

# “Style is the Man” 文如其人 : A Critical Review

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## SUMMARY

While in the West poetry has been seen essentially as *poiesis*, a “making” of a fictionalized, symbolic artifact, and the “objectivity” of the literary text (even more recently the “death of the author”) has been emphasized especially in 20th century theory, in Chinese poetics poetry has always been seen as a verbal expression (*yen*) of “will” (*chih*) or inner heart/mind of the poet, and the author’s moral character and specific historical situation have been considered fundamental to the meaning of his works. Through an exploration of this difference, this essay helps to clarify the basic ambiguity of contemporary Western objectivist theories which would foreground only “textuality” and exclude the author from critical consideration. That is, we must be aware of the subtlety and complexity of this issue: the ancient dictum that “style is the man” is of course a fallacy if taken dogmatically, but no more so than the post-structuralist dictum that the author is “dead”, or has dissolved into mere textuality.

## KEY WORDS

style  
textuality  
expression  
“heart-mind”

objectivism  
moral character  
“will”  
historical situation



About half a century ago M.H. Abrams characterized the mainstream of twentieth century Western literary theory and criticism as "objective."<sup>1</sup> With slight modification this characterization can be applied to the developments in literary studies of the period since as well. Literary works are regarded as having nothing to do with, or at least separated from the agents that have begotten them, the authors. The ancient dictum that "*le style est l'homme même*" (style is the man, or in Chinese, *wen ru qiren* 文如其人) has come to be regarded as a fallacy, even an anathema since the early years of this century. T.S. Eliot declared as early as 1919 that "the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium,"<sup>2</sup> in their influential *Theory of Literature* René Wellek and Austin Warren labelled the biographical approach to literature as "extrinsic" and announced that "The whole view that art is self-expression pure and simple, the transcript of personal feelings and experiences, is demonstrably false."<sup>3</sup> W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley further distanced the literary work from its author in their influential essay "The Intentional Fallacy" published in 1946.<sup>4</sup> The battle to denigrate the author was fought on relatively firm ground when Russian formalism, structuralism and deconstruction began to adopt linguistic and semiotic studies to demonstrate that the traditional concept of the author as the source and center of meaning is an illusion. The meaning of a text is not simply assigned to it by its author, but produced by the complex play of signs whose meaning is completely arbitrary and beyond

authorial control. Like other "I"s in the literary text, the author is merely a linguistic function, a "paper I", and the stylistic features of a literary work can only be naturalized or understood by relating them to a highly impersonal literary convention. If style reflects anything at all, it is not its agent, but this convention in which the agent's personality is effectively wiped out by the impersonal plays of signs.<sup>5</sup>

However, despite this constant battering, the long cherished humanistic view that a literary work mirrors the personality of its producer has not disappeared from the scene. Harold Bloom's theory of poetic influence pays a great deal of attention to the subjectivity of the poet: "Poetic influence, or . . . poetic misprision, is necessarily the study of the life-cycle of the poet-as-poet."<sup>6</sup> The phenomenological approach to literature still resolutely regards the author and his intention as the ultimate source of meaning, although in this approach the author is no longer the biographical author in the Romantic tradition. The aim of phenomenological criticism or interpretation is to reconstruct *from the text* the authorial intention at the time of the production of the text.<sup>7</sup> This clearly implies that the text will inevitably carry some traces of its producer. In China historical and biographical study of literature is still widely practiced: one need only take a look at the detailed introductions to the authors' lives in the collections of their writings to realize this.<sup>8</sup> The predominance of this view is also reflected in many studies of Chinese literature by American critics. Stephen Owen says that to read Chinese Tang lyric poetry is essentially to read the poet and his world, and that "this two-part process can be seen as the true meaning of poetry as an experience of the world."<sup>9</sup> In his *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, James Liu claims that among various types of imagery in poetry there is "imagery as a revelation of the poet's personality." And he goes on unabashedly to say that "Since 'style is the man himself,'

imagery, which plays an important part in forming one's style, often provides a clue to the man."<sup>10</sup>

The remarkable resilience of the ancient dictum "style is the man" 文如其人 suggests that beneath its seeming naiveté and simplicity there is some perennial value, or at least some common sense that defies any attempts, no matter how sophisticated these attempts are, at its annihilation. But this does not mean that in the past it was universally accepted; as a matter of fact it was questioned in both China and the West in their respective classical traditions, although the overall tendency was to embrace it. In this paper I will give a historical review of this concept in China and the West.

In China the earliest source of this notion can be traced to the Zhou Dynasty text 尚書 (*The Book of History*), supposedly edited by Confucius himself but almost certainly dating much earlier (10th to 6th centuries B. C.). In a sentence that has become the "fundamental principle of Chinese poetic theory,"<sup>11</sup> it states that "poetry expresses the will, songs prolong the words" 詩言志，歌永言.<sup>12</sup> This statement locates the origin and meaning of poetry in the mind/heart (the same word, *xin*, in Chinese) and presumes a continuity between the product (the poetry) and the producer (the poet). The quality of poetry is determined by the quality of the poet; therefore from reading poetry one will be able to learn about its author, and because the author is a member of society, by learning about him one will be able to gain a knowledge of the whole society. The ancient Chinese firmly believed in this expressive view of poetry, and in this expressive view the alleged continuity between the author and his work is not only taken for granted but regarded as the foundation of a poetic theory. Confucius, for example, sums up the functions of poetry into five categories: "to evoke, to observe, to unite, and to lament" 興觀群怨.<sup>13</sup> The second category, "to observe" clearly follows from the presumption that what is expressed or described in poetry reveals the poet and his world; it is for this reason that poetry

is given a paramount role in administering the country, as described in the "Great Preface" to *The Book of Songs*:

The poem is that to which, what is intently on the mind, goes. In mind, it is "being intent"; coming out in language, it is a poem. The affections are stirred within and take on form in words. If words alone are inadequate, we speak them out in sighs. If sighing is inadequate, we sing them. If singing them is inadequate, unconsciously our hands dance them and our feet tap them.

詩者，志之所之也，在心爲志，發言爲詩。情動於中而形于言，言之不足故嗟嘆之，嗟嘆之不足故永歌之，永歌之不足，不知手之舞之，足之蹈之也。

Poetic production is envisioned as spontaneous. This is extremely important to our discussion here because the very spontaneity of this production makes it impossible for the poet to hide any information from his readers. The poet cannot help but let feelings and thoughts flow into the work; the poet is "possessed," not by a divine inspiration as in the case of Plato, but by an overwhelming and heartfelt response to an external event. The information revealed about the poet is then of the most reliable kind, as Mencius puts it:

"What do you mean by 'understanding language'?"

