ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to study the scripting of the imagination of the “Singapore Youth” from the perspective of a youth’s Chinese periodical. Particularly focusing on the Youth Monthly Periodical with its first piece published in the 1976, it constitute one of the most popular periodical in the 1970s, with more than ten thousands issues published every month. With the Singapore Youth as its specific targeted readers, a total of 51 issues of the periodical were published before it ceased its publication in 1981.

Previous researches set against China’s context had focused mainly on the concept of the child as compared to that of the youth. This was congruent with both the interests of Western and Chinese researchers. Additionally, studies have shown that the concept of the child is a historical concept as it changes according to the history of the specific country; hence the notion of the child is not viewed as a universalistic concept. With the success in studies on the concept of the child, I seek to further explore on the concept of the youth, and particularly putting it into the Nanyang context.

The Youth Monthly was after the independence of Singapore in 1965. Building national consciousness has always been the main concern of Singapore government after its independence, various new policies on education, housing, national service were set up to create a sense of belonging among Singaporeans. Other than that, working toward a harmonious society with a prosperous future was also in the mind of the Singapore government. Hence, being introduced under such
critical period of nation building, the scripting of “Singapore Youth” through the Youth Monthly Periodical would be closely related to the national discourse, making it a significant lens of study.

Based on the Youth Monthly periodical, this dissertation will study the construction of image of the ‘Singapore Youths’ in 1970s, through the analysis of its pictures and texts. It will also unpack the underlying meaning of the image of the ‘Singapore Youths’ by putting this periodical in the context of Singapore. There will be a total of four chapters in this paper. The first chapter provides a brief overview of the background of the periodical; with a comparison drawn between the Youth Monthly and two other periodicals situated in different periods, namely the Malays Youth and the World Youth. The second chapter aims to critically study the scripting of the imaginations of the “Singapore Youth” via pictorial images, while the third chapter will further explore the construction of the imagination of the “Singapore Youth” through textual contents in the periodical. Finally, chapter four will conclude this dissertation with a description of the relationship between the Singapore Youth and national discourse.