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The Westerner in Chinese Advertisements,
the Chinese in Western Advertisements:

crossed views on added values

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EA4186

Representations of the Westerner =
excellence, high-quality, luxury

Representations of the Chinese =
wisdom, spirituality, eternity

By using the Other (and by exploiting ignorance of the Other, stereotypes on the Other and common ideas on the Other), advertisement is adding value to the product to create identity : a brand identity, and therefore, the consumer' s identity.

Part 1

Value added by representing the Other in commercial advertisement

Advertisement for *Houshi Boss*
briefcases
(Shanghai, May 2005)

“I Believe Muself – HOUSHIBOSS ”



“Westernity”:
white, westerner,
wise, confident,
successful, ambitious,
wealthy



Advertisement for an hospital in Beijing (Beijing, August 2006)



"A good health is the key for a perfect home"

“While you cannot change what a product is, you can change what it means”

James Twitchell

To stimulate the purchase, advertisement has:

- to put into scenery a world where consumption is source of positive change and satisfaction, and where purchasing is the core of existence
- to publicize the myth of the middle class as a social accomplishment

The purpose of the White in these Chinese advertisements:

- to embody high-quality, excellence, perfection, and a certain idea of social accomplishment, implying materialist success.
- to serve the propaganda of the middle class as a social accomplishment and an ideal of life.

Real estate advertisement (Tianjin, May 2006)



An added value supposedly missing or lacking for the Chinese, and whose quest would be supposed to perfect an existence still unbalanced: the White way of life.

Advertisement for house
accessories company
(France, March 2008)

*“These porcelains symbolise
the heritage of a eternal
China”*



Advertisement for IWC watch
(France, January 2008)

*“We don’t know the lifetime of
a IWC. But we’ve only existed
for 140 years”*

**Nous ne connaissons pas la durée
de vie d’une IWC. Mais nous
n’existons que depuis 140 ans.**



**IWC
SCHAFFHAUSEN
SINCE 1868**

Né il y a 120 ans!



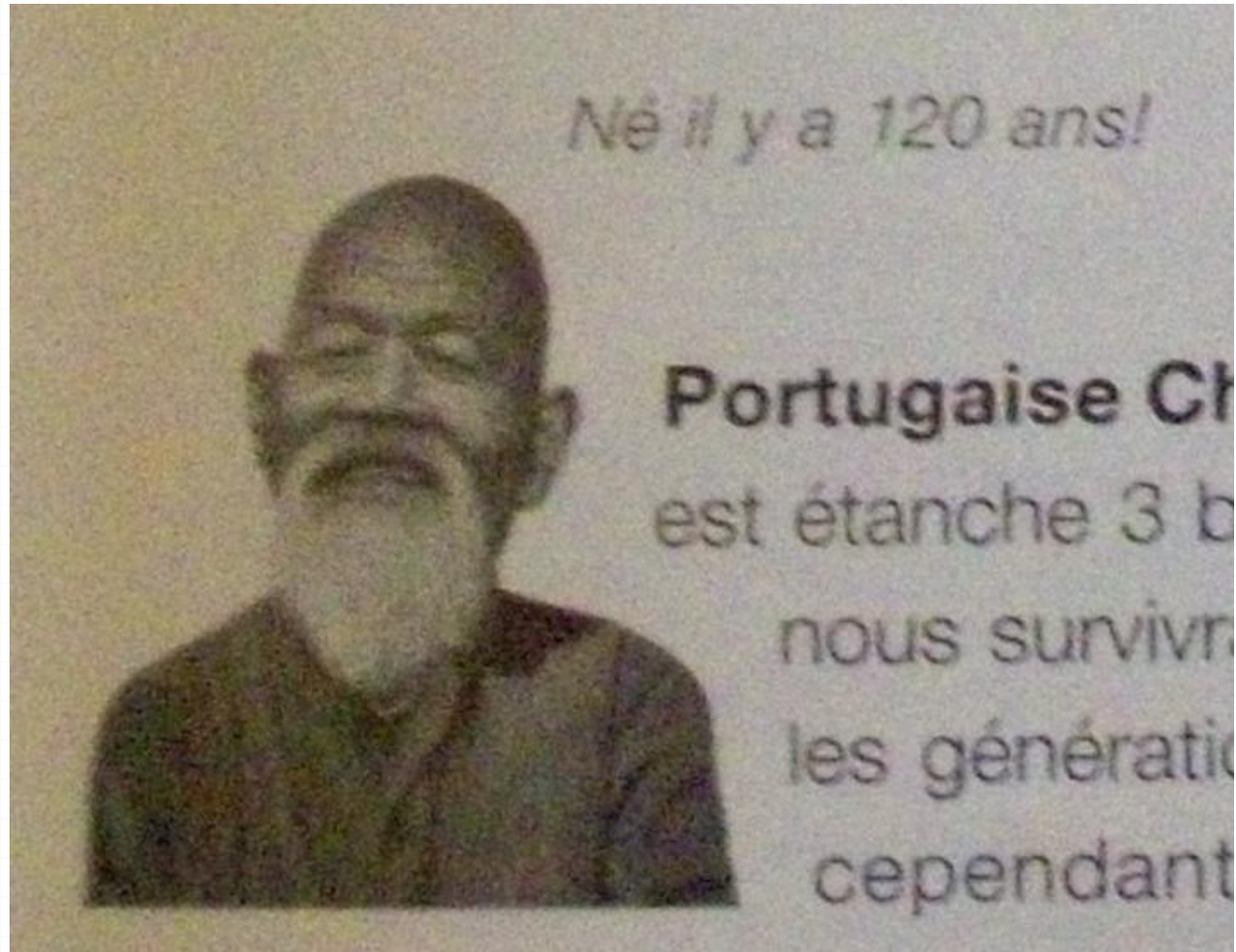
Portugaise Chrono-Automatic. Réf. 3714: une IWC pour vos héritiers. Le robuste boîtier est étanche 3 bars. Et comme nous sommes certains que chaque exemplaire de Portugaise nous survivra, nous l’enregistrons dans une importante base de données. C’est ainsi que les générations à venir connaîtront l’origine de ces montres d’exception. Ce qui ne règle cependant pas les autres problèmes d’héritage. **IWC. Conçue pour les hommes.**