"When someone's words are one-sided, I understand how his mind is clouded. When someone's words are loose and extravagant, I understand the pitfalls into which that person had fallen. When someone's words are warped, I understand wherein the person has strayed. When someone's words are evasive, I understand how the person has been pushed to the limit—they arise from his heart and bring about harmful results in his political life."

“何謂知言？”

曰：“諛辭知其所蔽，淫辭知其所陷，邪辭知其所離，遁辭知其所窮。生於其心，害於其政。”<sup>15</sup>

It is not surprising that the sages in ancient times made the utmost use of this information in governing the country:

The music of a peaceful world is leisurely and happy, its politics in order; the music of a disordered world is full of grievance and anger, its politics is in chaos. The music of a defeated country is sad, and its people are in trouble. Therefore, to uphold what is just, to correct what is wrong, to move heaven and earth, to reach the gods and spirits, nothing is like poetry. This is why the ancient kings use it to regulate husband and wife, to make people filial and respectful to their elders, to make morality honest, to make the customs beautiful, and to change what is wrong in society.

治世之音安以樂，其政和；亂世之音怨以怒，其政乖；亡國之音哀以思，其民困；故正得失，動天地，感鬼神，莫近於詩。先王以是經夫婦，成孝敬，厚人倫，美教化，移風俗。<sup>16</sup>

The sincerity of expression in poetry guarantees the accuracy of the information that it provides. The ancients were of course not blind to this. Hence the sublime vision of poetry in the Chinese tradition (that poetry is the ideal instrument in nurturing social harmony and avoiding political disaster) depends on the presumption that poetry is the man who writes it, and that the man who writes it is the epitome of the society. The political and social repercussions of this expressive view are elaborated in the grandest way possible.<sup>17</sup>

There is another extremely important consequence of this presumption. If the origin of poetry is located in the expressing agent, if the continuity between this expressing agent and the expressive product is taken for granted, then the

only way to understand the meaning of the literary work is to go back to the mental and emotional conditions of the poet at the time of writing; not only that, but since feelings and thoughts are inevitably affected by the surrounding milieu, we must also explore that milieu. This is *the exegetical principle* in the Chinese tradition: 知人論世 "to learn about the man and explore his world." It is fully enunciated by Mencius:

A good *shih* [scholar] in one small community will befriend the other good *shih* of that community. The good *shih* of a single state will befriend the other good *shih* of that state. The good *shih* of the whole world will befriend the other good *shih* of the whole world. But if befriendng the good *shih* of the whole world is not enough, then one may go on further to consider the ancients. Yet is it acceptable to recite their poems and read their books without knowing what kind of persons they were? Therefore one considers the age in which they lived. This is 'going on further to make friends.'

一鄉之善士斯友一鄉之善士，一國之善士司友一國之善士，天下之善士斯友天下之善士。以友天下之善士爲未足，又尙論古之人。頌其詩，讀其書，不知其人，可乎？是以論其世。是尙友也。<sup>18</sup>

Guo Shaoyu regards this passage as being originally about personal cultivation,<sup>19</sup> but he also agrees (as most critics do) that it was later used as an exegetical principle in the study of poetry. Making friends with the ancients is understood by succeeding critics as a metaphor for reading and interpreting their poetry, and the most effective way of doing so is through exploring the poet's life and his world. In another passage Mencius states directly his opinion on this:

In explaining the poems of the *Book of Songs* one must not permit the literary patterning (*wen*) to affect adversely [the understanding of] the statement (*tz'u*);

and one must not permit [our understanding of] the statement to affect adversely [our understanding of] what was on the writer's mind (*chih*). We use our understanding (*yi*) to trace it back to what was [originally] in the writer's mind (*chih*)—this is how to grasp it.

故說詩者不以文害辭，不以辭害志。以意逆志，是為得之。<sup>20</sup>

To grasp the meaning of a poem is to find out and reconstruct the writer's intention at the time of composition; one's understanding of the poem should never stop at its stylistic features (verbal patterns) because they are only means through which a writer makes his feelings, thoughts, in short, his personality known; a correct understanding lies in a successful meeting between our understanding of the text and what is intended by the writer, but the latter is the ultimate frame of reference for an "objective" interpretation of the poem. We cannot but recall the phenomenological criticism that we mentioned briefly at the beginning of our discussion, but Mencius' emphasis seems to be entirely on the *subject matter* of the poem. For him to understand a literary work is essentially the same as to know its author, to "befriend" the *shih* of another community or ancient times.

Another memorable enunciation of this view comes from the Han philosopher and writer Yang Xiong 楊雄 (53 BC—18 AD). He stated that

words are the sound of [the author's] heart, writing is the picture of [the author's] heart. When the sound and picture are formed, a gentleman or a villain will be revealed. Isn't this because sound and picture result from the emotional response of a gentleman and a villain?

故言，心聲也；書，心畫也；聲畫形，君子小人見矣。聲畫者，君子小人之所以動情乎？<sup>21</sup>

Words and writing are the externalization of the writer's personal, inner world, and the quality and characteristics of the former rely exclusively on the latter. This was further elaborated by the Southern Dynasties critic Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465-520), the author of one of the most important books of literary theory in the classical Chinese tradition, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* 文心雕龍. Liu Xie adopts Mencius' analogy that understanding the poetry of the ancients is like making friends with them and explicitly calls the critic who conducts the process of critical reading and interpretation of poetry a "zhi yin" 知音, the one who knows the tones [of the poet's work], or a "bosom friend" of the poet. This is what he has to say in a chapter titled "Zhi Yin" or "An Understanding Critic" in Vincent Yu-chung Shi's translation:

The writer's first experience is his inner feeling, which he then seeks to express in words. But the reader, on the other hand, experiences the words first, and then works himself into the feeling of the author. If he can trace the waves back to their source, there will be nothing, however dark and hidden, that will not be revealed to him. Although the life of an age may have passed beyond our view, we may often, through reading literature, succeed in grasping the heart of it.

