 良友圖書印刷公司	This is the collection of his fifteen essays on literary study published in some magazines between 1934 and 1936. When the first publisher, Liangyou Tushu Yinshua Gongsi, went bankrupt, this collection was republished under the different title of <i>Wo yu wenxue ji qita</i> 我與文學及其他 [Literature, me and other essays] by Kaiping Shudian in Shanghai in 1943. In the new edition three articles from the first version were excluded while two articles published in 1937 and 1943 respectively were included. The three articles were: "Koizumi Yakumo" 小泉八雲 [Lafcadio Hearn], "Anuode" 阿諾德 [Arnold] and "Shiren de guji" 詩人的孤寂 [Poet's loneliness]. The two articles were: "Lixiang de wenyi kanwu" 理想的文藝刊物 [Ideal periodical of literature and art] and "Cong wo zhenyang xue guowen shuo qi" 從我怎樣學國文說起 [How did I study Chinese literature?].	3

³ Zhu Guangqian, "Zhongyiben zixu" 中譯本自序 [Writer's preface of Chinese version], in *QJ*, vol. 2, p. 209.

⁴ Zhu Guangqian, "Zuozhe zibai" 作者自白 [Writer's preface], in *QJ*, vol. 1, p. 197.

⁵ For a translation of this article, see *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, vol. 6 no. 2 (Winter 1974-1975), pp. 19-53.

Publication date	Date written	Titles	Place & Publisher	Details	QJ
1943	1931 -1940	<i>Shi lun</i> 詩論 [On poetry]	Chongqing 重慶: Guomin tushu chubanshe 國民圖書出版社 2 nd ed. Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju 正中書局, 1948 3 rd ed. Beijing: Sanlian shuju 三聯書店, 1984	Zhu completed his first draft around 1931 and then revised it while using it as a textbook at Peking University and Wuhan University. When published again in 1948, four articles were supplemented: "Zhongguo shi heyi zoushang "lü" de lu" 中國詩何以走上"律"的路 [How did Chinese poetry go to the way of "eight line poem"], part I, II in Chapter 11 and 12, "Tao Yuanming" 陶淵明 [Tao Yuanming] in Chapter 13 and "Gei yiwei xie xinshi de qingnian pengyou" 給一位寫新詩的青年朋友 [To a young friend who writes New Poetry] in Appendix 1. This 1948 edition has another preface "Supplementary Edition Preface" dated in March 1942. When published in Sanlian Shudian in July 1984, two more articles were added in Chapter 3 and Chapter 13 respectively: "Zhongxi shi zai qingqu shang de bijiao" 中西詩在情趣上的比較 [A comparison of mood between Chinese and Western poetry] and "Ti shi de yinlü bianhu" 替詩的音律辯護 [Advocacy of poetic rhythm]. In <i>QJ</i> , two articles originally included in the first draft of <i>Shi lun</i> and reprinted in <i>Yiwen zatan</i> 藝文雜誌 [Informal talking about literature and art] were added: "Shi de shizhi yu xingshi" 詩的實質與形式 [Substance and form in poetry] and "Shi yu sanwen" 詩與散文 [Poetry and prose].	3
May 1943	1940 -1942	<i>Tan Xiyang</i> 談修養 [Discussion of self-cultivation]	Chongqing: Chongqing zhongzhou chubanshe 重慶中周出版社	Twenty-two essays. Most of them were published in <i>Zhongyang zhoukan</i> 中央週刊 [Central weekly]. This book is all on topics of interest to young people such as the kinds of problems they face with regards to morality, love, friendship and study. These were modified from his earlier book <i>Twelve Letters to Young People</i> .	4
May 1946	1943 -1945	<i>Tan wenxue</i> 談文學 [Discussion of literature]	Shanghai: Kaiming shudian	Nineteen essays published in several magazines during the late wartime. Most essays are on topics of literature, either introductions to literature or literary theory.	4
May 1948	1947	<i>Keluoqi zhexue shuping</i> 克羅齊哲學述評 [A study of Croce's philosophy]	Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju 正中書局	After translating Croce's work <i>Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic</i> in 1947, Zhu published this monograph in which he introduced Croce's theory of aesthetics regarding him as a successor of Western idealism.	4

