ABSTRACT

In this particular thesis, we will embark on a journey involving a comprehensive study of Chinese fiction that appeared in the supplementary pages of *Lat Pau*. The Newspaper also known as Le Bao, was the first and longest Chinese daily newspaper of Singapore during the pre-war years. Beginning its publication in December 1881, it had an amazing life span of more than half a decade before it finally ceased running in March 1932. The earliest issues of the newspaper were now lost and those extant at the NUS Chinese Library cover only the period from 19 August 1887 to 31 March 1932.

The scope under our study however will emphasize on the articles that were published in the first supplementary pages of the newspaper which spanned across the period between 17 January 1907 to 15 April 1922, a total of 16 years. In actual fact, the years before the birth of the supplementary pages saw an almost non-fictional phenomenon, simply because the newspaper only had main sections that report solemn and serious news events. The setting up of the supplementary pages on the other hand, gave the newsletter a brand new life, full of jokes, tabloids,
critics, essays, poems, stories and many other light-hearted literary writings. Fiction is definitely one great contribution of the paper.

As an invaluable historical resource for the research on pre-war Singapore, the study on materials in *Lat Pau* provides an insight view on the development of Chinese Fiction in the history of Early Singapore Literature. Findings showed that the years before 1917 saw few fictional articles in the paper but the situation was totally reversed after this fateful year. The dissertation further brought to our attention the characteristics of two typical form of Chinese Fiction mainly those written in *wenyan*, writings in the Classical Chinese and that in *baihua*. The former was still practiced widely in Singapore while *baihua*, writings in the vernacular of Chinese Fiction though popular in China was not very influential during this particular period.