ABSTRACT

Zhou Zuoren (1885-1967) was a pioneer writer of modern Chinese essay. He was also a translator, literary theorist and critic in the period from 1920s to 1960s. This dissertation is a critical study of his contribution to literary theory and criticism and his influence on the development of a new literature in modern China in the 1920s and 1930s. His creative writings in the forms of prose and poetry also will be analysed. His creative works, which have individualistic characteristics, as I have discussed in the thesis, deserve an important place in the history of modern Chinese literature.

This thesis is divided into ten chapters. First chapter is a survey of the development of the studies of Zhou Zuoren in the past 60 years in order to define the objectives, scope and approach for this study. The second chapter examines the principal ideas of Zhou Zuoren’s literary theory, a literary theory based on the humane literature. The third and the fourth chapters focus on analysing the formation of individual literature (个性主义文学) in Zhou Zuoren’s literary theory. The fifth chapter explores the influence of the Chinese traditional and the Western cultures on Zhou Zuoren’s theory of essay (散文). The sixth chapter deeply looks into the world of Zhou Zuoren’s essay writing, analysing the styles and characteristics of his creative works. The seventh and the eighth chapters evaluate Zhou Zuoren’s contribution, as a writer and as a critic to the development of modern Chinese poetry and modern Chinese novel. The ninth chapter discusses Zhou Zuoren’s literary criticism theory. The final chapter highlights the important findings of this study.