夫綴文者情動而辭發，見文者披文以入情，沿波討源，雖幽必顯。世遠莫見其面，睹文輒見其心。<sup>22</sup>

Reading or critical understanding is envisaged as the reversal of the author's production: instead of moving from the internal to the external, a critic or a reader aims to navigate through the external to reach the internal, which is the source of meaning. Like two intimate friends who can reach a harmony of their respective interests and thereby understand each other, a sympathetic and perceptive critic will eventually

be able to obtain a full vision of an author's world. Liu Xie's confidence in the validity and practicability of this process does not stop at the abstract, general theoretical level; he claims that a perceptive critic (*zhi yin*) will be able to find a close parallel between an author's writing and his inner world of emotion and thought:

[Thus] the sharp and quick-witted Chia I produced literary pieces with a clean and pure style; Ch'ang-ch'ing [Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju], proud and eccentric, overburdened his works with exaggerated reasoning and excessive wordiness; the writings of Tzu-yun [Yang Hsiung] are abstruse, although giving the reader a taste which lingers, because of his retiring and reticent nature; Tzu-cheng [Liu Hsiang] was clear in his ideas and exhaustive in his treatment of facts, because he was unassuming and simple; Meng-chien [Pan Ku], a man of grace and excellence, was careful in composition and resourceful in thought . . .

是以賈生俊發，故文潔而體輕；長卿傲誕，故理侈而辭溢；子雲沉寂，故志隱而味深；子政簡易，故趣昭而事博；孟堅雅懿，故才密而思靡……<sup>23</sup>

It is not difficult to see that Liu's characterization of the different styles of the authors mentioned in his account relies on his knowledge of their personalities, and that the direct linkage between the two tends to be pushed to the extent of becoming a dogma. This linkage is not presented in relative terms; quite the contrary, it is viewed as an absolute principle.

While it is true that this view represents the orthodoxy in regard to the issue in question, there are many dissenting voices in the classical Chinese tradition as well. Confucius himself, for example, had cast some doubt upon the presumed connection between the author's moral character and his writing, although he was a firm believer in the expressive

nature of poetry, as has been shown earlier. In a passage that sowed the seeds of potential disruption of this connection Confucius said that "Those who have virtue will have [valuable words], but those who have [valuable] words do not necessarily have virtue" (有德者必有言，有言者不必有德).<sup>24</sup> It seems inevitable that this suspicion would grow when poetry was produced in greater quantity and when what we read was no longer ancient classics like *The Book of Songs* alone, but mediocre pieces as well. For if good poetry is the result of a spontaneous expression, what about bad poetry? Liu Xie addressed this question in his book:

A literary piece will be pertinent, simple, and truthful, if it is based on feeling; but if it aims at literary achievement, though it may have deceptively alluring charm, it will be prolix and diffuse. Later writers take to the diffuse and neglect the genuine, and forsake the style of the *feng* and *ya* for that of *tz'u* and *fu*. Works which are based on genuine feeling become more and more scarce every day, while those which aim at merely literary achievement become more and more abundant. People whose minds are completely dominated by worldly ambition sing vaguely of the blissful statement of retirement, while people whose hearts are wholly entangled in the business of the day purposelessly paint a life beyond this workaday world. These people have lost their souls, and live lives of contradiction.

故爲情者要約而寫真，爲文者淫麗而煩濫。而後世之作者，采亂忽真，遠棄風雅，近師辭賦，故體情之志日疏，逐文之篇愈盛。故有志深軒冕，而泛舉壤，心纏幾務，而虛述人外。眞宰弗存，翻其反矣？<sup>25</sup>

The unmotivated writings are "deceptive" because they cannot reveal the personality of their writers. Not only that, they actually hide the writers from being known in their

works because what is disclosed is a false personality, a personality that is precisely the opposite of the real author. Liu Xie regards these authors as being living a "contradiction", but this contradiction and the gap it opens between literary agent and his product has called into question the orthodox view that one is able to know the author through his work.

But Liu Xie did not present his challenge directly. As a matter of fact he was able to protect the orthodoxy from being questioned by claiming that all unmotivated writings were decadent and therefore did not represent the ideal, or the correct. They were merely deviations from the norm. Among those who openly questioned and even repudiated the orthodox view of 文如其人 are Xiao Gang 蕭綱 (503-551), the Emperor Jian Wen of Liang Dynasty (502-558), and Yuan Haowen 元好問 (1190-1257) of Jin (1115-1234). In a letter to his son, Xiao Gang stated in unequivocal words that "personal cultivation is different from literary composition. In personal cultivation one should be prudent, but in literary composition one should be extravagant" (立身之道，與文章異；立身先須謹重，文章且須放蕩).<sup>26</sup> What is shocking in this statement is that not only does it reject the cherished continuity between author and his work, it presents it opposite, the disruption of this continuity, as a necessity. The implication of this view is profound. Now we can no longer know anything about the author from his work because a frivolous style may *conceal* a discreet Confucian gentleman, and a simple, straightforward writing may actually disguise a despicable villain. We can no longer "befriend" ourselves with the ancient sages because given the fact that their writing is highly deceptive, we have no means left to learn about their lives and world. We are faced with a system of signs that signify nothing but themselves.

Yuan Haowen's rejection is explicitly directed against Yang Xiong's notion that writing is the picture and sound of its author's heart. He picked a historical example to

demonstrate his point. The Jin poet Pan Yue 潘岳 (247-300) once wrote a well known "Rhyme-prose on Seclusion" in which he asserted his disgust with the world and his longing for life of "simple living and high thinking". But his official biography in *The History of Jin* describes him as "frivolous and greedy . . . He failed to succeed in his official career, therefore wrote 'The Rhyme-prose on Seclusion'."<sup>27</sup> Yuan Haowen composed the following short poem to comment on this:

心畫心聲總失真	The picture and sound of heart always lose their truth,
文章寧復見爲人	How can we know the author from his writing any more?
高情千古閑居賦	"Rhyme-prose on Seclusion" [tells] noble feelings of antiquity,
爭信安仁拜路塵	Can we believe An-ren [Pan Yue] [was] the bowing dust on the road? <sup>28</sup>

Yuan Haowen shares Liu Xie's view that the unmotivated writings of later ages are a sign of decline from the ancient classics like *The Book of Songs*, for the second line clearly indicates that the disjunction between the author and his writing was a recent phenomenon: not "any more" (復) implies that once we *were* able to know the author from his writing.

