ABSTRACT

This study aims at examining the important contributions made by Wang FuZhi (王夫之, 1619 - 1692) in the field of Chinese literary criticism. Wang's enthusiasm in Chinese philosophy and the study of Chinese history is well known. He was also one of the best literary critics in China.

The discussion in this exercise focuses primarily on Wang's Jiang Zhai Shi Hua (《姜斋诗话》). In particular, relevant aspects reflecting Wang's view on poetry are explored. The author emphasizes Wang's argument that poetry is essentially a verbalization of the poet's emotional activities. Poetry, according to Wang, entails a certain degree of social utility. He adopts the view that poetry serves the purposes of stimulation and socialization, among others. Wang also describes much about the origin of poetry and methodology in poetry. The author examines Wang's arguments in relation to these two subjects. Wang's literary criticism is firmly based on his philosophy.

Comments are often disorganized, fragmented and unsystematic in Jiang Zhai Shi Hua. This may be traced to the fact that analysis of the poetic theory of critics is, by and large, a difficult task. It is in this respect that the author attempts to piece together the scattered comments and views. Every effort is made by the author, which includes the method of inductive and deductive reasoning, to reconstruct the theoretical framework of Wang's poetic criticism. Approaches from various angles are taken in the analysis of Wang's literary work. Apart from Jiang Zhai Shi Hua, the author also refers to Wang's other works, in a desire to have a more complete picture and analysis.

In addition, the author compares Wang the poetic critic with his predecessors, highlighting Wang's peculiar insights and outstanding achievements.