This exercise is a study of the literary thought of Zhu Guang-Qian. Zhu is a prominent aesthete and literary theorist of contemporary China. His accomplishment in both literary theories and the aesthetics have been outstanding. But because more attention has been paid to his works in aesthetics that his achievements in the literary field have to a certain degree been neglected.

Zhu was profoundly influenced by Western literature as he studied in Britain and France. Nevertheless, because of his early traditional education, he had been selective in his orientation towards western teachings from which he absorbed only those theories that he found to be most relevant. Basically, he expresses his literary view from the standpoint of psychology. His literary theory is built upon the Intuition Theory of Benedetto Croce (1866 - 1952), the Psychical Distance Theory of Edward Bullough (1880 - 1934) and the Empathy Theory of Theodor Lipps (1851 - 1914) and his associates. Using traditional Chinese literature as the foundation, Zhu has synthesized these theories and come out with a distinct literary thought of his own.

There is a close link between literature and aesthetics. As such, Zhu's literary theory is not only found in his literary works such as "Tan Wen Xue" (《谈文学》), "Wo Yu Wen Xue" (《我与文学》) and "Shi Lun" (《诗论》), but is also evident in his aesthetic works "Wen Yi Xin Li Xue" (《文艺心理学》) and "Tan Mei" (《谈美》) in particular. Therefore, this exercise is an attempt to develop a systematic approach towards understanding
Zhu's literary thought based on his works.

This exercise consists of five chapters. Chapter one, an introductory chapter, is to provide the rationale for the study of Zhu's literary thought and also a brief description of the approach to the topic. Chapter two consists of two sections; the first introduces the personal background of Zhu, while the second takes a look at the foundation of Zhu's literary thought. The third chapter is divided into six sections dealing respectively with the origin of literature, the function of literature, literary creation, literary expression, literary communication, literary appreciation and literary criticism through all of which Zhu's thought is discussed and analyzed. Chapter four is a critical evaluation of Zhu's thought. The final chapter sums up the entire exercise by stressing the outstanding features of Zhu's theories and his position in the Chinese academic world.

Despite the fact that Zhu places great emphasis on the artistic aspect of literature, he is against the literary view of "art for art's sake". Literature, to Zhu, is a reflection of life. It is therefore not surprising that Zhu propounds "limited independence for arts" which is an innovative view in the field of Chinese literary theory.