ABSTRACT

The fifteen-year period from 1980 to 1994 is an important phase of the development of Chinese Spoken Drama (华语话剧) activities in Singapore as several significant changes had taken place during that period. For example, during the early 1980s, Contemporary Realistic Drama (现实主义话剧) with moral or educational themes dominated the Chinese theatre works. However, towards the end of the 80s and into the early 90s, it gradually gave up its leading role to Experimental Drama (实验剧), which has been the prestiged performing drama form since then. This study traces the overall development of Chinese drama activities in Singapore from 1980 to 1994.

The data of this study are mainly taken from the following sources: Lianhe Zao Bao, Lianhe Wan Bao, The Straits Times, The Sunday Times and other works and theses that deal with the overall development of drama activities in Singapore as a whole. Statistical methods were used to analyse the data whenever necessary. Interviews were also conducted with several active dramatists for a better insight into some of the topics that were discussed in this study.

This study made the following observations:

(1) The changes in themes, contents and drama forms within the

(2) The contributions of three dramatists, namely, Mr. Han Raoda (韩劳达), Mr. Kuo PaoKun (郭宝昆) and Mr. Lin Renyu (林仁余). In the past, much attention had been given to Mr. Kuo’s contributions in terms of directorship and playwriting. This study tries to recognise the efforts of the other two as well.

(3) The problems faced by the local Chinese theatreworks during the fifteen-year period from 1980 to 1994 had been more or less the same but they occurred in different proportions over the years.

(4) The government and some private organisations had been playing a role in assisting the local Chinese drama troupes to solve the problems they had been facing but many problems seem to remain unsolved.