ABSTRACT

In traditional literary theory, the content of a piece of literary work has always taken precedence over its form. However, in Xi Ni Er’s (新加坡) fiction, we see a deviation from the norm. Through changes in his narrative strategy both between and within his works, Xi Ni Er portrays the changes that Singapore has undergone in its bid to become a modernized society. At the same time, these changes also show a movement away from the traditional functions of fiction as a semiotic system. This academic exercise therefore aims to provide a comprehensive study of Xi Ni Er’s narrative strategy and its implications on the traditional relationship between content and form.

Chapter One of this academic exercise highlights and explains the aims and scope of this study. Chapter Two discusses Xi Ni Er’s concept of “change” and his use of “change” as the basis of the themes found in his works. Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six describe 4 of Xi Ni Er’s narrative forms, providing an in-depth analysis of the changes found in his narrative strategy. Chapter 7, the concluding chapter, summarizes and presents the findings of this academic exercise. The findings show that Xi Ni Er’s narrative strategy is dominated by the concept and use of “change”. Through these changes, he has also established an iconic relationship between content and form, therefore revolutionizing conventional ideas of representation.