ABSTRACT

In the history of modern Chinese literature, Zhu Ziqing (朱自清) represents one of the greatest May Fourth realist writer. His works are like a mirror reflecting the realism of the Chinese agrarian society which was on the verge of disintegration. They depict vividly the disillusionment and frustrations of the idealistic youth and dissatisfied intellectuals in the midst of constant internecine wars.

In this thesis, I aim to analyze the rhetorical devices used in Zhu’s prose. Previous analysis on his prose has been done on individual articles instead of analyzing them according to content types. Such analysis does not allow one to see the general pattern of rhetorical devices of different content types. This thesis categorizes Zhu’s prose into three main types: “scenery”, “people” and “event”. Analysis was based on a collection of Zhu’s prose and secondary materials in books and journal articles.

The results show that each type of prose uses certain rhetorical devices that most appropriately describe what the author wants to depict. For example, in the “scenery” prose, Zhu uses mainly metaphors, personifications and hyperboles; in the “people” prose, Zhu uses mainly ironies and repetitions, and in the “event” prose, he uses mainly citations, rhetorical questions and parallelisms etc. This shows that by dividing his works according to types one can better understand his use of rhetorical techniques.

This thesis is only a pilot study of the use of rhetorical devices in Zhu’s prose that will hopefully show a new dimension to rhetorical research.