ABSTRACT

The period between the Second World War and the independence of Singapore witnessed some significant changes in the quality and quantity of Singapore Chinese Literature. There were some significant changes of the authors' attitude towards creative writing, with greater emphasis on local consciousness and flavour. Miao Xiu was one of the prominent writers during this period. Miao had published several novels and had contributed a great deal to literary activities.

The aim of this Academic Exercise is to give a detailed account of the late Miao Xiu's life and to evaluate his fiction.

Structurally, this study is divided into two sections: the first section deals with Miao Xiu's life and also gives a brief account on his involvement in literary activities, the second section analyses and evaluates Miao Xiu's fiction from the following aspects: theme, subject-matter and the style of his works.

This study yields several important findings:

(i) it has been found that the actual period during which Miao was an editor for 'Chen Xin' (晨星), a supplement for Sin Chew Jit Poh, was from 1947 to 1949. Furthermore, more than ten pseudonyms were used by Miao Xiu but were unknown to the readers,

(ii) the structure of Miao Xiu's full-length novels (长篇小说) was influenced by the structure of Chinese Classical Novel (章回小说), such as The Water Margins (水浒传) and The Scholars (儒林外史),

(iii) Miao Xiu was one of the modern Singapore Chinese
writers who preferred to use dialect peculiarities in his fiction, especially cantonese, which, when overused, became difficult for non-cantonese to understand,

(iv) it has been found that Miao Xiu's stories and characters were often based on his own and his friends' experiences.

The study shows that during the period between the Second World War and the independence of Singapore great emphasis was placed on local consciousness and local flavour as exemplified in Miao Xiu's work.