ABSTRACT

The various aspects of *A Dream of Red Mansions* (Hong Lou Meng), the greatest Chinese novel published in Qing Dynasty, have always been the centre of attraction in academic study. However, symbolism, which is a very important aspect has been neglected by scholars, especially the symbolism of minor objects in the novel. Thus, the objective of this academic exercise is to examine the symbolism in *A Dream of Red Mansions* through the interpretation of four minor objects selected from the novel. These four objects, namely, fire cracker, plum blossom, bamboo and fan, though minor and often neglected in academic study, have profound symbolic meanings. They symbolise the fate and characteristics of some of the figures in the novel, as well as the degeneration of the Jia household. For example, the instant disappearance of the fire cracker symbolises the splendid yet short life of Jia Yuanchun. It also symbolises the degeneration of the Jia household. With these findings, this essay reaffirms that *A Dream of Red Mansions* is a symbolist novel.