ABSTRACT

*Lin Lan Xiang* <<林兰香>> has been considered as an important historical link between *Jin Ping Mei* <<金瓶梅>> and *Hong Lou Meng* <<红楼梦>>. It is apparently a work influenced by *Jin Ping Mei*, and it in turn anticipates in many ways *Hong Lou Meng*. A comparison between *Lin Lan Xiang* and *Hong Lou Meng* becomes the main purpose of this thesis. Meanwhile, the process of comparison between these two works shows the thematic concern of desire “欲” and romance “情” which is a reoccurring theme in many Chinese fictions. Hence, desire and romance is the major discussion in this thesis.

The first chapter is a brief introduction regarding the importance of *Lin Lan Xiang* as a historical link between *Jin Ping Mei* and *Hong Lou Meng*. The dating of *Lin Lan Xiang* has been a controversial issue. Therefore, I tried to discuss this problem by referring to some Chinese scholars’ opinions towards it.

The next chapter focuses on the comparison between two works. The comparison was made from the perspectives of narrative structure and characterization. Amazingly, two works are identical in many ways.

An introduction of the historical context of late Ming (晚 明) is made in the third chapter. Current debates on desire and romance in the cultural and intellectual arenas and of the new and more complex views that
emerged from these debates provide a broader view for the readings of *Lin Lan Xiang* and *Hong Lou Meng*.

The fourth chapter analyses the thematic concern of desire and romance in the two works. *Lin Lan Xiang* is a historical link in the sense that it marks a midpoint in the process of a changing focus from desire to romance in the Chinese novel. *Lin Lan Xiang* shows the dilemma between desire and romance, whereas *Hong Lou Meng* explores the complexities of the subtle relationship between these two important concepts and their inseparability in this chapter.