To categorize this disjunction as a discontinuity and disruption of a once achieved ideal is an effort to save such an ideal from total destruction. It is also a sign that one is uncomfortable with this disjunction, and longs for the time when it had not occurred. Although there are other challenges to the orthodox view that literary works inevitably reflect the character of their producers,<sup>29</sup> it remains not only a consistent ideal in the Chinese tradition,<sup>30</sup> but also a standard for critical judgment. Good works are those that have successfully reflected the authors' character, while those that fail to do so

are regarded as decadent. This is not difficult to understand because if the purpose of poetry is to express one's will, then any poem that chooses not to or fails to do so can only be viewed as an outcast. Again, as Liu Xie put it, "If words contradict the inner feeling, how can we look to the literary expression for truth?"(言與志反，文豈足徵).<sup>31</sup>

The European conception of poetry is diametrically opposed to its Chinese counterpart. This can be shown by the etymologies of the word "poetry" in Chinese and Greek. The Chinese character for poetry consists of another two characters which respectively mean "to speak"(*yan* 言) and "will"(*zhi* 志),<sup>32</sup> therefore in Chinese poetry means "to speak [one's] will." In Greek the word "poetry" derives from "poet", which originally means a "maker" or someone who constructs or invents;<sup>33</sup> poetry then means something made, a construction or invention. While in the Chinese tradition poetry is defined in its relation to the inner human heart of mind, in Europe it is located in the external world of craftsmanship. This is a crucial difference. The Chinese tradition demands a poetic study in the biographical mode because it regards poetic meaning to be located inside the poet. But the European tradition requires a poetic theory of a technical kind because it considers the meaning of poetry to be manifested in the product of an artistic construction. No wonder that as opposed to the expressive theory in China, the Greeks developed a mimetic theory of poetry that situates it in the external, technical, and mechanical sphere of human life. Tragedy, which for the ancient Greeks represented the highest form of poetry, "is a process of imitating an action which has serious implications, is complete, and possesses magnitude; by means of language made sensuously attractive . . ."<sup>34</sup> Because the act of imitation or poetic composition is an act of construction, what counts most in the finished product is then the technical accomplishment of the poet, the maker. This is why Aristotle speaks painstakingly about the importance of

structure and regards it the most crucial element in tragedy.<sup>35</sup> The critical criterion here is not whether the feelings and thoughts are sincere, since they have nothing to do with the finished artifact which has already been removed from the poet's inner world. On the contrary, whether a tragedy is successful should be judged merely by its structural features, so much so that even catharsis, the psychological effect that tragedy is supposed to exert upon its audience, is described by Aristotle as a structural need. The reversal of fortune, the chief means to excite fear and pity, "must grow out of the very structure of the plot itself."<sup>36</sup> The effect of a tragedy depends upon the technical arrangement which has as its goal a well-balanced structure. This structure has little to do with the poet's personality because it is not modeled after an inner response of the poet, but after the development of external events. Like a mechanical artifact which is not directly connected with the personality of its producer, tragedy in the Aristotelian theory is removed from the poet's inner, personal world.

This removal is further highlighted by the fictional nature of the poet's product, for how could it be possible to detect the character of the author if his work is a fiction, an invention which has no connection with his real life? It is precisely because of this reason that reading European poetry is different from reading Chinese poetry. In reading Chinese poetry we assume that the poet is writing from his personal experience which is often solidly located in a specific historical context,<sup>37</sup> but in reading European poetry it is necessary to presume that what is described in the poem is of a fictional nature. Even in the convention of lyric which often has a more personal, biographical element, "The fictional situation of discourse must be constructed so as to have a thematic function."<sup>38</sup> In lyric poetry "The deictics do not refer us to an external context but force us to construct a fictional situation of utterance . . ."<sup>39</sup> The "I" in the poem does not

point to the empirical poet, but merely denotes a "paper I", a textual function, as Barthes later pointed out.<sup>40</sup>

Plato also separated the author from his work, but for a different reason. In *Ion* Socrates tries painstakingly to prove that the poet does not actually know what he is talking about in his work because he is "possessed" by a divine inspiration which effectively drives him out of his mind:

. . . and therefore God takes away reason from poets, and uses them as his ministers, as he also uses the pronouncers of oracles and holy prophets, in order that we who hear them may know them to be speaking not of themselves, who utter these priceless words while bereft of reason, but that God himself is the speaker, and that through them he is addressing us.<sup>41</sup>

So, in addition to the liability that poetic imitation is threefold removed from the origin, the Ideal, poets are condemned for the misleading and plagiarist nature of their work. The image of the prophet in this passage can be looked at in two different ways: that poets are transmitters of divine truth like prophets, and that they are parasites who live not by their own talent and energy, but by sucking the life of others. But in either case the implication for our study is the same: their works do not reflect their own characters.

These are certainly the dominant views concerning the relationship between the poet and his writing in ancient Greece. One might expect that critics of later ages would follow in the footsteps of these two most influential thinkers in the West. Didn't Coleridge once claim that in the West one was born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian?<sup>42</sup> But the pattern of development in critical thinking is a great deal more complicated. In the subsequent ages many Western critics demonstrated that in the matter of style and its relationship to its author they were neither Platonic nor

Aristotelian. This is so because rather than separating them as Plato and Aristotle did, most critics in the West demanded a close link between them. The authors of *Literary Criticism: A Short History* observe that during the Roman period

An intimate correspondence between the character of the verbal artist and the worth of his utterance was a reiterated doctrine of antiquity which received such neat epitomes as the Stoic definition of an orator, 'a morally good verbal technician' (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*), or the statement of the younger Seneca that a man's oratory could be no better than his life (*talis hominum oratio qualis vita*).<sup>43</sup>

One's writing is viewed as not merely being affected by his moral character, but *determined* by it. This comes close to the opinion of the Tang Dynasty Chinese poet, Han Yu, who once said that "air is the water; words are the things that float on it. When water is vast, all things, big and small, will float."<sup>44</sup> The internal shapes and characterizes the external. The Roman philosopher Longinus, in his essay "On the Sublime" states that in order to achieve an elevated writing style:

. . . we must here too, even though this is a gift rather than a thing acquired, nevertheless so far as possible train our souls for grandeur, and make them ever pregnant (as it were) of some touch of noble ardor. How, you ask, are we to do this? I have elsewhere written something to the following effect: sublimity is the ring of greatness in the soul . . . First then we must lay down the source of sublimity as our prerequisite: that the true orator must have no abject and ignoble spirit. For it is quite impossible for men whose thoughts and acts throughout their lives are mean and slavish to bring forth aught that is admirable and

worthy of all time; while it is only to be expected that men whose thoughts are weighty should have grandeur in their speech as well.<sup>45</sup>

Moral elevation is presented as the pre-condition of a sublime style, personal cultivation as the necessary first step toward producing a great work. The way one composes will inevitably reflect his moral quality. Longinus' absolute confidence in making this categorical connection reminds us of many similar statements of Chinese critics, especially that of Yang Xiong. One's writing mirrors one's personality. By reading a writer's work the readers will be able to determine whether the writer is a gentleman or a villain, for as Longinus puts it, it is impossible for a person of ignoble stature to compose a sublime work, and vice versa.

