Abstract

Li Yu (李渔 1610 - 1680) is probably the most distinguished dramatist of the Qing dynasty. Being a talent artist, he had made literary contribution in diverse fields concerning fiction, poetry and drama especially in theory of play writing.

The main aim of this academic exercise is to present a systematic theory of drama inherited from the Yuan and Ming dynasty in a more composite form. The exercise also attempts to draw the attention of dramatists who have neglected Li Yu's theory.

Structurally, this academic exercise consists of seven chapters. Chapter one, an introductory chapter, provides a brief description of the development of drama history, followed by the approach adopted for this study. Chapter two introduces the life of Li Yu and shows how historical changes has influenced his thought. The following three chapters, being the theme of this exercise, focus on the distinctive features of Li Yu's theory of drama. Chapter six shows the special aesthetic features of Li Yu's theory of drama. And lastly, the final chapter is the conclusion which highlights and affirms his achievements and contributions to the world of drama.

It is hoped that the focus on Li Yu and his theory of drama in this exercise will spur further research into this much neglected aspect of the dramatist's work in the history of Chinese literary criticism.