ABSTRACT

Mao Dun was one of the major initiators of the "May Fourth" New Cultural Movement as well as being a distinguished writer and translator. He has written widely on various subjects revealing the societal evils and the describing of the thinking of young intellectuals. More importantly, imbued in all his work was the spirit of realism, thus making him the "Master of his time".

Mao Dun was a scholar who could go to the full extent to observe and appreciate the ways of living and thinking of various strata in the society. This explains why he could produce works which were not only rich in content but also vivid in details. In many of his works, he had reflected upon the societal problems in various periods, each having great social implications.

After his completion of the book "The Three Rhythms of Corrosion" (腐蚀三部曲), Mao Dun embarked upon another work, "Rainbow" (彩虹), which took the period between "May Fourth" and "May Thirtieth". In this narration, the young petty bourgeois intellectuals were subjected to various persecutions; but they finally awoke and began to head towards the road to
revolt and revolution.

"Rainbow" actually centered on a girl Mei. The author, through the personal experience of the girl, tried to portray the youths in that period. The success of the book can be attributed to the fact that the author had abandoned his pessimistic outlook. Thus, this book had set the foundation for his subsequent work, "Midnight" (子夜), and also had a certain bearing in all his latter works.

Structurally, the academic exercise can be divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter is a brief description of Mao Dun's important status in China's literary world and of his influential role in shaping China's literary movement of realism.

Chapter Two would be a brief account of the author's life and literary activities.

Chapter Three discusses the social context in which the book "Rainbow" was written, including China's internal and external trends, and her social, economic and political changes.

The main theme of "Rainbow" would be dealt with
in chapter Four. It seeks to analyse the contents of the work and to bring out its social significance.

Chapter Five is on the special aesthetic features in "Rainbow". It will also assess the merits and demerits of this book so as to give an overall evaluation.

Chapter Six concludes with the contribution Mao Dun had made to China's New Literary Movement and the success of his works.