This view was repeatedly echoed in later ages by writers of different theories and temperaments. Milton, who used his poetry to express his defiant revolutionary spirit during the late years of his life, gave it a whole-hearted endorsement. In *Apology for Smectymnus* he says that "He who would not be frustrated of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem."<sup>46</sup> Eighteenth-century neo-classic writers like Boileau and Pope showed overwhelming interest in the matters of decorum and artistic craftsmanship, but they nevertheless inclined toward this integrated view of the author and his work. In "The Art of Poetry" Boileau advises his readers: "Let your mind and morals, as reflected in your works, offer none but a worthy image of you." And in order to achieve this goal one must not merely practice writing, but must also cultivate living: "one also ought to know how to talk, and how to live,"<sup>47</sup> thus implying that writing and living depend upon one another. Pope states in "An Essay on Criticism" that "A perfect judge will read each work of wit/With the same spirit that its author writ."<sup>48</sup> This clearly calls on an investigation into the author's

motivation in writing, which cannot be done without a thorough study of his life and time.

The climax of this critical attitude came in the nineteenth century. The positivistic approach to literature, with its exclusive emphasis on the milieu, time, and race of the author, is certainly the best example of this theory and practice, but it is by no means confined to it. Shelley, whose Platonic tendency contrasts sharply with the materialistic character of a positivistic philosophy, remarks that "poetry is connate with the origin of man;" and that "poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." For Shelley to be a poet is essentially the same as to be a man, because "A poet, as he is the author to others of the highest wisdom, pleasure, virtue, and glory, so he ought personally to be the happiest, the best, the wisest, and the most illustrious of men."<sup>49</sup> In "Style", one of the longest essays in *Appreciations*, Walter Pater quoted Buffon's maxim that "The Style is the man," and then elaborated it in his own words: "The style, the manner, would be the man, not in his unreasoned and really uncharacteristic caprices, involuntary or affected, but in absolutely sincere apprehension of what is most real to him."<sup>50</sup> But the clearest, and often the most rigid description of this view is without question given by the critics with a distinct positivistic bent. The following statement was given by Sainte-Beuve:

Literature, the literary product, is for me indistinguishable from the whole organization of the man. I can enjoy the work itself, but I find it difficult to judge this work without taking into account the man himself. I say without hesitation: *Like tree, like fruit*. Literary study thus brings me naturally to the study of morals.

One has to ask oneself a certain number of questions about an author, and give answers to them (even though not out loud—and even though the

questions may seem quite irrelevant to the nature of the works to be studied). Only after such questions can one be sure about the whole problem one faces. What did the author think about religion? In what way was he impressed by the contemplation of nature? How did he handle himself in the matter of women? How in the matter of money? Was he rich? Was he poor? What rules of living did he follow? What was his daily routine? And so on.—To sum it up: what was his master vice, his dominant weakness? Every man has one. Not a single one of the answers we give to these questions can be irrelevant to forming an opinion about the author of a book and about the book itself—that is, if we suppose we are dealing with something other than a treatise in pure geometry.<sup>51</sup>

Despite his passing admission that these questions might be “irrelevant to the nature of the works to be studied,” he nevertheless reaffirms its absolute relevance “to forming an opinion about the author of a book and about the book itself” —the juxtaposition of the author and the book is crucial here, because very often in literary studies of such kind the latter serves merely as the stepping-stone to the former. As Wimsatt and Brooks observed, in this critical method of Sainte-Beuve, “The work existed mainly to provide him clues to the charting of that rich hinterland [i.e. the personality of the author].”<sup>52</sup>

But dissenting voices on this matter are by no means lacking in the West. Before the nineteenth century a notable instance of this dissent was the French Logician Peter Ramus’ (1515-1572) revisionist concept of rhetoric. Traditionally rhetoric had been closely related to the orator’s education in other branches of liberal arts; particularly it had been related to the cultivation of one’s personality. Among the canonical views of rhetoric are “Aristotelian instructions to the orator about self-advertisement, from the dictum of Cato that a good orator has

to be not only skilled in speaking but a good man, and from the Horatian portrait of the upright satirist."<sup>53</sup> In other words, people's views or rhetoric had been shaped by their presumption about the close connection between the writer's personality and his work, even Aristotle, whose theory of poetry led him to separate the poet from his work, agreed on this. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle points out that to achieve good result the rhetorician should try to produce via his speech a good impression on his audience about his personality because, "The apparent character of the speaker tells more in debate." He goes on to elaborate that "The speakers themselves are made trustworthy by three things; for there are three things, besides demonstrations, which make us believe. These are, intelligence, virtue and good will."<sup>54</sup> In the following pages he discusses in detail how to use these three things to one's advantage in a rhetorical debate. Rhetoric in Aristotle's view then is not merely a verbal art (although he did state at the beginning of his study that it is a "function of art"), because it is affected by other elements that reside in human psychology and intelligence. As a matter of fact in ancient times rhetoric consisted of three mutually related parts: invention, disposition, and elocution. But the Ramist concept of rhetoric separated the third from the other two and turned it into a purely stylistic matter. As paraphrased by Wimsatt and Brooks:

The art of rhetoric, as distinct from philosophy and science, has after all been always a matter essentially of style. Leaving the content and structure of argument, therefore, to the logician, the scientist, the theologian, let me discuss rhetoric in its pure form, that of figures and tropes and of external pronunciation.<sup>55</sup>