Publication date	Date written	Titles	Place & Publisher	Details	QJ
October 1958	1955-1958	<i>Meixue pipan lunwen ji</i> 美學批判論文集 [Critical essays of aesthetics]	Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe 作家出版社	Ten essays including his well-known confession of his former erroneous thinking: "Wo de wenyi sixiang de fandongxing" 我的文藝思想的反動性 [The reactionary nature of my thinking on literature and art], originally published in <i>Wenyi bao</i> 文藝報, no. 12, 30 June 1956, pp. 34-43 written in 1956. ⁵ Ten essays can be divided into two main discussions: the first one is Zhu's criticism of his former theory and thought. The second one is Zhu's criticism of the views of Cai Yi 蔡儀 and other aesthetic theorists between 1956 and 1958.	5
vol.1 Jul 1963 vol.2 Aug 1964	1961-1964	<i>Xifang meixueshi</i> 西方美學史 [A history of Western aesthetics] 2 vols	Beijing:Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社	These works cover the Western history of aesthetics from ancient Greek thinkers to aesthetic theorists at the beginning of the twentieth century. These two volumes were reprinted in 1979 with the writer's revision and a new second edition preface.	6 & 7
1980	1979	<i>Tan mei shujian</i> 談美書簡 [Letters of talking about beauty]	Shanghai: wenyi chubanshe 上海文藝出版社	This book can be considered to be a second version of <i>Tan mei</i> 談美 (1932) written in the light of Marxism. This book gives a rich source for understanding Zhu's ideas in his last phase.	5
October 1980	1977-1980	<i>Meixue shisui ji</i> 美學拾穗集 [Collected essays of aesthetics]	Beijing: Baihua wenyi chubanshe 百花文藝出版社	Collected twelve essays and reading notes on aesthetics and Marx's early writings published in different journals in the last decade of his life. In <i>QJ</i> , the article "Cong juti de xianshi shenghuo chufa haishi cong chouxiang gainian chufa" 從具體的現實生活出發還是從抽象概念出發 [Does it start from the viewpoint of abstractive conception or concrete real life?] was excluded since it was included in <i>Tan mei shujian</i> .	5
1981		<i>Yiwen zatan</i> 藝文雜誌 [Informal talking about literature and art]	Hefei 合肥: Anhui renmin chubanshe 安徽人民出版社	Collected writings on literary criticism and theory of poetry. This collection was edited by Wu Taichang 吳泰昌 since Zhu was very busy translating between 1000 and 2000 words of Bico's <i>New Science</i> into Chinese, on a daily basis. "Zuozhe zizhuan" 作者自傳 [Writer's autobiography], one of the important sources of Zhu's biography, appeared in this book for the first time.	

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English Translation

- Zhu Guangqian, "Wenxue yu rensheng" 文學與人生 [Literature and life], *Tan wenxue* 談文學 [Discussion of literature], Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1946. In *QJ*, vol. 4, pp. 157-163, trans. by Zhang Longxi, "Literature and Life," in Kirk A. Denton ed., *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945*, Stanford: Stanford University, 1996.
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Reprints

Note: The following list includes some reprints of Zhu's works published in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The list below is divided by places: mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan respectively followed by the chronological order of Zhu's works published in book form. Each title includes details on different publishers and years. Information on impression has been added where it is available. For the details on the original edition of each publication, see the appendix.

Reprints in Mainland China

- Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people], Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996; Shanghai: Kaiming chubanshe, 1996.
- Biantai xinlixue paibie* 變態心理學派別 [Schools of abnormal psychology], Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 1989; Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997.
- Tan mei* 談美 [Talking about beauty], Shanghai: Kaiming chubanshe, 1994; Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997.
- Beiju xinlixue* 悲劇心理學 [The psychology of tragedy], Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996.
- Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 [The psychology of literature and art], Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996.
- Wo yu wenxue ji qita* 我與文學及其他 [Literature and me and other essays], Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996.
- Shi lun* 詩論 [On poetry], Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1998 2nd ed. (1st ed. 1984); Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997.
- Tan wenxue* 談文學 [Discussion of literature], Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996; Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 2001.
- Tan mei shujian* 談美書簡 [The letters of talking about beauty], Beijing: Renmin daxue chubanshe, 2001.

Reprints in Taiwan

- Gei qingnian de shier feng xin* 給青年的十二封信 [Twelve letters to young people], Taibei: Wanjuanlou chubanshe, 1990; Taibei: Yuanliu chubanshe, 1992; Taibei: Xinchao she, 1995; Taibei: Yejiang chubanshe, 1995; Taibei: Guoji shaonian cun, 2000; Taibei: Wenfang, 2001; Taibei: Guiguan, 2001; Taibei: Mingtian, 2003; Taibei: Zhengzhong shuju, 2003;
- Tan mei* 談美 [Talking about beauty], Taibei: Wanjuanlou chubanshe, 1990; Taibei: Xinchao she, 1995; Taibei: Yejiang chubanshe, 1998 6th imp. (1995 1st ed.); Taibei: Shuquan chubanshe, 1999 2nd imp. (1994 1st ed.); Taibei: Guoji shaonian cun, 2000; Taibei: Wenfang, 2001; Taibei: Niluohe, 2001; Taibei: Mingtian, 2003; Taibei: Chenxing, 2003.
- Beiju xinlixue* 悲劇心理學 [The psychology of tragedy], Taibei: Rizhen, 1995.
- Biantai xinlixue* 變態心理學 [Abnormal psychology], Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1998.
- Wenyi xinlixue* 文藝心理學 [The psychology of literature and art], Taibei: Hanxiang wenhua, 2003.
- Shi lun* 詩論 [On poetry], Taibei: Taiwan zhengzhong shuju, 1979; Taibei: Dehua chubanshe, 1981; Taibei: Taiwan zhengzhong shuju, 1982; Taibei: Shuquan chubanshe, 1994.
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