Abstract

The Romance of the Three Kingdoms or Sanguo Yanyi (三国演义), written by Luo Guanzhong (罗贯中) of the Ming dynasty is a classical novel based on Chinese historical events from the Dynasty of Eastern Han (东汉) to the period of the Three Kingdoms (三国时期). The main characters such as Liu Bei (刘备), Guan Yu (关羽), Zhuge Liang (诸葛亮) are the main protagonists. Each character constitutes the combination of historical facts and legendary tales passed down through the generations. Thus the views on heroes reflected in this novel represent the idealism of the author and common people.

Materials for this dissertation are drawn primarily from published literature from Mainland China, Taiwan and western scholars. Numerous critiques have been given on this novel and each from different angle. This thesis attempts to evaluate the various views on heroes and the characterization of heroes in this novel.

My study has led to the following conclusions:

· Firstly, traditional view on heroes places great emphasis on moral qualities. A real hero in the eyes of the common people must be morally virtuous besides being extraordinary capable.

· Secondly, the characterization of heroes is extremely outstanding in its vividness.