Rhetoric in its pure form is cut off from the process of thinking; consequently it is presented as having nothing to do

with the orator who uses it. In this theory, style and man are essentially strangers to one another, because writing is viewed as being conducted by a faculty that is completely severed from the faculties of thinking and feeling, and we all know that thinking and feeling are the most personal, the most subjective faculties of human being. As a later scholar puts it, the Ramist concept of rhetoric ". . . tended to separate the investigative responsibilities of speakers and writers from their presentational responsibilities . . . as if one set of men could do the thinking for society, and quite another set, the speaking."<sup>56</sup>

This is perhaps one of the most radical attitudes regarding the issue in question. Other disagreements tend to be more open and less dogmatic. Robert Browning, for instance, once remarked that there were two types of poetry: the objective and the subjective. In studying the objective type (like the poetry of Shakespeare) we do not have to rely on our knowledge of the poet's life because the poems speak pretty much for themselves. But our interpretation of the subjective type, like the poetry of Shelley, has to take his life into consideration: "We must in every case betake ourselves to the review of a poet's life ere we determine some of the nicer questions concerning his poetry,—more especially if the performance we seek to estimate aright, has been obstructed and cut short of completion by circumstances,—a disastrous youth or a premature death . . ."<sup>57</sup>

Browning's rebuttal was stated more explicitly in a poem. William Wordsworth once wrote a sonnet in which he warns:

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,  
Mindless of its just honours; with this key Shakespeare  
unlocked his heart.<sup>58</sup>

In Wordsworth's view Shakespeare's sonnets are valuable because they help to convey to us Shakespeare the man, since

they reveal the most personal aspect of the bard's life. Browning responded in his poem entitled "House":

I

Shall I sonnet-sing you about myself?  
Do I live in a house you would like to see?  
Is it scant of gear, has it store of pelf?  
"Unlock my heart with a sonnet-key"

II

Invite the world, as my betters have done?  
"Take notice: this building remains on view,"  
Its suites of reception every one,  
Its private apartment and bedroom too;

III

"For a ticket, apply to the Publisher."  
No: thanking the public, I must decline.  
A peep through my window, if folk prefer;  
But, please, no foot over threshold of mine  
...

X

...  
"With this key same key  
Shakespeare unlocked his heart," once more!  
Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he! <sup>59</sup>

Browning's reluctance to reveal himself to his readers in his work seems to come from a deeply felt need to maintain his privacy in front of the public, and his frequent use of masks, personae and obscure syntax are illustrations of this reluctance. But significantly he also makes this reluctance and the success in materializing this reluctance a critical standard. According to Browning, Shakespeare's poetry would suffer if, as Wordsworth claimed, it did disclose to the world Shakespeare the man. Thus for Browning, poetry, at least the "objective" poetry, should conceal rather than reveal.

But in the exchange between Wordsworth and Browning it is Wordsworth's view that prevailed. The nineteenth century literary theory had been characterized by Abrams as "expressive," which concentrates mainly on the author in its theoretical orientation. Without much exaggeration, the Nineteenth century can be called the age of author. Its mode of literary study is not so different from the *zhi ren lun shi* (to learn about the man [author], and explore [his] world) tradition in China. Both lavished most of, and sometimes all of, their attention on the biographical and historical studies of the poets. The artistic features of the texts were consequently ignored; even if they did receive any attention they were usually taken to be the illustrations of the authors intentions which the critics thought they had already grasped in their biographical and historical research. In other words the linguistic medium or style was regarded as nothing more than the raw material that could be molded at will by the authors; its function in the process of meaning production is completely passive; the meaning of the work was determined solely by the intention of the author, and this authorial intention presumably would reveal itself to the readers in a medium or style that had been turned transparent by it: to use Yang Xiong's words, it had been turned into the sound and the picture of the author's heart.

The violence with which twentieth-century literary theory reacted against this equation of the author and his work<sup>60</sup> illustrates only too well its influence and prevalence in literary studies. The distrust of the author in some contemporary literary theories does demonstrate many legitimate concerns. For too often the author's life and time became the only focus of literary studies, and literary texts were treated as no more than documents to record the author's feelings and thoughts. But despite the consistent efforts by many twentieth century critics to separate once and for all the author from his work, the traditional method to study a literary work in its

relations to its author is still very much alive. In China biographical and historical study is still one of the dominant approaches in contemporary Chinese literary study. Even in the West where various literary theories have tried painstakingly to supplant this old approach, it has together with the humanistic tradition survived and is actually in the process of coming back, though of course in a much more sophisticated way.<sup>61</sup> For while the simplistic biographical and historical studies neglected the quality of literature as a linguistic construction and craftsmanship, the various linguistic and semiotic theories, in pushing the matter to the other extreme, tend to ignore another fundamental principle in literature: that literature is produced by a human being, and that although its meaning is inevitably affected and even confined by a literary convention of which each work is an integral part, it is nevertheless also dependent upon the agent, the author, whose life and time play a valuable role in understanding his works. To wipe out the author from his work, to reduce literature to a totally impersonal network of signs which, instead of being used by the author to express his views and emotions, use the author to demonstrate their own rules, is essentially a nihilism, and a disregard of the fundamental nature of literature as a human response to its world. As a matter of fact, the anti-humanistic tendency in some linguistic and semiotic literary theories of our time has caused some sharp reactions. Besides the phenomenological theory discussed briefly at the beginning of this paper, Marxism, feminism, new historicism and other cultural theories can also be regarded as reactions of this kind, although they all to some extent adopt some textual strategies and the terminology of structuralism, semiotics, and deconstruction. What these new theories share is a revived interest in the subject or the author, in the author's role in the meaning production of the text, the effects that gender, social status, cultural and ethnic background have on the author's

literary practice, and finally, the author's relationship to the text, both in the narrow sense of text as the author's own work and in the general sense of text as a complicated web of literary conventions. Perhaps this review of the ancient dictum of "Style is the man" in China and the West will contribute to this revival in the interest of the author, for like it or not, the author is there to stay, and stay with his distinct personality which is more or less revealed in his writing; otherwise our world would become a world of signs in which all human beings speak in a similar but indistinguishable babble.

