Abstract

Wang Shuo (王朔) is a young and controversial Chinese writer. He considers that writers are merely a common worker. He also firmly believes that fiction's first objective should be amusement rather than instruction.

A significant characteristic of Wang Shuo's fiction is Tiao Kan (调侃). The meaning given to Tiao Kan ranges from jeer, jest to caricature. In short, things previously deified by the people were jeered by him. For instance, he spoofs of idea, of love, of writer, of teacher and morals.

Wang Shuo goes his own way. He kicks over the traces and fills his fiction enough with slang, witticism, catch-phrase and paradox. Of course, he is not merely playing with words, he even not plays with literature as someone thinks.

There is considerable disagreement about Wang Shuo's stature as a writer. His critics have argued that his philosophy is elementary, and that his books are shapeless gray affairs. Hence "Pi Zi literature" (痞子文学) is associated with his fiction. Others argue that his style is tolerable or even an asset. Thus, Wang Shuo was extolled as the "Master of Humor" (幽默大师).

It is an undeniable fact that Wang Shuo's Tiao Kan gives Chinese literature a relief from traditionalism. For instance, he relieves the Chinese literature from the literary burden and heroism of the past.

To study Wang Shuo's Tiao Kan from this perspective, this thesis will be divided into six chapters. In chapter one, I will discuss the Wang Shuo's phenomenon (王朔现象) and explain the meaning of Tiao Kan. Chapter two traces the background from which Tiao Kan arises. Chapter three provides a brief discussion on the state of Chinese literature after 1976. Chapter four analyzes the different forms of Tiao Kan. Chapter five is a comparative study of Wang Shuo and Qian Zhong Shu (钱钟书), and Wang Shuo and Joseph Heller respectively. Chapter six is my concluding remarks on Tiao Kan in Wang Shuo's fiction.