Abstract

The Qing Dynasty saw an emergence of works on literary criticism, especially that on poetry. Unfortunately, many of these works are often neglected, with research on them lacking and not forthcoming. Mao Chunrong's (冒春荣) Shen yuan Shishuo (綦原诗说) is one such example. It is therefore hoped that through providing a comprehensive study of his view on poetry, this thesis will increase readers’ awareness of Shen yuan Shishuo and raise Mao Chunrong's status in the field of Chinese literary criticism. Above all, I hope this thesis will contribute to the studies on Qing literary criticism on poetry and inspire further research on the subject.

This academic exercise consists of seven chapters. Chapter one deals with the aims and scope of the study. Chapters two to four highlight Mao Chunrong's emphasis on the rules of poetry-writing (诗法), paying special attention to the construction of the gist of a poem (意旨的设置), the "qi cheng zhuang he" way of presentation (起承转合之篇章法), and the requirements on words, sentences and "shengliü" (字法, 句法与声律). Chapter five investigates Mao Chunrong's approach to the learning of poetry (学诗主张). Chapter six depicts his views on the various forms of poetry (诗体). The last chapter concludes with an evaluation on Mao Chunrong's Shen yuan Shishuo.

With scarce relevant materials and little information, this study mainly relies on the original text and my personal interpretation. The findings show that, though Mao Chunrong's ideas and arguments may seem imperfect at times, Shen yuan Shishuo is still worth taking a look at for its detailed discussions on various topics, especially those on rules governing the writing of poetry.