But the ancient dictum that "style is the man" (*wen ru qi ren*) must also undergo some modification in order to meet the challenges in a post-structuralist-deconstructive world. We still know little about how precisely one's personality affects one's writing, although we do know that Keats and Li He wrote in their unmistakable "personal" styles, and that both lived their short lives with an acute feeling of living close to death. Our knowledge of their lives does seem to have helped our understanding of their poetry. But is there a direct link between their highly sensual, ornate, and dense style and their short lives of artistic devotion?<sup>62</sup> We would have recognized their style immediately if we had sat in I. A. Richards' class, and we would have been able to demonstrate that their peculiar uses of imagery, their peculiar choices of subject matter do reveal certain traces of their personalities, such as their peculiar aesthetic tastes and their peculiar attitudes toward life. But isn't this because we have already known their lives and works fairly well? In our interpretation of their poetry, which influences which? Does our knowledge of their lives and worlds influence our reading of their poetry, or vice versa? These are difficult questions to answer. But one thing is certain: ignorance of their lives will seriously hinder our understanding and appreciation of their works.

Literature, as Sainte-Beuve said, is not pure geometry,<sup>63</sup> and the literary medium is inevitably tinged by its user's personality. But the maxim that "style is the man" 文如其人 is true only in a relative sense, just as it is a fallacy only in a relative sense. To correct one by going to the other extreme is to replace one dogma with another, for both result in a skewed view of literature which is harmful to a fair understanding of literary works. Here we probably should remember Browning's advice: there are two kinds of poetry, one is subjective, the other is objective; these two different kinds of poetry require two different approaches; biographical and historical information might be absolutely essential in our study of subjective poetry, but it might not be so in the case of objective poetry. But to characterize poetry as "subjective" or "objective" is an extremely tricky matter. It is here that personal judgment and taste inevitably intrude. Consequently, whether a poem is seen as subjective or objective is pretty much a personal decision based on personal experiences, personal tastes, and personal understanding. T. S. Eliot is an arch advocate of an impersonal poetry, but we detect in his poetry certain aspects that are peculiarly Eliotian. Yet Eliot himself might have thought his poetry an excellent example of his poetic theory. This is a dilemma, and if this dilemma teaches us anything, the lesson is probably that we can never completely obliterate individual personality, be it the personality of the author or the personality of the critic, from literary studies. Interpreted dogmatically, the ancient dictum that "style is the man" is of course a fallacy, but so is the recent declaration by some critics that "the author is dead." Thus, the value of our critical review is that it can serve as a reminder of the extreme complexity of the issue in question, and as a warning that in literary study we need to remain open and aware.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See his *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953) 3-29.

<sup>2</sup> "Tradition and Individual Talent" in his *The Sacred Wood* (London: Faber, 1920) 47-59.

<sup>3</sup> *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956), p. 78. The first edition of this book was published in 1942.

<sup>4</sup> See their *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1954) 3-18.

<sup>5</sup> For numerous works that advocate such views, see Roland Barthes, "From Word to Text" and Michel Foucault, "What is an Author", both in Josue V. Harari, ed., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979) 73-81, and 141-160; Barthes, "The Death of the Author" in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977) 142-48; Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Human Sciences" in Vassilis Lambropoulos and David Neal Miller, ed., *Twentieth Century Literary Theory* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987) 35-60; and Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> *The Anxiety of Influence* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) 7.

<sup>7</sup> Husserl makes the consciousness of the individual the center of his inquiry and says that the aim of phenomenological theory is to "consider conscious experience in the *concrete fullness and entirety* with which they figure in their concrete context—the stream of experience—and to which they are closely attached through their own proper essence." See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, tr. W. R. Boyce Gibson (New York: The Crowell-Collier Publishing Company, 1962) 105. Terry Eagleton comments that "For Husserl . . . the meaning of a literary work is fixed once and for all: it is identical with whatever 'mental object'

the author had in mind, or 'intended', at the time of writing." In *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 67. Interested readers may also consult E. D. Hirsch, Jr., "Objective Interpretation" in his *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), and Georges Poulet "Phenomenology of Reading", in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation*, Vol. I, No. 1 (October, 1969).

Although Husserl and other phenomenological critics repeatedly caution that only what the author intends at the time of his writing is relevant to their study, and that all biographical information must be "bracketed" in order to achieve an objective interpretation, the line between what is intended and what is not intended, or between the relevant and the irrelevant biographical information, is very nebulous since the authorial intention is not readily accessible. To reconstruct it we have to rely on not only text but also what we know about the poet at the time of composing a specific work. This is further complicated by the fact that, as Hirsch said, "The extrinsic information [the biographical information about the author] has ultimately a purely verificative function." A phenomenological approach aims to correct the anti-humanistic tendency in contemporary literary theories like structuralism and to some extent, deconstruction, but it can only do so by bringing back the author. Paradoxically it is equally opposed to the Romantic and positivistic ideas of the author. In its effort to reconcile the two approaches it occasionally and understandably causes some confusions, as is the case here.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Wu Yun *et al* ed., *Jian-an qi zi ji jiao zhu* (Tianjing: Tianjing guji, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> "Transparencies: Reading the T'ang Lyric" in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (39:2), September 1979, pp. 231-251.

<sup>10</sup> James J. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962) 123. It is noteworthy that in another book Liu did make some comparisons between Chinese poetic theories and phenomenological theory of literature. See his *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,

1975), pp. 57-62.

<sup>11</sup> Zhu Ziqing 朱自清, *Shi yan zhi bian* 詩言志辨 (Taipei: Kaiming, 1964) vi.

<sup>12</sup> In Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, *Zhong Guo li dai wen lun xuan* 中國歷代文論選 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1979), vol. I, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Yang Bojun 楊伯俊, *Lun yu yi zhu* 論語譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965) 192.

<sup>14</sup> Chinese text in Guo Shaoyu, vol. I, p. 63; English translation in Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992) 40-41.

<sup>15</sup> Yang Bojun, *Meng zi yi zhu* 孟子譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1963), p. 62; English translation (with my modification) in Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> In Guo Shaoyu, p. 63; Owen, pp. 43-44.

<sup>17</sup> Even before Confucius' age there was a custom of collecting poetry from people and using them as a barometer for the government to rule the country. This custom was institutionalized by the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) when the government established the Music Bureau which was exclusively responsible for this task. The poetry collected is called "Music Bureau Poetry". Interested readers may consult Guo Maoqian, ed., *Yue fu shi ji* (Taipei: Xinxing Shuju, 1968).

<sup>18</sup> *Meng zi yi zhu*, p. 251; English translation in Owen, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> *Zhong guo li dai wen lun xuan*, vol. I, p. 35.

