ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyse the use of parallelism in *The Dream of the Red Chambers* 《红 楼 梦》. The analysis will only involved the first 80 chapters written by Cao Xueqin. Xueqin

The four-chapter thesis is the outcome of personal research by means of the original text along with other related materials, such as books, journals and texts by literary critics.

The first chapter is about the use of parallelism in China. It had its roots in the Chinese cosmology. Later, it is extended to Chinese literature. From here, the discussion about the use of this technique will move on from poetry to “scholar-beauty” romances ( 才子佳人小说) and finally, to *The Dream of the Red Chambers* 《红 楼 梦》.

The second chapter looks into the use of parallelism in the form of “doubling” the characters. These “doubles” (影子) are designed to provide the image of the main characters. Instead of describing the same characters repeatedly, the author make use of the doubling technique to create a sense of familiarity, so as to identify with the main protagonist. From these “doubles”, Cao Xueqin manages to create a complicated yet intriguing web of interpersonal relationships in the story.

The following chapter analyses the parallel structure and narrative technique in the story. It will look at different opinions voiced by experts. The aim is to find the purpose and pattern in the series of events as they are unfolded in the story.

The fourth chapter, which is also the concluding chapter concentrates on the function of the use of parallelism in the book and how Cao Xueqin creates an ironical ending to show the unreasonable and illogical reality of life instead of following the tradition of having a happy ending for everyone.

It is hoped that this thesis will contribute to the research work on the use of parallelism in *The Dream of the Red Chambers*. 