Abstract

This academic exercise aims to provide a systematic and in-depth study of Lao She's Teahouse (《茶馆》).

Lao She (老舍, 1899-1966) was of Marchurian descent. His writings reflected the livelihood, emotions and ambitions of the common people. His unique style has made him an outstanding writer in contemporary China. In the early years of his literary career, Lao She was engaged in writing novels and short stories. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, he then concentrated on writing plays. Teahouse, one of the most representative and notable of Lao She's plays, has received favourable commendation from the literary circles all over the world. It thus affirms Lao's status as an eminent dramatist in the modern era.

In this play, the author attempts to use a Beijing teahouse as a microcosm of old society. He does not use the plot to develop the story, nor does he adhere to the chronological principle of organisation. He uses the characters to spin the story, emphasizing the inner thoughts of the play.
Structurally, this academic exercise is divided into seven chapters. The introductory chapter consists of a brief discussion of Lao She's status in China's literary world, the objective of studying this play and the scope of the thesis. Chapter two discusses in detail the social and political background which forms the subject-matter of the play. In addition, there is a review of the dramatist's intentions. The next chapter deals with the main themes. Chapter four and five delve into the artistry of Teahouse. Chapter six analyses and examines the stage effects of the play. The final chapter provides an overall evaluation of Teahouse.

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