Mouvement de chronographe mécanique | Remontage automatique | Petite seconde avec dispositif d’arrêt (illustration) | Verre saphir antireflet | Etanche 3 bars | Diamètre du boîtier 40,9 mm | Acier In.



IWC Schaffhausen, Suisse www.iwc.com

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"Born 120 years ago !"

The Westerner is evolving in a society which has already reached the limits of materialism, and which is looking for a certain idea of happiness, not anymore in consumption (as we can see in China), but mostly in the joy (and therefore in the consumption) of certain values, like spirituality, escaping, free time, “discovery” of the Other.

“Advertisement is the place where are expressed the deep trends of a period, the modern concerns, myths and sensibilities”

“The advertising image offers to see humans models corresponding to the dominating social values. (...) It works thanks to a “mimetic desire” forcing us to look like the model offered. (...) Advertisement reflects the dominating ideology, stereotypes which are often very volatile and episodic.”

*Geneviève Cornu, Sémiologie de l'image dans la publicité,
Paris, Les éditions d'organisation, 1991*

Part 2

Commodification of cultures and spectacular
“middleclassification” of the world

We are living in a *“spectacle market economy”*
Guy Debord

- Advertisement contributes to the commodification of cultures.
- Advertisement encourages to show what the Other is expected to be instead of showing what the Other is: it is a performative imaginary.
- Advertisement is inspired by myths of modernity, and inspires them in the same time.

Spectacular “middleclassification”

We can observe, *in terms of representation, icons and spectacle*, the “middleclassification” of China, that is to say : the omnipresence of the middle class as a new social norm.

Beijing Airport's advertisement (Beijing, May 2006)



Advertisements only create a world which is making allusions to reality, where the purpose, the aim is the consumption

Advertisement for credit card (Shanghai, September 2006)
“Happiness loans” “Loan brings happiness”



“Necessity to give free rein to the power of imagination, to promote creativity (...) as intrinsic vector of a new art of living, is now more and more urging” Gregory B. Lee

Advertisement for a bank loan
(Shanghai, September 2006)

*“Your dream home tailored to
your needs”*

大华银行房屋贷款

按需定制您的 理想家园



- 多种货币选择
- 优惠利率
- 贷款高达70%
- 长达25年的灵活偿还期及更多优惠

欢迎亲临任何大华银行分行，或拨 021-6247 3688 / 021-5047 3688 询问详情。

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大華銀行
UNITED OVERSEAS BANK

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“The dominating imaginary [in China] is from now on the same as elsewhere. It is likewise poor, and likewise dangerous because of this very poorness”

Jean-François Billeter



Thank you

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