ABSTRACT

Rediffusion was one of the most significant agencies for commercial broadcasting from the early 50s to the late 70s. Since its opening in August 1949, the company had managed to enchant the majority of Chinese listeners in Singapore with countless hours of Chinese-oriented entertainment programmes lacking in the colony then. This dissertation attempts to recount the oral memories of this broadcasting company (between 1949 to 1965) that has left its mark on the social history of broadcasting in Singapore as well as the everyday life of its listeners.

Hence, from a socio-historical approach, the study looks into the cultural effects of this media form. Chapter one establishes the research methodology and defines the scope and aim of the study. Chapter two traces the history of Rediffusion and illustrates the distinctive characteristics that existed within the organizational structure of the establishment. Chapter three examines how Rediffusion incorporated the various popular arts forms of the Singaporean Chinese into its programmes and, in the process, created a unique “cultural form”. Chapter four reevaluates Rediffusion from the perspective of its audience, and looks into how a unique “cultural group” is formed revolving around its broadcast.

Among other things, this dissertation reveals the formation of a “Culture of Rediffusion” that was unique to Singapore Chinese community in the 50s and 60s. This was the culture that had become an integral part of life of many of our Chinese forefathers, and fond memories of this unique culture are still held dearly by its aging participants.