The Propensity of Chinese Space: 
through the Architecture in “Dream of the Red Chamber”

by

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Abstract

This dissertation addresses the subject of propensity in Chinese spaces. It attempts to
investigate on the inclination and disposition of Chinese spaces, providing an a-historical
investigation into the relationships of perception on spaces and the consequent of this
disposition of thoughts, through the re-reading of a classic narrative, Dream of the Red
Chamber.

The concept of Chinese space is manifested in both formal and informal architectural
environment: the Mansion and the Garden. The concept is embraced as a vehicle for all sorts of
activities. Although the interest is architectural, it is not exclusively so. It is also seen as a social
and cultural phenomenon and, as such, as an inseparable part of daily living. It is in terms of
this perspective that this dissertation has been written.

The dissertation is thus written in five chapters. Chapter 1 establishes the hypothesis and
methodology; Chapter 2 sets out the narrative structure based on the Novel and poses inherent
contradictions; Chapter 3 surveyed the representation and perception of space; Chapter 4
analysis the propensity of space relationships; & finally Chapter 5, conclusion.

It is hoped that, in terms of this perspective, the work will go some way to illustrate that Chinese
space is formed through nurturing – an ever-changing disposition which has its own propensity
for transformation – dynamism within the static.

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