<sup>20</sup> *Meng zi yi zhu*, p. 215; English translation in Owen, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> In Guo Shaoyu, vol. I, p. 97; My translation.

<sup>22</sup> Vincent Yu-chung Shih, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Taipei: Zhonghua, 1970), p. 372.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 225.

<sup>24</sup> Yang Bojun, *Lun yu yi zhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965), p. 163; my translation.

<sup>25</sup> Shih, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, pp. 247-248.

<sup>26</sup> In Zhang Pu 張浦, ed., *Han Wei liu chao bai san jia ji* 漢魏六朝百三家集 (Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1963), p. 2628.

<sup>27</sup> See Guo Shaoyu, *Zhong guo li dai wen lun xuan*, vol I, p. 453, n. 21.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 449; my translation.

<sup>29</sup> Interested readers may consult Qian Zhongshu 錢鐘書, *Guan zhui bian* 管錐編 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979), vol VI, pp. 1387-1392.

<sup>30</sup> For example, in the preface to the collection of his own poetry, Kang Youwei 康有為 (1857-1927) says:

[My poetry] describes my life, expresses my deeply felt feelings. I never miss a chance to sing about the unpredictable sorrow and happiness. The frustrated [use poetry] to articulate their feelings, the laborers [use poetry] to sing the events [in their life]: this is what the *Book of Songs* did not forgo. I hope people of later generations, when they read my poetry to study my life and world, will not blame me for having done that.

抑以寫身世，發幽懷，哀樂無端，咏嘆淫佚，窮者達情，勞者歌世，小雅國風之所不棄也。後之誦其詩論其世者，其亦無罪邪！

In Guo Shaoyu, *Zhong guo li dai wen lun xuan*, vol VI, p. 189.

<sup>31</sup> *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, p. 248.

<sup>32</sup> Many scholars have pointed out that in the ancient time the pronunciation of the second etymon of *shi* 詩 (poetry), *si* 寺 (temple) was the same as that of *zhi* 志 (will); the two words were then interchangeable. Actually *zhi* was sometimes used instead of *shi*. See Zhu Ziqing, *Shi yan zhi bian*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> See Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1965) 99.

<sup>34</sup> *Poetics*, tr. Gerald F. Else (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. 25. Here I would like to point out that Aristotle's view of artistic imitation is not purely formalistic, although formalism is definitely its overall tendency. The desire for imitation, according to Aristotle, comes from human instinct. But the criteria of judgment, as is argued here, is presented by Aristotle as related mainly to the structure of the product. The sincerity of the artist, which in the Chinese tradition is the ultimate standard, is simply not an issue.

<sup>35</sup> ". . . plot is the basic principle, the heart and soul, as it

were, of tragedy." *Ibid*, p. 28.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> For studies of the historicity of Chinese poetry and poetic theory see Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), and Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975) 167.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, p. 166.

<sup>40</sup> See his "From Work to Text."

<sup>41</sup> *The Dialogues of Plato*, Benjamin Jowett (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1953) 289.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted by Hazard Adams in his "Introduction" to *Critical Theory Since Plato*, p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> William K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957). 92-93.

<sup>44</sup> "Da Li Yi shu," in Guo Shaoyu *Zhong guo li dai wen lun xun* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1979), vol. II, 116. Here the word "air" refers one's cultivation in both morality and literary tradition.

<sup>45</sup> *Longinus: On the Sublime*, tr. Benedict Einarson (Chicago: Packard and Company, 1945) 16.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Wimsatt and Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History*, p. 176.

<sup>47</sup> *Boileau: Selected Criticism*, tr. Ernest Dilworth (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965) 38.

<sup>48</sup> Wimsatt, Jr., William K. ed., *Alexander Pope: Selected Poetry and Prose* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1951) 70.

<sup>49</sup> See his "A Defense of Poetry," *ibid*, pp. 499-513.

<sup>50</sup> Walter Pater, *Appreciations* (London: Macmillan, 1924), pp. 35-36.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in *Literary Criticism: A Short History*, p. 535.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p. 535.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p. 176.

<sup>54</sup> *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*, tr. Richard Claverhouse Jebb (Cambridge University Press, 1909) 68-69.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>56</sup> The words are those of W. S. Howell, quoted in Wimsatt and Brooks, p. 226.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Wimsatt and Brooks, p. 536.

<sup>58</sup> "Scorn not the Sonnet" in John O. Hayden, ed., *William Wordsworth: Poems* (New York: Penguin Inc., 1989), vol. II, p. 635.

<sup>59</sup> Robert Browning: *Selected Poetry* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1956) 272-273.

<sup>60</sup> For example, the following passage from Foucault's "What is An author" might demonstrate this: "Writing is now linked to sacrifice and to the sacrifice of life itself; it is a voluntary obliteration of the self that does not require representation in books because it takes place in the everyday existence of the writer. Where a work had the duty of creating immortality, it now attains the right to kill, to become the murderer of its author . . . In addition, we find the link between writing and death manifested in the total effacement of the individual characteristics of the writer, the quibbling and confrontations that a writer generates between himself and his text cancel out the signs of his particular individuality." See *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post Structuralist Poetics*, pp. 140-161.

<sup>61</sup> An excellent example of this will be the recent discussion and adaptation of intertextuality. In its "original" form (as advocated by Kristeva, Barthes and Derrida), intertextuality aims to eliminate the author from the critical scene so that literary works can be studied as the result of impersonal interactions among signifiers. Many American critics try to alter this purist notion of intertextuality by reinstituting the agent or author in their adoption of this textual strategy. This "revision" is reflected in many articles collected in Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein ed., *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary Theory* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991). See the editor's introductory essay, "Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality" (pp. 3-36), Tilottaman Rajan's

"Intertextuality and the Subject of Reading/Writing," (pp. 61-74), Susan Stanford Friedman's "Weavings: Intertextuality and the (Re) Birth of the Author," (146-180), and Andrew D. Weiner's "Sidney/Spenser/Shakespeare: Influence/Intertextuality/Intention" (pp. 245-270).

<sup>62</sup> J. D. Frodsham claims that "In his [Li He's] sensuality and despairing intensity with which he strives to hold the passing moment burning eternally in his art, like a frozen flame, he is akin to Keats . . . he is half in love in times with easeful death." See his *The Poems of Li He* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1970) lxiv.

<sup>63</sup> See note 51.