ABSTRACT

Guo Moruo (郭沫若, 1892 - 1978), the playwright of Qu Yuan (屈原), one of the most celebrated works of China's prominent historical drama during the anti-Japanese war period (1937 - 1945), is highly praised for his art and skill in excellent characterization. So far, a great deal of research has been done on the Qu Yuan. However, most studies lack depth in discussing the implications of character-moulding, reinventing and recreating in the Qu Yuan. Hence, this academic exercise undertakes to cover this neglected ground of Qu Yuan studies, attempting to provide a better view on the various characters appearing in this drama.

In the portrayal of the eight main historical characters, Guo distills the virtues of good people and divulges the defects and evil of the bad ones. This sharp contrast portrays distinct image of the characters and injects realism, which is the main purpose of unveiling the evils and corruptions of politicians in the early 40's China and of encouraging the revolutionalists on the other hand. Although here exist differences between history and drama, the development of the images in this play is reasonably logical. There are many imaginary and fictitious characters, out of which three are most important. These three fictitious characters are based on the poems in
the Chu Ci anthology "楚辞", written by the protagonist Qu Yuan. They play an important as well as supporting role in the drama. Yet, their existence positively helps amplify the images of the leading characters on the one hand, and greatly enhances the literary value and status of this remarkable historical drama on the other.

The thesis concludes that the success of Guo's historical drama Qu Yuan lies very much in his ability and artistic skill in moulding and creating vivid historical and fictitious characters.